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The
POETS
and the
POETRY
of the
CENTURY



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CENTURY

Joanna Baillie
to
Mathilde Blind

Edited by
ALFRED H. MILES

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PREFATORY.

THE work of the Women Poets of the nineteenth century is a characteristic feature of its literature. As such it has been thought well to separate it from the general body of the poetry of the period and present it in a form calculated to show its progress and development. It is hoped that the result will be found of sufficient interest to justify this special treatment.

The poets represented are those included in the period "from Joanna Baillie to Mathilde Blind," the work of later women poets being reserved for a volume to be devoted to contemporary writers.

The Editor begs gratefully to acknowledge his numerous obligations to the poets and publishers represented in his pages: to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., for the use of some of the later poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and for permission to print the revised text of her earlier work; to Mrs. Kemble and her publishers, for the use of the selection from her poems; to Messrs. Warne & Co., for several poems by Eliza Cook; to Charles L. Lewis, Esq., for permission to select from the poems of the late George Eliot, published by Messrs. Blackwood & Sons; to Messrs. Bell & Sons, for the use of the selection from the poems of the late Adelaide Procter; to G. L. Craik, Esq., for a simi-

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A. H. M.

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Joanna Baillie
to
Mathilde Blind

Joanna Baillie.

1762—1851.

JOANNA BAILLIE—"the immortal Joanna," Scott called her—was born in the manse of Bothwell, in Lanarkshire, on September 11th, 1762, and was sprung from an old Scottish family. She was educated in Glasgow, and in her girlhood revealed a remarkable literary faculty. Her father died in 1778, and in 1784 her mother took her to London. Her "Fugitive Verses" appeared in 1790, and in 1798 the first series of her "Plays on the Passions" was published anonymously. Samuel Rogers wrote a review of the latter book, in which he spoke of it as undoubtedly the work of a man; and for a time the authorship was ascribed to Sir Walter Scott. When the true writer's name was revealed, Sir Walter formed an acquaintance with Miss Baillie, an acquaintance which grew into a lasting friendship. John Kemble thought so highly of one of the plays, namely, "De Montfort," that he produced it at Drury Lane. The cast included himself and his sister, Mrs. Siddons; nevertheless, the piece proved a failure. On the death of her mother in 1806, Miss Baillie took a house at Hampstead, where she thenceforth lived until the day of her death. In 1804 she published "Miscellaneous Plays," one of which, "Constantine Palaeologus," had a fairly good run at various theatres. Miss Baillie was

present at the successful production of this piece in Edinburgh in 1820. In 1810, her drama, "The Family Legend," met with a favourable reception in Edinburgh. A third series of "Plays on the Passions," was brought out in 1812, and her "Metrical Legends," a collection of poems dealing with Scottish scenes and characters, appeared in 1821. "The Drama of the Martyr," appeared in 1826, and was followed by "Witchcraft," a tragedy in prose, a play suggested by a scene in "The Bride of Lammermoor." Three volumes of "Miscellaneous Plays" were published in 1836. Miss Baillie continued to write until she was nearly eighty. She died on February 23rd, 1851, at the age of eighty-eight.

Joanna Baillie was as simple and unaffected as she was gifted. Her work—at least her dramatic work—was no doubt overrated in her own day. Scott in particular spoke with characteristic, generous exaggeration of her plays. "The 'Plays on the Passions,'" he said, "have put me entirely out of conceit with my Germanised brat, *The Fall of the House of Aspen*, and should I ever again attempt dramatic composition, I would endeavour after the genuine old English model." He used even stronger terms of eulogy in speaking of her tragedy "Fear." The language of the play, he declared, was distinguished by a rich variety of fancy which was matched by Shakespeare alone. Again he asserted that she beat "male authors out of the pit in describing the higher passions that are more proper to their sex than hers." These, of course, are words born of unconscious prejudice; still, the plays with all their defects in no way merit the neglect which

has befallen them. They have been described as the best ever written by a woman—and this praise (which is far from inordinate) they probably deserve. They show considerable invention ; the blank verse is not without dignity, and the heroines are gracefully drawn. It is not, however, by her dramas that Joanna Baillie will live. It is by her lyrics. Where is the woman-poet of our days who could write such a rousing, hearty lyric as “The Chough and Crow to roost are gone,” the song of the outlaw from “Orra,” Act III., Scene i.

“The chough and crow to roost are gone,
 The owl sits on the tree,
 The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
 Like infant charity.
 The wild-fire dances on the fen,
 The red star sheds its ray,
 Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
 It is our op'ning day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
 And clos'd is every flower,
 And winking tapers faintly peep
 High from my lady's bower ;
 Bewilder'd hinds with shorten'd ken
 Shrink on their murky way,
 Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
 It is our op'ning day.

Nor board nor garner own we now,
 Nor roof nor latched door,
 Nor kind mate, bound by holy vow
 To bless a good man's store ;
 Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
 And night is grown our day,
 Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
 And use it as ye may.”

Of heartiness, outside of the Elizabethans, and Burns

and Scott, there is unhappily but little in the strains of our lyrists. Yet heartiness is one of the gifts most essential to a song-writer. Joanna Baillie had the gift. Of all English women-poets, she speaks in accents least easily distinguishable from a man's. The songs "Woo'd and Married an' a'," and "Saw ye Johnny comin'" (the best of them all), and "Fy let us a' to the Wedding," were, in her own phrase, "Auld Songs new Buskit." But she made them her own—even as Burns made so many an old ditty his own—by skilful verbal changes, by refining their tone without lessening their spontaneity and pith. Her fame has suffered a sad eclipse since Sir Walter deemed her "the immortal Joanna," and paid high tribute to her in the introduction to the third canto of "Marmion." But while her dramas are never to be revived and seldom, very seldom to be read, her vigorous, bracing, hearty lyrical work endures, and will endure.

WALTER WHYTE.

SONGS.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

I.—SAW YE JOHNNY COMIN'?

“**S**AW ye Johnny comin’?” quo’ she,
“Saw ye Johnny comin’?
Wi’ his blue bonnet on his head,
And his doggie runnin’?
Yestreen about the gloamin time
I chanced to see him comin,
Whistling merrily the tune
That I am a’ day hummin,” quo’ she,
“I am a’ day hummin.”

“Fee him, faither, fee him,” quo’ she,
“Fee him, faither, fee him;
A’ the wark about the house
Gaes wi’ me when I see him:
A’ the wark about the house,
I gang sae lightly through it;
And though ye pay some merks o’ gear,
Hoot! ye winna rue it,” quo’ she,
“No; ye winna rue it.”

“What wad I do wi’ him, hizzy?
What wad I do wi’ him?
He’s ne’er a sark upon his back,
And I hae nane to gie him.”
“I hae twa sarks into my kist,
And ane o’ them I’ll gie him;
And for a merk o’ mair fee,
O, dinna stand wi’ him,” quo’ she;
“Dinna stand wi’ him.”

"Weel do I lo'e him," quo' she,
 "Weel do I lo'e him,
 The brawest lads about the place
 Are a' but haverels to him.
 O fee him, faither ; lang I trow
 We've dull and dowie been ;
 He'll hand the plough, thrash i' the barn,
 And crack wi' me at e'en," quo' she,
 "Crack wi' me at e'en."

II.—THE MAID OF LLANWELLYN.

I'VE no sheep on the mountain, nor boat on the lake,
 Nor coin in my coffer to keep me awake,
 Nor corn in my garner, nor fruit on my tree,
 Yet the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me.

Softly tapping at eve to her window I came,
 And loud bay'd the watch-dog, loud scolded the dame ;
 For shame, silly Lightfoot ! what is it to thee,
 Though the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me ?

The farmer rides proudly to market or fair,
 The clerk at the alehouse still claims the great chair,
 But, of all our proud fellows, the proudest I'll be,
 While the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me.

For blythe as the urchin at holiday play,
 And meek as a matron in mantle of gray,
 And trim as a lady of gentle degree,
 Is the Maid of Llanwellyn, who smiles upon me.

III.—POVERTY PARTS GUDE COMPANIE.

WHEN my o'erlay was white as the foam o' the lin,
 And siller was chinkin my pouches within,
 When my lambkins were bleatin on meadow and brae,
 As I went to my love in new cleeding sae gay,
 Kind was she, and my friends were free,
 But poverty parts good company.

How swift pass'd the minutes and hours of delight,
 The piper play'd chcerly, the crusie burn'd bright,
 And link'd in my hand was the maiden sae dear,
 As she footed the floor in her holyday gear!
 Woe is me ; and can it then be,
 That poverty parts sic company ?

We met at the fair, and we met at the kirk,
 We met i' the sunshine, we met i' the mirk ;
 And the sound o' her voice, and the blinks o' her een,
 The cheerin and life of my bosom hae been.
 Leaves frae the tree, at Martinmass flee,
 And poverty parts sweet company.

At bridal and in fair, I braced me wi' pride,
 The broose I hae won, and a kiss o' the bride ;
 And loud was the laughter good fellows among,
 As I utter'd my banter or chorus'd my song ;
 Dowie and dree are jestin and glee,
 When poverty spoils good company.

Wherever I gaed kindly lasses look'd sweet,
 And mithers and aunties were unco discreet ;
 While kebbuck and bicker were set on the board ;
 But now they pass by me, and never a word !
 Sae let it be, for the worldly and slee
 Wi' poverty keep nae company.

But the hope of my love is a cure for its smart,
 And the spae-wife has tauld me to keep up my heart,
 For, wi' my last saxpence, her loof I hac crost,
 And the bliss that is fated can never be lost.
 Though cruelly we may ilka day see
 How poverty parts dear company.

IV.—FY, LET US A' TO THE WEDDING.

FY, let us a' to the wedding,
 For they will be lilding there ;
 For Jock's to be married to Maggy,
 The lass wi' the gowden hair.

And there will be jibing and jeering,
 And glancing of bonny dark cen,
 Loud laughing and smooth-gabbit spcering
 O' questions baith pawky and keen.

And there will be Bessy the beauty,
 Wha raises her cockup sae hie,
 And giggles at preachings and duty,
 Guid grant that she gang na' ajee !

And there will be auld Geordie Taunner,
 Wha coft a young wife wi' his gowd ;
 She'll flaunt wi' a silk gown upon her,
 But wow ! he looks dowie and cow'd.

And brown Tibby Foulter the Heiress
 Will perk at the tap o' the ha',
 Encircled wi' suitors, wha's care is
 To catch up her gloves when they fa',—

Repeat a' her jokes as they're cleckit,
 And haver and glower in her face,
 When tocherless mayes are negleckit,—
 A crying and scandalous case.

- And Mysie, wha's clavering aunty
Wad match her wi' Laurie the Laird,
And learns the young fule to be vaunty,
But neither to spin nor to caird.
- And Andrew, wha's Granny is yearning
To see him a clerical blade,
Was sent to the college for learning,
And cam' back a coof as he gaed.
- And there will be auld Widow Martin,
That ca's hersel thritty and twa!
And thraw-gabbit Madge wha for certain
Was jilted by Hab o' the Shaw.
- And Elspy the sewster sae genty,
A pattern of havens and sense,
Will straik on her mittens sae dainty,
And crack wi' Mess John i' the spence.
- And Angus, the seer o' ferlies,
That sits on the stane at his door,
And tells about bogles, and mair lies
Than tongue ever utter'd before.
- And there will be Bauldy the boaster,
Sae ready wi' hands and wi' tongue;
Proud Paty and silly Sam Foster,
Wha quarrel wi' auld and wi' young:
- And Hugh the town-writer, I'm thinking,
That trades in his lawerly skill,
Will egg on the fighting and drinking
To bring after-grist to his mill:
- And Maggy—na, na! we'll be civil,
And let the wee bridie a-be;
A vilipend tongue is the devil,
And ne'er was encouraged by me.

Then fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be liling there,
Frae mony a far-distant ha'ding,
The fun and the feasting to share.

For they will get sheep's-head, and haggis,
And browst o' the barley-mow ;
E'en he that comes latest, and lag is,
May feast upon dainties enow :

Veal florentines in the o'en baken,
Weel plenish'd wi' raisins and fat
Beef, mutton, and chuckies, a' taken
Het reekin frae spit and frae pat :

And glasses (I trow 'tis nae said ill),
To drink the young couple good luck,
Weel fill'd wi' a braw beechen ladle
Frae punch-bowl as big as Dumbuck.

And then will come dancing and daffing,
And reelin and crossin o' hans,
Till even auld Lucky is laughing,
As back by the aumry she stans.

Sie bobbing and flinging and whirling,
While fiddlers are making their din ;
And pipers are droning and skirling,
As loud as the roar o' the lin.

Then fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be liling there,
For Jock's to be married to Maggy,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.

V.—THE GOWAN GLITTERS ON THE SWARD.

THE gowan glitters on the sward,
The lav'rock's in the sky,
And collie on my plaid keeps ward,
And time is passing by.

Oh no! sad and slow
And lengthen'd on the ground,
The shadow of our trysting bush,
It wears so slowly round!

My sheep-bell tinkles frae the west,
My lambs are bleating near,
But still the sound that I lo'e best,
Alack! I canna' hear.

Oh no! sad and slow,
The shadow lingers still,
And like a lanely ghaist I stand
And croon upon the hill.

I hear below the water roar,
The mill wi' clackling din,
And Lucky scolding frae her door,
To ca' the bairnies in.

Oh no! sad and slow,
These are na' sounds for me,
The shadow of our trysting bush,
It creeps sae drearily!

I coft yestreen, frae Chapman Tam,
A snood of bonny blue,
And promised when our trysting cam',
To tie it round her brow.

Oh no! sad and slow,
The mark it winna' pass;
The shadow of that weary thorn,
Is tether'd on the grass.

O now I see her on the way,
 She's past the witch's knowe,
 She's climbing up the Brownny's brae,
 My heart is in a lowe!
 Oh no! 'tis no' so,
 'Tis glam'rie I have seen;
 The shadow of that hawthorn bush,
 Will move na' mair till e'en.
 My book o' grace I'll try to read,
 Though conn'd wi' little skill,
 When collie barks I'll raise my head,
 And find her on the hill;
 Oh no! sad and slow,
 The time will ne'er be gane,
 The shadow of the trysting bush,
 Is fix'd like ony stane.

VI.—IT WAS ON A MORN.

IT was on a morn, when we were thrang,
 The kirn it croon'd, the cheese was making,
 And bannocks on the girdle baking,
 When anc at the door chapp't loud and lang.
 Yet the auld gudewife and her mays sae tight,
 Of a' this bauld din took sma' notice I ween;
 For a chap at the door in braid day-light,
 Is no like a chap that's heard at e'en.
 But the docksy auld laird of the Warlock glen,
 Wha waited without, half blate, half cheery,
 And lang'd for a sight o' his winsome deary,
 Raised up the latch, and cam' crouselly ben.
 His coat it was new, and his o'erlay was white,
 His mittens and hose were cozie and bien;
 But a wooer that comes in braid day-light,
 Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

He greeted the carline and lasses sae braw,
 And his bare lyart pow, sae smoothly he strakit,
 And he looket about, like a body half glaikit,
 On bonny sweet Nanny, the youngest of a'.

“Ha, laird!” quo’ the carline, “and look ye that way?
 Fy, let na’ sic fancies bewilder you clean:

An elderlin man, in the noon o’ the day,
 Should be wiser than youngsters that come at e’en.”

“Na, na,” quo’ the pawky auld wife, “I trow,
 You’ll no’ fash your head wi’ a youthfu’ gilly,
 As wild and as skeigh as a muirland filly;
 Black Madge is far better and fitter for you.”

He hem’d and he haw’d, and he drew in his mouth,
 And he squeezed the blue bannet his twa hands between,
 For a wooer that comes when the sun’s i’ the south,
 Is mair landward than wooers that come at e’en.

“Black Madge is sae carefu’”—“What’s that to me?”

“She’s sober and eydent, has sense in her noddle:
 She’s douce and respeckit.” “I care na’ a bodle:
 Love winna be guided, and fancy’s free.”

Madge toss’d back her head wi’ a saucy slight,
 And Nanny, loud laughing, ran out to the green;
 For a wooer that comes when the sun shines bright
 Is no like a wooer that comes at e’en.

Then away flung the laird, and loud mutter’d he,
 “A’ the daughters of Eve, between Orkney and Tweed, O!
 Black or fair, young or auld, dame or damsel or widow,
 May gang in their pride to the de’il for me!”

But the auld gudewife and her mays sae tight
 Cared little for a’ his stour banning, I ween;
 For a wooer that comes in braid day-light,
 Is no like a wooer that comes at e’en.

VII.—WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'.

THE bride she is winsome and bonny,
 Her hair it is snooded sae sleek,
 And faithfu' and kind is her Johnny,
 Yet fast fa' the tears on her cheek.
 New pearlins are cause of her sorrow,
 New pearlins and plenishing too,
 The bride that has a' to borrow,
 Has e'en right mickle ado,
 Woo'd and married and a'!
 Woo'd and married and a'!
 Is na' she very weel aff
 To be woo'd and married at a'?

Her mither then hastily spak,
 "The lassie is glaikit wi' pride;
 In my pouch I had never a plack
 On the day when I was a bride.
 E'en tak' to your wheel, and be clever,
 And draw out your thread in the sun;
 The gear that is gifted, it never
 Will last like the gear that is won.
 Woo'd and married and a'!
 Wi' havins and tocher sae sma'!
 I think ye are very weel aff,
 To be woo'd and married at a'!"

"Toot, toot!" quo' her grey-headed father,
 "She's less o' a bride than a bairn,
 She's ta'en like a cout frae the heather,
 Wi' sense and discretion to learn.

Half husband, I trow, and half daddy,
As humour inconstantly leans,
The chiel maun be patient and steady,
That yokes wi' a mate in her teens.
A kerchief sae douce and sae neat,
O'er her locks that the winds used to blaw!
I'm baith like to laugh and to greet,
When I think o' her married at a'!"

Then out spak' the wily bridegroom,
Weel waled were his wordies, I ween,
"I'm rich, though my coffer be toom,
Wi' the blinks o' your bonny blue een.
I'm prouder o' thee by my side,
Though thy ruffles or ribbons be few,
Than if Kate o' the Croft were my bride,
Wi' purples and pearlins enow.
Dear and dearest of ony!
Ye're woo'd and buikit and a'!
And do ye think scorn o' your Johnny,
And grieve to be married at a'?"

She turn'd, and she blush'd, and she smiled,
And she looket sae bashfully down;
The pride o' her heart was beguiled,
And she played wi' the sleeves o' her gown;
She twirled the tag o' her lace,
And she nippit her boddice sae blue,
Synne blinket sae sweet in his face,
And aff like a maukin she flew.
Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' Johnny to roose her and a'!
She thinks hersel very weel aff,
To be woo'd and married at a'!

VIII.—GOOD NIGHT, GOOD NIGHT!

FROM "THE PHANTOM."

Act I., Scene 3.

THE sun is down, and time gone by,
The stars are twinkling in the sky,
Nor torch nor taper longer may
Eke out a blithe but stinted day ;
The hours have pass'd with stealthy flight,
We needs must part : good night, good night !

The bride unto her bower is sent,
And ribald song and jesting spent ;
The lover's whisper'd words and few
Have bid the bashful maid adieu ;
The dancing floor is silent quite,
No foot bounds there : good night, good night !

The lady in her curtain'd bed,
The herdsman in his wattled shed,
The clansmen in the heather'd hall,
Sweet sleep be with you, one and all !
We part in hopes of days as bright
As this gone by : good night, good night !

Sweet sleep be with us, one and all !
And if upon its stillness fall
The visions of a busy brain,
We'll have our pleasure o'er again,
To warm the heart, to charm the sight,
Gay dreams to all ! good night, good night !

Carolina, Lady Nairne.

1766—1845

THE gift of writing songs—songs which achieve a high degree of poetical merit, and, at the same time, attain permanent popularity in virtue of their deep human interest—is much rarer than is generally supposed. Even great poets have not always possessed the combination of qualities required before a really great song, exhibiting both the characteristics just named, can be produced. Probably before a poet, however great, can produce a song so universally popular as “The Land o’ the Leal,” he must possess, in addition to his other poetic endowment, that sympathy with ordinary human life, which, in some natures, amounts almost to a passion. The mere knowledge of artistic *technique*, and the mere atmosphere of the study, are not in themselves favourable to the growth of such sympathy. Perhaps this is largely the reason why children of nature like Burns and Carolina Nairne have possessed the gift of song-writing in so eminent a degree.

Scotland has been remarkable for producing a succession of songstresses whose poems have possessed that rare lyrical charm which appeals to the hearts of high and low alike. Most of them were ladies of position, and this renders their success in reaching the popular sentiment the more remarkable. It must, however, be remembered, that in Scotland

there has always been a reminiscence of the feudal relation between the upper classes and the peasantry, which has long since died out south of the Border. Besides Lady Nairne, writers like Lady Grisell Baillie, Jean Adam, Allison Cockburn, Jean Elliot, Lady Anne Barnard, Elizabeth Hamilton, Jean Glover, and Joanna Baillie form a roll of poetesses of which any country might be proud.

Much of Lady Nairne's poetical activity consisted in writing words to old Scotch airs, or else of changing and improving the words of old Scottish songs. Her verse was sometimes rugged and inartistic in form, but, on many occasions, this arose from the method of composition forced upon a writer who adapts her words to some popular air. Not unfrequently Lady Nairne used assonances for rhymes (as "ran" and "strang," in "The Rowan Tree"). Assonances in place of rhymes are common, however, in the old North Country ballads, and the influence of these ballads upon Scottish poets must always be taken into account when dealing with their work. Still it can hardly be questioned that Lady Nairne's ideas of poetry as an art were primitive. Her attempts to improve the words of old Scottish songs, which, from one reason or another, she thought defective, were generally successful. But occasionally she tried to give an ethical bias to a song which was quite unfitted to bear it. At one time she had thoughts of giving editorial assistance in the preparation of a "purified edition of Burns's songs." Burns's "Duncan Gray" had, in her opinion, a "Bacchanalian tendency," and she wrote a version of her own—a version which, though immeasurably inferior to Burns's inimit-

able song, was, nevertheless, full of humorous suggestion.

Even when she did not aspire to amend the ethics of an old song Lady Nairne did not always improve on the originals. This will be seen by comparing her version of "The Lass o' Gowrie" (p. 26) with the exquisite song by a writer unknown, which was itself an improvement on the original "Kate o' Gowrie" by William Reid, of Glasgow. Lady Nairne's song follows the old "Lass o' Gowrie" down to the end of the first two stanzas, and then, leaving the old version, takes a very much more feeble and prosaic course. In fact, her completion of "The Lass o' Gowrie" would be a somewhat serious impeachment of her art, did we not recollect how extremely difficult was the task she undertook. The idiomatic *verve* of an old song wins for it its popular vogue, and to attempt to change this elasticity is always risky. In such attempts Burns himself did not always achieve entire success.

Lady Nairne was a true poet. Her "Laird o' Cockpen" (p. 25) is full of a humour that is quite peculiar to herself; while her Jacobite songs, "Wha'll be King but Charlie" (p. 29), and "Charlie is my Darling" (p. 30), are alive with warlike spirit as sincere and earnest as though they had been written in the heat of the struggle, during the pauses of the very battles. In these poems she evidently feels every word she writes, and this quality of sincerity alone, even apart from their other conspicuous merits, causes them to reach a far higher standard of excellence than all the other Jacobite verse which was written in her time. "Caller Herrin'" (p. 24) written to a tune representing the chime of the bells

of the Tron Kirk at Edinburgh, will always be worthy of study as a fine example of words arranged to musical sounds. Her masterpiece is "The Land o' the Leal" (p. 23). This faultless poem is worthy of the pathetic situation it renders so irresistibly. We seem to hear the very accents of the dying woman as she speaks to the fond husband who was the father of her dead child. Yet "The Land o' the Leal," flawless as it is, seems as spontaneous as her more crude work. Indeed it may be said of this kind of lyric no less than of the Jacobite ballads, that Lady Nairne never wrote a line that she did not feel; and this fact gives to her poems a strength which nothing else could give.

Carolina Oliphant was born at Gask, Perthshire, on July the 16th, 1766. Her Jacobitism was inherited. On her father's side she sprang from the Oliphants (originally Olifards) of Gask, and on her mother's from the Robertsons of Strowan. Both families were Jacobites of the purest and most uncompromising order. And it was during the time that the Oliphants and the Robertsons were living in compulsory exile at the *soi-disant* Court of St. Germain that her father and mother married. Named after "the king over the water," there was no feature of Carolina's surroundings that was not Jacobite. And when it is remembered that she was fully eighteen years of age before her maternal grandfather and grandmother ceased to be outlaws for the "cause," and were permitted to return to Scotland, it is easy to understand her intense Jacobitism, and to see why her Jacobite songs are no mere literary exercises.

At the age of eight she lost her mother, but her

training was carefully attended to, and she became highly educated according to the measure of those days. When she was about twenty-six, her brother Lawrence, who had succeeded to the family property, gave a dinner to his tenantry. He sang to them on the occasion a new version of "The Ploughman," written by his sister. It was received with favour, and, though the authorship was not divulged, copies were multiplied, and the song became popular. Henceforward Carolina wrote songs, though preserving the strictest secrecy respecting their authorship. Probably she felt that the production of literature was hardly a fitting occupation for one who had the blue blood. Carolina was beautiful, and might have made an advantageous marriage. Influenced, however, by her Jacobite predilections, she consented to marry her cousin, Captain Nairne. As staunch a Jacobite as herself, he was half a score years her senior, and was entirely dependent on his soldier's pay. Hence the marriage had to be postponed, and did not take place until June 1806. After her marriage she resided near Edinburgh, but did not mix much in the literary society of that city: even with Sir Walter Scott, with whom she had much in common, she was never intimate. Yet she was noted for "graceful manners, and elegant accomplishments." She continued her song-writing under the pseudonym of "Mrs. Bogan, of Bogan," and not only wrote out her poems in a feigned hand, but actually, on meeting her publisher, Purdie, got herself up as a middle-class country gentlewoman of advanced years, in order to mystify him the more thoroughly. It is difficult for us in these days of feminine ambition to understand an idiosyncrasy

like this. Carolina Nairne's freedom from aspirations of a literary kind, owing to its contrast to modern ideas, lends an added interest to her name, though, of course, such shrinking from publicity was a characteristic of other Scottish poetesses, and particularly of Lady Anne Barnard, who did not divulge her authorship of "Auld Robin Gray" for fifty years.

When George IV., after his famous visit to Scotland, agreed to reverse the attainders of several Jacobite families, Major Nairne was reinstated in the Baron's rank which his ancestors had lost. The estate of Nairne, in Perthshire, however, was gone for ever, but no doubt Carolina prized the barren honour almost as much without the lands as with them. The loss of her husband in 1830 was a heavy blow to her, and this was followed by the long illness, and then the death in 1837 of her only son, whom she idolised. From this time she lived much in France, and devoted most of her energies to works of charity. Deeply and unostentatiously religious, her latter years were spent in the strictest retirement. Though writing but little verse, she did not lose her poetic faculty, for the beautiful song "Would you be Young Again" (p. 37) was written in her seventy-sixth year. She died at Gask on October the 26th, 1845. Not until after her death was a collected edition of her poems issued with her name as the author prefixed to them.

MACKENZIE BELL.

SONGS.

CAROLINA, LADY NAIRNE.

I.—THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I'M wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'

To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John,
And oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.

But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear's that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.

Oh! dry your glist'ning e'e, John,
My saul lings to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh! haud ye leal and true, John,
 Your day it's wearin' through, John,
 And I'll welcome you
 To the land o' the leal.
 Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,
 This world's cares are vain, John,
 We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
 In the land o' the leal.

II.—CALLER HERRIN'.

WHA'LL buy my caller herrin' ?
 They're bennie fish and halesome farin' ;
 Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
 New drawn frae the Forth ?

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
 Dream'd ye aught o' our puir fellows,
 Darkling as they faced the billows,
 A' to fill the woven willows ?

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
 They're no brought here without brave daring ;
 Buy my caller herrin',
 Haul'd through wind and rain.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
 Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin',
 Wives and mithers maist despairing,
 Ca' them lives o' men.

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
 Ladies, clad in silks and laces,
 Gather in their braw pelisses,
 Cast their heads and screw their faces.

Caller herrin's no got lightlie,
 Ye can trip the spring fu' tightlie,
 Spite o' tauntin', flauntin', flingin',
 Gow has set you a' a-singing.

Neebour wives, now tent my tellin':
 When the bonny fish ye're sellin',
 At ae word be in yere dealin'—
 Truth will stand when a' thing's failin'.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
 They're bonny fish and halesome farin';
 Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
 New drawn frae the Forth?

III.—THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN.

THE laird o' Cockpen, he's proud an' he's great,
 His mind is ta'en up wi' things o' the State;
 He wanted a wife, his braw house to keep,
 But favour wi' wooin' was fashious to seek.

Down by the dyke-side a lady did dwell,
 At his table head he thought she'd look well,
 M'Clish's ae daughter o' Clavers-ha' Lee,
 A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree.

His wig was weel pouter'd and as gude as new,
 His waistcoat was white, his coat it was blue;
 He put on a ring, a sword, and cock'd hat,
 And wha could refuse the laird wi' a' that?

He took the grey mare, and rade cannily,
 An' rapp'd at the yett o' Clavers-ha' Lee;
 "Gae tell Mistress Jean to come speedily ben,—
 She's wanted to speak to the Laird o' Cockpen."

Mistress Jean was makin' the elder-flower wine ;
 "An' what brings the laird at sic a like time ?"
 She put aff her apron, and on her silk gown,
 Her mutch wi' red ribbons, and gaed awa' down.

An' when she cam' ben he bow'd fu' low,
 An' what was his errand he soon let her know ;
 Amazed was the laird when the lady said "Na,"
 And wi' a laigh curtsie she turned awa'.

Dumfounder'd was he, nae sigh did he gie,
 He mounted his mare—he rade cannily ;
 An' aften he thought, as he gaed through the glen,
 She's daft to refuse the laird o' Cockpen."

(Stanzas added by Miss Ferrier.)

And now that the laird his exit had made,
 Mistress Jean she reflected on what she had said ;
 "Oh, for ane I'll get better, its waur I'll get ten,
 I was daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen."

Next time that the laird and the lady were seen,
 They were gaun arm-in-arm to the kirk on the green ;
 Now she sits in the ha' like a weel-tappit hen,
 But as yet there's nae chickens appear'd at Cockpen.

IV.—THE LASS O' GOWRIE.

T WAS on a simmer's afternoon,
 A wee afore the sun gaed down,
 A lassie wi' a'braw new gown
 Cam' owre the hills to Gowrie.
 The rose-bud wash'd in simmer's shower,
 Bloom'd fresh within the sunny bower ;
 But Kitty was the fairest flower
 That e'er was seen in Gowrie.

To see her cousin she cam' there,
 An' oh ! the scene was passing fair ;
 For what in Scotland can compare
 Wi' the Carse o' Gowrie ?

The sun was setting on the Tay,
 The blue hills melting into grey,
 The mavis and the blackbird's lay
 Were sweetly heard in Gowrie.

O lang the lassie I had woo'd,
 An' truth and constancy had vow'd,
 But could na speed wi' her I lo'ed,
 Until she saw fair Gowrie.

I pointed to my father's ha',
 Yon bonnie bield ayont the shaw,
 Sae loun' that there nae blast could blaw,
 Wad she no bide in Gowrie ?

Her faither was baith glad and wae ;
 Her mither she wad naething say ;
 The bairnies thocht they wad get play,
 If Kitty gaed to Gowrie.

She whiles did smile, she whiles did greet,
 The blush and tear were on her cheek—
 She naething said, an' hung her head ;
 But now she's Leddy Gowrie.

V.—HUNTINGTOWER.

“**W**HEN ye gang awa', Jamie,
 When ye gang awa', laddie,
 What will ye gi'e my heart to cheer,
 When ye are far awa', Jamie ?”

“I'll gi'e ye a braw new gown, Jeanie,
 I'll gi'e ye a braw new gown, lassie,
 An' it will be a silken ane,
 Wi' Valenciennes trimm'd round, Jeanie.”

“O, that’s nae luv at a’, laddie,
That’s nae luv at a’, Jamie ;
How could I bear braw gouns to wear,
When ye are far awa’, laddie !

“But mind me when awa’, Jamie,
Mind me when awa’, laddie,
For out o’ sicht is out o’ mind
Wi’ mony folk, we ken, Jamie.”

“Oh, that can never be, Jeanie,
Forgot ye ne’er can be, lassie ;
Oh gang wi’ me to the north countrie,
My bonny bride to be, Jeanie.

“The hills are grand and hie, Jeanie,
The burnies rinnin’ clear, lassie,
’Mang birks and braes, where the wild deer strays,
Oh cum wi’ me and see, lassie.”

“I winna gang wi’ thee, laddie,
I tell’t ye sae afore, Jamie ;
Till free consent my parents gi’e,
I canna gang wi’ thee, Jamie.”

“But when ye’re wed to me, Jeanie,
Then they will forgi’e, lassie ;
How can ye be sae cauld to me,
Wha’s lo’ed ye weel and lang, lassie ? ”

“No sae lang as them, laddie,
No sae lang as them, Jamie ;
A grief to them I wadna be,
No for the Duke himsel’, Jamie.

“ We’ll save our penny fee, laddie,
 To keep frae poortith free, Jamie ;
 An’ then their blessing they will gi’e,
 Baith to you an’ me, Jamie.”

“ Huntingtower is mine, lassie,
 Huntingtower is mine, Jeanie ;
 Huntingtower, an’ Blairnagower,
 An’ a’ that’s mine is thine, Jeanie !”

VII.—WH’LL BE KING BUT CHARLIE ?

THE news frae Moidart cam’ yestreen,
 Will soon gar mony ferlie ;
 For ships o’ war hae just come in,
 And landit Royal Charlie.

Come thro’ the heather, around him gather,
 Ye’re a’ the welcomer early ;
 Around him cling wi’ a’ your kin ;
 For wha’ll be king but Charlie ?
 Come thro’ the heather, around him gather,
 Come Ronald, come Donald, come a’ thegither
 And crown your rightfu’, lawfu’ king !
 For wha’ll be king but Charlie ?

The Heiland clans, wi’ sword in hand,
 Frae John o’ Groats to Airlie,
 Hae to a man declared to stand
 Or fa’ wi’ Royal Charlie.

The Lowlands a’, baith great an’ sma’,
 Wi’ mony a lord and laird, hae
 Declar’d for Scotia’s king an’ law,
 An’ speir ye wha’ but Charlie,

There's ne'er a lass in a' the lan',
 But vows baith late an' early,
 She'll ne'er to man gie heart nor han',
 Wha wadna fecht for Charlie.

Then here's a health to Charlie's cause,
 And be't complete an' early ;
 His very name our heart's blood warms ;
 To arms for Royal Charlie !

Come thro' the heather, around him gather,
 Ye're a' the welcomer early ;
 Around him cling wi' a' your kin ;
 For wha'll be king but Charlie ?
 Come thro' the heather, around him gather,
 Come Ronald, come Donald, come a' thegether,
 And crown your rightfu', lawfu' king !
 For wha'll be king but Charlie ?

VII.—CHARLIE IS MY DARLING.

'T WAS on a Monday morning,
 Right early in the year,
 When Charlie came to our toun,
 The young Chevalier.

Oh, Charlie is my darling,
 My darling, my darling ;
 Oh, Charlie is my darling,
 The young Chevalier.

As he came marching up the street,
 The pipes play'd loud and clear,
 And a' the folk came running out
 To meet the Chevalier.

Wi' Hieland bonnets on their heads,
 And claymores bright and clear,
 They came to fight for Scotland's right,
 And the young Chevalier.

They've left their bonnie Hieland hills,
 Their wives and bairnies dear,
 To draw the sword for Scotland's lord,
 The young Chevalier.

Oh, there were mony beating hearts,
 And mony a hope and fear,
 And mony were the prayers put up
 For the young Chevalier.

Oh, Charlie is my darling,
 My darling, my darling,
 Oh, Charlie is my darling,
 The young Chevalier.

VIII.—MY AIN KLND DEARIE, O.

WILL ye gang owre the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O?
 Will ye gang over the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O?
 Gin ye'll tak' heart, and gang wi' me,
 Mishap will never steer ye, O;
 Gude luck lies owre the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O.

There's walth owre yon green lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O;
 There's walth owre yon green lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O;

It's neither land, nor gowd, nor braws,
 Let them gang tapsie teerie, O;
 It's walth o' peace, o' love, and truth,
 My ain kind dearie, O.

IX.—KIND ROBIN LO'ES ME.

ROBIN is my ain gudeman,
 Now match him, carlins, gin ye can,
 For ilk ane whitest thinks her swan,
 But kind Robin lo'es me.
 To mak' my boast I'll e'en be bauld,
 For Robin lo'ed me young and auld,
 In simmer's heat, and winter's cauld,
 My kind Robin lo'es me.

Robin he comes hame at e'en,
 Wi' pleasure glancin' in his een;
 He tells me a' he's heard and seen,
 And syne how he lo'es me.
 There's some ha'e land, and some ha'e gowd,
 Mair wad ha'e them gin they cou'd,
 But a' I wish o' warld's gude
 Is Robin aye to lo'e me.

X.—CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.

THERE'S cauld kail in Aberdeen,
 There's castocks in Stra'bogie,
 And, morn and e'en, they're blythe and bein,
 That haud them frae the cogie.
 Now haud ye frae the cogie, lads,
 O bide ye frae the cogie,
 I'll tell ye true, ye'll never ruc
 O passin' by the cogie.

Young Will was braw and weel put on,
Sae blythe was he and vogie,
And he got bonnie Mary Don,
The flower o' a' Stra'bogie.
Wha wad hae thought, at wootin' time,
He'd e'er forsaken Mary!
And ta'en him to the tipplin' trade,
Wi' boozin' Rob and Harry.

Sair Mary wrought, sair Mary grat,
She scarce could lift the ladle,
Wi' pithless feet, 'tween ilka greet,
She'd rock the borrow'd cradle.
Her weddin' plenishin' was gane,
She never thought to borrow;
Her bonnie face was waxin' wan,
And Will wrought a' the sorrow.

He's reelin' hame ae winter's night,
Some later than the gloamin';
He's ta'en the rig, he's miss'd the brig,
And Bogie's owre him foamin'.
Wi' broken banes, out owre the stanes
He creepit up Stra'bogie,
And a' the nicht he prayed wi' micht,
To keep him frae the cogie.

Now Mary's heart is light again,
She's neither sick nor silly;
For, auld or young, nae sinfu' tongue
Could e'er entice her Willie
And aye the sang thro' Bogie rang,
O haud ye frae the cogie;
The weary gill's the sairest ill
On braes o' fair Stra'bogie.

XI.—SAW YE NE'ER A LANELY LASSIE ?

SAW ye ne'er a lanely lassie,
 Thinkin' gin she were a wife,
 The sun o' joy wad ne'er gae down,
 But warm and cheer her a' her life ?
 Saw ye ne'er a wearie wifie,
 Thinkin' gin she were a lass,
 She wad aye be blythe and cheerie,
 Lightly as the day wad pass ?

Wives and lasses, young and agcd,
 Think na on each ither's state ;
 Ilka ane it has its crosses,
 Mortal joy was ne'er complete.
 Ilka ane it has its blessings.
 Peevish dinna pass them bye,
 But like choicest berries seek them,
 Tho' amang the thorns they lie.

XII.—THE AULD HOUSE.

OH, the auld house, the auld house,
 What tho' the rooms were wee !
 Oh ! kind hearts were dwelling there,
 And bairnies fu' o' glee ;
 The wild rose and the jessamine
 Still hang upon the wa',
 How mony cherish'd memories
 Do they, sweet flowers, reca' !
 Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird,
 Sae canty, kind, and crouse,
 How mony did he welcome to
 His ain wee dear auld house !

And the leddy too, sae genty,
There shelter'd Scotland's heir,
And clipt a lock wi' her ain hand
Frae his lang yellow hair.

The mavis still doth sweetly sing,
The bluebells sweetly blaw,
The bonnie Earn's clear winding still
But the auld house is awa'.
The auld house, the auld house,
Deserted tho' ye be,
There ne'er can be a new house
Will seem sae fair to me.

Still flourishing the auld pear tree
The bairnies liked to see,
And oh, how often did they speir
When ripe they a' wad be!
The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
Aye rinnin' here and there,
The merry shout—oh! whiles we greet
To think we'll hear nae mair!

For they are a' wide scatter'd now,
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas! to her lang hame;
Not here we'll meet again.
The kirkyaird, the kirkyaird!
Wi' flowers o' every hue,
Shelter'd by the holly's shade
An' the dark sombre yew.

The setting sun, the setting sun,
How glorious it gaed doon!
The cloudy splendour raised our hearts
To cloudless skies aboon!

The auld dial, the auld dial,
 It tauld how time did pass ;
 The wintry winds ha'e dung it doon,
 Now hid 'mang weeds and grass.

XIII.—GUDE NICHT, AND JOY BE WI' YE A'.

THE best o' joys maun ha'e an end,
 The best o' friends maun part, I trow ;
 The langest day will wear away,
 And I maun bid fareweel to you.
 The tear will tell when hearts are fu' ;
 For words, gin they hae sense ava,
 They're broken, faltering, and few ;
 Gude nicht, and joy be wi' you a'.

O we hae wandered far and wide,
 O'er Scotia's lands o' firth and fell,
 And mony a simple flower we've pu'd,
 And twined it wi' the heather bell.
 We've ranged the dingle and the dell,
 The cot-house and the baron's ha' ;
 Now we maun tak' a last farewell,
 Gude nicht, and joy be wi' you a'.

My harp, fareweel, thy strains are past,
 Of gleefu' mirth, and heartfelt wae ;
 The voice of song maun cease at last,
 And minstrelsy itsel' decay.
 But, oh ! whare sorrow canna win,
 Nor parting tears are shed ava,
 May we meet neighbour, kith and kin,
 And joy for aye be wi' us a' !

XIV.—WOULD YOU BE YOUNG AGAIN?

WOULD you be young again ?
 So would not I—
 One tear to memory giv'n,
 Onward I'd hie.
 Life's dark flood forded o'er,
 All but at rest on shore,
 Say, would you plunge once more,
 With home so nigh ?

If you might, would you now
 Retrace your way ?
 Wander through thorny wilds,
 Faint and astray ?
 Night's gloomy watches fled,
 Morning all beaming red,
 Hope's smiles around us shed,
 Heavenward—away.

Where are they gone, of yore
 My best delight ?
 Dear and more dear, tho' now
 Hidden from sight.
 Where they rejoice to be,
 There is the land for me ;
 Fly, time, fly speedily ;
 Come life and light.

XV.—REST IS NOT HERE.

WHAT'S this vain world to me ?—
 Rest is not here ;
 False are the smiles I see,
 The mirth I hear.

Where is youth's joyful glee ?
Where all once dear to me ?
Gone as the shadows flee—
Rest is not here.

Why did the morning shine
Blythely and fair ?
Why did those tints so fine
Vanish in air ?
Does not the vision say,
Faint lingering heart, away,
Why in this desert stay ?
Dark land of care !

Where souls angelic soar,
Thither repair ;
Let this vain world no more
Lull and ensnare.
That Heaven I love so well
Still in my heart shall dwell ;
All things around me tell,
Rest is found there.

Caroline (*Bowles*) Southey.

1787—1854.

CAROLINE BOWLES, the daughter of Captain Charles Bowles, of Buckland, near Lymington, Hants, was born on the 6th of December, 1787. Her first serious attempt at literature was a poem entitled "Ellen Fitz Arthur," written while the century was in its teens, and submitted to Robert Southey for opinion and advice. The laureate is said to have recommended its publication, and it was issued in 1820. "Ellen Fitz Arthur" was followed in 1822 by "The Widow's Tale, and Other Poems"; in 1836 by "The Birthday, and Other Poems," and in 1839 by "Solitary Hours." Caroline Bowles also contributed a series of "Chapters on Churchyards" to *Blackwood's Magazine*, "pathetic novelettes," which were gathered together and issued in two volumes in 1829. Her poem of "The Birthday" contains some touching pictures of her delicate and solitary childhood. To quote one:—

" My father loved the patient angler's art ;
And many a summer day, from early morn
To latest evening, by some streamlet's side
We two have tarried ; strange companionship !
A sad and silent man ; a joyous child—
Yet were those days, as I recall them now,
Supremely happy. Silent though he was,
My father's eyes were often on his child
Tenderly eloquent—and his few words

Were kind and gentle. Never angry tone
Repulsed me, if I broke upon his thoughts
With childish question. But I learnt at last—
Learnt intuitively to hold my peace
When the dark hour was on him, and deep sighs
Spoke the perturbed spirit—only then
I crept a little closer to his side,
And stole my hand in his, or on his arm
Laid my cheek softly ; till the simple wife
Won on his sad abstraction, and he turned
With a faint smile, and sighed, and shook his head,
Stooping toward me : So I reached at last
Mine arm about his neck, and clasped it close,
Printing his pale brow with a silent kiss.”

Early in life Caroline Bowles sustained a violent attack of small-pox, which disfigured her, and before she attained maturity, lost both her mother and father. These circumstances tended to strengthen her nervous if not morbid desire for retirement and seclusion. Henceforward, to quote her own words, all her adventures were by the fireside ; all her migrations “from the blue bed to the brown.”

Her earlier work was anonymous, and may be fairly said to have attained its reputation on its merits. Southey, who was ever ready to help any one who appealed to him, assisted her in the *Quarterly*, and Moir, the Delta of *Blackwood*, gave her high if not extravagant praise. The whirligig of time has reversed this, and the writer, who was called “the Cowper of poetesses,” and declared to be equal to Mrs. Hemans in her own day, is now denied all praise, and treated with but scant courtesy. Southey, whose powers of letter writing were not the least remarkable of his qualities, kept up correspondence with her from the first, and, losing his wife Edith after a period of severe mental

affliction in 1837, he married Caroline Bowles, at Boldre Church, near Keswick, on June 5th, 1839. Widowed in 1843, Mrs. Southey retired into Hampshire, and died at Buckland, Lymington, on July 20th, 1854. The *Athenæum* (August 5th, 1854), in recording her decease, paid a powerful tribute to her character in connection with her marriage to Robert Southey, whose subsequent mental condition involved her in such assiduous devotion. "No sacrifice could have been greater than the one she was induced to make on the occasion. It can be placed beyond all doubt by those who survive her, that she was fully prepared for the distressing calamity that impended over both. She could have had no mercenary motives, for she resigned a larger income on her marriage than she knew she could receive at her husband's death; indeed, the sum bequeathed to her in his will did not amount to anything like the income she had sacrificed. She consented to unite herself with him with a sure prevision of the awful condition of mind to which he would shortly be reduced, with a certain knowledge of the injurious treatment to which she might be exposed from the purest motive that could actuate a woman in forming such a connection—namely, the faint hope that her devotedness and zeal might enable her, if not to avert the catastrophe, to acquire at least a legal title to minister to the sufferer's comforts, and watch over the few sad years of existence that might remain to him."

Mrs. Southey's verse had a greater charm for her own generation than it can ever have again. There is a natural simplicity about it which gives it a certain affinity with the so-called "Lake school," and

which was much newer in her day than it is in ours. And yet, after the lapse of so many years, like flowers that have been preserved, her work still emits a sweet mild fragrance, and recalls a tender, sympathetic personality. One can scarcely read her general poems without feeling that they came from a true, loving heart, nor peruse the poems which with an almost morbid recurrence she wrote upon the subject of death, without feeling that she had a true sense of the sublime. Faulty in form, she possessed a spontaneity which some masters of form never show, besides in some degree that magic touch which invests a subject with the nameless environment which for want of a better term we call atmosphere. This may not always be in evidence, nor obtain to a very large degree, but in such poems as "The Pauper's Death-bed," and "The Christian Mariner's Hymn," short as they are, there is a something conveyed beyond that which is expressed, which is incapable of definition, but which counts for much in poetry. She was the earliest of her sex to follow Wordsworth's lead, if indeed she followed any lead at all, and had a far better idea of the difference between true and false sentiment than most of the women poets of her time.

ALFRED H. MILES.

POEMS.

CAROLINE (BOWLES) SOUTHEY.

I.—THE PRIMROSE.

I SAW it in my evening walk,
A little lonely flower !
Under a hollow bank it grew,
Deep in a mossy bower.

An oak's gnarl'd root, to roof the cave
With Gothic fretwork sprung,
Whence jewell'd fern, and arum leaves,
And ivy garlands hung.

And from beneath came sparkling out
From a fallen tree's old shell,
A little rill, that clipt about
The lady in her cell.

And there, methought, with bashful pride,
She seem'd to sit and look
On her own maiden loveliness
Pale imaged in the brook.

No other flower—no rival grew
Beside my pensive maid ;
She dwelt alone, a cloister'd nun,
In solitude and shade.

No sunbeam on that fairy well
Darted its dazzling light—
Only, methought, some clear, cold star
Might tremble there at night.

No ruffling wind could reach her there—
 No eye, methought, but mine,
 Or the young lamb's that came to drink,
 Had spied her secret shrine.

And there was pleasantness to me
 In such belief. Cold eyes
 That slight dear Nature's lowliness,
 Profane her mysteries.

Long time I looked and linger'd there,
 Absorb'd in still delight—
 My spirit drank deep quietness
 In, with that quiet sight.

II.—THE PAUPER'S DEATH-BED.

TREAD softly—bow the head—
 In reverent silence bow—
 No passing bell doth toll—
 Yet an immortal soul
 Is passing now.

Stranger ! however great,
 With lowly reverence bow ;
 There's one in that poor shed—
 One by that paltry bed—
 Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,
 Lo ! Death doth keep his state :
 Enter—no crowds attend—
 Enter—no guards defend
This palace gate.

That pavement damp and cold
No smiling courtiers tread ;
One silent woman stands
Lifting with meagre hands
A dying head.

No mingling voices sound—
An infant wail alone ;
A sob suppressed—again
That short deep gasp, and then
The parting groan.

Oh, change! oh, wondrous change!
Burst are the prison bars :
This moment *there*, so low,
So agonised, and now
Beyond the stars!

Oh, change! stupendous change!
There lies the soulless clod ;
The Sun eternal breaks—
The new Immortal wakes—
Wakes with his God!

III.—THE MARINER'S HYMN.

L AUNCH thy bark, Mariner !
Christian, God speed thee !
Let loose the rudder-bands—
Good angels lead thee !
Set thy sails warily,
Tempests will come ;
Steer thy course steadily,
Christian, steer home !

Look to the weather-bow,
Breakers are round thee ;
Let fall the plummet now,
Shallows may ground thee.
Reef in the fore-sail, there !
Hold the helm fast !
So—let the vessel wear—
There swept the blast.

“What of the night, watchman ?
What of the night ?”
“Cloudy—all quiet—
No land yet—all’s right !”
Be wakeful, be vigilant—
Danger may be
At an hour when all seemeth
Securest to thee.

How ! gains the leak so fast ?
Clear out the hold—
Hoist up thy merchandise,
Heave out thy gold ;—
There—let the ingots go—
Now the ship rights ;
Hurrah ! the harbour’s near—
Lo, the red lights !

Slacken not sail yet
At inlet or island ;
Straight for the beacon steer,
Straight for the high land ;
Crowd all thy canvas on,
Cut through the foam—
Christian ! cast anchor now—
HEAVEN IS THY HOME !

IV.—TO A DYING INFANT.

SLEEP, little Baby! sleep!
Not in thy cradle bed,
Not on thy mother's breast
Henceforth shall be thy rest,
But with the quiet dead.

Yes, with the quiet dead,
Baby! thy rest shall be—
Oh! many a weary wight,
Weary of life and light,
Would fain lie down with thee!

Flee, little tender nursling!
Flee to thy grassy nest—
There the first flowers shall blow,
The first pure flake of snow
Shall fall upon thy breast.

Peace! peace! the little bosom
Labours with shortening breath.
Peace! peace! that tremulous sigh
Speaks his departure nigh—
Those are the damps of Death.

I've seen thee in thy beauty,
A thing all health and glee;
But never then wert thou
So beautiful, as now,
Baby! thou seem'st to me.

Thine upturned eyes glazed over
Like harebells wet with dew—
Already veiled and hid
By the convulsèd lid,
Their pupils darkly blue.

Thy little mouth half open,
Thy soft lip quivering,
As if, like summer air,
Ruffling the rose leaves, there
Thy soul were fluttering.

Mount up, immortal essence!
Young spirit! hence—depart!
And is *this* Death?—Dread thing!
If such thy visiting,
How beautiful thou art!

Oh! I could gaze for ever
Upon that waxen face,
So passionless! so pure!
The little shrine was sure
An angel's dwelling-place.

Thou weapest, childless Mother!
Ay, weep—'twill ease thine heart;
He was thy first-born son—
Thy first, thine only one;
'Tis hard from him to part.

'Tis hard to lay thy darling
Deep in the damp cold earth,
His empty crib to see,
His silent nursery,
Late ringing with his mirth.

To meet again in slumber
His small mouth's rosy kiss,
Then—waken'd with a start
By thine own throbbing heart--
His twining arms to miss.

And then to lie and weep,
And think the live-long night—
Feeding thine own distress
With accurate greediness—
Of every past delight ;

Of all his winning ways,
His pretty, playful smiles,
His joy at sight of thee,
His tricks, his mimicry,
And all his little wiles.

Oh! these are recollections
Round mothers' hearts that cling!
That mingle with the tears
And smiles of after years,
With oft awakening.

But thou wilt then, fond Mother,
In after years look back—
Time brings such wondrous easing—
With sadness not unpleasing,
Even on this gloomy track.

Thou'lt say, " My first-born blessing!
It almost broke my heart,
When thou wert forced to go ;
And yet for thee, I know,
'Twas better to depart.

“ God took thee in His mercy,
A lamb untask'd—untried—
He fought the fight for thee,
He won the victory—
And thou art sanctified.

“ I look around, and see
The evil ways of men,
And oh, belovèd child !
I'm more than reconciled
To thy departure then.

“ The little arms that clasp'd me,
The innocent lips that prest—
Would they have been as pure
'Till now, as when of yore
I lull'd thee on my breast ?

“ Now, like a dew-drop shrined
Within a crystal stone,
Thou'rt safe in Heaven, my dove !
Safe with the Source of Love,
The Everlasting One !

“ And when the hour arrives,
From flesh that sets me free,
Thy spirit may await,
The first at Heaven's gate,
To meet and welcome me.”

VI.—TO DEATH.

COME not in terrors clad, to claim
An unresisting prey :
Come like an evening shadow, Death !
So stealthily, so silently !
And shut mine eyes, and steal my breath ;
Then willingly—oh ! willingly,
With thee I'll go away.

What need to clutch with iron grasp
What gentlest touch may take ?
What need, with aspect dark, to scare,
So awfully, so terribly,
The weary soul would hardly care,
Called quietly, called tenderly,
From thy dread power to break ?

'Tis not as when thou markest out
The young, the blest, the gay,
The loved, the loving—they who dream
So happily, so hopefully ;
Then harsh thy kindest call may seem,
And shrinkingly, reluctantly,
The summoned may obey.

But I have drunk enough of life —
The cup assigned to me
Dashed with a little sweet at best,
So scantily, so scantily—
To know full well that all the rest,
More bitterly, more bitterly,
Drugged to the last will be.

And I may live to pain some heart
That kindly cares for me—
To pain, but not to bless. O Death!
Come quietly—come lovingly,
And shut mine eyes, and steal my breath;
Then willingly—oh! willingly,
With thee I'll go away.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans.

1793—1835.

AN interesting essay might be written on what has been well called "the rise and fall of the sentimental in English poetry." At the head of those who, in the earlier decades of the present century, cultivated the sentimental Muse, stands Mrs. Hemans. But, when (with present-day dislike of sentimentality) we are prone to judge her too harshly on this account, we must not forget how largely poets are influenced by the fashions of their own time. Not only did her own poems win universal popularity, but her influence over the less prominent poets of her epoch was comparable to that of Byron himself. And foolish and even ridiculous as was sometimes the excess of sentiment exhibited by her followers, it was less foolish, less ridiculous, and less harmful than the excesses of Byronism.

Felicia Hemans's claims to attention, however, rest on a far more substantial basis than the mere fact of having been able to catch the public ear at a time when immeasurably greater poets than herself were first coming into repute. Her strength and originality of mind enabled her to discard the fantastic mannerisms of the Della Cruscan school. Her verse at its best was spontaneous, simple, and direct. Her descriptions of nature, though, of course, lacking the profound insight

and sense of communion which are the chief attributes of Wordsworth's descriptions, were true to fact and free from any touch of pedantry. Wordsworth called her—

“ That holy spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep.”

Such an epithet is well deserved, and is more worthy of note as coming from one so little inclined to praise his contemporaries.

It is not too much to say that some, at least, of the very qualities which recommended Felicia Hemans to her poetical constituency of sixty years ago, have caused the decrease of her reputation in our own day. For now that a higher conception of the scope and mission of poetry is gaining an ever-widening acceptance, mere sentimentality does not find favour. Sir Walter Scott aptly defined the chief deficiency of her poetry when he remarked that it exhibited “too many flowers” and “too little fruit.” Doubtless this deficiency arose, in a considerable degree, from her astonishing facility in the mere act of versification—a facility greater probably than that possessed by any other poet of her time except Lætitia Elizabeth Landon. This rapidity in production could not fail to result in diffuseness and weakness, not only in thought, but also in technical qualities. Nevertheless, after every reasonable deduction has been made from the value of her work, we find it fraught with fancy, melodious, and, beneath its sentimental trappings, often sincere, while such touching and beautiful poems as “Casabianca” (p. 77), “The Graves of a Household” (p. 73), and “Gertrude; or, Fidelity Till Death” (p. 62) escape

from sentimentality altogether. Such poems, together with the ballad of Roncesvalles from "The Siege of Valencia" (p. 59), "England's Dead" (p. 71), "The Better Land" (p. 80), and some others will live. Felicia Hemans has now ceased to be a poet for poets. Her diffuseness alone would prevent her from being this. She not only rarely achieved concentration: she seems rarely to have tried to achieve it. Diffuseness such as hers is fatal to the life of poetry. Concentration may, no doubt, as I have said in another essay in the present work, be carried too far; but no body of verse ever survived that was as diffuse as is much of Felicia Hemans's poetry. Her name will still be held in honour however because of a few of her poems. For so universal is the human interest of some of her themes that it is difficult to believe a time will come when she will cease to be read by the people. Sometimes we are inclined to forget that the greatest poet is rarely the poet who is most read.

The powers of Felicia Hemans were not of a kind to fit her for success in sustained poetical efforts. Hence none of her long poems except, perhaps, "The Siege of Valencia," were altogether successful; though two of them, "The Vespers of Palermo," and "The Forest Sanctuary," contain many fine passages. She was strongest as a lyrist. Her picturesqueness was considerable, and she undoubtedly possessed, within certain narrow limits, a dramatic touch which enabled her to bring a scene before the mental vision of her readers. Many of the vivid episodes in the two excellent series of brief poems entitled respectively "Lays of Many Lands" and "Records of Woman" are examples of

what is here meant. "The Sceptic," a didactic poem of considerable length, which, at the time of its publication, gained both wide popularity and no small influence, suffers from confusion of metaphor. Her genius was derivative, not creative; while never a plagiarist, she came somewhat under the sway of the greater poets of her time. Perhaps she owed, in a large measure, the subdued romanticism which pervades, like an atmosphere, her finest poems, to that spirit which Scott caught from the German poets. We must not forget, however, that she herself was highly cultured, and, as a German scholar, had not only read, but appreciatively studied the originals.

Felicia Dorothea Browne was born in Liverpool on September 25th, 1793. Her father, a native of Ireland, was a merchant. Her mother, who was of mingled Italian and German descent, and whose family name was Wagner, was the daughter of the Imperial and Tuscan Consul at Liverpool. Felicia is described as possessing beauty and displaying talent from her earliest years. Her childish fondness for reading was great. She had a passion for Shakespeare, and it was her "choicest recreation, at six years old," to pass "hours of romance in a secret haunt of her own—a seat among the branches of an old apple-tree." When she was seven years old, her father sustained some commercial reverses, chiefly owing, it is said, to the disturbed condition of the times. He quitted Liverpool, and went with his family to reside at Gwrych, an old mansion near Abergele, in North Wales. This house, not far from the sea, was surrounded by a picturesque range of hills, and here Felicia lived

until the removal of the family in 1809 from Gwrych to Bronwylfa, near St. Asaph. Such calm and happy seclusion suited well her highly imaginative temperament, especially as she had the further advantage of a free access to an extensive library.

Amid these surroundings was nourished a love of nature which was one of the characteristics of her mind, and it need occasion no surprise that, at an unusually early age, she began to write verse. Her mother chiefly superintended her education; when she was eleven years old she spent a winter in London with her parents, and visited it again in the year following. These were the only occasions on which she ever saw London, and she does not seem to have enjoyed the visits, preferring rather the freedom of her country home.

Her friends published in 1808 a collection of her poems, in the form of a quarto volume, dedicated to the Prince Regent, and entitled, "Blossoms of Spring." The publication was injudicious when we remember the extreme youth of the poet, for, very naturally, the critics resented this "large quarto by a little child," and so sensitive was Felicia that an "unkind review" made her ill for several days. "England and Spain," her first important poem, was written at the age of fourteen, and "The Domestic Affections and other Poems," her second volume of verse, appeared in 1812. Her two elder brothers had joined the British army, then serving in Spain, and the event had aroused her patriotic enthusiasm. About the same time she met Captain Hemans shortly before he embarked to join his regiment. A parting, under such circumstances, had in it an element of romance, and on his return,

in 1811, Felicia became his wife. The marriage was not a happy one. In 1818, Captain Hemans went to Rome, partly for the benefit of his health. Felicia Hemans and her children remained in England. It was not at first supposed that this separation involved permanent estrangement. Husband and wife never met again, however, though they corresponded occasionally.

The subsequent life of Felicia Hemans was outwardly quiet and uneventful. For a while she resided at Wavertree, near Liverpool. She paid a visit to Scotland, where she saw a good deal of Scott at Abbotsford, and to the Lakes, where she met Wordsworth. During the closing years of her life, when most of her best poetical work was accomplished, her health had become very fragile. This necessitated an even greater degree of seclusion than that to which she had formerly accustomed herself; and her days were largely spent in reading the chief English, German, and French poets. Probably the fine poem "Despondency and Aspiration" (p. 65), which originally appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* during 1835, belongs to these later years. When young, she was very beautiful; in disposition she was sweet-tempered, generous, and without literary envy; and her piety, though inobtrusive, was sincere. She died in Dublin, where she had gone to be near her brother, on the 16th of May, 1835. The "Lays of Many Lands" appeared in 1826, and the "Records of Woman," containing some of her best work, in 1828. Her most important publications, not hitherto mentioned, are "Songs of the Affections" (1830), and "Scenes and Hymns of Life" (1834).

MACKENZIE BELL.

THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA.

1823.

FELICIA HEMANS.

I.

BALLAD.

(SCENE I.)

“**T**HOU hast not been with a festal throng
At the pouring of the wine ;
Men bear not from the hall of song
A mien so dark as thine !
There’s blood upon thy shield,
There’s dust upon thy plume,
Thou hast brought from some disastrous field
That brow of wrath and gloom !”

“And is there blood upon my shield ?
Maiden, it well may be !
We have sent the streams from our battle-field
All darken’d to the sea :
We have given the founts a stain,
Midst their woods of ancient pine ;
And the ground is wet—but not with rain,
Deep dyed—but not with wine !

“The ground is wet—but not with rain—
We have been in war-array,
And the noblest blood of Christian Spain
Hath bathed her soil to-day.
I have seen the strong man die,
And the stripling meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by
In the Roncesvalles’ Strait.

“In the gloomy Roncesvalles’ Strait
There are helms and lances cleft;
And they that moved at morn elate
On a bed of heath are left!
There’s many a fair young face
Which the war-steed hath gone o’er;
At many a board there is kept a place
For those that come no more!”

“Alas for love, for woman’s breast,
If woe like this must be!
Hast thou seen a youth with an eagle-crest,
And a white plume waving free?
With his proud quick-flashing eye,
And his mien of kingly state?
Doth he come from where the swords flash’d high
In the Roncesvalles’ Strait?”

“In the gloomy Roncesvalles’ Strait
I saw, and mark’d him well:
For nobly on his steed he sate,
When the pride of manhood fell.
But it is not youth which turns
From the field of spears again;
For the boy’s high heart too wildly burns
Till it rests amidst the slain!”

“Thou canst not say that he lies low,
The lovely and the brave:
Oh, none could look on his joyous brow,
And think upon the grave!
Dark, dark perchance the day
Hath been with valour’s fate;
But he is on his homeward way,
From the Roncesvalles’ Strait!”

“ There is dust upon his joyous brow,
And o'er his graceful head ;
And the war-horse will not wake him now,
Though it browse his greensward bed.
I have seen the stripling die,
And the strong man meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by
In the Roncesvalles' Strait ! ”

II.

DIRGE.

(SCENE IX.)

CALM on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit ! rest thee now !
E'en while with ours thy footsteps trode
His seal was on thy brow.

Dust, to its narrow house beneath !
Soul, to its place on high !
They that have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die.

RECORDS OF WOMEN.

1828.

FELICIA HEMANS.

GERTRUDE; OR, FIDELITY TILL DEATH.

[The Baron Von der Wart, accused—though it is believed unjustly—as an accomplice in the assassination of the Emperor Albert, was bound alive on the wheel, and attended by his wife Gertrude, throughout his last agonising hours, with the most heroic devotedness. Her own sufferings, with those of her unfortunate husband, are most affectingly described in a letter which she afterwards addressed to a female friend, and which was published some years ago, at Haarlem, in a book entitled *Gertrude Von der Wart; or, Fidelity unto Death.*]

“ Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house,
In the terrific face of armed law,
Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee.”—JOANNA BAILLIE.

HER hands were clasp'd, her dark eyes raised,
The breeze threw back her hair;
Up to the fearful wheel she gazed—
All that she loved was there.
The night was round her clear and cold,
The holy heaven above,
Its pale stars watching to behold
The might of earthly love.

“And bid me not depart,” she cried ;
“My Rudolph ! say not so !
This is no time to quit thy side—
Peace ! peace ! I cannot go.
Hath the world aught for *me* to fear,
When death is on thy brow ?
The world ! what means it ? *Mine is here*—
I will not leave thee now.

“I have been with thee in thine hour
Of glory and of bliss ;
Doubt not its memory’s living power
To strengthen me through *this* !
And thou, mine honour’d love and true
Bear on, bear nobly on :
We have the blessed heaven in view,
Whose rest shall soon be won.”

And were not these high words to flow
From woman’s breaking heart ?
Through all that night of bitterest woe
She bore her lofty part ;
But oh ! with such a glazing eye,
With such a curdling check—
Love, Love ! of mortal agony
Thou, only *thou*, should’st speak !

The wind rose high—but with it rose
Her voice, that he might hear :—
Perchance that dark hour brought repose
To happy bosoms near ;
While she sat striving with despair
Beside his tortured form,
And pouring her deep soul in prayer
Forth on the rushing storm,

She wiped the death-damps from his brow
With her pale hands and soft,
Whose touch upon the lute-chords low
Had still'd his heart so oft.
She spread her mantle o'er his breast,
She bathed his lips with dew,
And on his cheek such kisses pressed
As hope and joy ne'er knew.

Oh! lovely are ye, Love and Faith,
Enduring to the last!
She had her meed—one smile in death—
And his worn spirit pass'd!
While even as o'er a martyr's grave
She knelt on that sad spot,
And, weeping, blessed the God who gave
Strength to forsake it not.

DESPONDENCY AND ASPIRATION.

1835.

FELICIA HEMANS.

“Par correr miglior acqua alza le vele,
Omai la navicella del mio Intelletto.”—DANTE.

MY soul was mantled with dark shadows, born
Of lonely Fear, disquieted in vain ;
Its phantoms hung around the star of morn,
A cloud-like weeping train :
Through the long day they dimmed the autumn gold
On all the glistening leaves, and wildly rolled,
When the last farewell flush of light was glowing,
Across the sunset sky,
O'er its rich isles of vaporous glory throwing
One melancholy dye.
And when the solemn night
Came rushing with her might
Of stormy oracles from caves unknown,
Then with each fitful blast
Prophetic murmurs passed,
Wakening or answering some deep Sybil-tone
Far buried in my breast, yet prompt to rise
With every gusty wail that o'er the wind-harp flies.

“Fold, fold thy wings,” they cried, “and strive no more—
Faint spirit! strive no more: for thee too strong
Are outward ill and wrong,
And inward wasting fires! Thou canst not soar
Free on a starry way,
Beyond their blighting sway,
At heaven's high gate serenely to adore.
How should'st *thou* hope earth's fetters to unbind?
O passionate, yet weak! O trembler to the wind!

"Never shall aught but broken music flow
 From joy of thine, deep love, or tearful woe—
 Such homeless notes as through the forest sigh,
 From the reed's hollow shaken,
 When sudden breezes waken
 Their vague, wild symphony.
 No power is theirs, and no abiding-place
 In human hearts ; their sweetness leaves no trace—
 Born only so to die !
 Never shall aught but perfume faint and vain,
 On the fleet pinion of the changeful hour,
 From thy bruised life again
 A moment's essence breathe ;
 Thy life, whose trampled flower,
 Into the blessed wreath
 Of household-charities no longer bound,
 Lies pale and withering on the barren ground.

"So fade, fade on ! Thy gift of love shall cling
 A coiling sadness round thy heart and brain—
 A silent fruitless yet undying thing,
 All sensitive to pain !
 And still the shadow of vain dreams shall fall
 O'er thy mind's world, a daily darkening pall.
 Fold, then, thy wounded wing, and sink subdued
 In cold and unrepining quietude !"

Then my soul yielded : spells of numbing breath
 Crept o'er it heavy with a view of death—
 Its powers like leaves before the night-rain closing ;
 And, as by conflict of wild sea-waves tossed
 On the chill bosom of some desert coast,
 Mutely and hopelessly I lay reposing.

When silently it seemed
As if a soft mist gleaned
Before my passive sight, and slowly curling,
To many a shape and hue
Of visioned beauty grew,
Like a wrought banner, fold by fold unfurling.

Oh! the rich scenes that o'er mine inward eye
Unrolling then swept by
With dreamy motion! Silvery seas were there,
Lit by large dazzling stars, and arched by skies
Of southern midnight's most transparent dyes;
And gemmed with many an island, wildly fair,
Which floated past me into orient day,
Still gathering lustre on the illumined way,
Till its high groves of wondrous flowering-trees
Coloured the silvery seas.
And then a glorious mountain-chain uprose,
Height above spiry height!
A soaring solitude of woods and snows,
All steeped in golden light!
While as it passed, those regal peaks unveiling,
I heard, methought, a waving of dread wings,
And mighty sounds, as if the vision hailing,
From lyres that quivered through ten thousand strings
Or as if waters, forth to music leaping
From many a cave, the Alpine echo's hall,
On their bold way victoriously were sweeping,
Linked in majestic anthems!—while through all
That billowy swell and fall,
Voices, like ringing crystal, filled the air
With inarticulate melody, that stirred
My being's core; then, moulding into word

Their piercing sweetness, bade me rise and bear
 In that great choral strain my trembling part,
 Of tones by love and faith struck from a human heart.

Return no more, vain bodings of the night !
 A happier oracle within my soul
 Hath swelled to power ; a clear unwavering light
 Mounts through the battling clouds that round me roll ;
 And to a new control
 Nature's full harp gives forth rejoicing tones,
 Wherein my glad sense owns
 The accordant rush of elemental sound
 To one consummate harmony profound—
 One grand Creation-Hymn,
 Whose notes the seraphim
 Lift to the glorious height of music winged and crowned.
 Shall not those notes find echoes in my lyre,
 Faithful though faint ? Shall not my spirit's fire,
 If slowly, yet unswervingly, ascend
 Now to its fount and end ?
 Shall not my earthly love, all purified,
 Shine forth a heavenward guide,
 An angel of bright power—and strongly bear
 My being upward into holier air,
 Where fiery passion-clouds have no abode,
 And the sky's temple-arch o'erflows with God ?

The radiant hope new-born
 Expands like rising morn
 In my life's life : and as a ripening rose
 The crimson shadow of its glory throws

More vivid, hour by hour, on some pure stream ;
So from that hope are spreading
Rich hues, o'er nature shedding
Each day a clearer, spiritual gleam.

Let not those rays fade from me ! Once enjoyed,
Father of Spirits ! let them not depart—
Leaving the chilled earth without form and void,
Darkened by mine own heart !
Lift, aid, sustain me ! Thou, by whom alone
All lovely gifts and pure
In the soul's grasp endure ;
Thou, to the steps of whose eternal throne
All knowledge flows—a sea for evermore
Breaking its crested waves on that sole shore—
Oh, consecrate my life ! that I may sing
Of Thee with joy that hath a living spring,
In a full heart of music ! Let my lays
Through the resounding mountains waft Thy praise,
And with that theme the wood's green cloisters fill,
And make their quivering leafy dimness thrill
To the rich breeze of song ! Oh ! let me wake
The deep religion, which hath dwelt from yore
Silently brooding by lone cliff and lake,
And wildest river-shore !
And let me summon all the voices dwelling
Where eagles build, and caverned rills are welling,
And where the cataract's organ-peal is swelling,
In that one spirit gathered to adore !

Forgive, O Father ! if presumptuous thought
Too daringly in aspiration rise !
Let not Thy child all vainly have been taught
By weakness, and by wanderings, and by sighs

Of sad confession ! lowly be my heart,
And on its penitential altar spread
The offerings worthless, till Thy grace impart
The fire from heaven, whose touch alone can shed
Life, radiance, virtue !—let that vital spark
Pierce my whole being, wildered else and dark !
Thine are all holy things—oh, make me Thine !
So shall I, too, be pure—a living shrine
Unto that Spirit which goes forth from Thee,
Strong and divinely free,
Bearing Thy gifts of wisdom on its flight,
And brooding o'er them with a dove-like wing,
Till thought, word, song, to Thee in worship spring,
Immortally endowed for liberty and light.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FELICIA HEMANS. •

I.—ENGLAND'S DEAD.

SON of the Ocean Isle !
Where sleep your mighty dead ?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is reared o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger ! track the deep—
Free, free the white sail spread !
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'erswayed,
With fearful power the noonday reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade ;—

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done !—
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far by Ganges' banks at night
Is heard the tiger's roar ;—

But let the sound roll on !
It hath no tone of dread
For hose that from their toils are gone,—
There slumber England's dead.

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The Western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung ;—
But let the floods rush on !
Let the arrow's flight be sped !
Why should they reckon whose task is done ?—
There slumber England's dead.
The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine-boughs through the sky
Like rose-leaves on the breeze ;—
But let the storm rage on !
Let the fresh wreaths be shed !
For the Roncesvalles' field is won,—
There slumber England's dead.
On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
And the northern night-clouds lour ;—
But let the ice drift on !
Let the cold-blue desert spread !
Their course with mast and flag is done,—
Even there sleep England's dead.
The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave !
Are not the rocks their funeral piles,
The seas and shores their grave ?
Go, stranger ! track the deep—
Free, free the white sail spread !
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

II.—THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

THEY grew in beauty side by side,
They fill'd one home with glee ;—
Their graves are sever'd far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow :
She had each folded flower in sight—
Where are those dreamers now ?

One, 'midst the forests of the West,
By a dark stream is laid—
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the cedar-shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one—
He lies where pearls lie deep ;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where Southern vines are drest
Above the noble slain :
He wrapt his colours round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one—o'er *her* the myrtle showers
Its leaves, by soft winds fann'd ;
She faded 'midst Italian flowers—
The last of that bright band.

And parted thus they rest, who play'd
Beneath the same green tree ;
Whose voices mingled as they pray'd
Around one parent knee ;

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
 And cheer'd with song the hearth!—
 Alas, for love! if *thou* wert all,
 And naught beyond, O Earth!

III.—THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP.

WHAT hidest thou in thy treasure-caves and cells,
 Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious main?—
 Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured shells,
 Bright things which gleam unrecked of, and in vain!—
 Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
 We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more!—what wealth
 untold,
 Far down, and shining through their stillness lies!
 Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
 Won from ten thousand royal Argosies!—
 Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main;
 Earth claims not *these* again.

Yet more, the depths have more!—thy waves have
 rolled
 Above the cities of a world gone by:
 Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
 Seaweed o'ergrown the halls of revelry:
 Dash o'er them, ocean! in thy scornful play!
 Man yields them to decay.

Yet more! the billows and the depths have more!
 High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!
 They hear not now the booming waters roar,

The battle thunders will not break their rest.
 Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave !
 Give back the true and brave !

Give back the lost and lovely !—those for whom
 The place was kept at board and hearth so long,
 The prayer went up thro' midnight's breathless gloom,
 And the vain yearning woke 'midst festal song !
 Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown—
 But all is not thine own.

To thee the love of woman hath gone down,
 Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
 O'er youth's bright locks, and beauty's flowery crown:
 Yet must thou hear a voice—Restore the dead !
 Earth shall reclaim her precious things from thee!—
 Restore the dead, thou sea !

IV.—THE HOUR OF DEATH.

LEAVES have their time to fall,
 And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
 And stars to set ; but all,
 Thou hast *all* seasons for thine own, O Death !

Day is for mortal care,
 Eve, for glad meetings round the joyous hearth,
 Night, for the dreams of sleep, the voice of prayer ;
 But all for thee, thou mightiest of the earth !

The banquet hath its hour—
 Its feverish hour of mirth, and song, and wine ;
 There comes a day for grief's o'erwhelming power,
 A time for softer tears—but all are thine.

Youth and the opening rose
May look like things too glorious for decay,
And smile at thee—but thou art not of those
That wait the ripened bloom to seize their prey.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north-wind's breath,
And stars to set—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!

We know when moons shall wane,
When summer birds from far shall cross the sea,
When Autumn's hue shall tinge the golden grain;
But who shall teach us when to look for thee?

Is it when Spring's first gale
Comes forth to whisper where the violets lie?
Is it when roses in our paths grow pale?
They have one season—all are ours to die!

Thou art where billows foam;
Thou art where music melts upon the air;
Thou art around us in our peaceful home,
And the world calls us forth—and thou art there.

Thou art where friend meets friend,
Beneath the shadow of the elm to rest—
Thou art where foe meets foe, and trumpets rend
The skies, and swords beat down the princely crest.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set; but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!

VI.—CASABIANCA.

[Young Casabianca, son to the Admiral of the Orient, remained at his post (in the Battle of the Nile) after the ship had taken fire, and all the guns had been abandoned, and perished in the explosion of the vessel.]

THE boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled ;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.
Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm—
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud though child-like form.
The flames rolled on. He would not go
Without his father's word ;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.
He called aloud :—"Say, father ! say
If yet my task is done !"
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.
"Speak, father !" once again he cried,
"If I may yet be gone !"
And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.
Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of death
In still yet brave despair ;
And shouted but once more aloud,
"My father ! must I stay ?"
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,
 They caught the flag on high,
 And streamed above the gallant child
 Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder-sound—
 The boy—oh! where was he?
 Ask of the winds that far around
 With fragments strewed the sea!—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
 That well had borne their part;
 But the noblest thing which perished there
 Was that young faithful heart!

VII.—THE ADOPTED CHILD.

“**W**HY wouldst thou leave me, O gentle child?
 Thy home on the mountain is bleak and wild,
 A straw-roofed cabin with lowly wall—
 Mine is a fair and a pillar'd hall,
 Where many an image of marble gleams,
 And the sunshine of pleasure for ever streams.”

“Oh! green is the turf where my brothers play,
 Through the long bright hours of the summer day;
 They find the red cup-moss where they climb,
 And they chase the bee o'er the scented thyme,
 And the rocks where the heath-flower blooms they know.
 Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!”

“Content thee, boy! in my bower to dwell—
 Here are sweet sounds which thou lovest well;
 Flutes on the air in the stilly noon,
 Harps which the wandering breezes tune,
 And the silvery wood-note of many a bird
 Whose voice was ne'er in thy mountains heard.”

“Oh! my mother sings, at the twilight's fall,
A song of the hills far more sweet than all ;
She sings it under our own green tree
To the babe half slumbering on her knee :
I dreamt last night of that music low—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!”

“Thy mother is gone, from her cares to rest—
She hath taken the babe on her quiet breast ;
Thou wouldst meet her footstep, my boy! no more,
Nor hear her song at the cabin door.
Come thou with me to the vineyards nigh,
And we'll pluck the grapes of the richest dye.”

“Is my mother gone from her home away ?
But I know that my brothers are there at play—
I know they are gathering the foxglove's bell,
Or the long fern-leaves by the sparkling well ;
Or they launch their boats where the bright streams flow—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!”

“Fair child! thy brothers are wanderers now,
They sport no more on the mountain's brow ;
They have left the fern by the spring's green side,
And the streams where the fairy barks were tried.
Be thou at peace in thy brighter lot,
For thy cabin home is a lonely spot.”

“Are they gone, all gone from the sunny hill?—
But the bird and the blue-fly rove o'er it still ;
And the red-deer bound in their gladness free,
And the heath is bent by the singing bee,
And the waters leap, and the fresh winds blow—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!”

VIII.—THE BETTER LAND.

“ I HEAR thee speak of the better land,
Thou call'st its children a happy band
Mother! oh, where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance thro' the myrtle boughs?”
“—Not there, not there, my child!”

“ Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?
Or midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange bright birds on their starry wings
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?”
“—Not there, not there, my child!”

“ Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand?
Is it there, sweet mother! that better land?”
“—Not there, not there, my child!”

“ Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy!
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy!
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
Sorrow and death may not enter there:
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
For beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
—It is there, it is there, my child!”

Mary Howitt.

1799—1888.

MARY HOWITT—one of the most graceful, versatile and voluminous writers of the earlier half of the century—was born at Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, on March 12th, 1799. Her parents were members of the Society of Friends, to which both families had belonged from an early period. Her father, Samuel Botham, had engaged in the iron-working business, but had not been successful, and soon after the birth of Mary, when affairs seemed very hopeless, he returned to Uttoxeter, where he had lived before, and became a land surveyor. By-and-by he was appointed by the Crown one of the surveyors in the disforested of Needwood, in the county of Stafford; and it is with this district that Mary Howitt's first clear recollections were associated. Her father would often take the children with him in his rounds, and thus, even in infancy, she became acquainted, as she says, "with the spirit of nature." Of some of these rambles Mary preserved a vivid recollection; in fact, it was on one of them that the first clear consciousness that she could think dawned upon her. She was then only between five and six years old. "I remember very well," she says, "the new light, the gladness, the wealth of which I seemed suddenly possessed." The stillness of the home, and the isolation in which the children

lived combined to throw them in upon themselves; so that nature afforded an early and welcome relief from introspection. Mary was early taught to read by her mother; religious instruction was not neglected, and perhaps it lost little through the Quaker flavour imparted to it by the use of good Robert Barclay's "Catechism and Confession," though the little Mary was "much perplexed" sometimes. By-and-by she would read to her father such works as the "Imitation" of Thomas à Kempis which was a great favourite with him, but not so with her, she admits, "as I understood," she explains, "the constant exhortation to take up the Cross to refer to using the plain language and plain attire of Friends; and our peculiar garb, many degrees more ungainly than that of most strict Friends, which was already a perfect crucifixion to Anna and me." For a time a governess, Mary Parker, a strict Friend and noble woman, was engaged for the girls, but by-and-by they were transferred to the Friends' School, at York, where the utmost strictness and formality obtained. "Anna took with her Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns, as these praises of Creation and Nature were very sweet to her, but when amidst new scenes she longed to read those aspirations of a grateful and admiring heart, she sought vainly for the book amid the contents of her trunk! "It had been privately removed by our teachers." One of the few pleasures in the life at school was that each girl had her own little garden where she could grow flowers. Mary Botham was very fond of her plot, but she could not be so much beside it as she desired. "I feel," she says, "a sort of tender pity for Anna and myself when I remember how we were always

seeking and struggling after the beautiful and after artistic production, though we knew nothing of art."

In 1817, shortly after her school life was finished, she met William Howitt, at the house of some friends at Leicester. They were mutually attracted to each other by the sense of common interests, sympathies and aspirations; and on April 10th, 1821, they were married, and settled at Hanley, in Staffordshire, where he was then engaged in business. One of the notable things in their early married life was a tour in Scotland, which left its impressions in many ways on them both. The literary instincts of each were sharpened by their constant companionship, with the result not only of productions varied and extensive, but some instances of very happy and successful joint-work, revealing the characteristics of both writers in the happiest union. Scarcely elsewhere, perhaps, is to be found the record of a wedded couple who through so lengthened a life worked more assiduously and successfully together, with less loss of individuality on either side.

In 1824 the Howitts removed to Nottingham, and remained there till 1836; being not only active and productive in literature, but taking a very warm interest in many social and philanthropic movements. In 1827 appeared their first joint volume of poems, which received favourable notice from the press, and brought them many new friends and correspondents. To this period, too, belong "The History of Priestcraft" by William, "The Book of the Seasons," "Rural Life in England," and Mary Howitt's "Sketches of Natural History," one of the first effective popularisations of science in our country.

Then it began to be felt that to be able to

take advantage of all opportunities, it was necessary that they should be within easy reach of London. A house was accordingly taken at Esher, in Surrey, which they occupied till 1840. Then from 1840 to 1843 they were in Germany—the life and literature of which they studied with such success, that their visit has left record of itself in many ways in their works—notably, in William's picturesque book—"Student Life in Germany." On their return to England they settled in Clapton—a house which received many visitors of distinction; Hans Christian Andersen (whose earlier works Mary Howitt translated) and Alfred Tennyson amongst them;—Mary Howitt having preserved records of his many visits—and here they resided from 1843 to 1848. In 1846 William Howitt became editor of the *People's Journal*; but in 1848 he began to publish, on his own account, a rival serial—*Howitt's Journal*, which, however, did not run to more than three or four volumes. They lived in St. John's Wood, from 1848 to 1852; at Highgate, from 1852—1866; at the Orchard, Claygate, near Esher, from 1866—1870; in Switzerland and Italy from 1870—1871; in Rome from 1871—1879, and there William died on March 3rd, 1879.

After William's death, Mary Howitt lived either in the now famous health resort in the Tyrol, Meran, or in Rome, where she found much to engage her sympathies and interest. We have seen how her love of nature, poetry and art, developed even in her childhood, led her to fret at the restrictions of Quakerism, while her strong sense of duty and her keen realisation of the nobility of character formed under it, led her to remain for a long time in formal connection with the society in

which she had been brought up. But she was by instinct and nature very fond of symbolism,—a vein of sweet mystical fancy often appears in her verse. The presence of this element, we cannot help thinking, had much to do with one incident of her later days, which surprised many people, and was much commented on, both at the time, and later, when her daughter Margaret published her autobiography—her going over to the Church of Rome. She herself declared that she was devoted to the Pope, and not to the papacy, and indeed, stronger personal influences may well have been operative than we know for certain. She enjoyed a calm and placid old age, with “love, honour, reverence, troops of friends,” and passed away on January 30th, 1888.

Mary Howitt's poetical works vary through a wide range. She treated many subjects, and essayed many styles; but one note may be found in all—a delightful naturalness, and a graceful fancy. She had the gift of vision; she clearly painted what she saw, and on fitting occasions could command apt and striking figures. She was free from one of the great faults of the earlier school—she knew no affectations. She has been most remembered by what are, in some respects, her least artistic productions, those poems which she wrote either primarily for children, or were professedly weighted with a lesson or a purpose; whereas several of her pieces are inspired by a fantastic imagination, by a nimble fancy, and an unexpected power over the weird and wonderful. Such pieces as “The Voyage with the Nautilus,” and “An Old Man's Story,” suffice to attest this. Then she can be very daintily fanciful, and gently, lightly humorous, as proved by a large body

of poems, of a purely playful or inventive cast—not to speak of those parables in dialogue, of which “The Spider and the Fly” may be cited as the best known illustration. She wrote many poems, too, to commend the study of nature and the practice of humanity to animals; indeed, viewed from one side, a large section of her poetic work was humanitarian: her special claim to praise is that, whatever the subject, whatever the purpose, she managed in her treatment to infuse into the work so much subdued imaginative colour, that it may well be claimed for her, that however definite her purpose or pronounced her moral aim she very rarely or, indeed, never failed to produce what has the true note of poetry, observation, fancy, and happy, figurative illustration. A rare power of raising the conventional or properly prosaic in subject to a higher level, through the divining presence of imagination,—though not perhaps of a very high order,—goes with her, gently irradiating whatever she touches. It would be wholly unjust to try many of her pieces, written with an eye to certain evils almost special to the time—by the highest standard of what we nowadays are taught to consider “high-art.” But one thing is sure. A certain number of the most successful of Mary Howitt’s poetic efforts will have the suffrage and favour and gratitude of many generations of young folks yet to come. And in the power which she will thus wield there is an assurance that she not only had a message, but conveyed that message with something of the touch that makes all men (or we may perhaps here say children) kin. That is no slight service to render; no slight fame to have made sure.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

BALLADS.

MARY HOWITT.

I.—*THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW.*

A MIDSUMMER LEGEND.

“AND where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?”

“I’ve been to the top of the Caldon Low,
The midsummer-night to see!”

“And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?”

“I saw the glad sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow.”

“And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Hill?”

“I heard the drops of the water made,
And the ears of the green corn fill.”

“Oh! tell me all, my Mary,
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies,
Last night, on the Caldon Low.”

“Then take me on your knee, mother;
And listen, mother of mine.
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine.

“And their harp-strings rung so merrily
To their dancing feet so small;
But oh! the words of their talking
Were merrier far than all.”

“And what were the words, my Mary,
That then you heard them say?”

“I’ll tell you all, my mother;
But let me have my way.

“Some of them played with the water,
And rolled it down the hill;

“And this,” they said, “shall speedily turn
The poor old miller’s mill:

“‘For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man will the miller be
At dawning of the day.

“‘Oh! the miller, how he will laugh
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh
Till the tears fill both his eyes!’

“And some they seized the little winds
That sounded over the hill;
And each put a horn unto his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill:

“‘And there,’ they said, ‘the merry winds go
Away from every horn;
And they shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind, old widow’s corn.

“‘Oh! the poor, blind widow,
Though she has been blind so long,
She’ll be blithe enough when the mildew’s gone,
And the corn stands tall and strong.’

“And some they brought the brown lint-seed,
And flung it down from the Low;

'And this,' they said, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow.

" 'Oh! the poor, lame weaver,
How will he laugh outright,
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!'

" And then outspoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin ;
'I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
'And I want some more to spin.

" 'I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another ;
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother.'

"With that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free ;
And then on the top of the Caldun Low
There was no one left but me.

" And all on the top of the Caldun Low
The mists were cold and grey,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

" But, coming down from the hill-top,
I heard afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how the wheel did go.

" And I peeped into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, were seen
The yellow ears of the mildewed corn,
All standing stout and green.

“ And down by the weaver’s croft I stole,
To see if the flax were sprung ;
But I met the weaver at his gate,
With the good news on his tongue.

“ Now this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see ;
So, pr’ythee, make my bed, mother,
For I’m tired as I can be.”

II.—AN OLD MAN’S STORY.

THERE was an old and quiet man,
And by the fire sate he ;
“ And now,” he said, “ to you I’ll tell
A dismal thing, which once befell
Upon the Southern Sea.

“ ’Tis five and fifty years gone by,
Since, from the river Plate,
A young man, in a home-bound ship,
I sailed as second mate.

“ She was a trim stout-timbered ship,
And built for stormy seas ;
A lovely thing on the wave was she,
With her canvas set so gallantly
Before a steady breeze.

“ For forty days, like a wingèd thing,
She went before the gale ;
Nor all that time we slackened speed,
Turned helm, or shifted sail.

“ She was a laden argosy,
With gold from the Spanish Main,
And the treasure-hoards of a Portuguese
Returning home again.

“ An old and silent man was he,
His face was yellow and lean ;
In the golden lands of Mexico
A miner he had been.

“ His body was wasted, bent, and bowed,
And 'mid his gold he lay,
'Mid iron chests bound round with brass,
And he watched them night and day.

“ No word he spoke to any on board,
His step was heavy and slow ;
And all men deemed that an evil life
He had led in Mexico.

“ But list ye me ! On the lone high seas
As we went smoothly on,
It chanced, in the silent second watch,
As I sate on the deck alone,
That I heard from 'mong those iron chests
A sound like a dying groan.

“ I started to my feet, and lo !
The captain stood by me ;
He bore a body in his arms,
And dropped it in the sea.

“ I heard it drop into the sea,
With a heavy splashing sound ;
I saw the captain's bloody hands
As quickly he turned round.
He drew in his breath when me he saw,
Like one whom the sudden withering awe
Of a spectre doth astound :

“But I saw his white and palsied lips,
And the stare of his wild eye,
As he turned in hurried haste away,
Yet had no power to fly;
He was chained to the deck by his heavy guilt,
And the blood that was not dry.

“‘Twas a cursèd thing,’ said I, ‘to kill
That old man in his sleep.
The curse of blood will come from him
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

“‘The plagues of the sea will follow us,
For Heaven his groans hath heard.’
The captain’s white lips slowly moved,
And yet he spoke no word.

“And slowly he lifted his bloody hands,
As if his eyes to shade;
But the blood that was wet did freeze his soul.
And he shrieked like one afraid.

“And even then, that very hour,
The wind dropped; and a spell
Was on the ship, was on the sea;
And we lay for weeks, how wearily!
Where the old man’s body fell.

“I told no one within the ship
That horrid deed of sin;
For I saw the hand of God at work,
And punishment begin.

“And, when they spoke of the murdered man
And the El-Dorado hoard,
They all surmised he had walked in dreams,
And fallen overboard.

“But I alone, and the murderer,
That dreadful thing did know,
How he lay in his sin, a murdered man,
A thousand fathoms low.

“And many days, and many more,
Came on, and lagging sped ;
And the heavy waves of the sleeping sea
Were dark, like molten lead.

“But not a breeze came east or west,
And burning was the sky,
And stifling was each breath we drew ;
The air was hot and dry.

“Oh me ! a very smell of death
Hung round us night and day ;
Nor dared I look into the sea,
Where the old man’s body lay.

“The captain in his cabin kept,
And bolted fast the door ;
The seamen, they walked up and down,
And wished the calm was o’er.

“The captain’s son was on board with us,
A fair child, seven years old,
With a merry face that all men loved,
And a spirit kind and bold.

“I loved the child ; and I took his hand
And made him kneel, and pray

That the crime for which the calm was sent
Might clean be purged away.

“For I thought that God would hear his prayer,
And set the vessel free :
'Twas a dreadful curse, to lie becalmed
Upon that charnel sea.

“Yet I told him not wherefore he prayed,
Nor why the calm was sent ;
I could not give that knowledge dark
To a soul so innocent.

“At length I saw a little cloud
Rise in that sky of flame,
A little cloud, that grew and grew,
And blackened as it came.

“We saw the sea beneath its track
Grow dark as was the sky ;
And waterspouts, with rushing sound,
Like giants passed us by.

“And all around, 'twixt sky and sea,
A hollow wind did blow ;
The sullen waves swung heavily ;
The ship rocked to and fro.

“I knew it was that fierce death-calm
Its horrid hold undoing ;
I saw the plagues of wind and storm
Their missioned work pursuing.

“There was a yell in the gathering winds
A groan in the heaving sea :
The captain rushed from his place below,
But durst not look on me.

“He seized each rope with a madman’s haste,
And set the helm to go,
And every sail he crowded on
As the furious winds did blow.

“Away they went, like autumn leaves
Before the tempest’s rout ;
The naked masts came crashing down,
The wild ship plunged about.

“The men to spars and splintered boards
Clung, till their strength was gone ;
And I saw them from their feeble hold
Washed over, one by one ;

“And ’mid the creaking timber’s din,
And the roaring of the sea,
I heard the dismal, drowning cries
Of their last agony.

“There was a curse in the wind that blew,
A curse in the boiling wave ;
And the captain knew that vengeance came
From the old man’s ocean-grave.

“I heard him say, as he sate apart,
In a hollow voice and low,
‘Tis a cry of blood doth follow us,
And still doth plague us so !’

“And then those heavy iron chests
With desperate strength took he,
And ten of the strongest mariners
Did cast them into the sea.

“And out from the bottom of the sea
There came a hollow groan ;—

The captain by the gunwale stood,
And looked like icy stone,
With a gasping sob he drew in his breath,
And spasms of death came on.

“ And a furious boiling wave rose up,
With a rushing thundering roar ;
I saw him fall before its force,
But I never saw him more.

“ Two days before, when the storm began,
We were forty men and five,
But ere the middle of that night
There were but two alive—

“ The child and I : we were but two ;
And he clung to me in fear.
Oh ! it was pitiful to see
That meek child in his misery,
And his little prayers to hear.

“ At length, as if his prayers were heard,
'Twas calmer ; and anon
The clear sun shone ; and, warm and low,
A steady wind from the west did blow,
And drove us gently on.

“ And on we drove, and on we drove,
That fair young child and I ;
His heart was as a man's in strength,
And he uttered not a cry.

“ There was no bread within the wreck,
And water we had none,
Yet he murmured not, and talked of hope,
When my last hopes were gone.

- I saw him waste and waste away,
And his rosy cheek grow wan.
- “ Still on we drove, I know not where,
For many nights and days,
We were too weak to raise a sail,
Had there been one to raise.
- “ Still on we went, as the west wind drove,
On, o'er the pathless tide ;
And I lay in sleep, 'twixt life and death,
With the young child at my side.
- “ And, as we thus were drifting on
Amid the Great South Sea,
An English vessel passed us by
That was sailing cheerily.
Unheard by me that vessel hailed,
And asked what we might be.
- “ The young child at the cheer rose up,
And gave an answering word ;
And they drew him from the drifting wreck,
As light as is a bird.
- “ They took him gently in their arms,
And put again to sea :—
‘ Not yet! not yet!’ he feebly cried ;
‘ There was a man with me !’
- “ Again unto the wreck they turned,
Where, like one dead, I lay ;
And a ship-boy small had strength enough
To carry me away.
- “ Oh ! joy it was, when sense returned,
That fair warm ship to see,
And to hear the child within his bed
Speak pleasant words to me !

“I thought at first that we had died ;
That all our pain was o'er,
And in a blessed ship of Heaven
We voyaged to its shore :

“But they were human forms that knelt
Beside our bed to pray,
And men with hearts most merciful
That watched us night and day.

“’Twas a dismal tale I had to tell
Of wreck and wild distress ;
But, even then, I told to none
The captain’s wickedness.

“For I loved the boy, and could not cloud
His soul with sense of shame ;
’Twere an evil thing, thought I, to blast
A sinless orphan’s name !
So he grew to be a man of wealth
And honourable fame.

“And in after years, when he had ships,
I sailed with him the sea,
And in all the sorrows of my life
He was a friend to me ;
And God hath blessed him everywhere
With a great prosperity.”

III.—THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS.

I MADE myself a little boat,
As trim as trim could be ;
I made it of a great pearl shell
Found in the Indian Sea.

I made my masts of wild sea-rush
That grew on a secret shore,
And the scarlet plume of the halcyon
Was the pleasant flag I bore.

For my sails I took the butterfly's wings ;
For my ropes the spider's line ;
And that mariner old, the Nautilus,
To steer me over the brine.

For he had sailed six thousand years,
And knew each isle and bay ;
And I thought that we, in my little boat,
Could merrily steer away.

The stores I took were plentiful :
The dew as it sweetly fell ;
And the honey that was hoarded up
In the wild bee's summer cell.

“ Now steer away, thou helmsman good,
Over the waters free ;
To the charmèd Isle of the Seven Kings,
That lies in the midmost sea.”

He spread the sail, he took the helm ;
And, long ere ever I wist,
We had sailed a league, we had reached the isle
That lay in the golden mist.

The charmèd Isle of the Seven Kings,
’Tis a place of wondrous spell ;
And all that happed unto me there
In a printed book I'll tell,

Said I, one day, to the Nautilus,
As we stood on the strand,
"Unmoor my ship, thou helmsman good,
And steer me back to land ;

"For my mother, I know, is sick at heart,
And longs my face to see.
What ails thee now, thou Nautilus ?
Art slow to sail with me ?
Up ! do my will ; the wind is fresh,
So set the vessel free."

He turned the helm ; away we sailed
Towards the setting sun :
The flying-fish were swift of wing,
But we outsped each one.

And on we went for seven days,
Seven days without a night ;
We followed the sun still on and on,
In the glow of his setting light.

Down and down went the setting sun,
And down and down went we ;
'Twas a splendid sail for seven days
On a smooth, descending sea.

On a smooth, descending sea we sailed,
Nor breeze the water curled :
My brain grew sick, for I saw we sailed
On the down-hill of the world.

"Good friend," said I to the Nautilus,
"Can this the right course be ?
And shall we come again to land ?"

But answer none made he ;
And I saw a laugh in his fishy eye
As he turned it up to me.

So on we went ; but soon I heard
A sound as when winds blow,
And waters wild are tumbled down
Into a gulf below.

And on and on flew the little bark,
As a fiend her course did urge ;
And I saw, in a moment, we must hang
Upon the ocean's verge.

I snatched down the sails, I snapped the ropes,
I broke the masts in twain ;
But on flew the bark and 'gainst the rocks,
Like a living thing did strain.

"Thou'st steered us wrong, thou helmsman vile !"
Said I to the Nautilus bold ;
"We shall down the gulf ; we're dead men both !
Dost know the course we hold ?"

I seized the helm with a sudden jerk,
And we wheeled round like a bird ;
But I saw the Gulf of Eternity,
And the tideless waves I heard.

"Good master," said the Nautilus,
"I thought you might desire
To have some wondrous thing to tell
Beside your mother's fire.

"What's sailing on a summer sea ?
As well sail on a pool ;

Oh, but I know a thousand things
That are wild and beautiful!

"And if you wish to see them now,
You've but to say the word."

"Have done!" said I to the Nautilus
"Or I'll know that overboard!"

"Have done!" said I, "good-mannered lad,
And steer me back to land!"

No other word spoke the Nautilus,
But took the helm at hand.

I peered up at the lady moon

She was like a ghost-woman's spark,
And never a star came down to us
Through the sky so bright and dark.

We had no mast, we had no ropes,
And every sail was rent.

And all words I thought from the charmed tale
To the adventures will have spent.

But the Nautilus was a patient thing,
And steered what all his might

On the sky-hill lay, and he never slept,
But kept the course as if in

And for three seven nights we sailed and sawed;
At length I saw the bay

Where I built my nest, and my mother's house,
Mid the green hills where it lay.

"Farewell!" said I to the Nautilus,
And stepped upon the shore;

"Thus art a well-mannered
But I'll not work here no more!"

Little Black Book

1911

1911-1912

Little Black Book
1911-1912
This book is a collection of
notes and observations
made during the year
1911-1912. It contains
information on various
subjects, including
the weather, the
state of the world,
and the progress of
science. It is a
valuable reference
work for anyone
interested in these
subjects.

ment, the fallen leaf, the faded flower, the broken heart, and the early grave. Surely we must be less worldly, less interested, from this sympathy with the sorrow in which our unselfish feelings alone can take part."

But, despite their many faults, the poems of "L. E. L." show powers of language, a facile and graceful fancy, some lyrical faculty, and, within certain narrow limits, a real dramatic instinct. When Wordsworth said about Scott's poems that they were novels in verse, the remark, though unjust to Scott, would have been a fair criticism of the poems of Scott's imitators. As novels in verse, "L. E. L.'s" poems are undoubtedly interesting: in them the reader's attention is often aroused and sustained almost as much as in a prose romance. Lætitia Landon was ignorant of German and Italian, and therefore unacquainted with the fine poetical literature contained in these languages. She had never visited Italy or Germany or the South of France, or, indeed, travelled at all; and, when we remember these facts, and recollect the vivid, if idealised, descriptions of these countries in some of her best work, we shall find it impossible to deny to her the possession of considerable, though somewhat undisciplined, imaginative powers.

Perhaps it need not occasion surprise that "L. E. L.'s" long poems, such as "The Improvisatrice" (1824), "The Troubadour" (1825), and "The Golden Violet" (1826) should more especially be full of the faults mentioned above. For a long poem to be altogether satisfactory its author must possess some of the very qualities in which "L. E. L." was most deficient. Her longer efforts are not, however

without merit, though it is in her shorter poems that we find her highest excellence. "The Moorish Romance," an episode of "The Improvisatrice," is a good specimen of "L. E. L.'s" work; so is "The Bayadere," which appeared in the same volume, though it suffers by comparison with Goethe's masterpiece. The brief pictures comprising the poem called "St. George's Hospital" are remarkable when we learn from the "Life" of "L. E. L." that they were produced "in a space of time that seems scarcely sufficient for transcribing the lines legibly." "The Deserter," also, shows dramatic qualities, while the lines entitled "Mont Blanc" (p. 113) have some lyrical vigour. "Erinna," and "The Venetian Bracelet" (1829) are two of her best poems. They are too long for quotation here in full. The following brief extract from the latter, however, has a personal interest, and exhibits her increasing command over metrical resources:—

"Another tale of thine! fair Italie—
 What makes my lute, my heart, aye turn to thee?
 I do not know thy language,—that is still
 Like the mysterious music of the rill;—
 And neither have I seen thy cloudless sky,
 Where the sun hath his immortality;
 Thy cities crown'd with palaces, thy halls
 Where art's great wonders light the storied walls;
 Thy fountains' silver sweep; thy groves, where dwell
 The rose and orange, summer's citadel;
 Thy songs that rise at twilight on the air,
 Wedding the breath thy thousand flowers sigh there;
 Thy tales of other times; thy marble shrines,
 Lovely though fallen,—for the ivy twines
 Its graceful wreath around each ruin'd fane,
 As still in some shape beauty would remain.
 I know them not, yet, Italie, thou art
 The promised land that haunts my dreaming heart."

Indeed, the fact that "The Venetian Bracelet" is not only one of her latest poems in point of date, but also one of her best stories told in verse, proves that she was learning more of her art as she grew older. "St. Valerie" (p. 111) is full of picturesqueness. One of "L. E. L.'s" chief defects is diffuseness of expression, but here the picture is concisely rendered. It is in these short poems with a distinct dramatic motive that "L. E. L." is seen at her best. Her series of poems, called "Subjects for Pictures," show a marked ability in the grouping of details for pictorial purposes. Doubtless her talent in this respect grew out of the dramatic instinct previously referred to. "The Moorish Maiden's Vigil" (p. 118), one of the series just named, has real feeling and pathos. Some of her most excellent work is to be found in "Poetical Sketches of Modern Pictures." Of these, "Juliet after the Masquerade" (p. 115) is a good example. It appeared in the *Literary Souvenir* of 1828, the same volume in which Coleridge's *Youth and Age* first appeared, and described a picture by Henry Thomson, R.A. She was afterwards ill-advised enough to recast it, and her failure to improve it shows how entirely improvisatorial was her power. She turned a lyric of much sweetness of movement into a poem in heroic couplets. The version given here is that which was first written. "Felicia Hemans" (p. 109) is a graceful and tender tribute to a greater poet than herself, and one who shared with "L. E. L." her faults rather than her merits.

Lætitia Elizabeth Landon, the daughter of an army agent, was born at Hans Place, Chelsea, London, on the 14th of August, 1802. As a child

she was unusually apt at learning, and, when very young, was in the habit of amusing her father and mother for an hour or two in the evening by telling them about the "wonderful castles she had built in her imagination." She became very fond of reading. The books that engaged her attention were miscellaneous in character, but during her childhood she read with her little brother nearly one hundred and fifty volumes of Cooke's "Poets and Novelists." Though she soon began to compose verses, she found, curiously enough, no small difficulty in acquiring the mechanical part of the art of writing. Mr. Jerdan, editor of the *Literary Gazette*,—then newly established—happened to be a neighbour of the Landons. Lætitia received from him advice and encouragement, and soon her poetical efforts appeared regularly in his journal. Her first long poem, "The Fate of Adelaide" (1820) is noticeable only as an indication of the direction which her poetical powers were afterwards to take. Besides the poems already named, and constant contributions to the literary annuals of the day, with much anonymous criticism in the *Literary Gazette*, she wrote novels entitled, "Romance and Reality" (1831), "Francesca Carrara" (1834), "Ethel Churchill" (1837), and "Lady Anne Granard," which last-mentioned story was published posthumously in 1842. Her best prose work is to be found in a series of essays upon Scott's female characters contributed to the *New Monthly Magazine*. A poem entitled "The Vow of the Peacock," suggested by Maclise's picture, appeared in 1835.

It is a striking instance of the power of fashions over literary art, that personally "L. E. L." had

nothing of the false sentimentality we find in her work; on the contrary, the chief characteristic of her talk and manner was a natural cheerfulness. Her biographer describes her face as one which, "though not regular in any feature, became beautiful by expression." She early became her own mistress. Sought after in society, she was not always sufficiently discreet in her conduct. Hence, by-and-by, scandal grew busy with her name, and, though there was no real stain on her character, her happiness was diminished. Strangely enough, although very fond of London where she had lived all her life, she had always cherished dreams of Africa. Partly from this cause, but mainly to be relieved, in a great measure, from the ceaseless annoyance caused by the calumnies respecting her, she married in 1838 Mr. George Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle. She accompanied her husband on his return to Africa, leaving England full of hope for the future, and full of curiosity respecting the new scenes amid which her life was now to be passed. She had also many literary schemes in contemplation. But she died at Cape Coast Castle on the 15th of October, 1838, from the effects, it is believed, of poison, under circumstances which have never been satisfactorily explained. So tragic a conclusion gives to "L. E. L.'s" career more pathetic interest than it would otherwise possess.

MACKENZIE BELL.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

LÆTITIA E. MACLEAN,

I.—*FELICIA HEMANS.*

NO more, no more—oh, never more returning,
Will thy beloved presence gladden earth ;
No more wilt thou with sad, yet anxious yearning
Cling to those hopes which have no mortal birth.
Thou art gone from us, and with thee departed,
How many lovely things have vanished too ;
Deep thoughts that at thy will to being started,
And feelings, teaching us our own were true.
Thou hast been round us, like a viewless spirit,
Known only by the music on the air ;
The leaf or flowers which thou hast named inherit
A beauty known but from thy breathing there :
For thou didst on them fling thy strong emotion,
The likeness from itself the fond heart gave ;
As planets from afar look down on ocean,
And give their own sweet image to the wave.

And thou didst bring from foreign lands their treasures
As floats thy various melody along ;
We know the softness of Italian measures,
And the grave cadence of Castilian song.
A general bond of union is the poet,
By its immortal verse is language known,
And for the sake of song do others know it—
One glorious poet makes the world his own.

And thou—how far thy gentle sway extended !

The heart's sweet empire over land and sea ;
Many a stranger and far flower was blended

In the soft wreath that glory bound for thee.
The echoes of the Susquehanna's waters

Paused in the pine-woods words of thine to hear ;
And to the wide Atlantic's younger daughters
Thy name was lovely, and thy song was dear.

Was not this purchased all too dearly ?—never

Can fame atone for all that fame hath cost.
We see the goal, but know not the endeavour,
Nor what fond hopes have on the way been lost.

What do we know of the unquiet pillow,
By the worn cheek and tearful eyelid prest,
When thoughts chased thoughts, like the tumultuous billow
Whose very light and foam reveals unrest ?

We say, the song is sorrowful, but know not
What may have left that sorrow on the song ;
However mournful words may be, they show not
The whole extent of wretchedness and wrong.
They cannot paint the long sad hours, passed only
In vain regrets o'er what we feel we are.
Alas ! the kingdom of the lute is lonely—
Cold is the worship coming from afar.

Yet what is mind in woman, but revealing

In sweet clear light the hidden world below,
By quicker fancies and a keener feeling

Than those around, the cold and careless, know ?
What is to feed such feeling, but to culture

A soil whence pain will never more depart ?
The fable of Prometheus and the vulture
Reveals the poet's and the woman's heart.

Unkindly are they judged—unkindly treated—
By careless tongues and by ungenerous words ;
While cruel sneer, and hard reproach, repeated,
Jar the fine music of the spirit's chords.
Wert thou not weary—thou whose soothing numbers
Gave other lips the joy thine own had not ?
Didst thou not welcome thankfully the slumbers
Which closed around thy mourning human lot ?

What on this earth could answer thy requiring,
For earnest faith—for love, the deep and true,
The beautiful, which was thy soul's desiring,
But only from thyself its being drew.
How is the warm and loving heart requited
In this harsh world, where it awhile must dwell.
Its best affections wronged, betrayed, and slighted—
Such is the doom of those who love too well.
Better the weary dove should close its pinion,
Fold up its golden wings and be at peace :
Enter, O lady, that serene dominion
Where earthly cares and carthly sorrows cease.
Fame's troubled hour has cleared, and now replying,
A thousand hearts their music ask of thine.
Sleep with a light, the lovely and undying
Around thy grave—a grave which is a shrine.

II.—*ST. VALERIE.*

RAISED on the rocky barriers of the sea,
Stands thy dark convent, fair St. Valerie !
Lone like an eagle's nest, the pine-trees tall
Throw their long shadows on the heavy wall,
Where never sound is heard, save the wild sweep
Of mountain waters rushing to the deep,
The tempest's midnight song, the battle-cry

Of warring winds, like armies met on high,
And in a silent hour the convent chime.
And sometimes, at the quiet evening time
A vesper song—those tones, so pure so sweet,
When airs of earth and words of heaven do meet !
Sad is the legend of that young Saint's doom !
When the Spring Rose was in its May of bloom
The storm was darkening ; at that sweet hour
When hands beloved had reared her nuptial bower,
The pestilence came o'er the land, and he
 With whom her heart was, died that very morn—
Her bridal morn ! Alas, that there should be
 Such evil ever for affection born !
She shrank away from earth, for solitude
 Is the sole refuge for the heart's worst pain ;
Life had no ties,—she turned her unto heaven,
 And on the steep rock reared her holy fane.
It has an air of sadness, as just meet
For the so broken heart's last lone retreat !
A portrait here has still preserved each charm :
I saw it one bright evening, when the warm
Last glow of sunset shed its crimson ray
Over the lovely image. She was fair
As those most radiant spirits of the air
Whose life is amid flowers ! like the day,
The golden summer day, her glossy hair
Fell o'er a brow of Indian ivory ;
Her cheek was pale, and in her large dark eye
There was a thought of sorrow, and her brow
Upon one small snow hand leaned pensively,
As if to hide her tears ;—the other pressed
A silver crucifix upon her breast.
I ne'er saw sadness touching as in thee
And thy lorn look, oh fair St. Valerie !

III.—MONT BLANC.

Heaven knows our travellers have sufficiently alloyed the beautiful, and profaned the sublime, by associating these with themselves, the common-place, and the ridiculous; but out upon them, thus to tread on the grey hairs of centuries,—on the untrodden snows of Mont Blanc. (*L. E. L.*)

THOU monarch of the upper air,
Thou mighty temple given
For morning's earliest of light,
And evening's last of heaven.
The vapour from the marsh, the smoke
From crowded cities sent,
Are purified before they reach
Thy loftier element.
Thy hues are not of earth but heaven;
Only the sunset rose
Hath leave to fling a crimson dye
Upon thy stainless snows.

Now out on those adventurers
Who scaled thy breathless height,
And made thy pinnacle, Mont Blanc.
A thing for common sight.
Before that human step had left
Its sully on thy brow,
The glory of thy forehead made
A shrine to those below :
Men gaz'd upon thee as a star,
And turned to earth again,
With dreams like thine own floating clouds,
The vague but not the vain.
No feelings are less vain than those
That bear the mind away,
Till blent with nature's mysteries

It half forgets its clay.
It catches loftier impulses ;
And owns a nobler power ;—
The poet and philosopher
Are born of such an hour.

But now where may we seek a place
For any spirit's dream ;
Our steps have been o'er every soil,
Our sails o'er every stream.
Those isles, the beautiful Azores,
The fortunate, the fair !
We looked for their perpetual spring
To find it was not there.
Bright El Dorado, land of gold,
We have so sought for thee,
There's not a spot in all the globe
Where such a land can be.

How pleasant were the wild beliefs
That dwelt in legends old,
Alas ! to our posterity
Will no such tales be told.
We know too much, scroll after scroll
Weighs down our weary shelves ;
Our only point of ignorance
Is centred in ourselves.
Alas ! for thy past mystery,
For thine untrodden snow,
Nurse of the tempest, hast thou none
To guard thy outraged brow ?
Thy summit, once the unapproached,
Hath human presence owned,
With the first step upon thy crest
Mont Blanc, thou wert dethroned.

IV.—JULIET AFTER THE MASQUERADE.

(FROM "THE LITERARY SOUVENIR," 1828.)

Those fond, vague dreams, that make love's happiness
Its first—and oh, its last !

SHE has left the lighted hall,
She has flung down cap and plume,
Her eye wears softer light,
And her cheek a tenderer bloom :

And her hair in sunny showers
Falls o'er her marble brow,
From its midnight bonds of pearl,
Free as her thoughts are now.—

She has left the yet glad dance,
O'er those gentle thoughts to brood,
That haunt a girl's first hour
Of love-touched solitude.

Music's sweet and distant sound
Comes floating on the air,
From the banquet-room it tells
The dancers still are there :

But she, their loveliest one,
Has left the festal scene,
To dream on what may be,
To muse o'er what has been ;

To think on low, soft words,
Her ear had drunk that night,
While her heart beat echo-like,
And her cheek burnt ruby bright.

How beautiful she looks
Beneath that moonlit sky,
With her lip of living rose,
Her blue and drooping eye !

Spell-like, the festal scene
Rises on heart and brain ;
Not a word, and not a look,
But she lives them o'er again.

Well, dream thy dream, fair girl !
Tho' ne'er did morning close,
With its cold and waking light,
Dreams fair and false as those :

They are like the mists that rise
At day-break to the sky,
There, touched by all bright hues,
On its breast awhile they lie ;

But the darker hour draws on,
The rose-tint disappears,
And the falling cloud returns
To its native earth in tears.—

Yet dream thy dream, fair girl !
Tho' away it will be driven,
'Tis something to have past
A single hour in heaven.

Tho' thine eye has April light,
Tho' thy cheek has April bloom
There is that upon them both
Which marks an early tomb.

So young, so fair, to die—
And can those words be true ?
Ah ! better far ' to die,'
Than live as some must do ;

With a heart that will not break,
Though every nerve be strained,
Whether won to be betrayed,
Or discovered and disdained :—

For Love to watch Hope's grave,
And yet itself breathe on,
Like the blighted flower which lives,
Tho' scent and bloom be gone.

But this watching each last leaf,
Green on the fading tree,
The while we see it wither,
Is maiden not for thee.

One hour of passionate joy,
And one of passionate grief—
A morning and a midnight—
Fill up thy life's short leaf !

Short, sad, but still how much
Of death's bitterness is past,
Thy last sigh breathed upon the heart,
Beating thine unto the last !

V.—THE MOORISH MAIDEN'S VIGIL.

(FROM "SUBJECTS FOR PICTURES.")

DOES she watch him, fondly watch him,
Does the maiden watch in vain ?
Do her dark eyes strain to catch him
Riding o'er the moonlit plain,
Stately, beautiful, and tall ?
Those long eyelashes are gleaming
With the tears she will not shed ;
Still her patient hope is dreaming
That it is his courser's tread,
If an olive leaf but fall.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side ;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Scarlet is the turban folded
Round the long black plaits of hair ;
And the pliant gold is moulded
Round her arms that are as fair
As the moonlight which they meet.
Little of their former splendour
Lingereth in her large dark eyes ;
Ever sorrow maketh tender,
And the heart's deep passion lies
In their look so sad and sweet.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side ;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Once the buds of the pomegranate
Paled beside her cheek's warm dye,
Now 'tis like the last sad planet
Waning in the morning sky—
She has wept away its red.
Can this be the Zegri maiden,
Whom Granada named its flower,
Drooping like a rose rain-laden?—
Heavy must have been the shower,
Bowing down its fragrant head.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side ;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

To the north her fancies wander,
There he dwells, her Spanish knight ;
'Tis a dreadful thing to ponder,
Whether true love heard aright.
Did he say those gentle things
Over which fond memories linger,
And with which she cannot part ?
Still his ring is on her finger,
Still his name is in her heart—
All around his image brings.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side ;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Can the fond heart be forsaken
By the one who sought that heart ?
Can there be who will awaken
All of life's diviner part,
For some vanity's cold reign.

Heavy is the lot of woman—
Heavy is her loving lot—
If it thus must share in common
Love with those who know it not—
With the careless and the vain.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Faithless Christian!—ere the blossom,
Hanging on the myrtle bough,
Float on the clear fountain's bosom,
She who listened to thy vow—
She will watch for thee no more!
'Tis a tale of frequent sorrow
Love seems fated to renew;
It will be again to-morrow
Just as bitter and as true,
As it aye has been of yore.
Woe to thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's wave;
But the shade of rest is round thee—
And it is the grave!

VI.—LINES OF LIFE.

Orphan in my first years, I early learnt
To make my heart suffice itself, and seek
Support and sympathy in its own depths.

WELL, read my cheek, and watch my eye,—
Too strictly school'd are they,
One secret of my soul to show,
One hidden thought betray.

I never knew the time my heart
Look'd freely from my brow ;
It once was check'd by timidness,
'Tis taught by caution now.

I live among the cold, the false,
And I must seem like them
And such I am, for I am false
As those I most condemn.

I teach my lip its sweetest smile,
My tongue its softest tone ;
I borrow others' likeness, till
Almost I lose my own.

I pass through flattery's gilded sieve,
Whatever I would say ;
In social life, all, like the blind,
Must learn to feel their way.

I check my thoughts like curbed steeds
That struggle with the rein ;
I bid my feelings sleep, like wrecks
In the unfathom'd main.

I hear them speak of love, the deep,
The true, and mock the name ;
Mock at all high and early truth,
And I too do the same.

I hear them tell some touching tale,
I swallow down the tear ;
I hear them name some generous deed,
And I have learnt to sneer.

I hear the spiritual, the kind,
The pure, but named in mirth ;
Till all of good, ay, even hope,
Seems exiled from our earth.

And one fear, withering ridicule,
Is all that I can dread ;
A sword hung by a single hair
For ever o'er the head.

We bow to a most servile faith,
In a most servile fear ;
While none among us dares to say
What none will choose to hear.

And if we dream of loftier thoughts,
In weakness they are gone ;
And indolence and vanity
Rivet our fetters on.

Surely I was not born for this !
I feel a loftier mood
Of generous impulse, high resolve,
Steal o'er my solitude !

I gaze upon the thousand stars
That fill the midnight sky ;
And wish, so passionately wish,
A light like theirs on high.

I have such eagerness of hope
To benefit my kind ;
And feel as if immortal power
Were given to my mind.

I think on that eternal fame,
The sun of earthly gloom,
Which makes the gloriousness of death,
The future of the tomb—

That earthly future, the faint sign
Of a more heavenly one ;
—A step, a word, a voice, a look,—
Alas! my dream is done !

And earth, and earth's debasing stain,
Again is on my soul ;
And I am but a nameless part
Of a most worthless whole.

Why write I this ? because my heart
Towards the future springs,
That future where it loves to soar
On more than eagle wings.

The present, it is but a speck
In that eternal time,
In which my lost hopes find a home,
My spirit knows its clime.

Oh ! not myself,—for what am I ?—
The worthless and the weak,
Whose every thought of self should raise
A blush to burn my cheek.

But song has touch'd my lips with fire,
And made my heart a shrine
For what, although alloy'd, debased,
Is in itself divine.

I am myself but a vile link
Amid life's weary chain ;
But I have spoken hallow'd words,
Oh do not say in vain !

My first, my last, my only wish,
Say will my charmed chords
Wake to the morning light of fame.
And breathe again my words ?

Will the young maiden, when her tears
Alone in moonlight shine—
Tears for the absent and the loved—
Murmur some song of mine ?

Will the pale youth by his dim lamp,
Himself a dying flame,
From many an antique scroll beside,
Choose that which bears my name ?

Let music make less terrible
The silence of the dead ;
I care not, so my spirit last
Long after life has fled.

VII.—THE UNKNOWN GRAVE.

THERE is a little lonely grave
Which no one comes to see,
The foxglove and red orchis wave
Their welcome to the bee.
There never falls the morning sun,
It lies beneath the wall,
But there when weary day is done
The lights of sunset fall,
Flushing the warm and crimson air,
As life and hope were present there.

There sleepeth one who left his heart
Behind him in his song ;
Breathing of that diviner part
Which must to heaven belong,
The language of those spirit chords,
But to the poet known,
Youth, love, and hope yet use his words,
They seem to be his own :
And yet he has not left a name,
The poet died without his fame.

How many are the lovely lays
That haunt our English tongue ;
Defrauded of their poet's praise,
Forgotten he who sung.
Tradition only vaguely keeps
Sweet fancies round his tomb ;
Its tears are what the wild flower weeps,
Its record is that bloom ;
Ah, surely Nature keeps with her
The memory of her worshipper.

One of her loveliest mysteries
Such spirit blends at last,
With all the fairy fantasies
Which o'er some scenes are cast :
A softer beauty fills the grove,
A light is in the grass,
A deeper sense of truth and love
Comes o'er us as we pass ;
While lingers in the heart one line
The nameless poet hath a shrine,

Sara Coleridge.

1802—1850.

THERE is little to recount respecting the life of Sara Coleridge. Born December 22nd, 1802, she was brought up under the roof of her uncle, Southey, and owed nothing to her father except the inheritance of his mental power, of which she gave proof at a surprisingly early age, by her translation of Dobrizhofer's "History of the Abipones," a feat requiring an equal mastery of Latin and English. With her cousins, Dora Wordsworth and Edith Southey, she is the subject of Wordsworth's beautiful poem, "The Triad." Shortly after its composition she married her cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, who became her father's literary executor, a duty soon devolved upon her by his premature death. Her entire devotion to it is probably the chief cause of her having missed the supreme literary distinction which her correspondence shows to have been entirely within her reach. She died in 1850.

After George Eliot's, we should pronounce Sara Coleridge's the most powerful female mind which has as yet addressed itself to English literature. While deficient in no feminine grace, she is intellectually distinguished by a quality for which we can find no better name than manliness. She displays the strongest, massiest common sense, goes direct to the root of a matter, sweeps antagonism

from her path in a twinkling, and exhibits a refreshing liberality, despite a burden of hereditary and conventional prejudice. Circumstances forced her learning and her reasoning faculty into prominence, her pious labours as her father's editor and annotator leaving her but little opportunity for the exercise of the imaginative gift which she had equally inherited from him. "Phantasmion," though too unsubstantial a work to create a permanent impression, shows that she possessed this endowment in rich measure, and the little lyrics scattered through its pages confer upon her a secure though a modest place among English poetesses.

RICHARD GARNETT.

PHANTASMION.

A FAIRY TALE.

1837.

SARA COLERIDGE.

I.—SYLVAN STAG, SECURELY PLAY.

(FROM CHAPTER VIII.)

Phantasmion advanced into the forest, and, looking from behind an oak tree, beheld the slender damsel caressing the stag, whose white hide was dappled with minute shadows from a branch of aspen, the sunbeams finding their way through the interstices of its delicate foliage. The lady had intermitted her melody, but now resumed it, addressing thus her happy comrade, who seemed to be conscious he was the subject of the strain:—

S YLVAN stag, securely play,
'Tis the sportful month of May,
Till her music dies away
 Fear no huntsman's hollo;
While the cowslip nods her head,
While the fragrant blooms are shed
O'er the turf which thou dost tread,
 None thy traces follow.

In the odours wafted round,
Those that breathe from thee are drowned;
Echo voices not a sound,
 Fleet one, to dismay thee;
On the budding beeches browse,
None shall come the deer to rouse;
Scattered leaves and broken boughs
 Shall not now betray thee

Sylvan deer, on branches fed,
 'Mid the countless branches bred,
 Mimic branches on thy head
 With the rest are springing ;
 Smooth them on the russet bark,
 Or the stem of cypress dark,
 From whose top the woodland lark
 Soars to heaven singing.

Here a livelier voice from another quarter of the forest, where the ground dipped into a dell, took up the strain and continued the song thus, as if in a spirit of gay mimicry:—

Bound along, or else be still,
 Sportive roebuck, at thy will ;
 Wilding rose and woodbine fill
 All the grove with sweetness,
 Safely may thy gentle roe
 O'er the piny hillocks go,
 Every white-robed torrent's flow
 Rivalling in fleetness.
 Peaceful breaks for thee the dawn,
 While thou lead'st thy skipping fawn,
 Gentle hind, across the lawn
 In the forest spreading ;
 Morn appears in sober vest,
 Nor hath eve in roses drest,
 By her purple hues exprest
 Aught of thy blood-shedding.

The damsel was by this time seated on the projecting roots of a large tree, finishing a long wreath of flowers, while the stag lay beside her and seemed to watch her motions. She continued to murmur in a low key, but in unison with the voice which proceeded from the dell, and which was joined by one of deeper tone, in these latter verses:—

Milk-white doe, 'tis but the breeze
Rustling in the alder trees ;
Slumber thou while honey-bees
 Lull thee with their humming ;
Though the ringdove's plaintive moan
Seems to tell of pleasure flown,
On thy couch with blossoms sown,
 Fear no peril coming.

Thou amid the lilies laid,
Seem'st in lily vest array'd
Fann'd by gales which they have made
 Sweet with their perfuming ;
Primrose tufts impearl'd with dew ;
Bells which heav'n has steep'd in blue
Lend the breeze their odours too,
 All around thee blooming.

None shall come to scare thy dreams,
Save perchance the playful gleams ;
Wake to quaff the cooling streams .
 Of the sunlit river ;
Thou across the faithless tide
Needest not for safety glide.
Nor thy panting bosom hide
 Where the grasses shiver.

When the joyous months are past,
Roses pine in autumn's blast,
When the violets breathe their last,
 All that's sweet is flying :
Then the sylvan deer must fly,
'Mid the scatter'd blossoms lie,
Fall with falling leaves and die
 When the flow'rs are dying.

II.—ONE FACE ALONE.

(FROM CHAPTER VIII.)

ONE face alone, one face alone,
 These eyes require ;
 But, when that longed-for sight is shown,
 What fatal fire
 Shoots through my veins a keen and liquid flame,
 That melts each fibre of my wasting frame.
 One voice alone, one voice alone,
 I pine to hear ;
 But, when its meek mellifluous tone
 Usurps mine ear,
 Those slavish chains about my soul are wound,
 Which ne'er, till death itself, can be unbound.
 One gentle hand, one gentle hand,
 I fain would hold ;
 But, when it seems at my command,
 My own grows cold ;
 Then low to earth I bend in sickly swoon,
 Like lilies drooping 'mid the blaze of noon.

III.—GRIEF'S HEAVY HAND.

(FROM CHAPTER XIII.)

GRIEF'S heavy hand hath sway'd the lute ;
 'Tis henceforth mute :
 Though pleasure woo, the strings no more respond
 To touches light as fond,
 Silenced as if by an enchanter's wand.
 Do thou brace up each slackened chord,
 Love, gentle lord ;
 Then shall the lute pour grateful melodies
 On every breeze,
 Strains that celestial choristers may please.

IV.--O SLEEP, MY BABE.

(FROM CHAPTER XVI.)

O SLEEP, my babe, hear not the rippling wave,
Nor feel the breeze that round thee lingering strays
To drink thy balmy breath,
And sigh one long farewell.

Soon shall it mourn above thy wat'ry bed,
And whisper to me, on the wave-beat shore,
Deep murm'ring in reproach,
Thy sad untimely fate.

Ere those dear eyes had opened on the light,
In vain to plead, thy coming life was sold,
O! wakened but to sleep,
Whence it can wake no more!

A thousand and a thousand silken leaves
The tufted beech unfolds in early spring,
All clad in tenderest green,
All of the self-same shape:

A thousand infant faces, soft and sweet,
Each year sends forth, yet every mother views
Her last not least beloved
Like its dear self alone.

No musing mind hath ever yet foreshaped
The face to-morrow's sun shall first reveal,
No heart hath e'er conceived
What love that face will bring.

O sleep, my babe, nor heed how mourns the gale
To part with thy soft locks and fragrant breath,
As when it deeply sighs
O'er autumn's latest bloom.

V.—I TREMBLE WHEN WITH LOOK BENIGN.

(FROM CHAPTER XVIII.)

I TREMBLE when with look benign
 Thou tak'st my offer'd hand in thine,
 Lest passion-breathing words of mine
 The charm should break :
 And friendly smiles be forced to fly,
 Like soft reflections of the sky,
 Which, when rude gales are sweeping by,
 Desert the lake.

Of late I saw thee in a dream ;
 The day-star pour'd his hottest beam,
 And thou, a cool refreshing stream,
 Did'st brightly run :
 The trees where thou wert pleased to flow,
 Threw out their flowers, a glorious show,
 While I, too distant doomed to grow,
 Pined in the sun.

By no life-giving moisture fed,
 A wasted tree, I bow'd my head,
 My sallow leaves and blossoms shed
 On earth's green breast :
 And silent pray'd the slumbering wind,
 The lake, thy tarrying place, might find,
 And waft my leaves, with breathings kind,
 There, there, to rest.

VI.—HOW HIGH YON LARK.

(FROM CHAPTER XX.)

HOW high yon lark is heavenward borne !
 Yet, ere again she hails the morn,
 Beyond where birds can wing their way
 Our souls may soar to endless day,

May hear the heavenly choirs rejoice,
While earth still echoes to her voice.

A waveless flood, supremely bright,
Has drown'd the myriad isles of light ;
But ere that ocean ebb'd away,
The shadowy gulf their forms betray,
Above the stars our course may run,
'Mid beams unborrow'd from the sun.

In this day's light what flowers will bloom,
What insects quit the self-made womb !
But ere the bud its leaves unfold,
The gorgeous fly his plumes of gold,
On fairer wings we too may glide,
Where youth and joy no ills betide.

Then come, while yet we linger here,
Fit thoughts for that celestial sphere,
A heart which under keenest light,
May bear the gaze of spirits bright,
Who all things know, and nought endure
That is not holy, just and pure.

VII.—FALSE LOVE, TOO LONG THOU HAST
DELAYED.

(FROM CHAPTER XXII.)

FALSE Love, too long thou hast delay'd,
Too late I make my choice ;
Yet win for me that precious maid,
And bid my heart rejoice :
Then shall mine eyes shoot youthful fire,
My cheek with triumph glow,
And other maids that glance desire,
Which I on one bestow.

Make her with smile divinely bland
 Beam sunshine o'er my face,
 And Time shall touch with gentlest hand
 What she hath deigned to grace ;
 O'er scanty locks full wreaths I'll wear ;
 No wrinkled brow to shade,
 For joy will smooth the furrows there,
 Which earlier griefs have made.

Though sports of youth be tedious toil,
 When youth has pass'd away,
 I'll cast aside the martial spoil
 With her light locks to play ;
 Yea, turn, sweet maid, from tented field
 To rove where dew-drops shine,
 Nor care what hand the sceptre wield,
 So thou wilt grant me thine.

VIII.—HE CAME UNLOOKED FOR.

(FROM CHAPTER XXVI.)

HE came unlook'd for, undesir'd
 A sun-rise in the northern sky :
 More than the brightest dawn admir'd,
 To shine and then for ever fly.

His love, conferr'd without a claim,
 Perchance was like the fitful blaze,
 Which lives to light a steadier flame,
 And, while that strengthens, fast decays.

Glad fawn along the forest springing,
 Gay birds that breeze-like stir the leaves,
 Why hither haste, no message bringing,
 To solace one that deeply grieves ?

Thou star that dost the skies adorn
 So brightly heralding the day,
 Bring one more welcome than the morn,
 Or still in night's dark prison stay.

IX.—YON CHANGEFUL CLOUD.

(FROM CHAPTER XXVII.)

YON changeful cloud will soon thy aspect wear—
 So bright it grows :—and now, by light winds shaken
 O ever seen yet ne'er to be o'ertaken !
 Those waving branches seem thy billowy hair.
 The cypress glades recall thy pensive air ;
 Slow rills, that wind like snakes amid the grass,
 Thine eye's mild sparkle fling me as they pass,
 Yet murmuring cry, This fruitless quest forbear !

Nay e'en amid the cataract's loud storm,
 Where foamy torrents from the crags are leaping,
 Methinks I catch swift glimpses of thy form,
 Thy robe's light folds in airy tumult sweeping ;
 Then silent are the falls : 'mid colours warm
 Gleams the bright maze beneath their splendour sleeping.

X.—I WAS A BROOK.

(FROM CHAPTER XXVIII.)

I WAS a brook in straitest channel pent,
 Forcing 'mid rocks and stones my toilsome way,
 A scanty brook in wandering well-nigh spent ;
 But now with thee, rich stream, conjoin'd I stray,
 Through golden meads the river sweeps along,
 Murmuring its deep full joy in gentlest undersong.

I crept through desert moor and gloomy glade,
 My waters ever vex'd, yet sad and slow,
 My waters ever steep'd in baleful shade :
 But, whilst with thee, rich stream, conjoined I flow,
 E'en in swift course the river seems to rest,
 Blue sky, bright bloom and verdure imag'd on its
 breast.

And, whilst with thee I roam through regions bright
 Beneath kind love's serene and gladsome sky,
 A thousand happy things that seek the light,
 Till now in darkest shadow forc'd to lie,
 Up through the illumin'd waters nimbly run,
 To show their forms and hues in the all revealing sun.

XI.—I THOUGHT BY TEARS.

(FROM CHAPTER XXXI.)

I THOUGHT by tears thy soul to move
 Since smiles had proved in vain ;
 But I from thee no smiles of love,
 Nor tears of pity gain :
 Now, now I could not smile perforce
 A sceptred queen to please :
 Yet tears will take th' accustom'd course
 Till time their fountain freeze.

My life is dedicate to thee,
 My service wholly thine ;
 But what fair fruit can grace the tree
 Till suns vouchsafe to shine ?
 Thou art my sun, thy looks are light,
 O cast me not in shade
 Beam forth ere summer takes its flight,
 And all my honours fade.

When torn by sudden gusty flaw,
 The fragile harp lies mute,
 Its tenderest tones the wind can draw
 From many another lute ;
 But when this beating heart lies still,
 Each chord relax'd in death,
 What other shall so deeply thrill,
 So tremble at thy breath ?

XII.—FULL OFT BEFORE SOME GORGEOUS
 FANE

(FROM CHAPTER XXXIX.)

FULL oft before some gorgeous fane
 The youngling heifer bleeds and dies ;
 Her life-blood issuing forth amain,
 While wreaths of incense climb the skies.

The mother wanders all around,
 Through shadowy grove and lightsome glade ;
 Her foot-marks on the yielding ground
 Will prove what anxious quest she made.

The stall where late her darling lay
 She visits oft with eager look :
 In restless movements wastes the day,
 And fills with cries each neighbouring nook.

She roams along the willowy copse,
 Where purest waters softly gleam :
 But ne'er a leaf or blade she crops,
 Nor crouches by the gliding stream.

No youthful kine, though fresh and fair,
 Her vainly searching eyes engage ;
 No pleasant fields relieve her care,
 No murmuring streams her grief assuage.

XIII.—*SEE YON BLITHE CHILD.*

(FROM CHAPTER XXXIX.)

SEE yon blithe child that dances in our sight ?
 Can gloomy shadows fall from one so bright ?
 Fond mother, whence these fears ?
 While buoyantly he rushes o'er the lawn,
 Dream not of clouds to stain his manhood's dawn,
 Nor dim that sight with tears.

No cloud he spies in brightly glowing hours,
 But feels as if the newly vested bowers
 For him could never fade :
 Too well we know that vernal pleasures fleet,
 But having him, so gladsome, fair, and sweet,
 Our loss is overpaid.

Amid the balmiest flowers that earth can give
 Some bitter drops distil, and all that live
 A mingled portion share ;
 But, while he learns these truths which we lament,
 Such fortitude as ours will sure be sent,
 Such solace to his care.

XIV.—*L'ENVOY OF PHANTASMION.*

GO, little book, and sing of love and beauty,
 To tempt the worldling into fairy land ;
 Tell him that airy dreams are sacred duty,
 Bring better wealth than aught his toils command—
 Toils fraught with mickle harm.

But if thou meet some spirit high and tender,
 On blessed works and noblest love intent,
 Tell him that airy dreams of nature's splendour,
 With graver thoughts and hallowed musings blent,
 Prove no too earthly charm.

Sarah Flower Adams.

1805—1848.

THE authoress of "Vivia Perpetua," was the daughter of Benjamin Flower, a well-known politician and martyr for the liberty of the press in Pitt's day; and the sister of Eliza Flower, one of the most gifted of English female composers. She was born Feb. 22nd, 1805; married William Bridges Adams, engineer, in 1834; and died of decline in August 1848. Her life, so far as known to the world, is summed up in the authorship of her drama "Vivia Perpetua" (1841) and her connection with the congregation of Finsbury Unitarian Chapel, under the pastorate of William Johnson Fox. The musical service was organised, and a large proportion of the hymns set to music, by Mrs. Adams's sister; while she herself enriched the collection with many original and translated pieces. Among them was "Nearer, my God, to thee," which divides with Cardinal Newman's "Lead, kindly Light," the distinction of being at once the most popular and the most poetical modern hymn. One is reminded of Dryden's famous lines; but the feats of the male and the female minstrel were in this instance reversed; for it is Mrs. Adams who "raises the mortal to the skies," and Cardinal Newman who "draws the angel down."

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE.

“Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee,
Even though it be a cross
That raiseth me ;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone ;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Then let the way appear
Steps unto heaven ;
All that thou send'st to me
In mercy given ;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Then, with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of those stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise ;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Or, if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

An unsigned translation from Luis de Leon, almost equally beautiful, may be safely attributed

to Mrs. Adams; nor less exquisite is the following little known piece, the quintessence of pure devotional feeling:—

“ He sendeth sun, he sendeth shower,
Alike they're needful to the flower,
And joys and tears alike are sent
To give the soul fit nourishment:
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done.

Can loving children e'er reprove
With murmurs, whom they trust and love
Creator, I would ever be
A trusting, loving child to thee:
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done.

O ne'er will I at life repine,
Enough that thou hast made it mine.
When falls the shadow cold of death
I yet will sing with parting breath:
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done.”

The above will suffice for Mrs. Adams's character and eulogy as a writer of devotional poetry; and her dramatic attempt also is essentially lyrical. “*Vivia Perpetua*” is unsatisfactory as a play, but has deep human interest as an idealised representation of the authoress's mind and heart. In the character of *Vivia* she has shadowed forth her own moral affections and intellectual convictions, and the intensity of her feelings frequently exalts her diction, else artless and slightly conventional, into genuine eloquence. The moral charm, however, takes precedence of the artistic, as is to be expected in the work of a true woman. Lyrical enthusiasm atones in no small measure for the lack of the

constructive faculty, and "Vivia Perpetua" fulfils better than many more ambitious works Milton's demand that poetry should be "simple, sensuous, and passionate." The authoress would probably have left a higher reputation if she had given freer scope to her natural instinct for lyrical poetry, instead of devoting her most strenuous endeavour to the difficult undertaking of reviving the poetical drama. But her love of the theatre, which at one time led her to contemplate adopting it as a profession, was fostered by the friendship of Browning and Macready, as well as by her affection and reverence for W. J. Fox, the best critic of acting in his day. Her occasional lyrics on political and social subjects have not been collected; one, a very spirited poem on the opening of the Royal Exchange, is preserved in Fox's "Lectures to the Working Classes."

RICHARD GARNETT.

VIVIA PERPETUA.

1841.

SARAH FLOWER ADAMS.

(FROM ACT V., SCENE II.)

Vivia.

CÆCILIUS, go not thou.—Gaoler, give leave.
Nay, quench the lights,—my lamp will serve; and
ere
The prison-rounds are o'er, this youth shall meet thee
At the outer gate.

Pudens. Thy time, how long soe'er. [*Exit.*

Vivia.

I have not spoke with thee to-night, Cæcilius;
The slightest word had made the ready tears
Brim o'er their boundaries. Said I not?—weep on!
Thou hast wept to me before, and I with thee.
Ease thy full heart; then be thou strong to listen.
I need thee;—thou canst help me, if thou wilt.

Cæcil. Help thee?—and if I will!

Vivia.

But ere I speak
Of the one only thought 'twixt me and heaven,
Tell me of Nola; for my heart is yearning
To see her once again before I die.

Cæcil. She stays within her chamber; was forbid
To haste to you. She stays in sure belief
That you will be releas'd, will come to her.

Vivia. Releas'd I shall be! She must come to me.

[*She takes a golden arrow from her hair.*]

Give her this token. Say, our early love
Is fresh with me, as though 'twere yesterday
We wander'd, arm-encircl'd, gathering shells.—
Could it be yesterday she talk'd of it?—
Tell her, that He for whom I die was one
Who taught all love to hope: so bid her thought
Soar up, to meet my blessing on the way,
Sure, unforgotten as she is in death,
I still may be her friend in heav'n!—Your thoughts?—
They wander.

Cæcil. They are still with thee!—with thee
And with the morrow.

Vivia. Mark me! many thoughts
In many morrows I now ask of thee.
Much has been said—too much—of loving kindness
Render'd to one who was left motherless;—
This time to-morrow—Thascius—wilt thou—

Cæcil. Will I? oh, find thy words to tell me what!

Vivia. Thou'rt young; hast many years—and be
they blest—

Before thee. I have mark'd a strength in thee,
Seen most within these latter days of trial;
And Heav'n hath prosper'd so the thought that thou
Wilt come to hold the faith; I unto thee,
Commit in trust this child, my Thascius,—
In trust unto thy thought. It may be years—
Never, perchance—ere act of thine may serve;
Still let him have a home within thy thought.
And thy good strength, and youth, and years to come,

And fate alike, so oft a loving bond,
 And something for his mother's memory,—
 No, no, there needs no word of thine, Cæcilius
 That look has laid an answer at my heart !
 Blessing of Heav'n descend on thee and him !

Cæcil. I would I were your God, to give you wings
 Now, now to bear you up ! I would not stay you,
 Though they would take you quite away from me
 But, oh, that morrow's doom !

Vivia. Why fear it thus ?
 The pain of martyrdom dwells not in death.
 Think'st thou the love that dares it hath not joy
 In loving, to make light the keenest pangs
 That touch the body ? No !—the torture comes
 And sharpen'd fangs are busiest at the heart,
 When all the old affections are dragg'd forth,
 And torn upon the rack. What is't to die ?

Cæcil. To sink in quiet 'neath a sighing tree,
 Like to the warrior in the song you lov'd ;
 To die like him, lapsing in quiet shadow,
 Were peace : but, oh, the death that waits for thee !—
 The glare—the tumult !

Vivia. What are they ? since I
 Have sat alone, girt with the dreadful dark,
 The never-ceasing night, with that one image
 In terrible light, stern, pale, and palpable,—
 The image of my father in his grief :
 Eyes shut—the same—or staring wide again,
 Still would it come—look, look, now while I speak !

[VIVIUS *appears with a lamp at the
 opposite side of the quadrangle. He
 comes slowly forward. The father
 and daughter gaze at each other for
 some time without speaking.*

Vivius. Do ye know me, who I am?—no, no—
no wonder!

I am older many years since yester morn.
I was before that time a man nam'd Vivius,
A happy father, who did read his hopes
Upon the noble brows, and, as he thought,
The most true brows, of a beloved daughter!
I am—I know not what. And when I ask
Help of the outward universe to bring
Back to myself the former consciousness,
The sun shuts up the while I look on him;
The stars all hurry past me while I pray;
The earth sinks from my feet: all false! all false!

Vivia. No bitterness now!

Vivius. No bitterness?—gods,
No bitterness! [*He weeps.*]

Vivia. My father, that thou couldst
Crowd all thyself at once into one thought!
Think of the faith—look on me as I stand,
A creature anguished at thy agony,—
How far beyond the morrow's suffering!—
One who hath lost even the few brief hours
She reckoned as her own, to tend her child;—
Then think upon the faith that bids my heart
Have yet beneath it all, a hope as calm
As were his lids, when last I parted from him.
Whence comes such miracle—of whom such faith?

Vivius.

Faith! faith!—is that the word?—and miracle!
Yes!—that thy tongue would stir to speak the word!
What is thy faith?—a lie. What are its fruits?
What made thee false to me? What made thee thus
Shew forth fine joys to woo me in thy face,—
A black'ning plague-spot hidden in thy breast;—

Lur'd me to build my trust on thee for rock,
 While thou wert rotten as the poisonous heap
 The sea throws up for waste? And this is faith!
 A lie!—it is a lie!

Vivia. No more! forbear!

I see, though thou dost not, God's angel stand
 Shelt'ring my hope in thee! Thou shalt not speak,
 Lest he be moved to stretch a ruffled wing
 Up to the Lord, with those accusing words.
 I will not have thee less before the Lord
 When I shall plead for thee—as plead I will—
 Plead for the earthly father, who once taught
 His child in youth to love the truth, so led
 Unto the heav'nly. Hath it been gainsay'd?
 Thou know'st it hath not. Thou dost know 'twas love,
 And love alone, that, fearful of thy grief,
 Delay'd to bring it on thee, hoping still
 A way might show to mitigate the pang.
 And I will not be lesser than I am,
 Unworthy as I am for this emprise;
 For thy sake, not. 'Twas thou who mad'st me true,
 And true I am; 'twas thou who mad'st me dare,
 And I have dar'd. Who was it in my youth
 Did crown our Dido empress of my soul,
 For that she gave her blood for double worth,—
 A faith unbroken, and her people's good?
 Did tell me of the wife of Asdrubal,
 How that she lov'd the honour of her Carthage
 More than her life, and leapt from off the walls
 Giving herself, her children, to the flames?
 My Carthage is the world! I do but stretch
 The line they held—Christ guiding still my hand,
 Who first did point the way.

Vivius.

And can it be

Thou art that very child so oft hath stood
Between my knees to listen those old tales?
Oh for that child again!

Vivia. I am that child
In all that's simple truth. It was your wont
To question, that an answering lisp might come
Of names, of things, almost too large for one
Of infant speech. Ask me of this, —what is it?
Why, I should say, it is a water-cruise;
I know it that, and could not say it other.
I could no more deny to those who ask
Of me, what am I;—I do know myself
A Christian, and must say I am a Christian.

Vivius.
Thy breath comes to me like the sharpen'd air
To cut my heart in twain; cold,—cold. But, no!
Here's fire enough. And I will shew the world
White ashes yet may cover glowing heat!
You had a boy.

Vivia. Dead?

Vivius. To you!

Vivia. Oh, cruel!

Oh, spare me, for 'tis here that I am weak.
No, no, spare not; 'tis here I would be strong,
And, trust Christ's mercy, he will guard a child
Blest by such love as mine hath had upon him.
Such love, sure am I, it can never perish.
E'en now doth comfort, like a flower, spring up
Sudden within my breast. You—you,—I know
That you will nourish him—will cherish him,—
Will teach his tongue the truth you taught to mine;
(And hath not Christ abundant for the rest?)
And when that he and time have smil'd down sorrow,
Oft, will you, while you sit and gaze on him,

See his dead mother live from out his eyes,—
His loving eyes ; and then,—dear child ! dear father !

Vivius (*falling at her feet*). You weep !—you
weep ! Oh let those tears at once

Revive my dying hopes like dew, and quench
The fire that's smouldering in a tortur'd brain.
Once more ; yet save me—save thyself ;—thou canst ;
'Tis not too late. Although the storm hangs black,
A word can wave it off, and bring us heaven !

Oh save me from a poison'd, livid past !

Oh save me from a future, that doth yawn

A flaming gulf of hell before my feet !

These are thy father's hands that clasp thy knees ;

These are his lips, that on thy very feet

Now print their hope for mercy. Save me !—save me !

Vivia. Oh that my blood had double tide, that I
Might die another death for thy salvation !

Up—up, my father !—my own noble father !

It is thyself in me that stands erect ;—

Claim kindred with thine own.

Vivius.

Thou teachest well.

I thank thee for thy counsel,—this the last

That we shall take together. I am up ;

But not to claim. Utterly I disclaim

All kindred with thee ! Blood thou'rt none of mine.

Blood thou hast none in thee ; thy heart is stone.

Weakness in me to pray, to weep to it ;

Weakness in thee, that thou dost blindly scan

The doom that darkly gathers o'er our house.

E'en now the Fates begin with busy fingers

To weave the dusky web shall dimly shroud

Him, the devoted of a mother's shame !

Where is the hope that I should cherish him,

Poor sickly sapling, 'neath a blasted tree ?

All wreck'd, near mad, 'tis like they may decree
That I, my brain on fire, my senses gone,
Wild with an agony of memory,
Taking him for my grief, should swing him thus,
And dash the life from out him!

Vivia.

Oh for mercy!

Cæcil.

The trust will hold, although no word was said.

Vivius.

Thou here? Come, I must have a vow of thee.
Hearken, young sir! Swear by thy mother's dust—
Or hath this *faith* made it but rottenness?
Good boy! good boy!—truer unto dead bones
Than others unto living quivering flesh.
Yet swear!—that if in after-life you cross
The path of him was yesterday her child—
For he must live in double orphanage,
Unbless'd with e'en the memory of a mother—
Ne'er to make known to him—to him or any,
That he did hold communion with her blood.

Cæcil. I will not take such oath!

Vivius. How! (*seizing him*) Let me feel it
Come up thy throat—Speak! or—

Vivia.

Cæcilius, do it.

Cæcil. I swear!

Vivius. 'Tis well. And now, farewell to all—
To thee, who art the corpse of all my hopes—
Unurned, unburied, ever so to be.
O hell! my very words do twist their sense
Like tortuous snakes, to sting me as I speak.
Curses on Carthage!—curses on her people!
Would that to-morrow's crowds might find the earth,
Traacherous as they, give way beneath them all,
And, with one gape of its devouring jaws,

Swallow them quick. 'Twill come, or soon or late,
The flame, the sword, and mighty desolation.
The Goth shall trample where your gardens flourish'd
Scattering your children like the weeds they grew.

Vivia. O Christ, who wept over Jerusalem!

Vivius.

Weep thou, and for thine own—no longer thine—
(Of little heed). Let me but have the pow'r
To fix these loosen'd wits, I'll make of him
One, who would turn thy love into a curse.
Hope quickens with the thought—there's much to do:
Time narrows in, and I stay here! Away!
Thascius shall be a conqueror—shall hew
His path through this thy faith. Thou sacrifice
Hast chosen;—mark me! sacrifice shall be
His very end of life; his highest triumph
Won by the sword; and Fame, with crimson hands,
Shall steep in blood the wreath that crowns his brow.
Away! away! [*Exit* VIVIUS.]

Vivia. Cæcilius, follow him!

My hope lives in thee, as thou wert Christ's angel.
To-morrow, at the last, bring me thy tidings.

Cacil. To-morrow!

Vivia. Speak not word (nor look) to mar
My trust in thee. [*Exit* CÆCILIUS.]
My trust, O God, in thee!— [*She kneels.*
So sure, I have no words that come as prayer.
Thou who dost all things well, shall I of thee
Crave other than thou dost? And, blessed Christ,
'Twas thou who bad'st us visit in their need
The widow and the fatherless, I know
Thou wilt take pity on a childless father.
Thou, the good Shepherd, who didst gently fold
Those little ones, with blessing, in thine arms,

Wilt care for him, my tender one—my yearling,
Else all bereft.—One prayer—but one—the last :
That in the final hours of this frail life,
With love and praise triumphant over all,
We may show forth thy glory, blessed Lord.

Now to my rest. Not yet—a little while. [*She rises.*
[*Exit.*

END OF SCENE II.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

1806—1861.

CURIOUSLY enough, both the time and the place of the birth of Mrs. Browning have been made subjects of an unnecessarily heated controversy. That controversy need not be revived here. Mrs. Browning herself, in a letter to R. H. Horne, says distinctly that she was born in the county of Durham, and better authority we could not well have. Further investigation, moreover, confirms this statement, and it may now be accepted as established that Mrs. Browning was born at Coxoe Hall, Durham, on the 6th of March, in the year 1806. Her father was Mr. Edward Barrett Moulton, who, during his daughter's infancy, inherited an estate from his maternal grandfather, and assumed the additional surname of Barrett. While Elizabeth was still a very young child the family removed from Durham to Herefordshire, where, at Hope End, near Ledbury, Mr. Barrett had built a country house—a picturesque place with Moorish turrets and windows, looking out upon an extensive and beautiful park. Here the little maiden played, cultivated white roses, rode her pony, and when eight years old, read Homer in the original, holding her book in one hand and nursing her doll upon her other arm. The doll comes pleasantly into the picture. Homer without it would have been rather

awful, but the doll subdues his awfulness and makes the vision a thing of unalloyed beauty. Still, even Homer was not a task but a childish passion. Agamemnon and her pony shared her dream-chambers of imagery, but the king's apartments were oftenest occupied. In these days, too, she began to write poetry—mainly about her friends the Greeks—and her epic, "The Battle of Marathon" in four books, produced about the age of eleven or twelve, was printed by the proud father. "Papa," she writes, "was bent upon spoiling me;" but some people are not easily spoiled, and the little Elizabeth was one of them.

She was about fifteen when she stepped over the outer edge of the shadow in which so much of her after life was spent. In attempting to saddle her pony she fell with the saddle upon her and received injuries to the spine, which condemned her to years of recumbency and disablement from all physical activities. Then, at twenty, came the death of her mother and an enforced migration from the beloved Hope End, two years at Sidmouth, and a second removal to Gloucester Place, London. Still a constant invalid, she was taken for her health's sake to Torquay, and here the shadow darkened into blackness, for a beloved brother who had come to see her was drowned while boating, and thenceforward the sea-music in which she had rejoiced was to her a dirge. Then came more years of weakness and seclusion, made bearable only by her books, her pen,—busy always when the tired hand could hold it—and by the visits of a very few friends, chief among whom were Miss Mitford and her cousin John Kenyon, to whom in after years

"Aurora Leigh" was dedicated. It was in 1846, when Elizabeth Barrett would be in her forty-first year that she, whose romance had heretofore been of imagination all compact, stepped into the enchanted ground, for Mr. Kenyon brought to Gloucester Place a new visitor in the person of Mr. Robert Browning. Browning's work was already known and loved by her; she had paid a fine tribute to the rich humanity of "Bells and Pomegranates" in a well-known stanza of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship;" and there is a pretty but apparently unauthenticated story that Mr. Browning in the first instance sought the acquaintance of Miss Barrett in order to thank her for the words of gracious recognition. However this may have been, Mr. Browning came under Mr. Kenyon's friendly wing,—came, saw, and became at once conqueror and conquered. The unyielding antagonism of Mr. Barrett—not it would seem to Mr. Browning in particular, but to any suitor whatever—rendered necessary a secret betrothal and marriage, and the latter event took place in the church of St. Marylebone on the 12th of September, 1846.

Miss Barrett's physician had declared that her life depended upon absence from England during the winter; and so the newly-wedded pair sped southward, taking Paris, Avignon, Vacluse, and Pisa on their way to Florence, where Mrs. Browning was to find her final home; where in 1849 her boy, now Robert Barrett Browning the painter, was to be born to her; where she was to sing of sights seen from "Casa Guidi Windows," to tell the story of "Aurora Leigh" and to write the "Poems before Congress," in praise of the heroes of the fight for

Italian liberty and unity, among whom her enthusiasm which, like charity, was able to believe all things, classed the Emperor Napoleon III. After her marriage, Mrs. Browning's health perceptibly improved. She was still a fragile creature, but she was no longer a confirmed invalid; and her fifteen Italian years were fuller of intense vitality than all the years that had preceded them, except perhaps those of her bright childhood at Hope End, when she had felt her life in every limb. She and her husband were now encompassed by troops of friends; and it would be difficult to find pleasanter reading than some of their descriptions of the two poets and their surroundings, which Mrs. Richmond Ritchie quotes freely in the delightful memoir of Mrs. Browning contributed by her to the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

But though love and Italy had done much for Mrs. Browning, they were powerless to prolong to its natural term her hold upon the life of earth. She was very ill when she received the news of the death of the patriot statesman Cavour, and the shock hastened the end, which came on the 30th of June, 1861. Like Dürer's knight she had long held companionship with Death; and though the things from which he beckoned her were sweet and dear, she had learned to regard the beckoning face as not unkindly. It called to a short severance from love, but to an eternal severance from the weariness which had often made musical moan.

“Enough! we're tired, my heart and I.
We sit beside the headstone thus,
And wish that name were carved for us.
The moss reprints more tenderly

The hard types of the mason's knife
As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life
With which we're tired, my heart and I."

Perhaps the first and the last, the strongest and most enduring impression stamped upon the mind by the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning is that it is the poetry of instinct, or—to use a word which has of late become somewhat unfashionable—of inspiration. We feel that to her the measured but incalculable music of verse was what the common prose of the street or the drawing-room is to most of us, a natural and inevitable vehicle of expression,—that she saw and felt herself truly when she wrote in "Aurora Leigh"—

"My joy and pain,
My thought and aspiration, like the stops
Of flute or pipe, are absolutely dumb
Unless melodious."

The word "inspiration" I have said has become unfashionable, it has given place to that much smaller word *technique*; and it may frankly be admitted that in those qualities of exquisite and flawless rendering which contribute to technical literary perfection Mrs. Browning's work is frequently deficient. It may indeed be said that she is more obviously faulty than any poet who is equally distinguished; but, after all, faultiness in every kind of work is too common to stand in need of being laboriously pointed out, while distinction in any kind of work is somewhat rare; and where the latter is present the added presence of the former is of comparatively little moment. In any brief estimate it would indeed be foolish to waste space in dwelling upon the heresies of rhyme, the fantastic epithets,

the incoherencies of phrase which are to be found by all who care to seek them in the books of the poet to whom we owe "The Sleep," "The Cry of the Children," "Aurora Leigh," and the "Sonnets from the Portuguese."

If, as it is sometimes contended, the highest art must be art in which distinctively masculine and feminine characteristics disappear in some transcendental human synthesis which knows no sex, then assuredly the place of Mrs. Browning is below the highest, for she was pre-eminently a great woman poet, and not simply a woman who wrote great poetry. Though her work was in external form, sometimes narrative and sometimes dramatic, it was always in essence the poetry of self-expression—the poetry in which the treatment of external things, howsoever admirable in itself, is always subsidiary to the imaginative utterance of personal thought and emotion. In poetry of this kind typical masculine work and typical feminine work are distinguished from each other by the fact that in the former the thought comes first and inspires the emotion, while in the latter the emotion comes first and suggests the thought. "As I was musing the fire burned";—that is an adequate description of the genesis of masculine poetry. In the poetry of womanhood the fire burns first and the musings, the thoughts, are generated by the warmth. It is thus in the work of Mrs. Browning. It has no lack of intellectual substance; on the contrary, it has been held by some that in "Aurora Leigh," and elsewhere this intellectual substance is inartistically obtrusive; but the thought is always the child and vassal of emotion:—the brain is as alert as the pulse is strong, yet

everywhere, in "Aurora Leigh," in "Casa Guidi Windows," and in the "Poems before Congress," not less than in such intimately personal utterances as "A Denial," "Inclusions," and the Portuguese Sonnets "the heart still overrules the head."

This last wonderful, indeed unique series of poems—the noblest anthology for noble lovers which any literature has to show—provides striking illustrations both of the close combination of the passionate and the reflective element in Mrs. Browning's verse, and of the dominance of the former over the latter. Take for example the well-known fourteenth number of the sequence,—a poem born of the strongest emotion in the heart of one beloved—the all-powerful desire to be loved for her very self, for what she *is*, not for what she *has*. "If thou must love me, let it be for love's sake only,"—the fiery heart of the sonnet is in that first line: love me because I am I, not for my smile, my look, my way of gentle speech, my thought in accord with yours. And then as the fire burns the musing begins, the thought is born, the intellect supplies a justification for the emotion. These things are transient, and the love that is fixed upon them may not survive them; but the soul, the self, endures, and the love which is bound to it—to the essential not to the accidental—is therefore the love which lives on "through love's eternity."

This method, if any habit so instinctive can be called a method, may be traced through the greater part of Mrs. Browning's work; and it gives to that work an immediate charm for that majority of poetry-lovers who are one with the poet in reaching thought through feeling rather than feeling through

thought. And this majority will respond with not less ready sympathy and appreciation to the special tone of the emotion,—the prevalent pensiveness and sadness which are all the more impressive because so obviously spontaneous, so entirely free from a suspicion of affectation. The domination of the mood of melancholy, manifests itself both in the choice of themes which lend themselves readily to its expression, and by the sombre treatment of other themes which are in themselves devoid of sombre suggestions. Many of the best known and most deservedly popular of Mrs. Browning's shorter poems—"Confessions," "The Mask," "The Lay of the Brown Rosary," "Bertha in the Lane." and "The Cry of the Children"—are poems of unrelieved sadness; the hero and heroine of "Aurora Leigh," have to be taught life's lesson by the anguish of failure; and even when, as in "The Sea-Mew," she lights upon a theme which seems full of suggestions of the free joyousness of vivid life, the music is still in the minor key, for even the bright wild bird is drawn into the human shadow.

"He lay down in his grief to die,
(First looking to the sea-like sky
That hath no waves) because, alas!
Our human touch did on him pass,
And with our touch, our agony."

In spite, however, of its uniformity of emotional tone there is in Mrs. Browning's work a variety of matter and form which render detailed comment altogether impossible here. The finest of her pure lyrics have the richness and the rapture of the song of the nightingale, with now and again a certain unearthliness in the melody, as if the singer were

indeed what she was declared to be by the one who knew her best, "half-angel and half-bird." Her narrative ballads have a swift directness and an impressive pictorialism which hold the imagination and stir the blood. In her sonnets, especially in the marvellous sequence purporting to be "from the Portuguese" the poet is seen at her loftiest altitude, for here art is as victorious as inspiration. The irresistibly winning individuality is as distinct as ever; but the style has cleared itself of its dross its occasional ruggedness, and grating grotesqueness, and has, without losing force, gained ease, clearness, balance, and all the qualities which in the mass we call classical. Many a great poet has his own peculiar honour: it was given to Mrs. Browning to render in perfect verse the very apotheosis of love. Concerning "Aurora Leigh" there will always be differences of opinion and feeling, for it exhibits the poet's weakness not less manifestly than her strength. Its form is defective, its inspiration intermittent, its style unequal; it is greater in parts than as a whole; but if we regard its finest details of description and characterisation, if we weigh the nuggets of imaginative thought which we turn over on nearly every page, we may fairly pronounce it, with all its faults, one of the fullest and most opulent poems produced in this century by any English poet.

The work of Mrs. Browning appeals to us by its fervidly eloquent rendering of imaginative vision, ethical fervour, and profound passion, employing the last word not in the special sense to which usage has confined it, but as comprehending all outgoings of strong emotion towards God, or country, or human fellows, or those aspects of

nature which rouse within us love or awe, wonder or hushed delight. The sadness which utters itself in so much of her verse is the sadness of that keen sensation which brings exquisite sympathy, not the sadness of the dimmed faith which brings despair; and when the song which comes from her lips is most mournful the eye of the singer is fixed upon the far horizon with a look of hope. She lived in the shadow of human weakness, human sorrow, human disquietude, but she never failed in her witness to the light behind the cloud; and we discern the constant attitude of her nature in the tender and triumphant utterance which closes "The Rhyme of the Duchess May":—

"Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang
west,
And I said in underbreath,—All our life is mixed with death,
And who knoweth which is best?
Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang
west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our
incompleteness,—
Round our restlessness, His rest."

JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone
'Mid the beeches of a meadow
By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow :
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses
Fills the silence like a speech
While she thinks what shall be done,
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooses—" I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds :
He shall love me without guile,
And to *him* I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.

“ And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath :
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

“ And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind ;
And the hoofs along the sod
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

“ But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face :
He will say, ‘ O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here for thy grace ! ’

“ Then, ay, then he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand,
Till I answer, ‘ Rise and go !
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.’

“ Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say,
Nathless maiden-brave, ‘ Farewell,’
I will utter, and dissemble—
‘ Light to-morrow with to-day ! ’

“ Then he'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong ;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

“ Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain
And kneel down beside my feet—
' Lo, my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting !
What wilt thou exchange for it ?'

“ And the first time I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,
And the second time, a glove ;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—' Pardon,
If he comes to take my love.'

“ Then the young foot-page will run,
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee :
' I am a duke's eldest son,
Thousand serfs do call me master,
But, O Love, I love but *thee* !'

“ He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his deeds :
And, when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds.”

Little Ellie, with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gaily,
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,
And went homeward, round a mile,
Just to see, as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
Winding up the stream, light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads,
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.
Lo, the wild swan had deserted,
And a rat had knawed the reeds!

Ellie went home sad and slow.
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not; but I know
She could never show him—never,
That swan's nest among the reeds!

THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

1.

I PLANT a tree whose leaf
The yew-tree leaf will suit :
But when its shade is o'er you laid,
Turn round and pluck the fruit.
Now reach my harp from off the wall
Where shines the sun aslant ;
The sun may shine and we be cold !
O harken, loving hearts and bold,
Unto my wild romaunt,
Margret, Margret.

II.

Sitteth the fair ladye
Close to the river side
Which runneth on with a merry tone
Her merry thoughts to guide :
It runneth through the trees,
It runneth by the hill,
Nathless the lady's thoughts have found
A way more pleasant still.
Margret, Margret.

III.

The night is in her hair
And giveth shade to shade,
And the pale moonlight on her forehead white
Like a spirit's hand is laid ;
Her lips part with a smile
Instead of speakings done :
I ween, she thinketh of a voice,
Albeit uttering none.
Margret, Margret.

IV.

All little birds do sit
 With heads beneath their wings :
 Nature doth seem in a mystic dream,
 Absorbed from her living things :
 That dream by that ladye
 Is certes unpartook,
 For she looketh to the high cold stars
 With a tender human look.
 Margret, Margret.

V.

The ladye's shadow lies
 Upon the running river ;
 It lieth no less in its quietness,
 For that which resteth never :
 Most like a trusting heart
 Upon a passing faith,
 Or as upon the course of life
 The steadfast doom of death.
 Margret, Margret.

VI.

The ladye doth not move,
 The ladye doth not dream,
 Yet she seeth her shade no longer laid
 In rest upon the stream :
 It shaketh without wind,
 It parteth from the tide,
 It standeth upright in the cleft moonlight,
 It sitteth at her side.
 Margret, Margret.

VII.

Look in its face, ladye,
 And keep thee from thy svound ;

With a spirit bold thy pulses hold
 And hear its voice's sound :
 For so will sound thy voice
 When thy face is to the wall,
 And such will be thy face, ladye,
 When the maidens work thy pall.
Margret, Margret.

viii.

'Am I not like to thee ?
 The voice was calm and low,
 And between each word you might have heard
 The silent forests grow ;
 ' *The like may sway the like ;* '
 By which mysterious law
 Mine eyes from thine and my lips from thine
 The light and breath may draw.
Margret, Margret.

ix.

'My lips do need thy breath,
 My lips do need thy smile,
 And my pallid eyne, that light in thine
 Which met the stars erewhile :
 Yet go with light and life
 If that thou lovest one
 In all the earth who loveth thee
 As truly as the sun,
Margret, Margret.

x.

Her cheek had waxed white
 Like cloud at fall of snow ;
 Then like to one at set of sun,
 It waxed red also ;
 For love's name maketh bold
 As if the loved were near

And then she sighed the deep long sigh
Which cometh after fear.

Margret, Margret.

XI.

'Now, sooth, I fear thee not—
Shall never fear thee now!'
(And a noble sight was the sudden light
Which lit her lifted brow.)
'Can earth be dry of streams,
Or hearts of love?' she said;
'Who doubteth love, can know not love:
He is already dead.'

Margret, Margret.

XII.

'I have' . . . and here her lips
Some word in pause did keep,
And gave the while a quiet smile
As if they paused in sleep,—
'I have . . . a brother dear,
A knight of knightly fame!
I broidered him a knightly scarf
With letters of my name.

Margret, Margret.

XIII.

'I fed his grey gosshawk,
I kissed his fierce bloodhound,
I sate at home when he might come
And caught his horn's far sound:
I sang him hunter's songs,
I poured him the red wine,
He looked across the cup and said,
I love thee, sister mine.'

Margret, Margret.

XIV.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter ;
The sounding river which rolled, for ever
Stood dumb and stagnant after :
' Brave knight thy brother is !
But better loveth he
Thy chaliced wine than thy chaunted song,
And better both than thee,
Margret, Margret.'

XV.

The ladye did not heed
The river's silence while
Her own thoughts still ran at their will,
And calm was still her smile.
' My little sister wears
The look our mother wore :
I smooth her locks with a golden comb,
I bless her evermore.'
Margret, Margret.

XVI.

I gave her my first bird
When first my voice it knew ;
I made her share my posies rare
And told her where they grew :
I taught her God's dear name
With prayer and praise to tell,
She looked from heaven into my face
And said, *I love thee well.*
Margret, Margret.

XVII.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter ;
You could see each bird as it woke and stared
Through the shrivelled foliage after.

‘Fair child thy sister is!
 But better loveth she
 Thy golden comb than thy gathered flowers,
 And better both than thee,
 Margret, Margret.’

XVIII.

The ladye did not heed
 The withering on the bough ;
 Still calm her smile albeit the while
 A little pale her brow :
 ‘I have a father old,
 The lord of ancient halls ;
 An hundred friends are in his court
 Yet only me he calls.

Margret, Margret.

XIX.

‘An hundred knights are in his court
 Yet read I by his knee ;
 And when forth they go to the tourney show
 I rise not up to see :
 ‘Tis a weary book to read,
 My tryst’s at set of sun,
 But loving and dear beneath the stars
 Is his blessing when I’ve done.’

Margret, Margret.

XX.

IT trembled on the grass
 With a low, shadowy laughter ;
 And moon and star though bright and far
 Did shrink and darken after.
 ‘High lord thy father is !
 But better loveth he
 His ancient halls than his hundred friends,
 His ancient halls, than thee,

Margret, Margret.’

XXI.

The ladye did not heed
That the far stars did fail ;
Still calm her smile, albeit the while . . .
Nay, but she is not pale !
' I have more than a friend
Across the mountains dim :
No other's voice is soft to me,
Unless it nameth *him*.'

Margret, Margret.

XXII.

' Though louder beats my heart
I know his tread again,
And his far plume aye, unless turned away
For the tears do blind me then :
We brake no gold, a sign
Of stronger faith to be,
But I wear his last look in my soul,
Which said, *I love but thee !*'

Margret, Margret.

XXIII.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter ;
And the wind did toll, as a passing soul
Were sped by church-bell after ;
And shadows, 'stead of light,
Fell from the stars above,
In flakes of darkness on her face
Still bright with trusting love.

Margret, Margret.

XXIV.

' He *loved* but only thee !
That love is transient too.
The wild hawk's bill doth dabble still
I' the mouth that vowed thee true :

Will he open his dull eyes,
 When tears fall on his brow ?
 Behold, the death-worm to his heart
 Is a nearer thing than *thou*,
 Margret, Margret.'

xxv.

Her face was on the ground—
 None saw the agony ;
 But the men at sea did that night agree
 They heard a drowning cry :
 And when the morning brake,
 Fast rolled the river's tide,
 With the green trees waving overhead
 And a white corse laid beside.
 Margret, Margret.

xxvi.

A knight's bloodhound and he
 The funeral watch did keep ;
 With a thought o' the chase he stroked its face
 As it howled to see him weep.
 A fair child kissed the dead, †
 But shrank before its cold.
 And alone yet proudly in his hall
 Did stand a baron old.
 Margret, Margret.

xxvii.

Hang up my harp again !
 I have no voice for song.
 Not song but wail, and mourners pale
 Not bards, to love belong.
 O failing human love !
 O light, by darkness known !
 O false, the while thou treadest earth !
 O deaf beneath the stone !
 Margret, Margret.

BERTHA IN THE LANE.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

PUT the broidery-frame away,
For my sewing is all done :
The last thread is used to-day,
And I need not join it on.
Though the clock stands at the noon
I am weary. I have sewn,
Sweet, for thee, a wedding-gown.

Sister, help me to the bed,
And stand near me, Dearest-sweet.
Do not shrink nor be afraid,
Blushing with a sudden heat !
No one standeth in the street ?—
By God's love I go to meet,
Love I thee with love complete.

Lean thy face down ; drop it in
These two hands, that I may hold
'Twixt their palms thy cheek and chin,
Stroking back the curls of gold :
'Tis a fair, fair face, in sooth—
Larger eyes and redder mouth
Than mine were in my first youth.

Thou art younger by seven years--
Ah!--so bashful at my gaze,
That the lashes, hung with tears,
Grow too heavy to upraise ?
I would wound thee by no touch
Which thy shyness feels as such.
Dost thou mind me, Dear, so much ?

Have I not been nigh a mother
 To thy sweetness—tell me, Dear ?
 Have we not loved one another
 Tenderly, from year to year,
 Since our dying mother mild
 Said with accents undefiled,
 “Child, be mother to this child” !

Mother, mother, up in heaven,
 Stand up on the jasper sea,
 And be witness I have given
 All the gifts required of me,—
 Hope that blessed me, bliss that crowned,
 Love that left me with a wound,
 Life itself that turneth round !

Mother, mother, thou art kind,
 Thou art standing in the room,
 In a molten glory shrined
 That rays off into the gloom !
 But thy smile is bright and bleak
 Like cold waves—I cannot speak,
 I sob in it, and grow weak.

Ghostly mother, keep aloof
 One hour longer from my soul,
 For I still am thinking of
 Earth’s warm-beating joy and dole !
 On my finger is a ring
 Which I still see glittering
 When the night hides everything.

Little sister, thou art pale !
 Ah, I have a wandering brain—
 But I lose that fever-bale,
 And my thoughts grow calm again,

Lean down closer—closer still !
I have words thine ear to fill,
And would kiss thee at my will.

Dear, I heard thee in the spring,
Thee and Robert,—through the trees,—
When we all went gathering
Boughs of May-bloom for the bees.
Do not start so ! think instead
How the sunshine overhead
Seemed to trickle through the shade.

What a day it was, that day !
Hills and vales did openly
Seem to heave and throb away
At the sight of the great sky :
And the silence, as it stood
In the glory's golden flood,
Audibly did bud, and bud.

Through the winding hedgerows green,
How we wandered, I and you,
With the bowery tops shut in,
And the gates that showed the view !
How we talked there ; thrushes soft
Sang our praises out, or oft
Bleatings took them from the croft :

Till the pleasure grown too strong
Left me muter evermore,
And, the winding road being long,
I walked out of sight, before,
And so, wrapt in musings fond,
Issued (past the wayside pond)
On the meadow-lands beyond.

I sate down beneath the beech
Which leans over to the lane,
And the far sound of your speech
Did not promise any pain ;
And I blessed you full and free,
With a smile stooped tenderly
O'er the May-flowers on my knee.

But the sound grew into word
As the speakers drew more near—
Sweet, forgive me that I heard
What you wished me not to hear.
Do not weep so, do not shake,
Oh,—I heard thee, Bertha, make
Good true answers for my sake.

Yes, and HE too! let him stand
In thy thoughts, untouched by blame.
Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim ?
That was wrong perhaps—but then
Such things be—and will, again.
Women cannot judge for men.

Had he seen thee when he swore
He would love but me alone ?
Thou wast absent, sent before
To our kin in Sidmouth town,
When he saw thee who art best
Past compare, and loveliest,
He but judged thee as the rest.

Could we blame him with grave words,
Thou and I, Dear, if we might ?
Thy brown eyes have looks like birds
Flying straightway to the light

Mine are older,—Hush!—look out—
Up the street! Is none without?
How the poplar swings about!

And that hour—beneath the beech,
When I listened in a dream,
And he said in his deep speech
That he owed me all *esteem*,—
Each word swam in on my brain
With a dim, dilating pain,
Till it burst with that last strain.

I fell flooded with a dark,
In the silence of a swoon.
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night; I saw the moon:
And the stars, each in its place,
And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.

And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand,
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand,
Somewhat coldly, with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence,
And a “Poor thing” negligence.

And I answered coldly too,
When you met me at the door;
And I only *heard* the dew
Dripping from me to the floor:
And the flowers I bade you see,
Were too withered for the bee,—
As my life, henceforth, for me.

Do not weep so—Dear—heart-warm !
All was best as it befell.
If I say he did me harm,
I speak wild,—I am not well.
All his words were kind and good—
He esteemed me. Only, blood
Runs so faint in womanhood !

Then I always was too grave,—
Liked the saddest ballad sung,—
With that look, besides, we have
In our faces, who die young.
I had died, Dear, all the same ;
Life's long, joyous, jostling game
Is too loud for my meek shame.

We are so unlike each other,
Thou and I, that none could guess
We were children of one mother,
But for mutual tenderness.
Thou art rose-lined from the cold,
And meant verily to hold
Life's pure pleasures manifold.

I am pale as crocus grows
Close beside a rose-tree's root
Whosoe'er would reach the rose,
Treads the crocus underfoot.
I, like May-bloom on thorn-tree,
Thou, like merry summer-bee,—
Fit that I be plucked for thee !

Yet who plucks me ?—no one mourns,
I have lived my season out,
And now die of my own thorns
Which I could not live without.

Sweet, be merry! How the light
Comes and goes! If it be night,
Keep the candles in my sight.

Are there footsteps at the door?
Look out quickly. Yea, or nay?
Some one might be waiting for
Some last word that I might say.
Nay? So best!—so angels would
Stand off clear from deathly road,
Not to cross the sight of God.

Colder grow my hands and feet.
When I wear the shroud I made,
Let the folds lie straight and neat,
And the rosemary be spread,
That if any friend should come,
(To see *thee*, Sweet!) all the room
May be lifted out of gloom.

And, dear Bertha, let me keep
On my hand this little ring,
Which at nights, when others sleep,
I can still see glittering.
Let me wear it out of sight,
In the grave,—where it will light
All the dark up, day and night.

On that grave drop not a tear!
Else, though fathom-deep the place,
Through the woollen shroud I wear
I shall feel it on my face.
Rather smile there, blessèd one,
Thinking of me in the sun,
Or forget me—smiling on!

Art thou near me ? nearer ! so—
Kiss me close upon the eyes,
That the earthly light may go
Sweetly, as it used to rise
When I watched the morning-grey
Strike, betwixt the hills, the way
He was sure to come that day.

So,—no more vain words be said !
The hosannas nearer roll.
Mother, smile now on thy Dead,
I am death-strong in my soul.
Mystic Dove alit on cross,
Guide the poor bird of the snows
Through the snow-wind above loss !

Jesus, Victim, comprehending
Love's divine self-abnegation,
Cleansed my love in its self-spending,
And absorb the poor libation !
Wind my thread of life up higher,
Up, through angels' hands of fire !
I aspire while I expire.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their
And *that* cannot stop their tears. [mothers,
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy;
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,
"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak;

“Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
 Our grave-rest is very far to seek :
 Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,
 For the-outside earth is cold,
 And we youngones stand without, in our bewildering,
 And the graves are for the old.”

“True,” say the children, “it may happen
 That we die before our time :
 Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen
 Like a snowball, in the rime.
 We looked into the pit prepared to take her :
 Was no room for any work in the close clay !
 From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
 Crying, ‘Get up, little Alice ! it is day.’
 If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
 With your ear down, little Alice never cries ;
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
 For the smile has time for growing in her eyes :
 And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
 The shroud by the kirk-chime.
 “It is good when it happens,” say the children,
 “ That we die before our time.”

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
 Death in life, as best to have :
 They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
 With a cerement from the grave.
 Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
 Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do ;
 Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
 Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
 But they answer, “Are your cowslips of the meadows
 Like our weeds anear the mine ?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

“For oh,” say the children, “we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground;
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

“For all day, the wheels are droning, turning;
Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places:
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
‘O ye wheels,’ (breaking out in a mad moaning)
‘Stop! be silent for to-day!’

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other’s hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals:

Let them prove their living souls against the notion
 That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!
 Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
 Grinding life down from its mark;
 And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
 Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
 To look up to Him and pray;
 So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
 Will bless them another day.
 They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,
 While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
 When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
 Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
 And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
 Strangers speaking at the door:
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
 Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
 And at midnight's hour of harm,
 'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
 We say softly for a charm.
 We know no other words except 'Our Father,'
 And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
 And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
 'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely
 (For they call Him good and mild)
 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
 'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,
 "He is speechless as a stone:

And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children,—“up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving:
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.”
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.
And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm:
Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! let them weep!
They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
“How long,” they say, “how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.”

COWPER'S GRAVE.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

IT is a place where poets crowned may feel the
heart's decaying ;
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid
their praying :
Yet let the grief and humbleness as low as silence
languish :
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she
gave her anguish.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the
deathless singing !
O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand
was clinging !
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths
beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died
while ye were smiling !

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming
tears his story,
How discord on the music fell and darkness on the
glory,
And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and
wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted,
He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker
adoration ;
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly as the household name of one whom
God hath taken.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose heaven hath
won him,
Who suffered once the madness-cloud to His own love to blind
him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find
him ;

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences :
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-
caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses :
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways
removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of that
guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, while phrenzy desolated,
—Nor man nor nature satisfies whom only God created.

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses,—
That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother ! where's my
mother ?"—

As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other!—

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale from watchful love, the unwearied love she bore
him !—

Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes which closed in death to save
him.

Thus? oh, not *thus!* no type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him
breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those eyes alone, and knew,—“*My Saviour! not*
deserted!”

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness
rested,
Upon the Victim's hidden face no love was manifested?
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops
averted?
What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one* should
be deserted?

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather;
And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son and
Father:

Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, “*My God, I am forsaken!*”

It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!
That earth's worst phrenzies, marring hope, should mar not
hope's fruition,
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a vision,

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

“THERE is no God,” the foolish saith,
But none, “There is no sorrow,”
And nature oft the cry of faith,
In bitter need will borrow :
Eyes, which the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raisèd,
And lips say, “God be pitiful,”
Who ne'er said, “God be praisèd.”
Be pitiful, O God!

The tempest stretches from the steep
The shadow of its coming,
The beasts grow tame and near us creep,
As help were in the human ;
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,
We spirits tremble under—
The hills have echoes, but we find
No answer for the thunder.
Be pitiful, O God

The battle hurtles on the plains,
Earth feels new scythes upon her ;
We reap our brothers for the wains,
And call the harvest—honour :
Draw face to face, front line to line,
Our image all inherit,—
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay—clay, and spirit—spirit.
Be pitiful, O God!

The plague runs festering through the town,
And never a bell is tolling,
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling :

The young child calleth for the cup,
 The strong man brings it weeping,
 The mother from her babe looks up,
 And shrieks away its sleeping.
 Be pitiful, O God !

The plague of gold strikes far and near,
 And deep and strong it enters ;
 This purple chimar which we wear,
 Makes madder than the centaur's :
 Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange,
 We cheer the pale gold-diggers,
 Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
 And marked, like sheep, with figures.
 Be pitiful, O God !

The curse of gold upon the land
 The lack of bread enforces ;
 The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
 Like more of Death's White horses :
 The rich preach "rights" and "future days,"
 And hear no angel scoffing,
 The poor die mute, with starving gaze
 On corn-ships in the offing.
 Be pitiful, O God !

We meet together at the feast,
 To private mirth betake us ;
 We stare down in the winecup, lest
 Some vacant chair should shake us :
 We name delight, and pledge it round—
 "It shall be ours to-morrow !"
 God's seraphs, do your voices sound
 As sad, in naming sorrow ?
 Be pitiful, O God !

We sit together, with the skies,
The steadfast skies, above us,
We look into each other's eyes,
"And how long will you love us?"
The eyes grow dim with prophecy,
The voices, low and breathless,—
"Till death us part!"—O words, to be
Our *best*, for love the deathless!
Be pitiful, O God!

We tremble by the harmless bed
Of one loved and departed :
Our tears drop on the lips that said
Last night, "Be stronger-hearted!"
O God,—to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a light upon such brows,
Which is the daylight only!
Be pitiful, O God!

The happy children come to us,
And look up in our faces ;
They ask us—"Was it thus, and thus,
When we were in their places?"—
We cannot speak ;—we see anew
The hills we used to live in,
And feel our mother's smile press through
The kisses she is giving.
Be pitiful, O God!

We pray together at the kirk
For mercy, mercy solely :
Hands weary with the evil work,
We lift them to the Holy.

The corpse is calm below our knee,
 Its spirit, bright before Thee—
 Between them, worse than either, we—
 Without the rest or glory.
 Be pitiful, O God!

We leave the communing of men,
 The murmur of the passions,
 And live alone, to live again
 With endless generations:
 Are we so brave?—The sea and sky
 In silence lift their mirrors,
 And, glassed therein, our spirits high
 Recoil from their own terrors.
 Be pitiful, O God!

We sit on hills our childhood wist,
 Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding:
 The sun strikes through the farthest mist
 The city's spire to golden:
 The city's golden spire it was,
 When hope and health were strongest,
 But now it is the churchyard grass
 We look upon the longest.
 Be pitiful, O God!

And soon all vision waxeth dull;
 Men whisper, "He is dying;"
 We cry no more "Be pitiful!"
 We have no strength for crying:
 No strength, no need. Then, soul of mine,
 Look up and triumph rather—
 Lo, in the depth of God's Divine,
 The Son adjures the Father,
 BE PITIFUL, O God!

THE SLEEP.

“He giveth His beloved sleep.”—PSALM cxxvii. 2.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

OF all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this—
“He giveth His beloved, sleep”?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?—
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake:
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

“Sleep soft, beloved!” we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep:
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

O earth, so full of dreary noises !
 O men, with wailing in your voices !
 O delv'd gold, the wailers heap !
 O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !
 God strikes a silence through you all,
 And giveth His belov'd, sleep.

His dew's drop mutely on the hill,
 His cloud above it saileth still,
 Though on its slope men sow and reap :
 More softly than the dew is shed,
 Or cloud is floated overhead,
 He giveth His belov'd, sleep.

Ay, men may wonder while they scan
 A living, thinking, feeling man
 Confirmed in such a rest to keep ;
 But angels say, and through the word
 I think their happy smile is *heard*—
 " He giveth His belov'd, sleep."

For me, my heart that erst did go
 Most like a tired child at a show,
 That sees through tears the mummers leap,
 Would now its wearied vision close,
 Would childlike on His love repose
 Who giveth His belov'd, sleep.

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
 That this low breath is gone from me,
 And round my bier ye come to weep,
 Let One, most loving of you all,
 Say " Not a tear must o'er her fall !"
 " He giveth His belov'd, sleep."

THE SEA-MEW.

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO M. E. H.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

HOW joyously the young sea-mew
Lay dreaming on the waters blue
Whereon our little bark had thrown
A little shade, the only one,
But shadows ever man pursue.

Familiar with the waves and free
As if their own white foam were he,
His heart upon the heart of ocean
Lay learning all its mystic motion,
And throbbing to the throbbing sea.

And such a brightness in his eye
As if the ocean and the sky
Within him had lit up and nurst
A soul God gave him not at first,
To comprehend their majesty.

We were not cruel, yet did sunder
His white wing from the blue waves under
And bound it, while his fearless eyes
Shone up to ours in calm surprise,
As deeming us some ocean wonder.

We bore our ocean bird unto
A grassy place where he might view
The flowers that curtesy to the bees,
The waving of the tall green trees,
The falling of the silver dew.

But flowers of earth were pale to him
Who had seen the rainbow fishes swim ;
And when earth's dew around him lay
He thought of ocean's winged spray,
And his eye waxed sad and dim.

The green trees round him only made
A prison with their darksome shade ;
And dropped his wing, and mourned he
For his own boundless glittering sea—
Albeit he knew not they could fade.

Then One her gladsome face did bring,
Her gentle voice's murmuring,
In ocean's stead his heart to move
And teach him what was human love :
He thought it a strange, mournful thing.

He lay down in his grief to die,
(First looking to the sea-like sky
That hath no waves) because, alas
Our human touch did on him pass,
And with our touch, our agony.

A SONG AGAINST SINGING.

To E. J. H.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THEY bid me sing to thee,
Thou golden-haired and silver-voicèd child—
With lips by no worse sigh than sleep's defiled—
With eyes unknowing how tears dim the sight,
And feet all trembling at the new delight
Treaders of earth to be !

Ah no ! the lark may bring
A song to thee from out the morning cloud,
The merry river from its lilies bowed,
The brisk rain from the trees, the lucky wind
That half doth make its music, half doth find,—
But *I*—I may not sing.

How could I think it right,
New-comer on our earth as, Sweet, thou art,
To bring a verse from out an human heart
Made heavy with accumulated tears,
And cross with such amount of weary years
Thy day-sum of delight ?

Even if the verse were said,
Thou, who wouldst clap thy tiny hands to hear
The wind or rain, gay bird or river clear,
Wouldst, at that sound of sad humanities,
Upturn thy bright uncomprehending eyes
And bid me play instead.

Therefore no song of mine,—
But prayer in place of singing ; prayer that would
Commend thee to the new-creating God
Whose gift is childhood's heart without its stain
Of weakness, ignorance, and changing vain—
That gift of God be thine !

So wilt thou aye be young,
In lovelier childhood than thy shining brow
And pretty winning accents make thee now :
Yea, sweeter than this scarce articulate sound
(How sweet !) of " father," " mother," shall be found
The ABBA on thy tongue.

And so, as years shall chase
Each other's shadows, thou wilt less resemble
Thy fellows of the earth who toil and tremble,
Than him thou seest not, thine angel bold
Yet meek, whose ever-lifted eyes behold
The Ever-loving's face.

FELICIA HEMANS.

TO L. E. L., REFERRING TO HER MONODY ON THE POETESS
(p. 109).

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THOU bay-crowned living One that o'er the bay-
crowned Dead art bowing,
And o'er the shadeless moveless brow the vital
shadow throwing,
And o'er the sighless songless lips the wail and
music wedding,
And dropping o'er the tranquil eyes the tears not of
their shedding!—
Take music from the silent Dead whose meaning is
completer,
Reserve thy tears for living brows where all such
tears are meeter.
And leave the violets in the grass to brighten where
thou treadest,
No flowers for her! no need of flowers, albeit 'bring
flowers,' thou saidest.
Yes, flowers, to crown the 'cup and lute,' since both
may come to breaking,
Or flowers, to greet the 'bride'—the heart's own
beating works its aching;
Or flowers, to soothe the 'captive's' sight, from
earth's free bosom gathered,
Reminding of his earthly hope, then withering as it
withered:
But bring not near the solemn corse a type of human
seeming,
Lay only dust's stern verity upon the dust un-
dreaming:
And while the calm perpetual stars shall look upon
it solely,
Her spher'd soul shall look on *them* with eyes more
bright and holy.

Nor mourn, O living One, because her part in life
 was mourning :
 Would she have lost the poet's fire for anguish of
 the burning ?
 The minstrel harp, for the strained string ? the
 tripod, for the aflated
 Woe ? or the vision, for those tears in which it shone
 dilated ?

Perhaps she shuddered while the world's cold hand
 her brow was wreathing,
 But never wronged that mystic breath which breathed
 in all her breathing,
 Which drew from rocky earth and man, abstractions
 high and moving,
 Beauty, if not the beautiful, and love, if not the
 loving.

Such visionings have paled in sight ; the Saviour she
 descrieth,
 And little recks *who* wreathed the brow which on
 His bosom lieth :
 The whiteness of His innocence o'er all her garments,
 flowing,
 There learneth she the sweet 'new song' she will
 not mourn in knowing.

Be happy, crowned and living One ! and as thy dust
 decayeth
 May thine own England say for thee what now for
 Her it sayeth—
 'Albeit softly in our ears her silver song was ringing,
 The foot-fall of her parting soul is softer than her
 singing.'

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river ?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river :
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river ;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river !)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

“This is the way,” laughed the great god Pan,
 (Laughed while he sat by the river,)
“The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.”
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
 He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan !
 Piercing sweet by the river !
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan !
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
 To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man :
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
 As a reed with the reeds in the river.

A CHILD'S GRAVE AT FLORENCE.

A. A. E. C.

Born, July 1848; died, November 1849.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

OF English blood, of Tuscan birth,
What country should we give her?
Instead of any on the earth,
The civic Heavens receive her.

And here among the English tombs
In Tuscan ground we lay her,
While the blue Tuscan sky endomes
Our English words of prayer.

A little child!—how long she lived,
By months, not years, is reckoned
Born in one July, she survived
Alone to see a second.

Bright-featured, as the July sun
Her little face still played in,
And splendours, with her birth begun,
Had had no time for fading.

So, LILY, from those July hours,
No wonder we should call her;
She looked such kinship to the flowers,
Was but a little taller.

A Tuscan Lily,—only white,
As Dante, in abhorrence
Of red corruption, wished aright
The lilies of his Florence,

We could not wish her whiter,—her
Who perfumed with pure blossom
The house—a lovely thing to wear
Upon a mother's bosom !

This July creature thought perhaps
Our speech not worth assuming ;
She sate upon her parents' laps
And mimicked the gnat's humming ;

Said " father," " mother,"—then left off,
For tongues celestial, fitter :
Her hair had grown just long enough
To catch heaven's jasper-glitter.

Babes ! Love could always hear and see
Behind the cloud that hid them.
" Let little children come to Me,
And do not thou forbid them.

So, unforbidding, have we met,
And gently here have laid her,
Though winter is no time to get
The flowers that should o'er-spread her :

We should bring pansies quick with spring,
Rose, violet, daffodilly,
And also, above everything,
White lilies for our Lily.

Nay, more than flowers, this grave exacts,—
Glad, grateful attestations
Of her sweet eyes and pretty acts,
With calm renunciations.

Her very mother with light feet
Should leave the place too earthy,
Saying, "The angels have thee, Sweet,
Because we are not worthy."

But winter kills the orange-buds,
The gardens in the frost are,
And all the heart dissolves in floods,
Remembering we have lost her.

Poor earth, poor heart,—too weak, too weak
To miss the July shining !
Poor heart !—what bitter words we speak
When God speaks of resigning !

Sustain this heart in us that faints,
Thou God, the self-existent !
We catch up wild at parting saints
And feel Thy heaven too distant.

The wind that swept them out of sin,
Has ruffled all our vesture :
On the shut door that let them in,
We beat with frantic gesture,—

To us, us also, open straight !
The outer life is chilly ;
Are *we* too, like the earth, to wait
Till next year for our Lily ?

—Oh, my own baby on my knees
My leaping, dimpled treasure,
At every word I write like these,
Clasped close with stronger pressure !

Too well my own heart understands,—
At every word beats fuller—
My little feet, my little hands,
And hair of Lily's colour !

But God gives patience, Love learns strength,
And Faith remembers promise,
And Hope itself can smile at length
On other hopes gone from us.

Love, strong as Death, shall conquer Death,
Through struggle, made more glorious :
This mother stills her sobbing breath,
Renouncing yet victorious.

Arms, empty of her child, she lifts
With spirit unbereaven,—
“God will not all take back His gifts ;
My Lily's mine in heaven.

“Still mine ! maternal rights serene
Not given to another !
The crystal bars shine faint between
The souls of child and mother.

“Meanwhile,” the mother cries “content !
Our love was well divided :
Its sweetness following where she went,
Its anguish stayed where I did.

“Well done of God, to halve the lot,
And give her all the sweetness ;
To us, the empty room and cot,—
To her, the Heaven's completeness.

“To us, this grave,—to her, the rows
The mystic palm-trees spring in;
To us, the silence in the house,—
To her, the choral singing.

“For her, to gladden in God’s view,—
For us, to hope and bear on.
Grow, Lily, in thy garden new,
Beside the Rose of Sharon!

“Grow fast in heaven, sweet Lily clipped,
In love more calm than this is,
And may the angels dewy-lipped
Remind thee of our kisses!

“While none shall tell thee of our tears,
These human tears now falling,
Till, after a few patient years,
One home shall take us all in.

“Child, father, mother,—who, left out?
Not mother, and not father!
And when, our dying couch about,
The natural mists shall gather,

“Some smiling angel close shall stand
In old Correggio’s fashion,
And bear a LILY in his hand,
For death’s ANNUNCIATION.”

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

1850.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

(1.)

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young :
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair ;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
“ Guess now who holds thee ? ”—“ Death,” I said.
But, there,
The silver answer rang,—“ Not Death, but Love.”

(iv.)

Thou hast thy calling to some palace-floor.
Most gracious singer of high poems ! where
The dancers will break footing, from the care
Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.
And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor
For hand of thine ? and canst thou think and bear
To let thy music drop here unaware
In folds of golden fulness at my door ?
Look up and see the casement broken in,
The bats and owlets builders in the roof !
My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.
Hush, call no echo up in further proof
Of desolation ! there's a voice within
That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

(v.)

I lift my heavy heart up solemnly,
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,
And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn
The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see
What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,
And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn
Through the ashen greyness. If thy foot in scorn
Could tread them out to darkness utterly,
It might be well perhaps. But if instead
Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow
The grey dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,
O my Belovēd, will not shield thee so,
That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred
The hair beneath. Stand further off then ! go.

(vi.)

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

(ix.)

Can it be right to give what I can give ?
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears
As salt as mine, and hear the sighing years

Re-sighing on my lips renunciative
 Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live
 For all thy adjurations? O my fears,
 That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,
 So to be lovers; and I own, and grieve,
 That givers of such gifts as mine are, must
 Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!
 I will not soil thy purple with my dust,
 Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,
 Nor give thee any love—which were unjust.
 Beloved, I only love thee! let it pass.

(x.)

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
 And worthy of acceptance. Fire is bright,
 Let temple burn, or flax; an equal light
 Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed:
 And love is fire. And when I say at need
I love thee . . . mark! . . . I love thee—in thy sight
 I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
 With conscience of the new rays that proceed
 Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
 In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures
 Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
 And what I *feel*, across the inferior features
 Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
 How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

(xiii.)

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech
 The love I bear thee, finding words enough,
 And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,
 Between our faces, to cast light on each?—
 I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach
 My hand to hold my spirit so far off

From myself—me—that I should bring thee proof
 In words, of love hid in me out of reach.
 Nay, let the silence of my womanhood
 Commend my woman-love to thy belief,—
 Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,
 And rend the garment of my life, in brief,
 By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,
 Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

(xiv.)

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
 Except for love's sake only. Do not say
 "I love her for her smile—her look—her way
 Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
 That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
 A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
 For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
 Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,
 May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
 Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—
 A creature might forget to weep, who bore
 Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
 But love me for love's sake, that evermore
 Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

(xviii.)

I never gave a lock of hair away
 To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,
 Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully,
 I ring out to the full brown length and say
 "Take it." My day of youth went yesterday;
 My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee,
 Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,
 As girls do, any more: it only may

Now shade on two pale cheeks the mark of tears,
 Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside
 Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears
 Would take this first, but Love is justified,—
 Take it thou,—finding pure, from all those years,
 The kiss my mother left here when she died.

(xx.)

Belov'd, my Belov'd, when I think
 That thou wast in the world a year ago,
 What time I sate alone here in the snow
 And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
 No moment at thy voice, but, link by link,
 Went counting all my chains as if that so
 They never could fall off at any blow
 Struck by thy possible hand, why, thus I drink
 Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,
 Never to feel thee thrill the day or night
 With personal act or speech,—nor ever cull
 Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white
 Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,
 Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

(xxi.)

Say over again, and yet once over again,
 That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated
 Should seem "a cuckoo-song," as thou dost treat it.
 Remember, never to the hill or plain,
 Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain
 Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
 Belov'd, I, amid the darkness greeted
 By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain
 Cry, "Speak once more—thou lovest!" Who can fear
 Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll,
 Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
 Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll

The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,
To love me also in silence with thy soul.

(xxvi.)

I lived with visions for my company
Instead of men and women, years ago,
And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know
A sweeter music than they played to me.
But soon their trailing purple was not free
Of this world's dust, their lutes did silent grow,
And I myself grew faint and blind below
Their vanishing eyes. Then THOU didst come—to be,
Belovéd, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,
Their songs, their splendours, (better, yet the same,
As river-water hallowed into fonts)
Met in thee, and from out thee overcame
My soul with satisfaction of all wants:
Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

(xxxv.)

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove,

(XXXVIII.)

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
 The fingers of this hand wherewith I write ;
 And ever since, it grew more clean and white,
 Slow to world-greetings, quick with its " Oh, list,"
 When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst
 I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,
 Than that first kiss. The second passed in height
 The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,
 Half falling on the hair. O beyond need !
 That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,
 With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
 The third upon my lips was folded down
 In perfect, purple state ; since when, indeed,
 I have been proud and said, " My love, my own."

(XLIII.)

How do I love thee ? Let me count the ways.
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
 For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
 I love thee to the level of everyday's
 Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
 I love thee with the passion put to use
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
 With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
 Smiles, tears, of all my life !—and, if God choose,
 I shall but love thee better after death.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I.—THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling interwound,
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground.
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air :
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

II.—BEREAVEMENT.

WHEN some Beloveds, 'neath whose eyelids lay
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,
And I astonied fell and could not pray,—
A thought within me to myself did say,
“Is God less God, that *thou* art left undone ?
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,
As in that purple !”—But I answered, Nay !
What child his filial heart in words can loose
If he behold his tender father raise
The hand that chastens sorely ? can he choose
But sob in silence with an upward gaze ?—
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise.

III.—CONSOLATION.

ALL are not taken ; there are left behind
 A Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring
 And make the daylight still a happy thing,
 And tender voices, to make soft the wind :
 But if it were not so—if I could find
 No love in all the world for comforting,
 Nor any path but hollowly did ring
 Where “dust to dust” the love from life disjoined,
 And if, before those sepulchres unmoving
 I stood alone, (as some forsaken lamb
 Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth)
 Crying “Where are ye, O my loved and loving?”—
 I know a Voice would sound, Daughter, I AM.
 Can I suffice for HEAVEN and not for earth ?

IV.—GRIEF.

TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless ;
 That only men incredulous of despair,
 Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
 Beat upward to God’s throne in loud access
 Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
 In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare
 Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
 Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
 Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death—
 Most like a monumental statue set
 In everlasting watch and moveless woe
 Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
 Touch it ; the marble eyelids are not wet :
 If it could weep, it could arise and go.

V.—SUBSTITUTION.

WHEN some belov'd voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new—
What hope? what help? what music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,
Not reason's subtle count; not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet All hails,
Met in the smile of God: nay, none of these.
Speak THOU, availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

VI.—WORK.

WHAT are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.
God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dew-drop with another near.

VII.—FUTURITY.

AND, O belovèd voices, upon which
 Ours passionately call because erelong
 Ye break off in the middle of that song
 We sang together softly, to enrich
 The poor world with the sense of love and witch,
 The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,
 Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
 The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche
 In Heaven to hold our idols : and albeit
 He brake them to our faces and denied
 That our close kisses should impair their white,
 I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
 The dust swept from their beauty,—glorified
 New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

VIII.—WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.

THE woman singeth at her spinning-wheel
 A pleasant chant, ballad or barcarole ;
 She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,
 Far more than of her flax ; and yet the reel
 Is full, and artfully her fingers feel
 With quick adjustment, provident control,
 The lines, too subtly twisted to unroll,
 Out to a perfect thread. I hence appeal
 To the dear Christian church—that we may do
 Our Father's business in these temples mirk,
 Thus swift and steadfast, thus intent and strong ;
 While thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue
 Some high, calm, spheric tune, and prove our work
 The better for the sweetness of our song.

AURORA LEIGH.

1856.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

(FROM FIRST BOOK.)

WHOEVER lives true life, will love true love.
I learnt to love that England. Very oft,
Before the day was born, or otherwise
Through secret windings of the afternoons,
I threw my hunters off and plunged myself
Among the deep hills, as a hunted stag
Will take the waters, shivering with the fear
And passion of the course. And when at last
Escaped, so many a green slope built on slope
Betwixt me and the enemy's house behind,
I dared to rest, or wander, in a rest
Made sweeter for the step upon the grass,
And view the ground's most gentle dimplement,
(As if God's finger touched but did not press
In making England) such an up and down
Of verdure,—nothing too much up or down,
A ripple of land; such little hills, the sky
Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb;
Such nooks of valleys lined with orchisis,
Fed full of noises by invisible streams;
And open pastures where you scarcely tell
White daisies from white dew,—at intervals
The mythic oaks and elm-trees standing out
Self-poised upon their prodigy of shade,—
I thought my father's land was worthy too
Of being my Shakespeare's. . . .

. . . . After we walked only two
If cousin Romney pleased to walk with me.
We read, or talked, or quarrelled, as it chanced.

We were not lovers, nor even friends well-matched :
 Say rather, scholars upon different tracks,
 And thinkers disagreed, he, overfull
 Of what is, and I, haply, overbold
 For what might be.

But then the thrushes sang,
 And shook my pulses and the elms' new leaves ;
 At which I turned, and held my finger up,
 And bade him mark that, howsoe'er the world
 Went ill, as he related, certainly
 The thrushes still sing in it. At the word
 His brow would soften,—and he bore with me
 In melancholy patience, not unkind,
 While breaking into voluble ecstasy
 I flattered all the beauteous country round,
 As poets use, the skies, the clouds, the fields.
 The happy violets hiding from the roads
 The primroses run down to, carrying gold ;
 The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out
 Impatient horns and tolerant churning mouths
 'Twixt dripping ash-boughs,—hedgerows all alive
 With birds and gnats and large white butterflies
 Which look as if the May-flower had caught life
 And palpitated forth upon the wind ;
 Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver mist,
 Farms, granges, doubled up among the hills ;
 And cattle grazing in the watered vales,
 And cottage-chimneys smoking from the woods,
 And cottage-gardens smelling everywhere,
 Confused with smell of orchards. “ See,” I said,
 “ And see! is God not with us on the earth ?
 And shall we put Him down by aught we do ?
 Who says there's nothing for the poor and vile
 Save poverty and wickedness ? behold ! ”

And ankle-deep in English grass I leaped
And clapped my hands, and called all very fair.

(FROM SEVENTH BOOK.)

THE next day we took train to Italy
And fled on southward in the roar of steam.
The marriage-bells of Romney must be loud,
To sound so clear through all : I was not well,
And truly, though the truth is like a jest,
I could not choose but fancy, half the way,
I stood alone i' the belfry, fifty bells
Of naked iron, mad with merriment,
(As one who laughs and cannot stop himself)
All clanking at me, in me, over me,
Until I shrieked a shriek I could not hear,
And swooned with noise,—but still, along my swoon,
Was 'ware the baffled changes backward rang,
Prepared, at each emerging sense, to beat
And crash it out with clangour. I was weak ;
I struggled for the posture of my soul
In upright consciousness of place and time,
But evermore, 'twixt waking and asleep,
Slipped somehow, staggered, caught at Marion's eyes
A moment, (it is very good for strength
To know that some one needs you to be strong)
And so recovered what I called myself,
For that time.

I just knew it when we swept
Above the old roofs of Dijon : Lyons dropped
A spark into the night, half trodden out
Unseen. But presently the winding Rhone
Washed out the moonlight large along his banks
Which strained their yielding curves out clear and clean
To hold it,—shadow of town and castle blurred

Upon the hurrying river. Such an air
Blew thence upon the forehead,—half an air
And half a water,—that I leaned and looked,
Then, turning back on Marion, smiled to mark
That she looked only on her child, who slept,
His face toward the moon too.

So we passed
The liberal open country and the close,
And shot through tunnels, like a lightening-wedge
By great Thor-hammers driven through the rock,
Which, quivering through the intestine blackness, splits,
And lets it in at once : the train swept in
Athrob with effort, trembling with resolve,
The fierce denouncing whistle wailing on
And dying off smothered in the shuddering dark,
While we, self-awed, drew troubled breath, oppressed
As other Titans underneath the pile
And nightmare of the mountains. Out, at last,
To catch the dawn afloat upon the land !
—Hills, slung forth broadly and gauntly everywhere,
Not cramped in their foundations, pushing wide
Rich outspreads of the vineyards and the corn,
(As if the entertained i' the name of France)
While, down their straining sides, streamed manifest
A soil as red as Charlemagne's knightly blood,
To consecrate the verdure. Some one said,
'Marseilles !' And lo, the city of Marseilles,
With all her ships behind her, and beyond,
The scimitar of ever-shining sea
For right-hand use, bared blue against the sky !
That night we spent between the purple heaven
And purple water : I think Marian slept ;
But I, as a dog a-watch for his master's foot,
Who cannot sleep or eat before he hears,

I sate upon the deck and watched the night
And listened through the stars for Italy.
Those marriage-bells I spoke of, sounded far,
As some child's go-cart in the street beneath
To a dying man who will not pass the day,
And knows it, holding by a hand he loves.
I too sate quiet, satisfied with death,
Sate silent : I could hear my own soul speak,
And had my friend,—for Nature comes sometimes
And says, " I am ambassador for God."
I felt the wind soft from the land of souls ;
The old miraculous mountains heaved in sight,
One straining past another along the shore,
The way of grand dull Odyssean ghosts,
Athirst to drink the cool blue wine of seas
And stare on voyagers. Peak pushing peak
They stood : I watched, beyond that Tyrian belt
Of intense sea betwixt them and the ship,
Down all their sides the misty olive-woods
Dissolving in the weak congenial moon
And still disclosing some brown convent-tower
That seems as if it grew from some brown rock,
Or many a little lighted village, dropt
Like a fallen star upon so high a point,
You wonder what can keep it in its place
From sliding headlong with the waterfalls
Which powder all the myrtle and orange groves
With spray of silver. Thus my Italy
Was stealing on us. Genoa broke with day,
The Doria's long pale palace striking out,
From green hills in advance of the white town,
A marble finger dominant to ships,
Seen glimmering through the uncertain gray of dawn.

Truth, so far, in my book! a truth which draws
From all things upward. I, Aurora, still
Have felt it hound me through the wastes of life
As Jove did Io; and, until that Hand
Shall overtake me wholly and on my head
Lay down its large unfluctuating peace,
The feverish gad-fly pricks me up and down.
It must be. Art's the witness of what Is
Behind this show. If this world's show were all,
Then imitation would be all in Art;
There, Jove's hand gripes us!—For we stand here, we,
If genuine artists, witnessing for God's
Complete, consummate, undivided work;
—That every natural flower which grows on earth
Implies a flower upon the spiritual side,
Substantial, archetypal, all a-glow
With blossoming causes,—not so far away,
But we, whose spirit-sense is somewhat cleared,
May catch at something of the bloom and breath,—
Too vaguely apprehended, though indeed
Still apprehended, consciously or not,
And still transferred to picture, music, verse,
For thrilling audient and beholding souls
By signs and touches which are known to souls.
How known, they know not,—why, they cannot find,
So straight call out on genius. say, "A man
Produced this," when much rather they should say,
" 'T is insight, and he saw this." . . .

Jane Welsh Carlyle.

1806—1866.

JANE BAILLIE WELSH, afterwards wife of Thomas Carlyle, was born on July 14th, 1806. On her father's side she had descended from John KNOX, on her mother's she claimed descent from William Wallace. Whether it were too fanciful to attribute some of her gifts and graces to her distant progenitors is open to discussion. Certain it is that she had an indomitable spirit, a stern, strong sense of duty, an heroic endurance of hardship, and an uncompromising love of honesty and truth, and she may have owed somewhat to heredity as well as to early education and later self-discipline. Her father was a surgeon in Dumfriesshire, who met his death by typhus fever, caught from a patient; her mother was a woman of education and culture. The widow lady and her daughter dwelt in Haddington. Jane was a clever, sprightly, mischievous creature, and when put to books made great strides in learning. As she grew up she came under the pupilage of Edward Irving and was perhaps the first to discover his genius as she was afterwards, when notoriety in London was working him harm, amongst the earliest to detect and to sadly prophesy what the end must be with him. She, however, reaped much from the young man's teaching, and there appears to be little doubt that, had circumstances permitted, she would have

taken him for her husband, and, as she wrote years afterwards, "there would have been no tongues."

When introduced to Carlyle by Irving, she was a young, beautiful, well-read, and accomplished girl, several years under twenty. Carlyle was greatly impressed by her, and they quickly formed a friendship and established a correspondence. We find her writing to him in August 1823, "I owe you much: feelings and sentiments that ennoble my character, that give dignity, interest and enjoyment to my life,—in return I can only love you, and that I do from the bottom of my heart." She was only second to Irving in appreciating the great qualities of Carlyle, beneath whose somewhat rough, uncouth manners and self-doubting, self-questioning spirit, Jane Welsh discovered the man of genius. In 1826 they twain were married, and in wedding Carlyle Jane Welsh had faith in her own insight. When fame came to him, and people were recognising the presence of a great genius amongst them, she wrote, "They tell me things, as if they were new, that I found out years ago." Nevertheless, it is a striking testimony to her originality, her insight, and her sympathy, that she, a remarkably beautiful, gifted girl, of good position and family, should dare all the inevitable struggle, the inevitable poverty, that must precede success, by marrying the rough, penniless peasant-scholar, whose position in life was so different from her own.

In order that Carlyle, in marrying her, should be under no suspicion of mercenary motives, Jane Welsh Carlyle, renounced in her mother's favour, certain landed property, worth about £200 a year, and placed herself by her husband's side, who had

nothing but the promise, very dimly visible to most people, of distinction later on. For some years they lived at Craigenputtock, a little property belonging to the Welshes, a dreary, solitary, moorland place—"a solitude almost Druidical." Here Carlyle,—whose wife bore the solitude and submitted to much domestic drudgery for which her delicate physique was but ill-fitted, for her husband's sake,—produced, besides some of his best essays, "Sartor Resartus."

Leaving Craigenputtock, the Carlyles removed (in 1834) to No. 5, afterwards 24, Cheyne Row, Chelsea. "Her arrival I best of all remember. Ah me! She was clear for this poor house (which she gradually, as poverty a little withdrew after long years pushing, has made so beautiful and comfortable) in preference to all my other samples; and here we spent our two-and-thirty years of hard battle against fate; hard, but not quite unvictorious, when she left me in her car of heaven's fire."

It was here that this "singularly gifted woman who" (according to Mr. Froude), "had she so pleased, might have made a name for herself," voluntarily sacrificed ambition and fortune for his sake, and watched over and defended from care and annoyance the gifted, but desperately trying, man by her side.

Not until she had been suddenly snatched from him, on the morrow of his triumphant reception by the University of Edinburgh (April 21st, 1866), did Carlyle fully appreciate all she had been to him. "Could I be easy to live with? She flickered round me like perpetual radiance, and in spite of my glooms and my misdoings, would at no moment cease to

love me and help me. . . . Ah me! she never knew fully, nor could I show her in my heavy laden, miserable life, how much I had at all times regarded, loved, and admired her. No telling of her now."

Like other persons in this world, where even the best amongst us fall lamentably short of their ideals, the Carlyles had their hours, even their days, of estrangement; but surely far too much importance has been attached to their differences, and we shall not follow those rash, unwise, and sacrilegious people who have intruded into the griefs of Jane Carlyle. Unfortunately her marriage was not blessed with children: her fight with poverty was desperately prolonged, and she had a bitter experience of the Hope deferred which maketh the heart sick, and there were moments in her life when she craved for more tenderness and more outward displays of affection and sympathy than she obtained from her husband. If only they had been blessed with children, all might have been well. Nevertheless, they lived brave and noble lives.

In her very early days, before her marriage, Mrs. Carlyle wrote a good deal of verse; the poem here reprinted belongs to a somewhat later date. But who shall say how much of the pathos, tenderness, and poetry which abound in the writings of Thomas Carlyle is due to the gifted woman who detected his genius when none else did, who shielded him from the buffets of fortune, tended him in sickness, cheered him in despair, and was his loyal-hearted wife for forty years?

H. J. GIBBS.

TO A SWALLOW BUILDING UNDER OUR
EAVES.

1832.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE.

THOU too hast travelled, little fluttering thing—
Hast seen the world, and now thy weary wing
Thou too must rest.
But much, my little bird, couldst thou but tell,
I'd give to know why here thou lik'st so well
To build thy nest.

For thou hast passed fair places in thy flight;
A world lay all beneath thee where to light;
And, strange thy taste,
Of all the vari'd scenes that met thine eye—
Of all the spots for building 'neath the sky—
To choose this waste.

Did fortune try thee? was thy little purse
Perchance run low, and thou, afraid of worse,
Felt here secure?
Ah, no! thou need'st not gold, thou happy one!
Thou know'st it not. Of all God's creatures, man
Alone is poor!

What was it, then? some mystic turn of thought,
Caught under German eaves, and hither brought,
Marring thine eye
For the world's loveliness, till thou art grown
A sober thing that dost but mope and moan
Not knowing why?

Nay, if thy mind be sound, I need not ask,
Since here I see thee working at thy task
 With wing and beak.

A well-laid scheme doth that small head contain,
At which thou work'st, brave bird, with might and main,
 Nor more need'st seek.

In truth, I rather take it thou hast got
By instinct wise much sense about thy lot,
 And hast small care
Whether an Eden or a desert be
Thy home so thou remain'st alive, and free
 To skim the air.

God speed thee, pretty bird ; may thy small nest
With little ones all in good time be blest.

 I love thee much ;
For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I ! Oh, ask not what I do with mine !
 Would I were such !

Lady Dufferin.

1807—1867.

HELEN SELINA SHERIDAN, afterwards Lady Dufferin, was the eldest daughter of Thomas Sheridan, and the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Elizabeth Linley. Born in 1807, she spent her early life at Hampton Court Palace, where, after the death of her father in 1817, her mother found asylum for herself and her children. Her younger sister, Caroline Elizabeth, afterwards became famous as the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and a third sister, Jane Georgina, as "The Queen of Beauty," and the Duchess of Somerset. These three remarkable sisters inherited a large measure of the wit and beauty which was characteristic of both their parents and their grandparents, and were known in society as "The Three Graces." Helen Selina, at the age of eighteen, married Mr. Price Blackwood, who succeeded to the title of Dufferin in 1839, and died in 1841. Lady Dufferin does not seem to have had the strong literary impulse of her sister Caroline, and happily for herself lacked the motive of necessity which drew greater efforts from the Hon. Mrs. Norton's pen, but she wrote songs which have been sung wherever the language is spoken, and which give lyric expression to some of the tenderest emotions of the Irish heart. "Terence's Farewell" and "The Irish Emigrant" have been among the most popular

songs of the century. Sung by herself they won their way in the brilliant society with which she mingled, and found echo and re-echo outside that charmed circle in countless hearts and homes. Her amiability of temperament and sweetness of manner exercised an irresistible charm upon her contemporaries, a charm which was rendered the more fascinating by the natural wit with which it was associated.

Lady Dufferin was the mother of the present Marquis, whose distinguished services to the State have won for him universal honour, and who is known to literature by his "Letters from High Latitudes," and other works. Later in life, she married Lord Gifford, who only survived the marriage two months. She died in the month of June 1867.

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS.

LADY DUFFERIN.

I.

LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT.

I'M sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side
On a bright May mornin' long ago,
When first you were my bride ;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high—
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
And the love-light in your eye.

The *place* is little changed, Mary,
The day is bright as then,
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
And the corn is green again ;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
And your breath, warm on my cheek,
And I still keep list'ning for the words
You never more will speak.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane,
And the little church stands near,
The church where we were wed, Mary,
I see the spire from here.
But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
And my step might break your rest—
For I've laid you, darling! down to sleep,
With your baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary,
For the poor make no new friends,
But, oh! they love the better still,
The few our Father sends!
And you were all *I* had, Mary,
My blessin' and my pride :
There's nothin' left to care for now,
Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
That still kept hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
And my arm's young strength was gone.
There was comfort ever on *your* lip,
And the kind look on your brow—
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
Though you cannot hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile
When your heart was fit to break,
When the hunger pain was gnawin' there,
And you hid it, for *my* sake!
I bless you for the pleasant word,
When your heart was sad and sore—
Oh! I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
Where grief can't reach you more!

I'm biddin' you a long farewell,
My Mary—kind and true!
But I'll not forget *you*, darling!
In the land I'm goin' to ;
They say there's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there—
But I'll not forget old Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair!

And often in those grand old woods
 I'll sit, and shut my eyes,
 And my heart will travel back again
 To the place where Mary lies ;
 And I'll think I see the little stile
 Where we sat side by side :
 And the springin' corn, and the bright May morn,
 When first you were my bride.

II.

TERENCE'S FAREWELL.

SO, my Kathleen, you're goin' to leave me
 All alone by myself in this place,
 But I'm sure you will never deceive me,
 Oh no, if there's truth in your face.
 Though England's a beautiful country
 Full of iligant boys, och ! what then ?
 You wouldn't forget your poor Terence,
 You'll come back to ould Ireland again.

Och ! them English decavers by nature !
 Though maybe you'd think them sincere,
 They'll say you're a sweet charming creature,
 But don't you belave them, my dear,
 No, Kathleen, agrah, don't be mindin'
 The flatterin' speeches they'll make,
 Just tell them a poor boy in Ireland
 Is breakin' his heart for your sake.

It's a folly to keep you from goin',
 Though, faith ! 'tis a mighty hard case ;
 For, Kathleen, you know there's no knowin'
 When next I may see your sweet face,

And when you come back to me, Kathleen,
None the better shall I be off then :
You'll be spakin' such beautiful English,
Sure I won't know my Kathleen again.

Eh now ! where's the need of this hurry ?
Don't fluster me so in this way ;
I've forgot, 'twixt the grief and the flurry,
Every word I was manin' to say.
Now just wait a minute, I bid ye—
Can I talk if you bother me so ?
Och, Kathleen, my blessin' go wid ye
Ev'ry inch of the way that you go.

Hon. Mrs. Norton.

1808—1876.

CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH SHERIDAN, afterwards the Hon. Mrs. Norton, was the second daughter of Thomas Sheridan, and the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Her mother, who was the daughter of Colonel Callendar, possessed great personal charms, and natural literary ability, which found exercise in the writing of novels. Caroline inherited many of her mother's gifts and graces, together with the more brilliant qualities belonging to her father's family, and was thus well equipped for both a fashionable and a literary career. Born in 1808, she spent some years after her father's death with her mother and sisters at Hampton Court Palace, and later at a small mansion in Great George Street, near Storey's Gate. When scarcely more than a child she was sought in marriage by Mr. George Norton, a younger brother of Lord Grantley, and in 1827 he married her. The marriage was a most unhappy one, and Mrs. Norton doubtless found some relief from her sorrows in the employment of her pen. She is said to have earned large sums by her writings, and for a long time to have provided the means for the family subsistence, as well as for her husband's extravagances. These were the days of the "Annuals" with their covers of red silk and embellishments of steel engravings, and Mrs. Norton

became both a contributor and an editor in this connection. Like her mother she wrote several novels, "Old Sir Douglas," "Lost and Found," etc., etc., novels which, in some instances, ran to several editions, and to these she added four volumes of verse: "The Sorrows of Rosalie" (1829); "The Undying One" (1831); "The Child of the Islands" (1845); "The Lady of la Garaye" (1861-2). Mrs. Norton's work was not conceived in any dilettante spirit. It shows from first to last, that steady progress which only comes of conscientious application and continuous study. Her longer works lack the sustained interest which can alone make such poems permanently popular, but they contain stanzas which give felicitous expression to genuine feeling and ennobling thought. Lockhart, in the *Quarterly*, called her "the Byron of poetesses," but, except for the connubial infelicity which withered both their lives, and the occasional expression of the emotions stirred by their common experience, the analogy cannot be said to hold good. Each, like Wordsworth's nightingale, was "a creature of a fiery heart;" but Mrs. Norton was chastened and refined by the sufferings that irritated and degraded Byron.

Mrs. Norton's tender womanly feeling was everywhere evident in her life and work. Her sympathy with the poor and the suffering was keen and constant.

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS AND BALLADS.

HON. MRS. NORTON.

I.—LOVE NOT.

LOVE not, love not, ye hapless sons of clay !
Hope's gayest wreaths are made of earthly flow'rs—
Things that are made to fade and fall away,
When they have blossomed but a few short hours.
Love not, love not !

Love not, love not ! The thing you love may die—
May perish from the gay and gladsome earth ;
The silent stars, the blue and smiling sky,
Beam on its grave as once upon its birth.
Love not, love not !

Love not, love not ! The thing you love may change,
The rosy lip may cease to smile on you ;
The kindly beaming eye grow cold and strange ;
The heart still warmly beat, yet not be true.
Love not, love not !

Love not, love not !—Oh, warning vainly said
In present years, as in the years gone by :
Love flings a halo round the dear one's head,
Faultless, immortal,—till they change or die.
Love not, love not !

II.—THE KING OF DENMARK'S RIDE.

WORD was brought to the Danish king,
 (Hurry!)
That the love of his heart lay suffering,
And pined for the comfort his voice would bring;
 (Oh! ride as though you were flying!)
Better he loves each golden curl
On the brow of that Scandinavian girl
Than his rich crown jewels of ruby and pearl:
 And his Rose of the Isles is dying!

Thirty nobles saddled with speed;
 (Hurry!)
Each one mounting a gallant steed
Which he kept for battle and days of need;
 (Oh! ride as though you were flying!)
Spurs were struck in the foaming flank;
Worn-out chargers staggered and sank;
Bridles were slackened and girths were burst;
But ride as they would, the king rode first,
 For his Rose of the Isles lay dying!

His nobles are beaten, one by one;
 (Hurry!)
They have fainted and faltered and homeward gone;
His little fair page now follows alone,
 For strength and for courage trying.
The king looked back at that faithful child;
Wan was the face that answering smiled;
They passed the drawbridge with clattering din,
Then he dropped; and only the king rode in
 Where his Rose of the Isles lay dying!

The king blew a blast on his bugle horn ;
 (Silence !)
 No answer came ; but faint and forlorn
 An echo returned on the cold grey morn,
 Like the breath of a spirit sighing.
 The castle portal stood grimly wide ;
 None welcomed the king from that weary ride ;
 For dead in the light of the dawning day,
 The pale sweet form of the welcomer lay
 Who had yearned for his voice while dying !

The panting steed, with a drooping crest,
 Stood weary.
 The king returned from her chamber of rest,
 The thick sobs choking in his breast,
 And that dumb companion eying,
 The tears gushed forth which he strove to check
 He bowed his head on his charger's neck ;
 "O steed, that every nerve didst strain,
 Dear steed, our ride hath been in vain
 To the halls where my love lay dying !"

III.—DREAMS.

SURELY I heard a voice—surely my name
 Was breathed in tones familiar to my heart !
 I listened—and the low wind stealing came,
 In darkness and in silence to depart.

Surely I saw a form, a proud bright form,
 Standing beside my couch ! I raised mine eyes :
 'Twas but a dim cloud, herald of a storm,
 That floated through the grey and twilight skies.

Surely the brightness of the summer hour
 Hath suddenly burst upon the circling gloom !
 I dream ; 'twas but the perfume of a flower,
 Which the breeze wafted through the silent room.

Surely a hand clasped mine with greetings fond !
 A name is murmured by my lips with pain ;
 Woe for that sound—woe for love's broken bond.
 I start—I wake—I am alone again !

IV.—I DO NOT LOVE THEE !

I DO not love thee !—no ! I do not love thee !
 And yet when thou art absent I am sad ;
 And envy even the bright blue sky above thee,
 Whose quiet stars may see thee and be glad.

I do not love thee !—yet, I know not why,
 Whate'er thou dost seems still well done, to me—
 And often in my solitude I sigh—
 That those I *do* love are not more like thee !

I do not love thee !—yet, when thou art gone
 I hate the sound (though those who speak be dear)
 Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone
 Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear.

I do not love thee !—yet thy speaking eyes,
 With their deep, bright, and most expressive blue—
 Between me and the midnight heaven arise,
 Oftener than any eyes I ever knew.

I *know* I do not love thee ! yet, alas !
 Others will scarcely trust my candid heart ;
 And oft I catch them smiling as they pass,
 Because they see me gazing where thou art.

V.—BINGEN ON THE RHINE.

A SOLDIER of the Legion lay dying in Algiers—
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was
dearth of woman's tears ;
But a comrade stood beside him, while his life-blood
ebbed away,
And bent, with pitying glances, to hear what he
might say.
The dying soldier faltered, as he took that comrade's
hand,
And he said: "I never more shall see my own, my
native land ;
Take a message and a token to some distant friends
of mine,
For I was born at Bingen—at Bingen on the Rhine !
"Tell my brothers and companions, when they meet
and crowd around
To hear my mournful story, in the pleasant vineyard
ground,
That we fought the battle bravely—and, when the
day was done,
Full many a corse lay ghastly pale, beneath the
setting sun.
And 'midst the dead and dying were some grown
old in wars,—
The death-wound on their gallant breasts, the last
of many scars ;
But some were young,—and suddenly beheld life's
morn decline,—
And one had come from Bingen—fair Bingen on the
Rhine !

“Tell my mother that her other sons shall comfort
her old age,
And I was aye a truant bird, that thought his home
a cage ;
For my father was a soldier, and, even as a child,
My heart leaped forth to hear him tell of struggles
fierce and wild ;
And when he died, and left us to divide his scanty
hoard,
I let them take whate’er they would—but kept my
father’s sword ;
And with boyish love I hung it where the bright
light used to shine,
On the cottage wall at Bingen—calm Bingen on the
Rhine!

“Tell my sister not to weep for me, and sob with
drooping head,
When the troops are marching home again, with
glad and gallant tread ;
But to look upon them proudly, with a calm and
steadfast eye,
For her brother was a soldier, too—and not afraid
to die.
And, if a comrade seek her love, I ask her, in my
name,
To listen to him kindly, without regret or shame ;
And to hang the old sword in its place (my father’s
sword and mine),
For the honour of old Bingen—dear Bingen on th
Rhine!

“There’s another—not a sister,—in the happy days
gone by,
You’d have known her by the merriment that sparkled
in her eye:
Too innocent for coquetry! too fond for idle scorn-
ing;—
Oh friend! I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes
heaviest mourning!
Tell her, the last night of my life (for, ere this moon
be risen,
My body will be out of pain—my soul be out of
prison),
I dreamed I stood with *her*, and saw the yellow sun-
light shine
On the vine-clad hills of Bingen—fair Bingen on the
Rhine!

“I saw the blue Rhine sweep along—I heard, or
seemed to hear,
The German songs we used to sing, in chorus sweet
and clear;
And down the pleasant river, and up the slanting
hill,
That echoing chorus sounded, through the evening
calm and still;
And her glad blue eyes were on me, as we passed
with friendly talk,
Down many a path beloved of yore, and well-
remembered walk;
And her little hand lay lightly, confidently in mine . . .
But we’ll meet no more at Bingen—loved Bingen on
the Rhine!”

His voice grew faint and hoarser,—his grasp was
childish weak,—
His eyes put on a dying look,—he sighed and ceased
to speak :
His comrade bent to lift him, . . . but the spark of
life had fled !
The soldier of the Legion, in a foreign land was
dead !
And the soft moon rose up slowly, and calmly she
looked down
On the red sand of the battle-field, with bloody
corpses strown ;
Yea, calmly on that dreadful scene her pale light
seemed to shine,
As it shone on distant Bingen—fair Bingen on the
Rhine !

VI.—CRIPPLED JANE.

THEY said she might recover, if we sent her down
to the sea,
But that is for rich men's children, and we knew it
could not be :
So she lived at home in the Lincolnshire Fens, and
we saw her, day by day,
Grow pale, and stunted, and crooked ; till her last
chance died away.
And now *I'm* dying ; and often, when you thought
that I moaned with pain,
I was moaning a prayer to Heaven, and thinking of
Crippled Jane.
Folks will be kind to Johnny ; his temper is merry
and light ;
With so much love in his honest eyes, and a sturdy
sense of right.

And no one could quarrel with Susan; so pious,
and meek, and mild,
And nearly as wise as a woman, for all that she looks
such a child !
But Jane will be weird and wayward ; fierce, and
cunning, and hard ;
She won't believe she's a burden, be thankful, nor
win regard.—
God have mercy upon her ! God be her guard and
guide ;
How will strangers bear with her, when, at times,
even *I* felt tried ?
When the ugly smile of pleasure goes over her
sallow face,
And the feeling of health, for an hour, quickens her
languid pace ;
When with dwarfish strength she rises, and plucks,
with a selfish hand,
The busiest person near her, to lead her out on the
land ;
Or when she sits in some corner, no one's com-
panion or care,
Huddled up in some darksome passage, or crouched
on a step of the stair ;
While far off the children are playing, and the birds
singing loud in the sky,
And she looks through the cloud of her headache,
to scowl at the passers-by
I die—God have pity upon her !—how happy rich
men must be !—
For they said she might have recovered—if we sent
her down to the sea.

THE CHILD OF THE ISLANDS.

1845.

HON. MRS. NORTON.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

THE Mother looketh from her latticed pane—
Her Children's voices echoing sweet and clear :
With merry leap and bound her side they gain,
Offering their wild field-flow'rets : all are dear,
Yet still she listens with an absent ear :
For, while the strong and lovely round her press,
A halt uneven step sounds drawing near :
And all she leaves, that crippled child to bless,
Folding him to her heart, with cherishing caress.

Yea, where the Soul denies illumined grace,
(The last, the worst, the fatallest defect ;)
SHE, gazing earnest in that idiot face,
Thinks she perceives a dawn of Intellect :
And, year by year, continues to expect
What Time shall never bring, ere Life be flown :
Still loving, hoping,—patient, though deject,—
Watching those eyes that answer not her own,—
Near him, and yet how far ! with him, but still alone

Want of attraction *this* love cannot mar :
Years of Rebellion cannot blot it out :
The Prodigal, returning from afar,
Still finds a welcome, giv'n with song and shout !
The Father's hand, without reproach or doubt,
Clasps his,—who caused them all such bitter fears :
The Mother's arms encircle him about :
That long dark course of alienated years,
Marked only by a burst of reconciling tears !

Frances Anne Kemble.

1809.

FANNY KEMBLE, to call her by the name by which she is most familiarly known, was born on the 27th November, 1809, in Newman Street, Oxford Street, London. Her father was Charles Kemble, the famous actor, her mother was the offspring of a French officer, who had married the daughter of a farmer from the neighbourhood of Berne. Fanny Kemble was always proud to think that there was as much of her mother's as of her father's blood in her veins;—"I sometimes wonder," she writes, "whether it is her blood in my veins that so loves and longs for those supremely beautiful mountains." Fanny Kemble confesses that she was a rebellious child, prone to defy all authority, and in her "Records of Girlhood," she tells in a half-humorous tone, how her famous great-aunt, Mrs. Siddons, who lived next door, had often to be called in to admonish her.

"Melpomene took me upon her lap, and, bending upon me her 'controlling frown,' discoursed to me of my evil ways, in those accents which curdled the blood of the poor shopman, of whom she demanded if the printed calico she purchased of him 'would wash.' The tragic tones pausing, in the midst of the impressed and impressive silence of the assembled family, I tinkled forth, 'What beautiful eyes you

have!' all my small faculties having been absorbed in the steadfast upward gaze I fixed upon those magnificent orbs. Mrs. Siddons set me down with a smothered laugh, and I trotted off, apparently uninjured by my great-aunt's solemn moral suasion."

Fanny Kemble early showed unmistakable proofs of genius, and was carefully educated with a view to the stage. She was sent to several schools, and finally to Paris; and of the school there she gives a very graphic account, describing the great difficulty the dancing teacher had in giving her a good deportment. She soon showed her superiority in acting, however, and, though she essayed somewhat ambitious parts, generally carried herself well through them. She returned home when sixteen; and has to confess that, though a pretty-looking girl with fine eyes, teeth and hair, a clear vivid complexion, and rather good features, she suffered from the results of small-pox. She says this rendered her complexion at times thick and muddy, the features heavy and coarse, leaving her so moderate a share of good looks then as quite to warrant her mother's satisfaction in saying when she went on the stage, "Well, my dear, they can't say we've brought you out to exhibit your beauty!" "Plain I certainly was," she adds, "but I by no means looked so; and so great was the variation in my appearance at different times, that my comical old friend, Mrs. Fitzhugh, once exclaimed, 'Fanny Kemble, you are the ugliest and the handsomest woman in London!'"

While still very young, Fanny Kemble began to write for the stage, composing her drama of "Francis I.," at the age of seventeen; a play in which she herself personated one of the leading char-

acters. It was successful also as a book, reaching a seventh edition. At Covent Garden Theatre, then under the management of her father, she acted many leading characters while yet young: Portia, Isabella, Lady Townley, Calista, Bianca, Beatrice Constance, Lady Teazle, Lady Macbeth, and Julia in the *Hunchback* being amongst them.

In 1832 with her father, she visited America, and performed with *éclat* at the principal theatres there. She has given an account of her experiences during this tour in her "Journal of a Residence in America" (1835). Whilst in America, she married a planter of South Carolina, Mr. Pierce Butler; but her marriage did not prove a happy one, and she obtained a divorce from him in 1839. She resumed her maiden name, and settled in Lenox, Massachusetts, where she resided for twenty years, with the exception of one year spent in Italy, of which she has given a vivacious account in her book entitled, "A Year of Consolation: Travels in Italy" (1847). She also wrote an account of her "Residence in America," and published a volume of "Residence on a Georgia Plantation" (1863). She has been a constant writer, and has published much. She translated some of Schiller's dramas, among them "Mary Stuart," and wrote many novels and tales; "Notes on Shakespeare's Plays" (1882); "Records of Girlhood," 3 vols. (1878); "Records of Later Life," 3 vols. (1882), besides two volumes of Poems. She has appeared at intervals as a public reader. From 1869 to 1873 she resided in Europe, and for a time returned to America, but she now resides in London.

Her poems are marked by thought, by fancy, and great love of nature and art. She has written in

many metres and almost always with a sense of distinction and of ease. Her sonnets are very finished—some of them, indeed, will compare with the most successful of those written by any, save the half-dozen or so who stand supreme in this department of poetry. Much of her work is autobiographical and bears the impress of her changeful life. The following sonnet could only have been written by one who united the poet's feeling and the actor's experience :—

TO SHAKESPEARE.

OFt, when my lips I open to rehearse
Thy wondrous spells of wisdom, and of power,
And that my voice, and thy immortal verse,
On listening ears, and hearts, I mingled pour,
I shrink dismayed—and awful doth appear
The vain presumption of my own weak deed ;
Thy glorious spirit seems to mine so near,
That suddenly I tremble as I read—
Thee an invisible auditor I fear :
Oh, if it might be so, my master dear !
With what beseeching would I pray to thee,
To make me equal to my noble task,
Succor from thee, how humbly would I ask,
Thy worthiest works to utter worthily.

Our selection aims at representing something of her varied range and her fresh and often felicitous treatment of ordinary themes.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

I.—THE YEAR'S PROGRESS.

I LOOK along the dusty dreary way,
So lately strew'd with blossoms fresh and gay,—
The sweet procession of the year is past,
And wither'd whirling leaves run rattling fast,
Like throngs of tatter'd beggars following
Where late went by the pageant of a king.

First came the forward darlings of the Spring,
Snowdrops, and violets, and daisies white,
And hanging cowslips, and each pageant thing
Whose waking wakes the season of delight,—
The year's faint smiles before its burst of mirth,
The soft sweet breathing babies of the earth,
Close to her warm brown bosom nestling in,
That the wild winds take laughing by the chin ;
Then flush'd the silver glory of the May,
And like a bride the Spring was led away.
Summer's lithe daughters followed flaunting gay,
Mingling their odours with the new mown hay,
The rosy eglantine, smooth, silken-cheek'd,
And amber honeysuckle, crimson-streak'd ;
Then the prim privet with her ivory bloom,
Like a pale maiden sister, filled their room
With blue-green leaves, and almond bitter breath,
Thrusting her dainty spices up underneath.
Brown thorny arches sprinkled with the rose,
Whiter than chalk that on the wild briar grows,

And the cream-colour'd crumbling elder flower,
 Garlanded o'er with starry virgin's bow'r,
 Piled the green hedgerows with their heaps of bloom,
 And buried the deep lanes in pageant gloom.

Autumn, with shining berries black and red,
 And glossy curl'd clematis bound his head ;
 Over his russet cloak the wild hops pale
 With golden corn and scarlet poppies trail,
 And waving down his mane of tawny hair,
 Hangs purple poison-flow'r, the Lady Fair.

Of all the lovely train he was the last,
 And with him all the pageant bright hath past,
 And in its path, scour'd by the whimpering wind,
 Grey shapeless Winter shuffles close behind.

II.—EXPOSTULATION.

WHAT though the sun must set, and darkness
 come,
 Shall we turn coldly from the blessèd light,
 And o'er the heavens call an earlier gloom,
 Because the longest day must end in night ?
 What though the golden summer flies so fast,
 Shall we neglect the rosy wreaths she brings,
 Because their blooming sweetness may not last,
 And winter comes apace with snowy wings ?
 What though this world be but the journeying land,
 Where those who love but meet to part again ;
 Where, as we clasp in welcome friendship's hand,
 That greeting clasp becomes a parting strain :
 'Tis better to be blest for one short hour,
 Than never know delight of love or joy,
 Friendship, or mirth, or happiness, or power,
 And all that Time creates, and must destroy.

III.—THE BLACK WALL-FLOWER.

I FOUND a flower in a desolate plot,
 Where no man wrought,—by a deserted cot,
 Where no man dwelt ; a strange, dark-colour'd gem,
 Black heavy buds on a pale leafless stem ;
 I pluck'd it, wondering, and with it hied
 To my brave May ; and, showing it, I cried :
 “ Look, what a dismal flower ! did ever bloom,
 Born of our earth and air, wear such a gloom ?
 It looks as it should grow out of a tomb :
 Is it not mournful ? ” “ No,” replied the child ;
 And, gazing on it thoughtfully, she smiled.
 She knows each word of that great book of God,
 Spread out between the blue sky and the sod :
 “ There are no mournful flowers—they are all glad ;
 This is a solemn one, but not a sad.”

Lo ! with the dawn the black buds open'd slowly ;
 Within each cup a colour deep and holy,
 As sacrificial blood, glow'd rich and red,
 And through the velvet tissue mantling spread ;
 While in the midst of this dark crimson heat
 A precious golden heart did throb and beat ;
 Through ruby leaves the morning light did shine,
 Each mournful bud had grown a flow'r divine ;
 And bitter sweet to senses and to soul,
 A breathing came from them, that fill'd the whole
 Of the surrounding tranced and sunny air
 With its strange fragrance, like a silent prayer.
 Then cried I, “ From the earth's whole wreath I'll
 borrow
 No flower but thee ! thou exquisite type of sorrow ! ”

IV.—WRITTEN AT TRENTON FALLS.

COME down! from where the everlasting hills
 Open their rocky gates to let thee pass,
 Child of a thousand rapid running rills,
 And still lakes, where the skies their beauty glass.
 With thy dark eyes, white feet, and amber hair,
 Of heaven and earth thou fair and fearful daughter,
 Through thy wide halls, and down thy echoing stair,
 Rejoicing come—thou lovely “Leaping Water!”
 Shout! till the woods beneath their vaults of green
 Resound, and shake their pillars on thy way;
 Fling wide thy glittering fringe of silver sheen,
 And toss towards heaven thy clouds of dazzling spray.
 The sun looks down upon thee with delight,
 And weaves his prism around thee for a belt;
 And as the wind waves thy thin robes of light,
 The jewels of thy girdle glow and melt.
 Ah! where be they, who first with human eyes
 Beheld thy glory, thou triumphant flood!
 And through the forest, heard with glad surprise,
 Thy waters calling, like the voice of God?
 Far towards the setting sun, wandering they go,
 Poor remnant! left, from exile and from slaughter,
 But still their memory, mingling with thy flow,
 Lives in thy name—thou lovely “Leaping Water.”

V.—WRITTEN ON CRAMOND BEACH.

FAREWELL, old playmate! on thy sandy shore
 My lingering feet will leave their print no more;
 To thy loved side I never may return.
 I pray thee, old companion, make due mourn

For the wild spirit who so oft has stood
Gazing in love and wonder on thy flood.
The form is now departing far away,
That half in anger, oft, and half in play,
Thou hast pursued with thy white showers of foam.
Thy waters daily will besiege the home
I loved among the rocks ; but there will be
No laughing cry, to hail thy victory,
Such as was wont to greet thee, when I fled
With hurried footsteps, and averted head,
Like fallen monarch, from thy venturous stand,
Chased by thy billows far along the sand.
And when at eventide thy warm waves drink
The amber clouds, that in their bosom sink ;
When sober twilight over thee has spread
Her purple pall, when the glad day is dead,
My voice no more will mingle with the dirge
That rose in mighty moaning from thy surge,
Filling with awful harmony the air,
When thy vast soul and mine were joined in prayer.

VI.—DREAM LAND.

WHEN in my dreams thy lovely face,
Smiles with unwonted tender grace,
Grudge not the precious seldom cheer ;
I know full well, my lady dear !
It is no boon of thine.

In thy sweet sanctuary of sleep,
If my sad sprite should kneeling weep,
Suffer its speechless worship there ;
Thou know'st full well, my lady fair !
It is no fault of mine.

VII.—IS IT A SIN?

IS it a sin, to wish that I may meet thee
 In that dim world whither our spirits stray,
 When sleep and darkness follow life and day?
 Is it a sin, that there my voice should greet thee
 With all that love that I must die concealing?
 Will my tear-laden eyes sin in revealing
 The agony that preys upon my soul?
 Is't not enough through the long, loathsome day,
 To hold each look, and word, in stern control?
 May I not wish the staring sunlight gone,
 Day and its thousand torturing moments done,
 And prying sights and sounds of men away?
 Oh, still and silent Night! when all things sleep,
 Locked in thy swarthy breast my secret keep:
 Come, with thy visioned hopes and blessings now!
 I dream the only happiness I know.

VIII.—WHENE'ER I RECOLLECT THE HAPPY TIME:

WHENE'ER I recollect the happy time,
 When you and I held converse dear together,
 There come a thousand thoughts of sunny weather,
 Of early blossoms, and the fresh year's prime;
 Your memory lives for ever in my mind
 With all the fragrant beauties of the spring,
 With od'rous lime and silver hawthorn twined,
 And many a noonday woodland wandering.
 There's not a thought of you, but brings along
 Some sunny dream of river, field, and sky;
 'Tis wafted on the blackbird's sunset song,
 Or some wild snatch of ancient melody.
 And as I date it still, our love arose
 'Twixt the last violet and the earliest rose.

IX.—ABSENCE.

WHAT shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face ?
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of grace ?
Shall I in slumber steep each weary sense,
Weary with longing ?—shall I flee away
Into past days, and with some fond pretence
Cheat myself to forget the present day ?
Shall love for thee lay on my soul the sin
Of casting from me God's great gift of time ;
Shall I these mists of memory locked within,
Leave, and forget life's purposes sublime ?
Oh ! how, or by what means, may I contrive
To bring the hour that brings thee back more near ?
How may I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessèd time, and thou art here ?
I'll tell thee : for thy sake, I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds, each moment that is told
While thou, belovèd one ! art far from me.
For thee, I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenward flights, all high and holy strains ;
For thy dear sake I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their minutes pains.
I will this dreary blank of absence make
A noble task-time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o'ertake
More good than I have won, since yet I live.
So may this doomèd time build up in me
A thousand graces which shall thus be thine ;

So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence divine.

X.—*MORNING.*

BY THE SEASIDE.

WITH these two kisses on thine eyes
I melt thy sleep away—arise !
For look, my love, Phœbus his golden hand
Hath laid upon the white mane of the sea,
And springing from the fresh brine gloriously,
He glances keen o'er the long level strand.
Now come his horses up, all snorting fire,
The lovely morning hours, hymning their choir
Of triumph, circle round the royal sun,
And the bright pageant of the day's begun.
Come, let me lock in mine thy hand,
And pace we with swift feet, this smooth and sparkling sand.
See, how the swollen ridges of the waves
Curl into crystal caves,
Rising and rounding,
Rolling, rebounding,
Echoing, resounding,
And running into curves of creamy spray,
Mark, with white wavy lines, the far-indented bay.
The little bark, that by the sheltering shore,
Folded her wings, and rocked herself to sleep,
Shakes out her pinions to the breeze once more,
And like a swallow, dips, and skims the deep.
Hail, welcome day ! hail, miracle of light !
Hail, wondrous resurrection from the night !
Hail, glorious earth ! hail, ocean, fearful fair !
Hail, ye sweet kisses of fresh morning air !
Hail thou ! my love, my life, my air, my light,
Soul of my day ! my morning, noon, and night !

XI.—ONE AFTER ONE, THE SHIELD, THE
SWORD, THE SPEAR.

ONE after one, the shield, the sword, the spear,
The panoply that I was wont to wear,
My suit of proof, my wings that kept me free,
These, full of trust, delivered I to thee,
When, through all time, I swore that by thy side
I would henceforward walk :—I since have tried,
In hours of sadness, when my former life
Shone on me through thick gathering clouds of strife,
To wield my weapons bright, and wear again
My maiden corslet and free wings—in vain !
My hands have lost their strength and skill—my breast,
Beneath my mail throbs with a wild unrest ;
My pinions trail upon the earth—my soul,
Quails 'neath the heavy spell of thy control.
All that was living of my life seems fled,
My mortal part alone is not yet dead.
But since my nobler gifts have all been thine,
Trophies, or sacrifices for thy shrine,
Pierce not the breast that stripped itself for thee
Of the fair means God gave it to be free ;
Have yet some pity, and forbear to strike
One without power to strive, or fly alike,
Nor trample on a heart, which now must be
Towards all defenceless—most of all towards thee.

XII.—FAITH.

BETTER trust all, and be deceived,
And weep that trust, and that deceiving ;
Than doubt one heart, that, if believed,
Had blessed one's life with true believing.
Oh, in this mocking world, too fast
The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth !
Better be cheated to the last,
Than lose the blessed hope of truth.

XIII.—LADY, WHOM MY BELOVED LOVES.

LADY, whom my belovèd loves so well !
 When on his clasping arm thy head reclineth,
 When on thy lips his ardent kisses dwell,
 And the bright flood of burning light, that shineth
 In his dark eyes, is pourèd into thine ;
 When thou shalt lie enfolded to his heart,
 In all the trusting helplessness of love ;
 If in such joy sorrow can find a part,
 Oh, give one sigh unto a doom like mine !
 Which I would have thee pity, but not prove.
 One cold, calm, careless, wintry look, that fell
 Haply by chance on me, is all that he
 E'er gave my love ; round that, my wild thoughts dwell
 In one eternal pang of memory.

XIV.—PAOLO AND FRANCESCA.

SEER of the triple realm invisible,
 When I behold that miserable twain,
 By Rimini's sudden sword of justice slain,
 Sweep through the howling hurricane of hell—
 Light seems to me to rest upon their gloom,
 More than upon this wretched earth above,
 Falls on the path of many a living love,
 Whose fate may envy their united doom.
 There be, who wandering in this world, with heart
 Riveted to some other heart for ever,
 Past power of all eternity to sever,
 The current of this life still drives apart,
 Who, with strained eyes, and outstretched arms, and cry
 Of bitterest longing, come each other nigh,
 To look, to love, and to be swept asunder,
 The breathless greeting of their agony
 Lost in the pitiless world-storm's ceaseless thunder.

*XV.—IF I BELIEVED IN DEATH, HOW SWEET
A BED.*

IF I believed in death, how sweet a bed
For such a blessèd slumber could I find,
Beneath the blue and sparkling coverlid
Of that smooth sea, stirred by no breath of wind.
Oh if I could but die, and be at rest,
Thou smiling sea! in thy slow-heaving breast.

But all thy thousand waves quench not the spark
Immortal, woful, of one human soul ;
Under thy sapphire vault, cold, still, and dark,
Deep down, below where tides and tempests roll,
The spirit may not lose its deeper curse,
It finds no death in the whole universe.

*XVI.—COVER ME WITH YOUR EVERLASTING
ARMS.*

COVER me with your everlasting arms,
Ye guardian giants of this solitude !
From the ill-sight of men, and from the rude,
Tumultuous din of yon wild world's alarms !
Oh, knit your mighty limbs around, above,
And close me in for ever! let me dwell
With the wood spirits, in the darkest cell
That ever with your verdant locks ye wove.
The air is full of countless voices, joined
In one eternal hymn ; the whispering wind,
The shuddering leaves, the hidden water-springs,
The work-song of the bees, whose honeyed wings
Hang in the golden tresses of the lime,
Or buried lie in purple beds of thyme.

*XVII.—I HEAR A VOICE LOW IN THE SUNSET
WOODS.*

I HEAR a voice low in the sunset woods ;
 Listen, it says : " Decay, decay, decay."
 I hear it in the murmuring of the floods,
 And the wind sighs it as it flies away.
 Autumn is come ; seest thou not in the skies
 The stormy light of his fierce, lurid eyes ?
 Autumn is come ; his brazen feet have trod,
 Withering and scorching, o'er the mossy sod.
 The fainting year sees her fresh flowery wreath
 Shriveled in his hot grasp ; his burning breath,
 Dries the sweet water-springs that in the shade
 Wandering along, delicious music made.
 A flood of glory hangs upon the world,
 Summer's bright wings shining ere they are furled.

XVIII.—EVENING.

NOW in the west is spread
 A golden bed ;
 Great purple curtains hang around,
 With fiery fringes bound,
 And cushions, crimson red,
 For Phœbus' lovely head ;
 And as he sinks through waves of amber light,
 Down to the crystal halls of Amphitrite,
 Hesper leads forth his starry legions bright
 Into the violet fields of air—Good night !

Eliza Cook.

1812—1889.

AN almost contemptuous indifference has succeeded to the extensive popularity once enjoyed by Eliza Cook. The reaction, although not inexplicable, is to some extent undeserved. During the latter portion of her life her reputation was unduly depressed, owing to her lengthy withdrawal from the world through ill-health; but some of her lyrics are still familiar, and many of them are worthy of preservation.

It has been the fashion to weigh the merits of Eliza Cook by an unjust standard. She did not attempt to please poets or philosophers—her audience was the people. Her muse, though homely in attire, could touch the hearts of those to whom the philosophy of Shelley, or the psychology of Browning, was incomprehensible. She had her mission, and fulfilled it honestly. She carried pathos and true sentiment into hearts and homes, where little but vulgarity and commonplaceness dwelt. Modern England is singularly deficient in poets who can touch the nation's heart. She has poets, true and great, but they are only for the educated classes, the masses have but few minstrels now-a-days, whose lays are fit for their firesides. The songs of Béranger, Petöfi, Burns, can still

excite the emotions of the labouring folks more than they can the high-strung feelings of the educated of their nationalities; but the English possess no such influential bards. Eliza Cook sang for the people, and was comprehended of the people and her influence was ever for their good. She inculcated independence, integrity, a love of home, and a sturdy patriotism; and although beauty rather than morality may be the truest theme for poetry, the class of readers Eliza Cook appealed to were better able to understand and profit by moral themes, especially when they were presented to them in a self-respective instead of in the usual mawworm manner. Eliza Cook's themes may be trivial, but they touch home, and have often caused the eyes to dim with tears—the lips to quiver with emotion—of those whose hearts have long been closed to any softening influence.

Adverse criticism notwithstanding, it may be confidently claimed for Eliza Cook that she was and is a poet of the people: a poet whose works are filled with sympathy for the downtrodden and helpless, the earth-weary and oppressed. Her works are characterised by purity of tone, clearness of expression, and an entire absence of straining for effect. In her verse, sound ever echoes sense, and rhyme is always accompanied by reason. No writer has been more national, without being narrow-minded, than Eliza Cook; and whilst in sympathy with the suffering of all humanity, she took pre-eminently to heart the precept, "Poet, of thine own country sing." Naturally, several of her lyrics were only of transient interest, referring as they did to such contemporary events as the Lancashire Cotton Famine, the Shakespeare

Tercentenary, Garibaldi's Visit to England, and the like; but many of them strike those chords of the human heart, which are of ever-enduring vitality, and deal with thoughts and themes that age cannot stale, nor repetition dull.

As far as the outside world may know, her life was calm and uneventful. She was born in Southwark on December 24th, 1812. Her parents were enabled to afford her an education suited to the position of a respectable tradesman's daughter; but at a very early age her writings brought her into public favour. She sent some verses to a contemporary periodical, which attracted the notice of Jerdan, the editor. He published them, encouraged her to persevere, and in a very short time she found herself famous. In 1840 she collected her scattered pieces, and published them in a volume, which was warmly received by the public. In 1849 she started a weekly periodical entitled *Eliza Cook's Journal*, and carried it on until 1854, when her failing health caused its discontinuance. From time to time new volumes of her poetry appeared, and new editions of her former work were published, including some that were handsomely illustrated. Besides these volumes, she published a collection of prose sketches, styled "Jottings from my Journal;" and in 1865, at the present writer's instigation, a collection of "wise saws and modern instances," partly selected, but chiefly original, entitled "Diamond Dust." It must not be forgotten that it is owing to her continuous exertions, and, above all, to her timely lines entitled "Poor Hood," that Kensal Green Cemetery *now* contains a suitable memorial of one of our truest and noblest poets:—

“ Must strangers come to woo his shade,
 Scanning rare beauties as they pass ;
 And when they pause where *he* is laid,
 Stop at a trodden mound of grass ?

Give him the dust beneath his head,
 Give him a grave—a grave alone—
 In Life he dearly won his bread ;—
 In Death he was not worth a stone.

‘ Poor Hood ! ’ for whom a people wreathes
 The heart-born flowers that never die.
 ‘ Poor Hood ! ’ for whom a requiem breathes
 In every human Toil-wrung sigh.

Let the Horse-tamer’s bed be known
 By the rich mausoleum-shrine ;
 Give the bold Quack his charnel throne—
 Their works were worthier far than thine.

And let thy Soul serenely sleep
 While pilgrims stand as I have stood ;
 To worship at a nameless heap,
 And fondly, sadly say, ‘ Poor Hood ! ’ ”

For some years previous to her decease, on September 23rd, 1889, Eliza Cook’s state of health prevented her writing anything new, or revising her existing works ; but in the home of her dear and best loved relatives she found that rest and care which, in her earlier years, she had given to others. Although for a lengthened period prior to her death she was compelled to relinquish her generous efforts on behalf of young and inexperienced writers, her past goodness and kindness have left memories which still thrill with gratitude those who were able to enjoy the benefit of her friendship and literary experience.

JOHN H. INGRAM,

POEMS AND SONGS.

ELIZA COOK.

I.—*THE ENGLISHMAN.*

THERE'S a land that bears a world-known name,
Though it is but a little spot ;
I say 'tis first on the scroll of Fame,
And who shall say it is not ?
Of the deathless ones who shine and live
In Arms, in Arts, or Song ;
The brightest the whole wide world can give,
To that little land belong.
'Tis the star of earth, deny it who can ;
The island home of an Englishman.

There's a flag that waves o'er every sea,
No matter when or where :
And to treat that flag as aught but the free
Is more than the strongest dare.
For the lion-spirits that tread the deck
Have carried the palm of the brave ;
And that flag *may* sink with a shot-torn wreck,
But never float over a slave ;
Its honour is stainless, deny it who can ;
And this is the flag of an Englishman.

There's a heart that leaps with burning glow,
The wronged and the weak to defend ;
And strikes as soon for a trampled foe,
As it does for a soul-bound friend.
It nurtures a deep and honest love ;
It glows with faith and pride ;

And yearns with the fondness of a dove,
 To the light of its own fireside.
 'Tis a rich, rough gem, deny it who can ;
 And this is the heart of an Englishman.

The Briton may traverse the pole or the zone,
 And boldly claim his right ;
 For he calls such a vast domain his own,
 That the sun never sets on his might.
 Let the haughty stranger seek to know
 The place of his home and birth ;
 And a flush will pour from cheek to brow ;
 While he tells his native earth.
 For a glorious charter, deny it who can,
 Is breathed in the words "I'm an Englishman."

II.—THEY ALL BELONG TO ME.

THERE are riches without measure
 Scattered thickly o'er the land ;
 There are heaps and heaps of treasure,
 Bright, beautiful, and grand ;
 There are forests, there are mountains,
 There are meadows, there are rills,
 Forming everlasting fountains
 In the bosoms of the hills ;
 There are birds and there are flowers,
 The fairest things that be—
 And these great and joyful dowers,
 Oh ! "they all belong to me."

There are golden acres bending
 In the light of harvest rays,
 There are garland branches blending
 With the breath of June's sweet days :

There are pasture grasses blowing
In the dewy, moorland shade,
There are herds of cattle lowing
In the midst of bloom and blade ;
There are noble elms that quiver,
As the gale comes full and free,
There are alders by the river,
And "they all belong to me."

I care not who may reckon
The wheat piled up in sacks,
Nor who has power to beckon
The woodman with his axe ;
I care not who hold leases
Of the upland or the dell,
Nor who may count the fleeces
When the flocks are fit to sell.
While there's beauty none can barter
By the greensward and the tree :
Claim who will, by seal and charter,
Yet "they all belong to me."

There's the thick and dinged cover
Where the hare and pheasant play,
There are sheets of rosy clover,
There are hedges crowned with May ;
There are vines all dark and gushing
There are orchards ripe and red,
There are herds of wild deer crushing
The heath-bells as they tread.
And ye, who count in money
The value these may be,
Your hives but hold my honey,
For "they all belong to me."

Ye cannot shut the tree in,
Ye cannot hide the hills,
Ye cannot wall the sea in,
Ye cannot choke the rills ;
The corn will only nestle
In the broad arms of the sky,
The clover crop must wrestle
With the common wind, or die.
And while these stores of treasure
Are spread where I may see,
By God's high, bounteous pleasure,
" They all belong to me."

What care I for the profit
The stricken stem may yield ?
I have the shadow of it
While upright in the field.
What reck I of the riches
The mill-stream gathers fast,
While I bask in shady niches,
And see the brook go past ?
What reck I who has title
To the widest lands that be ?
They are mine, without requital,
God gave them all to me.

Oh ! privilege and blessing,
To find I ever own,
What great ones, in possessing,
Imagine theirs alone !
Oh ! glory to the Maker,
Who gave such boon to hold,
Who made me free partaker
Where others buy with gold !

For while the woods and mountains
Stand up where I can see,
While God unlocks the fountains,
“They all belong to me !”

III.—GOD SPEED THE PLOUGH.

“**G**OD speed the plough !” be this a prayer
To find its echo everywhere ;
But curses on the iron hand
That grasps one rood of “common” land.
Sure there’s enough of earth beside,
Held by the sons of Wealth and Pride ;
Their glebe is wide enough without
Our “commons” being fenced about !

We guard the spot where steeples rise
In stately grandeur to the skies ;
We mark the place where altars shine,
As hallowed, sainted, and divine ;
And just as sacred should we hold
The turf, where peasants blithe and bold,
Can plant their footsteps day or night,
In free, unquestioned, native right.

The common range—the common range—
Oh ! guard it from invading change ;
Though rough, ’tis rich—though poor, ’tis blest,
And will be while the skylark’s nest
And early violets are there,
Filling with sweetness earth and air.

It glads the eye—it warms the soul,
To gaze upon the rugged knoll ;
Where tangled brushwood twines across
The straggling brake and sedgy moss.
Oh ! who would give the blackthorn leaves

For harvest's full and rustling sheaves ?
Oh ! who would have the grain spring up
Where now we find the daisy's cup ;
Where clumps of dark red heather gleam,
With beauty in the summer beam—
And yellow furze-bloom laughs to scorn
Your ripened hops and bursting corn ?
" God speed the plough ! " but let us trace
Something of Nature's infant face ;
Let us behold some spot where man
Has not yet set his " bar and ban " ;
Leave us the green wastes, fresh and wild,
For poor man's beast and poor man's child !

'Tis well to turn our trusty steeds
In chosen stalls and clover meads ;
We like to see our " gallant grey "
Snuff daintily his fragrant hay ;
But the poor sandman's " Blind old Ball "
Lacks grooms and clover, oats and stall.

With tired limbs and bleeding back
He takes his steady, homeward track ;
The hovel gained, he neighs with glee,
From burthen, whip, and bridle free :
Turned forth he flings his bony length ;
And rolls with all his waning strength ;
Up on his trembling legs again,
He shakes himself from tail to mane,
And, nibbling with a grateful zest,
Finds on " the common " food and rest.

Hark to the shouts of peasant boys,
With ill-carved bats, and unchecked noise !
While " cricket," with its light-heeled mirth,
Leaves scars upon the grassy earth

Too deeply lined by Summer's play,
For Winter's storms to wear away.
Spent by the game, they rove apart,
With lounging form and careless heart ;
One by the rushy pond will float
Old "Dilworth" in a paper boat ;
Another wades, with legs all bare,
To pluck the water-lily fair ;
Others will sit and chatter o'er
The village fund of cricket lore—
Quote this rare "catch," and that bold "run,"
Till, having gossiped down the sun,
They promise, with a loud "Good night !"
That, if to-morrow's sky be bright,
They'll be again where they have been
For years—upon the "common green."

The chicken tribe—the duckling brood,
Go there to scratch their daily food ;
The woodman's colt—the widow's cows,
Unwatched—untethered—there may browse ;
And though the pasturage be scant,
It saves from keen and starving want.

"God speed the plough !" let fields be tilled,
Let ricks be heaped and garner's filled ;
'Tis good to count the Autumn gold,
And try how much our barns can hold :
But every English heart will tell
It loves an "English common" well ;
And curse the hard and griping hand
That wrests away such "hallowed" land :
That shuts the green waste, fresh and wild :
From poor man's beast and poor man's child.

IV.—THE OLD ARM-CHAIR.

I LOVE it, I love it ; and who shall dare
 To chide me for loving that old Arm-chair ?
 I've treasur'd it long as a sainted prize ;
 I've bedew'd it with tears, and embalm'd it with sighs.
 'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart ;
 Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
 Would ye learn the spell ?—a mother sat there ;
 And a sacred thing is that old Arm-chair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
 The hallowed seat with listening ear ;
 And gentle words that mother would give ;
 To fit me to die, and teach me to live.
 She told me shame would never betide,
 With truth for my creed and God for my guide ;
 She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer ;
 As I knelt beside that old Arm-chair.

I sat and watched her many a day,
 When her eye grew dim, and her locks were grey :
 And I almost worshipp'd her when she smiled,
 And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
 Years rolled on ; but the last one sped—
 My idol was shattered ; my earth-star fled :
 I learnt how much the heart can bear.
 When I saw her die in that old Arm-chair.

'Tis past, 'tis past, but I gaze on it now
 With quivering breath and throbbing brow :
 'Twas there she nursed me : 'twas there she died :
 And memory flows with lava tide.
 Say it is folly, and deem me weak,
 While the scalding drops start down my check ;

But I love it, I love it; and cannot tear
My soul from a mother's old Arm-chair.

V.—THE RAISING OF THE MAYPOLE.

MY own land! My own land! Where Freedom
finds her throne-land,
Fair thou art, and rare thou art to every true-born
son.
Though no gold ore veins thee, though no grape-
juice stains thee,
We've harvest fields, and quartered shields, well
kept and nobly won.
And we have pleasant tales to tell,
And spots in many a native dell,
Which we may prize and love as well
As Troubadour his story.
The lilting troll and roundelay
Will never, never pass away,
That welcomed in the herald day
Of Summer's rosy glory.
And goodly sight of mirth and might,
In blood that gained us Cressy's fight,
Was hearts and eyes, all warm and bright
About the high and gay pole;
When flower-bedight, 'mid leaves and light,
Shouts echoed it—as it reared upright—
Of—"Hurrah for merry England, and the raising
of the Maypole!"
When the good old times had carol rhymes,
With morris games and village chimes;
When clown and priest shared cup and feast,
And the greatest jostled with the least
At the "raising of the Maypole."

My brave land! my brave land! oh! may'st thou
 be my grave-land;
 For firm and fond will be the bond that ties my
 breast to thee.

When Summer's beams are glowing, when Autumn's
 gusts are blowing,
 When Winter's clouds are snowing, thou art still
 right dear to me.

 But yet methinks I love thee best
 When bees are nursed on white-thorn breast,
 When Spring-tide pours in—sweet and blest—
 And Mirth and Hope come dancing!
 When music from the feathered throng,
 Breaks forth in merry marriage-song,
 And mountain streamlets dash along,
 Like molten diamonds glancing!
 Oh! pleasant 'tis to scan the page,
 Rich with the theme of bygone age;
 When motley fool and learned sage
 Brought garlands for the gay pole;
 When laugh and shout came ringing out,
 From courtly knight and peasant lout,
 In, "Hurrah for merry England, and the raising
 of the Maypole!"

 When the good old times had carol rhymes,
 With morris games and village chimes;
 When clown and priest shared cup and feast,
 And the greatest jostled with the least,
 At the "raising of the Maypole!"

Emily Brontë.

1818—1848.

FEW persons of whom so little has been or can be recorded as Emily Brontë have made so deep an impression upon the popular mind, or are so distinctly present to the imagination. There is nothing to be said except that she was born in August 1818, and died of consumption in December 1848; that she was first a teacher without pupils, and then an authoress without readers; that her life was harassed by an impracticable father, and infected by a base, profligate brother; and that nevertheless she was visited by such noble inspirations, and was such a piece of her own moorland, that one hardly accounts her unfortunate. She was the laureate of the moors, and no fanciful analogy might be drawn between her and these scenes of her residence, and objects of her affections. Like them she was free, rough, wild; in a certain sense barren and limited; in another sense rich and expansive; from one point of view mournful, from another joyous. In one respect only is she false to the teaching of the nature that environed her: the moor is ever healthy, but it is impossible to acquit the creator of "Heathcliffe" of a taint of unsoundness. The hero of "Wuthering Heights" is indeed by no means untrue to nature; what is unnatural is the authoress's evident sympathy with the most repulsive traits in his

character. By over-much insistence on these, she all but destroys our interest in her hero, who has after all found the pearl of great price. Her poetry, in general less powerful, is more pleasing than her fiction; harsh and forbidding as her view of life seems at first, it gains upon us as we realise her proud superiority to external circumstances, and the passionate affection for those she really loves, which redeems her unamiability towards the rest. Her scorn and her tenderness are beautifully combined in this simple and exquisite lyric:—

“The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells
That hide my lady fair :

The wild deer browse above her breast ;
The wild birds raise their brood ;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude !

I ween, that when the grave’s dark wall
Did first her form retain,
They thought their hearts could ne’er recall
The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
Unchecked through future years ;
But where is all their anguish now,
And where are all their tears ?

Well, let them fight for honour’s breath,
Or pleasure’s shade pursue—
The dweller in the land of death
Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep
Till sorrow’s source were dry,

She would not, in her tranquil sleep,
Return a single sigh !

Blow, west wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer-streams—
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my lady's dreams."

Almost all the poetry which Emily Brontë published during her lifetime was of this character, though not always attaining the same careless beauty, graceful in its apparent negligence. Not until nigh to death did she compose a strain of quite another sort, which, if it were just to judge her solely by one supreme inspiration, would place her above every other female lyrist since Sappho. The grandeur and eloquence of her last verses have in our judgment never been rivalled by any English poetess: the question whether she could have maintained herself at such an elevation, were it capable of an answer, would help to elucidate the deeper problem how far poetical inspiration is the result of favourable conditions, and how far it is a visitation from above. It must remain for ever unanswered.

Of Charlotte and Anne Brontë as poetesses, little need be said. Charlotte,—a nature as intense and passionate as Emily,—as a prose writer rivalling her sister's genius, and vastly excelling her art, was comparatively ineffective in verse, because verse was not a native language with her. She had no real call to write it, and added one more to the examples which prove that mental power will not make a poet without the addition of something, partly indefinite, partly definable as a tune in the head, the instinct and accomplishment of verse.

Still the quality of interest inheres in whatever Charlotte writes; and the same is in a measure true of Anne—a pallid touching figure, her sister's wraith. Charlotte is the most objective of the sisters; she alone manifests a faculty of imagining scenes and characters external to herself. Emily can place herself in imaginary situations, but at most only idealises her own experience and emotions. Anne cannot even do this; she simply sets down her thoughts in artless verse; her one really good poem, "Lines composed in a Wood on a Windy Day," is composed when her thoughts are for the moment exalted above her personal sphere by an inspiration from external Nature:—

"My soul is awakened, my spirit is soaring
 And carried aloft on the wings of the breeze;
 For above and around me the wild wind is roaring,
 Arousing to rapture the earth and the seas.

The long withered grass in the sunshine is glancing,
 The bare trees are tossing their branches on high;
 The dead leaves beneath them are merrily dancing,
 The white clouds are scudding across the blue sky.

I wish I could see how the ocean is lashing
 The foam of its billows to whirlwinds of spray;
 I wish I could see how the proud waves are dashing,
 And hear the wild roar of their thunder to-day!"

RICHARD GARNETT.

POEMS.

EMILY BRONTË.

I.—THE NIGHT-WIND.

I N summer's mellow midnight,
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlour window,
And rose-trees wet with dew.

I sat in silent musing,
The soft wind waved my hair;
It told me heaven was glorious,
And sleeping earth was fair.

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me;
But still it whispered lowly,
How dark the woods will be!

"The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices
Instinct with spirit seem."

I said, "Go, gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind:
But do not think its music
Has power to reach my mind.

"Play with the scented flower,
The young tree's supple bough,
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow."

The wanderer would not heed me;
Its kiss grew warmer still.

"Oh come!" it sighed so sweetly;
"I'll win thee 'gainst thy will.

“Were we not friends from childhood ?
 Have I not loved thee long ?
 As long as thou, the solemn night,
 Whose silence wakes my song.

“And when thy heart is resting
 Beneath the church-aisle stone,
 I shall have time for mourning,
 And *thou* for being alone.”

II.—A DEATH-SCENE.

“O DAY! he cannot die
 When thou so fair art shining !
 O Sun, in such a glorious sky
 So tranquilly declining ;

“He cannot leave thee now,
 While fresh west winds are blowing,
 And all around his youthful brow
 Thy cheerful light is glowing !

“Edward, awake ! awake—
 The golden evening gleams
 Warm and bright on Arden’s lake—
 Arouse thee from thy dreams !

“Beside thee, on my knee,
 My dearest friend, I pray
 That thou, to cross the eternal sea,
 Wouldst yet one hour delay :

“I hear its billows roar—
 I see them foaming high ;
 But no glimpse of a further shore
 Has blest my straining eye.

“Believe not what they urge
 Of Eden isles beyond ;

Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,
To thy own native land.

“It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast—
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again ;
I cannot let thee rest !”

One long look, that sore reproved me
For the woe I could not bear—
One mute look of suffering moved me
To repent my useless prayer :

And, with sudden check, the heaving
Of distraction passed away ;
Not a sign of further grieving
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting ;
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze :
Summer dews fell softly, wetting
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began to weary,
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep ;
And their orbs grew strangely dreary,
Clouded, even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,
Never moved, and never closed ;
Troubled still, and still they ranged not—
Wandered not, nor yet reposed !

So I knew that he was dying—
Stooped, and raised his languid head ;
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,
So I knew that he was dead.

III.—REMEMBRANCE.

COLD in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave ?
Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more ?
Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring :
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering !
Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along ;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong !
No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me ;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.
But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy ;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.
Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine ;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.
And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain ;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again ?

IV.—OFTEN REBUKED.

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
 To those first feelings that were born with me,
 And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
 For idle dreams of things which cannot be :

To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region ;
 Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear ;
 And visions rising, legion after legion,
 Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
 And not in paths of high morality,
 And not among the half-distinguished faces,
 The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading :
 It vexes me to choose another guide :
 Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding ;
 Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing ?
 More glory and more grief than I can tell :
 The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling
 Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

V.—THE OLD STOIC.

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
 And Love I laugh to scorn ;
 And lust of fame was but a dream,
 That vanished with the morn :

And if I pray, the only prayer
 That moves my lips for me
 Is, " Leave the heart that now I bear,
 And give me liberty ! "

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
 'Tis all that I implore ;
 In life and death, a chainless soul,
 With courage to endure.

VI.—LAST LINES.

NO coward soul is mine.
 No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :
 I see Heaven's glories shine,
 And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.
 O God within my breast,
 Almighty, ever-present Deity !
 Life—that in me has rest,
 As I—undying Life—have power in thee !
 Vain are the thousand creeds
 That move men's hearts : unalterably vain ;
 Worthless as withered weeds,
 Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,
 To waken doubt in one
 Holding so fast by thine infinity ;
 So surely anchored on
 The steadfast rock of immortality.
 With wide-embracing love
 Thy spirit animates eternal years,
 Pervades and broods above,
 Charges, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.
 Though earth and man were gone,
 And suns and universes cease to be,
 And Thou were left alone,
 Every existence would exist in Thee.
 There is not room for Death,
 Nor atom that his might could render void :
 Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
 And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

George Eliot.

(*Mary Ann Cross.*)

1819—1880.

THE story of the life of the great writer who chose to be known to the world as George Eliot has been told with more or less of completeness by one American and three English biographers—Mr. George Willis Cooke, Miss Mathilde Blind, Mr. J. W. Cross, and Mr. Oscar Browning; and the details of that uneventful but interesting career are familiar to most readers. Suffice it, then, here to say that Mary Ann Evans was born at Kirk Hallam, in Derbyshire, on November 22nd, in the year 1819, her father, Robert Evans, being agent for an estate held by a member of the Newdigate family. The letters of her quiet early years show her to have been a studious, thoughtful girl, deeply imbued with a somewhat narrow form of Evangelical Christianity; but in early womanhood she made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Bray, and of their relatives the Hennells—names not unknown in philosophical literature—under whose influence she abandoned her previous beliefs, and adopted a creed which may, perhaps, be most justly described as a reverent and unaggressive agnosticism. Migrating to London she became sub-editor of the *Westminster Review*, the quarterly organ of Radicalism in politics, philosophy, and religion, and while fulfilling the duties of

this post made the acquaintance of that brilliant *littérateur*, George Henry Lewes. Acquaintance developed into friendship, friendship into something still warmer, and Lewes having contracted an unfortunate marriage, from which circumstances denied him the relief of a divorce, Miss Evans and he entered into an alliance which, though unrecognised by law and custom, had for the persons immediately concerned all the sacredness belonging to a true union of husband and wife. To the stimulation and encouragement given by Lewes, there is little doubt that the world largely owes not merely the famous works of fiction by which George Eliot has won an assured place among the great novelists of the world, but that smaller poetical product which, though doubtless less important, has had such importance as really belongs to it unduly and unjustly minimised. This union, entered upon in 1853, endured for a happy and fruitful quarter of a century, and was terminated by the death of Lewes in 1878. In May, 1880, George Eliot, unable to bear up against the desolation of her solitude, contracted the marriage with Mr. J. W. Cross which has provided material for so much fruitless discussion; but her new happiness was of brief duration, for seven months afterwards her voice in the earthly chorus was stilled, and she passed away to join that other company of which she had sung with such passionate fervency: "the choir invisible, whose music is the gladness of the world."

That the outward conduct of a life bears a fixed and inevitable relation to the character and personality behind it is a truth to which George Eliot herself bore emphatic testimony; and yet the George

Eliot whom, by an act of unconscious synthesis, we evolve from her published writings is, in various perplexing ways, a very different person from the George Eliot who actually lived and loved and rejoiced and suffered. What she said of Dorothea Casaubon is largely true of herself—that the determining acts of her life “were not ideally beautiful”; and in addition to their want of inherent beauty, they seem curiously inconsistent with the nature of that ideal personality which the mind creates for itself from the hints supplied to it. As a matter of fact, however, the self-contained, self-reliant nature, strong to achieve and to endure, which we think we discern behind such creations as Adam Bede, Tom Tulliver, Felix Holt, Romola, and Fedalma, is, like the Shakespeare of so many constructive critics, an entirely imaginary personage. The true George Eliot realised, with a quite remarkable completeness, the old ideal of woman as a being born not to stand alone and to work out her own conception of life, but to love and to cling, to lean on some stronger nature, and to accept its care and guidance. In all the leading events of her life—her rejection of Christianity, her union with Lewes, her appearance before the world as an imaginative writer, and her marriage with Mr. Cross—she was, to an incalculable extent, a passive rather than an active agent, enduring pain, contumely, self-distrust, and the consciousness of dull disapproval, because the endurance was prompted and sustained by the magnetic proximity of spirits more potent than her own. This combination of an intellectual nature so essentially virile, with an emotional nature so typically feminine, is unique in the history of literature; and it confers

upon the life of George Eliot the peculiar fascination belonging to objects of thought or vision in which the element of strangeness is added to the element of beauty. Here, however, the beauty is in excess of the strangeness; and the nearer we come to the true personality of this great woman, the more rapidly does the strangeness disappear. The shadowy figure of George Eliot present to the mind's eye is not altogether unreal—nay, it has the finest reality; for it is the George Eliot of aspiration and endeavour, though not of achievement. She might have said, with Rabbi Ben Ezra—

“ All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.”

And not only to God, but to man; for—to quote again from the sentences in which she dismisses her own Dorothea—“the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive”; and men went from the presence of this timid, self-distrustful woman with new strength for that battle of life which she herself dared not fight alone.

To some of us it will always seem inexplicable that the question which must first be answered by any writer upon George Eliot, as a writer of verse, is not “What is her true place among poets?” but that much more searching question, “Was she, in any really accurate sense of the word, a poet at all?” Yet not only is this the case, but any writer who has the courage to return an affirmative reply finds that he has on his side hardly one of the critics who speaks with a voice having any authority. Mr. Oscar Browning, George Eliot's most recent biographer, denies to her not only “the passionate fire, without

which," he says, "no poet can excel," but also "the gift of melodious language." "Verse to her," says Mr. R. H. Hutton, "is a fetter, not a stimulus." "A large rhythm," writes Mr. Edward Dowden, "sustains the verse, similar in nature to the movement of a calmly musical period of prose; but at best the music of the lines is a measurable music; under the verse there lies no living heart of music with curious pulsation, and rhythm which is a miracle of the blood . . . She could not sing." These three criticisms are fairly representative: George Eliot was not a poet; she was not a singer; verse was a fetter to her;—the second and third statements being the justifications of the first. The verdict sounds very formidable, but it may lose some of its formidableness if we see in it only an illustration of a habit which has recently been growing among the critics of demanding in all poetry the presence of certain characteristics which necessarily belong only to poetry of the lyrical kind,—an effusion, an abandonment, a sense as of a pulse beating in the verse. Poetry has, in fact, been too exclusively identified with song, whereas many conceptions which are purely poetical, and which clothe themselves in verse as naturally and inevitably as other conceptions clothe themselves in prose, are not of a nature to ally themselves with song or to allow of being sung. Prose and poetry are not related as speech and song, for speech may be poetry and song prose; indeed the difference between the two is primarily one of substance and only secondarily one of form. Poetry is a sustained metrical rendering of thought or emotion or vision which cannot otherwise be adequately rendered; and in order to decide whether a metrical

composition presented to us is or is not poetry we have to ask ourselves whether the form is one with the substance or separable from it,—whether the impression intended to be made would have been deeper or sharper, or even as deep and sharp, if prose had been employed instead of verse.

The writer of these pages has asked this question many times, with regard to the verse of George Eliot; and to the self which asks the self which answers has always been impelled to return one reply. "The Spanish Gypsy" is the work upon which the deniers of George Eliot's poetic faculty, mainly base their judgment. In speaking of it their voice is loud and confident. "The Legend of Jubal" and "Brother and Sister" bring it down to a lower tone; and as they approach that lyric of solemn rapture, "Oh may I join the choir invisible!" it dies into a whisper. "The Spanish Gypsy" is therefore the structure brave upon which those who greatly dare, because they greatly admire, will, with courageous eagerness plant their standard as a signal that there as elsewhere they are ready to stand an assault. Nor will they fear to admit that there are passages in "The Spanish Gypsy" which lack the metrical inevitableness just referred to,—passages which might have taken the form of prose without any loss of essential weight or beauty; but then they are to be found not less in the "Iliad," the "Inferno," the "Paradise Lost." To the whole world, however, these works are indubitable poetry; and those who regard "The Spanish Gypsy" also as poetry, and poetry of a very noble order, base their regard on the fact that the final impression left by it as by them is of an imaginative conception which could

only be made fully manifest in an embodiment of verse. If we try to imagine such characters as those of Zarca, Silva, and Fedalma, such situations as those which one by one reveal the evolution of the great tragedy, embodied in a prose romance we feel instinctively that the work which our vagrant fancy has brought into shadowy being, is a poorer and less impressive thing than the actual existing volume,—a thing that could never stir us as we are stirred by the printed page. Quotation is a poor aid to the appraisalment of a great imaginative organism; the “*Beauties of Shakespeare*” never made any reader feel the marvel of “*Hamlet*”; but as for the critics who deny to George Eliot “a passionate fire,” who tell us that verse was “a fetter” to her, and that her poetry has no “living heart of music,”—what avail their confident words as we read but one single passage, the reply of Fedalma when Zarca summons her to the great renunciation, and ends his appeal with the terrible words, “Say you will curse your race”?

“No, no—I will not say it—I will go!
 Father, I choose! I will not take a heaven
 Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.
 This deed and I have ripened with the hours:
 It is a part of me—a wakened thought
 That, rising like a giant, masters me,
 And grows into a doom. O mother life,
 That seemed to nourish me so tenderly,
 Even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,
 Hung on my soul the burden of men’s hopes,
 And pledged me to redeem!—I’ll pay the debt.
 You gave me strength that I might pour it all
 Into this anguish. I can never shrink
 Back into bliss—my heart has grown too big
 With things that might be. Father, I will go.”

The impression that is left by this passage, and by much besides, in "The Spanish Gypsy" is an impression of sombre and profound passion, the combined intensity and elevation of which make themselves heard in a weighty music, not of dance or song, but rather of a solemn triumphal or funeral march;—a measured music indeed, yet measured not by the calculation of conscious thought, but rather by the decorous restraint which every finely trained nature will put upon the outflow of its most poignant emotions. It is this impression that is left by the majestic close of "Jubal"; by the outpouring of Armgart's foiled aspirations; by the quieter but not really less impassioned colloquy of Stradivarius, most of all by that supreme utterance which will fulfil its own desire, and make its writer an immortal member of the invisible choir. George Eliot *could* sing—witness the lovely lyric in "How Lisa loved the King!" but she has given us something better than song—the poetry which incarnates energising thought and purifying emotion in a body of stately verse, the gracious form of which is not unworthy of the indwelling spirit.

JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

1869.

GEORGE ELIOT.

I.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.

He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.

I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.

If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath.
Wherever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

II.

Long years have left their writing on my brow,
But yet the freshness and the dew-fed beam
Of those young mornings are about me now,
When we two wandered toward the far-off stream

With rod and line. Our basket held a store
Baked for us only, and I thought with joy
That I should have my share, though he had more,
Because he was the elder and a boy.

The firmaments of daisies since to me
Have had those mornings in their opening eyes,

The bunchèd cowslip's pale transparency
Carries that sunshine of sweet memories,

And wild-rose branches take their finest scent
From those blest hours of infantine content.

III.

Our mother bade us keep the trodden ways,
Stroked down my tippet, set my brother's frill,
Then with the benediction of her gaze
Clung to us lessening, and pursued us still

Across the homestead to the rookery elms,
Whose tall old trunks had each a grassy mound,
So rich for us, we counted them as realms
With varied products: here were earth-nuts found,

And here the Lady-fingers in deep shade;
Here sloping toward the Moat the rushes grew,
The large to split for pith, the small to braid;
While over all the dark rooks cawing flew,

And made a happy strange solemnity,
A deep-toned chant from life unknown to me.

IV.

Our meadow-path had memorable spots:
One where it bridged a tiny rivulet,
Deep hid by tangled blue Forget-me-nots;
And all along the waving grasses met

My little palm, or nodded to my cheek,
When flowers with upturned faces gazing drew
My wonder downward, seeming all to speak
With eyes of souls that dumbly heard and knew,

Then came the copse, where wild things rushed unseen,
And black-scathed grass betrayed the past abode
Of mystic gypsies, who still lurked between
Me and each hidden distance of the road.

A gypsy once had startled me at play,
Blotting with her dark smile my sunny day.

v.

Thus rambling we were schooled in deepest lore,
And learned the meanings that give words a soul,
The fear, the love, the primal passionate store,
Whose shaping impulses make manhood whole.

Those hours were seed to all my after good ;
My infant gladness, through eye, ear, and touch,
Took easily as warmth a various food
To nourish the sweet skill of loving much.

For who in age shall roam the earth and find
Reasons for loving that will strike out love
With sudden rod from the hard year-pressed mind ?
Were reasons sown as thick as stars above,

'Tis love must see them, as the eye sees light :
Day is but Number to the darkened sight.

vi.

Our brown canal was endless to my thought ;
And on its banks I sat in dreamy peace,
Unknowing how the good I loved was wrought,
Untroubled by the fear that it would cease.

Slowly the barges floated into view
Rounding a grassy hill to me sublime
With some Unknown beyond it, whither flew
The parting cuckoo toward a fresh spring time.

The wide-arched bridge, the scented elder-flowers,
 The wondrous watery rings that died too soon,
 The echoes of the quarry, the still hours
 With white robe sweeping-on the shadeless noon,

Were but my growing self, are part of me,
 My present Past, my root of piety.

VII.

Those long days measured by my little feet
 Had chronicles which yield me many a text ;
 Where irony still finds an image meet
 Of full-grown judgments in this world perplex.

One day my brother left me in high charge,
 To mind the rod, while he went seeking bait,
 And bade me, when I saw a nearing barge,
 Snatch out the line, lest he should come too late.

Proud of the task, I watched with all my might
 For one whole minute, till my eyes grew wide,
 Till sky and earth took on a strange new light
 And seemed a dream-world floating on some tide -

A fair pavilioned boat for me alone
 Bearing me onward through the vast unknown.

VIII.

But sudden came the barge's pitch-black prow,
 Nearer and angrier came my brother's cry,
 And all my soul was quivering fear, when lo !
 Upon the imperilled line, suspended high,

A silver perch ! My guilt that won the prey,
 Now turned to merit, had a guerdon rich
 Of hugs and praises, and made merry play,
 Until my triumph reached its highest pitch

When all at home were told the wondrous feat,
 And how the little sister had fished well,
 In secret, though my fortune tasted sweet,
 I wondered why this happiness befell.

“The little lass had luck,” the gardener said :
 And so I learned, luck was with glory wed.

IX.

We had the self-same world enlarged for each
 By loving difference of girl and boy :
 The fruit that hung on high beyond my reach
 He plucked for me, and oft he must employ

A measuring glance to guide my tiny shoe
 Where lay firm stepping-stones, or call to mind
 “This thing I like my sister may not do,
 For she is little, and I must be kind.”

Thus boyish Will the nobler mastery learned
 Where inward vision over impulse reigns,
 Widening its life with separate life discerned,
 A Like unlike, a Self that self-restrains.

His years with others must the sweeter be
 For those brief days he spent in loving me.

X.

His sorrow was my sorrow, and his joy
 Sent little leaps and laughs through all my frame ;
 My doll seemed lifeless and no girlish toy
 Had any reason when my brother came.

I knelt with him at marbles, marked his fling
 Cut the ringed stem and make the apple drop,
 Or watched him winding close the spiral string
 That looped the orbits of the humming top.

Grasped by such fellowship my vagrant thought
Ceased with dream-fruit dream-wishes to fulfil ;
My æry-picturing fantasy was taught
Subjection to the harder, truer skill

That seeks with deeds to grave a thought-tracked line,
And by "What is," "What will be" to define.

XI.

School parted us ; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled.

Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue :
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And its dear accent to our utterance clung.

Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
Two elements which sever their life's course.

But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL.

1869.

GEORGE ELIOT.

(A SELECTION.)

THUS glorying as a god beneficent,
Forth from his solitary joy he went
To bless mankind. It was at evening,
When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
When imminence of change makes sense more fine
And light seems holier in its grand decline.
The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
Earth and her children were at festival,
Glowing as with one heart and one consent—
Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet warm radiance
blent.

The tribe of Cain was resting on the ground,
The various ages wreathed in one broad round.
Here lay, while children peeped o'er his huge thighs,
The sinewy man embrowned by centuries ;
Here the broad-bosomed mother of the strong
Looked, like Demeter, placid o'er the throng
Of young lithe forms whose rest was movement too—
Tricks, prattle, nods, and laughs that lightly flew,
And swayings as of flower-beds where Love blew.
For all had feasted well upon the flesh
Of juicy fruits, on nuts, and honey fresh,
And now their wine was health-bred merriment,
Which through the generations circling went,
Leaving none sad, for even father Cain
Smiled as a Titan might, despising pain.
Jabal sat climbed on by a playful ring
Of children, lambs and whelps, whose gambolling,
With tiny hoofs, paws, hands, and dimpled feet,
Made barks, bleats, laughs, in pretty hubbub meet.

But Tubal's hammer rang from far away
Tubal alone would keep no holiday,
His furnace must not slack for any feast,
For of all hardship work he counted least ;
He scorned all rest but sleep, where every dream
Made his repose more potent action seem.

Yet with health's nectar some strange thirst was blent,
The fateful growth, the unnamed discontent,
The inward shaping toward some unborn power,
Some deeper-breathing act, the being's flower.
After all gestures, words, and speech of eyes,
The soul had more to tell, and broke in sighs.
Then from the east, with glory on his head
Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
Came Jubal with his lyre : there 'mid the throng,
Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
Where the dark sources of new passion sleep.
Joy took the air, and took each breathing soul,
Embracing them in one entrancèd whole,
Yet thrilled each varying frame to various ends,
As Spring new-waking through the creature sends
Or rage or tenderness ; more plenteous life
Here breeding dread, and there a fiercer strife.
He who had lived through twice three centuries,
Whose months monotonous, like trees on trees
In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
Dreamed himself dimly through the travelled days
Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
That warmed him when he was a little one ;
Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,

The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,
And in that heaven wept. But younger limbs
Thrilled toward the future, that bright land which swims
In western glory, isles and streams and bays,
Where hidden pleasures float in golden haze.
And in all these the rhythmic influence,
Sweetly o'ercharging the delighted sense,
Flowed out in movements, little waves that spread
Enlarging, till in tidal union led
The youths and maidens both alike long-tressed,
By grace-inspiring melody possessed,
Rose in slow dance, with beauteous floating swerve
Of limbs and hair, and many a melting curve
Of ringèd feet swayed by each close-linked palm :
Then Jubal poured more rapture in his psalm,
The dance fired music, music fired the dance,
The glow diffusive lit each countenance,
Till all the gazing elders rose and stood
With glad yet awful shock of that mysterious good

Even Tubal caught the sound, and wondering came,
Urging his sooty bulk like smoke-wrapt flame
Till he could see his brother with the lyre,
The work for which he lent his furnace-fire
And diligent hammer, witting nought of this—
This power in metal shape which made strange bliss,
Entering within him like a dream full-fraught
With new creations finished in a thought.

The sun had sunk, but music still was there,
And when this ceased, still triumph filled the air :
It seemed the stars were shining with delight
And that no night was ever like this night.
All clung with praise to Jubal : some besought
That he would teach them his new skill ; some caught,

Swiftly as smiles are caught in looks that meet,
The tone's melodic change and rhythmic beat :
'Twas easy following where invention trod—
All eyes can see when light flows out from God.

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal
Music their larger soul, where woe and weal
Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance
Moved with a wider-wingèd utterance.
Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong,
Till things of Jubal's making were so rife,
"Hearing myself," he said, "hems in my life,
And I will get me to some far-off land,
Where higher mountains under heaven stand
And touch the blue at rising of the stars,
Whose song they hear where no rough mingling mars
The great clear voices. Such lands there must be,
Where varying forms make varying symphony—
Where other thunders roll amid the hills,
Some mightier wind a mightier forest fills
With other strains through other-shapen boughs ;
Where bees and birds and beasts that hunt or browse
Will teach me songs I know not. Listening there,
My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit
each year."

He took a raft, and travelled with the stream
Southward for many a league, till he might deem
He saw at last the pillars of the sky,
Beholding mountains whose white majesty
Rushed through him as new awe, and made new song
That swept with fuller wave the chords along,
Weighting his voice with deep religious chime,

The iteration of slow chant sublime.

It was the region long inhabited

By all the race of Seth ; and Jubal said :

“ Here have I found my thirsty soul’s desire,
Eastward the hills touch heaven, and evening’s fire
Flames through deep waters ; I will take my rest,
And feed anew from my great mother’s breast,
The sky-clasped Earth, whose voices nurture me
As the flowers’ sweetness doth the honey-bee.”

He lingered wandering for many an age,
And, sowing music, made high heritage
For generations far beyond the Flood—
For the poor late-begotten human brood
Born to life’s weary brevity and perilous good.

And ever as he travelled he would climb
The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,
The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres
Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.
But wheresoe’er he rose the heavens rose,
And the far-gazing mountain could disclose
Nought but a wider earth ; until one height
Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light
And he could hear its multitudinous roar,
Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore :
Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

He thought, “ The world is great, but I am weak,
And where the sky bends is no solid peak
To give me footing, but instead, this main—
Myriads of maddened horses thundering o’er the plain.

“ New voices come to me where’er I roam,
My heart too widens with its widening home :
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake

The lyre's full answer ; nay, its chords were all
Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.
The former songs seem little, yet no more
Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore
Tell what the earth is saying unto me :
The secret is too great, I hear confusedly.

“ No farther will I travel : once again
My brethren I will see, and that fair plain
Where I and Song were born. There fresh-voiced youth
Will pour my strains with all the early truth
Which now abides not in my voice and hands,
But only in the soul, the will that stands
Helpless to move. My tribe remembering
Will cry ‘Tis he ! ’ and run to greet me, welcoming.”

The way was weary. Many a date-palm grew,
And shook out clustered gold against the blue,
While Jubal, guided by the steadfast spheres,
Sought the dear home of those first eager years.
When, with fresh vision fed, the fuller will
Took living outward shape in pliant skill ;
For still he hoped to find the former things,
And the warm gladness recognition brings.
His footsteps erred among the mazy woods
And long illusive sameness of the floods,
Winding and wandering. Through far regions, strange
With Gentile homes and faces, did he range,
And left his music in their memory,
And left at last, when nought besides would free
His homeward steps from clinging hands and cries,
The ancient lyre. And now in ignorant eyes
No sign remained of Jubal, Lamech's son,
That mortal frame whercin was first begun
The immortal life of song. His withered brow

Pressed over eyes that held no lightning now,
His locks streamed whiteness on the hurrying air,
The unresting soul had worn itself quite bare
Of beauteous token, as the outworn might
Of oaks slow dying, gaunt in summer's light.
His full deep voice toward thinnest treble ran :
He was the rune-writ story of a man.

And so at last he neared the well-known land,
Could see the hills in ancient order stand
With friendly faces whose familiar gaze
Looked through the sunshine of his childish days ;
Knew the deep-shadowed folds of hanging woods,
And seemed to see the self-same insect broods
Whirling and quivering o'er the flowers—to hear
The self-same cuckoo making distance near.
Yea, the dear Earth, with mother's constancy,
Met and embraced him, and said, "Thou art he !
This was thy cradle, here my breast was thine,
Where feeding, thou didst all thy life entwine
With my sky-wedded life in heritage divine."

But wending ever through the watered plain,
Firm not to rest save in the home of Cain,
He saw dread Change, with dubious face and cold
That never kept a welcome for the old,
Like some strange heir upon the hearth, arise
Saying "This home is mine." He thought his eyes
Mocked all deep memories, as things new made,
Usurping sense, make old things shrink and fade
And seem ashamed to meet the staring day.
His memory saw a small foot-trodden way.
His eyes a broad far-stretching paven road
Bordered with many a tomb and fair abode ;
The little city that once nestled low

As buzzing groups about some central glow,
Spread like a murmuring crowd o'er plain and steep,
Or monster huge in heavy-breathing sleep.
His heart grew faint, and tremblingly he sank
Close by the wayside on a weed-grown bank,
Not far from where a new-raised temple stood,
Sky-roofed, and fragrant with wrought cedar wood.
The morning sun was high ; his rays fell hot
On this hap-chosen, dusty, common spot,
On the dry-withered grass and withered man :
That wondrous frame where melody began
Lay as a tomb defaced that no eye cared to scan.

But while he sank far music reached his ear.
He listened until wonder silenced fear
And gladness wonder ; for the broadening stream
Of sound advancing was his early dream,
Brought like fulfilment of forgotten prayer ;
As if his soul, breathed out upon the air,
Had held the invisible seeds of harmony
Quick with the various strains of life to be.
He listened : the sweet mingled difference
With charm alternate took the meeting sense ;
Then bursting like some shield-broad lily red,
Sudden and near the trumpet's notes out-spread,
And soon his eyes could see the metal flower,
Shining upturned, out on the morning pour
Its incense audible ; could see a train
From out the street slow-winding on the plain
With lyres and cymbals, flutes and psalteries,
While men, youths, maids, in concert sang to these
With various throat, or in succession poured,
Or in full volume mingled. But one word
Ruled each recurrent rise and answering fall,

As when the multitudes adoring call
On some great name divine, their common soul,
The common need, love, joy, that knits them in one whole.

The word was "Jubal!" . . . "Jubal" filled the air
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,
Creator of the quire, the full-fraught strain
That grateful rolled itself to him again.
The aged man adust upon the bank—
Whom no eye saw—at first with rapture drank
The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,
Felt, this was his own being's greater part,
The universal joy once born in him.
But when the train, with living face and limb
And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,
The longing grew that they should hold him dear ;
Him, Lamech's son, whom all their fathers knew,
The breathing Jubal—him, to whom their love was due.
All was forgotten but the burning need
To claim his fuller self, to claim the deed
That lived away from him, and grew apart,
While he as from a tomb, with lonely heart,
Warmed by no meeting glance, no hand that pressed,
Lay chill amid the life his life had blessed.
What though his song should spread from man's small race
Out through the myriad worlds that people space,
And make the heavens one joy-diffusing quire ?—
Still 'mid that vast would throb the keen desire
Of this poor aged flesh, this eventide,
This twilight soon in darkness to subside,
This little pulse of self that, having glowed
Through thrice three centuries, and divinely strowed
The light of music through the vague of sound,
Ached with its smallness still in good that had no bound.

For no eye saw him, while with loving pride
Each voice with each in praise of Jubal vied.
Must he in conscious trance, dumb, helpless lie
While all that ardent kindred passed him by?
His flesh cried out to live with living men
And join that soul which to the inward ken
Of all the hymning train was present there.
Strong passion's daring sees not aught to dare :
The frost-locked starkness of his frame low-bent,
His voice's penury of tones long spent,
He felt not ; all his being leaped in flame
To meet his kindred as they onward came
Slackening and wheeling toward the temple's face :
He rushed before them to the glittering space,
And, with a strength that was but strong desire,
Cried, " I am Jubal, I ! . . . I made the lyre ! "

The tones amid a lake of silence fell
Broken and strained, as if a feeble bell
Had tuneless pealed the triumph of a land
To listening crowds in expectation spanned.
Sudden came showers of laughter on that lake ;
They spread along the train from front to wake
In one great storm of merriment, while he
Shrank doubting whether he could Jubal be,
And not a dream of Jubal, whose rich vein
Of passionate music came with that dream-pain
Wherein the sense slips off from each loved thing
And all appearance is mere vanishing.
But ere the laughter died from out the rear,
Anger in front saw profanation near ;
Jubal was but a name in each man's faith
For glorious power untouched by that slow death
Which creeps with creeping time ; this too, the spot,

And this the day, it must be crime to blot,
 Even with scoffing at a madman's lie :
 Jubal was not a name to wed with mockery.

Two rushed upon him : two, the most devout
 In honour of great Jubal, thrust him out,
 And beat him with their flutes. 'Twas little need ;
 He strove not, cried not, but with tottering speed,
 As if the scorn and howls were driving wind
 That urged his body, serving so the mind
 Which could but shrink and yearn, he sought the
 screen

Of thorny thickets, and there fell unseen.
 The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
 While Jubal lonely laid him down to die.
 He said within his soul, " This is the end :
 O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
 And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul :
 I lie here now the remnant of that whole,
 The embers of a life, a lonely pain ;
 As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
 So of my mighty years nought comes to me again.

" Is the day sinking ? Softest coolness springs
 From something round me : dewy shadowy wings
 Enclose me all around—no, not above—
 Is moonlight there ? I see a face of love,
 Fair as sweet music when my heart was strong :
 Yea—art thou come again to me, great Song ? "

The face bent over him like silver night
 In long-remembered summers ; that calm light
 Of days which shine in firmaments of thought,
 That past unchangeable, from change still wrought.
 And gentlest tones were with the vision blent :
 He knew not if that gaze the music sent,

Or music that calm gaze : to hear, to see,
Was but one undivided ecstasy :
The raptured senses melted into one,
And parting life a moment's freedom won
From in and outer, as a little child
Sits on a bank and sees blue heavens mild
Down in the water, and forgets its limbs,
And knoweth nought save the blue heaven that swims.

“Jubal,” the face said, “I am thy loved Past,
The soul that makes thee one from first to last.
I am the angel of thy life and death,
Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.
Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride
Who blest thy lot above all men's beside ?
Thy bride whom thou wouldst never change, nor take
Any bride living, for that dead one's sake ?
Was I not all thy yearning and delight,
Thy chosen search, thy senses' beauteous Right,
Which still had been the hunger of thy frame
In central heaven, hadst thou been still the same ?
Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god—
Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod
Or thundered through the skies—aught else for share
Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear
The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast ?
No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,
Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain
Where music's voice was silent ; for thy fate
Was human music's self incorporate :
Thy senses' keenness and thy passionate strife
Were flesh of *her* flesh and her womb of life.
And greatly hast thou lived, for not alone

With hidden raptures were her secrets shown,
Buried within thee, as the purple light
Of gems may sleep in solitary night ;
But thy expanding joy was still to give,
And with the generous air in song to live,
Feeding the wave of ever-widening bliss
Where fellowship means equal perfectness.
And on the mountains in thy wandering
Thy feet were beautiful as blossomed spring,
That turns the leafless wood to love's glad home,
For with thy coming Melody was come.
This was thy lot, to feel, create, bestow,
And that immeasurable life to know
From which the fleshly self falls shrivelled, dead,
A seed primeval that has forests bred,
It is the glory of the heritage
Thy life has left, that makes thy outcast age :
Thy limbs shall lie dark, tombless on this sod,
Because thou shinest in man's soul, a god,
Who found and gave new passion and new joy
That nought but Earth's destruction can destroy
Thy gifts to give was thine of men alone :
'Twas but in giving that thou couldst atone
For too much wealth amid their poverty."—

The words seemed melting into symphony,
The wings upbore him, and the gazing song
Was floating him the heavenly space along,
Where mighty harmonies all gently fell
Through veiling vastness, like the far-off bell,
Till, ever onward through the choral blue,
He heard more faintly and more faintly knew,
Quitting mortality, a quenched sun-wave,
The All-creating Presence for his grave.

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

1864-8.

GEORGE ELIOT.

(FROM BOOK 1.)

THE long notes linger on the trembling air,
With subtle penetration enter all
The myriad corridors of the passionate soul,
Message-like spread, and answering action rouse.
Not angular jigs that warm the chilly limbs
In hoary northern mists, but action curved
To soft andante strains pitched plaintively.
Vibrations sympathetic stir all limbs :
Old men live backward in their dancing prime,
And move in memory ; small legs and arms
With pleasant agitation purposeless
Go up and down like pretty fruits in gales.
All long in common for the expressive act
Yet wait for it ; as in the olden time
Men waited for the bard to tell their thought.
" The dance ! the dance ! " is shouted all around.
Now Pablo lifts the bow, Pepita now,
Ready as bird that sees the sprinkled corn,
When Juan nods and smiles, puts forth her foot
And lifts her arm to wake the castanets.
Juan advances, too, from out the ring
And bends to quit his lute ; for now the scene
Is empty ; Roldan weary, gathers pence,
Followed by Annibal with purse and stick.
The carpet lies a coloured isle untrod,
Inviting feet : " The dance, the dance, " resounds,
The bow entreats with slow melodic strain,
And all the air with expectation yearns.

Sudden, with gliding motion like a flame
That through dim vapour makes a path of glory,
A figure lithe, all white and saffron-robed,
Flashed right across the circle, and now stood
With ripened arms uplift and regal head,
Like some tall flower whose dark and intense heart
Lies half within a tulip-tinted cup.

Juan stood fixed and pale ; Pepita stepped
Backward within the ring ; the voices fell
From shouts insistent to more passive tones
Half meaning welcome, half astonishment.
“Lady Fedalma !—will she dance for us ?”
But she, sole swayed by impulse passionate,
Feeling all life was music and all eyes
The warming quickening light that music makes,
Moved as, in dance religious, Miriam,
When on the Red Sea shore she raised her voice
And led the chorus of the people’s joy ;
Or as the Trojan maids that reverent sang
Watching the sorrow-crownéd Hecuba :
Moved in slow curves voluminous, gradual,
Feeling and action flowing into one,
In Eden’s natural taintless marriage-bond ;
Ardently modest, sensuously pure,
With young delight that wonders at itself
And throbs as innocent as opening flowers,
Knowing not comment—soilless, beautiful.
The spirit in her gravely glowing face
With sweet community informs her limbs,
Filling their fine gradation with the breath
Of virgin majesty ; as full vowelled words
Are new impregnate with the master’s thought.
Even the chance-strayed delicate tendrils black,
That backward ’scape from out her wreathing hair—

Even the pliant folds that cling transverse
When with obliquely soaring bend altern
She seems a goddess quitting earth again—
Gather expression—a soft undertone
And resonance exquisite from the grand chord
Of her harmoniously bodied soul.

At first a reverential silence guards
The eager senses of the gazing crowd :
They hold their breath, and live by seeing her.
But soon the admiring tension finds relief—
Sighs of delight, applausive murmurs low,
And stirrings gentle as of eared corn
Or seed-bent grasses, when the ocean's breath
Spreads landward. Even Juan is impelled
By the swift-travelling movement : fear and doubt
Give way before the hurrying energy ;
He takes his lute and strikes in fellowship,
Filling more full the rill of melody
Raised ever and anon to clearest flood
By Pablo's voice, that dies away too soon,
Like the sweet blackbird's fragmentary chant,
Yet wakes again, with varying rise and fall,
In songs that seem emergent memories
Prompting brief utterance—little *cancións*
And *villancicos*, Andalusia-born.

PABLO (*sings*).

*It was in the prime
Of the sweet Spring-time.
In the linnets' throat
Trembled the love-note,
And the love-stirred air
Thrilled the blossoms there.*

*Little shadows danced
Each a tiny elf,
Happy in large light
And the thinnest self.*

*It was but a minute
In a far-off Spring,
But each gentle thing,
Sweetly-wooing linnets,
Soft-thrilled hawthorn tree,
Happy shadowy elf
With the thinnest self,
Lives still on in me.
O the sweet, sweet prime
Of the past Spring-time !*

And still the light is changing : high above
Float soft pink clouds ; others with deeper flush
Stretch like flamingos bending toward the south.
Comes a more solemn brilliance o'er the sky,
A meaning more intense upon the air—
The inspiration of the dying day.
And Juan now, when Pablo's notes subside,
Soothes the regretful ear, and breaks the pause
With masculine voice in deep antiphony.

JUAN (*sings*).

*Day is dying ! Float, O song,
Down the westward river,
Requiem chanting to the Day—
Day, the mighty Giver.*

*Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds,
Melted rubies sending
Through the river and the sky,
Earth and heaven blending ;*

*All the long-drawn earthy banks
Up to cloud-land lifting :
Slow between them drifts the swan,
'Twixt two heavens drifting.*

*Wings half open, like a flow'r
Iuly deeper flushing,
Neck and breast as virgin's pure—
Virgin proudly blushing.*

*Day is dying ! Float, O swan,
Down the ruby river ;
Follow, song, in requiem
To the mighty Giver.*

The exquisite hour, the ardour of the crowd,
The strains more plenteous, and the gathering might
Of action passionate where no effort is,
But self's poor gates open to rushing power
That blends the inward ebb and outward vast—
All gathering influences culminate
And urge Fedalma. Earth and heaven seem one,
Life a glad trembling on the outer edge
Of unknown rapture. Swifter now she moves,
Filling the measure with a double beat
And widening circle ; now she seems to glow
With more declaréd presence, glorified,
Circling, she lightly bends and lifts on high
The multitudinous-sounding tambourine,
And makes it ring and boom, then lifts it higher
Stretching her left arm beauteous ; now the crowd
Exultant shouts, forgetting poverty
In the rich moment of possessing her.

“O MAY I JOIN THE CHOR INVISIBLE.”

1867.

GEORGE ELIOT.

*Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet,
quam hoc exiguum.*—CICERO, AD ATT., xii. 18.

O MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:

To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonised
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within

A worthier image for the sanctuary,
 And shaped it forth before the multitude
 Divinely human, raising worship so
 To higher reverence more mixed with love—
 That better self shall live till human Time
 Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
 Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
 Unread for ever.

This is life to come,
 Which martyred men have made more glorious
 For us who strive to follow. May I reach
 That purest heaven, be to other souls
 The cup of strength in some great agony,
 Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
 Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
 Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
 And in diffusion ever more intense.
 So shall I join the choir invisible
 Whose music is the gladness of the world.

Menella Bute Smedley.

1820—1877.

MENELLA B. SMEDLEY was born in 1820, the daughter of the Rev. Edward Smedley, M.A., himself the author of some poems of merit. As a child she was delicate, and required the most careful attention. She came of a family that had shown genius in many of its members—her cousin Frank, though from youth paralysed, wrote some popular books; and her sister, Mrs. Hart, secured considerable success alike as a story-writer and a writer of poems for children. Miss Smedley could not, on account of health, live in London, and resided for many years in that pleasant seacoast town Tenby. But though thus exiled from much that she delighted in, she was constantly at work. Considering the weak health with which she was so tried, she produced what formed a fair body of literature, and some of it reached a very high level. Her earliest volume of poems, "Lays and Ballads from English History," is little known as her identity was disguised under the reversed initials, "S. M.;" but the poet's touch is felt throughout in fresh images, lines of exceptional beauty, and sweet rhythmic effects, rare in such poems. Those on "Richard Cœur de Lion" and "Wallace" are very fine indeed. She wrote at least half-a-dozen prose-stories, the most successful of which were, perhaps, "Twice Lost" and "Linnet's

Trial"; she contributed many articles to the magazine *Good Words* and to *The Contemporary Review*; and published at least three volumes of poems, besides those she wrote for children in association with her sister.

If the poet is born and not made, Miss Smedley was by nature a poet. Not only was she gifted with imagination and the power of verse, but she possessed in no slight measure the dramatic faculty. Though in many of her earlier poems there was a decided tendency to mysticism, by which the human interest was veiled, or at any rate clouded, she managed, as she gained in experience, largely to escape from this. Many of her later poems are indeed imbued with fine human sympathy, and the loving imagination which clothes commonplace themes with beauty. Some of her sonnets on heroic workers—notably that on Bishop Patteson—if not strictly after the Petrarchan form, are very complete; penetrated by a lyrical spirit, and marked by a subtle music of their own. Here and there in her later work there are touches which recall to mind some of Alice Cary's best work, though Miss Smedley was unacquainted with her writings.

The touch of mysticism, tending sometimes a little to obscurity, which prevails in such poems as "A Little Fair Soul" and "Wind me a Summer Crown," hardly prepares one for the realistic strength to be found in such pieces as "Hero Harold," which, though suffused with the true ballad spirit, observes a polish that recalls Lord Tennyson's "Lord of Burleigh"; while certainly the force and compact energy thrown into some poems written on striking events of the day (only a few of which were

published in her volume of collected poems) give the idea of such decision, patriotic feeling, and width of range as only a few English women poets have shown. Note, for example, the poem "When the News about the 'Trent' came":—

Faint as a sigh the weary light
 Touches the verge before it drops ;
 The rustle of descending night
 Is felt through all the breathless copse.
 A great slow shadow dims the sea,
 And ships come softly through its haze,
 Like passing shapes seen doubtfully
 By eyes that ache while sleep delays.
 A ship had brought us word at morn,
 How some mad world beyond the sea
 Stood up to fling a look of scorn
 In face of England's majesty.
 And all our land was thinking war ;
 I, too, with powerless hopes and hands,
 Watched while each pale deliberate star
 Struck this wet purple in the sands ;
 And felt, for each red boss of rock,
 Now blackening as the night-time grows ;
 Each curve of these cliff-walls that lock
 Our precious freedom from our foes ;
 For each small circuit traced by foam,
 And marking England to my sight,
 Each fringe and fragment of my home,
 I could have wished to die to-night.

We recall, too, a powerful piece—"Lines suggested by the Greek Massacre"—in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1870, which, so far as we know has not been reprinted.

Miss Smedley, in association with her sister, Mrs. Hart, the author of "Mrs. Jerningham's Journal," and other tales in verse, wrote many of the poems in the volumes titled "Child-World"

and "Poems Written for a Child;" and if she did not equal her sister in that quaint and sparkling glee which seems to accord with so much in happy childhood, she certainly surpassed her in fancy, in lyrical sweetness, and in all that goes to constitute true poetry. A delicious sense of music, and an airy fancy, are everywhere to be found in the sections of the book that come from her pen.

The drama entitled "Lady Grace" has been declared by competent critics to be in some respects one of the best chamber-dramas ever written in English. It is original in construction, its incidents are nicely treated and adjusted to promote the movement of the piece, and it is full of careful delineations of character, with the nicest perception of the modifying effects of association and personal influence. A second volume, containing two plays, "Blind Love" and "Cyril," published in 1874, though it showed great resource, with touches of rare music and melody, and a growing feeling for life, was not so successful—at all events, from a publisher's point of view. Miss Smedley, as we said, wrote many prose tales full of originality, and remarkable for polish of style. The more notable are "A Mere Story" (1865), "A Very Woman" (1867), "Twice Lost" (1868), "Other Folk's Lives" (1869), "Linnet's Trial" (1878). She took a great interest in many forms of philanthropic work, and wrote in favour of boarding out poor children.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

MENELLA BUTE SMEDLEY.

I.—THE LAY OF SIR WILLIAM WALLACE.

(FROM "LAYS AND BALLADS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.")

THE grey hill and the purple heath
Are round me as I stand ;
The torrent hoar doth sternly roar,
The lake lies calm and grand ;
The altars of the living rock
'Neath yon blue skies are bare,
And a thousand mountain-voices mock
Mine accents on the air.

O loved most lovely and beloved,—
Whether in morn's bright hues,
Or in the veil, so soft, so pale,
Woven by twilight dews,
God's bounty pours from sun and cloud,
Beauty on shore and wave,—
I lift my hands, I cry aloud,
Man shall not make thee slave.

Ye everlasting witnesses,—
Most eloquent, though dumb,—
Sky, shore, and seas, light, mist, and breeze,
Receive me when I come !
How could I in this holy place,
Stand with unstained brow,
How look on earth's accursing face,
If I forget my vow ?

Not few nor slight his burdens are
Who gives himself to stand,
Steadfast and sleepless as a star,
Watching his fatherland ;
Strong must his will be, and serene,
His spirit pure and bright,
His conscience vigilant and keen,
His arm an arm of might.

From the closed temple of his heart,
Sealed as a sacred spring,
Self must he spurn, and set apart
As an unholy thing ;
Misconstrued where he loves the best,
Where most he hopes, betrayed,
The quenchless watchfire in his breast
Must neither fail nor fade.

And his shall be a holier meed
Than earthly lips may tell ;—
Not in the end, but in the deed,
Doth truest honour dwell.
His land is one vast monument,
Bearing the record high
Of a spirit with itself content,
And a name that cannot die !

For this, with joyous heart, I give
Fame, pleasure, love, and life ;
Blest for a cause so high, to live
In ceaseless, hopeless strife :
For this to die, with sword in hand,
Oh, blessed and honoured thrice !
God, countrymen, and fatherland,
Accept the sacrifice !

I.—“WIND ME A SUMMER CROWN,” SHE SAID.

“WIND me a summer crown,” she said,
“And set it on my brows ;
For I must go, while I am young,
Home to my Father’s house,

“And make me ready for the day,
And let me not be stayed ;
I would not linger on the way,
As if I was afraid.

“O ! will the golden courts of heaven,
When I have paced them o’er,
Be lovely as my lily walks
Which I must see no more ?

“And will the seraph hymns and harps,
When they have filled my ear,
Be tender as my mother’s voice,
Which I must never hear ?

“And shall I lie where sunsets drift,
Or where the stars are born,
Or where the living tints are mixed
To paint the clouds of morn ?”

Your mother’s tones shall reach you still,
Even sweeter than they were ;
And the false love that broke your heart
Shall be forgotten there.

And not a star or flower is born
The beauty of that shore ;
There is a Face which you shall see,
And wish for nothing more.

III.—A CHARACTER.

SO noble that he cannot see
He stands in aught above the rest,
But does his greatness easily,
And mounts his scaffold with a jest ;

Not vaunting any daily death,
Because he scorns the thing that dies,
And not in love with any breath
That might proclaim him grand or wise.

Not much concerned with schemes that show
The counterchange of weak with strong,
But never passing by a woe,
Nor sitting still to watch a wrong.

Of all hearts careful save his own ;
Most tender when he suffers most ;
Wont, if a foe must be o'erthrown,
To count, but never grudge the cost.

Sharp insight, severing with a glance
Greater from less, from substance shade ;
Faith, in gross darkness, of mischance
Unable to be much afraid ;

Out-looking eyes that seek and scan,
Ready to love what they behold ;
Quick reverence for his brother-man ;
Quick sense where gilding is not gold.

Such impulse of his self-control,
It seems a voluntary grace,
The careless grandeur of a soul
That holds no mirror to its face.

True sympathy, a light that grows
And broadens like the summer morn's;
A hope that trusts before it knows,
Being out of tune with all the scorns.

On-moving, temperately intent
On radiant ends by means as bright,
And never cautious, but content
With all the bitter fruits of right.

Under this shade the tired may lie,
Worn with the greatness of their way;
Under this shield the brave may die,
Aware that they have won the day.

For such a leader lifts his times
Out of the limits of the night,
And, falling grandly, while he climbs,
Falls with his face toward the height.

IV.—THE LITTLE FAIR SOUL.

(A PARABLE.)

A LITTLE fair soul that knew not sin
Looked over the edge of Paradise,
And saw one striving to come in
With fear and tumult in his eyes.

“Oh, brother, is it you?” he cried;
“Your face is like a breath from home;
Why do you stay so long outside?
I am athirst for you to come!”

“Tell me first how our mother fares,
And has she wept too much for me?”
“White are her cheeks and white her hairs,
But not from gentle tears for thee.”

“Tell me where are our sisters gone?”
“Alas, I left them weary and wan.”
“And tell me, is the baby grown?”
“Alas, he is almost a man.”

“Cannot you break the gathering days
And let the light of death come through,
Ere his feet stumble in the maze
Crossed safely by so few, so few?”

“For like a cloud upon the sea
That darkens till you find no shore,
So was the face of life to me,
Until I sank for evermore ;

“And like an army in the snow
My days went by, a treacherous train,
Each smiling as he struck his blow,
Until I lay among them, slain.”

“Oh, brother, there was a path so clear!”
“There might be, but I never sought.”
“Oh, brother, there was a sword so near!”
“There might be, but I never fought.”

“Yet sweep this needless gloom aside,
For you are come to the gate at last!”
Then in despair that soul replied,
“The gate is fast, the gate is fast!”

“I cannot move this mighty weight,
 I cannot find this golden key,
 But hosts of heaven around us wait,
 And none has ever said ‘no’ to me.

“Sweet Saint, put by thy palm and scroll,
 And come undo the door for me!”

“Rest thee still, thou little fair soul,
 It is not mine to keep the key.”

“Kind Angel, strike these doors apart!
 The air without is dark and cold.”

“Rest thee still, thou little pure heart,
 Not for my word will they unfold.”

Up all the shining heights he prayed
 For that poor Shadow in the cold;
 Still came the word, “Not ours to aid;
 We cannot make the doors unfold.”

But that poor Shadow, still outside,
 Wrung all the sacred air with pain,
 And all the souls went up and cried
 Where never cry was heard in vain.

No eye beheld the pitying Face,
 The answer none might understand,
 But dimly through the silent space
 Was seen the stretching of a Hand.

V.—A DISCOVERY.

THE languid world went by me as I found
 A jewel on the ground,
 Under a silent weed,
 A nameless glory set for none to heed.
 “Stoop, see, and wonder!” was my joyful cry,
 But still the languid world went only by.

I drew it forth, and set it on a hill ;
 They passed it still.
 Some turned to look,
And said it was a pebble from the brook,
A dewdrop, only made to melt away,
A worthless mirror, with a bordered ray.

Then on my knees I shouted forth its praise,
 For nights and days.
 “ See with your eyes
A diamond shining only for the wise !
How is it that you love not at first sight,
This unfamiliar treasure of pure light ? ”

I set it on my breast. Then, with a sneer,
 The world drew near,
 They knew the sign
And secret of my praise ; the thing was mine.
They left it to me with a bland disdain,
And hugged their tinsel to their hearts again.

I showed it to the dearest soul I had :
 “ *You* are not mad ;
 Let them go by ;
We *know* it is a diamond, you and I.”
Coldly he answered, “ If you love it so,
You need not me to praise it. Let me go.”

“ It is my sin,” I cried with bitter tears,
 “ That no man hears.
 I'll fling it down ;
Some nobler hand shall set it in a crown.
I shall behold it honoured ere I die ;
But no one could have loved it more than I ! ”

VI.—SLAIN.

LET her lie upon your heart while she faints,
Where she slept such a short time ago ;
O ! she's young to be crowned with the saints—
Hold her fast, mother, do not let her go !

The roses are not dead on her cheeks,
There is but a passing chill in their bloom ;
It will melt when she smiles, when she speaks—
Hush ! was not that her voice in the room ?

She is looking like a babe as she lies
With her ringlets swept aside and apart—
Ah, mother, keep the tears in your eyes,
If they fall upon her face she may start.

Did some one break her heart with a word,
Having grasped at it first as a prize ?
Did it flutter from his hand, like a bird
Which goes a little way, and then dies ?

He remembers the joy of her face,
The love in her smile, and the light,
When, shrinking, she met his embrace—
Bring him here, let him look at her to-night !

O ! first came the wonder and the doubt,
And the pale hope fading day by day,
So wistfully she wandered about,
Like a lost child asking its way ;

And then came the silence and despair,
And the sighing after wings like a dove,
And the proud heart bleeding into prayer,
But hiding all its wounds from your love.

It is over and the tale is all told,
And the white lamb lies dead in the frost ;
You may cover up its limbs from the cold,
But you cannot find a life that is lost.

We were thinking that she moved, but her cheek
Was but stirred by the breast where she lay
Heaving a moment, while we speak,
With the quiet sobs forcing their way.

Let them come, poor mother, let them come ;
You must turn when your tears are all done
To a blank in the sweet talk at home,
And a name on a little grey stone.

VII.—BISHOP PATTESON.

AN Angel came and cried to him by night,
“ God needs a Martyr from your little band ;
Name me the purest soul, which, closely scanned,
Still overflows with sweetness and with light
That find no limit till they reach the Land
Whence first they sprang ! ” Weeping for what
must be,
He named them all, with love adorning each ;
And still that Angel smiled upon his speech,
And, smiling still, went upward silently
Not marking any name. Amazed he knelt,
Pondering the silent choice. But when the stroke
Fell, not an Angel, but the Master, spoke,
With voice so strong that nothing else was felt ;
“ Thou art the man ! Belovèd, come to Me ! ”

Dora Greenwell.

1821—1882.

DOROTHY GREENWELL, a poet of rare sweetness, penetration, and individuality, if touched with something of a religious mysticism, was born at Greenwell Ford, in the parish of Lanchester, Durham, on December 6th, 1821. Her father was owner of the estate of Greenwell Ford, as his ancestors had been before him from the time of Henry VIII. He was a popular magistrate, and Deputy Lieutenant of the County, and was greatly beloved and respected. The mansion of Greenwell Ford was a spacious house in a beautiful country, well fed with streams and charmingly wooded; and the little Dora drew from it many memories and inspirations. Very sweet and gentle as a child, she soon showed rare faculty. Her childish letters were said to have been very premature. Her fondness for those about her—more especially her mother and her brother Alan—was very marked. Always delicate, and often ill, her cheerfulness amidst pain surprised those who were near her, while her sufferings, continued through life, mellowed her character and gave tone and colour to her verse. In 1848 her father was compelled to part with his estate; and Dora went to live for a time with her brother William (afterwards Canon of Durham), at Ovingham Rectory, in Northumberland. While here her first

volume of poems was published by Mr. Pickering. It contained poems and sonnets, some of which indicated the mystico-religious vein of which so much was to follow. After a short period of residence with her brother Alan, who was now rector of Colbourne, she went to Durham in 1854, and settled down there with her mother. Her acquaintance with members of the Constable family of Edinburgh, formed about this time, resulted in much encouragement and stimulus, as did also the friendship afterwards formed with Professor William Knight, of St. Andrews,—the editor and biographer of Wordsworth,—which produced a collection of letters, remarkably rich in thought and experience. On her mother's death, in 1871, she left Durham, where she had lived for eighteen years. After a brief visit to Torquay she settled in London, where she had made many friends, whose society she greatly enjoyed. In 1881 she met with an accident, which rendered it necessary for her to go to the house of her brother Alan, at Clifton, where she passed away on March 29th, 1882.

The most noticeable characteristic of Miss Greenwell, as a poet, is quickness of thought, wedded to striking originality of form and subtle sweetness of verse. She is utterly unconventional in her movements, and now and then touches boldly a new chord. Though she was one of the most interested and active in many philanthropic and social movements, this did not, as in so many other cases, exercise a deteriorating effect on her poetry—at all events, not directly. The same thing can hardly be said of her religious tendencies, which induced a strain of mysticism; and thus had the effect of throwing over

much of her work a kind of dreamy haze, such as would have been ruinous in destroying all clear outline, and becoming merely sectarian had it not been for the colours of which she made it the medium. One of her friends—herself a poet—has pointed out that she had the same passion as Charles Kingsley for all that was tropical and glowing—rich and spreading palms, rich and potent scents; and that, in her whole nature, there was a love of what was free and lavish. The width and healthy outflow of her human sympathies did much to save her from the fate of the pure mystic. One of the most remarkable sections of her work is that collection of poems titled “Songs of Salvation,” in which she shows quite an exceptional power of uniting a high religious teaching with a kind of dramatic realism of portraiture of simple characters by monologue and dialogue, marked by the utmost truth and directness. Her faculty in ballad was surprising, and almost beyond expectation, as may be seen in “The Battle Flag of Sigurd,” where there is action, and keen sense of movement. Her prose bears almost the same marks, and has the same range. In “The Two Friends,” and in “The Patience of Hope” we have simplicity and now and then force fitted to carry home practical truths; in “Colloquia Crucis” and “The Soul’s Legend” we have it affecting the level of prose-poetry. Her articles in *The Contemporary Review*, on “Our Single Women,” etc., and her papers on “Imbeciles and their Treatment,” a subject in which she took a profound interest, should not, however, be forgotten. “The Life of Lacordaire”—full of subtle insight and biographic sympathy—shows Miss Greenwell at her

best as a prose writer, as perhaps "Carmina Crucis" shows her at her best as regards poetic form. In some respects, this is the most remarkable of Miss Greenwell's works. There is in it a glow of colour and light, a passionate throb or thrill of devotion, of spiritual elevation and expectancy. She has entered largely into the joys of the soul; these are but promises, prophecies of fuller joys to follow; and the forms she finds to embody and express her "sanctified emotions" are richly musical, and sometimes recall the finest turns of her friend, Christina Rossetti. She shares with Dr. George MacDonald the tendency to parable. She will accept nothing for itself, but must translate everything into a text for religious truth. The experience of the soul is the first thing with her, and must find a language. Her exceeding desire to interpret exceptional phases of spiritual experience has operated against the popular acceptance of her poetry as a whole; but there is much in it that beyond cavil belongs *almost* to the first rank, or at the lowest, must take a very high place in the second; for she was undoubtedly original, had a fine sense of music, and in her more important poems exhibited a happy instinct for new forms and musical terms and phrases.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

DORA GREENWELL.

I.—HOME.

TWO birds within one nest ;
Two hearts within one breast ;
Two spirits in one fair
Firm league of love and prayer,
Together bound for aye, together blest.

An ear that waits to catch
A hand upon the latch ;
A step that hastens its sweet rest to win,
A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.

II.—THE BATTLE-FLAG OF SIGURD.

The flag of Sigurd, the northern warrior, carried victory with it, but brought death to its bearer.

I HAVE no folded flock to show,
Though from my youth I have loved the sheep
And the lambs, as they strayed in the valleys low,
Or clomb the upland pastures steep,
But none were given me to keep !
I stood on the hill when the dawn brake red,
Through the darkling glen the foe drew nigh,

They came on swift, with a stealthy tread ;
I gave the earliest warning cry !
Then flashed the falchion, the arrow flew ;
I did not fight, nor yield, nor fly,
I held up the flag the whole day through—
Wrap it round me when I die !

I have no garnered sheaf to show,
Though oft with my shining sickle bared
I have wrought with the reapers, row by row,
And joined the shout as they homeward fared :
I was not by when the land was shared !
I stood at noon when the maidens dread
Came forth ere the battle, to choose the slain,
And at nightfall the raven's foot was red,
And the wolves were met on the darkening plain.
Then hewed the hanger, the sword smote sore,
I held up the flag till the day went by ;
It was glued to my straining clasp with gore—
Wrap it round me when I die !

I have no silken spoil to show,
No torque of the beaten gold, no red
Rich broidered mantle, wrung from the foe,
Or flung down by chief as the banquet sped ;
I have only watched, and toiled, and bled !
I stand at eve on the vessel's prow,
My heart is wounded, and I have striven
So long that my arm is weary now,
And the flag I bear is stained and riven ;
The dark waves mutter, the night dews fall ;
'Twixt a sullen sea and a stormy sky
I hold up the flag in sight of all—
Wrap it round me when I die !

III.—DARIA.

In Calderon's drama, *Los Dos Amantes del Cielo*, Daria, a beautiful Roman girl, eventually a Christian convert and martyr, declares, while yet Pagan, that she will never love until she finds some one who has died to prove his love for her.

OH, proud and fair was she !
Yet only proud perchance in being fair,
And in her speech, and in her smiling free,
As Rose to summer air ;

And near her in the dell
Another damsel sat who sweetly sung ;
And one who Love's fond ancient chronicle
Read ; and these three were young,

And fair, and richly dight.
But she I speak of, read not, neither sung,
But deemed she ministered enough delight
In being fair and young.

"Love!" said she in disdain,
"Now am I weary of the vows and sighs
Of lovers that to die for me are fain,
Yet find I none who dies."

She spoke again in jest
Or sadness—which, I knew not then, nor she :
Deep words are spoken, deepest thoughts confessed,
By hearts in careless glce.

"Yet might I in that train
Find one who for my love indeed had died,
Then let him come to ask for love again,
And I will be his bride!"

Oh, meek was she and fair,
 But then most fair, methought, in being meek ;
 And yet the same was she whom otherwhere
 I heard so proudly speak.

Her voice rose clear and soft
 As is the dove's, and dove-like still caressed
 One tender note, as if returning oft
 To what it loveth best.

She sang, "My soul is bound
 By that sweet olden promise, One who died
 For me and for my love now have I found,
 I quit no more His side."

IV.—THE MAN WITH THREE FRIENDS.

(A STORY TOLD IN THE "GESTA ROMANORUM.")

TO one full sound and quietly
 That slept, there came a heavy cry,
 "Awake ! arise ! for thou hast slain
 A man." "Yea, have I to mine own pain,"

He answered ; "but of ill intent
 And malice am I that naught forecast
 As is the babe innocent.

"From sudden anger our strife grew.
 I hated not, in times past,
 Him whom unwittingly I slew."

"If it be thus indeed, thy case
 Is hard," they said ; "for thou must die,
 Unless with the Judge thou can'st find grace.
 Hast thou, in thine extremity,
 Friends soothfast for thee to plead ?"

Then said he, "I have friends three :

One ¹ whom in word, and will, and deed
From my youth I have served, and loved before
Mine own soul, and for him striven ;
To him was all I got given ;
And the longer I lived, I have loved him more.

And another ² have I, whom, sooth to tell,
I love as I love my own heart well,
And the third, ³ I cannot now call
To mind that ever loved at all
He hath been of me, or in aught served ;
And yet, maybe, he hath well deserved
That I should love him with the rest.

"Now will I first to the one loved best."

Said the first, "And art thou so sore bestead ?

See, I have gained of cloth good store,
So will I give thee three ells and more
(If more thou needest) when thou art dead,
To wrap thee. Now hie away from my door :
"I have friends many, and little room."

And the next made answer, weeping sore
"We will go with thee to the place of doom :
There must we leave thee evermore."

"Alack," said the man, "and well-a-day !"
But the third only answered, "Yea" ;
And while the man spake, all to start soon,
Knelt down and buckled on his shoon,
And said, "By thee in the Judgment Hall
I will stand, and hear what the Judge decree ;
And if it be death, I will die with thee,
Or for thee, as it may befall."

¹ The world. ² Wife and children. ³ Christ.

V.—*THE ETERNAL NOW.*

“For one day with Thee is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

“**N**OW have I won a marvel and a Truth” ;
So spake the soul and trembled, “dread and ruth
Together mixed, a sweet and bitter core
Closed in one rind ; for I did sin of yore,
But this (so said I oft) was long ago ;
So put it from me far away, but, lo !
With Thee is neither After nor Before,
O Lord, and clear within the noon-light set
Of one illimitable Present, yet
Thou lookest on my fault as it were now.
So will I mourn and humble me ; yet Thou
Art not as man, that oft forgives a wrong
Because he half forgets it, Time being strong
To wear the crimson of guilt’s stain away ;
For Thou, forgiving, dost so in the Day
That shows it clearest, in the boundless Sea
Of Mercy and Atonement, utterly
Casting our pardoned trespasses behind,
No more remembered, or to come in mind ;
Set wide from us as East from West away
So now this bitter turns to solace kind ;
And I will comfort me that once of old
A deadly sorrow struck me, and its cold
Runs through me still ; but this was long ago.
My grief is dull through age, and friends outworn,
And wearied comforters, have long forborne
To sit and weep beside me : Lord, yet Thou
And look upon my pang as it were now !”

VI.—DEMETER AND CORA.

“SPEAK, daughter, speak ; art speaking now ?”

“Seek, mother, seek ; art seeking thou

Thy dear-loved Cora ?” “Daughter sweet,

I bend unto the earth my ear

To catch the sound of coming feet ;

I listen long but only hear

The deep, dark waters running clear.”

“Oh ! my great mother, now the heat

Of thy strong heart in thickened beat

Hath reached thy Cora in her gloom,

Is't well with thee, my Mother—tell ?”

“Is't well with thee, my daughter ?” “Well

Or ill I know not ; I through fate

Queen of a wide unmeasured tomb

Know not if it be love or hate

That holds me fast, but I am bound

For ever ! What if I am found

Of thee, my mother, still the bars

Are round me, and the girdling night

Hath passed within my soul ! the stars

Have risen on me, but the light

Hath gone for ever.” “Daughter, tell,

Doth thy dark lord, the King of Hell,

Still love thee ?” “Oh, too well, too well

He loves ! he binds with unwrought chain.

I was not born to be thy mate,

Aïdes ! nor the Queen of pain :

I was thy daughter Cora, vowed

To gladness in thy world above,

I loved the daffodil, I love

All lovely, free and gentle things

Beloved of thee ! a sound of wings

Is with me in captivity,
Of birds, and bees, with her that sings
The shrill Cicula, ever gay
In noon's white heat." "But, daughter, say
Dost love Aides?" "Now, too bold
Thy question, mother; this be told,
I leave him not for love, for gold,
One lot we share, one life we know.
The Lord is he of wealth and rest,
As well as king of death and pain;
He folds me to a kingly breast,
He yields to me a rich domain.
I leave him not for aught above,
For any God's unsteadfast love
Or fairest mortal-form below;
Thou hast left heaven for earth; and thou
For thy poor Cora's sake, self-driven,
Hast led its sunny heights in scorn
And hate, of Zeus unforgiven!
Do mortals love thee?" "Daughter, yea.
They call me their great mother. Corn
And wine I give them when they pray;
Their love for me their little day
Of life lasts out; perchance they knew
It was not love for them that drew
Me down to wander where the vine
Is sweet to me, and breath of kine.
Art listening now, my Cora dear?
Art listening now, my child,—art near?
Oh, that thy kiss upon my cheek
Were warm! thy little hand in mine
Once more! Yet, let me hear thee speak,
And tell me of that garden rare,
And of thy flowers, dark, fiery, sweet,

That never breathe the upper air.”
 “Oh, mother, they are fair, are fair ;
 Large-leaved are they, large-blossomed, frail,
 And beautiful. No vexing gale
 Comes ever nigh them ; fed with fire,
 They kindle in a torch-like flame
 Half ecstasy, half tender shame
 Of bloom that must so soon expire.
 But, mother, tell me of the wet
 Cool primrose ! of the lilac-bough
 And its warm gust of rapture, met
 In summer days !—art listening yet ?”
 “Art near me, O my Cora, now ?”

VII.—“BRING ME WORD HOW TALL SHE IS.”

WOMAN IN 1873.

“How tall is your Rosalind ?”

“Just as high as my heart.”

As You Like It.

WITHIN a garden shade,
 A garden sweet and dim,
 Two happy children played
 Together ; he was made
 For God, and she for him.
 Beyond the garden's shade,
 In deserts drear and dim
 Two outcast children strayed
 Together, he betrayed
 By her, and she by him.
 Together girl and boy,
 They wandered, ne'er apart ;
 Each wrought to each annoy,

Yet each knew never joy
Save in the other's heart
By her so oft deceived ;
By him so sore opprest ;
They each the other grieved,
Yet each of each was best
Beloved, and still caressed.
And she was in his sight
Found fairest, still his prize,
His constant chief delight ;
She raised to him her eyes
That led her not aright,
And ever by his side
A patient huntress ran
Through forests dark and wide,
And still the woman's pride
And glory was the Man.
When her he would despise,
She kept him captive bound ;
Forbidding her to rise,
By many cords and ties
She held him to the ground.
At length, in stature grown,
He stands erect and free ;
Yet stands he not alone,
For his beloved would be
Like him she loveth wise, like him she
loveth free.
So wins she her desire,
Yet stand they not apart ;
For as *she* doth aspire
He grows, nor stands she higher
Than her Beloved's heart.

VIII.—“*QUI SAIT AIMER, SAIT MOURIR.*”

“**I** BURN my soul away !”

So spake the Rose and smiled ; “within my cup
All day the sunbeams fall in flame, all day
They drink my sweetness up !”

“I sigh my soul away !”

The Lily said ; “all night the moonbeams pale
Steal round and round me, whispering in their play
An all too tender tale !”

“I give my soul away !”

The Violet said ; “the West wind wanders on,
The North wind comes ; I know not what they say,
And yet my soul is gone !”

Oh, Poet, burn away

Thy fervent soul ! fond Lover at the feet
Of her thou lovest, sigh ! dear Christian, pray,
And let the world be sweet !

IX.—*THE SOUL'S PARTING.*

November 12th, 1851.

SHE sat within Life's Banquet Hall at noon,
When word was brought unto her secretly,
“The Master cometh onwards quickly ; soon
Across the Threshold He will call for thee.”
Then she rose up to meet Him at the Door,
But turning, courteous, made a farewell brief
To those that sat around. From Care and Grief
She parted first : “Companions sworn and true
Have ye been ever to me, but for Friends
I knew ye not till later, and did miss
Much solace through that error ; let this kiss,
Late known and prized, be taken for amends ;
Thou, too, kind, constant Patience, with thy slow,
Sweet counsels aiding me ; I did not know

That ye were angels, until ye displayed
Your wings for flight ; now bless me !” but they said,
“ We blest thee long ago.”

Then turning unto twain
That stood together, tenderly and oft
She kissed them on their foreheads, whispering soft,
“ Now must we part ; yet leave me not before
Ye see me enter safe within the Door ;
Kind bosom-comforters, that by my side
The darkest hour found ever closest bide,
A dark hour waits me, ere for evermore
Night with its heaviness be overpast ;
Stay with me till I cross the Threshold o’er.’
So Faith and Hope stayed by her till the last.

But giving both her hands
To one that stood the nearest, — “ Thou and I
May pass together ; for the holy bands
God knits on earth are never loosed on high.
Long have I walked with Thee ; Thy name arose
E’en in my sleep, and sweeter than the close
Of music was thy voice ; for thou wert sent
To lead me homewards from my banishment
By’ devious ways, and never hath my heart
Swerved from Thee, though our hands were wrung apart
By spirits sworn to sever us ; above
Soon shall I look upon Thee as Thou art.”
So she crossed o’er with Love.

X.—GONE.

ALONE, at midnight as he knelt, his spirit was aware
Of somewhat falling in between the silence and
the prayer,
A bell’s dull clangour that hath sped so far, it faints
and dies

So soon as it hath reached the ear whereto its errand lies ;
And as he rose up from his knees, his spirit was aware
Of Somewhat, forceful and unseen, that sought to hold
him there ;

As of a Form that stood behind, and on his shoulders prest
Both hands to stay his rising up, and Somewhat in his
breast,

In accents clearer far than words, spake, "Pray yet
longer, pray,
For one that ever prayed for thee, this night hath passed
away ;

"A soul, that climbing hour by hour the silver-shining stair
That leads to God's great treasure-house, grew covetous ;
and there

"Was stored no blessing and no boon, for thee she did
not claim,
(So lowly, yet importunate!) and ever with *thy* name

"She linked—that none in earth or heaven might hinder
it or stay—

One Other Name, so strong, that thine hath never
missed its way.

"This very night within my arms this gracious soul I bore
Within the Gate, where many a prayer of hers had gone
before ;

"And where she resteth, evermore one constant song
they raise,

Of 'Holy, holy,' so that *now* I know not if she prays ;

But for the voice of Praise in Heaven, a voice of
Prayer hath gone

From Earth ; thy name upriseth now no more ; pray on,
pray on !"

XI.—LIFE TAPESTRY.

TOO long have I, methought, with tearful eye
 Pored o'er this tangled work of mine, and mused
 Above each stitch awry, and thread confused ;
 Now will I think on what in years gone by
 I heard of them that weave rare tapestry
 At Royal looms, and how they constant use
 To work on the rough side, and still peruse
 The pictured pattern set above them high :
 So will I set my copy high above,
 And gaze and gaze till on my spirit grows
 Its gracious impress : till some line of love
 Transferred upon my canvas, faintly glows ;
 Nor look too much on warp or woof, provide
 He whom I work for sees their fairer side.

XII.—TO CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

“ I have mingled my grapes and my wine.”

The Song of Songs.

THOU hast filled me a golden cup
 With a drink divine that glows,
 With the bloom that is flowing up
 From the heart of the folded rose.
 The grapes in their amber glow,
 And the strength of the blood-red wine
 All mingle and change and flow
 In this golden cup of thine.
 With the scent of the curling wine
 With the balm of the rose's breath,—
 For the voice of love is thine,
 And thine is the Song of Death !

Adelaide Anne Procter.

1825—1864.

IN his sympathetic and touching preface to the "Legends and Lyrics" of Adelaide Anne Procter, Charles Dickens gave a characteristic account of the connection which had grown up between himself—as Editor of *Household Words*—and the gentle and delicate lyrist whose works he was then introducing. Her father, Bryan Waller Procter, better known as Barry Cornwall, himself a lyrist of no mean power, had befriended Dickens when he was a young literary aspirant, and a life-long friendship had ensued between them. Dickens had known Adelaide Procter as a child, and had watched her develop into young womanhood. She was a gay, sprightly girl, of great energy and rare sympathy of character, strenuous and eager in every study, passionately fond of books and of music. Highly cultured, intensely sympathetic, and surrounded by a rare intellectual atmosphere, it was not remarkable that she should seek to give expression to her thoughts and feelings in literary shape; and when at length she determined on making some of her verses public, she sent them, under an assumed name, to her father's friend, Charles Dickens. Their merit was at once discerned, and further contributions were invited and secured for publication in *Household Words*. How the humorous and imaginative editor

built up in his mind a little romance about his unknown contributor, "Miss Mary Berwick," and how it at length became known to him that she was none other than the daughter of his old friend, is most delightfully told in the preface to her collected works.

Born in Bedford Square, London, October 30th, 1825, Adelaide Procter early manifested a love of poetry. A tiny album, into which her favourite verses were copied by her mother's hand, was carried about by her as another child carries about her doll. She soon displayed a remarkable memory and great quickness of apprehension, and as she grew older she acquired the French, Italian, and German languages, and great skill as a pianoforte player. At the age of twenty-six she adopted the Roman Catholic faith, and though her special views of religion are not obtruded in her works, a generally devout tone, deep admiration for Christian heroism, devotion, and self-abnegation are conspicuously manifest in her subsequent writings. She spent her life between contemplation, poetical composition, and active benevolence. "Always impelled by the conviction that her life must not be dreamed away, and that her indulgence in her favourite pursuits must be balanced by action in the real world around her, she was indefatigable in her endeavours to do some good. . . . Now it was the visitation of the sick that had possession of her; now it was the sheltering of the houseless; now it was the elementary teaching of the densely ignorant; now it was the raising up of those who had wandered and got trodden under foot; . . . now it was all these things at once. Perfectly unselfish, swift to sympathise, and eager to

relieve, she wrought at such designs with a flushed earnestness that disregarded season, weather, time of day or night, food and rest." Thus wrote Charles Dickens. No wonder that a constitution so over-taxed succumbed under the burdens imposed upon it. After a lingering illness of fifteen months, borne with patience, resignation and hope, she died, in her mother's arms, on the 2nd of February, 1864. Adelaide Procter's best work was the fruit of the last ten years of her life; for though she had published a few verses before that date, it was not until the spring of 1853 that "Mary Berwick" sent her first contribution to *Household Words*, and her career was over, as we have seen, in 1864. Her poetry may be classified as narrative, lyrical, and devotional, though, as we have already observed, the deeply religious and devotional cast of their author's mind is manifest in all of them. Nor is their purpose unapparent, though their didacticism is kept under admirable restraint. All of them faithfully reflect the deeper convictions of her mind, and it is matter for observation that though she lived till 1864, in the midst of intellectual people, many of whom must have been profoundly influenced by the scepticism, the unrest, the despair, of the time, no trace of it is to be discovered in her writings,—a remarkable fact in connection with the work of one so eager, so sympathetic, so impetuous. So far as books inspired her songs, she might have drawn all her inspiration from the New Testament. We must strive. Yes; she accepts, cheerfully accepts, this nineteenth century admonition; but we must wait and pray too.

Full of faith and hope, she is yet practical and

sensible in her view of life. She finds the world full of sorrow and suffering and accepts it without a murmur; nay, rather glories in the imperfect and transient nature of earthly joys. The ministry of suffering is a favourite theme with her, and this without any affected cynicism as to "the joy of the whole earth." There can be no doubt as to the genuineness of the joy that sings—

"My God, I thank Thee who hast made
The Earth so bright;
So full of splendour and of joy,
Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here
Noble and right!

"I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round,
That in the darkest spot of Earth
Some love is found.—"

Nor is it possible to deny the high standard of self-discipline, of calm, hopeful and resigned confidence attained by the spirit that can sing with her—

"I thank Thee *more* that all our joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that Earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

* * * * *

"I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast kept
The best in store;
We have enough, yet not too much
To long for more:
A yearning for a deeper peace,
Not known before.

“I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
 Though amply blest,
Can never find, although they seek,
 A perfect rest—
Nor ever shall, until they lean
 On Jesus’ breast!”

Surely here she gives lyric expression to a very rare attainment of even Christian faith. Her message to suffering humanity is characteristically given in the poem “Friend Sorrow” :—

“Do not cheat thy Heart and tell her,
 ‘Grief will pass away,
Hope for fairer times in future,
 And forget to-day.’—
Tell her, if you will, that sorrow
 Need not come in vain ;
Tell her that the lesson taught her
 Far outweighs the pain.”

Her narrative poems have remarkably good qualities. The stories are vivid; the reader is quickly interested, and reads right to the end. Witness the two entitled respectively, “A Legend of Bregenz,” and “A Legend of Provence.” In the former, the story of the young Tyrolean maid, faithfully performing the “daily round, the common task,” of humble servitude in the household of strangers, placid and content, all unconscious of the heroic potentiality within her, suddenly aroused into a burning anxiety to save her native town from attack, is powerfully though simply told, and the reader’s anxiety and sympathy for the maiden, as she scales the steep banks and conveys the warning to her townsmen, is complete.

References to the power of Music are scattered throughout her poems, and two of her lyrics, expressive of its magical efficiency in ministering to the soul’s needs, have become widely popular. We refer

to "A Lost Chord," and "Sent to Heaven" ("The Message"). How exquisitely lyrical are the lines

" It rose in harmonious rushing
Of mingled voices and strings."

Adelaide Procter is never obscure. She never struggles to find utterance for any "perplexed meanings"; all she says is clear, simple, direct. On the other hand, it is not often that she touches a very deep note in the human heart. There are no flashes of inspiration, no revelations of truths before unrecognised. Perhaps she penetrates deepest in "Judge Not."

" Judge not ; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see ;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, bright from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

* * * * *

" The fall thou darest to despise—
May be the angel's slackened hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand ;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

One of her best and most characteristic pieces is, undoubtedly, "The Story of the Faithful Soul." To compare her for a moment with another sweet religious singer of this century,—Keble—it might be said that, while she instils the same precepts and inculcates the same duties, she has never attained to his height. "Wisdom and sight are well, but Trust is best," she wrote. Keble, in treating of the same theme, wrote,

" Thou art thy Father's darling,
Ask no more."

H. J. GIBBS.

LEGENDS AND LYRICS.

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

I.--SENT TO HEAVEN.

I HAD a Message to send her,
To her whom my soul loved best :
But I had my task to finish,
And she was gone home to rest.

To rest in the far bright heaven ;
Oh, so far away from here,
It was vain to speak to my darling,
For I knew she could not hear !

I had a message to send her
So tender, and true, and sweet,
I longed for an Angel to bear it,
And lay it down at her feet.

I placed it, one summer evening,
On a Cloudlet's fleecy breast ;
But it faded in golden splendour,
And died in the crimson west.

I gave it the Lark next morning,
And I watched it soar and soar ;
But its pinions grew faint and weary,
And it fluttered to earth once more.

To the heart of a Rose I told it ;
And the perfume, sweet and rare,
Growing faint on the blue bright ether,
Was lost in the balmy air.

I laid it upon a Censer,
And I saw the incense rise ;
But its clouds of rolling silver
Could not reach the far blue skies.

I cried, in my passionate longing :—
“Has the earth no Angel-friend
Who will carry my love the message
That my heart desires to send ?”

Then I heard a strain of music,
So mighty, so pure, so clear,
That my very sorrow was silent,
And my heart stood still to hear.

And I felt, in my soul's deep yearning,
At last the sure answer stir :—
“The music will go up to Heaven,
And carry my thought to her.”

It rose in harmonious rushing
Of mingled voices and strings,
And I tenderly laid my message
On the Music's outspread wings.

I heard it float farther and farther,
In sound more perfect than speech ;
Farther than sight can follow,
Farther than soul can reach.

And I know that at last my message
Has passed through the golden gate :
So my heart is no longer restless,
And I am content to wait.

II.—HUSH!

“ I CAN scarcely hear,” she murmured,
“ For my heart beats loud and fast,
But surely, in the far, far distance,
I can hear a sound at last.”
“ It is only the reapers singing,
As they carry home their sheaves,
And the evening breeze has risen,
And rustles the dying leaves.”
“ Listen! there are voices talking.”
Calmly still she strove to speak,
Yet her voice grew faint and trembling,
And the red flushed in her cheek.
“ It is only the children playing
Below, now their work is done,
And they laugh that their eyes are dazzled
By the rays of the setting sun.”
Fainter grew her voice, and weaker
As with anxious eyes she cried,
“ Down the avenue of chestnuts,
I can hear a horseman ride.”
“ It was only the deer that were feeding
In a herd on the clover grass,
They were startled, and fled to the thicket,
As they saw the reapers pass.”
Now the night arose in silence,
Birds lay in their leafy nest,
And the deer couched in the forest,
And the children were at rest :
There was only a sound of weeping
From watchers around a bed,
But Rest to the weary spirit,
Peace to the quiet Dead!

III.—THE STORY OF THE FAITHFUL SOUL.

FOUNDED ON AN OLD FRENCH LEGEND.

THE fettered Spirits linger
 In purgatorial pain,
 With penal fires effacing
 Their last faint earthly stain,
 Which Life's imperfect sorrow
 Had tried to cleanse in vain.

Yet, on each feast of Mary
 Their sorrow finds release,
 For the Great Archangel Michael
 Comes down and bids it cease ;
 And the name of these brief respites
 Is called "Our Lady's Peace."

Yet once—so runs the Legend—
 When the Archangel came
 And all these holy spirits
 Rejoiced at Mary's name ;
 One voice alone was wailing,
 Still wailing on the same.

And though a great Te Deum
 The happy echoes woke,
 This one discordant wailing
 Through the sweet voices broke ;
 So when St. Michael questioned,
 Thus the poor spirit spoke :—

"I am not cold or thankless,
 Although I still complain ;
 I prize our Lady's blessing
 Although it comes in vain
 To still my bitter anguish,
 Or quench my ceaseless pain.

“ On earth a heart that loved me,
Still lives and mourns me there,
And the shadow of his anguish
Is more than I can bear;
All the torment that I suffer
Is the thought of his despair.

“ The evening of my bridal
Death took my Life away;
Not all Love’s passionate pleading
Could gain an hour’s delay.
And he I left has suffered
A whole year since that day.

“ If I could only see him,—
If I could only go
And speak one word of comfort
And solace,—then, I know
He would endure with patience,
And strive against his woe.”

Thus the Archangel answered :—
“ Your time of pain is brief,
And soon the peace of Heaven
Will give you full relief;
Yet if his earthly comfort
So much outweighs your grief,

“ Then through a special mercy
I offer you this grace,—
You may seek him who mourns you,
And look upon his face,
And speak to him of comfort
For one short minute’s space.

“But when that time is ended,
 Return here, and remain
 A thousand years in torment,
 A thousand years in pain :
 Thus dearly must you purchase
 The comfort he will gain.”

* * * * *

The Lime-trees' shade at evening
 Is spreading broad and wide ;
 Beneath their fragrant arches,
 Pace slowly, side by side,
 In low and tender converse,
 A Bridegroom and his Bride.

The night is calm and stilly,
 No other sound is there
 Except their happy voices :
 What is that cold bleak air
 That passes through the Lime-trees
 And stirs the Bridegroom's hair ?

While one low cry of anguish,
 Like the last dying wail
 Of some dumb, hunted creature,
 Is borne upon the gale :—
 Why does the Bridegroom shudder
 And turn so deathly pale ?

* * * * *

Near Purgatory's entrance
 The radiant Angels wait ;
 It was the great St. Michael
 Who closed that gloomy gate,
 When the poor wandering spirit
 Came back to meet her fate.

“Pass on,” thus spoke the Angel :
“Heaven’s joy is deep and vast ;
Pass on, pass on, poor Spirit,
For Heaven is yours at last ;
In that onè minute’s anguish
Your thousand years have passed.”

IV.—A LEGEND OF BREGENZ.

GIRT round with rugged mountains
The fair Lake Constance lies ;
In her blue heart reflected
Shine back the starry skies ;
And, watching each white cloudlet
Float silently and slow,
You think a piece of Heaven
Lies on our earth below !

Midnight is there : and Silence,
Enthroned in Heaven, looks down
Upon her own calm mirror,
Upon a sleeping town :
For Bregenz, that quaint city
Upon the Tyrol shore,
Has stood above Lake Constance,
A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers,
From off their rocky steep,
Have cast their trembling shadow
For ages on the deep :
Mountain, and lake, and valley,
A sacred legend know,
Of how the town was saved, one night
Three hundred years ago.

Far from her home and kindred,
A Tyrol maid had fled,
To serve in the Swiss valleys,
And toil for daily bread ;
And every year that fled
So silently and fast,
Seemed to bear farther from her
The memory of the Past.

She served kind, gentle masters,
Nor asked for rest or change ;
Her friends seemed no more new ones,
Their speech seemed no more strange ;
And when she led her cattle
To pasture every day,
She ceased to look and wonder
On which side Bregenz lay.

She spoke no more of Bregenz,
With longing and with tears :
Her Tyrol home seemed faded
In a deep mist of years ;
She heeded not the rumours
Of Austrian war and strife ;
Each day she rose contented,
To the calm toils of life.

Yet, when her master's children
Would clustering round her stand,
She sang them ancient ballads
Of her own native land ;
And when at morn and evening
She knelt before God's throne,
The accents of her childhood
Rose to her lips alone.

And so she dwelt : the valley
More peaceful year by year ;
When suddenly strange portents,
Of some great deed seemed near.
The golden corn was bending
Upon its fragile stalk,
While farmers, heedless of their fields,
Paced up and down in talk.

The men seemed stern and altered,
With looks cast on the ground ;
With anxious faces, one by one,
The women gathered round ;
All talk of flax, or spinning,
Or work, was put away ;
The very children seemed afraid
To go alone to play.

One day, out in the meadow
With strangers from the town,
Some secret plan discussing,
The men walked up and down.
Yet, now and then seemed watching,
A strange uncertain gleam,
That looked like lances 'mid the trees,
That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled,
Then care and doubt were fled ;
With jovial laugh they feasted ;
The board was nobly spread.
The elder of the village
Rose up, his glass in hand,
And cried, " We drink the downfall
" Of an accursed land !

“The night is growing darker,
“Ere one more day is flown,
“Bregenz, our foemen’s stronghold,
“Bregenz shall be our own !”
The women shrank in terror,
(Yet Pride, too, had her part),
But one poor Tyrol maiden
Felt death within her heart.

Before her, stood fair Bregenz ;
Once more her towers arose ;
What were the friends beside her ?
Only her country’s foes !
The faces of her kinsfolk,
The days of childhood flown,
The echoes of her mountains,
Reclaimed her as their own !

Nothing she heard around her,
(Though shouts rang forth again),
Gone were the green Swiss valleys,
The pasture, and the plain ;
Before her eyes one vision,
And in her heart one cry,
That said, “Go forth, save Bregenz,
And then, if need be, die !”

With trembling haste and breathless,
With noiseless step she sped ;
Horses and weary cattle
Were standing in the shed ;
She loosed the strong white charger,
That fed from out her hand,
She mounted, and she turned his head
Towards her native land.

Out—out into the darkness—
Faster, and still more fast ;
The smooth grass flies behind her,
The chestnut wood is past ;
She looks up ; clouds are heavy :
Why is her steed so slow ?—
Scarcely the wind beside them,
Can pass them as they go.

“Faster !” she cries, “O, faster !”
Eleven the church-bells chime :
“O God,” she cries, “help Bregenz,
And bring me there in time !”
But louder than bells’ ringing,
Or lowing of the kine,
Grows nearer in the midnight
The rushing of the Rhine.

Shall not the roaring waters
Their headlong gallop check ?
The steed draws back in terror,
She leans upon his neck
To watch the flowing darkness ;
The bank is high and steep ;
One pause—he staggers forward,
And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness,
And looser throws the rein ;
Her steed must breast the waters
That dash above his mane.
How gallantly, how nobly,
He struggles through the foam,
And see—in the far distance,
Shine out the lights of home !

Up the steep banks he bears her,
And now, they rush again
Towards the heights of Bregenz,
That tower above the plain.
They reach the gate of Bregenz,
Just as the midnight rings,
And out come serf and soldier
To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved ! Ere daylight
Her battlements are manned ;
Defiance greets the army
That marches on the land.
And if to deeds heroic
Should endless fame be paid,
Bregenz does well to honour
The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished,
And yet upon the hill
An old stone gateway rises,
To do her honour still.
And there, when Bregenz women
Sit spinning in the shade,
They see in quaint old carving
The Charger and the Maid.

And when, to guard old Bregenz,
By gateway, street, and tower,
The warder paces all night long,
And calls each passing hour ;
“ Nine,” “ ten,” “ eleven,” he cries aloud,
And then (Oh crown of Fame !)
When midnight pauses in the skies,
He calls the maiden’s name !

Dinah Maria Craik.

1826—1887.

LIKE many other successful prose writers, Mrs. Craik sometimes threw her thoughts into the form of verse. These occasional efforts formed the substance of two volumes issued at different times and afterwards of one volume, entitled, "Thirty Years, being Poems New and Old." Though lacking in the higher qualities of true poetry, imagination, passion, breadth of experience, and depth of emotion, there is enough true feeling and human interest in many of her poems to entitle them to recognition in these pages, and give her a true if not a very exalted place in any representative anthology of the verse of her countrywomen. "Philip my King," the first poem in either volume, ranked high among her own favourites, and has, perhaps, been the most often quoted of her verses. "A Silly Song," too, and "A Christmas Carol" are given in an anthology for which her own selection of her own work was asked. The ballad "In Swanage Bay," which is not included in her last volume, has none the less been very popular as a recitation, and shows ability to write a simple and touching story in verse.

Dinah Maria Muloch was born at Stoke-upon-Trent, in the year 1826. Her father, a clergyman of wide learning, superintended her education and encouraged her early efforts. She published her

first novel "The Ogilvies" when in her twenty-third year, a work which was followed in 1850 by "Olive," and in 1856-7 by "John Halifax, Gentleman." Other novels, stories for children, essays on ethical and domestic subjects and translations succeeded, including "A Life for a Life" (1860), in which, perhaps, her strongest work is to be found. In 1864 she received a pension of £60 in consideration of work in literature; and in 1865 she married Mr. George Lillie Craik, Professor of English Literature at Queen's College, Belfast, and a well-known man of letters. Mrs. Craik died in the month of October 1887.

ALFRED H. MILES.

POEMS.

DINAH MARIA CRAIK.

I.—PHILIP MY KING.

“ Who bears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty.”

LOOK at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip my king,
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities :
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With love's invisible sceptre laden ;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip my king.

O the day when thou goest a wooing,
Philip my king !
When those beautiful lips are suing,
And some gentle heart's bars undoing
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest love glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair
For we that love, ah ! we love so blindly
Philip my king.

Up from thy sweet mouth,—unto thy brow,
Philip my king !
The spirit that there lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant and make men bow
As to one heaven-chosen amongst his peers :
My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer
Let me behold thee in future years ;—
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip my king.

—A wreath not of gold, but palm. One day,
 Philip my king,
 Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way
 Thorny and cruel and cold and gray :
 Rebels within thee and foes without,
 Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious,
 Martyr, yet monarch : till angels shout
 As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious,
 "Philip the king !"

II.—A SILLY SONG.

"O HEART, my heart !" she said, and heard
 His mate the blackbird calling,
 While through the sheen of the garden green
 May rain was softly falling,—
 Aye softly, softly falling.

The buttercups across the field
 Made sunshine rifts of splendour :
 The round snow-bud of the thorn in the wood
 Peeped through its leafage tender,
 As the rain came softly falling.

"O heart, my heart !" she said and smiled,
 "There's not a tree of the valley,
 Or a leaf I wis which the rain's soft kiss
 Freshens in yonder alley,
 Where the drops keep ever falling,—

"There's not a foolish flower i' the grass,
 Or bird through the woodland calling,
 So glad again of the coming rain
 As I of these tears now falling,—
 These happy tears down falling."

III. *SEMPER FIDELIS.*

“Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted.”

THINK you, had we two lost fealty, something
would not, as I sit
With this book upon my lap here, come and over-
shadow it ?
Hide with spectral mists the pages, under each
familiar leaf
Lurk, and clutch my hand that turns it with the icy
clutch of grief ?
Think you, were we twain divided, not by distance,
time, or aught
That the world calls separation, but we smile at,
better taught,
That I should not feel the dropping of each link you
did untwine
Clear as if you sat before me with your true eyes
fixed on mine ?
That I should not, did you crumble as the other false
friends do
To the dust of broken idols, know it without sight of
you,
By some shadow darkening daylight in the fickle
skies of spring,
By foul fears from household corners crawling over
everything ?
If that awful gulf were opening which makes two,
however near,
Parted more than we were parted, dwelt we in each
hemisphere,
Could I sit here, smiling quiet on this book within
my hand,
And while earth was cloven beneath me, feel no
shock nor understand ?

No, you cannot, could not alter. No, my faith builds
 safe on yours,
 Rock-like; though the winds and waves howl, its
 foundation still endures:
 By a man's will—"See, I hold thee: mine thou art,
 and mine shalt be."
 By a woman's patience—"Sooner doubt I my own
 soul than thee."
 So, Heaven mend us! we'll together once again take
 counsel sweet;
 Though this hand of mine drops empty, that blank
 wall my blank eyes meet:
 Life may flow on: men be faithless,—ay, forsooth,
 and women too!
 ONE is true; and as He liveth, I believe in truth—
 and *you*.

IV.—LETTICE.

I SAID to Lettice, our sister Lettice,
 While drooped and glistened her eyelash brown,
 "Your man's a poor man, a cold and dour man,
 There's many a better about our town."
 She smiled securely—"He loves me purely:
 A true heart's safe, both in smile or frown;
 And nothing harms me while his love warms me,
 Whether the world go up or down."
 "He comes of strangers, and they are rangers,
 And ill to trust, girl, when out of sight:
 Fremd folk may blame ye, and e'en defame ye,—
 A gown oft handled looks seldom white."
 She raised serenely her eyelids queenly,—
 "My innocence is my whitest gown;
 No harsh tongue grieves me while he believes me,
 Whether the world go up or down."

“Your man’s a frail man, was ne’er a hale man,
 And sickness knocketh at every door,
 And death comes making bold hearts cower, breaking—”
 Our Lettice trembled ;—but once, no more.
 “If death should enter, smite to the centre
 Our poor home palace, all crumbling down,
 He cannot fright us, nor disunite us,
 Life bears LOVE’s cross, death brings LOVE’s crown.”

V.—ROTHESAY BAY.

FU’ yellow lie the corn-rigs
 Far down the braid hillside ;
 It is the brawest harst-field
 Alang the shores o’ Clyde,—
 And I’m a puir harst-lassie
 Wha stands the lec-lang day
 Shearing the corn-rigs of Ardbeg
 Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.
 O I had ance a true-love,—
 Now, I hae nane ava ;
 And I had three braw brithers,
 But I hae tint them a’ ;
 My father and my mither
 Sleep i’ the mools this day,
 I sit my lane amang the rigs
 Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.
 It’s a bonnie bay at morning,
 And bonnier at the noon,
 But it’s bonniest when the sun draps
 And red comes up the moon :
 When the mist creeps o’er the Cumbrays
 And Arran peaks are gray,
 And the great black hills, like sleepin’ kings,
 Sit grand roun’ Rothesay Bay,

Then a bit sigh stirs my bosom,
 And a saut tear blin's my e'e,—
 And I think o' that far Countrie
 Whar I wad like to be!
 But I rise content i' the morning
 To wark while wark I may,
 I' the yellow harst-field of Ardbeg
 Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

VI.—A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

GOD rest ye, merry gentlemen ; let nothing you
 dismay,
 For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-
 day.

The dawn rose red o'er Bethlehem, the stars shone
 through the gray,
 When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christ-
 mas-day.

God rest ye, little children ; let nothing you affright,
 For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy
 night ;
 Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping
 lay,
 When Christ, the Child of Nazareth, was born on
 Christmas-day.

God rest ye, all good Christians ; upon this blessèd
 morn
 The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman
 born :
 Now all your sorrows He doth heal, your sins He
 takes away ;
 For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christ-
 mas-day.

Jean Ingelow.

1830.

AMONG the small group of eminent English women-poets that the present century has produced, Jean Ingelow holds a conspicuous place. She is greater than Felicia Hemans or Lætitia Landon, for she avoids sentimentality—the characteristic weakness of both these poets. It is true that she does not possess in an equal degree with Elizabeth Barrett Browning that breadth of thought, that strength of passion—that imaginative fervour, and that vigour of execution—which give to the latter the first place among English women-poets, nor has she that peculiarly exalted spirituality tinged with ascetism which distinguishes the best work of Christina Rossetti. Nevertheless her poems exhibit high qualities of their own. First among these qualities is lyrical charm. Hence it is that her poems have gained such widespread popular acceptance, for, as Mr. Ashcroft Noble has pointed out with true critical discernment, “there is no maxim of the critics which finds more favour with the general public than this—that the poet must be, before all other things, a singer.” Jean Ingelow’s verse is always distinguished by graceful fancy, and often by imagination of the more lofty kind. Though it cannot be said that her range is wide, her pictures within this range are vivid, and her verse displays a

tender womanliness, a reverent simplicity of religious faith, and a deep touch of sympathy with the pain inherent in human life which are very fascinating.

She has also the rare quality of depicting faithfully, and sometimes with minute accuracy, the aspects of nature in purely lyrical measures of anapæstic movement. The best example of this is seen in "Divided," where the colour of the landscape is rendered in an exquisitely lyrical measure with as much faithfulness as if the poem had been written in iambic lines. And, remembering how seldom the great English poets have succeeded in such efforts, Jean Ingelow's success in this respect may, indeed, be regarded as a worthy achievement.

Born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, in 1830, Jean Ingelow's first book, "A Rhyming Chronicle of Incidents and Feelings," appeared in 1850. This was followed in 1851 by a novel, entitled "Allerton and Dreux; or, The War of Opinion," and in 1860 by "Tales of Orris." But it was not until the publication in November 1863 of the first series of her "Poems" that she gained any important recognition. This volume, however, was received with warm praise by the critics, and their praise was immediately echoed and confirmed by the general public. But we need feel no surprise at this somewhat unusual occurrence when we remember some of the poems the volume contained. The very first poem, "Divided" (p. 405), was well fitted to attract both the critic and the general reader. For while the critic would observe its distinctive lyrical qualities, and a certain touch of sadness which is often a characteristic of its author's best moods, the general reader, whatever the extent of his culture, could at least under-

stand and enjoy its directness and its simplicity, together with its lovely descriptions of some of Nature's more familiar aspects. Perhaps none of Jean Ingelow's other poems quite equals this in perfection of music and lyrical freedom, though "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire, 1571" (p. 393), has other notable qualities. Cast in an archaic mould, and full of deep and passionate human feeling, the pathetic motive of the latter poem is handled with an earnestness which is absolutely convincing. This, even more than its high technical excellence, makes it one of the finest of modern ballads. But, perhaps, the exquisite poem "Requiescat in Pace" (p. 398) is, in many respects, the highest effort of Jean Ingelow's poetical genius. In it there is a touch of the supernatural which we find elsewhere in some of her best work, though in a less intense degree. Moreover it is full of that concentrated fervour which comes only to the poet when the creative imagination is fully alive. The manner in which the tender mournfulness—almost the despair—of the concluding stanzas is handled makes the poem irresistible in its appeal to our sympathies. "Strife and Peace," another beautiful lyric, calls also for mention.

"Supper at the Mill," "Brothers and a Sermon," and "Afternoon at a Parsonage," all in blank verse, with interspersed songs, belong to a different class of poems—a class for which Jean Ingelow has evidently a marked predilection—poems of mingled narrative and reflection. In the extreme simplicity of the poems just named we see the influence of Wordsworth; while in their mingling of narrative and reflection with snatches of song we see the

influence of Tennyson. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that these remarkable poems are imitative. On the contrary they display dramatic insight and originality both of thought and treatment. All three poems contain striking examples of Jean Ingelow's gift in delineating character. In the first-named poem the middle-aged farmer's wife, as she chats at her son's house on a market day, is as real to us as if she had been sketched by Crabbe, although, in Jean Ingelow's verse, there is nothing of that hardness of touch which sometimes detracts from the effect of Crabbe's marvellous fidelity. Indeed, the character painting throughout Jean Ingelow's poems is frequently very good. But, as with the similar work of Tennyson, we often feel it to be the character-painting of the writer of prose fiction rather than of the poet. "Brothers and a Sermon" with its true vein of devotional feeling, exhibits a certain idiosyncrasy of conception peculiar to its author. The pretty song beginning, "Goldilocks sat on the grass," which occurs in this poem, is one of her most simple, and, at the same time, one of her most finished efforts. The two last stanzas, beginning, "As a gloriole sign o' grace," bring before the mind of the reader, in a few delicate touches full of subtle beauty, the change, the almost unconscious sympathy, which, to the eye of the beholder, comes over the aspect of external nature after the first dawn of love.

"Persephone" is interesting as being a rendering of that favourite theme of the poets—the story of Demeter and her daughter. The brevity of Jean Ingelow's ballad does not admit of the elaboration observable in the poem of Tennyson, nor in that of

Mr. Aubrey de Vere on the same subject. But her version has a certain beauty of its own. "The Letter L," fine as it is in part, is injured by that diffuseness into which Jean Ingelow's facility, both in verse and prose, not unfrequently betrays her. It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on so widely popular and so admirable a series of poems as "Songs of Seven." Several of these lyrics are almost perfect of their kind. Where all is so good it is difficult to give adequate reasons for the awarding of especial praise. I may remark, however, that the first lyric, entitled "Exultation," has pre-eminent merit from the fact that in it Jean Ingelow shows a rare dramatic gift—a gift of interpreting faithfully a child's emotions.

"A Story of Doom and other Poems" appeared in 1867. The title poem in this collection, the longest of Jean Ingelow's poetical efforts, tells in flowing blank verse the Biblical narrative of Noah. The theme is handled with no little skill, and many of the individual pictures are effective. Still the poem in its entirety shows that the subject she has here chosen is not so well suited to her powers as some others which she has elsewhere treated. She is a lyrist above all else, and although (as I have already remarked) she shows dramatic instinct in some of her shorter narrative poems, such as "Supper at the Mill" and "Afternoon at a Parsonage," she does not show that consummate degree of dramatic power required by the writer who would cope effectively with the great difficulties inherent in such a theme. Much better work is to be found in "Songs of the Voices of Birds," particularly in one of these called "A Raven in a White Chine," and in the series of

poems entitled "Songs of the Night Watches." The opening lyric "Apprenticed" and "A Morn of May," the lyric which closes the sequence, are probably the most beautiful. "Songs with Preludes," and "Contrasted Songs," ought also to be mentioned. Of the last-named poems "Sailing Beyond Seas" and "A Lily and a Lute" are fine examples of Jean Ingelow's work.

As a novelist, as well as a poet, Jean Ingelow gives token of very considerable power in the delineation of character, especially as seen in child-life. But her work in fiction is sometimes disfigured by deficiency in construction, and by occasional prolixity in narrative. "Studies for Stories" (1864), a series of brief tales, contains some of Jean Ingelow's best work in this department of literature. There is often a quaint realism about these "Studies" which is very delightful. "Off the Skelligs" (1872) is, perhaps, the most successful of Jean Ingelow's full-length novels. Her exceptional faculty of delineating child life is shown here, and again in "Don John" (1881), where more attention is paid to the strict lines of plot than is usual with this writer. The *dénouement* is cleverly conceived and unexpected, so unexpected, indeed, that possibly some readers might be inclined to resent a conclusion so different from that which they had been disposed to look for. Among her other novels are "Fated to be Free" (1873); "Sarah de Berenger" (1879); "John Jerome: His Thoughts and Ways" (1886); and "Very Young and Quite Another Story" (1890). Jean Ingelow has long been favourably known as a writer of stories avowedly for children—stories, however, which have an appeal to readers of all ages.

Indeed some of the most fascinating of all her prose work belongs to this class. "Stories told to a Child" (1865) must here be named. This was followed in 1869 by "Mopsa the Fairy." Some episodes in the last-mentioned tale are very fine of their kind: as, for example, Jack's voyage from the enchanted bay where lie the ships of bygone ages which had been sent on voyages of evil purpose. Doubtless some of Jean Ingelow's prose fiction will live by reason of the real imaginative power displayed in it.

Jean Ingelow's third series of "Poems" was published in 1885. If it cannot with candour be said that this volume is altogether free from the faults discernible in her earlier verse, and if it cannot be said that it shows a wider range, it may be said emphatically that it possesses the same great qualities which originally gained for her and still maintain her wide popularity. We see the same mingled sweetness and simplicity, the same rare lyrical gift, the same remarkable power in the description of nature, and the same profound knowledge of child-life. Her lyrical faculty, her power of depicting nature, and her subtle knowledge of the heart of a child are all revealed in the lovely poem called "Echo and the Ferry" (p. 410). "Rosamund," a narrative poem in blank verse, is of some considerable length. The scene is laid in the time of the Spanish Armada. The story is well planned and told throughout with much imaginative ardour. Jean Ingelow here exhibits even more than her accustomed ability in handling blank verse. Many excellent descriptive passages and felicitous phrases occur, and, occasionally, comes a note of true passion. "Preludes to a Penny Reading"

belongs to the same class as "Supper at the Mill." Some of the interspersed songs, such as "For Exmoor," are full of the lyrical beauty which we expect from Jean Ingelow. "Lyrical and other Poems, selected from the Writings of Jean Ingelow" was published in 1886.

MACKENZIE BELL.

LYRICAL AND OTHER POEMS.

JEAN INGELOW.

*I.—THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF
LINCOLNSHIRE (1571).*

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
'Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best,' quoth he.
'Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe "The Brides of Enderby."

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mewes and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies,
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,
Ere the early dewes were falling
Farre away I heard her song.

'Cusha ! Cusha !' all along
 Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
 Floweth, floweth ;
 From the meads where melick groweth
 Faintly came her milking song—

'Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !' calling,
 'For the dews will soone be falling ;
 Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow ;
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
 Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
 Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow ;
 Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
 From the clovers lift your head ;
 Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
 Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
 Jetty, to the milking shed.'

If it be long, ay, long ago,
 When I beginne to think howe long,
 Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong ;
 And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
 Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
 That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
 Save where full fyve good miles away
 The steeple towered from out the greene ;
 And lo ! the great bell farre and wide
 Was heard in all the country side
 That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth ;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The ' Brides of Mavis Enderby.'

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, ' And why should this thing be ?
What danger lowers by land or sea ?
They ring the tune of Enderby !

' For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down ;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne :
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring " The Brides of Enderby " ?'

I looked without, and lo ! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main :
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
' Elizabeth ! Elizabeth !'
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

' The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place.'

He shook as one that looks on death :
'God save you, mother!' straight he saith ;
'Where is my wife, Elizabeth?'

'Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
With her two bairns I marked her long ;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song.'
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, 'Ho Enderby !'
They rang 'The Brides of Enderby !'

With that he cried and beat his breast ;
For, lo ! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped,
It swept with thunderous noises loud ;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine ;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet :
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knce,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
 The noise of bells went sweeping by ;
 I marked the lofty beacon light
 Stream from the church tower, red and high --
 A lurid mark and dread to see ;
 And awsome bells they were to mee,
 That in the dark rang 'Enderby.'

They rang the sailor lads to guide
 From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed ;
 And I—my sonne was at my side,
 And yet the ruddy beacon glowed ;
 And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
 'O come in life, or come in death !
 O lost ! my love, Elizabeth.'

And didst thou visit him no more ?
 Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare ;
 The waters laid thee at his doore,
 Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
 Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
 The lifted sun shone on thy face,
 Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
 That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
 A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !
 To manye more than myne and mee :
 But each will mourn his own (she saith)
 And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
 By the reedy Lindis shore,
 'Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !' calling
 Ere the early dewes be falling ;

I shall never hear her song,
 'Cusha! Cusha!' all along
 Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
 Goeth, floweth ;
 From the meads where melick groweth,
 When the water winding down,
 Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
 Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
 Shiver, quiver ;
 Stand beside the sobbing river,
 Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
 To the sandy lonesome shore ;
 I shall never hear her calling,

"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow ;
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
 Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot ;
 Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow ;
 Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow ;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
 From your clovers lift the head ;
 Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
 Jetty, to the milking shed.'

II.—REQUIESCAT IN PACE!

O MY heart is sick awishing and awaiting ;
 The lad took up his knapsack, he went, he
 went his way ;
 And I looked on for his coming, as a prisoner through
 the grating
 Looks and longs and longs and wishes for its
 opening day.

On the wild purple mountains, all alone with no
other,
The strong terrible mountains, he longed, he longed
to be ;

And he stooped to kiss his father, and he stooped to
kiss his mother,

And till I said 'Adieu, sweet Sir,' he quite forgot
me.

He wrote of their white raiment, the ghostly capes
that screen them,

Of the storm winds that beat them, their thunder-
rents and scars,

And the paradise of purple, and the golden slopes
atween them,

And fields, where grow God's gentian bells and
His crocus stars.

He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop on them
like fleeces,

And make green their fir forests, and feed their
mosses hoar ;

Or come sailing up the valleys, and get wrecked and
go to pieces,

Like sloops against their cruel strength : then he
wrote no more.

O the silence that came next, the patience and long
aching !

They never said so much as 'He was a dear-loved
son ;'

Not the father to the mother moaned, that dreary
stillness breaking :

'Ah ! wherefore did he leave us so—this, our only
one ?'

They sat within, as waiting, until the neighbours
prayed them,
‘At Cromer, by the sea-coast, ’twere peace and
change to be ;’
And to Cromer, in their patience, or that urgency
affrayed them,
Or because the tidings tarried, they came, and
took me.

It was three months and over since the dear lad had
started :
On the green downs at Cromer I sat to see the view ;
On an open space of herbage, where the ling and
fern had parted,
Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers, the old
and the new.

Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet sun was
stooping,
And he dyed the waste water, as with a scarlet
dye ;
And he dyed the lighthouse towers ; every bird with
white wing swooping
Took his colours, and the cliffs did, and the yawning
sky.

Over grass came that strange flush, and over ling
and heather,
Over flocks of sheep and lambs, and over Cromer
town ;
And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted like a scarlet
feather
Torn from the folded wings of clouds, while he
settled down,

When I looked, I dared not sigh :—In the light of
God's splendour,
With his daily blue and gold, who am I? what
am I?

But that passion and outpouring seemed an awful
sign and tender,
Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown on earth
and sky.

O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt and trouble!
On that sultry August eve trouble had made me
meek;

I was tired of my sorrow—O so faint, for it was
double
In the weight of its oppression, that I could not
speak!

And a little comfort grew, while the dimmed eyes
were feeding,

And the dull ears with murmur of waters satisfied ;
But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my thoughts
and fancy leading
Across the bounds of waking life to the other side.

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the waste waters
turning,

And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave to wave
tossed on ;

And the scarlet mix with azure, where a heap of
gold lay burning

On the clear remote sea reaches ; for the sun was
gone.

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped across the
still water—

A question as I took it, for soon an answer came

From the tall white ruined lighthouse: 'If it be the
old man's daughter
That we wot of,' ran the answer, 'what then—
who's to blame?'

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-
broken:

A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched
out to sea;

Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird
had spoken,

And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked
of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to
name him;

'He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the
sun;

Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did
not shame him;

Ay, the old man was a good man—and his work
was done.'

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon
departed,

Frail, white, she rocked and curtseyed as the red
wave she crossed,

And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent
dipped and darted,

Flying on, again was shouting, but the words were
lost.

I said, 'That thing is hooded; I could hear but that
floweth

The great hood below its mouth:' then the bird
made reply,

'If they know not, more's the pity, for the little
shrew-mouse knoweth,
And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead
and pyc.'

And he stooped to whet his beak on the stones of the
coping ;
And when once more the shout came, in querulous
tones he spake,
'What I said was "more's the pity;" if the heart
be long past hoping,
Let it say of death, "I know it," or doubt on and
break.

'Men must die—one dies by day, and near him moans
his mother ;
They dig his grave, tread it down, and go from it
full loth :
And one dies about the midnight, and the wind
moans, and no other,
And the snows give him a burial—and God loves
them both.

'The first hath no advantage—it shall not soothe his
slumber
That a lock of his brown hair his father aye shall
keep ;
For the last, he nothing grudgeth, it shall nought his
quiet cumber
That in a golden mesh of HIS callow eaglets sleep.

'Men must die when all is said, e'en the kite and
glead know it,
And the lad's father knew it, and the lad, the lad
too ;

It was never kept a secret, waters bring it and winds
blow it,
And he met it on the mountain—why then make
ado ?’

With that he spread his white wings, and swept
across the water,
Lit upon the hooded head, and it and all went
down ;
And they laughed as they went under, and I woke
‘the old man’s daughter,’
And looked across the slope of grass, and at Cromer
town.

And I said, ‘Is that the sky, all grey and silver
suited ?’
And I thought, ‘Is that the sea that lies so white
and wan ?’
I have dreamed as I remember : give me time—I was
reputed
Once to have a steady courage—O, I fear ’tis
gone !’

And I said, ‘Is this my heart ?’ if it be, low ’tis
beating,
So he lies on the mountain, hard by the eagle’s
brood ;
I have had a dream this evening, while the white and
gold were fleeting,
But I need not, need not tell it—where would be
the good ?

‘Where would be the good to them, his father and
his mother ?
For the ghost of their dead hope appeareth to them
still.

While a lonely watchfire smoulders, who its dying
red would smother,
That gives what little light there is to a darksome
hill ?'

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,
But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.
What can wringing of the hands do that which is
ordained to alter ?

He had climbed, had climbed the mountain, he
would ne'er come down.

But, O my first, O my best, I could not choose but
love thee :

O, to be a wild white bird, and seek thy rocky
bed !

From my breast I'd give thee burial, pluck the down
and spread above thee ;

I would sit and sing thy requiem on the mountain
head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves ! would I had died
before thee ;

O, to be at least a cloud, that near thee I might
flow,

Solemnly approach the mountain, weep away my
being, o'er thee,

And veil thy breast with icicles, and thy brow
with snow !

III.—DIVIDED.

I.

AN empty sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom ;
We two among them wading together,
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
 Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet
 Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
 Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.
 Flusheth the rise with her purple favour,
 Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
 'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
 Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.
 We two walk till the purple dieth
 And short dry grass under foot is brown ;
 But one little streak at a distance lieth
 Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,
 And God He knoweth how blithe we were !
 Never a voice to bid us eschew it :
 Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair !
 Hey the green ribbon ! we kneeled beside it,
 We parted the grasses dewy and sheen ;
 Drop over drop there filtered and slided
 A tiny bright beck that trickled between.
 Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sang to us,
 Light was our talk as of faëry bells—
 Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
 Down in their fortunate parallels.
 Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
 We lapped the grass on that youngling spring ;
 Swept baek its rushes, smoothed its clover,
 And said, 'Let us follow it westering.'

III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,
 Circling above us the black rooks fly

Forward, backward ; lo, their dark shadows
 Flit on the blossoming tapestry—

Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
 As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back :
 And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth
 His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on ! we sing in the glorious weather
 Till one steps over the tiny strand,
 So narrow, in sooth, that still together
 On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must sever.
 On either margin, our songs all done,
 We move apart, while she singeth ever,
 Taking the course of the stooping sun.

He prays, 'Come over'—I may not follow ;
 I cry 'Return'—but he cannot come :
 We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow ;
 Our hands are hanging, our hearts are numb.

iv.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
 A little talking of outward things :
 The careless beck is a merry dancer,
 Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.

A little pain when the beck grows wider ;
 'Cross to me now—for her wavelets swell ;'
 'I may not cross'—and the voice beside her
 Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

No backward path ; ah ! no returning ;
 No second crossing that ripple's flow :
 'Come to me now, for the west is burning ;
 Come ere it darkens ;—Ah, no ! ah, no !'

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching—
 The beck grows wider and swift and deep:
 Passionate words as of one beseeching—
 The loud beck drowns them; we walk, and weep.

v.

A yellow moon in splendour drooping,
 A tired queen with her state oppressed,
 Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,
 Lies she soft on the waves at rest.
 The desert heavens have felt her sadness;
 Her earth will weep her some dewy tears;
 The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,
 And goeth stilly as soul that fears.
 We two walk on in our grassy places
 On either marge of the moonlit flood,
 With the moon's own sadness in our faces,
 Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

vi.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,
 A little piping of leaf-hid birds;
 A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,
 A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.
 Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tethered;
 Round valleys like nests all ferny lined;
 Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered,
 Swell high in their freckled robes behind.
 A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,
 When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide;
 A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
 The beck, a river—with still sleek tide.
 Broad and white, and polished as silver,
 On she goes under fruit-laden trees

Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,
 And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.
 Glitters the dew and shines the river,
 Up comes the lily and dries her bell;
 But two are walking apart for ever,
 And wave their hands for a mute farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;
 The river hasteth, her banks recede:
 Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
 Bear down the lily and drown the reed.
 Stately prows are rising and bowing
 (Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
 And level sands for banks endowing
 The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.
 While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,
 And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide
 How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,
 That moving speck on the far-off side!
 Farther, farther—I see it—know it—
 My eyes brim over, it melts away:
 Only my heart to my heart shall show it
 As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting, truly—
 A knowledge greater than grief can dim—
 I know, as he loved, he will love me duly—
 Yea, better—e'en better than I love him.
 And as I walk by the vast calm river,
 The awful river so dread to see,
 I say 'Thy breadth and thy depth for ever
 Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me.

IV.—ECHO AND THE FERRY.

AY, Oliver! I was but seven, and he was eleven;
He looked at me pouting and rosy. I blushed
where I stood.

They had told us to play in the orchard (and I only
seven!

A small guest at the farm); but he said 'Oh, a girl
was no good!'

So he whistled and went, he went over the stile to
the wood.

It was sad, it was sorrowful! Only a girl—only
seven!

At home in the dark London smoke I had not found
it out.

The pear-trees looked on in their white, and blue
birds flash'd about,

And they too were angry as Oliver. Were they
eleven?

I thought so. Yes, every one else was eleven—
eleven!

So Oliver went, but the cowslips were tall at my
feet,

And all the white orchard with fast-falling blossom
was litter'd;

And under and over the branches those little birds
twitter'd,

While hanging head downwards they scolded because
I was seven.

A pity. A very great pity. One should be eleven.
But soon I was happy, the smell of the world was so
sweet,

And I saw a round hole in an apple-tree rosy and
old.

Then I knew! for I peeped, and I felt it was right
 they should scold!
 Eggs small and eggs many. For gladness I broke
 into laughter;
 And then some one else—oh, how softly!—came after,
 came after
 With laughter—with laughter came after.
 And no one was near us to utter that sweet mocking
 call,
 That soon very tired sank low with a mystical fall.
 But this was the country—perhaps it was close under
 heaven;
 Oh, nothing so likely; the voice might have come
 from it even.
 I knew about heaven. But this was the country, of
 this
 Light, blossom, and piping, and flashing of wings not
 at all.
 Not at all. No. But one little bird was an easy
 forgiver:
 She peeped, she drew near as I moved from her
 domicile small,
 Then flashed down her hole like a dart—like a dart
 from the quiver.
 And I waded atween the long grasses and felt it was
 bliss.
 —So this was the country; clear dazzle of azure and
 shiver
 And whisper of leaves, and a humming all over the
 tall
 White branches, a humming of bees. And I came
 to the wall—
 A little low wall—and looked over, and there was
 the river,

The lane that led on to the village, and then the
sweet river
Clear shining and slow, she had far far to go from
her snow ;
But each rush gleamed a sword in the sunlight to
guard her long flow,
And she murmur'd, methought, with a speech very
soft—very low.
'The ways will be long, but the days will be long,'
quoth the river,
To me a long liver, long, long !' quoth the river—
the river.

I dreamed of the country that night, of the orchard,
the sky,
The voice that had mocked coming after and over and
under.
But at last—in a day or two namely—Eleven and I
Were very fast friends, and to him I confided the
wonder.
He said that was Echo. 'Was Echo a wise kind of
bee
That had learned how to laugh: could it laugh in
one's ear and then fly
And laugh again yonder?' 'No; Echo'—he whis-
pered it low—
'Was a woman, they said, but a woman whom no
one could see
And no one could find; and he did not believe it, not
he,
But he could not get near for the river that held us
asunder.
Yet I that had money—a shilling, a whole silver
shilling—

We might cross if I thought I would spend it.' 'Oh
 yes, I was willing'—
 And we ran hand in hand, we ran down to the ferry,
 the ferry,
 And we heard how she mocked at the folk with a
 voice clear and merry
 When they called for the ferry; but oh! she was
 very—was very
 Swift-footed. She spoke and was gone; and when
 Oliver cried,
 'Hie over! hie over! you man of the ferry—the
 ferry!'
 By the still water's side she was heard far and wide
 —she replied
 And she mocked in her voice sweet and merry, 'You
 man of the ferry,
 You man of—you man of the ferry!'
 'Hie over!' he shouted. The ferryman came at his
 calling,
 Across the clear reed-bordered river he ferried us
 fast;—
 Such a chase! Hand in hand, foot to foot, we ran
 on; it surpass'd
 All measure her doubling—so close, then so far away
 falling,
 Then gone, and no more. Oh! to see her but once
 unaware,
 And the mouth that had mocked, but we might not
 (yet sure she was there!),
 Nor behold her wild eyes and her mystical coun-
 tenance fair.
 We sought in the wood, and we found the wood-
 wren in her stead;

In the field, and we found but the cuckoo that talked
overhead ;
By the brook, and we found the reed-sparrow deep-
nested, in brown—
Not Echo, fair Echo! for Echo, sweet Echo! was
flown.
So we came to the place where the dead people wait
till God call.
The church was among them, grey moss over roof,
over wall.
Very silent, so low. And we stood on a green grassy
mound
And looked in at a window, for Echo, perhaps, in her
round
Might have come in to hide there. But no; every
oak-carven seat
Was empty. We saw the great Bible—old, old, very
old,
And the parson's great Prayer-book beside it; we
heard the slow beat
Of the pendulum swing in the tower; we saw the
clear gold
Of a sunbeam float down the aisle and then waver
and play
On the low chancel step and the railing, and Oliver
said,
'Look, Katie! look, Katie! when Lettice came here
to be wed
She stood where that sunbeam drops down, and all
white was her gown ;
And she stepped upon flowers they strew'd for her.'
Then quoth small Seven :
'Shall I wear a white gown and have flowers to
walk upon ever ?'

All doubtful: 'It takes a long time to grow up,' quoth
 Eleven;
 'You're so little, you know, and the church is so old,
 it can never
 Last on till you're tall.' And in whispers—because
 it was old
 And holy, and fraught with strange meaning, half felt,
 but not told,
 Full of old parsons' prayers, who were dead, of old
 days, of old folk,
 Neither heard nor beheld, but about us, in whispers
 we spoke.
 Then we went from it softly and ran hand in hand to
 the strand,
 While bleating of flocks and birds piping made
 sweeter the land.
 And Echo came back e'en as Oliver drew to the ferry,
 'O Katie!' 'O Katie!' 'Come on, then!' 'Come on,
 then!' 'For, see,
 The round sun, all red, lying low by the tree'—'by
 the tree.'
 'By the tree.' Ay, she mocked him again, with her
 voice sweet and merry:
 'Hie over!' 'Hie over!' 'You man of the ferry'—
 'the ferry.'

'You man of the ferry—
 You man of—you man of—the ferry.'

Ay, here—it was here that we woke her, the Echo of
 old;
 All life of that day seems an echo, and many times
 told.
 Shall I cross by the ferry to-morrow, and come in my
 white

To that little low church ? and will Oliver meet me
anon ?
Will it all seem an echo from childhood pass'd over
—pass'd on ?
Will the grave parson bless us ? Hark, hark ! in the
dim failing light
I hear her ! As then the child's voice clear and high,
sweet and merry
Now she mocks the man's tone with 'Hie over !
Hie over the ferry !'
And Katie.' 'And Katie.' 'Art out with the glow-
worms to-night,
My Katie ?' 'My Katie !' For gladness I break into
laughter
And tears. Then it all comes again as from far-away
years ;
Again, some one else—oh, how softly ! with laughter
comes after,
Comes after—with laughter comes after.

Christina G. Rossetti.

1830.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI, the younger sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was born in London, December 5th, 1830. She is the daughter of Gabriele Rossetti, the Neapolitan poet, patriot, and commentator on Dante; her mother was Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori, an Italian of partly English extraction, born in England, and in all her sympathies a complete Englishwoman. When Miss Rossetti was sixteen, her grandfather, G. Polidori, printed at his private press a little pamphlet of "Verses by Christina G. Rossetti" (1847). In 1850 she contributed a few poems to *The Germ*, under the pseudonym of Ellen Alleyn. It was not till 1862 that her first volume of poetry, "Goblin Market, and other Poems," appeared. This was followed by a second volume, "The Prince's Progress, and other Poems," in 1866. In 1870 appeared a collection of tales under the name of "Commonplace, and other Short Stories." Two years afterwards Miss Rossetti published a little book of rhymes and snatches, "Sing-Song, a Nursery Rhyme-book," with illustrations by Arthur Hughes. In 1874 appeared "Speaking Likenesses," three short tales slightly connected together, somewhat in the manner of "Alice in Wonderland." From this time until 1881 Miss Rossetti published nothing but devotional works: "Annus Domini, a Collect for

each Day of the Year, founded on a Text of Holy Scripture" (1874); "Seek and Find: Short Studies of the Benedicite" (1879); "Called to be Saints, the Minor Festivals devotionally Studied" (1881). In 1881 appeared a new volume of poetry, "A Pageant, and other Poems." Since then Miss Rossetti has published two more works of devotion, "Letter and Spirit, Notes on the Commandments" (1883), and "Time Flies, a Reading Diary" (1885). The latter, which contains some of her most charming later work, shows Miss Rossetti in the double character of poet and homilist. It consists of reflections, in prose and verse, for every day of the year. Though written for purposes of devotion, it may be read for artistic pleasure, so full of charm, of delicate harmony, of quaint humour, of subtle observation, is both verse and prose. Miss Rossetti's "Poetical Works" were published in one volume in 1890.

The poetry of Miss Rossetti, as I have said elsewhere, deeply thought, intensely felt as it is, appeals first of all to the reader through a quality not always found, in any specially prominent degree, in the work of passionate or thoughtful poets. Almost every poem leaves on the mind a sense of satisfaction, of rightness and fitness; we are not led to think of art, but we notice, almost unconsciously, the way in which every word fits into its place, as if it could not possibly have been used otherwise. The secret of this style—which seems innocently unaware of its own beauty—is, no doubt, its sincerity, leading to the employment of homely words where homely words are wanted, and always of natural and really expressive words; yet not sincerity only, but sincerity as the servant of a finely touched and

exceptionally *seeing* nature. A power of seeing finely beyond the scope of ordinary vision: that, in a few words, is the note of Miss Rossetti's genius, and it brings with it a subtle and as if instinctive power of expressing subtle and yet as if instinctive conceptions; always clearly, always simply, with a singular and often startling homeliness, yet in a way and about subjects as far removed from the borders of commonplace as possible. This power is shown in every division of her poetry; in the peculiar witchery of the poems dealing with the supernatural, in the exaltation of the devotional poems, in the particular charm of the child-songs, bird-songs, and nature lyrics, in the special variety and the special excellence of the poems of affection and meditation. The union of homely yet always select literalness of treatment with mystical visionariness, or visionariness which is sometimes mystical, constitutes the peculiar quality of her poetry—poetry which has, all the same, several points of approach and distinct varieties of characteristic.

Miss Rossetti's power of seeing what others do not see, and of telling us about it in such a way that we too are able to see it, is displayed nowhere more prominently than in those poems which deal, in one way or another, with the supernatural. "Goblin-Market"—surely the most naïve and childlike poem in our language—is the perfect realisation of those happy and fantastic aspects of the supernatural which we call Fairyland. Miss Rossetti's witchcraft is so subtle that she seems to bewitch, not us only, but herself, and without trying to do either. The narrative has so matter-of-fact, and at the same time so fantastic and bewildering an air, that

we are fairly puzzled into acceptance of everything. The very rhythm, the leaping and hopping rhythm, which renders the goblin merchantmen visible to us, has something elfin and proper to "the little people" in its almost infantile jingle and cadence.

“ Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping :
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter-skelter, hurry-scurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her :
Squeezed and caressed her :
Stretched up their dishes
Panniers and plates :
“ Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red and basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs ;
Pluck them and suck them
Pomegranates, figs.”

In "The Prince's Progress" we are in quite another corner of the world of faëry. The poem is more mature, it is handled in a more even and masterly way; but it is, while still very different, more like other romantic ballads—William Morris's, for instance—than "Goblin-Market" is like anything at all. The narrative is in the pure romantic spirit, and the touch of magic comes into it suddenly and unawares. The verse is throughout flexible and expressive, but towards the end, just before and during the exquisite lament, bride-song and death-song at once, it falls into a cadence of such solemn and tender sweetness as even Miss Rossetti has rarely equalled.

" Too late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate:
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

" Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
Which now you cannot know:
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

" Is she fair now as she lies?
Once she was fair;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.

Now these are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear ;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven there :
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care ?

“ We never saw her with a smile
Or with a frown ;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
Though tossed of down ;
She little heeded what she wore,
Kirtle, or wreath, or gown ;
We think her white brows often ached
Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
That used to be so brown.

“ We never heard her speak in haste :
Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
As it was meet,
Her heart sat silent through the noise
And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
No hurry in her feet,
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

“ You should have wept her yesterday,
Wasting upon her bed :
But wherefore should you weep to-day
That she is dead ?
Lo, we who love weep not to-day,
But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red :
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread.”

Yet another phase of the supernatural meets us in a little group of poems (“The Ghost’s Petition,”

"The Hour and the Ghost," "At Home," "The Poor Ghost") in which the problems of the unseen world are dealt with in a singular way. Miss Rossetti's genius is essentially sombre, or it writes itself at least on a dark background of gloom. The thought of death has a constant fascination for her, almost such a fascination as it had for Leopardi or Baudelaire; only it is not the fascination of attraction, as with the one, nor of repulsion, as with the other, but of interest, sad but scarcely unquiet interest in what the dead are doing underground, in their memories—if memory they have—of the world they have left; a singular, whimsical sympathy with the poor dead, like that expressed in two famous lines of the "*Fleurs du Mal*."

These strange little poems, with their sombre and fantastic colouring—the picturesque outcome of deep and curious pondering on things unseen—lead easily, by an obvious transition, to the poems of spiritual life, in the customary or religious sense of the term. Miss Rossetti's devotional poetry is quite unlike most other poetry of the devotional sort. It is intensely devout, sometimes almost liturgical in character; surcharged with personal emotion, a cry of the heart, an ecstasy of the soul's grief or joy: it is never didactic, or concerned with purposes of edification. She does not preach; she prays. We are allowed to overhear a dialogue of the soul with God. Her intensity of religious feeling touches almost on the ecstasy of Jacopone da Todi, but without his delirium. It is usually a tragic ecstasy. In such a poem as "Despised and Rejected," one of the most marvellous religious poems in the language, the reality of the externalised emotion is

almost awful: it is scarcely to be read without a shudder. Christ stands at the door and knocks, at the unopening door of the heart.

“Then I cried out upon him : Cease,
 Leave me in peace ;
 Fear not that I should crave
 Aught thou mayst have.
 Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
 Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
 What, shall I not be let
 Alone, that thou dost vex me yet ?

But all night long that voice spake urgently :

“ Open to Me.”

Still harping in mine ears :

“ Rise, let Me in.”

Pleading with tears :

“ Open to Me, that I may come to thee.”

While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold :

“ My Feet bleed, see My Face,

See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,

My Heart doth bleed for thee,

Open to Me.”

So till the break of day :

Then died away

That voice, in silence as of sorrow ;

Then footsteps echoing like a sigh

Passed me by,

Lingering footsteps slow to pass.

On the morrow

I saw upon the grass

Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door

The mark of blood for evermore.”

In “Advent,” another masterpiece, the ecstasy is of faith—faith triumphant after watching and waiting, after vigils and darkness: a cry from spiritual watch-towers. In all these poems we are led through phase after phase of a devout soul; we find a sequence of

keen and brooding moods of religious feeling and meditation, every word burningly real and from the heart, yet in every word subjected to the keenest artistic scrutiny, the most finished and flawless artistic manipulation.

In Miss Rossetti's religious poems there is a recurring burden of lament over the vanity of things, the swiftness of the way to death, the faithlessness of affection, the relentless pressure of years, finding voice in the magnificent paraphrase on Ecclesiastes (the early poem called "A Testimony"), in the two splendid sonnets, "Vanity of Vanities," and "One Certainty," and, less sadly, in the little lyric masterpiece, "Passing away, saith the World, passing away!"

"All things are vanity, I said :

Yea vanity of vanities.

The rich man dies ; and the poor dies :

The worm feeds sweetly on the dead.

Whate'er thou lackest, keep this trust :

All in the end shall have but dust :

The one inheritance, which best

And worst alike shall find and share :

The wicked cease from troubling there,

And there the weary be at rest ;

There all the wisdom of the wise

Is vanity of vanities.

Man flourishes as a green leaf,

And as a leaf doth pass away ;

Or as a shade that cannot stay

And leaves no track, his course is brief :

Yet man doth hope and fear and plan

Till he is dead :—oh foolish man !

Our eyes cannot be satisfied

With seeing, nor our ears be filled

With hearing: yet we plant and build
 And buy and make our borders wide;
 We gather wealth, we gather care,
 But know not who shall be our heir.

Why should we hasten to arise
 So early, and so late take rest?
 Our labour is not good; our best
 Hopes fade; our heart is stayed on lies:
 Verily, we sow wind; and we
 Shall reap the whirlwind, verily.

He who hath little shall not lack;
 He who hath plenty shall decay:
 Our fathers went; we pass away;
 Our children follow on our track:
 So generations fail, and so
 They are renewed and come and go.

The earth is fattened with our dead;
 She swallows more and doth not cease:
 Therefore her wine and oil increase
 And her sheaves are not numberèd;
 Therefore her plants are green, and all
 Her pleasant trees lusty and tall.

Therefore the maidens cease to sing,
 And the young men are very sad;
 Therefore the sowing is not glad,
 And mournful is the harvesting.
 Of high and low, of great and small,
 Vanity is the lot of all.

A King dwelt in Jerusalem;
 He was the wisest man on earth;
 He had all riches from his birth,
 And pleasures till he tired of them;
 Then, having tested all things, he
 Witnessed that all are vanity."

So, in its grave and sober assurance of earthly mis-
 chance speaks the "Testimony." But the quiet sad-

ness of these poems of abstract meditation over the vanity of things, passes, when we turn to another well-defined class of poems, into a keener and more heart-moving outcry of sorrow. There is a theme to which Miss Rossetti returns again and again, a theme into which she is able to infuse a more intense feeling than we find in any other but her devotional pieces—that of a heart given sorrowfully over to the memory of a passion spent somehow in vain, disregarded or self-repressed. There is a marvellously affecting expression given in such poems as that named “Twice,” to the suppressed bitterness of a disappointed heart, anguish of unuttered passion reaching to a point of ascetic abnegation, a devout frenzy of patience, which is the springing of the bitter seed of hope dead in a fiery martyrdom. In that “masterpiece of ascetic passion,” as Dante Rossetti justly called the dramatic lyric entitled “The Convent Threshold,” this conception obtains its very finest realisation. We meet with nothing like the passion, nothing like the imagination, of this superb poem, save in one or two pieces only of her poetic work. The romantic feeling, the religious fervour, the personal emotion—all her noblest gifts and qualities, with her very noblest possibilities of style and versification—meet here as one.

“Your eyes look earthward, mine look up.
I see the far-off city grand,
Beyond the hills a watered land,
Beyond the gulf a gleaming strand
Of mansions where the righteous sup ;
Who sleep at ease among their trees,
Or wake to sing a cadenced hymn
With Cherubim and Seraphim ;

They bore the Cross, they drained the cup,
 Racked, roasted, crushed, wrenched limb from limb,
 They the offscouring of the world :
 The heaven of starry heavens unfurled,
 The sun before their face is dim.

You looking earthward, what see you ?
 Milk-white, wine-flushed among the vines,
 Up and down leaping, to and fro,
 Most glad, most full, made strong with wines,
 Blooming as peaches pearly with dew,
 Their golden windy hair afloat,
 Love-music warbling in their throat,
 Young men and women come and go.

* * * * *

“ I tell you what I dreamed last night :
 It was not dark, it was not light,
 Cold dews had drenched my plenteous hair
 Through clay ; you came to seek me there.
 And ‘ Do you dream of me ? ’ you said.
 My heart was dust that used to leap
 To you ; I answered half asleep :
 “ My pillow is damp, my sheets are red,
 There’s a leaden tester to my bed :
 Find you a warmer playfellow,
 A warmer pillow for your head,
 A kinder love to love than mine.”
 You wrung your hands ; while I, like lead,
 Crushed downwards through the sodden earth :
 You smote your hands but not in mirth,
 And reeled but were not drunk with wine.

For all night long I dreamed of you :
 I woke and prayed against my will,
 Then slept to dream of you again.
 At length I rose and knelt and prayed ;
 I cannot write the words I said,
 My words were slow my tears were few

But through the dark my silence spoke
Like thunder. When this morning broke,
My face was pinched, my hair was grey,
And frozen blood was on the sill
Where stifling in my struggle I lay.

If now you saw me you would say :
Where is the face I used to love ?
And I would answer : Gone before ;
It tarries veiled in Paradise.
When once the morning star shall rise,
When earth with shadow flees away
And we stand safe within the door,
Then you shall lift the veil thereof.
Look up, rise up : for far above
Our palms are grown, our place is set ;
There we shall meet as once we met,
And love with old familiar love."

The passion here is almost fierce. In "Monna Innominata : a Sonnet of Sonnets," the masterpiece of the "Pageant" volume, a much quieter, perhaps only a sadder, voice is given to the same cry of the heart. This sonnet-sequence—a comparison of which with the sonnet-sequence of Mrs. Browning she herself has not shrunk from challenging—should and will take its place among the great works in that line, if delicate art, perfect within its limits, wedded to delicately sincere and deep emotion, limited, too, within a certain range, can give it right of admission among the stronger and more varied sequences of Dante and Petrarch, of Mrs. Browning and Rossetti.

In a world which wears chiefly an aspect of gloom for her, which is tragical in its earnestness, when it is not tragical in its pain or passion, there are still for Miss Rossetti, as for all sane and healthy spirits

in however dark a world, two elements of pure joy two eternal comforters—nature and children. To her, nature is always a relief, an escape; certain aspects she responds to with a peculiarly exhilarating joyousness. It is always the calm aspects of natural things, and chiefly *growing* nature, that call out her sympathy and delight. What we call scenery she never refers to; nor to mountains, nor often to the sea. But nowhere in poetry can we get such lovingly minute little pictures of flowers, and corn, and birds, and animals; of the seasons—spring particularly. She delights in just such things as are the delight of a child; her observation is, as of set purpose, very usually that of a thoughtful and observant child. Children, we must remember, especially very small children, play a great part in the world of Miss Rossetti's poetry. They have, indeed, a book all to themselves, one of the quaintest and prettiest books in the language. "Sing-Song: a Nursery Rhyme-book," illustrated with pictures, almost equal to the poems, by Arthur Hughes, makes a very little book for all its hundred and twenty poems and pictures; but its covers contain a lyric treasure such as few books, small or great, can boast of.

What renders these little songs so precious is their pure singing quality—what Matthew Arnold calls the "lyrical cry"; and the same quality appears in a really large number of exquisite lyrics scattered throughout Miss Rossetti's volumes; some of them being, perhaps, in the most ethereal and quintessential elements of song, the most perfect we have had since Shelley, whom she resembles also in her free but flawless treatment of rhythm. The peculiar

charm of these songs is as distinct and at the same time as immaterial as a perfume. They are fresh with the freshness of dewy grass, or, in their glowing brightness, like a dewdrop turned by the sun into a prism. Thoughtfulness passing into intuition, thoughtfulness that broods as well as sees, and has, like shadowed water, its mysterious depths; this, joined to an extreme yet select simplicity of phrase and a clear and liquid melody of verse—as spontaneous apparently in its outflow as a lark's trill—seems to lie at the root of her lyric art: a careful avoidance of emphasis, a subdued colour and calculated vagueness, aiding often in giving its particular tone to one of her songs—songs, as a rule, enshrining an almost scentless flower of sentiment.

Finished workmanship, as I intimated at the outset, we find in practically every poem, and workmanship of such calm and even excellence that it is not at first sight we are made aware of the extremely original, thoughtful, and intense nature which throbs so harmoniously beneath it. Even in a poem so full of sorrow and wrath and indignation as the almost matchless lyric on the German-French campaign, "To-day for Me"—a poem that seems written with a pen dipped in the hot tears of France—no surge of personal feeling disturbs the calm assurance of the rhythm, the solemn reiteration of the tolling burden of rhyme. Indeed, the more deeply or delicately felt the emotion, the more impressive or exquisite, very often, is the art. At the same time, poems like "To-day for Me" are the exception, by no means the rule, in Miss Rossetti's poetry. Something altogether less emphatic must be sought for if we are anxious to find the type, the

true representative of this mystic and remote, yet homely and simple, genius; seeing so deeply into things of the spirit and of nature, overshadowed always with something of a dark imminence of gloom, yet with so large a capacity for joy and simple pleasure; an autumnal muse perhaps, but the muse, certainly, of an autumn going down towards winter with the happy light still on it of a past, or but now scarcely passing, summer.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

I.—“*YEA, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE.*”

MY vineyard that is mine I have to keep,
Pruning for fruit the pleasant twigs and leaves.
Tend thou thy cornfield : one day thou shalt reap
In joy thy ripened sheaves.

Or if thine be an orchard, graft and prop
Food-bearing trees each watered in its place :
Or if a garden, let it yield for crop
Sweet herbs and herb of grace.—

But if my lot be sand where nothing grows ?—
Nay, who hath said it ? Tune a thankful psalm :
For tho' thy desert bloom not as the rose,
It yet can rear thy palm.

II.—*AN ECHO FROM WILLOWWOOD.*

“ Oh ye, all ye that walk in willowwood.”

TWO gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,
Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart, I think,
Pale and reluctant on the water's brink,
As on the brink of parting which must be.
Each eyed the other's aspect, she and he,
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,
There on the brink of life's dividing sea.
Lilies upon the surface, deep below
Two wistful faces craving each for each,
Resolute and reluctant without speech :—
A sudden ripple made the faces flow
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach :
So those hearts joined, and ah ! were parted so.

III.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

“In the grave, whither thou goest.”

O WEARY Champion of the Cross, lie still :
 Sleep thou at length the all-embracing sleep :
 Long was thy sowing day, rest now and reap :
 Thy fast was long, feast now thy spirit's fill.
 Yea, take thy fill of love, because thy will
 Chose love not in the shallows but the deep :
 Thy tides were springtides, set against the neap
 Of calmer souls : thy flood rebuked their rill.
 Now night has come to thee—please God, of rest :
 So some time must it come to every man ;
 To first and last, where many last are first.
 Now fixed and finished thine eternal plan,
 Thy best has done its best, thy worst its worst :
 Thy best its best, please God, thy best its best.

IV.—A DEATH OF A FIRSTBORN.

JANUARY 14TH, 1892.

(THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.)

O NE young life lost, two happy young lives blighted,
 With earthward eyes we see :
 With eyes uplifted, keener, farther-sighted,
 We look, O Lord, to Thee.

Grief hears a funeral knell : hope hears the ringing
 Of birthday bells on high ;
 Faith, hope, and love make answer with soft singing,
 Half carol and half cry.

Stoop to console us, Christ, Sole Consolation,
 While dust returns to dust ;
 Until that blessed day when all Thy Nation
 Shall rise up of the Just.

TIME FLIES.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

I.—JANUARY 6.

(FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.)

“**L**ORD Babe, if Thou art He
We sought for patiently,
Where is Thy court ?
Hither may prophecy and star resort ;
Men heed not their report.”—

“Bow down and worship, righteous man :
This Infant of a span

Is He man sought for since the world began.”—

“Then, Lord, accept my gold, too base a thing
For Thee, of all kings King.”

“Lord Babe, despite Thy youth
I hold Thee of a truth
Both Good and Great :
But wherefore dost Thou keep so mean a state,
Low lying desolate ?”—

“Bow down and worship, righteous seer :
The Lord our God is here

Approachable, Who bids us all draw near.”—

“Wherefore to Thee I offer frankincense,
Thou Sole Omnipotence.”

“But I have only brought
Myrrh ; no wise afterthought
Instructed me

To gather pearls or gems, or choice to see
Coral or ivory."—

“Not least thine offering proves thee wise :

For myrrh means sacrifice,

And He that lives, this same is He that dies.”—

“Then here is myrrh : alas ! yea, woe is me
That myrrh befitteth Thee.”

Myrrh, frankincense and gold :

And lo ! from wintry fold

Good will doth bring

A Lamb, the innocent likeness of this King

Whom stars and seraphs sing :

And lo ! the bird of love, a Dove

Flutters and cooes above :

And Dove and Lamb and Babe agree in love :—

Come, all mankind, come, all creation, hither,

Come, worship Christ together.

II.—MARCH 3.

LAUGHING Life cries at the feast,—

Craving Death cries at the door,—

“Fish, or fowl or fatted beast ?”—

“Come with me, thy feast is o'er.”—

“Wreathe the violets.”—“Watch them fade.”—

“I am sunlight.”—“I am shade :

I am the sun-burying west.”—

“I am pleasure.”—“I am rest :

Come with me, for I am best.”

III.—MARCH 5.

WHERE shall I find a white rose blowing?—
 Out in the garden where all sweets be.—
 But out in my garden the snow was snowing
 And never a white rose opened for me.
 Nought but snow and a wind were blowing
 And snowing.

Where shall I find a blush rose blushing?—
 On the garden wall or the garden bed.—
 But out in my garden the rain was rushing
 And never a blush rose raised its head.
 Nothing glowing, flushing or blushing ;
 Rain rushing.

Where shall I find a red rose budding?—
 Out in the garden where all things grow.—
 But out in my garden a flood was flooding
 And never a red rose began to blow.
 Out in a flooding what should be budding ?
 All flooding!

Now is winter and now is sorrow,
 No roses but only thorns to-day :
 Thorns will put on roses to-morrow,
 Winter and sorrow scudding away.
 No more winter and no more sorrow
 To-morrow.

IV.—APRIL 6.

WEIGH all my faults and follies righteously,
 Omissions and commissions, sin on sin ;
 Make deep the scale, O Lord, to weigh them in ;

Yea, set the Accuser vulture-eyed to see
 All loads ingathered which belong to me :
 That so in life the judgment may begin,
 And Angels learn how hard it is to win
 One solitary sinful soul to Thee.
 I have no merits for a counterpoise :
 Oh vanity my work and hastening day,
 What can I answer to the accursing voice ?
 Lord, drop Thou in the counterscale alone
 One Drop from Thine own Heart, and overweigh
 My guilt, my folly, even my heart of stone.

V.—APRIL 20.

PITEOUS my rhyme is,
 What while I muse of love and pain,
 Of love misspent, of love in vain,
 Of love that is not loved again :
 And is this all then ?
 As long as time is
 Love loveth. Time is but a span,
 The dalliance space of dying man :
 And is this all immortals can ?
 The gain were small then.

Love loves for ever,
 And finds a sort of joy in pain,
 And gives with nought to take again,
 And loves too well to end in vain :
 Is the gain small then ?
 Love laughs at "never,"
 Outlives our life, exceeds the span
 Appointed to mere mortal man :
 That which love is and does and can,
 Is all in all then.

VI.—MAY 14.

YOUNG girls wear flowers,
 Young brides a flowery wreath,
 But next we plant them
 In garden plots of death.
 Whose lot is best :
 The maiden's curtained rest,
 Or bride's whose hoped-for sweet
 May yet outstrip her feet ?
 Ah ! what are such as these
 To death's sufficing ease ?
 He sleeps indeed who sleeps in peace
 Where night and morning meet.

Dear are the blossoms
 For bride's or maiden's head,
 But dearer planted
 Around our blessed dead.
 Those mind us of decay
 And joys that fade away,
 These preach to us perfection,
 Long love, and resurrection,
 We make our graveyards fair
 For spirit-like birds of air,
 For Angels may be finding there
 Lost Eden's own delection.

VII.—JUNE 2.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a
 far country."

"GOLDEN haired, lily white,
 Will you pluck me lilies ?
 Or will you show me where they grow,
 Show where the limpid rill is ?

But is your hair of gold or light,
 And is your foot of flake or fire,
 And have you wings rolled up from sight,
 And songs to slake desire ?”

“ I pluck fresh flowers of Paradise,
 Lilies and roses red,
 A bending sceptre for my hand,
 A crown to crown my head.
 I sing my songs, I pluck my flowers
 Sweet-scented from their fragrant trees :
 I sing, we sing amid the bowers,
 And gather palm branches.”

“ Is there a path to Heaven
 My stumbling foot may tread ?
 And will you show that way to go,
 That bower and blossom bed ?”

“ The path to Heaven is steep and straight
 And scorched, but ends in shade of trees,
 Where yet awhile we sing and wait,
 And gather palm branches.”

VIII.—JULY 5.

I NNOCENT eyes not ours,
 Are made to look on flowers,
 Eyes of small birds and insects small :
 Morn after summer morn,
 The sweet rose on her thorn
 Opens her bosom to them all.
 The least and last of things
 That soar on quivering wings,
 Or crawl among the grass-blades out of sight,
 Have just as clear a right
 To their appointed portion of delight,
 As Queens or Kings.

IX.—JULY 11.

MAN'S life is but a working day
 Whose tasks are set aright :
 A time to work, a time to pray,
 And then a quiet night.
 And then, please God, a quiet night
 Where palms are green and robes are white,
 A long-drawn breath, a balm for sorrow,—
 And all things lovely on the morrow.

X.—JULY 16.

HAVE I not striven, my God, and watched and
 prayed ?
 Have I not wrestled in mine agony ?
 Wherefore dost Thou still turn Thy Face from
 me ?
 Is Thine Arm shortened that Thou canst not aid ?
 Thy silence breaks my heart : speak though to up-
 braid,
 For Thy rebuke yet bids us follow Thee.
 I grope and grasp not ; gaze, but cannot see.
 When out of sight and reach, my bed is made,
 And piteous men and women cease to blame,
 Whispering and wistful of my gain or loss ;
 Thou who for my sake once didst feel the Cross,
 Lord, wilt Thou turn and look upon me then,
 And in Thy glory bring to nought my shame,
 Confessing me to angels and to men ?

XI.—JULY 29.

THROUGH burden and heat of the day
 How weary the hands and the feet,
 That labour with scarcely a stay,
 Through burden and heat !

Tired toiler whose sleep shall be sweet,
Kneel down, it will rest thee to pray :
Then forward, for daylight is fleet.

Cool shadows show lengthening and grey,
Cool twilight will soon be complete :—
What matters this wearisome way
Through burden and heat ?

XII.—SEPTEMBER 25.

SORROW hath a double voice,
Sharp to-day but sweet to-morrow :
Wait in patience, hope, rejoice,
Tried friends of sorrow.

Pleasure hath a double taste,
Sweet to-day, but sharp to-morrow :
Friends of pleasure, rise in haste,
Make friends with sorrow.

Pleasure set aside to-day
Comes again to rule to-morrow :
Welcomed sorrow will not stay,
Farewell to sorrow !

XIII.—OCTOBER 30.

WHO is this that cometh up not alone
From the fiery-flying serpent wilderness
Leaning upon her own Beloved One,
Who is this ?

Lo, the King of King's daughter, a high princess,
Going home as bride to her Husband's Throne,
Virgin queen in perfected loveliness.

Her eyes a dove's eyes and her voice a dove's moan,
 She shows like a full moon for heavenliness,
 Eager saints and angels ask in heaven's zone :
 Who is this ?

XIV.—NOVEMBER 16.

THE goal in sight! Look up and sing,
 Set faces full against the light,
 Welcome with rapturous welcoming
 The goal in sight.

Let be the left, let be the right :
 Straight forward make your footsteps ring
 A loud alarum through the night.

Death hunts you, yea, but reft of sting ;
 Your bed is green, your shroud is white :
 Hail! Life and Death and all that bring
 The goal in sight.

XV.—DECEMBER 5.

BURY Hope out of sight,
 No book for it and no bell ;
 It never could bear the light
 Even while growing and well ;
 Think if now it could bear
 The light on its face of care
 And grey scattered hair.

No grave for Hope in the earth,
 But deep in that silent soul
 Which rang no bell for its birth
 And rings no funeral toll.
 Cover its once bright head ;
 Nor odours nor tears be shed :
 It lived once, it is dead.

Brief was the day of its power,
 The day of its grace how brief :
 As the fading of a flower,
 As the falling of a leaf,
 So brief its day and its hour :
 No bud more and no bower
 Or hint of a flower.

Shall many wail it ? not so :
 Shall one bewail it ? not one :
 Thus it hath been from long ago,
 Thus it shall be beneath the sun.
 O fleet sun, make haste to flee ;
 O rivers, fill up the sea ;
 O Death, set the dying free.

The sun nor loiters nor speeds,
 The rivers run as they ran,
 Through clouds or through windy reeds
 All run as when all began.
 Only Death turns at our cries :—
 Lo, the Hope we buried with sighs
 Alive in Death's eyes !

XVI.—ADVENT SUNDAY.

BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh :—go ye out
 With lighted lamps and garlands round about
 To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

It may be at the midnight black as pitch
 Earth shall cast up her poor, cast up her rich.

It may be at the crowing of the cock
 Earth shall upheave her depth, uproot her rock.

For lo, the Bridegroom fetcheth home the Bride :
His Hands are Hands she knows, she knows His Side.

Like pure Rebekah at the appointed place,
Veiled she unveils her face to meet His Face.

Like great Queen Esther in her triumphing,
She triumphs in the presence of her King.

His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed ;
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.

He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh :—go we out
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

XVII.—EASTER EVEN.

THE tempest over and gone, the calm begun.
Lo, "it is finished," and the Strong Man sleeps :
All stars keep vigil watching for the sun,
The moon her vigil keeps.

A garden full of silence and of dew,
Beside a virgin cave and entrance stone :
Surely a garden full of Angels too,
Wondering, on watch, alone.

They who cry "Holy, Holy, Holy," still
Veiling their faces round God's Throne above,
May well keep vigil on this heavenly hill
And cry their cry of love.

Adoring God in His new mystery
Of Love more deep than hell, more strong than death ;
Until the day break and the shadows flee,
The Shaking and the Breath.

SING-SONG.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

I.

LOVE me,—I love you,
Love me, my baby ;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Sing as it may be.

Mother's arms under you,
Her eyes above you ;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Love me,—I love you.

II.

Heartsease in my garden bed,
With sweetwilliam white and red,
Honeysuckle on my wall:—
Heartsease blossoms in my heart
When swcet William comes to call,
But it withers when we part,
And the honey-trumpets fall.

III.

What are heavy ? sea-sand and sorrow :
What are brief ? to-day and to-morrow :
What are frail ? Spring blossoms and youth :
What are deep ? the ocean and truth.

IV.

The days are clear,
Day after day,
When April's here,
That leads to May

And June
Must follow soon :
Stay, June, stay !—
If only we could stop the moon
And June !

v.

Twist me a crown of wind-flowers ;
That I may fly away
To hear the singers at their song,
And players at their play.

Put on your crown of wind-flowers :
But whither would you go ?
Beyond the surging of the sea
And the storms that blow.

Alas ! your crown of wind-flowers
Can never make you fly :
I twist them in a crown to-day,
And to-night they die.

vi.

I planted a hand
And there came up a palm
I planted a heart
And there came up balm.

Then I planted a wish,
But there sprang a thorn,
While heaven frowned with thunder
And earth sighed forlorn.

VII.

Roses blushing red and white
For delight ;
Honeysuckle wreaths above,
For love ;
Dim sweet-scented heliotrope,
For hope ;
Shining lilies tall and straight,
For royal state ;
Dusky pansies, let them be
For memory ;
With violets of fragrant breath,
For death.

VIII.

When a mounting skylark sings
In the sunlit summer morn,
I know that heaven is up on high,
And on earth are fields of corn.

But when a nightingale sings
In the moonlit summer even,
I know not if earth is merely earth,
Only that heaven is heaven.

IX.

“ Good bye in fear, good bye in sorrow,
Good bye, and all in vain,
Never to meet again, my dear—”
“ Never to part again.”
“ Good bye to-day, good bye to-morrow,
Good bye till earth shall wane,
Never to meet again, my dear—”
“ Never to part again.”

Ellen O'Leary.

1831—1889.

MISS O'LEARY, the Fenian poet, belongs to a type of writers better known in Ireland than in England. Her verses are songs and ballads in the old sense of the word rather than poems and lyrics. Living in a country where the populace are strongly moved by great fundamental passions, she was able to find an audience for her tender and simple rhymes. The streets of her native Tipperary have echoed more than once to some ballad of hers about emigrants and their sorrows, or like theme, sung by the ballad-singers from their little strips of fluttering paper. *The Commercial Journal*, *The Irishman*, and the Fenian organ *The Irish People*, helped also to spread her verse through the country. Her poetry, and the poetry of Casey, and Kickham's "Sally Kavanagh" and his three or four ballads, made up, indeed, the whole literary product of the Fenian agitation. "Young Ireland" days had brought their reaction of silence. Simple verse could still, however, find an audience; as it, indeed, always can in Ireland, where the ballad age has not yet gone by. It may be that a troubled history and the smouldering unrest of agitation and conspiracy are good for the making of ballads. If this be so, Miss O'Leary lived amid surroundings of an ideal kind, for all her life she was deep in the councils of Fenianism. Her

brother, Mr. John O'Leary, is now the most important survivor of the company of men who led the forlorn hope of 1864. O'Leary, Kickham, and Luby formed what was known as the Triumvirate under James Stephens, who bore the singular title of "Chief Executive." In 1864 Stephens, O'Leary, Luby, and Kickham were arrested. The escape of Stephens was at once planned, and carried out successfully. Miss O'Leary was the only woman told of the project. From this on she was constantly employed by Stephens carrying messages. While her brother was awaiting trial, she obeyed without murmur a command that sent her to Paris. Her brother might have been condemned to penal servitude in her absence, but she put her cause before all else. She was back in time, however, to hear the sentence pronounced, and to listen to his characteristic speech: "I have been found guilty of treason or treason felony. Treason is a foul crime. The poet Dante consigned traitors, I believe, to the ninth circle of hell; but what kind of traitors? Traitors against king, against country, against friends, against benefactors. England is not my country, and I have betrayed no friend, no benefactors. Sidney and Emmet were legal traitors."

It is impossible to describe Miss O'Leary's life without touching on that of her brother, for he was the most powerful influence she met with. His imprisonment did not, however, abate her political activity. She hid more than one rebel for whom the Government was searching; and when it became necessary to get James Stephens out of the country, raised £200 by a mortgage on some small property she had, to charter a vessel. In 1867, the

movement having failed, she went to her native town, and lived there until her brother's return in 1885. He had been five years in prison and fifteen in banishment, but returned still hopeful for Ireland, still waiting the day of deliverance. From 1885 until her death she lived with her brother in Dublin, and their house became a centre of literary endeavour. A little circle of writers who have sought to carry on the ballad literature of Ireland according to the tradition of 1848 drew much of their inspiration from the teaching of Mr. O'Leary and his sister, and many of their facts and legends from the books that filled every corner and crevice of Mr. O'Leary's rooms. Indeed, no influence in modern Ireland has been more ennobling than that of these two Fenians. Driven by the force of events into hostility to all the dominant parties in Irish politics, they concentrated their influence upon giving to all they met a loftier public spirit and more devoted patriotism. Unionist or Nationalist, Conservative or Liberal, it was nearly all one to them, if they thought you loved Ireland and were ready to seek her prosperity by setting the moral law above all the counsels of expediency. On this last they ever dwelt with most uncompromising insistence.

Miss O'Leary died in 1889, just when she had completed the correction of a collected edition of her poems. It is from this volume, published in 1890 by Sealey, Bryers, and Walker (Lower Abbey Street, Dublin), that the selection has been made.

Poetry such as hers belongs to a primitive country and a young literature. It is exceedingly simple, both in thought and expression. Its very simplicity and

sincerity have made it, like much Irish verse, unequal; for when the inspiration fails, the writer has no art to fall back upon. Nor does it know anything of studied adjective and subtle observation. To it the grass is simply green and the sea simply blue; and yet it has, in its degree, the sacred passion of true poetry.

W. B. YEATS.

SONGS AND BALLADS.

ELLEN O'LEARY.

I.—TO GOD AND IRELAND TRUE.

I SIT beside my darling's grave,
Who in the prison died,
And tho' my tears fall thick and fast
I think of him with pride :
Ay, softly fall my tears like dew,
For one to God and Ireland true.

"I love my God o'er all," he said,
"And then I love my land,
And next I love my Lily sweet,
Who pledged me her white hand :
To each—to all—I'm ever true,
To God, to Ireland, and to you.

No tender nurse his hard bed smoothed,
Or softly raised his head ;
He fell asleep and woke in heaven
Ere I knew he was dead ;
Yet why should I my darling rue ?
He was to God and Ireland true.

Oh! 'tis a glorious memory,
I'm prouder than a queen,
To sit beside my hero's grave,
And think on what has been ;
And, oh my darling, I am true
To God—to Ireland—and to you.

II.—THE DEAD WHO DIED FOR IRELAND.

THE dead who died for Ireland ;
 Let not their memory die,
 But solemn and bright, like stars at night,
 Be they throned for aye on high.

The dead who died for Ireland ;
 The noble, gallant Three,
 Whose last fond prayer on the gallows' stair
 Was for Ireland's liberty.

The dead who died for Ireland !
 In the lonely prison cell ;
 Far, far apart from each kindred heart ;
 Of their death-pangs none can tell.

The dead who died for Ireland !
 In exile—poor—in pain ;
 Dreaming sweet dreams of the hills and streams
 They never should see again.

The dead who died for Ireland !
 Let not their memory die,
 But solemn and bright, like stars at night,
 Be they throned for aye on high.

III.—A LEGEND OF TYRONE.¹

AMONG those green hills where O'Neill in his pride
 Ruled in high state, with his fair English bride.
 A quaint cottage stood, till swept down by some gale ;
 And of that vanished home the old wives tell this tale.

* * * *

Crouched round a bare hearth in hard, frosty weather,
 Three lone, helpless weans cling close together ;
 Tangled those gold locks, once bonnie and bright—
 There's no one to fondle the baby to-night.

“ My mammie I want ! Oh ! my mammie I want ! ”
The big tears stream down with low wailing chaunt ;
Sweet Ely’s slight arms enfold the gold head ;
“ Poor weeny Willie, sure mammie is dead—

And daddie is crazy from drinking all day,
Come down, holy angels, and take us away ! ”
Eily and Eddie keep kissing and crying—
Outside the weird winds are sobbing and sighing.

All in a moment the children are still,
Only a quick coo of gladness from Will.
The sheiling no longer seems empty and bare,
For, clothed in white raiment, the mother stands there.

They gather around her, they cling to her dress ;
She rains down soft kisses for each shy caress,
Her light, loving touches smooth out tangled locks,
And pressed to her bosom the baby she rocks.

He lies in his cot, there’s a fire on the hearth ;
To Eily and Eddy ’tis heaven on earth,
For mother’s deft fingers have been everywhere,
She lulls them to rest in the low *sugaun* chair.

They gaze open-eyed, then the eyes gently close,
As petals fold into the heart of a rose ;
But ope soon again in awe, love, but not fear,
And fondly they murmur, “ Our mammie is here ! ”

She lays them down softly, she wraps them around,
They lie in sweet slumbers, she starts at a sound !
The cock loudly crows, and the spirits away—
The drunkard steals in at the dawning of day.

Again and again 'tween the dark and the dawn
 Glides in the dead mother to nurse Willie bawn,²
 Or is it an angel who sits by the hearth?
 An angel in heaven, a mother on earth.

IV.—HOME TO CARRIGLEA.

A BALLAD.

MY Noney, lay your work aside
 For I have news to tell:
 I met a friend, a dear old friend—
 We've known him long and well;
 When you were but a toddling babe
 He danced you on his knee;
 But oh! 'twas in the good old times,
 At home in Carriglea.

Just now amidst the busy crowd,
 As I was toiling on
 With drooping heart and flagging steps,
 His mild glance on me shone;
 His voice seemed like an angel's voice,
 With such sweet sympathy
 He talked of all the good old times
 At home in Carriglea.

He clasped my hand in his warm grasp,
 His kind eyes filled with tears,
 To see me look so thin and wan
 After those weary years;
 And gazing in his face I thought
 I ne'er had crossed the sea,
 But still was playing hide and seek
 At home in Carriglea.

Once more I saw its rose-crowned poreh,
And the little stream close by,
Where oft we watched the young *brikeens*³
Or paddled on the sly ;
Or in the sunny summer days
Climbed up the old oak tree ;
Oh ! we were happy children then,
At home in Carriglea.

How softly on our curly locks
My mother's hands would rest.
She'd pat each sunburnt, rosy cheek,
And press us to her breast ;
You, Noney dear, when tired of play,
Would nestle lovingly
Within her tender sheltering arms
At home in Carriglea.

When you were only six years old
There came a woeful change,
Dear mother, always sad and pale,
Poor father wild and strange,—
He'd rave of cruel landlords,
And curse their tyranny.
His proud heart broke, the day he left
His home in Carriglea.

And with the falling of the leaf
My mother faded, too ;
And as I watched her hour by hour
More and more weak she grew ;
The night she died, she blessed us both
So sadly, tenderly,
That all the kindly neighbours wept
At home in Carriglea.

Oh! may God bless the faithful friends
Who, in the hour of need,
Thronged round the lonely orphan girls.
Oh! they were friends indeed:
And he, the truest, kindest, best,
Has come across the sea,
To take a wife and sister home—
Home, home to Carriglea.

1 The Legend of the Dead Mother, as told among the hills of Tyrone, is simple and very homely. The tender mother and fond wife dies; the father in despair turns to drinking and neglects his little ones. The mother, still watching over her babies, comes back in the gloaming, again and again, to succour and fondle them. They tell the neighbours to take them to the priest. In reply to his incredulous questions, their only answer is another question, "Wouldn't we know our own mammie?"

2 Bán, *i.e.* fair, in Irish.

3 Little trout.

Isa (Craig) Knox.

1831.

MRS. KNOX, whose maiden name was Isa Craig, under which she became well known, was born in Edinburgh on October 17th, 1831. She began at an early age to contribute to newspapers and magazines, and her poetical contributions to the *Scotsman*, signed "Isa," attracted attention, and led to her being employed in writing for that journal literary reviews and articles on social questions, in which already she took the greatest interest. In 1856 her first volume of poems was issued by the Messrs. Blackwood of Edinburgh, and was received with much favour. In 1857 she came to London to assist Mr. Hastings in organising the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. She acted as Secretary and literary assistant until her marriage with her cousin, Mr. John Knox, who was engaged in business in the City. Prior to this, however, she had won the first place in the competition (against 620 rivals) for her ode on Burns, on the occasion of the Burns Centenary. So little did she expect to win the prize that she was spending the day at a distance, and was not present when her ode was read by Mr. Phelps with fine effect to listening thousands in the Crystal Palace.

Shortly before her marriage she began to contribute to the magazines founded by Mr. Alexander

Strahan,—*Good Words* and the *Sunday Magazine*,—and, for a time, in the earlier days of the *Argosy*, she acted as its editor. In 1865 “*Duchess Agnes and Other Poems*” was published by Mr. Strahan, and added to her reputation.

Isa Craig Knox’s poems are characterised not only by true and natural feeling, but by remarkably picturesque touches. She excels in pictures, and can command atmosphere. “*Duchess Agnes*” admirably illustrates this in many passages, and we may refer also to the “*Brides of Quair*” and to “*The Thames*.” We recall, too, a very remarkable poem which appeared in the *Argosy* entitled “*The Vision of Sheikh Hamil*,” in which, without affectation of knowledge or display of pedantic learning, we have the whole spirit not only of Eastern life, but of Arab love and devotion, set in a frame of the most picturesque touches. The Mohammedan religion and worship affords her the finest medium for enforcing on Christian readers the true law of charity; for the unspeakable grief of the Sheikh at the loss of his much-loved wife touches, and cannot but touch, the sensitive reader to the quick. Seldom have we read a poem in which local colour and atmosphere were better preserved, and yet in which the law of common sympathy was more effectively vindicated.

As being in respect of extent her most important poem, we may, perhaps, be allowed to make a short quotation from “*Duchess Agnes*,” in proof of what we have said above. Agnes, the wife of the son of the Grand Duke of Bavaria, suffers death under an accusation of witchcraft, from which her husband is unable to save her. This is a part of one of her

monologues while in the prison, waiting for judgment and sentence :—

“Remember Thou Thy three days in the grave,
O my Lord Christ, and hasten to this door,
And open it, the way into the light,
Blot out those days of darkness evermore,
When in my bitterness I cried for death
To come and take me from Thee—cried to Thee.
That I might be as though I had not been
Forgive the cry—forgive the bitter cry,
O Mother Heart, so near the heart of God,
What if a little child should beat thy breast
In its blind pain, thou wouldst not punish it
By putting it far from Thee with its pain !”

Mrs. Knox has written some lyrics which for freshness of feeling and felicity of movement hold a place of their own ; and in her “Songs of Consolation,” published in 1874, has shown her ability to write true lyrics of the spiritual life—which many attempt, but few succeed in.

Like so many other authors whose original and natural gift is for verse, and who have turned to prose-writing, Mrs. Knox has of recent years done little in poetry, but has made a reputation for herself in prose-fiction. Several of her novels have appeared in the Messrs. Cassell’s magazines and elsewhere, and have enjoyed a wide popularity there. She has fair constructive powers, a firm hold on character within certain limits, and invariably writes a simple and most attractive style. Besides, she never forgets to insinuate a good moral influence into her story, if she does not always plainly enforce a moral lesson. “Esther West” is, perhaps, the most effective and popular of her prose stories. It has run through several editions, and

promises to take a permanent place in fiction. Mrs. Knox has also written a good deal for children, and has the gift of a light and pleasant manner of communicating knowledge. Her "Little Folks' History of England" has met with wide acceptance, and the same may be said of her "Tales on the Parables." We are, however, inclined somewhat to regret this determination to prose. The wider world of readers may profit, but the selecter band—the true votaries of poetry—are the losers, through even the temporary silence of so natural and sweet a voice.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

ISA (CRAIG) KNOX.

I.—ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF BURNS.

WE hail, this morn,
A century's noblest birth ;
A Poet peasant-born,
Who more of Fame's immortal dower
Unto his country brings,
Than all her kings !

As lamps high set
Upon some earthly eminence,—
And to the gazer brighter thence
Than the sphere-lights they flout,—
Dwindle in distance and die out,
While no star waneth yet ;
So through the past's far-reaching night,
Only the star-souls keep their light.

A gentle boy,—
With moods of sadness and of mirth,
Quick tears and sudden joy,—
Grew up beside the peasant's hearth.
His father's toil he shares !
But half his mother's cares
From his dark searching eyes,
Too swift to sympathise,
Hid in her heart she bears.

At early morn,
His father calls him to the field ;
Through the stiff soil that clogs his feet,
Chill rain, and harvest heat,

He plods all day ; returns at eve outworn,
 To the rude fare a peasant's lot doth yield ;—
 To what else was he born ?

The God-made King
 Of every living thing ;
 (For his great heart in love could hold them all ;)
 The dumb eyes meeting his by hearth and stall,—
 Gifted to understand !—
 Knew it and sought his hand ;—
 And the most tinorous creature had not fled,
 Could she his heart have read,
 Which fain all feeble things had blessed and shelterèd.

To Nature's feast,—
 Who knew her noblest guest
 And entertained him best,—
 Kingly he came. Her chambers of the east
 She draped with crimson and with gold,
 And poured her pure joy-vines
 For him the poet-souled.
 For him her anthem rolled,
 From the storm-wind among the winter pines,
 Down to the slenderest note
 Of a love-warble from the linnet's throat.

But when begins
 The array for battle, and the trumpet blows,
 A king must leave the feast, and lead the fight.
 And with its mortal foes,—
 Grim gathering hosts of sorrows and of sins,—
 Each human soul must close.

And Fame her trumpet blew
Before him ; wrapped him in her purple state ;
And made him mark for all the shafts of Fate,
That henceforth round him flew.

Though he may yield
Hard-pressed, and wounded fall
Forsaken on the field ;
His regal vestments soiled :
His crown of half its jewels spoiled ;
He is a king for all,
Had he but stood aloof !
Had he arrayed himself in armour proof
Against temptation's darts !
So yearn the good ;—so those the world calls wise,
With vain presumptuous hearts,
Triumphant moralise.

Of martyr-woe
A sacred shadow on his memory rests ;
Tears have not ceased to flow ;
Indignant grief yet stirs impetuous breasts,
To think,—above that noble soul brought low,
That wise and soaring spirit fooled, enslaved,—
Thus, thus he had been saved !

It might not be !
That heart of harmony
Had been too rudely rent :
Its silver chords, which any hand could wound,
By no hand could be tuned,
Save by the Maker of the instrument,
Its every string who knew,
And from profaning touch His heavenly gift withdrew.

Regretful love
 His country fain would prove,
 By grateful honours lavished on his grave ;
 Would fain redeem her blame
 That He so little at her hands can claim,
 Who unrewarded gave
 To her his life-bought gift of song and fame.

The land he trod
 Hath now become a place of pilgrimage ;
 Where dearer are the daisies of the sod
 That could his song engage.
 The hoary hawthorn, wreathed
 Above the bank on which his limbs he flung
 While some sweet plaint he breathed ;
 The streams he wandered near ;
 The maidens whom he loved ; the songs he sung ;—
 All, all are dear !

The arch blue eyes,—
 Arch but for love's disguise,—
 Of Scotland's daughters, soften at his strain ;
 Her hardy sons, sent forth across the main
 To drive the ploughshare through earth's virgin soils,
 Lighten with it their toils ;
 And sister-lands have learn'd to love the tongue
 In which such songs are sung.

For doth not Song
 To the whole world belong ?
 Is it not given wherever tears can fall,
 Wherever hearts can melt, or blushes glow,
 Or mirth and sadness mingle as they flow,
 A heritage to all ?

II.—THE BALLAD OF THE BRIDES OF QUAIR.

A STILLNESS crept about the house ;
At evenfall, in noon-tide glare,
Upon the silent hills looked forth
The many-windowed House of Quair.

The peacock on the terrace screamed ;
Browsed on the lawn the timid hare ;
The great trees grew i' the avenue,
Calm by the sheltered House of Quair.

The pool was still ; around its brim
The alders sickened all the air ;
There came no murmur from the streams,
Though nigh flowed Leithen, Tweed, and Quair.

The days hold on their wonted pace,
And men to court and camp repair
Their part to fill, for good or ill,
While women keep the House of Quair.

And one is clad in widow's weeds,
And one is maiden-like and fair,
And day by day they seek the paths
About the lonely fields of Quair.

To see the trout leap in the streams,
The summer clouds reflected there,
The maiden loves in pensive dreams
To hang o'er silver Tweed and Quair.

Within, in pall-black velvet clad,
Sits stately in her oaken chair—
A stately dame of ancient name—
The Mother of the House of Quair.

Her daughter broiders by her side,
With heavy drooping golden hair,
And listens to her frequent plaint,—
“ Ill fare the Brides that come to Quair.”

“ For more than one hath lived in pine,
And more than one hath died of care,
And more than one hath sorely sinned,
Left lonely in the House of Quair.”

“ Alas! and ere thy father died
I had not in his heart a share,
And now—may God forfend her ill—
Thy brother brings his Bride to Quair!”

She came: they kissed her in the hall,
They kissed her on the winding stair,
They led her to her chamber high,
The fairest in the House of Quair.

They bade her from the window look,
And mark the scene how passing fair,
Among whose ways the quiet days
Would linger o'er the wife of Quair.

“ 'Tis fair,” she said on looking forth,
“ But what although 'twere bleak and bare ”—
She looked the love she did not speak,
And broke the ancient curse of Quair.—

“ Where'er he dwells, where'er he goes,
His dangers and his toils I share.”
What need be said—she was not one
Of the ill-fated Brides of Quair!

III.—NEVER TO KNOW.

ONE within in a crimson glow,
 Silently sitting ;
One without on the falling snow,
 Wearily flitting ;
 Never to know
That one looked out with yearning sighs,
While one looked in with wistful eyes,
 And went unwitting.
What came of the one without, that so
 Wearily wended ?
Under the stars and under the snow
 His journey ended !
 Never to know
That the answer came to those wistful eyes,
But passed away in those yearning sighs,
 With night winds blended.
What came of the one within, that so
 Yearned forth with sighing ?
More sad, to my thinking, her fate, the glow
 Drearly dying ;
 Never to know
That for a moment her life was nigh,
And she knew it not and it passed her by,
 Recall denying.
These were two hearts that long ago —
 Dreaming and waking —
Each to a poet revealed its woe,
 Wasting and breaking ;
 Never to know
That if each to other had but done so,
Both had rejoiced in the crimson glow,
And one had not lain 'neath the stars and snow
 Forsaken—forsaking !

IV.—THE WOODRUFFE.

THOU art the flower of grief to me,
 'Tis in thy flavor !

Thou keepest the scent of memory,
 A sickly savor.

In the moonlight, under the orchard tree,
 Thou wert plucked and given to me,
 For a love favor.

In the moonlight, under the orchard tree,
 Ah, cruel flower !

Thou wert plucked and given to me,
 While a fruitless shower

Of blossoms rained on the ground where grew
 The woodruffe bed all wet with dew,
 In the witching hour.

Under the orchard tree that night

Thy scent was sweetness,

And thou, with thy small star clusters bright,
 Of pure completeness,

Shedding a pearly lustre bright,

Seemed as I gazed in the meek moonlight,
 A gift of meetness.

“It keeps the scent for years,” said he
 (And thou hast kept it);

“And when you scent it, think of me.”
 (He could not mean thus bitterly.)

Ah! I had swept it

Into the dust where dead things rot,
 Had I then believed his love was not

What I have wept it.

Between the leaves of this holy book,

O flower undying!

A worthless and withered weed in look,

I keep thee lying.
 The bloom of my life with thee was plucked,
 And a close-pressed grief its sap hath sucked,
 Its strength up-drying.

Thy circles of leaves, like pointed spears,
 My heart pierce often ;
 They enter, it inly bleeds, no tears
 The hid wounds soften ;
 Yet one will I ask to bury thee
 In the soft white folds of my shroud with me,
 Ere they close my coffin.

V.—THE ROOT OF LOVE.

UNTIL a goodly tree—
 A rose-tree—in the garden of my heart,
 Grew up my love for thee !
 Truth for its spreading root,
 That drew the sweetest virtue of the soil
 Up to the freshest shoot.
 My tree was richly clad ;
 All generous thoughts and fancies burst the bud,
 And every leaf was glad.
 Then last of all, the flower,
 The perfect flower of love, herself proclaimed
 And ruled from hour to hour.
 There came a thunder rain,
 But for each full-blown bloom it scattered down,
 Fresh buds it opened twain.
 There came a wind that reft
 Both leaf and flower, and broke both branch and stem ;
 Only the root was left.
 The root was left, and so
 The living rose lay hidden till the time
 When the sweet south should blow.

VI.—WIND AND STARS.

THE stars are shining fixt and bright,
 I stand upon the windy height,
 Alone with sorrow and the night.

O stars so high, from earth apart,
 Ye are the hopes that stirred my heart ;
 O wind, its beating wings thou art.

The wind may rave, the starry spheres
 Unheeding shine, nor moved by fears
 Nor shaken into trembling tears.

O hush, wild heart, regarded not,
 Sink to the level of thy lot,
 In pity sink, and be forgot.

VII.—SONG.

A GREENNESS o'er my vision passed,
 A freshness o'er my brain,
 Rose up as when I saw them last
 The glad green hills again.

Amid the streets' bewildering roar,
 I heard the rushing stirrs
 Of vagrant breezes running o'er
 The dark tops of the firs.

Far round, the wide and swooning view,
 The bound of chainèd heights ;
 Far off, the dales my footsteps knew,
 With all their green delights ;

Far down, the river winding through
 The valley, silver white ;
 Far up, amid the cloudless blue,
 The slow sail of the kite.

A greenness o'er my vision passed,
 A freshness o'er my brain,
 Rose up as when I saw them last
 The glad green hills again.

VIII.—THAMES.

1.

A GLIMPSE of the river ! it glimmers
Through the stems of the beeches ;
Through the screen of the willows it shimmers
In long winding reaches ;
Flowing so softly that scarcely
It seems to be flowing,
But the reeds of the low little islands
Are bent to its going ;
And soft as the breath of a sleeper
Its heaving and sighing,
In the coves where the fleets of the lilies
At anchor are lying.
It looks as if fallen asleep
In the lap of the meadows, and smiling
Like a child in the grass, dreaming deep
Of the flowers and their golden beguiling.

II.

A glimpse of the river ! it glooms
Underneath the black arches,
Across it the broad shadow looms,
And the eager crowd marches ;
Where, washing the feet of the city,
Strong and swift it is flowing ;
On its bosom the ships of the nations
Are coming and going ;
Heavy laden it labours and spends,
In a great strain of duty,
The power that was gathered and nursed
In the calm and the beauty.

Like thee, noble river, like thee,
Let our lives in beginning and ending,
Fair in their gathering be,
And great in the time of their spending.

IX.—SHADOW.

IT falls before, it follows behind,
Darkest still when the day is bright;
No light without the shadow we find,
And never shadow without the light.

From our shadow we cannot flee away;
It walks when we walk, it runs when we run;
But it tells which way to look for the sun;
We may turn our backs on it any day.

Ever mingle the light and shade
That make this human world so dear;
Sorrow of joy is ever made,
And what were a hope without a fear?

A morning shadow o'er youth is cast,
Warning from pleasure's dazzling snare;
A shadow lengthening across the past,
Fixes our fondest memories there.

One shadow there is, so dark, so drear,
So broad we see not the brightness round it;
Yet 'tis but the dark side of the sphere
Moving into the light unbounded.

Harriet Eleanor Hamilton-King.

1840.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING, daughter of Admiral W. A. Baillic Hamilton, was born at Edinburgh, February 10th, 1840. From her sixth year to the time of her marriage most of her life was spent between London and Blackheath; and she was never out of England until 1876, difficult as this is to realise when we consider the absolute familiarity with Italy which would be taken for granted by any reader of "The Disciples." As a matter of fact, her "guides" to that country were Murray's handbooks, and the imaginative, the shaping, the realising faculty which she possesses in a remarkable degree.

In 1863 Miss Hamilton married Mr. Henry S. King, and all her married life was spent at the Manor House, Chigwell, Essex. After her husband's death she removed, with her children, to another part of the county.

The first poem Miss Hamilton gave to the world was that which appears as "Aspromonte" in the little volume published in 1869. It came out in the *Observer* under the name of "Garibaldi at Varignano." The "Aspromote" volume consists purely of early work, characterized, in the opinion of the present writer, not only by promise, but by certain qualities which still mark Mrs. King's manner.

The inspiration of much of the poetry in this book,

as well as in the whole of "The Disciples," is the love for Italy in her suffering, in her struggling, in her wrestling to win back her lost birthright of freedom. The defeat of Garibaldi, the hero "a prisoner to his own," the hero whose "laurel leaves have sharpened into thorns," is the subject of "Aspromonte," a poem marked by nobleness of sympathy and by much beauty of expression. And the singer celebrates more than the checking and the galling of Garibaldi; she sings how at last must come the "rose-coloured Republic of Christ."

"The Execution of Felice Orsini" has beauty; but it is, I think, injured by the fault one might expect to find in young work—want of condensation. But the book shows Mrs. King's style formed, if not matured; so much so that such a poem, for instance, as "Many Voices" might have been written by her this very year. Several of the poems in the book are purely English.

"The Disciples" has, even apart from its place in Mrs. King's work, a special interest on account of its having been written at the request of Mazzini. But he never saw the completed book, the sheets of which were laid at his dead feet, instead of in his living hand. The "pressure of claims and voices from without," or the "overmastering constancy of pain," felt, when at last the song was free to come forth, to have been God's laying of silence on the poet "by tender tokens irresistible," had kept back the fulfilment of the promise for nine years; and then rapidly, almost hurriedly, the book came forth, and at once touched the hearts of many. I suppose its ten editions place it in the category of "popular books."

The fighters for Italian liberty are to Mrs. King the saints, the high ones of God; their struggle sacred, their persons holy. The book is full of the glorification not merely of noble deed, but of brave endurance, of the bearing of suffering, of the facing of martyrdom. To Ugo Bassi, from whom the most important poem in the book is named, has come the consecration. Marked out for persecution as one who dares to tell the truth, he has, after much suffering, worked quietly as a Barnabite friar, relieving pain by the very magic of his presence, and sending home the comfort of the sons of consolation in life and on voice, until the day comes when the black robe of the friar is exchanged for the scarlet of the deliverer, which will one day take a deeper dye in his own heart-blood; and the shadow of martyrdom falls upon him, until at last the great thing itself carries him nearer to the breast of God. Here I may say that Mrs. King's belief is that the way and the only way to heaven is the Cross; that the blessing is for those who hunger and thirst, and who watch for the Bridegroom, not wrapt in the goodness and the sweetness of the best and the sweetest here. She believes that suffering has a fruit and a recompense in itself quite irrespective of our will, and that such a thing as being without chastisement, were that possible, would mark the being unloved of God.

Mrs. King was quite aware that the historical narrative in "Ugo Bassi" was frequently injurious to the poem; but she chose to give it for the sake of clearness. Perhaps she has left it thus open to question whether "The Disciples," as a whole, is a poem, or whether it is not rather a work, in which there is much poetry, and a good deal of metrical

prose. At any rate, in my opinion, the power shown in the book is that of the lyric poet, not of the epic.

To many the "Sermon in the Hospital"—the "Sermon" put into the mouth of "Ugo Bassi"—has been felt to be the gem of the book; and accordingly it was, a few years since, issued in a cheap form. Among the shorter poems in the volume is one named from "Jacopo Ruffini," Mazzini's earliest and dearest friend, who knowing how the drug given him in prison was of subtle might to "loosen the bonds of will," and aware that his power of resistance might be so far destroyed that in irresponsible weakness he might betray his friend, ended his own life.

" . . . this new, subtle stealing of the brain,
What answer have I to it but to take
Presumptuously Thy angel's sword, and make
Mine own hand sin against myself?"

It is a noble and beautiful poem.

"A Book of Dreams" was more sheerly poetry than "The Disciples." We have the delight in beauty, in beauty for its own sake; the revelling in the wonder of flowers, which Mrs. King can write of as very few can; the charm of colour, of sound, of sensuous exquisiteness. But the sterner side is to her the greater. In "Awake" she bids goodbye to the magic of dreamland; for, sweet as is the sweetness of dreams, the better part, she is sure, is to lead the strenuous life of the worker, and amid the "shadowy gain" in dreamland "some sweet and common pain" may have already been lost. Not dreams, but prayer, she feels, bring nearer to the beloved lost; and the cry is to come back to children,

to friends, to a world needing singers, "like church-bells clear and strong."

I do not think Mrs. King has done anything which for sustained flight of imagination and subtle, delicate beauty of expression equals her "Ballad of the Midnight Sun" in "Ballads of the North." There seems to me to be in it that something which is rather felt than defined, even were its definition possible; that sort of haunting beauty which one finds now and then, as in Stevenson's—

"Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill;"

and in Dobell's—

"O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line."

I may give one instance of this :—

"There was a twitter of building birds
In the blackthorn bower,
*All broken from bare to gossamer
In an hour.*"

The italics are mine.

In "The Haunted Czar," and "Dives" specially, the thought that sinning is more pitiable than suffering is nobly worked out—the conviction that the inflicter of pain is in deeper need of sympathy than his victim.

"Working Girls in London" is a gentle, delicate expression of that sympathy with the white slaves of the great city, for whom some, thank God, are pleading with powerful voice. "The First of June" is an exquisite lyric of joy after pain; of the reunion of wedded souls in a fair land that is earth and is heaven too. "The Crocus" should find a place in every collection of flower-poems.

Mrs. King's treatment of flowers is a special feature of her poetry, and very many instances might be given of her power of describing them. She has also the faculty of calling up a certain atmosphere by subtle, delicate touches: this is conspicuous in the poem above mentioned—"The First of June."

To the present writer, Mrs. King's genius appears to be essentially lyrical, and her best work to be done in lyric measures, as in most of her later poems. She has her own place among our latter-day poets by virtue of her own gifts, given in her own manner; and her gifts and her manner of giving them place her, I think, not in a low room among those whose songs—

" Walk up and down our earthly slopes,
Companions by diviner hopes."

E. H. HICKEY.

THE DISCIPLES.

1878.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING

I.

UGO BASSI.

(III.)

(1848.)

Now I heard

Fra Ugo Bassi preach. For though in Rome
He held no public ministry this year,
On Sundays in the hospital he took
His turn in preaching, at the service held
Where five long chambers, lined with suffering folk,
Converged, and in the midst an altar stood,
By which on feast-days stood the priest, and spoke,
And I remember how, one day in March,
When all the air was thrilling with the spring,
And even the sick people in their beds
Felt, though they could not see it, he stood there ;
Looking down all the lines of weary life,
Still for a little under the sweet voice,
And spoke this sermon to them, tenderly,
As it was written down by one who heard :
" I am the True Vine," said our Lord, and Ye,
" My Brethren, are the Branches ;" and that Vine,
Then first uplifted in its place, and hung
With its first purple grapes, since then has grown,
Until its green leaves gladden half the world,
And from its countless clusters rivers flow
For healing of the nations, and its boughs
Innumerable stretch through all the earth,

Ever increasing, ever each entwined
With each, all living from the Central Heart.
And you and I, my brethren, live and grow,
Branches of that immortal human Stem.

Let us consider now this life of the Vine,
Whereof we are partakers : we shall see
Its way is not of pleasure nor of ease.
It groweth not like the wild trailing weeds
Whither it willeth, flowering here and there ;
Or lifting up proud blossoms to the sun,
Kissed by the butterflies, and glad for life,
And glorious in their beautiful array ;
Or running into lovely labyrinths
Of many forms and many fantasies,
Rejoicing in its own luxuriant life.

The Flower of the Vine is but a little thing,
The least part of its life;—you scarce could tell
It ever had a flower ; the fruit begins
Almost before the flower has had its day.
And as it grows, it is not free to heaven,
But tied to a stake ; and if its arms stretch out,
It is but crosswise, also forced and bound ;
And so it draws out of the hard hill-side,
Fixed in its own place, its own food of life ;
And quickens with it, breaking forth in bud,
Joyous and green, and exquisite of form,
Wreathed lightly into tendril, leaf, and bloom.
Yea, the grace of the green vine makes all the land
Lovely in spring-time ; and it still grows on
Faster, in lavishness of its own life ;
Till the fair shoots begin to wind and wave
In the blue air, and feel how sweet it is.
But so they leave it not : the husbandman

Comes early, with the pruning-hooks and shears,
And strips it bare of all its innocent pride,
And wandering garlands, and cuts deep and sure,
Unsparring for its tenderness and joy.
And in its loss and pain it wasteth not ;
But yields itself with unabated life,
More perfect under the despoiling hand.
The bleeding limbs are hardened into wood ;
The thinned-out bunches ripen into fruit
More full and precious, to the purple prime.

And still, the more it grows, the straitlier bound
Are all its branches ; and as rounds the fruit,
And the heart's crimson comes to show in it,
And it advances to its hour,—its leaves
Begin to droop and wither in the sun ;
But still the life-blood flows, and does not fail,
All into faithfulness, all into form.

Then comes the vintage, for the days are ripe.
And surely now in its perfected bloom,
It may rejoice a little in its crown,
Though it bend low beneath the weight of it,
Wrought out of the long striving of its heart.
But ah ! the hands are ready to tear down
The treasures of the grapes ; the feet are there
To tread them in the winepress, gathered in ;
Until the blood-red rivers of the wine
Run over, and the land is full of joy.
But the vine standeth stripped and desolate,
Having given all ; and now its own dark time
Is come, and no man payeth back to it
The comfort and the glory of its gift ;
But rather, now most merciless, all pain

And loss are piled together, as its days
 Decline, and the spring sap has ceased to flow
 Now is it cut back to the very stem ;
 Despoiled, disfigured, left a leafless stock,
 Alone through all the dark days that shall come.
 And all the winter-time the wine gives joy
 To those who else were dismal in the cold ;
 But the vine standeth out amid the frost ;
 And after all, hath only this grace left,
 That it endures in long, lone steadfastness
 The winter through :—and next year blooms again ;
 Not bitter for the torment undergone,
 Not barren for the fulness yielded up ;
 As fair and fruitful towards the sacrifice,
 As if no touch had ever come to it,
 But the soft airs of heaven and dews of earth ;—
 And so fulfils itself in love once more.

And now, what more shall I say ? Do I need here
 To draw the lesson of this life ; or say
 More than these few words, following up the text :—
 The Vine from every living limb bleeds wine ;
 Is it the poorer for that spirit shed ?
 The drunkard and the wanton drink thereof ;
 Are they the richer for that gift's excess ?
 Measure thy life by loss instead of gain ;
 Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth ;
 For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice ;
 And whoso suffers most hath most to give. . . .

II.

THE sculptor, with his Psyche's wings half-hewn,
 May close his eyes in weariness, and wake
 To meet the white cold clay of his ideal

Flushed into beating life, and singing down
The ways of Paradise. The husbandman
May leave the golden fruitage of his groves
Ungarnered, and upon the Tree of Life
Will find a richer harvest waiting him.
The soldier dying thinks upon his bride,
And knows his arms shall never clasp her more,
Until he first the face of his unborn child
Behold in heaven: for each and all of life,
And every phase of action, love, and joy,
There is fulfilment only elsewhere.—

But if, impatient, thou let slip thy cross,
Thou wilt not find it in this world again,
Nor in another; here, and here alone
Is given thee to suffer for God's sake.
In other worlds we shall more perfectly
Serve Him and love Him, praise Him, work for Him,
Grow near and nearer Him with all delight;
But then we shall not any more be called
To suffer, which is our appointment here.
Canst thou not suffer then one hour,—or two?
If He should call thee from thy cross to-day,
Saying, It is finished!—that hard cross of thine
From which thou prayest for deliverance,
Thinkest thou not some passion of regret
Would overcome thee? Thou wouldst say, "So
soon!

Let me go back, and suffer yet awhile
More patiently;—I have not yet praised God."
And He might answer to thee,—"Never more.
All pain is done with." Whensoe'er it comes,
That summons that we look for, it will seem
Soon, yea too soon. Let us take heed in time

That God may now be glorified in us ;
And while we suffer, let us set our souls
To suffer perfectly ; since this alone,
The suffering, which is this world's special grace,
May here be perfected and left behind.

—But in obedience and humility ;—
Waiting on God's hand, not forestalling it.
Seek not to snatch presumptuously the palm
By self-election ; poison not thy wine
With bitter herbs if He has made it sweet ;
Nor rob God's treasures because the key
Is easy to be turned by mortal hands.
The gifts of birth, death, genius, suffering,
Are all for His hand only to bestow.
Receive thy portion, and be satisfied.
Who crowns himself a king is not the more
Royal ; nor he who mars himself with stripes
The more partaker of the Cross of Christ.

But if Himself He come to thee, and stand
Beside thee, gazing down on thee with eyes
That smile, and suffer ; that will smite thy heart,
With their own pity, to a passionate peace ;
And reach to thee Himself the Holy Cup,
(With all its wreathen stems of passion-flowers
And quivering sparkles of the ruby stars),
Pallid and royal, saying " Drink with Me ;"
Wilt thou refuse ? Nay, not for Paradise !
The pale brow will compel thee, the pure hands
Will minister unto thee ; thou shalt take
Of that communion through the solemn depths
Of the dark waters of thine agony,
With heart that praises Him, that yearns to Him
The closer through that hour. Hold fast His hand,

Though the nails pierce thine too ! take only care
Lest one drop of the sacramental wine
Be spilled, of that which ever shall unite
Thee, soul and body to thy living Lord !

Therefore gird up thyself, and come, to stand
Unflinching under the unfaltering hand,
That waits to prove thee to the uttermost.
It were not hard to suffer by His hand,
If thou couldst see His face ;—but in the dark !
That is the one last trial :—be it so.
Christ was forsaken, so must thou be too :
How couldst thou suffer but in seeming, else ?
Thou wilt not see the face nor feel the hand,
Only the cruel crushing of the feet,
When through the bitter night the Lord comes down
To tread the winepress.—Not by sight, but faith,
Endure, endure,—be faithful to the end !

Is it then verily so hard to take
With willing heart, and utter faithfulness ?
What better wouldst thou have when all was done ?
If any now were bidden rise and come
To either, would he pause to choose between
The rose-warm kisses of a waiting bride
In a shut silken chamber,—or the thrill
Of the bared limbs, bound fast for martyrdom ? . . .

A BOOK OF DREAMS.

1882.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING.

I.

A HAUNTED HOUSE.

THE lawns are bright, the paths are wide.
The roses are bursting on every side.

All around the bowers are green,
And the shining laurels a folding-screen.

The large fruit ripens on many a tree,
Purple and gold drooping heavily.

Of health and wealth a hidden spell
Is scattered by hands invisible.

Young, and gladsome, and free they meet—
Voices of laughter and running feet.

Whether the seasons be dark or fair,
It is always summer and sunshine there.

And like a fountain that springs and falls,
There flows sweet music between the walls.

Among the guests one comes and goes
Whom no one sees and no one knows.

A neck more stately, a face more fair
Than any that meet and mingle there.

There is heaped up many a gay sea-stone,
One pearl lies among them all alone ;

With a golden halo all about,
The full moon's face from the clouds looks out ;

All cold on the breast of the crimson sky,
The star of the evening seems to lie.

Shining as pale, apart as far
As the pearl, or the moon, or the evening star,

That orbèd face, with its curvings rare,
Floats out from its waves of dusky hair,

With its eyes of shadow, its archèd eyes,
Whose lost looks dream upon Paradise.

One only knoweth it in the throng ;
One knoweth too well, and knoweth too long.

The others are ever unaware,
Though it pass and meet them in the air,

With sighs like the sighs of the summer night,
Breathing of love and of lost delight.

That haunting vision of yearning pain,
One moment strikes and then fades again.

It rises up at the music's sound,
And sinks before they can look around.

If they catch one sight of the crownèd brow,
A sunbeam glances from bough to bough.

If a low voice thrills in the air along,
It is but the dying note of the song.

Not to sadden, only to share,
To the feast unbidden that guest comes there.

Lovely as lilies ungathered, and white
The house is filled with a dream at night.

From chamber to chamber, from door to door,
Not a sound is heard, nor step on the floor ;

Through the shadowy hush as white wings win;—
Peace be to this house, and to all within!

The little children sleep soft and sweet;—
Who stands beside them with soft white feet?

The soft white hands pass over their hair;—
Sleep on, dear children, so safe and fair!

Till, where two are sleeping side by side,
Doth a dream at last between them glide.

* * * * *

Of all the angels that guard the place,
The least is not that forgotten face,

II.

A MOONLIGHT RIDE.

THROUGH the land low-lying, fast and free
I ride alone and under the moon;
An empty road that is strange to me,
Yet at every turn remembered soon:
A road like a racecourse, even and wide,
With grassy margins on either side;
In a rapture of blowing air I ride,
With a heart that is beating tune.

Light as on turf the hoof-beats fall,
As on spongy sod as fast and fleet,
For the road is smooth and moist withal,
And the water springs under the horse's feet;
And to every stride sounds a soft plash yet,
For all the length of the way is wet
With many a runnel and rivulet
That under the moonlight meet.

O surely the water lilies should be
Sunk away and safe folded to rest !
But, no ; they are shining open and free,
White and awake on the water's breast :
On the long and shimmering waterway,
All silver-spread to the full moon's ray,
'The shallow dykes that straggle and stray
With their floating fringes drest.

The road will flow winding and winding away
Through the sleeping country to-night ;
All one long level of dusky grey,
The border hedges slip past in flight ;
Turning and twisting in many a lane,
Mile after mile of a labyrinth chain
I have seen before, I shall see again,
Yet remember not aright.

And somewhere all out of sight there stands
A sleeping house that is white and low,
Hid in the heart of the level lands,
The lands where the waters wander slow,
Embowered all round by the thickset ways,
Set in a silent and stately maze
Of high-grown ilex, arbutus, bays,—
If I ever saw it, I do not know.

Shall I ever reach it ? or ere the day
Breaks, will it all have passed away ?
If only the night might last !
While the mists of moonlight the warm air fill,
Out of boskage and bower so deep and still
There reaches afar the glimmer, the thrill,—
O the night is flying too fast !

BALLADS OF THE NORTH.

1889.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING.

I.

THE FIRST OF JUNE.

LAST night I lay upon my bed,
With sinking heart alone ;
Long weeks, long months I so have lain,
Weeping and making moan.

All May has passed ; I hardly know
If swift spring-rains have stirred,
There hath not broken through the dark
One flash of flower or bird.

But sleep stole on me unawares,
Even on me at last ;
Though drop by drop the minutes faint
Like hours at midnight passed.

Short was the sleep, since even now
The summer dawn is nigh ;
But health and healing it has brought ;
I wake—but is it I ?

I feel no more these limbs of pain,
I draw no sobbing breath,
Life has come back to me at last,
And God remembereth.

How many years since I have known
A waking glad like this :
Nay, can I once recall an hour
So peaceful as it is ?

I have forgotten when it was
That I such ease have known ;
What hinders me from rising up
And going forth alone ?

Why should I, too, not wander out
Through the sweet morning mist,
And see the sunrise out of doors,
That all my life I missed ?

The house is hushed and sleeping,
My footsteps noiseless fall,
From door to door, from stair to stair :
Peace rest within on all !

The door is opened easily,
I stand beneath the sky ;
The old watch-dog remembers me,
Nor stirs as I go by.

Here on the lawn my children play ;
Across the stile I pass,
Out of the dewy garden
Into the meadow grass.

The grass is cool and damp and tall,
It rustles to my knees :
Year after year does morning bring
Airs upon earth like these ?

And to the crimson East I turn
The rising sun to meet,

The clover and the daisies dim
All close about my feet.

The cuckoo gives the signal call
From hill to hill unseen,
From every side the hymn of birds
Fills all the fields between.

Down to the brook, across the bridge ;
Where deep and high and dank
The orchis heads crowd through the grass,
And leaning from the bank

The guelder-rose dips in the stream,
And golden flags are hung,
Out of whose midst the water-hen
Awakens with her young.

I have heard said, the kingfisher
Was used to haunt this brook,
But seen no more of latter years :
He comes again, for—look !—

The flashing of his wings goes by
Almost against my face :
He is not shy to-day, within
This willow fringed place.

The sun is up, the mist is cleared,
All the still land lies fair ;
As up the sloping leas I pass,
The sweetest grass grows there.

All in among the crowded lambs,
They do not run away ;
The field-mice flit along the path,
Like little friends at play.

The larks sing high in the blue sky
As if in heaven they were ;
I too am free and full of glee
Out in the open air.

And now I pass th' horizon hill
That bounds my window-view ;
O house of love, O house of pain,
For how long time ?—adieu.

* * * * *

Oh, I have wandered many a mile
Through a country wild and sweet ;
I am not tired, I do not want
To stay, or sit, or eat.

It seems as if at last the soul
And body were reconciled ;
I think there once was such a day
When I was a little child.

A wicket-gate leads to the wood,
And as I enter through,
The speedwell from the bank looks up
With eyes of heavenly blue.

The flowers smile up, the birds sing down,
Come in, they sing and say ;
The wood is dark and fragrant-fresh
With June's first hour and day.

I wander deep, I wander far
 Into the green wood's heart ;
I come unto an open space
 Where the low branches part.

Beyond the level summer lawn
 The forest oak-trees spread ;
Under the stateliest of them all
 The moss has made a bed.

Oh, on soft couches laid in vain
 With aching limbs across,
How often have I dreamed of this—
 A bed of earth and moss !

There I will rest—Oh, everywhere
 Is rest and health at last ;
How can such utter weariness
 So suddenly be past ?

The wood-doves murmur over my head,
 Soon! soon! soon! for a sign :
But who is this beside me
 Whose eyes look into mine ?

“Oh, can it be you come back at last ?
 And where is it I met with you ?
Are not the waste wide waters
 Of Death between us two ?”

“Oh, all these years, by night and day
 I have watched beside the gate ;
I have looked down the road that you would come,
 I have waited early and late ;

I have been weary in Paradise,
Oh, it was long to wait!

“Do you not know that you have come
Across the waves in sleep?
And this is your birthday morning
Together we will keep.”

II.

THE CROCUS.

OUT of the frozen earth below,
Out of the melting of the snow,
No flower, but a film, I push to light;
No stem, no bud,—yet I have burst
The bars of winter, I am the first,
O Sun, to greet thee out of the night!

Bare are the branches, cold is the air,
Yet it is fire at the heart I bear,
I come, a flame that is fed by none:
The summer hath blossoms for her delight,
Thick and dewy and waxen-white,
Thou seest me golden, O golden Sun!

Deep in the warm sleep underground
Life is still, and the peace profound:
Yet a beam that pierced, and a thrill that smote
Called me and drew me from far away;—
I rose, I came, to the open day
I have won, unsheltered, alone, remote.

No bee strays out to greet me at morn,
I shall die ere the butterfly is born,
I shall hear no note of the nightingale ;
The swallow will come at the break of green,
He will never know that I have been
Before him here when the world was pale.

They will follow, the rose with thorny stem,
The hyacinth stalk,—soft airs for them ;
They shall have strength, I have but love :
They shall not be tender as I,—
Yet I fought here first, to bloom, to die,
To shine in his face who shines above.

O glory of Heaven, O Ruler of Morn,
O Dream that shaped me, and I was born
In thy likeness, starry, and flower of flame ;—
I lie on the earth and to thee look up,
Into thy image will grow my cup,
Till a sunbeam dissolve it into the same.

Augusta Webster.

1840.

A DAUGHTER of the late Vice-Admiral George Davies, Augusta Webster was born in 1840 at Poole in Dorsetshire. Her father, who won reputation for his success in saving shipwrecked seamen, held various Coast Guard commands. For a while, during her childhood, she lived on board the *Griper* in Chichester Harbour; for six years at Banff Castle where her father was Inspecting Commander of the coast line from Banff to Peterhead; and for three years at Penzance, where he held a similar appointment. Afterwards her home was at Cambridge, her father having accepted the post of Chief Constable of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon. She married in 1863 Mr. Thomas Webster, Fellow and Law Lecturer of Trinity College, Cambridge, who now practises as a solicitor in London. Augusta Webster sat for some time as a Member of the London School Board, where her influence was considerable. Her interest in social matters is further shown by her prose volume "A Housewife's Opinions" (1879), which consisted mainly of essays originally contributed to *The Examiner*, in which she discussed with much ability many practical topics.

If Mr. Ruskin's dictum that "no weight nor mass, nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain or

fragment of thought" were ever to be accepted as truth, Augusta Webster's position among contemporary poets would be higher than it now is, for her work seems at times so full of thought that the poetical form is clogged and overweighted. Indeed such shortcomings as have been charged against her poetry generally might all be comprised in one—a certain instinct for allowing beauty both of matter and form to succumb to strength. Perhaps the severity of her methods is partly the result of her deep study of the great classical writers of antiquity—most notably of the Greek dramatists—a study which has left abundant traces on her work. The quality which distinguishes her from all the other women poets of her time is concentrated strength. Even those who must be set above her in some other respects yield to her here. To Elizabeth Barrett Browning's gift of impulse and fire, to Christina Rossetti's gift of a deep and searching symbolism which becomes at times almost prophetic, and to Jean Ingelow's delightful power of throwing over English scenery a halo of the human feeling and sentiment appropriate to it, she has small claim. But the two last-named writers and all the other women poets of England must yield to her in that quality which, as it is generally deemed the specially masculine quality, is called virility. Because of this Augusta Webster has taken her place among Victorian poets—a place which cannot but be enduring. Though the poet's strength has, for the most part, grown with her growth, increasing on the whole book by book, it was very apparent in her first immature volume "*Blanche Lisle and Other Poems*" published under the pseudonym of

"Cecil Home" in 1860. "Cruel Agnes" and "St. Catherine's Tiring Maid," though somewhat imitative, are genuinely poetic in thought and treatment; the story of the lovers who "were not old in heart" reveals the germ of that aptitude in character analysis which marks her later work.

A distinct advance is apparent in "Lilian Gray" (1864). Many passages evince a maturity of thought rare in so young a poet, while not unfrequently the blank verse, though deficient in the emphasis of the author's later blank verse, excels it in music of rhythm. A novel, "Lesley's Guardians," appeared in 1864. One of the chief features of Augusta Webster's more mature poetry—her intense and passionate study of Woman's position and destiny—first became manifest in "Dramatic Studies" (1866). Of these studies the best is, perhaps, "The Snow Waste" (p. 507), which depicts allegorically the "doom of cold" borne by one who through jealousy committed deadly sin. This "Dantesque" conception is treated in a masterly manner, which appears all the more wonderful when we learn that the poem was the result of a sleepless night, when the author was only nineteen.

Although Augusta Webster's poetry, whether rhymed or unrhymed, cannot be said to show any great musical impulse, her knowledge of metrical laws, and her expertness in the use of metres, is striking. This is very observable in "The Snow Waste." It opens and concludes with a short passage in blank verse, but the body of the poem is written in eight-line stanzas. In each of these stanzas only one rhyme is employed, and the repetition of the same rhymes, which produces a

sense of gloomy monotony, is managed with extraordinary skill. There are many other noteworthy poems in this volume. "A Preacher" analyses with singular power the mental condition of a conscientious clergyman apprehensive lest having "preached to others" he himself "should be a cast-away." "A Painter" exhibits, with equal force, the self-communings of a man compelled to sacrifice his higher artistic aspirations to the sordid exigences of the hour. "By the Looking Glass" displays the inner life and feelings of a girl not endowed with the gift of beauty, but who longs to be loved. "Sister Annunciata" discloses the hidden struggle of a nun who cannot altogether set aside the yearnings of earthly love, strive as she may; while in "Jeanne d' Arc" Augusta Webster is no less dramatically effective, where her subject is historical. All these "soliloquies" prove their author to possess in full measure the faculty of "thinking the thoughts of others," and therefore to be a dramatist of no mean order.

In the most remarkable volume entitled "A Woman Sold and Other Poems" (1867) the deepest movements of Woman's heart find a voice—and that often in a few pregnant and telling words that recall the methods of the great poets. Virile, however, as is the strength of the writer, her sex is constantly declaring itself by a discernment of the most secret workings of the heart of Woman such as is far beyond the reach of masculine eyes, and a passionate, almost it might be said, a biassed sympathy with the cause of Woman in her relation to Man. "Too Faithful" (p. 520) and "A Mother's Cry," with its irresistibly pathetic appeal, are charged with such sympathy. But the book is not confined to poems of this class. "Pilate"

and "Blind Bartimæus," though widely different, are both fine. "How the Brook Sings" and "The Lake" are almost Wordsworthian in their personal interpretation of nature—a quality seldom seen in Augusta Webster's work. "To One of Many" (p. 519) and "To and Fro" (p. 522) are strong poems meditative in character, and with many touches of delicate beauty.

It is in "Portraits" (1870) that the poet's strength and insight in the delineation of Woman seems to culminate. If a fault can be found in the writing of "A Castaway," one of the most original poems contained in this volume, it is that the delineation of Woman's heart in the most appalling condition of Woman's life is too painful. The theme is the same as that which Dante Rossetti handled in "Jenny," and it is extremely interesting to compare these two poems, one touching the theme from the masculine, the other from the feminine standpoint. In melody and in picturesqueness Dante Rossetti's famous poem is a masterpiece, and it is most successful in its portrayal of the ironical mood in which is unfolded Jenny's relation to her more fortunate sisters. But it is lacking in the lofty yet mournful temper that breathes from every line of "A Castaway." Were it not for the tender pity which inspires this poem as a whole some of the bitter things that fall from the lips of the lost girl would be too terrible and too daring for poetic art. Here is an instance of what I allude to:—

Well, well, I know the wise ones talk and talk :
"Here's cause, here's cure : " "No, here it is and here : "
and find society to blame, or law,
the Church, the men, the women, too few schools,

too many schools, too much, too little taught
 somewhere or somehow someone is to blame :
 but I say all the fault's with God himself
 who puts too many women in the world.
 We ought to die off reasonably and leave
 as many as the men want, none to waste.
 Here's cause ; the woman's superfluity :
 and for the cure, why, if it were the law,
 say, every year, in due percentages,
 balancing them with men as the times need,
 to kill off female infants, 'twould make room ;
 and some of us would not have lost too much,
 losing life ere we know what it *can* mean.

In "Tired," excerpts from which are given (p. 525), Augusta Webster deals forcibly with the problems of "Society" so-called, and shows an insight into its hollowness which implies on her part a noteworthy freedom from conventional prejudice. "A Dilettante," extracts from which are given (p. 533), is a weighty and convincing protest against that foolish spirit of complaint when the inevitable in life is concerned with which we are all familiar. In "Portraits" Augusta Webster indulged in the eccentricity of writing blank verse without capitals at the beginning of the lines. To do this with English poetry is a great mistake; for it is not possible always to mark the distinction between metrical and immetrical writing by mere sonority and "rhetorical emphasis." Hence the usual typographical indications that the movements of the passage are meant to be metrical are not by any means superfluous. This may be said of the blank verse of most English writers, but the remark applies with particular force to the blank verse of Augusta Webster, which is much less characterised by perfection of form than by wealth of substance, and her lines require the

typographical aid which she discarded. There is great freshness in "Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute" (1874), a graceful "Chinese Tale" told in rhymed pentameter measure with interspersed songs. Of these "Too soon so fair, fair lilies" (p. 535) and "So soon asleep!" are probably the most lovely. In her prefatory note to "Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute" the author raises a suggestive literary question that space will not permit me to discuss.

Augusta Webster's genius is largely dramatic. "The Auspicious Day" (1872), her first drama, was followed in 1879 by "Disguises," a story of "sunny Aquitaine." Here she suddenly passed into a new and luxuriant style, and the play comes nearer than any other of our times to the fanciful comedy of Shakespeare and Fletcher. The scene of two impressive dramas, "In a Day" (1882) and "The Sentence" (1887), is laid at Rome in the days of the Empire. Naturally both plays bear witness to the influence of her classical studies, and, indeed, could only have been written by a scholar. They are full of power and beauty. The pathos is especially deep and searching. Her translations of "The Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus, and of "The Medea" of Euripides, published in 1866 and 1868 respectively, are exceedingly close to the originals, and display thorough acquaintance with Greek drama and a penetration into their spirit which could only be displayed by a student who was also a poet. A singularly able review of Browning's translation of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, appeared originally in *The Examiner*, and subsequently in her volume entitled "A Housewife's Opinions." Augusta Webster's female characters call for praise. Her Gualhardine

in "Disguises," her Klydone in "In a Day," and her Lælia in "The Sentence" are lifelike and real. Mention must also be made of the beautiful lyrics scattered throughout her dramas, notably those beginning "Hark the sky-lark in the cloud," "While the woods were green," and "Tell thee truth, sweet ; no" in "Disguises."

"A Book of Rhyme" (1881) is chiefly remarkable for its importation into English poetry of these brief forms of peasant song in which Italian poetry is so rich. What Augusta Webster calls *Stornelli*, however, seem rather to be *rispetti* than *stornelli*, for a *stornello* has properly only three lines, a *rispetto* eight—the length of these poems. Though several English poets have followed her lead in adapting these forms of Italian peasant poetry to English subjects, few besides Augusta Webster have met with an unqualified success. The *rispetti* of the other writers partake of the nature of the epigram rather than of the pure *rispetto*. A sonnet, "The Brook Rhine," should be named. "Purlain the Prisoner" (p. 536), a sonnet sequence, gives vigorously a mournful yet interesting episode of prison existence. In "A Coarse Morning" (p. 537) we have the old pathetic story of Nature inexorable to the appeal of human grief. There is real poetry in the lines "Not to Be" (p. 538).

MACKENZIE BELL.

DRAMATIC STUDIES.

1866.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

THE SNOW WASTE.

I SAW one sitting mid a waste of snow
Where never sun looked down nor silvering moon,
But far around the silent skies wère grey,
With chill far stars bespeckled here and there,
And a great stillness brooded over all.
And nought was there that broke the level plain,
And nothing living was there but himself.
Yet was not he alone, there stood by him
One right, one left, two forms that seemed of flesh,
But blue with the first clutchings of their deaths,
Fixed rigid in the death-pang, glassy-eyed,
Turning towards him each a vacant gaze.
And he looked on them blankly, turn by turn,
With gaze as void as theirs. He uttered speech
That was as though his voice spoke of itself
And swayed by no part of the life in him,
In an uncadenced chant on one slow chord
Dull undulating surely to and fro.
And thus it ran.

“Ye dead who comrade me amid this snow
Where through long æons I drag me to and fro,
I speak again to ye the things I know
But, knowing, cannot feel, that haply so
I may relight in me life's former glow
And thaw the icé-bound tears in me to flow,
If I might into sentient memory grow
And waken in me energy of woe.

“For there is left in me full memory
Of things that were to me in days gone by,
And I cannot read them with my inward eye;
But like a book whose fair-writ phrases lie
All shapely moulded to word-harmony
But void of meaning in their melody,
Vague echoes that awaken no reply
In my laxed mind that knows not what they cry.

“And I can reason duly with my thought,
And am not lessened of its range in aught,
Can reckon all the deeds that I have wrought
And say, ‘Here lurked the canker taint that brought
The plague whereby thy whole man was distraught,
Here with a grace of good the act was fraught,
A dew of love here slaked the desert drought,
Thy sin in truth hath here the vengeance brought.’

“So can I reckoning keep of woe and weal,
And mine own self unto myself reveal
In perfect knowledge : but I cannot feel.
And all the past across my mind will steal
And leave as little trace as the swift keel
Upon the lake’s cleft waves that seamless heal :
Cold memory can with the old things but deal
As with the creatures of some show unreal.

“I know that I was bent beneath the weight
Of wearing sorrow, or grew wroth with fate,
Or was with triumphing and joy elate,
Or bore towards another love or hate,
And ask, ‘What were these that had power so great,
These senses in me in my former state ?’
And mouth their names out in my hollow prate
To rouse with them my heart inanimate.

“Because I know if I one pang could make
Of sorrow in me, if my heart could ache
One moment for the memories I spake,
The spell that is upon me now might break,
And I might with a sudden anguish shake
The numbness from it and perceive it wake,
And these be no more bound here for my sake
But slumber calmly in their silent lake.

“Then I like other men might pass away,
And cold could no more gnaw me when I lay
Amid these snows a painless heap of clay,
And, though the sharp-tongued frosts my skin
 should flay,
I should not feel, no chills on me could prey
And gnaw their teeth into my bones for aye
As now in my long doom that will not slay:
I should know no dull torture in decay.

“Ye dead who follow me, I think that ye,
If ye have any being save in me,
Must have much longing that such end should be
To my long wandering, that ye may flee
To the deep grave I gave ye and be free
From bondage here, and in death quiet be,
If ye can know and loathe the bitter lee
Ye drink from my dregged cup by That decrec.

“Yet hear, if ye can hear, if ye have might,
Ye dead, to wake my heart from its strange night,
Hear now and waken it while I recite
That which hath brought on it this icy blight,
So I may come to mean my words aright
And not, as now, like some dull purblind wight
Prating by rote of shadow and of light,
Or like an idiot echoing wisdoms trite.

“What love is now I know not ; but I know
I once loved much, and then there was no snow.
A woman was with me whose voice was low
With trembling sweetness in my ears, as though
Some part of her on me she did bestow
In only speaking, that made new life flow
Quick through me: yet remembering cannot throw
That spell upon me now from long ago.

“I only know it was, forgetting how,
Nor can remind me why my soul should bow
Before her beauty, nor can gather now
What charm her nobleness of eye and brow
Hath with such queenship o’er me to endow ;
My memory can keep count of look and vow
But nothing of their spirit re-allow.
I know, dead woman, that my love art thou.

“I look on thee and him with equal mind.
I know him too: some years my heart was twined
In love round his. He was of noble kind,
He had no rival, leaving all behind ;
Me too he passed, and then my love declined.
But when I knew him first the boy would wind
His younger arms round me, and I would find
Pride in his triumphs next to mine assigned.

“He grew in strength and in all daring fast
Until, as if a sudden chill north blast
Had found me sleeping in the sun, aghast
I woke and knew my glory overcast.
No feat or skill in which I all had passed
But he passed me. My triumphs had been glassed
In eyes of all the fairest and I classed
First and alone ; now I to him was last.

“In all ways last : he was more deft, more gay,
More comely, apter in the minstrel lay ;
The brightness of my life had passed away :
I heard his praises echoed day by day :
And she, from whom no thought of mine could stray,
Set all her pride on him : I heard her say
Amid the maidens, ‘None, seek where ye may,
Will match my brother till his hair is grey.’

“When she was wed to me I sought in vain
By hid degrees her love from him to gain ;
It only seemed to move in her such pain
That need was on my hatred to refrain
From open showing of its bitter strain,
Albeit if thought could slay he had been slain,
He nothing doubting. So did all remain
Until the corn was yellow on the plain.

“And even mother earth had loved him more
Than me ; his wide sun-flooded meadows bore
A golden host that numbered mine thrice o'er ;
His vines a richer bloom of promise wore ;
The very river turned it from my shore
That, plenty bringing, it had marged of yore,
To make his pastures richer. Wroth and sore
My heart grew in me, burning at its core.

“Before our door, beneath the palm-tree wide,
One eve I sat alone with my young bride,
For he, who mostly then was by our side,
Some days had gone beyond the lake's far tide
Where the great city basked her in her pride,
And, thinking of him, she was absent-eyed,
And ever in our dearest talk she sighed
‘Great God and Light my brother's journey guide.’

“Because a pilgrim had passed by that day
And told us that the golden city lay
Beneath a ghastly plague’s devouring sway,
The living could not hide their dead away,
They writhed in human heaps of foul decay,
The gluttoned vultures lingered o’er their prey
Along the marts, poor fools with minds astray
Howled blasphemies or leaped in ghastly play.

“And loathsome taint, he said, lurked in the air
For miles around, and whoso harboured there
Must look no more to life, unless he were
Even to miracle the Heaven’s care.
So, while we watched the red lake’s sunset glare,
I only joyed that he might in that snare
Be caught and die; but she could only spare
Half thoughts for me, and sighed for him some
prayer.

“I knew that there was gladness in my eyes,
But hers were clouded with sad reveries :
I spoke to her of our fair destinies,
She told her fears for him in low replies :
‘Yes love him still, still me for him despise,’
I cried, ‘What wife have I unless he dies ?
Would that he might.’ In startled sad surprise
She answered, weeping out a voice of sighs.”

But a clear solemn voice rose over his,
“*Thou* speak it.” And I saw a lucent form,
As if a spirit making to itself
A pure white brightness, drooping over him
Towards that shape of a dead woman, cry :
“*Thou*, speak it, if so any ghost of love

Might yearn in him towards thee." Her dead lips
Moved not, nor moaned with any breath of words,
Nor passed there any stir across her face,
But a sweet plaining voice came out from her,
A voice as of one weeping at the heart.

"Do I not love thee first and most, my own?
And art thou bitter that my heart has room
For him, my brother? Dost thou chide the sun,
Our light of life and soul, that he will shine
His brightest on him even as on thee?
Wilt thou chide love that is our second light
Because it shines upon him from my heart
Only a little less than upon thee?"

Sadly the voice died off. He, vacantly,
As though he knew her not, met her dead eyes,
Then with his old unpassioned utterance spoke.

"These were her words and thus did her voices sigh;
Mine hurried from me in a fierce reply
That burst from out my lips with sudden cry,
As though itself had willed to speak, not I,
My secret thought: I wished all love might die
If else he in her love must press me nigh:
Since he must bless my foe, the sun on high
Might dwindle into darkness utterly."

There cried a voice, "Speak thou his very words
That he may hear them spoken as he spoke,
Hear his words, laden with his hateful doom,
In thy voice that he hated: so some ghost
Of passion might awaken in his soul.
Speak *thou* the words." And I saw stand by him
A form of darkness, like a tempest-cloud,
Waving towards that shape of a dead man
That he should speak. And a voice came from that dead

As from the woman, moving not the lips
Not waking any life in the glazed eyes,
“ Thus didst thou say, ‘ Rather might all love die
Out from the earth for ever than warm *him!*
Rather might all love perish from my life
Than have him wound into thy love with me !
And I *do* hate the sun though he be God.
What love or thanking need I to this God,
Since he but makes me one amid the all ?
I curse him. Would that all his vaunted light
Were utter darkness, rather than that he
Alike with me should shine on him I hate ! ’ ”

So the voice ceased in tempest. But he looked
One moment on that corpse’s livid face
With a dull dreamy loathing in his eyes,
And in the moment they were cold again
With the old quiet nothingness of gaze,
And he spoke on again in shadeless rhythm.

“ These were the words wherein I did invoke
Thy doom upon me, naming every stroke
Of this long vengeance. It was his voice spoke
Thy words again. If for the moment woke
An impulse in my breast to burst its yoke
And leap out through the clogging frosts that choke
Its well-springs, it but seemed as if they broke ;
Still do those frosts my stagnant life-blood cloke.”

Then the dark shadow cried, “ Lo I have failed,
I cannot wake him even by his hate ;
He is not given me but bears such doom
As was awarded him by his own words.”
And the fair brightness cried, “ And I have failed
And he, alas ! is left to his dread doom.”
And both passed out from him ; who still spoke on.

“And while my words yet on the echoes played,
The clouds that singly through the blueness strayed,
Hurled into one a sudden darkness made ;
A shrilling whirlwind all the palm-tops swayed,
Then stillness. Horror on our spirits weighed,
And I stood awe-struck, while she knelt and prayed.
Then through the dark we heard, and were afraid,
A slow voice speak the doom upon me laid.”

Called then a voice that was as though it dropped
From the far stars and rose from the deep snows,
And was in all and over all at once :

“Here once again : this was the doom pronounced :
‘Because thou hast cursed love which is a life
And is God’s greatest gift to souls on earth,
All love shall die from thee ; thou shalt not know it
Even in thought. And, since thou hast blasphemed
That which is God to thee, and cursed the day,
Thou shalt have lost all part in day. And know
That herein lies a curse more than thy mind
Can fathom yet. Yet this of hope is given,
Thou hast until to-morrow’s sun be sunk
For penitence : so may this less doom be,
To live thy life alone in heart and blind
But yet to die at last as all men die.’”
He listened calmly, and again spoke on.

“One came at noon and told that he to flee
The plague had turned him homewards and would be
Once more with us before the great lake sea
Was flushed to the red evening skies. Then she,
I saw it, in her joy lost thought of me
And could forget a moment That decree.
I went, unwatchèd to set my passion free ;
Perhaps, I thought, unwatched my weird to dree.

“I turned me home at noon. The house seemed lone,
No greeting voice made answer to my own,
But through the hush I heard a frequent moan.
I traced it where I found her anguish-prone,
Her writhing length athwart the cushions thrown,
So left to die, for all in dread had flown :
The black plague-roses on her cheek had blown,
I knew my weird’s first working on her shown.

“I did not fear the plague, who inly knew
The doom that had been meted out my due
Must fence me from it though all else it slew :
I held her till the death-films came to glue
Her swollen lids apart : my cold hand drew
Them o’er her faded eye’s dull gazing blue :
I still watched by her while the first plague hue
Upon the corpse’s face a blackness grew.

“It was at the first evening hour she died ;
And I, so waiting by my dead one’s side,
Thought angrily of him who homewards hied,
And joyed that now at least the linkings tied
Between us since his sister was my bride,
Now she was dead were snapt asunder wide.
At length I heard his voice without that cried,
And I went forth and smilingly replied.

“I said, ‘Go in, thy sister was distressed,
Long waiting for thee, and I bade her rest :
I think e’en now her eyes are slumber-pressed :
But thou, go clasp the sleeper to thy breast,
Let her be wakened by her looked-for guest :
She said not seeing thee she slept unblest,
And named thee last half-dreaming ; do her hest,
Obey the call ; ’twill be a goodly jest.

“I led him to her softly : his fresh eye
Could only glimmering outline yet descry,
He saw her silent in the dimness lie,
And breathed, ‘ Yes she is sleeping,’ then drew nigh.
And then I fled, and, that he should not fly,
I fenced the door. And then I watched the sky
That I might count how well the time went by,
And thought, ‘ He surely will go mad or die.’

“Two hours, then near an hour, passed onward slow,
The high east clouds were losing their last glow,
So late it grew, when I returned to know
If any evil came upon my foe.
I only heard a gasping thick and low,
I raised my torch his darkening face to show ;
He lay, plague smitten, in the passing throe.
I mocked him, watching ‘ Is the jest but so ?’

“He lay beside her, and I could not bear,
Through my great hatred, that he should rest there :
Ere yet the life had passed I sought to tear
His arms from her. But suddenly from where
The sun was sleeping, rose an awful glare
That reddened on us. When it ceased to flare
Its fiery anger I had lost all care
Of love or hatred, and I left the pair.

“But, when I was made strong with food and wine,
I called to mind that need was to consign
The darkening mass to fitter couch than mine,
And could not choose but his close grasp untwine,
That I might drag each where the mountain’s spine
Broke sudden lakewards in one high rigged line.
I hurled them downwards. From the steep incline
I watched the startled ripples whirl and dwine.

“And I was calmer than the lake ; no throe
Had stirred in me, no eddying of woe ;
And when once more it lay unmoved below
I went in peace my tired limbs to bestow
On any freed couch, alone but pangless so,
And slept such quiet sleep as children know.
But I awakened in this waste of snow
Where evermore gnawed by quick cold I go.”

He ceased, and looked long with alternate gaze
On the dead faces that were fixed on him,
And seeking in some change in them to read
His change, if any change might grow to him.
But they and he looked still one rigid void.
And nothing stirred along the boundless snows,
And nothing broke the wide unbreathing calm.
He rose, and moved with slow and even pace :
And those strange dead were borne along with him,
As though they were himself. So they passed on.
And far away along the dreadful waste
I heard the droning murmur of his words
But knew not what they bore. And when they died
In distance all things slept in one great hush,
The plain of snow and the unchanging sky.

A WOMAN SOLD; AND OTHER POEMS.

1867.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

I.—TO ONE OF MANY.

WHAT! wilt thou throw thy stone of malice now,
Thou dare to scoff at him with scorn or blame?
He is a thousand times more great than thou;
Thou, with thy narrower mind and lower aim,
Wilt thou chide him and not be checked by shame?

He hath done evil—God forbid my sight
Should falter where I gaze with loving eye,
That I should fail to know the wrong from right.
He hath done evil—let not any tie
Of birth or love draw moral sense awry.

And though my trust in him is yet full strong
I may not hold him guiltless, in the dream
That wrong forgiven is no longer wrong,
And, looking on his error, fondly deem
That he in that he erreth doth but *seem*.

I do not sooth me with a vain belief;
He hath done evil, therefore is my thought
Of him made sadness with no common grief.
But thou, what good or truth has in thee wrought
That thou shouldst hold thee more than him in aught?

He will redeem his nature, he is great
In inward purpose past thy power to scan,
And he will bear his meed of evil fate
And lift him from his fall a nobler man,
Hating his error as a great one can.

And what art thou to look on him and say
“Ah! he has fallen whom they praised, but know

My foot is sure " ? Upon thy level way
 Are there the perils of the hills of snow ?
 Yea, he has fallen, but wherefore art thou low ?
 Speak no light word of him, for he is more
 Than thou canst know—and ever more to me,
 Though he has lessened the first faith I bore,
 Than thou in thy best deeds couldst ever be ;
 Yea, though he fall again, not low like thee.

II.—TOO FAITHFUL.

TOO fond and faithful, wilt thou vainly yet
 Waste love on one who does not ask it now
 And, having wronged thee, seeks but to forget ?
 A fairer face smiles on his love, and thou,
 Thou with thy truth and fervour, stand aside,
 Thou nobler-natured to her beauty bow.
 There lingers in thee yet this much of pride
 That he who thus has wronged himself and thee
 Could never win thy truth whate'er betide,
 Since in thine eyes he never more may be
 So true and great that thou couldst bend to him,
 Oh never more ! Why is thy heart not free ?
 Oh wilt thou weep because his eyes are dim ?
 And wilt thou blush because his choice is shame
 Falling on one whose love is but a whim ?
 An idle whim to stir a languid heart,
 A business chaffering of the more and less
 And rise and falling of the marriage mart.
 Yet is it cause to deepen thy distress
 That he shall suffer for his misplaced trust ?
 For did he come into thy life to bless ?

He buys a bauble something touched with rust,
Passing through many hands that did not hold,
Its lustre deadened by the market's dust.

But what to thee, if he for this has sold
His faith, his living heart, his nobler mind,
And given gold for that which is not gold ?

Oh better that he should rest ever blind,
Better for him—but should he wake to see
The gem, he dreamed so pure, of paltriest kind,

Too fond and faithful, what were that to thee ?
Thou hast thy sorrow ; wherefore look beyond
To sorrow for his sorrow that shall be ?

Too fond and faithful, weak in being fond,
False to thyself by faithfulness to him,
Since he has freed thee wherefore art thou bond ?

And if his cup hold poison to the rim,
Dregged with life's malady beyond life's cure,
Why should its bitter drops to thine o'erbrim ?

And yet, if thou hast love so deep and pure
That, whatsoever change the years shall bring,
Before the sight of God it may endure,

And if it seem to thee a holy thing
That, should he need it in his day of pain,
Thou mayst have sister power of comforting,

Well, if thy love be thus, let it remain ;
Thou wilt not fear to name it in thy prayer,
As though it were some passion wild and vain.

Well, let it be, it may make less that care
Centered in self thou canst not wholly quell,
If others, not thine own its place shall share.

III.—TO AND FRO.

THERE is much shadow on this sunlit earth,
And sorrow lingers deep in laughing eyes,
Sad echoes tremble mid glad peals of mirth,
Low wailings whisper through rich melodies.

You cannot say of any one you know,
"I see his life, I know him very blest."
For would he tell you of the canker woe
That preys upon his being unconfessed ?

You cannot think in any festive place
Of mirth and pastime and smiles flashed on all
There is no mimic weary of his face,
No actor longing for the curtain's fall.

Among the dancers cruel spectres float
And chill their victims with a dull distress,
And, sighing through the measure's clearest note,
Weird voices murmur, full of bitterness.

Old sorrows fester on in aching hearts,
New sorrows rack them with hot spasm pain ;
Who knows ? The ball-room actors play their parts,
And we smile with them and discern no strain.

If one should say "This is a doubtful word,
That men so sorrowing can cheat our sense"
Yet let him own when grief his soul has stirred
He has been merry with gay eloquence.

And that is best. For what would it avail
If he should say "Lo, I am very sad"
To idle hearers, though they heard his tale
And ceased a little moment to be glad ?

But each heart keeps its sorrow for its own
Nor bares its wound to the chill general gaze ;
Men laugh together . . . if they weep alone :
But sorrow walks in all the wide world's ways.

What, will you fly ? her step is very fleet,
Her freezing touch will seize you unawares.
Look on her, never grovel at her feet,
For he is hers for ever who despairs.

Wait calmly ; as she waits on that old plain,
The stony smiler on the desert sand,
Smiling upon old pride's long-cycled wane,
Smiling unchanged upon a saddened land.

She saw the glories of the ancient days,
She ever sees the tombs of buried kings,
She has not lost the quiet of her gaze
Looking a silence deep with solemn things.

The great sand-surges press upon her close,
She in eternal calm looks out above—
And who shall look upon a waste of woes
With such grand patience which no change may move ?

Yet wait ; let the great desert clouds whirl by,
And sunlight once more floods upon the plain.
Yet wait ; the foolish leaf that flies the blast
Grows never greenly on the bough again.

Yet wait ; for sorrow's self is not all sad :
Put forth your hand and draw her veil aside ;
Behold, what secret of masked smiles she had,
What royal lovegifts in one cloked hand hide.

You will not say those were your saddest years,
In which you sorrowed. Void is worse than pain.
And many a rich bloom grows because of tears ;
And we see Heaven's lights more when our lights wane.

Ah! who knows what is ill from what is well?
And we, who see no more than we are shown
Of others' hearts, can we so much as tell
If grief or joy be chiefest in our own?

For sunlight gleams upon this shadowed earth,
Sunlight and shadow waver to and fro,
And sadness echoes in the voice of mirth,
And music murmurs through the wail of woe.

PORTRAITS.

1870.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

I.

TIRED.

(A SELECTION.)

NO, not to-night, dear child ; I cannot go ;
I'm busy, tired ; they knew I should not come ;
you do not need me there. Dear, be content,
and take your pleasure ; you shall tell me of it.
There, go to don your miracles of gauze,
and come and show yourself a great pink cloud.

So, she has gone with half a discontent ;
but it will die before her curls are shaped,
and she'll go forth intent on being pleased,
and take her ponderous pastime like the rest—
patient delightedly, prepared to talk
in the right voice for the right length of time
on any thing that anybody names,
prepared to listen with the proper calm
to any song that anybody sings ;
wedged in their chairs, all soberness and smiles,
one steady sunshine like an August day :
a band of very placid revellers,
glad to be there but gladder still to go.
She like the rest : it seems so strange to me,
my simple peasant girl, my nature's grace,
one with the others ; my wood violet
stuck in a formal rose box at a show.

Well, since it makes her happier. True I thought
the artless girl, come from her cottage home
knowing no world beyond her village streets,
come stranger into our elaborate life
with such a blithe and wondering ignorance

as a young child's who sees new things all day, would learn it my way and would turn to me out of the solemn follies "What are these? why must we live by drill and laugh by drill; may we not be ourselves then, you and I?" I thought she would have nestled here by me "I cannot feign, and let me stay with you." I thought she would have shed about my life the unalloyed sweet freshness of the fields pure from your cloying fashionable musks: but she "will do what other ladies do"—my sunburnt Madge I saw, with skirts pinned up, carrying her father's dinner where he sat to take his noon-day rest beneath the hedge, and followed slowly for her clear loud song.

And she did then, she says, as others did who were her like. 'Tis logical enough: as every woman lives, (tush! as we all, following such granted patterns for our souls as for our hats and coats), she lived by rules how to be as her neighbours, though I, trained to my own different code, discerned it not (mistaking other laws for lawlessness, like raw and hasty travellers): and now why should she, in a new world, all unapt to judge its judgments, take so much on her she did not in her old world, pick and choose her pleasures and her tastes, her aims, her faiths, breaking her smooth path with the thorny points of upstart questions? She is just a bird born in a wicker cage and brought away into a gilded one: she does not pine to make her nest in uncontrolled far woods,

but, unconceiving freedom, chirrup on,
content to see her prison bars so bright.

Yes, best for her ; and, if not best for me,
I've my fault in it too : she's logical,
but what am I, who, having chosen her
for being all unlike the tutored type,
next try and mould her to it—chose indeed
my violet for being not a rose,
then bade it hold itself as roses do,
that passers by may note no difference ?
The peasant ways must go, the homely burr,
the quaint strong English—ancient classic turns
mixed up with rustic blunders and misuse,
old grammar shot with daring grammarlessness ;
the village belle's quick pertness, toss of head,
and shriek of saucy laughter—graces there,
and which a certain reckless gracefulness,
half hoydenish, half fawnlike, made in her
graces in even my eyes . . . there ; the ease
of quick companionship ; the unsoftened “ no's ; ”
the ready quarrels, ready makings up ;
all these must go, I would not have her mocked
among the other women who have learned
sweet level speech and quiet courtesies—
and then they jarred upon me like the noise
of music out of rule, which, heard at first,
took the fresh ear with novel melody,
but makes you restless, listened to too long,
with missing looked for rhythms. So I teach,
or let her learn, the way to speak, to look,
to walk, to sit, to dance, to sing, to laugh,
and then . . . the prized dissimilarity
was outer husk and not essential core :

my wife is just the wife my any friend
selects among my any friend's good girls,
(a duplicate except that here and there
the rendering's faulty or touched in too strong) ;
my little rugged bit of gold I mined,
cleared from its quartz and dross and pieced for use
with recognized alloy, is minted down
one of a million stamped and current coins.

My poor dear Madge, it half seems treasonous
to let regret touch any thought of you,
loyal and loving to me as you are ;
and you are very very dear to me,
I could not spare you, would not change your love
to have the rich ideal of my hope
in any other woman ; as you are
I love you, being you. And for the rest,
if I, my theory's too eager fool,
mistook the freedom of blunt ignorance
for one with freedom of the instructed will,
and took yours for a nature made to keep
its hardness in culture, gaining strength
to be itself more fully ; if I looked
for some rare perfectness of natural gifts,
developing not changed, pruned and not dwarfed ;
if I believed you would be that to me
so many men have sung by women's names
and known no woman for, where is your fault,
who did but give yourself as you were then,
and with so true a giving ? Violet,
whose is the blame if, rooted from your place,
where you grew truly to your natural law,
set by my hand in artificial soil,

bound to unwonted props, whose blame if you
are not quite violet and not quite rose ?

She's happy though, I think : she does not bear
the pain of my mistake, and shall not bear ;
and she'll not ever guess of a mistake.

Mistake—'tis a hard word. Well let it pass :
it shall not wrong her : for was it in her
or in myself I was mistaken most ?
What, I, who have been bold to hurl revolt
at great Queen Bugaboo Society,
did I not teach her suit and service first,
wincing when she infringed some useless law ?
do I not vince to-day beside the fire
at every word or gesture she shall use
not scheduled in the warrant what to do ?
do I not bid her have the table thus,
assort such viands, use such furniture,
wear such a stuff at morning, such at night,
all to the warrant of Queen Bugaboo,
and feel a something missing when she fails,
a discord setting all my teeth on edge ?
Why, what a score of small observances,
mere fashionable tricks, are to my life
the butter on the bread, without which salve
the bit's too coarse to swallow ; what a score
of other small observances and tricks,
worn out of fashion or not yet come in,
reek worse than garlic to my pampered taste,
making the wholesomest food too difficult !
And that which in an ancient yesterday
was but some great man's humour is to me
duty by rote to-day. I had not felt

my own life that punctilious copy-book,
 writ to stock patterns set to all a school,
 I have called usual lives, but my poor Madge
 has unawares informed me of myself.

* * * * *

Oh, I am tired !

tired, tired, of this bland smiling slavery,
 monotonous waste of life. And, while we fools
 are making curtsies and brave compliments
 to our rare century, and, courtierly,
 swaddling our strength in trammels of soft silk,
 the rotten depths grow rottener. Every day
 more crime, more pain, more horror. We are good
 no doubt, we "better classes"—oh, we boast
 our modern virtues in the dead men's teeth
 that were our fathers—we are earnest now,
 and charitable, and we wash ourselves,
 and have a very fair morality ;
 most well brought up, in fine, of any men
 that any age has nurtured, and besides
 so equal in our manners and our coats :
 and then the classes which, though bettering,
 are not quite *better* yet, are the most shrewd,
 most apt, most honest, most intelligent,
 that ever the world saw yet. True all of it
 for aught I know, some of it as I think,
 but underneath—great God, how many souls
 are born an hour as provender for hell !

* * * * *

Tired, tired—grown sick of battle and defeat,
 lying in harbour, like a man worn out
 by storms, and yet not patient of my rest :

how if I went to some kind southern clime
where, as they say, lost in long summer dreams,
the mind grows careless with sun-drunkenness
and sleeps and wakens softly like a child ?
Would Madge be over sorry to come out
into free loneliness with me a while ?
clear tints and sunshine, glowing seas and skies,
beauty of mountains and of girdled plains,
the strangeness of new peoples, change and rest,
would these atone to her for so much lost
which she counts precious ? For she loves that round
of treadmill ceremonies, mimic tasks,
we make our women's lives—Good heavens what work
to set the creatures to, whom we declare
God purposed for companions to us men . . .
companions to each other only now,
their business but to waste each other's time.
So much to do among us, and we spend
so many human souls on only this !
in petty actress parts in the long game
(grave foolery like children playing school,
setting themselves hard tasks and punishments,)
that lasts till death and is Society :
the sunlight working hours all chopped and chipped
in stray ten minutes by some score of friends
who, grieved their friend's not out, come rustling in
by ones and twos to say the weather's fine ;
or paid away, poor soul, on pilgrimage
reciprocally due to tell them so :
each woman owing tax of half her life
as plaything for the others' careless hours,
each woman setting down her foot to hold
her sister tightly to the tethered round,
will she or nill she : all with rights on each

greater than hers . . . and I might say than God's, since He made work the natural food of minds, cheated of which they dwindle and go dead like palsied limbs, and gives to each that sense of beasts, who know their food, to know its work, choosing the great or little.

But myself,

have I befooled the instinct by warped use ?
for is not the fruit rotten I have found
 all my labours ; nothing to the world
and to me bitterness ? And I forget
the strong joy of endeavour, and the fire
of hope is burned out in me ; all grows dull
rest is not rest and I am sick of toil :
I count the cost, and—

Ready, love, at last ?

Why, what a rosy June ! A flush of bloom
sparkling with crystal dews—Ah silly one,
you love these muslin roses better far
than those that wear the natural dew of heaven.
I thought you prettier when, the other day,
the children crowned you with the meadow-sweets :
I like to hear you teach them wild flowers' names
and make them love them ; but yourself—

What's that ?

“The wild flowers in a room's hot stifling glare
would die in half a minute.” True enough :
your muslin roses are the wiser wear.
Well, I must see you start. Draw your hood close :
and are you shawled against this east wind's chills ?

II.

A DILETTANTE.

(A SELECTION.)

SELFISH, you call me ? callous ? Hear a tale.
There was a little shallow brook that ran
between low banks, scarcely a child's leap wide,
feeding a foot or two of bordering grass
and, here and there, some tufts of waterflowers
and cresses, and tall sedge, rushes and reeds ;
and, where it bubbled past a poor man's cot,
he and his household came and drank of it,
and all the children loved it for its flowers
and counted it a playmate made for them :
but, not far off, a sandy arid waste
where, when a winged seed rested, or a bird
would drop a grain in passing, and it grew,
it presently must droop and die athirst,
spread its scorched silent leagues to the fierce sun ;
and once a learned man came by and saw,
and " lo," said he, " what space for corn to grow,
could we send vivifying moistures here,
while look, this wanton misdirected brook
watering its useless weeds ! " so had it turned,
and made a channel for it through the waste :
but its small waters could not feed that drought,
and, in the wide unshadowed plain, it lagged,
and shrank away, sucked upwards of the sun
and downwards of the sands ; so the new bed
lay dry, and dry the old ; and the parched reeds
grew brown and dwined, the stunted rushes drooped,
the cresses could not root in that slacked soil,
the blossoms and the sedges died away,

the greenness shrivelled from the dusty banks,
the children missed their playmate and the flowers,
and thirsted in hot noon-tides for the draught
grown over precious now their mother went
a half-mile to the well to fill her pails ;
and not two ears of corn the more were green.

Tell me, what should I do ? I take my life
as I have found it, and the work it brings ;
well, and the life is kind, the work is light,
shall I go fret and scorn myself for that ?
and must I sally forth to hack and hew
at giants or at windmills, leave the post
I could have filled, the work I could have wrought,
for some magnificent mad enterprise,
some task to lift a mountain, drain a sea,
tread down a Titan, build a pyramid ?
No, let me, like a bird bred in the cage,
that, singing its own self to gladness there,
makes some who hear it gladder, take what part
I have been born to, and make joy of it.

* * * * *

Oh chiding friend, I am not of your kind,
you strenuous souls who cannot think you live
unless you feel your limbs, though 'twere by aches :
great boisterous winds you are, who must rush on
and sweep all on your way or drop and die,
but I am only a small fluttering breeze
to coax the roses open : let me be ;
perhaps I have my use no less than you.

FROM YU-PE-YA'S LUTE.

1874.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

“**T**OO soon so fair, fair lilies ;
To bloom is then to wane ;
The folded bud has still
Tomorrow at its will ;
Blown flowers can never blow again.

Too soon so bright, bright noontide ;
The sun that now is high
Will henceforth only sink
Towards the western brink ;
Day that's at prime begins to die.

Too soon so rich, ripe summer,
For autumn tracks thee fast ;
Lo, death-marks on the leaf !
Sweet summer, and my grief ;
For summer come is summer past.

Too soon, too soon, lost summer ;
Some hours and thou art o'er.
Ah ! death is part of birth :
Summer leaves not the earth,
But last year's summer lives no more.”

A BOOK OF RHYME.

1881.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

I—POURLAIN THE PRISONER.

I.

BEYOND his silent vault green springs went by,
The river flashed along its open way,
Blithe swallows flitted in their billowy play,
And the sweet lark went quivering up the sky.
With him was stillness and his heart's dumb cry
And darkness of the tomb through hopeless day,
Save that along the wall one single ray
Shifted, through jealous loop-holes, westerly.

One single ray: and where its light could fall
His rusty nail carved saints and angels there,
And warriors, and slim girls with braided hair,
And blossomy boughs, and birds athwart the air.
Rude work, but yet a world. And light for all
Was one slant ray upon a prison wall.

II.

One ray, and in its track he lived and wrought,
And in free wideness of the world, I know,
One said, "Fair sunshine, yet it serves not so,
It needs a tenderer when I shape my thought;"
And, "'Tis too brown and molten in the drought,"
And, "'Tis too wan a greyness in this snow,"
And would have toiled, but wearied and was woe,
While days stole past and had bequeathed him nought.

Maybe in Gisors, round the fortress mead—
Gisors where now, when fair-time brings its press,
They seek the prisoner's tower to gaze and guess

And love the work he made in loneliness —
 One cursed the gloom, and died without-a deed,
 The while he carved where his one ray could lead.

III.

“Oh loneliness! oh darkness!” so we wail,
 Crying to life to give we know not what,
 The hope not come, the ecstasy forgot,
 The things we should have had and, needing, fail,
 Nor know what thing it was for which we ail,
 And, like tired travellers to an unknown spot,
 Pass listless, noting only “Yet ’tis not,”
 And count the ended day an empty tale.

Ah me! to linger on in dim repose
 And feel the numbness over hand and thought,
 And feel the silence in the heart, that grows.
 Ah me! to have forgot the hope we sought.
 One ray of light, and a soul lived and wrought,
 And on the prison walls a message rose.

II.—A COARSE MORNING.

OH the yellow boisterous sea,
 The surging, chafing, murderous sea!
 And the wind-gusts hurtle the torn clouds by,
 On to the south through a shuddering sky,
 And the bare black ships scud aloof from the land.
 ’Tis as like the day as can be,
 When the ship came in sight that came never to strand,
 The ship that was blown on the sunken sand—
 And he coming back to me!

Oh the great white snake of foam,
 The coiling, writhing, snake of white foam,
 Hissing and huddering out in the bay,
 Over the banks where the wrecked ship lay,

Over the sands where the dead may lie deep!

There are some in the churchyard loam,
Some two or three the sea flung to our keep:

Their mothers can sit by a grave to weep,

But *my* son never came home.

Never, never, living or dead—

Oh, never, Willie, living or dead,

Could you keep your word and come back to me!

Oh, my darling! As like this day as can be,

When the ship came in sight that came never to strand,

When the ship came rounding the head,

Close to the haven and close to the sand.—

And their graves are long green that were tossed to land,

Ah, "Sure to come back," he said!

III.—NOT TO BE.

THE rose said "Let but this long rain be past,

And I shall feel my sweetness in the sun
And pour its fulness into life at last."

But when the rain was done,

But when dawn sparkled through unclouded air,

She was not there.

The lark said "Let but winter be away,

And blossoms come, and light, and I will soar,
And lose the earth, and be the voice of day."

But when the snows were o'er,

But when spring broke in blueness overhead,

The lark was dead.

And myriad roses made the garden glow,

And skylarks carolled all the summer long—

What lack of birds to sing and flowers to blow?

Yet, ah, lost scent, lost song!

Poor empty rose, poor lark that never trilled!

Dead unfulfilled!

Isabella Harwood.

(“*Ross Neil.*”)

1840—1888.

ISABELLA HARWOOD, who is better known by the name of Ross Neil, occupies a place among the writers of her own day corresponding to that filled by Joanna Baillie in a preceding generation. Like Joanna Baillie she kept the torch of the poetical drama alight without the power to send it abroad. Her plays pleased in the closet, but could take no hold upon the stage. In an era of great dramatic activity, the authoress of “*Inez*” and “*Elfinella*” might have passed unobserved: in her own day she stood forth as the writer whose experiments in poetical drama were the most numerous, the most earnest, and, in many respects, the most successful. The two examples selected will convey a fair idea of her intellectual ability, singular elegance of diction, and accurate delineation of character. She has done all that depended upon herself; the misfortune is that after having collected all the materials of the pyre with diligence and arranged them with judgment, she still needs the Promethean spark to kindle them. Her dramas are too manifestly works of reflection; she is never carried away by her subject, while at the same time too much interested in it to sink to the level of a mere playwright. Before essaying the drama, she had produced some deservedly successful novels, and acquired the art

of constructing a plot. She was the daughter of Philip Harwood, editor of the *Saturday Review*. Her life was entirely uneventful; but her good sense, amiability, and accomplishments adorned a tasteful home, and charmed a congenial circle. She wrote no fewer than fourteen plays, every one of which may be read with pleasure.

RICHARD GARNETT.

LORD AND LADY RUSSELL.

1876.

ISABELLA HARWOOD.

*KING CHARLES THE SECOND AND THE
FRENCH AMBASSADOR.*

(FROM ACT I., SCENE I.)

De Barillon. Sir, 'tis my charge to tell you from
my king
How much his very heart is grieved to see
The unworthy dealings of this parliament,
On whose obedient loyal thankfulness
Your princely nature counted.

King. Then his grief
May keep mine company, for I grieve too,
But grieving ne'er was cure for any ill.

De Bar. He would grieve more were there no cure
for this,
Since in his judgment those who seek to hurt
Your royal brother's birthright make themselves
The foes not only of your majesty,
But of all kings, and of the holy church,
Whose eldest son he is ; so doth he deem
Himself near touched by their rebelliousness.

King. And I am touched yet nearer, being touched
In mine own brother, for, believe me, sir,
My brother's rights are held by me as dear
As by the king of France, and you have seen
How for his service I have put away
Two parliaments already. But it seems
All I can do boots not.

De Bar. No, not unless
The third be sent to seek the other twain.

King. If 'tis the counsel of the king of France
That I should reign and fill my coffers full
And never ask a parliament to help,
'Tis for the king of France to show me how.

De Bar. So will he, sir, and doth—as you shall see
Will you but scan this paper. [*Giving a paper.*]

King. Ay? Hum, hum—
Two million livres; the second year and third
Five hundred thousand crowns. I see indeed
He knows the way, but goes not far enough;
Let him but follow further this same road,
And it will lead him right.

De Bar. Sir, he hath gone
So far that more he cannot.

King. Hath he thought
What 'tis that he would have me do? to break
A parliament that hath not lived a week,
A parliament that if 'tis broken now
Must be my last, for, plain enough to see,
I could not look another in the face.
So that indeed he bids me shut the door
For ever on my people, and for ever
Give up all hope of hearing that sweet music
Our blended loves should make. Nay, if I smile
It is because you teach me.

De Bar. And I smiled
Thinking that some good deeds reward themselves.

King. But parliaments can deal reward enough
Unto good deeds that please them—as perchance
A war with France, how say you? So, come now,
I will be plain as though I thought aloud—
Why is your king so niggard? If he will,

Now is the time that England may be brought
 Within his vassalage for evermore ;
 And will he let so fair a chance slip by
 Because he grudges something of the price ?

De Bar. He fears no slipping by, because he thinks
 He hath bid the highest price.

King. The highest price !
 Then, by my life, the bargain will not hold.

De Bar. Your majesty is harder with my king
 Than he with you.

King. So are you pleased to say.

De Bar. So is it, sire. If he were half so hard,
 Would he not stand, as 'tis his right to stand,
 On the fulfilment of that private treaty——

King. There, there, 'twill do.

De Bar. I say that private treaty
 Whereby the king of England bound himself
 To make avowal of his secret faith
 In sight of all the world——

King. For Heaven's love
 Be not so loud.

De Bar. And cast away for ever
 The name of Protestant. Nay, sir, fear not ;
 They shall not hear ; I know how perilous
 Unto your honour, and your power, and you,
 The lightest breath might be that waked a scent
 For jealousy to follow.

King. Why indeed
 Such breath might peradventure puff me forth
 Again upon my travels—and of travels
 I am quite weary, besides that then no more
 My brother France could fit me to his use.

De Bar. Full well he knows, nor ever with a thought
 Hath blamed you that you have not put in act

A bond wherein your wish outran your power ;
You could not if you would ; his eyes and mine
Bear for you daily witness, having seen
How you have found it needful to deny
Unto your people that such bond e'er was,
And how the disbelief of some of them
Hath wrought well-nigh your ruin. Never doubt ;
Upon this secret of your majesty's
We keep as careful watch as 'twere our own,
Knowing how precious 'tis, not trusted e'en
To your most trusted friends.

King. So precious 'tis
That now you mean to make it count with me
For full a million crowns—ay is't not so ?

De Bar. Sir, what I said I have but said to show
Our friendship hath deserved that yours should come
A little way to meet it.

King. And in truth
You have reasoned closely, leaving ne'er a mesh
For me to 'scape by. I am caught and caged ;
And even therefore shall the bargain stand
As you would have it stand ; my brother France
Shall keep the promise he hath made me here,
And I forthwith will break this parliament,
The last of all its race.

De Bar. 'Tis well resolved,
And all your friends must give your majesty
Joy of so wise a purpose.

THE HEIR OF LINNE.

1879.

ISABELLA HARWOOD.

(FROM ACT II., SCENE I.)

Enter LIONEL, JOHN OF THE SCALES *following*.

Lion. Break off—let silence be. Your pardon, friends:
But I have that to say which till 'tis said
Burns in my throat.

Lady F. Alas! my lord, what is't?

Lion. And yet as hard to tell as keep untold—
You being all my friends, to whom my griefs
Are even as your own.

Lady F. O but yet tell.

Hub. We'll strive our best to bear.

Sir Ruf. We will be strong.

Lion. Know then, a beggar stands before you here—
A landless, houseless beggar.

Lady F. What means this?

O now I see—a jest.

Lord F. Faith, a good jest.

Sir Ruf. Or would be good if'twere not beggarly.

Hub. When next you try the appetite of belief,
Offer a smaller mouthful.

Lion. Have you ne'er
Heard a voice speak from a sad heart before,
That now you know it not? I say again
I am a beggar, out of land and goods
Tricked by yon villain, who of all you see
Is master and disposer.

John. 'Tis quite true,
Dear lords and ladies, though so strange it seems—

True, I mean I am master ; which, I take it,
Is the point of chief concern.

Lion. Ay, true, all true.
He hath spent, and let me spend, till from my store
The last round coin hath rolled (surely made round
To roll the easier); and more than this,
Hath tied my hands so to my sides with debt
I cannot reach them forth for timely aid,
And must stand by and see a bond enforced
That gives to him the house and lands of Linne.

John. Yes, if before this hour to-morrow night
Those five-and-twenty thousand crowns you owe
Be not paid back in full—my little all.

Lion. Thus stands it, friends. You see, a desp'rate
case.

[*A pause, during which the Guests look
at each other, and whisper.*

[*Aside*] Poor girl, poor love ; I dare not lift my eyes
To where she is, as one who stabs himself,
Yet turns away from looking on the wound.

[*To AMABEL, who stands near him.*] Tell me, how fares
the Lady Geraldine ?

Amab. I will go and comfort her. O my sweet friend!

Lett. Need I say how I pity ?

Geral You need not—
Nor pity one who pities not herself.

Lion. [*aside*]. I knew not how she loved me, or
how true

She spake, saying that gold to her was dross.
Come, for her sake I will be strong as she.

[*Aloud*] Your silence, friends, well shows you think
the time

Too short for help to reach me.

Lord F.

Why indeed

I see not how, in four-and-twenty hours—
To be quite plain with you, as sure I am
You wish us to be plain, I cannot think
You have been wholly prudent.

Hub. Rankest folly
To put such trust in others! 'Tis so easy
To keep account oneself of what one owes.

Sir Ruf. Had you been earlier open with your
friends!
There would have then been time for us to give
Advice that might have saved.

Lion. But now, I see,
'Tis all too late for friendship's self to help—
And trust me, though time served you to redeem
My lands, as well I know you fain would do,
I ne'er had suffered you to have your will
At any peril of your own grave loss.
The folly hath been mine, and mine must be
The paying of the forfeit.

Lord F. On my word,
A noble spirit.

Sir Ruf. From my lord of Linne
I looked for nothing less, yet must admire.

Lion. And now that of my state you know the worst,
You next shall learn my hopes, the arms whcrewith
I look to vanquish Fortune; for be sure
While I have friends—or others peradventure,
Called by a dearer name—who still will deign
To wish me well, I'll wrestle for their sake
Till I have slain my troubles or they me,
Yea, strive to tame disaster for my slave
To help me to new wealth, which I'll go forth
Into the world to conquer with the sword
Of love and hope.

Lord F. An excellent resolve !

Sir Ruf. Wherein all our best wishes shall be yours.

Lion. Thanks. If those wishes have borne fruit or
not

Before three years are over shall you know ;
For three years being ended, with no sight
Or news of me, conclude me either dead
Or of my hopes fall'n short, and look no more
To see me in your midst. And thou, who once
Wert to have been the sunshine of my home,
Think thyself free, when those three years are done,
To make bright with thy smiles another's hearth ;
Longer I would not have thy fair young life
Wasted with bootless waiting.

Lady F. But, my lord,
Since to my daughter still you seem to ascribe
Part in your fortunes, you will pardon me
If I should ask you what the surety is
For their so speedy mending.

Lion. Chiefly, madam,
Strong heart and hands, by love made stronger.

Lady F. Ah !

Lion. The gold I hope one day to dower her with
Is now stored up in that new fairer world
Mariners tell us of beyond the west,
The treasure-house of earth, rich with a glow
Of million sunsets—there will I go seek
My second fortune, or, it may be, chance
To find it on the seas, where Spanish galleons
Crowd sail at sight of the smallest English bark.

Lady F. A little scattered, sir, it seems to lie.

Lion. Not long ago I held discourse with one
Who in those lands and waters of the west
Had made himself from poor in brief space rich,

And who so took my ear his prisoner
 With things he told me—of balm-breathing groves
 Where birds like jewels sparkle in and out,
 And many-coloured skies that blend and change
 With the blushing hills their blushes—then again
 Of the crash of oak 'gainst oak, and steel 'gainst steel,
 And the sacred cry of Spaniards to their saints,
 And, following soon, the full-voiced English cheer
 Telling of victory, and good gold won
 From use of foreign foes—with things like these
 He so ensnared my fancy that well-nigh
 He made me wish my fortune still to seek.

Sir Ruf. [*Aside.*] A modest wish, soon granted.

Lion. He I speak of—

A wealthy burgher now—a few years since
 Had only in the world his own stout heart,
 And a poor patrimony of no more
 Than some two thousand crowns, but these enough
 To equip and man the bark that made him heir
 Of far-off Indian kings and Spanish dons.
 Now I, you see, am strong, and of a spirit,
 I trust, to dare as much as any dare ;
 So with two thousand crowns I hope to make
 My fortunes equal his. These still I lack,
 But shall not long, I know, when once I say
 That of my friends I will not shame to ask
 A petty loan that will not do them hurt.
 Which of you all will lend two thousand crowns ?
 Or give ; since it may be that death, belched up
 By angry seas, or slung by foeman's hand,
 Will make my bond a mock. Which of you ? speak.
 [*A pause.*]

I see you think it is for me to choose
 Whom I will have for helper, and in truth

Where I know all to be so much my friends,
 By making choice of one I need not fear
 To give the rest offence. Hubert Fitzwater,
 To you in this great need I bring my suit,
 Both since you are my brother, and because
 I did you lately a good turn, which now
 I should be churlish if I gave you not
 Occasion to requite.

Hub. What! taunt me, sir,
 With favours past? I have just now at hand
 No more than what for present use I need;
 But let me say, if aught could make me fling
 Your favours back into your teeth, 'twere this.

Lion. I do confess that when I asked of you
 Most gravely I mistook; yet pray believe,
 To taunt you I meant not. Sir Rufus Rollestone,
 In the shrill-voiced hunting-field, and at the board
 Where wine makes warm, you long have been my
 friend,

Nor now that sport and feast for me are done
 Will be aught other. Those two thousand crowns
 Whereon I build my hopes I ask of you,
 Nor shame to ask.

Sir Ruf. Of me! Upon my life,
 More sorry am I than I well can say,
 But I have paid away of late such sums—
 That new estate I bought—and then some wine
 I've just laid down—and, to confess the truth,
 I scarce can see my way——

Lion. Yet in your place
 Methinks I could have found one. Nay, not now——
 Although you offered now, I would not take.

Sir Ruf. I offer not; would only that I could
 In justice to myself.

Lion. Will none else speak?
 Not one among them all? O now I find
 What I knew not before—a poor man's friends
 In justice to themselves must all be poor.
 Why then, my Lord Fitzwater, unto you,
 Whom I thought not to trouble, must I turn,
 You who perchance less easily can spare
 Than some of those, who will not.

Lord F. And who said
 I could not spare? you take upon yourself
 To speak strange things. It doth indeed fall out
 That at this moment—most unhappily—
 At this especial moment——

Lady F. At this moment
 He hath to think of the welfare of his child.
 So can do nought to help the hopes of one
 Whose suit he favours not, and doth forbid.
 Is it not so, my lord?

Lord F. 'Twas even thus
 I was about to say.

Lion. You would deny me
 All chance of winning her?

Lady F. Most absolutely,
 As a suitor quite unfit.

Lord F. O quite unfit.

Lion. But your denial, sir, and, madam, yours,
 I will not take; 'tis she, and only she,
 Whose sentence I will stand by. Geraldine,
 Betrothed, belovèd, speak; will you not wait
 A poor three years, to see if for your sake
 I cannot force from Fortune's hand as much
 As will, with my great love, make up a tribute
 That, at your feet laid, your love will not scorn?
 Answer, and for the battle give me strength.

Geral. My parents have for me made answer, sir,
Whereby, as is my duty, I abide.

Lion. Because it is your duty, not your will ?
Nay, then, if still you love me, I have right
To claim you still for mine, my bride, my queen,
Whom in the citadel of my love I'll hold
'Gainst all the opposing world. That duty's none
Which bids you break your heart.

Geral. O but I hope
My heart is framed less weakly than you deem,
And since you thus constrain me to speak plain,
I tell you, sir, I can as easily
Put from my heart one that in false disguise
Hath sought to enter there, as from my person
This token of my all too simple trust
And his deceit.

*[Disengages a ring from her chain, and
throws it down. LIONEL mechanically
does the same, then looks round, as
one bewildered.]*

Lion. They have the faces still
Of men and women.

Emily Pfeiffer.

1841—1890.

EMILY PFEIFFER, who died on the 2nd of June, 1890, was a poet of remarkable originality and sweetness. She had had many difficulties to contend with, not the least of which were lack of systematic education in youth, and disease which early laid hold of a constitution, from the first weak, and almost morbidly sensitive. She was born in 1841. Her father, Mr. R. Davis, had been at one time possessed of considerable property in Oxfordshire, and was an officer in the army. Her mother was the youngest child of a once numerous family, by far the greater number of whom had died prior to her birth (two of the sons of wounds received in battle and one by accident). Her maternal grandfather, Mr. Tilsley, of Milford Hall, in Montgomeryshire, had unfortunately given the weight of his name to a county bank of which his only remaining son was the head; and when this bank failed, he held himself in honour, though not in law, answerable for its liabilities to the whole extent of his fortune. Comparative poverty was thus the fate of his family; for even the husbands of his daughters had become involved in the bank's failure.

Her father's position as a large-hearted country squire became very painful to him from his inability to do for those about him what he would. His little daughter Emily, at a very early age, began to realise

what the struggles and pinchings incident to small means meant; and the circumstances in which she was placed opened the door to an invading flood of sensibility unfitted to her childish years. The wearisome and hopeless monotony of the lives lived in the peasant homes which she frequently visited, pressed upon her with an unspeakable weight, and she became subject to fits of depression and melancholy, which she tried to hide from others. She has very clearly indicated the feeling of this period in her poem entitled "A Lost Eden."

Of regular education for the growing minds of the children there was none; but Mrs. Pfeiffer thought that the struggle kept up then and always by her parents to maintain a position was fruitful in better consequences than mere schooling would have been without it. Only in her own case, as would inevitably happen with a child like her, too much time and scope were allowed for brooding over the woes of others and the evils of life in many forms. As she grew older, she endeavoured to find relief and escape from her own thoughts in books. She read whatever came in her way, and dated her awakening to the sense of wonder and beauty in nature from a first sight of the sea, and to the significance of human life and language by the reading of a work on the Round Towers of Ireland. It is indeed marvellous what the young mind will find sustenance in.

By and by—and a happy circumstance it no doubt was—she was taken by a friend who felt a warm interest in her on a tour abroad. She saw the Rhine, with its ancient castles, its lovely scenery, and historic old towns, and found in that journey a turning point in her life. Afterwards she spent a season

in London, and drew from its gaiety, variety, and life the delight, aid and suggestion such a mind was likely to feel. Not long after that she married Mr. Pfeiffer, a rich German merchant in London. In this new existence she found leisure and abundant stimulus to write, and wrote a great deal; but the lack of systematic education was keenly realised, and she now felt more than before that there was much to master as well as much to unlearn. She drew out a plan of more methodical study and work; but this was frustrated through such utter and long-continued physical prostration that for some years she was unable even to write her own letters.

In spite of all the drawbacks progress was made, and in 1873 "Gerard's Monument," which had been written in the utmost secrecy, was published, and with it her literary career may be said to have begun. From that time, at intervals, volumes of poetry appeared, and articles on "Woman's Work" and related themes in the *Contemporary Review* and elsewhere; all having the same merits, marked by thought, earnestness, and felicity of expression. Perhaps her highest mark in technical quality in poetic work is reached in her volume—a selection from a much larger mass—entitled "Songs and Sonnets."

In spite of the ill-health from which Mrs. Pfeiffer suffered, her married life was one of delightful harmony and happiness. Her husband believed in her powers, and was wise in his suggestions and encouragements. But she still exercised her art under peculiar difficulty, living always on the brink of insomnia, which was only kept at bay by change of occupation, the most fascinating and effectual being

painting, especially the painting of flowers. Mr. Pfeiffer predeceased his wife by exactly a year.

Mrs. Pfeiffer told the present writer that she regarded it as a duty to the memory of her husband to do all that in her lay to cultivate still further the literary gift in which he so firmly believed; and she at that time cherished the hope that, in part, it might be given her to do so. But this, she added, was not the only work that had been left to her to carry out for his sake. He was a firm believer in the influence for good that women were destined to exercise on the future of society; and after the satisfaction of all legitimate claims, the fortune made by him in this country was to go, by his wish, to an object calculated to develop and to train, in chosen individuals, this factor of human progress. The small orphanage designed to experiment on these lines was already built, and she hoped soon to open it, when death overtook her. The orphanage has since been opened, and others are to follow, managed by a body of trustees. Mrs. Pfeiffer also took a warm interest in the drama, and practically expressed this by offering a large sum to found a School of Dramatic Art.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

LYRICS.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

I.—LOVE CAME KNOCKING AT MY DOOR.

LOVE came knocking at my door in the flowery
month of May,
'Twas the morning of the year, and the morning of the
day ;

He was a winsome boy,

And I a maiden coy,

But I followed him, I followed ! for he drew me with
the wile

Of his eyes, his words, and whispers, and the glamour
of his smile.

Oh the merry laughing moments, oh the soft, the
shining hours,

When I followed as he led me through his gardens
and his bowers !

Love was a thing divine,

I was his, and he was mine ;

So I followed him, I followed, could have followed till
I died,

In the wake of his young glory, and the fulness of my
pride.

Now the merry days are over, with the joy and pride
and show ;

Love has grown to his full stature ; I am weary as I go.

Shamed is the golden head,

And the magic smile is fled ;

For the dust and soil of earth
Mock the greatness of Love's birth ;
But I follow, and if weeping I, though weeping,
follow still,
With no magic and no glamour, but a faithful human
will.

Ay, I follow still, I follow, though no longer through
the May,
Though the lingering dreams of morning with the
morn have passed away.

Now Love is no more glad,
Nay, his very smile is sad ;
But he needs me even more
Than I needed him before ;

So I follow, still I follow, and through all the darker
seeming,
Love's true need of me is sweeter than his smile that
held me dreaming.

And when one day hand in hand we before God's
gate shall stand,
And the gate shall open wide that we enter side by
side,

We may gaze in glad surprise
Into one another's eyes,
Not to find a winsome boy,
Or a maiden vain and coy ;
But two creatures shining bright
In the pure and keen love-light,
Of the patience and the faith
That have conquered more than death.

Then I follow love no longer, but I sink upon thy
breast

To abide there hushed for ever in the joy of utter rest.

II.—THE CROWN OF LOVE.

I WOULD be a goddess in
The light of those dear eyes,
Apt to hold you as to win,
All-beautiful, all-wise.
Pray you wherefore should you deem
This a vain and idle dream ?
Purblind love that cannot see
That woman still to man may be
Whatever she can seem !

I would win your tender trust,
But not to keep you still
Kneeling lowly in the dust,
Obedient to my will ;
Nor to surfeit all my days
On the nectar of your praise ;
Or to hear it sung so high
That the idle passer-by
Paused to hear your lays.

I but ask you for your faith
That, wounded by the herd,
I may bring you healing with
The magic of a word.
Pray you to believe me so
That in darkness, doubt, or woe,
I may guide you when you grope,
Light you with my stronger hope,
Warm you with my glow.

I would have you love me well,
That, fainting in the strife,
Kiss of mine should be a spell,
To win you back to life ;

Love me so that day or night,
 I could hide the world from sight,
 Keep it out with woven arms,
 Or subdue it with my charms,
 As a goddess might !

Love ! my worth will wax or wane
 As your light shall shine,
 Now a homely thing, or vain,
 Now almost divine.
 Lorn of love, my hands hang down,
 I am nothing when you frown ;
 Hold me fair, and keep me great,
 With your faithfulness for state,
 And your love for crown !

III.—BROKEN LIGHT.

IT was cruel of them to part
 Two hearts in the gladsome spring,
 Two lovers' hearts that had just burst forth
 With each blithe and beautiful thing ;
 Cruel, but only half—
 Had they known how to do us wrong,
 They had barr'd the way of the odorous May,
 They had shut out the wild bird's song.

Your kisses were so embalm'd
 With spices of beech and fir,
 That they haunt my lips in the dead o' the night,
 If the night-winds do but stir ;
 When I rise with the rising dawn,
 To let in the dewy south,
 Like a fountain's spray, or the pride of the day,
 They fall on my thirsty mouth.

They should never have let our love
Abroad in the wild free woods,
If they meant it to slumber on, cold and tame,
As the lock'd-up winter floods ;
They should never have let it hide
'Neath the beeches' lucent shade,
Or the up-turn'd arch of the tender larch
That blush'd as it heaved and sway'd.

Now the young and passionate year
Is no longer itself, but *you* ;
Its conniving woods, with their raptures and thrills,
You have leaven'd them through and through.
The troubadour nightingale
And the dove that o'erbends the bough,
Have both learnt, and teach, the trick of your speech,
As they echo it vow for vow.

My heart is heavy for scorn,
Mine eyes with impatient tears,
But the heaven looks blue through the cherry-blooms,
And preaches away my fears !
From the burning bush of the gorse,
Alive with murmurous sound,
I hear a voice, and it says, ' Rejoice !'
I stand as on holy ground.

O flower of life ! O Love !
God's love is at thy root ;
They may dim thy glory, but cannot blight
Or hinder thy golden fruit.
Yet all the same, I am mad,
However the end may fall,
That they dare to wring, in the gladsome spring,
Two hearts that were gladdest of all.

IV.—IN EXTREMIS.

I LOVE to feel your hand, beloved,
I love to feel your hand ;
Then hold me fast until we part
Upon the gloomy strand,
And I upon the silent sea
Go forth alone from love and thee !

I love to see your smile, which says
What else you dare not say :
It gilds for me the gloomy shore,
It seems to light my way.
Brave love, keep back your tears awhile
That parting I may see your smile !

Oh, let me hear your voice, beloved,—
Your face I see no more !
That tender voice still sounds above
The breakers of the shore ;
And for a space may follow me
Out, out upon the silent sea !

One kiss upon my lips, sad lips
That cannot kiss thee back,
Let love proclaim his bitter truth—
Bear witness on the rack !
One kiss, the longest and the last,
Resuming all the sacred past !

Oh love that seems to rise as rise
The waters of that sea,
To rise and overflow, and float
My soul, O God, to thee !
Thy voice, thy smile, thy kiss, thy breath,
Beloved, have rapt my soul from death !

V.—A SONG OF WINTER.

BARBED blossom of the guarded gorse,
I love thee where I see thee shine :
Thou sweetener of our common-ways,
And brightener of our wintry days,

Flower of the gorse, the rose is dead,
Thou art undying, O be mine !
Be mine with all thy thorns, and prest
Close on a heart that asks not rest.

I pluck thee and thy stigma set
Upon my breast and on my brow,
Blow, buds, and plenish so my wreath
That none may know the wounds beneath.

O thorny crown of burning gold,
No festal coronal art thou ;
Thy honeyed blossoms are but hives
That guard the growth of winged lives.

I saw thee in the time of flowers
As sunshine spilled upon the land,
Or burning bushes all ablaze
With sacred fire ; but went my ways ;

I went my ways, and as I went
Plucked kindlier blooms on either hand ;
Now of those blooms so passing sweet
None lives to stay my passing feet.

And yet thy lamp upon the hill
Feeds on the autumn's dying sigh,
And from thy midst comes murmuring
A music sweeter than in spring.

Barbed blossom of the guarded gorse,
 Be mine to wear until I die,
 And mine the wounds of love which still
 Bear witness to his human will.

VI.—WHEN THE BROW OF JUNE.

WHEN the brow of June is crowned by the rose
 And the air is faint and fain with her breath,
 Then the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes
 The Earth hath rest and forgetteth her woes
 As she watcheth the cradle of Love and Death,
 When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.
 O Love and Death, who are counted for foes,
 She sees you twins of one mind and faith—
 The Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.
 You are twins to the mother who sees and knows ;
 ‘Let them strive and thrive together,’ she saith,—
 When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.
 They strive, and Love his brother outgrows,
 But for strength and beauty he travaileth
 On the Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.
 And still when his passionate heart o’erflows
 Death winds about him a bridal wreath,—
 As the brow of June is crowned by the rose !
 So the bands of Death true lovers enclose,
 For Love and Death are as Sword and Sheath,
 When the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.
 They are Sword and Sheath, they are Life and its Shows
 Which lovers have grace to see beneath,
 When the brow of June is crowned by the rose
 And the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

SONNETS.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

I.—EVOLUTION.

HUNGER that strivest in the restless arms
Of the sea-flower, that drivest rooted things
To break their moorings, that unfoldest wings
In creatures to be rapt above thy harms ;
Hunger, of whom the hungry-seeming waves
Were the first ministers, till, free to range,
Thou mad'st the Universe thy park and grange,
What is it thine insatiate heart still craves ?

Sacred disquietude, divine unrest !

Maker of all that breathes the breath of life,
No unthrift greed spurs thine unflagging zest,
No lust self-slaying hounds thee to the strife ;
Thou art the Unknown God on whom we wait :
Thy path the course of our unfolding fate.

II.—TO NATURE. (II.)

DREAD Force, in whom of old we loved to see
A nursing mother, clothing with her life
The seeds of Love divine,—with what sore strife
We hold or yield our thoughts of Love and thee !
Thou art not "calm," but restless as the ocean,
Filling with aimless toil the endless years—
Stumbling on thought, and throwing off the spheres,
Churning the Universe with mindless motion.

Dull fount of joy, unhallowed source of tears,
Cold motor of our fervid faith and song,
Dead, but engendering life, love, pangs, and fears,
Thou crownedst thy wild work with foulest wrong
When first thou lightedst on a seeming goal,
And darkly blundered on man's suffering soul.

III.—DREAMING.

WHEN vexed with waking thought, and its dull
gleam,
I—waiting on the shore of Time—oft close
Mine eyes, and while the ocean ebbs and flows
Around me, hear its murmurous voice, and dream.
And sometimes dreaming thus, the Will supreme
My thoughts have bent beneath, will seem to be
A Will, not working by its sole decree,
But one that wrestles with a counter-stream.

And dreaming thus, my heart will give a bound
Of yearning love, and wake me with a cry;
Oh for the feet of Hermes that I might—
A chartered messenger—spurn back the ground
And through the reeling world be charged to fly,
With but one word to help Him in the fight.

IV.—THE WINGED SOUL.

MY soul is like some cage-born bird, that hath
A restless prescience—howsoever won—
Of a broad pathway leading to the sun,
With promptings of an oft reprovèd faith
In sun-ward yearnings. Stricken through her breast,
And faint her wing with beating at the bars
Of sense, she looks beyond outlying stars,
And only in the Infinite sees rest.

Sad soul! If ever thy desire be bent
Or broken to thy doom, and made to share
The ruminant's beatitude,—content,—
Chewing the cud of knowledge, with no care
For germs of life within; *then* will I say,
Thou art not caged, but fitly *stalled* in clay!

V.-VI.—PEACE TO THE ODALISQUE.

I.

PEACE to the odalisque, the facile slave,
 Whose unrespectful love rewards the brave,
 Or cherishes the coward ; she who yields
 Her lord the fief of waste, uncultured fields
 To fester in non-using ; she whose hour
 Is measured by her beauty's transient flower ;
 Who lives in man, as he in God, and dies
 His parasite, who shuts her from the skies.
 Graceful ephemera ! Fair morning dream
 Of the young world ! In vain would women's
 hearts,
 In love with sacrifice, withstand the stream
 Of human progress ; other spheres, new parts
 Await them. God be with them in their quest—
 Our brave, sad working-women of the West.

II.

Peace to the odalisque, whose morning glory
 Is vanishing, to be alone in story ;
 Firm in her place, a dull-robed figure stands,
 With wistful eyes, and earnest, grappling hands :
 The working-woman, she whose soul and brain—
 Her tardy right—are bought with honest pain.
 Oh woman ! sacrifice may still be thine—
 More fruitful than the souls ye did resign
 To sated masters ; from your lives, so real,
 Will shape itself a pure and high ideal,
 That ye will seek with sad, wide-open eyes,
 Till, finding nowhere, baffled love shall rise
 To higher planes, where passion may look pale,
 But charity's white light shall never fail.

VII.—TO THE HERALD HONEYSUCKLE.

DEEP Honeysuckle ! in the silent eve
 When wild-rose cups are closed, and when each bird
 Is sleeping by its mate, then all unheard,
 The dew's soft kiss thy wakeful lips receive.
 'Tis then the sighs that throng them seem to weave
 A spell whereby the drowsy night is stirred
 To fervid meanings, which no fullest word
 Of speech or song so sweetly could achieve.
 Herald of bliss ! whose fragrant trumpet blew
 Love's title to our hearts ere love was known,
 'Twas well thy flourish told a tale so true,
 Well that love's dazzling presence was foreshown ;
 Had his descent on us been as the dew
 On thee, our rarer sense he had o'erthrown.

VIII.—GORDON.

THE UNREQUITABLE.

GONE, with the toil of nigh twelve months undone,
 Cut from thy grasp by sloth and treachery,
 When friendly hands across that sandy sea
 To reach thee at thy post had all but won.
 Gone when thy hope was high as Egypt's sun,
 From sting of failure and all charge set free,
 A man no king was great enough to fee—
 God's Servant, taking wage of Him alone.
 Gordon, we may not give thee so much earth
 As might suffice thy bones for resting-place,
 But must remain thy debtors in our dearth ;
 Souls pure as thine are channels of God's grace,
 And all our famished lives must grow more worth
 When such have dwelt among us for a space.

IX.-X.—SHELLEY.

It will be remembered that Pisa, associated as it is with Shelley, was the scene of the life and labours of Galileo.

THERE lies betwixt dead Pisa and the sea
 A haunted forest, with a heart so deep,
 That none could sit beneath its pines to weep,
 But it would throb for them mysteriously.
 Here, in this place I dreamed there met with me
 The spirit who his part in it doth keep,
 Albeit his starry orbit now hath sweep
 As vast as Galileo's, if more free.

He drew me on to where the hollow beat
 Of waves upon a shore seemed to my mind
 The moan of a remorseful soul, to meet
 The homicidal Sea, whose passion blind
 Had slain him; as it writhed about my feet
 Methought his spirit past me on the wind.

II.

Wild sea, that drank his life to quench the thirst
 Thou had'st of him; and all devouring Fire,
 Who made his body thine with love as dire;
 Air pregnate with his breath, and thou accurst,
 Mother of Sorrows, Earth, whose claim is first
 Upon thy children dead, who from the pyre
 Received his dust,—what did his soul require—
 Wring from ye—ere your Protean bonds he burst?
 Perchance ye failed to reach him, and he hath
 O'er-leapt the rounds of change the earthlier dead
 May weary through, nor needing Lethean bath
 To speed anew his soul's ethereal tread,
 Hath left the elements, spurned from his path,
 To challenge grosser spirits in his stead.

XI.-XII.—THE LOST LIGHT.

(GEORGE ELIOT.)

December 29th, 1880.

I.

I NEVER touched thy royal hand, dead queen,
 But from afar have looked upon thy face,
 Which, calm with conquest, carried still the trace
 Of many a hard-fought battle that had been.
 Since thou hast done with life, its toil and teen,
 Its pains and gains, and that no further grace
 Can come to us of thee, a poorer place
 Shows the lorn world,—a dimlier lighted scene.
 Lost queen and captain, Pallas of our band,
 Who late upon the height of glory stood,
 Guarding from scorn—the ægis in thy hand—
 The banner of insurgent womanhood ;
 Who of our cause may take the high command ?
 Who make with shining front our victory good ?

II.

Great student of the schools, who grew to be
 The greater teacher, having wandered wide
 In lonely strength of purity and pride
 Through pathless sands, unfruitful as the sea.
 Now warning words—and one clear act of thee,
 Bold pioneer who shouldst have been our guide—
 Affirm the track which Wisdom must abide ;—
 For man is bond, the beast alone is free.
 So hast thou sought a larger good, so won
 Thy way to higher law, that by thy grave
 We thanking thee for lavish gifts, for none
 May owe thee more than that in quest so brave—
 True to a light our onward feet must shun—
 Thou gavest nobler strength our strength to save.

Sarah Williams.

(“*Sadie.*”)

1841—1868.

SARAH WILLIAMS, better known to many readers as “*Sadie*” (under which *nom de plume* she wrote during her life), was born in London in 1841. Her father was of Welsh extraction, and she to the end regarded that as the source of the “*bardic*” element in her. She was an only child, and from the first much attention was paid to her nurture and education. After having been for some time under governesses, she went to Queen’s College, Harley Street, where one of the teachers was Dr. Plumptre, late Dean of Wells, to whom she always attributed much impulse to authorship. He was one of the first to whom she showed her earliest printed book. Acquaintance being thus renewed, he aided and advised her in many ways, and afterwards wrote the little biography of her which is prefixed to her volume “*Twilight Hours.*” There was little change or incident in her life; it was that of the student and author, though I should not omit to say that she took a very keen interest in many forms of work among the poor, and dedicated to such work one-half of all she earned by her pen. “*God’s money*” she called it. Happily, she was pretty well independent, for her father had been very successful in life.

She was deeply attached to him, and she never fully recovered from the shock of his sudden death, after a few days' illness that occasioned but little concern, in January 1868. She herself was even then suffering from an incurable disease, which so far as possible she hid from her mother and friends, to save them pain. At last the fact had to be faced that an operation, which if successful might save her life, must be undergone. She made up her mind to submit to it, and succumbed under it only five months after her father's death.

Sarah Williams is distinguished by originality, breadth, and versatility. She wrote many songs and hymns, touched with a mingled simplicity and subtlety, which greatly attracted the late Rev. F. D. Maurice, as well as the late Dean Plumtre. Her mind was very active; her sympathies were at once wide and keen. She tried to enter into and to understand the positions of others, and not only so, but to realise the determining motives, and even the evanescent fluctuations of feeling and sentiment, which do so much to modify habit and conduct, and so often impart an air of irresolution. Hence in a great portion of her poetic work she was really dramatic, though she loved to abide by the lyric form. Her longest and most sustained work is entitled "*Sospiri Volate*"; and it is really a dialogue (in a series of songs) between two lovers. In the course of this dialogue, many of the flying phases of human emotion that so mark an artificial age like ours are caught and cunningly presented. She had, like the hero of "*In Memoriam*," "faced the spectres of the mind and laid them," and "would not make her judgment blind"; and the sense

of this imparts a reality and even a fascination to some of her poems.

With Dr. George Macdonald, whom she admired, but from whom she often differed, she could say,—

“The man that feareth, Lord, to doubt,
In that fear doubteth Thee.”

In the sections of her poems headed “Questionings,” “Responses,” and “Broken Chords” this is very keenly felt: we realise that we are in contact with a very serious and penetrating nature, though it could be cheerful and humorous on occasion. Many of her most effective pieces, indeed, show the struggle with theological dogmas in many forms. The great interest she had for men like Maurice and Plumptre is thus accounted for. She often sets into clear and musical form what must have been vaguely present to such minds in many circumstances. Her poem, “Is it so, O, Christ in Heaven?” is an illustration of what we have just said.

Her humour is sometimes as fine as it is unexpected, and when she allied it with the lightsome fancy she could so well command, in the writing of children’s poems, she was not seldom especially felicitous.

Her children’s poems, indeed, are so original, and so marked by fancy, gaiety, and fun, that they alone would have justified her appearance in such a selection as this; but some idea of her range and the firmness with which she touched the various strings of the lyre may be realised by turning from these children’s verses to such powerful and impressive pieces as that entitled “Baal,” “At the

Breach," "The Old Astronomer," "The Coast-guard's Story," or "The Roundhead's Chant." Indeed, in some of her pieces there is a direct dramatic strength, a power of what has been called "vicarious thinking," such as is seldom found in a woman together with the highly-strung, sensitive, impassioned thrill which goes for so much in what has been called the "lyrical cry."

Her volume titled "Twilight Hours: A Legacy of Verse" is a kind of autobiography indeed. It is one of the books written from a woman's heart. She died whilst she was engaged in the work of arranging her poems for press, so that they are in the truest sense her legacy. This work was finished by the present writer, and Dean Plumtre, as already stated, wrote a Prefatory Memoir of her, in which he quoted extensively from a memorial sketch contributed by the present writer to the pages of *Good Words* shortly after her death. A third edition of her poems appeared in 1872 with additions, and a note by "H. A. Page" respecting these additions. Probably she owed something to the strain of Welsh blood she received from her father; but it was qualified and supported by genuine English sense and sober thought. Some of her hymns—more especially "God's Way," which is quoted in this volume—are inspired by the truest religious experience.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

TWILIGHT HOURS.

SARAH WILLIAMS.

I.—*SOSPIRI VOLATE.*

I.

QUIETNESS.

(MARGARET.)

IS the world so very sad a place ?
Looking out here through geranium leaves,
We can see the sky all rosy grace,
And can feel, what one of us believes,
That He giveth His belovèd sleep —
Not in death alone we cease to weep.
Softly, shining cloudlets come and go,
While the blue shows deeper in between,
And the very sunset leaves a glow
Lovelier than all rays the day has seen :
Flecks of light make blossoms on the floor,
Silent music wraps us o'er and o'er.
Still and quiet, with intensest calm,
As the centre of all motion rests ;
So we breathe away those hours of balm,
Rise with strengthened hearts within our breasts.
Go, dear, but remember, through all weather,
We are friends--we were in Heaven together.

II.

YOUTH AND MAIDENHOOD.

(GREGORY.)

LIKE a drop of water is my heart
Laid upon her soft and rosy palm,
Turned whichever way her hand doth turn,
Trembling in an ecstasy of calm.

Like a broken rose-leaf is my heart,
 Held within her close and burning clasp,
 Breathing only dying sweetness out,
 Withering beneath the fatal grasp.

Like a vapoury cloudlet is my heart
 Growing into beauty near the sun,
 Gaining rainbow hues in her embrace,
 Melting into tears when it is done.

Like mine own dear harp is this my heart,
 Dumb, without the hand that sweeps its strings ;
 Though the hand be careless or be cruel,
 When it comes, my heart breaks forth and sings.

II.—THE LIFE OF A LEAF.

(FROM "NATURE APOSTATE.")

I.—THE BUD.

CLOSE within a downy cover
 Here at rest I lie,
 Half awake and half in slumber
 While the storms go by.

Sometimes vague impatient strivings
 Stir my life within ;
 Hopes of being something worthy,
 Longing to begin.

Then again a soft contentment
 Broodeth o'er my state ;
 When the time comes I am ready,
 Until then I wait.

II.—THE LEAFLET.

Is this then life ? 'Tis glorious, so fair !
The sweet soft breezes playing round our rest,
The summer fragrance growing everywhere,
The happy birds low cooing in their nest.

What meant the fear with which we put on life ?
It is all good, and hope comes after joy ;
Come anything in this delightsome strife,
Storms cannot daunt us, sunshine cannot cloy.

III.—SUMMER LEAF.

Kiss me, kiss me, kingly sun,
Till I glow with crimson light,
Till along my veins shall run
Liquid lustre glistening bright.

Let thy touch so piercing sweet
Hold me close and thrill me through,
Till I faint with languid heat,
Till for rest from thee I sue ;
Hear me not, O king of light !
Let me die within thy sight.

IV.—AUTUMN LEAF.

I wonder what has vanished from the world,
It was so bright a little while ago ;
And now we leaves upon the branches curled
Hang wearily, just swaying to and fro.

The sun shines on, the cruel biting sun,
 He will not veil one smile to ease our pain ;
 What matter that, so his great course is run ?
 The subjects suffer, but the king must reign :
 We are too weary even to complain.

V.—FALLEN.

The desperate clutch at the last weak hold
 Grows looser and looser and looser ;
 The dizzying leap into depths untold
 Comes closer and closer and closer.

Quivering, shivering,
 Drawn from below,
 Where shall we vanish to ?
 How shall we go ?

Leaving the upper air,
 Heaviness everywhere,
 Fallen on dull despair,
 Here we lie low.

VI.—ASLEEP.

Let me sleep, it is so sweet to slumber,—
 All of sweetness that remaineth still ;
 Swift the drenching rains and frosts of winter
 Rid the earth of worn-out things of ill.

It may be some good there was within us
 May survive this discipline of pain ;
 May not die but change its outward substance
 May revive in other leaves again.

III.—AT THE BREACH.

(FROM "SONGS OF COMRADES.")

ALL over for me
 The struggle, and possible glory !
 All swept past,
 In the rush of my own brigade.
 Will charges instead,
 And fills up my place in the story ;
 Well,—'tis well,
 By the merry old games we played.

There's a fellow asleep, the lout ! in the shade of the
 hillock yonder ;
 What a dog it must be to drowse in the midst of a
 time like this !
 Why, the horses might neigh contempt at him ; what
 is he like, I wonder ?
 If the smoke would but clear away, I have strength
 in me yet to hiss.

Will, comrade and friend,
 We parted in hurry of battle ;
 All I heard
 Was your sonorous " Up, my men !"
 Soon conquering pæans
 Shall cover the cannonade's rattle ;
 Then, home bells,
 Will you think of me sometimes, then ?

How that rascal enjoys his snooze ! Would he wake
 to the touch of powder ?
 A reveillé of broken bones, or a prick of a sword
 might do.

“Hai, man! the general wants you;” if I could but
 for once call louder:
 There is something infectious here, for my eyelids
 are dropping too.

Will, can you recall
 The time we were lost on the Bright Down?
 Coming home late in the day,
 As Susie was kneeling to pray,
 Little blue eyes and white night-gown,
 Saying, “Our Father, who art,—
 Art what?” so she stayed with a start.
 “In Heaven,” your mother said softly.
 And Susie sighed “So far away!”—
 ’Tis nearer, Will, now to us all.

It is strange how that fellow sleeps! stranger still
 that his sleep should haunt me;
 If I could but command his face, to make sure of the
 lesser ill:
 I will crawl to his side and see, for what should
 there be to daunt me?
 What there? what there! Holy Father in Heaven,
 not Will!

Will, dead Will!
 Lying here, I could not feel you!
 Will, brave Will!
 Oh, alas, for the noble end!
 Will, dear Will!
 Since no love nor remorse could heal you,
 Will, good Will!
 Let me die on your breast, old friend!

IV.—THE COAST-GUARD'S STORY.

(FROM "SONGS OF COMRADES.")

OUT on the isle of Mona,
Mona with rocks so red,
For the sins of the wreckers who preyed there once,
So the tradition said,

There lived a sturdy coast-guard,
Watching the whole night long;
And he sang to the sea, to the sea sang he,
This was his simple song :—

“Only over the sea,
Only over the sea!
There my love doth dwell, she that loves me well,
Waiting and looking for me.”

Singing away the darkness,
Unto the dawning white,
When the sea-gulls came screaming, “A—i—e. ’Tis day!”
Bats shivered, “Woe for night!”

Out of the waning darkness,
Driven before the sun,
A ship came drifting, and drifting fast,
A ship with never a sail nor mast,
All of its voyage done.

The coast-guard waited with hands fast clenched,
Visage a purple white,
“Something is here that I needs must fear,
After my dream last night.”

The ship came closer, the skeleton ship—
Tangle of shattered ropes,

Fragments of scattered hopes,
Did round its timbers cling ;
Among the shrouds, in a hammock of wreck,
A dead man's form did swing.

The coast-guard sprang with his heavy strength,
And bore the body down ;
He drew it in to a tomb-like rock, —
The dead man seemed to frown.

The ship went curtseying back to sea,
Like one whose task was done ;
The coast-guard stood, in a daze stood he,
Before the blinding sun.

Of all he rescued from out the sea
He saw one hand alone ;
On all the hand he could only see
One well-remembered stone.

“O ring!” the coast-guard cried,
“How hast thou come to this ?
The ring I gave her, my promised bride,
With many a tear and kiss ?

“Man, didst thou slay my wife ?
Though thou wert three times dead
I would avenge her, would claim thy life
For each dear hair of her head.

“Or did she give my ring ?
How could such vileness be ?
Man, with the truth at your black false heart,
Declare it now to me !”—
The dead man smiled with an awful calm,
And not a word said he.

“ If she be false ! O God,
Thou who the truth canst tell.”

The coast-guard swayed like a tree up-torn,
And on his knees he fell.

He grasped the fingers stiff,
And loosed them one by one ;
The dead man's hand was a faithful hand,
Its work was nearly done.

A letter, held till now,
Dropped from the open palm ;
The case was sealed with the coast-guard's name—
He read in dream-like calm.

“ Love,” so it ran, “ I am writing,
Writing our last Good-bye ;
I send the ring by a trusty hand,
For they say I must die, must die.”

Do not be broken-hearted,
Lover so true, so dear ;
The pain is nothing,—I think of you,
And I know that you fain were here.

But you must hold your post, dear
Must not be ruined for me ;
Before my letter can reach you, love,
I shall see you across the sea.

“ Only a little while, dear,
You will be free, be free !
We two shall meet on the golden street,
In the city that knows no sea.
Love, true love !
Be happy, not sad, for me.”

The letter dropt from his palsied hand,
 Two men lay stretched on the shifting strand
 Like brothers lay, in a close embrace,
 The cold sea-spray on each pale, pale face.
 But the one to whom living meant only pain,
 Was the one to be laden with life again.

Many a year has vanished ;
 Grey is the coast-guard now,
 With a shadowy smile in his tender eyes,
 Strength on his patient brow.

Still at his work he paces,
 Watching the whole night long ;
 And the birds, his companions, asleep on high,
 Hear not his passionate song.

“ Only over the sea,
 Only over the sea !
 There my love doth dwell, she that loves me well,
 Waiting and looking for me.”

V.—IS IT SO, O CHRIST IN HEAVEN ?

(FROM “QUESTIONINGS.”)

IS it so, O Christ in heaven, that the souls we loved
 so well
 Must remain in pain eternal, must abide in endless
 hell ?
 And our love avail them nothing, even Thine avail
 no more ?
 Is there nothing that can reach them,—nothing
 bridge the chasm o'er ?—
 “ I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
 them now.”

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that the Antichrist
must reign ?

Still assuming shapes Protean, dying but to live
again ?

Waging war on God Almighty, by destroying feeble
man,

With the heathen for a rear-guard, and the learned
for the van ?—

“ I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
them now.”

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that the highest suffer
most ?

That the strongest wander farthest, and more hope-
lessly are lost ?

That the mark of rank in nature is capacity for
pain,

And the anguish of the singer makes the sweetness
of the strain ?—

“ I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
them now.”

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that whichever way we
go

Walls of darkness must surround us, things we would
but cannot know ?

That the Infinite must bound us, as a temple veil
unrent,

While the Finite ever wearies, so that none attain
content ?—

“ I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
them now.”

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that the fulness yet to
 come
 Is so glorious and so perfect, that to know would
 strike us dumb ?
 That, if only for a moment, we could pierce beyond
 the sky
 With these poor dim eyes of mortals, we should
 just see God, and die ?—
 “ I have many things to show you, but ye cannot bear
 them now.”

VI.—BY COMMAND.

(FROM “CHILD POEMS.”)

MY king sat out on his castle wall,
 And a royal command gave he :
 “ Come hither, come hither, ye people all,
 And a fairy tale bring me,
 For of grammar, and crammer, and orthodox hammer,
 I have had quite enough,” quoth he.

My liege’s kingdom is small as yet,
 And his subjects are only two ;
 And sometimes it happens his Grace will fret,
 “ Why, you dear, I have only you ! ”
 And in such sad case it becomes my place
 The imperial will to do.

So I peeled a willow, so white, so white,
 The wand that the fairies love ;
 And I gathered the meadow-sweet, soft and light,
 And the fox’s crimson glove ;
 And I made a couch for the first stray sprite,
 With the down of a silver dove.

“Fairy, come home !
Fairy, come home !
Where hast thou wandered to ?
Where dost thou roam ?

“Here is thy dwelling,
Here is thy place ;
Fairy king, fairy king,
Show us thy face !”

Three times round the meadow
The little song did go ;
Then there came a peal of bells
Chiming soft and low :

“Coming, coming, coming,
No one need to wait,
Wearily beseeching,
At the fairy gate.

“For the fairies, like the mortals
Love to be loved ;
And the fairy palace portals
Lightly are moved.”

Then a rain of footsteps
Sounded on the sward,
And a page came kneeling—
“What wills my lord ?”

“I will a tournament,” said he,
“Where no one shall be killed ;
Where all shall gain the victory,
And be supremely skilled.”

Up rode a fairy paladin,
With coat of beetle's mail ;
Before the glistening green and gold
Sure any heart must quail.

"I see no foe," the king complained,
"But wait," the page implored.
And then the fairy paladin
Drew out a shining sword ;

He cut and thrust all round about,
At neither sight nor sound,
Until a dastard knight they saw
Lie dead upon the ground.

"The pledge is broken !" cried the king.
"Not so," the knight replied,
"It was my meaner self I slew,—
I live, though it has died."

Again the paladin rode forth,
And this time seemed to seek
Some traitor that eluded him—
The little king must speak ;
"Where is the foe, Sir Knight, on whom
You would your vengeance wreak ?"

"It was a falsehood," said the knight,
"They uttered of my friend ;
I tracked it down, and hunted it,
And thus its life doth end !"

Once more the paladin rode forth--
Beneath his horse's feet
There seemed to be an enemy
That he was loth to meet !

"Can you fear anything, Sir Knight?"
His smile was sad and sweet.

"It was a cruel injury,
An unforgiven pain;
But there it lieth tranquilly,—
It will not stir again."

Then lightly springs my little king,
And merrily he sings,
"I too will be a paladin,
And fight with evil things."

VII.—MARJORY'S WEDDING.

(FROM "CHILD POEMS.")

MARJORY made her a wedding feast,
"And I am to be the bride," said she.
"Wait for the bridegroom," was whispered then;
"What does that matter?" said Marjorie.

Marjory gathered the peaches fine,
That dropped in the sun behind the tree.
"Where is your husband to share the feast?"
"I can eat peaches," said Marjorie.

Feasting makes fractious, and some one said,
"The wives that are beaten, better be."
Marjory kissed at the mirror's face;
"There is my beating," said Marjorie.

"If you were pretty, would you be good?"
So somebody said to Marjory.
"I cannot tell," said the maiden wild;
"Plenty of people are good, you see."

Softly the sunset crept over the hill,
 Soft, like a shadow-land, glistened the sea ;
 Two little hands 'neath a head bent down
 "I am so tired !" said Marjorie.

VIII.—GROWTH.

(FROM "RESPONSES.")

A LONELY rock uprose above the sea,
 The coral insects fretting at its base ;
 And no man came unto its loneliness,
 The very storm-birds shunned its evil case.
 Only the ocean beat upon its breast,
 Only the ocean gave it close embrace.

An island was upheaved towards the skies,
 A central fire within its heart had burst ;
 The rock became a mountain, stern and strong,
 Only the desolation shewed at first ;
 A stray bird dropped a seed that fructified,
 No longer reigned the barrenness accursed.

A little world stood out among the seas,
 With singing brooks and many a fragrant wood,
 Where lovers heard again their story sweet,
 And truth grew fair, more fully understood.
 The tender flowers o'ergrew the chasms deep,
 And God looked down, and saw that it was good.

IX.—GOD'S WAY.

(FROM "RESPONSES.")

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord."
 I SAID, "The darkness shall content my soul ;"
 God said, "Let there be light."
 I said, "The night shall see me reach my goal ;"
 Instead came dawning bright.

I bared my head to meet the smiter's stroke :
 There came sweet dropping oil.
 I waited, trembling, but the voice that spoke,
 Said gently, "Cease thy toil."
 I looked for evil, stern of face and pale ;
 Came good, too fair to tell.
 I leant on God when other joys did fail ;
 He gave me these as well.

X.—WITH GOD.

(FROM "RESPONSES.")

GOOD Lord, no strength I have, nor need ;
 G Within Thy light I lie,
 And grow like herb in sunny place,
 While outer storms go by.
 Thy pleasant rain my soul doth feed—
 Thy love like summer rain ;
 I faint, but lo thy winds of grace
 Revive my soul again.
 I fain would give some perfume out,
 Some bruised scent of myrrh ;
 But Thou art close at hand, my Lord—
 I need not strive nor stir.
 I cannot fear, and need not doubt,
 Though I be weak and low :
 If Thou didst will, a mighty sword
 From out my stem should grow.
 Thou hast Thy glorious forest trees,
 Thy things of worth and power ;
 But it may be Thy plan were marred
 Had I ne'er lived a flower.

Thy promise, like an evening breeze,
Doth fold my leaves in sleep;
Who trusts, the Lord will surely guard,
Who loves, the Lord will keep.

XI.—PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

“THEY killed him then? the cowards—be it so!
Henceforth he is immortal—President,
Until the dead shall waken: none may know
His term of office now, nor how 'tis spent.

“His life is rounded off and perfect now;
It reached its fitting climax when great Death
Herself stooped down to crown the victor's brow,
And set the seal of silence on his breath.

“Nor foe nor friend can fret him into speech;
He shines as calmly as some distant star,
Whose light these lower worlds of ours can reach,
While not a cloud doth e'er extend so far.

“Silent and grand, embalmed in suffering,
What monarch ever lay in state like this?
We dare not weep, we hear the angels sing,
Exultant, as they welcome him to bliss.”

Mary M. Singleton.

(*"Violet Fane."*)

1843.

MRS. MARY MONTGOMERIE SINGLETON, better known to the public as "Violet Fane," was born in 1843. She is a daughter of the late C. J. S. Montgomerie Lamb—only child of Sir Charles Montolieu Lamb, Bart., by Mary Montgomerie, daughter and heiress of Archibald, 11th Earl of Eglinton. She has written much, and has in some lines of work received the best proof of public acceptance—her books have sold. She is the author of several novels, some of which are exceptionally attractive by their fresh views of life and careful delineations of character. She is the author, too, of a drama titled "Anthony Babington," which, if it is ambitious in its scheme and aim, contains passages of remarkable power. "Denzil Place: A Story in Verse" shows uncommon facility and resource, and has here and there pictures and lyrical turns that tell of real imagination, while it escapes the somewhat broad, almost Hudibrastic boldness of such tales in verse as "Mrs. Jerningham's Journal"—which, though very original, errs, by failing to mark off definitely enough the lines of verse from those of prose. Mrs. Singleton has also published several volumes of poetry pure and simple.

From a study of these, we come to the conclusion that "Violet Fane" is a singer, and a thinker as well. Her muse not only treasures up observations of life and nature, and turns them to good account; but the "painful riddle of the earth" is much with her. She broods over inequalities in the lot of man—the fortune that deals out wealth to one and poverty to another, with which merit apparently has nought to do. The sorrow for which there is no anodyne, the regret for which there is no remedy, the pain for which there is no salve, and the remorseful remembrance for which there is no nepenthe, insist on being present with her and colouring her life, and consequently her poetry. The ministry of the past to the present—as though the present was the inevitable full-flower of the past—is an idea that comes out in many of her poems. It is the burden of the first of our Selections, titled "Time." Inevitably, therefore, much of "Violet Fane's" poetry is set in a minor key: she is artist enough to relieve this by many devices of metre (of which she has considerable command), her poems flowing with a sense as of easy freedom. Occasionally she essays blank verse, and with more success than has fallen to the lot of many women. Her "Divided," for example, is, even on this account, a very different thing from that of "Jean Ingelow" under the same title: it has touches that are peculiarly her own. On the whole, "Violet Fane" is a poet of some culture and power of graceful impression, with just a tendency to over-facility—a tendency that would be very dangerous to her in leading to diffuseness, were it not that she has ample stores of thought.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS,

VIOLET FANE,

I,—*TIME*.

I.

OF Time what may a poet sing,
Who sees his seasons come and go,
With heart that falters and eyes askance ?
Who reads with sad prophetic glance
The pitiful tale of the dead rose-garden
All folded away in the buds of the spring,
And dreams, awake, of the summer glow,
Whilst snow-flakes fall, and whilst hoar-frosts
 harden,
Yet hopes for nothing from change or chance,—
How may a poet sing, and *know* ?

II.

Let him rise and tune to a mingled measure,
Blood and roses alike bloom red—
Pleasure in pain, and pain in pleasure—
Bitter the hunger, and bitter the bread
Time will tarnish a tawdry treasure,
Turn gold to silver, and silver to lead ;
Rise up and tune to a mingled measure :
Of Time, our master, what may be said ?

III.

Boy and girl, we have played together,
Hearts in slumber, and heads in air—
Maiden trim with the floating feather,
Sailor-lad, with a future clear,
Snatching a kiss as he climbed the stair—
(‘Kiss me,’ he said, on the twilight stair,
Half for pastime, and half in sorrow)—
Sailor-lad, that would sail to-morrow
Out to the uttermost hemisphere.
A few hot tears, and a lock of hair,
And a widowed heart in the summer weather,
A widowed heart for the half of a year,
And the satisfied sense of a secret care,
Whilst squirrels were sporting and thrushes sung,
And the old folks whispered and gossiped together,
Each one snug in an easy-chair,
And murmured low, ‘Beware, beware !
Not a word of this, lest the child should hear ;
Heart of my heart ! it was good to be young !

IV.

Good ships have foundered the whole world over,
For the sea is a grave, and some hearts are sore
For stately ship and for sailor-lover
That never again come back to the shore.
But the maid is a bride, and the bride a mother
(Bud, and blossom, and blown-out flower),
And the new-born lives, one after another,
Are a-dance, like motes, in the sunlit hour ;
But the two arm-chairs stand there as witness,

Though the babes and the sucklings clamber and crow :
 'Tis the nature of all things, in their fitness—
 They were both of them old, it was time they
 should go.'

v.

But *we*—we are young, we have time to linger
 By pleasant pathways from Yule to June,
 So never heed Time, with his warning finger
 And shifting glass ; for it is but noon !
 So pipe and sing to a blithesome tune,
 Though it be as the song of the wandering singer,
 Who loiters awhile, but who does not stay ;
 Or the fatal vow of the faithless lover,
 Who loves, and kisses, and rides away ;
 Or the notes of the nightingale trilling in May,
 Or the chirp of the grasshopper hid in the clover,
 That wists not when they will mow the hay,
 Nor knows when the nightingale's singing is over.

vi.

Yet were it well that these should know ?
 A sorry world if all were wise—
 If all life's finger-posts were plain,
 And all the blind could find their eyes
 To see that Wisdom's self is vain !
 Nay, let the hour unchallenged go,
 For wisdom cometh unaware,
 When, coy at first, as violet hidden,
 Or guest, unto the feast unbidden,
 Death's messenger, the silver hair,
 Glistens alike in brown and gold.
 Alas, old friend, are the sands so low ?
 Alas, my love, it is even so ! . . .
 And can it be that *we* too are old ?

VII.

Yea, sit we down in the old folks' chair,
 And watch we the little ones crow and clamber ;
 We have woven yew-garlands for sunny hair,
 And put out the lights in the bridal chamber ;
 And hand in hand, and with dimming eyes
 Wait we, and watch in the dusk together,
 O love, my love of the summer weather,
 Heart of my heart, who wert once so fair !
 No more of toiling, no more of spinning,
 No more heart-beatings, no more surprise ;
 For the end is foreseen from the first begin-
 ning,
 The castle is fall'n ere its turrets rise—
 Ah, love, my love, it is sad to be wise !

VIII.

But Time, our master, stands winged and hoary,
 And seeming to smile as he whets his blade ;
 Whilst Love is whisp'ring the same old story,
 And Hope seems shrinking and half afraid ;
 For of these the measure of youth is made,
 And the measure of pleasure, the measure of glory
 Which is meted out to a human lot ;
 And so on to the end (and the end draws nearer),
 When our souls may be freer, our senses clearer
 ('Tis an old world creed which is nigh forgot),
 When the eyes of the sleepers may waken in wonder,
 And the hearts may be joined that were riven
 asunder,
 And Time and Love shall be merged—in what ?

II.—DIVIDED.

THEY did not quarrel ; but betwixt them came
Combining circumstances, urging on
Towards the final ending of their loves.
Could they have smote and stung with bitter words,
Then sued for pardon or a blotted page,
And met, and kissed, and dried their mutual tears,
This had not been. But every day the breach
Widened without their knowledge. Time went by,
And led their footsteps into devious paths,
Each one approving, nay, with waving hand
Praying God-speed the other, since both roads
Seemed fair, and led away from sordid things,
And each one urged the other on to fame.
He was a very Cæsar for ambition ;
And she, a simple singer in the woods,—
Athirst for Nature—ever needing her
To crown a holiday, and sanctify
As with a mother's blessing, idle hours.
A bramble-blossom trailing in the way
Seemed more to her than all his talk of Courts
And Kings and Constitutions ; but his aims
Rose far above the soaring of the lark,
That leaves the peeping daisy out of sight.
The State required him, and he could not stay
Loit'ring and ling'ring in the 'primrose path
Of dalliance ;' and so it came to pass,
These two, that once were one, are two again,
And she is lone in spirit, having known
A sweeter thing than pipe of nightingale
Or scent of hawthorn, and yet loving these
And clinging to them still, though desolate,

And, like the lady of the 'Lord of Burleigh ;'
 Lacking the 'Landscape-painter' in her life.
 Thus, all her songs are sad—of withered leaves,
 And blighted hopes, and echoes of the past,
 And early death ; and yet she cannot die,
 But lives and sings, as he, too, lives and climbs,
 Far from the sight of waving meadow-grass ;
 And so they walk divided.

Were it well

So soon to sever such a tender tie,
 With never a reproach and none to blame,
 And not one tear ? With friendly greetings now
 At careless meetings, cold and unforeseen,
 As though no better days had ever dawned ;
 And all—for what ?

Nay, be it for the best !

Who knows, if we love well till we regret
 And sigh, in sadness, for a good thing gone ?
 Thus, all may work to wisdom.

Wherefore, wake

With wind-strewn cuckoo-bloom and daffodil,
 Fond foolish love of spring-tide and hot youth,
 And die when these have perished !

III.—A REVERIE.

BY the side of a ruined terrace
 I sat in the early spring ;
 The leaves were so young that the speckled hen-
 thrush
 Could be seen as she sat in the hawthorn bush,
 Falt'ring and faint at the cuckoo's cry ;
 The cypress looked black against the green
 Of folded chestnut and budding beech,

And up from the slumbering vale beneath
Came now and again the ominous ring
Of a passing bell for a village death.
Yet a spirit of hope went whispering by,
Through the wakening woods, o'er the daisied
mead ;

And up in the stem of the strait Scotch fir
An insolent squirrel, in holiday brush,
Went scampering gaily, at utmost speed,
To gnaw at his fir-apples out of reach.
All seemed so full of life and stir,
Of twitter and twinkle, and shimmer and sheen,
That I closed my book, for I could not read ;
So I sat me down to muse instead,
By the side of the ruined terrace,
In the breath of the early spring.

Alas that the sound of a passing bell,
(Only proclaiming some villager's death),
As it echoes up from the valley beneath,
Should summon up visions of trestle and shroud !
And pity it is that yon marble urn,
Fall'n and broken should seem to tell
Of days that are done with, and may not return
Whatever the future shall chance to be !
Hollow and dead as the empty shell
Of last year's nut as it lies on the grass,
Or the frail laburnum's withered seed,
That hang like felons on gallows-tree :
This is a truth that half aloud
We may but murmur with bated breath :
How many sat as I sit to-day,
In the vanished hours of the olden time,
Watching the Spring in her early prime

Beam, and blossom, and go her way !
Squirrels that sport and doves that coo,
And leaves that twinkle against the blue,
A green woodpecker and screeching jay,
Ye are purposeless things that perish and pass,
Yet you wanton and squander your transient day,—
My soul is sickened at sight of you !
' I had rather be shrouded and coffined and dead '
(To my innermost soul I, sighing, said)
' Than know no pleasure save love and play ! '
Then all seemed so full of the odour of Death
(Though I smelt the gorse-blossom blown from the
heath),
That I opened my book and tried to read,
Since my soul was too saddened to muse instead,
By the side of the ruined terrace,
In the breath of the early spring.

I wonder now if it could be right
For the Great First Cause to let such things be ?
To plan this blending of black and white,—
(I know for myself I had made *all* bright !)
And to mould me, and make me, and set me here,
Without my leave and against my will,
With never so much as a word in mine ear
As to how I may pilot my bark through the night ?
Was it well, I wonder, or was it ill,
That I should feel such a wish to be wise,
And dream of flying, and long for sight,
With faltering footsteps and bandaged eyes,
To be blamed the more that I may not see,
As I stagger about in a wilderness,
And know no more than the worms and the flies ?
I feel at my heart that it is not right—

'Nothing is right and nothing is just ;
We sow in ashes and reap the dust ;
I think, on the whole, I would rather be
The wandering emmet, that loses its way
On the desert-plain of my muslin-dress,
Than be moulded as either woman or man.'
(All this I said in my bitterness.)
'Yet who is to help me and who is to blame ?'
But just at that moment a hurrying sound,
A sound as of hurrying pattering feet,
In the dry leaves under the hawthorn bush,
Troubled the heart of the speckled hen-thrush,
Whilst the love-sick pigeon that called to her mate,
And the green woodpecker and screeching jay,
Outspread their wings and flew scared away ;
And on a sudden, with leap and bound,
My neighbour's collie, marked black and tan,
Sprang panting into the garden seat,
His collar aglow with my neighbour's name !
So my neighbour himself cannot be far,
Ah, I care not now how wrong things are ! . . .
I know I am ignorant, foolish, and small
As this wandering emmet that climbs my dress,
Yet I know that now I had answered 'Yes,'
(Were I asked my will by the Father of all) ;
'I desire to be, I am glad to be born !'
And all because, on a soft May morn,
My neighbour's collie-dog, black and tan,
Leapt over the privet-hedge, and ran
With a rush, and a cry, and a bound to my side,
And because I saw his master ride
(Laying spurs to his willing horse)
Over the flaming yellow gorse.
Awake, my heart ! I may not wait !

Let me arise and open the gate,
To breathe the wild warm air of the heath,
And to let in Love, and to let out Hate,
And anger at living, and scorn of Fate,
To let in Life, and to let out Death,
(For mine ears are deaf to the passing-bell—
I think he is buried now, out of the way ;)
And I say to myself, ' It is good, it is well ;
Squirrels that sport and doves that coo,
And leaves that twinkle against the blue,
And green woodpecker and screeching jay, —
Good-morrow, all ! I am one of you !'
Since now I need neither muse nor read,
I may listen, and loiter, and live instead ;
And take my pleasure in love and play,
And share my pastime with all things gay,
By the side of the ruined terrace,
In the breath of the early spring.

AUTUMN SONGS.

1889.

VIOLET FANE.

I.—THE LAMENT OF A WHITE ROSE.

I GREW beside a garden seat,
Where happy children laugh'd and play'd,
And tender lovers—dreaming—stray'd,
Whilst all my budding breast was sweet ;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose !)

Anon, the children's mirth was o'er,
The tender lovers clung and wept ;
Within the house a mother slept
Her last long sleep, to wake no more ;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose !)

They came and cull'd a funeral wreath,
They pluck'd the white, they spared the red,
They flung me on a straiten'd bed,
On her cold breast who lay in death.
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose !)

They mourn'd and sigh'd in bow'r and hall,
The children cried, the lovers clung ;
A great bell tolled with solemn tongue,
The coffin-lid leant by the wall ;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose !)

They lifted up the coffin-lid,
Strange footsteps echoed on the stair,
Her children came to see her there,
And kiss her ere her face was hid ;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose !)

They wept in hall, they wept in bow'r
 Their tears fell o'er me as they kissed her,
 But the red rose weeps for her own pale sister
 Buried alive 'neath the grey church tow'r.
 (Oh, why was I only a poor white rose !)

II.—SONG.

"Dark tree ! still sad when others' grief is fled,—
 The only constant mourner o'er the dead !"

BYRON.

I WONDER,—will you twine for me
 Sad cypress wreaths when I am dead,
 Or, sentinel,—like yon dark tree,
 Watch, constant, o'er my lonely bed ?

Or will you,—like some forest bird
 Escaped the slumb'ring fowler's snare,
 Plume your free'd wings, and heavenward
 Soar blithely thro' the ambient air ? . . .

Methinks at both my heart would bleed,—
 My spirit-heart, 'neath folded wings,—
 If our poor sexless souls shall heed
 The passing of terrestrial things !

So, choose, my love, some middle way ;—
 At morn,—like falcon fresh and free
 Soar sunwards,—but, at closing day
 Be, sometimes, like the cypress tree ;—

Mute o'er a memory remain
 In centred thought, one little minute,—
 Unclasp one closed-up book again
 And read the story written in it !

Mathilde Blind.

MATHILDE BLIND'S career illustrates the saying that persons exist whom to have known is an education. She has been profoundly influenced by the eminent men she has personally known, since the days when she sat at the feet of Mazzini, as she has told us in reminiscences as remarkable for their good taste and reticence as for their interest. She has also connected her name with women of genius, Madame Roland and George Eliot, of whom she has been the skilful and admiring biographer; and Marie Bashkirtseff, whom she discovered for the English public, and whose journals she has translated with remarkable ability. A traveller, continually on the move from land to land, she has accumulated the impressions derived from many different regions, and many different societies. Yet her original work bears few traces of the impress of other minds. She occupies, indeed, an exceptional place among female poets, alike in her strong points and her weak ones. As a rule, it is the merit of poetesses to be easy and fluent: their fault to go playfully rippling round the difficulties with which they ought to grapple. Miss Blind, on the contrary, seems to compose with difficulty, and to beat out her verses upon the anvil. Cyrene wrestling with the lion will be an apt vignette for her poems when they attain

an illustrated edition. But the lion is thrown. Whatever difficulty it may have cost the authoress to work out her "Prophecy of Oran," or her "The Heather on Fire," the thing is done, and the impression on the reader's mind is nothing short of indelible. If the effect of "The Ascent of Man" is less definite, the cause is the comparative vagueness of the subject, and the necessary absence of the wonderful local colouring of the Highland poems. "Dramas in Miniature," her last publication, deals again with humanity in the concrete, and is full of dramatic passion and lyrical impulse. Miss Blind's feeling for nature is far beyond that which merely prompts clever descriptive passages; her local poems are steeped in a local atmosphere which produces a perfect illusion. The same feeling for nature breathes through her lyrics, whose fault it is to be overcharged with the pictorial element. Her poem "The Sower," from "Poems of the Open Air," may be quoted in this connection.

"The winds had hushed at last as by command ;
 The quiet sky above,
 With its grey clouds spread o'er the fallow land,
 Sat brooding like a dove.

There was no motion in the air, no sound
 Within the tree-tops stirred,
 Save when some last leaf, fluttering to the ground,
 Dropped like a wounded bird :
 Or when the swart rooks in a gathering crowd
 With clamorous noises wheeled,
 Hovering awhile, then swooped with wranglings loud
 Down on the stubbly field.

For now the big-thewed horses, toiling slow
 In straining couples yoked,
 Patiently dragged the ploughshare to and fro
 Till their wet haunches smoked.

Till the stiff acre, broken into clods,
 Bruised by the harrow's tooth,
 Lay lightly shaken, with its humid sods
 Ranged into furrows smooth,
 There looming lone, from rise to set of sun,
 Without or pause or speed,
 Solemnly striding by the furrows dun,
 The sower sows the seed.
 The sower sows the seed, which mouldering,
 Deep coffined in the earth,
 Is buried now, but with the future spring
 Will quicken into birth.
 Oh, poles of birth and death ! Controlling Powers
 Of human toil and need !
 On this fair earth all men are surely sowers,
 Surely all life is seed !
 All life is seed, dropped in Time's yawning furrow,
 Which with slow sprout and shoot,
 In the revolving world's unfathomed morrow,
 Will blossom and bear fruit.

When she does sing as the bird sings, no voice is sweeter ; of all lyrical forms, however, the most congenial to her powerful mind is the grave and weighty sonnet, which it is hardly possible to overload with import. Miss Blind has been far more fortunate than sonnet-writers in general in finding thoughts great enough to fill fourteen lines, and some of her sonnets deserve no meaner praise than that of sublimity. Her besetting fault is one not unlikely to accompany conscious strength : an inattention to finish and polish which frequently annoys the sympathetic reader, and gives a needless handle to petty critics. Miss Blind began to write at a very early age, while still a child filling copy-books with her juvenile efforts in fiction, poetry, and the drama. One of these, "A Tragedy on the Death of Robespierre," secured a word of commenda-

tion from Louis Blanc, the French historian. Her first publication was an article on Shelley, contributed to the *Westminster Review*; her first volume, "The Prophecy of Oran," a narrative poem treating of the story of St. Columba and his disciples and their mission to the Hebrides, was published in 1881. "The Street Children's Dance," one of her most popular poems, appeared in this volume. Her next volume, "The Heather on Fire," a poem which deals with the removal of the Skye Crofters, was published in 1886. About the same time appeared her one novel "Tarantella," a highly imaginative romance, full of life, movement, and poetry, and hitherto far too little known. It would have a better chance if republished at the present day, now that the novel of imaginative incident is asserting its claim against the merely photographic delineation of society. "The Ascent of Man," upon which she had been engaged for many years, followed in 1889. This latter is in many respects her most important work; in it she has endeavoured to describe the evolution of Nature through the ages, showing the development of vegetable and animal life, the growth of man and the progress of society. The first part, "Chants of Life," is a series of wonderfully vivid pictures of this progress from the first germs of life in brute, formless claws, to the realisation of poetic hopes for the future of the world. Two noble sonnets conclude this part, which is followed by "The Pilgrim Soul," an allegory of the redemption wrought through Love, leading up to and concluding with the powerful "Leading of Sorrow" given in the following pages.

RICHARD GARNETT.

THE STREET-CHILDREN'S DANCE.

MATHILDE BLIND.

NOW the earth in fields and hills
Stirs with pulses of the Spring,
Nest embowering hedges ring
With interminable trills ;
Sunlight runs a race with rain,
All the world grows young again.

Young as at the hour of birth :
From the grass the daisies rise
With the dew upon their eyes,
Sun-awakened eyes of earth ;
Fields are set with cups of gold ;
Can this budding world grow old ?

Can the world grow old and sere,
Now when ruddy-tasselled trees
Stoop to every passing breeze,
Rustling in their silken gear ;
Now when blossoms pink and white
Have their own terrestrial light ?

Brooding light falls soft and warm,
Where in many a wind-rocked nest,
Curled up 'neath the she-bird's breast
Clustering eggs are hid from harm ;
While the mellow-throated thrush
Warbles in the purpling bush.

Misty purple bathes the Spring :
Swallows flashing here and there
Float and dive on waves of air,
And make love upon the wing ;
Crocus-buds in sheaths of gold
Burst like sunbeams from the mould.

Chestnut leaflets burst their buds,
Perching tiptoe on each spray,
Springing toward the radiant day,
As the bland, pacific floods
Of the generative sun
All the teeming earth o'errun.

Can this earth run o'er with beauty,
Laugh through leaf and flower and grain,
While in close-pent court and lane,
In the air so thick and sooty,
Little ones pace to and fro,
Weighted with their parents' woe ?

Woe-predestined little ones !
Putting forth their buds of life
In an atmosphere of strife,
And crime-breeding ignorance ;
Where the bitter surge of care
Freezes to a dull despair.

Dull despair and misery
Lie about them from their birth ;
Ugly curses, uglier mirth,
Are their earliest lullaby ;
Fathers have they without name,
Mothers crushed by want and shame.

Brutish, overburthened mothers,
With their hungry children cast
Half-nude to the nipping-blast ;
Little sisters with their brothers
Dragging in their arms all day
Children nigh as big as they.

Children mothered by the street :
Shouting, flouting, roaring after
Passers-by with gibes and laughter,
Diving between horses' feet,
In and out of drays and barrows,
Recklessly like London sparrows.

Mudlarks of our slums and alleys,
All unconscious of the blooming
World behind those housetops looming,
Of the happy fields and valleys,
Of the miracle of Spring
With its boundless blossoming.

Blossoms of humanity !
Poor soiled blossoms in the dust !
Through the thick defiling crust
Of soul-stifling poverty,
In your features may be traced
Childhood's beauty half effaced—

Childhood, stunted in the shadow
Of the light-debarring walls :
Not for you the cuckoo calls
O'er the silver-threaded meadow ;
Not for you the lark on high
Pours his music from the sky.

Ah ! you have your music too !
And come flocking round that player
Grinding at his organ there,
Summer-eyed and swart of hue,
Rattling off his well-worn tunc
On this April afternoon.

Lovely April lights of pleasure
Flit o'er want-beclouded features
Of these little outcast creatures,
As they swing with rhythmic measure,
In the courage of their rags,
Lightly o'er the slippery flags.

Little footfalls, lightly glancing
In a luxury of motion,
Supple as the waves of ocean
In your elemental dancing,
How you fly, and wheel, and spin,
For your hearts, too, dance within.

Dance along with mirth and laughter,
Buoyant, fearless, and elate,
Dancing in the teeth of fate,
Ignorant of your hereafter,
That with all its tragic glooms
Blindly on your future looms.

Past and future, hence away !
Joy, diffused throughout the earth,
Centre in this moment's mirth
Of ecstatic holiday :
Once in all their lives' dark story,
Touch them, Fate ! with April glory.

LOVE-TRILOGY.

MATHILDE BLIND.

I.

SHE stood against the Orient sun,
Her face inscrutable for light ;
A myriad larks in unison
Sang o'er her, soaring out of sight.

A myriad flowers around her feet
Burst flame-like from the yielding sod,
Till all the wandering airs were sweet
With incense mounting up to God.

A mighty rainbow shook, inclined
Towards her, from the Occident,
Girdling the cloud-wrack which enshrined
Half the light-bearing firmament.

Lit showers flashed golden o'er the hills,
And trees flung silver to the breeze,
And, scattering diamonds, flect-foot rills
Fled laughingly across the leas.

Yea Love, the skylarks laud but thee,
And writ in flowers thine awful name ;
Spring is thy shade, dread Ecstasy,
And life a brand which feeds thy flame.

II.

WINDING all my life about thee,
Let me lay my lips on thine ;
What is all the world without thee,
Mine—oh mine !

Let me press my heart out on thee,
 Grape of life's most fiery vine,
 Spilling sacramental on thee
 Love's red wine.

Let thy strong eyes yearning o'er me
 Draw me with their force divine ;
 All my soul has gone before me
 Claspings thine.

If I follow, oh my lover,
 As the shadow follows shine,
 'Tis because my heart's run over
 Full in thine.

Yea, all springs of life in motion,
 O belovèd one, combine,
 Mix as rain drops with the ocean,
 Mine and thine.

III.

I CHARGE YOU, O winds of the West, O winds with
 the wings of the dove,
 That ye seek the beloved of my soul, breathing low
 that I sicken for love.

I charge you, O dews of the Dawn, O tears of the
 star of the morn,
 That ye fall at the feet of my love with the sound of
 one weeping forlorn.

I charge you, O birds of the Air, O birds flying home
 to your nest,
 That ye sing in his ears of the joy that for ever has
 fled from my breast.

I charge you, O flowers of the Earth, O frailest of things, and most fair.

That ye droop in his path as the life in me shrivels consumed by despair.

O Moon, when he lifts up his face, when he seeth the waning of thee,

A memory of her who lies wan on the limits of life let it be.

Many tears cannot quench, nor my sighs extinguish the flames of love's fire,

Which lifteth my heart like a wave, and smites it, and breaks its desire.

I rise like one in a dream when I see the red sun flaring low.

That drags me back shuddering from sleep each morning to life with its woe.

I go like one in a dream, unbidden my feet know the way

To that garden where love stood in blossom with the red and white hawthorn of May.

The song of the throstle is hushed, and the fountain is dry to its core,

The moon cometh up as of old ; she seeks, but she finds him no more.

The pale-faced, pitiful moon shines down on the grass where I weep,

My face to the earth, and my breast in an anguish ne'er soothed into sleep.

The moon returns, and the spring, birds warble, trees burst into leaf,

But Love once gone, goes for ever, and all that endures is the grief.

SONNETS.

MATHILDE BLIND.

I.

THE DEAD.

THE dead abide with us! Though stark and cold
Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still:
They have forged our chains of being for good or ill,
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.
Our perishable bodies are the mould
In which their strong imperishable will—
Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil—
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold.
Vibrations infinite of life in death,
As a star's travelling light survives its star!
So may we hold our lives, than when we are
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
They shall not drag us to their judgment-bar,
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

II.

NIRVANA.

DIVEST thyself, O Soul, of vain desire!
Bid hope farewell, dismiss all coward fears;
Take leave of empty laughter, emptier tears,
And quench, for ever quench, the wasting fire
Wherein this heart, as in a funeral pyre,
Aye burns, yet is consumed not. Years on years,
Moaning with memories in thy maddened ears—
Let at thy word, like refluent waves, retire.
Enter thy soul's vast realm as Sovereign Lord,
And like that angel with the flaming sword,
Wave off life's clinging hands. Then chains will fall
From the poor slave of self's hard tyranny—
And Thou, a ripple rounded by the sea,
In rapture lost be lapped within the All.

THE ASCENT OF MAN.

1889.

MATHILDE BLIND.

(PART III.)

THE LEADING OF SORROW.

“Our spirits have climbed high
By reason of the passion of our grief,—
And from the top of sense, looked over sense
To the significance and heart of things
Rather than things themselves.”

E. B. BROWNING.

THROUGH a twilight land, a moaning region,
Thick with sighs that shook the trembling air,
Land of shadows whose dim crew was legion,
Lost I hurried, hunted by despair.
Quailed my heart like an expiring splendour,
Fitful flicker of a faltering fire,
Smitten chords which tempest-stricken render
Rhythms of anguish from a breaking lyre.
Love had left me in a land of shadows,
Lonely on the ruins of delight,
And I grieved with tearless grief of widows,
Moaned as orphans homeless in the night.
Love had left me knocking at Death's portal—
Shone his star and vanished from my sky—
And I cried: “Since Love, even Love, is mortal,
Take, unmake, and break me; let me die.”
Then, the twilight's grisly veils dividing,
Phantom-like there stole one o'er the plain,
Wavering mists for ever round it gliding
Hid the face I strove to scan in vain.
Spake the veiled one: “Solitary weeper,
'Mid the myriad mourners thou'rt but one:
Come, and thou shalt see the awful reaper,
Evil, reaping all beneath the sun.”

On my hand the clay-cold hand did fasten
As it murmured—"Up and follow me ;
O'er the thickly peopled earth we'll hasten,
Yet more thickly packed with misery."
And I followed : ever in the shadow
Of that looming form I fared along ;
Now o'er mountains, now through wood and meadow,
Or through cities with their surging throng.

With none other for a friend or fellow
Those relentless footsteps were my guide
To the sea-caves echoing with the hollow
Immemorial moaning of the tide.
Laughed the sunlight on the living ocean,
Danced and rocked itself upon the spray,
And its shivered beams in twinkling motion
Gleamed like star-motes in the Milky Way.

Lo, beneath those waters surging, flowing,
I beheld the Deep's fantastic bowers ;
Shapes which seemed alive and yet were growing
On their stalks like animated flowers.
Sentient flowers which seemed to glow and glimmer
Soft as ocean blush of Indian shells,
White as foam-drift in the moony shimmer
Of those sea-lit, wave-pavilioned dells.

Yet even here, as in the fire-eyed panther,
In disguise the eternal hunger lay,
For each feathery, velvet-tufted anther
Lay in ambush waiting for its prey.
Tiniest jewelled fish that flashed like lightning,
Blindly drawn, came darting through the wave,
When, a stifling sack above them tightening,
Closed the ocean-blossom's living grave.

Now we fared through forest glooms primeval
Through whose leaves the light but rarely shone,
Where the buttressed tree-trunks looked coeval
With the time-worn, ocean-fretted stone ;
Where, from stem to stem their tendrils looping,
Coiled the lithe lianas fold on fold,
Or, in cataracts of verdure drooping,
From on high their billowy leafage rolled.

Where beneath the dusky woodland cover,
While the noon-hush holds all living things,
Butterflies of tropic splendour hover
In a maze of rainbow-coloured wings :
Some like stars light up their own green heaven,
Some are spangled like a golden toy,
Or like flowers from their foliage driven
In the fiery ecstasy of joy.

But, the forest slumber rudely breaking,
Through the silence rings a piercing yell ;
At the cry unnumbered beasts, awaking,
With their howls the loud confusion swell.
'Tis the cry of some frail creature panting
In the tiger's lacerating grip ;
In its flesh carnivorous teeth implanting,
While the blood smokes round his wrinkled lip.

'Tis the scream some bird in terror utters,
With its wings weighed down by leaned fears,
As from bough to downward bough it flutters
Where the snake its glistening crest uprears :
Eyes of sluggish greed through rank weeds stealing,
Breath whose venomous fumes mount through the air,
Till benumbed the helpless victim, reeling,
Drops convulsed into the reptile snare.

Now we fared o'er sweltering wastes whose steaming
Clouds of tawny sand the wanderer blind.
Herds of horses with their long manes streaming
Snorted thirstily against the wind ;
O'er the waste they scoured in shadowy numbers,
Gasped for springs their raging thirst to cool,
And, like sick men mocked in fevered slumbers,
Stoop to drink--and find a phantom pool.

What of antelopes crunched by the leopard ?
What if hounds run down the timid hare ?
What though sheep, strayed from the faithful shepherd,
Perish helpless in the lion's lair ?
The all-seeing sun shines on unheeding,
In the night shines the unruffled moon,
Though on earth brute myriads, preying, bleeding,
Put creation harshly out of tune.

Cried I, turning to the shrouded figure—
"Oh, in mercy veil this cruel strife !
Sanguinary orgies which disfigure
The green ways of labyrinthine life.
From the needs and greeds of primal passion,
From the serpent's track and lion's den,
To the world our human hands did fashion,
Lead me to the kindly haunts of men."

And through fields of corn we passed together,
Orange golden in the brooding heat,
Where brown reapers in the harvest weather
Cut ripe swathes of downward rustling wheat.
In the orchards dangling red and yellow,
Clustered fruit weighed down the bending sprays ;
On a hundred hills the vines grew mellow
In the warmth of fostering autumn days.

Through the air the shrilly twittering swallows
Flashed their nimble shadows on the leas ;
Red-flecked cows were glassed in golden shallows,
Purple clover hummed with restless bees.
Herdsmen drove the cattle from the mountain,
To the fold the shepherd drove his flocks,
Village girls drew water from the fountain,
Village yokels piled the full-eared shocks.

From the white town dozing in the valley,
Round its vast Cathedral's solemn shade,
Citizens strolled down the walnut alley
Where youth courted and glad childhood played.
"Peace on earth," I murmured ; "let us linger—
Here the wage of life seems good at least :"
As I spake the veiled One raised a finger
Where the moon broke flowering in the aest.

Faintly muttering from deep mountain ranges,
Muffled sounds rose hoarsely on the night,
As the crash of foundering avalanches
Wakes hoarse echoes in each Alpine height.
Near and nearer sounds the roaring—thunder,
Mortal thunder, crashes through the vale ;
Lightning flash of muskets breaks from under
Groves once haunted by the nightingale.

Men clutch madly at each weapon—women,
Children crouch in cellars, under roofs,
For the town is circled by their foemen—
Shakes the ground with clang of trampling hoofs.
Shot on shot the volleys hiss and rattle,
Shrilly whistling fly the murderous balls,
Fiercely roars the tumult of the battle
Round the hard-contested, dear-bought walls.

Horror, horror! The fair town is burning,
Flames burst forth, wild sparks and ashes fly;
With her children's blood the green earth's turning
Blood-red—blood-red, too, the cloud-winged sky.
Crackling flare the streets: from the lone steeple
The great clock booms forth its ancient chime,
And its dolorous quarters warn the people
Of the conquering troops that march with time.

Fallen lies the fair old town, its houses
Charred and ruined gape in smoking heaps;
Here with shouts a ruffian band carouses,
There an outraged woman vainly weeps.
In the fields where the ripe corn lies mangled,
Where the wounded groan beneath the dead,
Friend and foe, now helplessly entangled,
Stain red poppies with a guiltier red.

There the dog howls o'er his perished master,
There the crow comes circling from afar;
All vile things that batten on disaster
Follow feasting in the wake of war.
Famine follows—what they ploughed and planted
The unhappy peasants shall not reap;
Sickening of strange meats and fever haunted,
To their graves they prematurely creep.

“Hence”—I cried in unavailing pity—
“Let us flee these scenes of monstrous strife,
Seek the pale of some imperial city
Where the law rules starlike o'er man's life”
Straightway floating o'er blue sea and river,
We were plunged into a roaring cloud,
Wherethrough lamps in ague fits did shiver
O'er the surging multitudinous crowd.

Piles of stone, their cliff-like walls uprearing,
 Flashed in luminous lines along the night ;
Jets of flame, spasmodically flaring,
 Splashed black pavements with a sickly light ;
Fabulous gems shone here, and glowing coral,
 Shimmering stuffs from many an Eastern loom,
And vast piles of tropic fruits and floral
 Marvels seemed to mock November's gloom.

But what prowls near princely mart and dwelling,
 Whence through many a thundering thoroughfare
Rich folk roll on cushions softly swelling
 To the week-day feast and Sunday prayer ?
Yea, who prowl there, hunger-nipped and pallid,
 Breathing nightmares limned upon the gloom ?
'Tis but human rubbish, gaunt and squalid,
 Whom their country spurns for lack of room.

In their devious track we mutely follow,
 Mutely climb dim flights of oozy stairs,
Where through gap-toothed, mizzling roof the yellow
 Pestilent fog blends with the fetid air.
Through the unhinged door's discordant slamming
 Ring the gruesome sounds of savage strife—
Howls of babes, the drunken father's damning,
 Counter-cursing of the shrill-tongued wife.

Children feebly crying on their mother
 In a wailful chorus—"Give us food !"
Man and woman glaring at each other
 Like two gaunt wolves with a famished brood.
Till he snatched a stick, and, madly staring,
 Struck her blow and blow upon the head ;
And she, reeling back, gasped, hardly caring—
 "Ah, you've done it now, Jim"—and was dead.

Dead—dead—dead—the miserable creature—
Never to feel hunger's cruel fang
Wring the bowels of rebellious nature
That her infants might be spared the pang.
"Dead! Good luck to her!" The man's teeth chattered,
Stone-still stared he with blank eyes and hard,
Then, his frame with one big sob nigh shattered,
Fled—and cut his throat down in the yard.

Dark the night—the children wail forsaken,
Crane their wrinkled necks and cry for food,
Drop off into fitful sleep, or waken
Trembling like a sparrow's ravished brood.
Dark the night—the rain falls on the ashes,
Feebly hissing on the feeble heat,
Filters through the ceiling, drops in splashes
On the little children's naked feet.

Dark the night—the children wail forsaken—
Is there none, ah, none, to heed their moan?
Yea, at dawn one little one is taken,
Four poor souls are left, but one is gone.
Gone—escaped—flown from the shame and sorrow
Waiting for them at life's sombre gate,
But the hand of merciless to-morrow
Drags the others shuddering to their fate.

But one came—a girlish thing—a creature
Flung by wanton hands 'mid lust and crime—
A poor outcast, yet by right of nature
Sweet as odour of the upland thyme.
Scapegoat of a people's sins, and hunted,
Howled at, hooted to the wilderness,
To that wilderness of deaf hearts, blunted
To the depths of woman's dumb distress.

Jetsam, flotsam of the monster city,
Spurned, defiled, reviled, that outcast came
To those babes that whined for love and pity,
Gave them bread bought with the wage of shame,
Gave them bread, and gave them warm, maternal
Kisses not on sale for any price :
Yea, a spark, a flash of some eternal
Sympathy shone through those haunted eyes,

Ah, perchance through her dark life's confusion,
Through the haste and taste of fevered hours,
Gusts of memory on her youth's pollution
Blew forgotten scents of faded flowers.
And she saw the cottage near the wild wood,
With its lichened roof and latticed panes,
Strayed once more through golden fields of childhood,
Hyacinth dells and hawthorn-scented lanes.

Heard once more the song of nesting thrushes
And the blackbird's long mellifluous note,
Felt once more the glow of maiden blushes
Burn through rosy cheek and milkwhite throat
In that orchard where the apple blossom
Lightly shaken fluttered on her hair,
As the heart was fluttering in her bosom
When her sweetheart came and kissed her there.

Often came he in the lilac-laden
Moonlit twilight, often pledged his word ;
But she was a simple country-maiden,
He the offspring of a noble lord.
Fading lilacs May's farewell betoken,
Fledglings fly and soon forget the nest ;
Lightly may a young man's vows be broken,
And the heart break in a woman's breast.

Gathered like a sprig of summer roses
In the dewy morn and flung away,
To the girl the father's door now closes,
Let her shelter henceforth how she may.
Who will house the miserable mother
With her child, a helpless castaway !
"I, am I the keeper of my brother ?"
Asks smug virtue as it turns to pray !

Lovely are the earliest Lenten lilies,
Primrose pleiads, hyacinthine sheets ;
Stripped and rifled from their pastoral valleys,
See them sold now in the public streets !
Other flowers are sold there besides posies—
Eyes may have the hyacinth's glowing blue,
Rounded cheeks the velvet bloom of roses,
Taper necks the rain-washed lily's hue.

But a rustic blossom ! Love and duty
Bound up in a child whom hunger slays !
Ah ! but one thing still is left her—beauty
Fresh, untarnished yet—and beauty pays.
Beauty keeps her child alive a little,
Then it dies—her woman's love with it—
Beauty's brilliant sceptre, ah, how brittle,
Drags her daily deeper down the pit.

Ruin closes o'er her—hideous, nameless ;
Each fresh morning marks a deeper fall ;
Till at twenty—callous, cankered, shameless,
She lies dying at the hospital.
Drink, more drink, she calls for—her harsh laughter
Grates upon the meekly praying nurse,
Eloquent about her soul's hereafter :
"Souls be blowed !" she sings out with a curse.

And so dies, an unrepenting sinner—
Pitched into her pauper's grave what time
That most noble lord rides by to dinner
Who had wooed her in her innocent prime.
And in after-dinner talk he preaches
Resignation—o'er his burgundy—
Till a grateful public dubs his speeches
Oracles of true philanthropy.

Peace ye call this? Call this justice, meted
Equally to rich and poor alike?
Better than this peace the battle's heated
Cannon-balls that ask not whom they strike!
Better than this masquerade of culture
Hiding strange hyæna appetites,
The frank ravening of the raw-necked vulture
As its beak the senseless carrion smites.

What of men in bondage, toiling blunted
In the roaring factory's lurid gloom?
What of cradled infants starved and stunted?
What of woman's nameless martyrdom?
The all-seeing sun shines on unheeding,
Shines by night the calm, unruffled moon,
Though the human myriads, preying, bleeding,
Put creation harshly out of tune.

“Hence, ah, hence”—I sobbed in quivering passion—
“From these fearful haunts of fiendish men!
Better far the plain, carnivorous fashion
Which is practised in the lion's den.”
And I fled—yet staggering still did follow
In the footprints of my shrouded guide—
To the sea-caves echoing with the hollow
Immemorial moaning of the tide.

Sinking, swelling roared the wintry ocean,
Pitch-black chasms struck with flying blaze,
As the cloud-winged storm-sky's sheer commotion
Showed the blank Moon's mute Medusa face
White o'er wastes of water—surges crashing
Over surges in the formless gloom,
And a mastless hulk, with great seas washing
Her scourged flanks, pitched toppling to her doom.

Through the crash of wave on wave gigantic,
Through the thunder of the hurricane,
My wild heart in breaking shrilled with frantic
Exultation—"Chaos come again!
Yea, let earth be split and cloven asunder
With man's still accumulating curse—
Life is but a momentary blunder
In the cycle of the Universe.

"Yea, let earth with forest-belted mountains,
Hills and valleys, cataracts and plains,
With her clouds and storms and fires and fountains,
Pass with all her rolling sphere contains,
Melt, dissolve again into the ocean,
Ocean fade into a nebulous haze!"
And I sank back without sense or motion
'Neath the blank Moon's mute Medusa face.

Moments, years, or ages passed, when, lifting
Freezing lids, I felt the heavens on high,
And, innumerable as the sea-sands drifting,
Stars unnumbered drifted through the sky.
Rhythmical in luminous rotation,
In dædalian maze they reel and fly,
And their rushing light is Time's pulsation
In his passage through Eternity.

Constellated suns, fresh lit, declining,
Were ignited now, now quenched in space,
Rolling round each other, or inclining
Orb to orb in multi-coloured rays.
Ever showering from their flaming fountains
Light more light on each far-circling earth,
Till life stirred crepuscular seas, and mountains
Heaved convulsive with the throes of birth.

And the noble brotherhood of planets,
Knitted each to each by links of light,
Circled round their suns, nor knew a minute's
Lapse or languor in their ceaseless flight.
And pale moons and rings and burning splinters
Of wrecked worlds swept round their parent spheres,
Clothed with spring or sunk in polar winters
As their sun draws nigh or disappears.

Still new vistas of new stars—far dwindling—
Through the firmament like dewdrops roll,
Torches of the Cosmos which enkindling
Flash their revelation on the soul.
Yea, One spake there—though nor form nor feature
Shown—a Voice came from the peaks of time :—
“Wilt thou judge me, wilt thou curse me, Creature
Whom I raised up from the Ocean slime ?

“ Long I waited—ages rolled o'er ages—
As I crystallized in granite rocks,
Struggling dumb through immemorial stages,
Glacial æons, fiery earthquake shocks.
In fierce throbs of flame or slow upheaval,
Speck by tiny speck, I topped the seas,
Leaped from earth's dark womb, and in primeval
Forests shot up shafts of mammoth trees.

“ Through a myriad forms I yearned and panted,
Putting forth quick shoots in endless swarms—
Giant-hoofed, sharp-tusked, or finned or planted
Writhing on the reef with pinioned arms.
I have climbed from reek of sanguine revels
In Cimmerian wood and thorny wild,
Slowly upwards to the dawnlit levels
Where I bore thee, oh my youngest Child !

“ Oh, my heir and hope of my to-morrow,
I—I draw thee on through fume and fret,
Croon to thee in pain and call through sorrow,
Flowers and stars take for thy alphabet.
Through the eyes of animals appealing,
Feel my fettered spirit yearn to thine,
Who, in storm of will and clash of feeling,
Shape the life that shall be—the divine.

“ Oh, redeem me from my tiger rages,
Reptile greed, and foul hyæna lust ;
With the hero's deeds, the thoughts of sages,
Sow and fructify this passive dust ;
Drop in dew and healing love of woman
On the bloodstained hands of hungry strife,
Till there break from passion of the Human
Morning-glory of transfigured life.

“ I have cast my burden on thy shoulder ;
Unimagined potencies have given
That from formless Chaos thou shalt mould her
And translate gross earth to luminous heaven.
Bear, oh, bear the terrible compulsion,
Flinch not from the path thy fathers trod,
From Man's martyrdom in slow convulsion,
Will be born the infinite goodness—God.”

Ceased the Voice : and as it ceased it drifted
Like the seashell's inarticulate moan ;
From the Deep, on wings of flame uplifted,
Rose the sun rejoicing and alone.
Laughed in light upon the living ocean,
Danced and rocked itself upon the spray,
And its shivered beams in twinkling motion
Gleamed like star-motes of the Milky Way.

And beside me in the golden morning
I beheld my shrouded phantom-guide ;
But no longer sorrow-veiled and mourning—
It became transfigured by my side.
And I knew—as one escaped from prison
Sees old things again with fresh surprise—
It was Love himself, Love re-arisen
With the Eternal shining through his eyes.

LOVE IN EXILE.

MATHILDE BLIND.

“ Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine.”

LORD TENNYSON.

SONGS.

I.

THOU walkest with me as the spirit-light
Of the hushed moon, high o'er a snowy hill,
Walks with the houseless traveller all the night,
When trees are tongueless and when mute the rill,
Moon of my soul, O phantasm of delight,
Thou walkest with me still.

The vestal flame of quenchless memory burns
In my soul's sanctuary. Yea, still for thee
My bitter heart hath yearned, as moonward yearns
Each separate wave-pulse of the clamorous sea :
My Moon of love, to whom for ever turns
The life that aches through me.

II.

I was again beside my Love in dream :
Earth was so beautiful, the moon was shining ;
The muffled voice of many a cataract stream
Came like a love-song, as, with arms entwining,
Our hearts were mixed in unison supreme.
The wind lay spell-bound in each pillared pine,
The tasselled larches had no sound or motion,
As my whole life was sinking into thine—
Sinking into a deep, unfathomed ocean
Of infinite love—uncircumscribed, divine.

Night held her breath, it seemed, with all her stars :
Eternal eyes that watched in mute compassion
Our little lives o'erleap their mortal bars,
Fused in the fulness of immortal passion,
A passion as immortal as the stars.

There was no longer any thee or me ;
No sense of self, no wish or incompleteness ;
The moment, rounded to Eternity,
Annihilated time's destructive fleetness :
For all but love itself had ceased to be.

III.

(iv.)

I would I were the glow-worm, thou the flower,
That I might fill thy cup with glimmering light ;
I would I were the bird, and thou the bower,
To sing thee songs throughout the summer night.

I would I were a pine tree deeply rooted,
And thou the lofty, cloud-beleaguered rock,
Still, while the blasts of heaven around us hooted,
To cleave to thee and weather every shock.

I would I were the rill, and thou the river ;
So might I, leaping from some headlong steep,
With all my waters lost in thine for ever,
Be hurried onwards to the unfathomed deep.

I would--what would I not ? O foolish dreaming !
My words are but as leaves by autumn shed,
That, in the faded moonlight idly gleaming,
Drop on the grave where all our love lies dead.

IV.

(vii.)

Why will you haunt me unawares,
And walk into my sleep,
Pacing its shadowy thoroughfares,
Where long-dried perfume scents the airs,
While ghosts of sorrow creep,
Where on Hope's ruined altarstairs,
With ineffectual beams,
The Moon of Memory coldly glares
Upon the land of dreams ?

My yearning eyes were fain to look
Upon your hidden face ;
Their love, alas ! you could not brook,
But in your own you mutely took
My hand, and for a space
You wrung it till I throbb'd and shook,
And woke with wildest moan
And wet face channelled like a brook
With your tears or my own.

V.

(x.)

On life's long round by chance I found
A dell impearled with dew,
Where hyacinths, gushing from the ground
Lent to the earth heaven's native hue
Of holy blue.

I sought that plot of azure light
Once more in gloomy hours ;
But snow had fallen overnight
And wrapped in mortuary white
My fairy ring of flowers.

VI.

L'ENVOI.

THOU art the goal for which my spirit longs ;
As dove on dove,
Bound for one home, I send thee all my songs
With all my love.

Thou art the haven with fair harbour lights ;
Safe locked in thee,
My heart would anchor after stormful nights
Alone at sea.

Thou art the rest of which my life is fain,
The perfect peace ;
Absorbed in thee the world, with all its pain
And toil, would cease.

Thou art the heaven, to which my soul would go !
O dearest eyes,
Lost in your light you would turn hell below
To Paradise.

Thou all in all for which my heart-blood yearns !
Yea, near or far—
Where the unfathomed ether throbs and burns
With star on star,

Or where, enkindled by the fires of June,
The fresh earth glows,
Blushing beneath the mystical white moon
Through rose on rose—

Thee, thee I see, thee feel in all live things,
Beloved one ;
In the first bird which tremulously sings
Ere peep of sun ;

In the last nestling orphaned in the hedge,
 Rocked to and fro,
When dying summer shudders in the sedge,
 And swallows go ;
When roaring snows rush down the mountain pass,
 March floods with rills,
Or April lightens through the living grass
 In daffodils ;
When popped cornfields simmer in the heat
 With tare and thistle,
And, like winged clouds above the mellow wheat,
 The starlings whistle ;
When stained with sunset the wide moorlands glare
 In the wild weather,
And clouds with flaring craters smoke and flare
 Red o'er red heather ;
When the bent moon, on frostbound midnight's waking,
 Leans to the snow
Like some world-mother whose deep heart is breaking
 O'er human woe.
As the round sun rolls red into the ocean,
 Till all the sea
Glowes fluid gold, even so life's mazy motion
 Is dyed with thee :
For as the wave-like years subside and roll,
 O heart's desire,
Thy soul glows interfused within my soul,
 A quenchless fire.
Yea, thee I feel, all storms of life above,
 Near though afar ;
O thou my glorious morning star of love,
 And evening star.

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