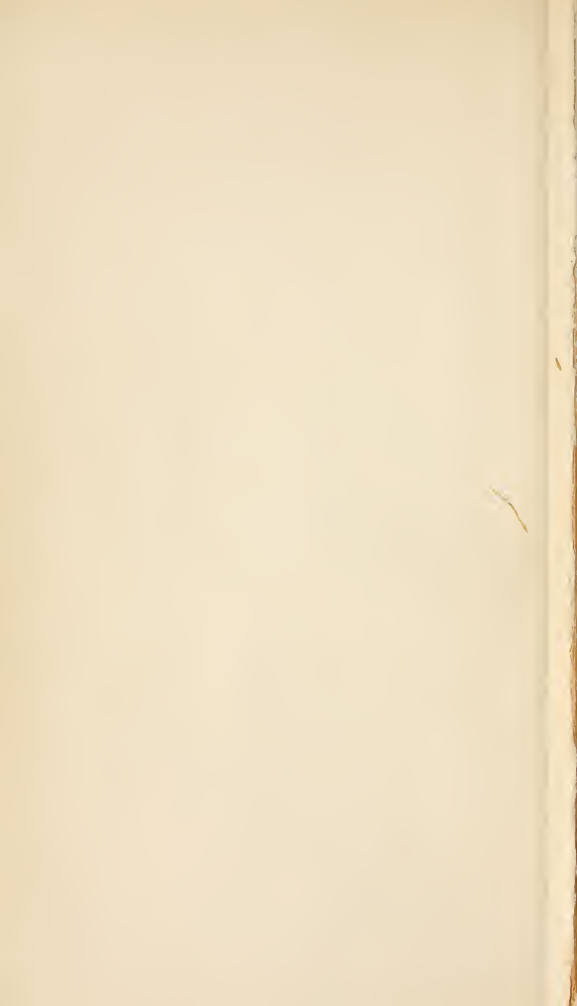


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THE  
POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,

WITH NOTES.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED

BY

G. CUNINGHAM.

ILLUSTRATED ON STEEL

BY G. STANDFAST.

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## PREFACE.

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THE poetry, of Percy Bysshe Shelley, of which a new and carefully collated edition is here presented to the reader, displays the greatest depth of feeling, combined with an excess of refinement sometimes beyond the apprehension of ordinary readers. His command of language was perhaps, as great, as that of any modern poet; but the innate abstractedness of his mind often betrayed him into obscurities of expression which not all the efforts of the reader can at times penetrate. He seems, in many instances to have had a most refined ear for all the touching music of versification, and yet many of his best poems for their moral instructiveness, and chasteness of imagination, would be exceedingly valuable even in prose. There is a charm about his writings, not easily described, which redeems the errors more obvious to criticism, and which will ever render him a favorite with the lover of genuine poetry, though he may never be an object of universal admiration, as well by occasional obscurity, as by certain sentiments which do not accord with prevailing opinions. Yet it is at least honest and becoming in an editor, not to anticipate the public taste and obtrude his own, by culling from the bouquet such flowers as he may deem noxious or unsightly. It is the province of the public to select, from a complete edition, what may best suit every variety of taste and opinion. Had the brief span of Shelley's life been lengthened, there can be no doubt that the efforts of his more matured years would have

outshone in brilliancy even those of his contemporary rivals in the art; and yet the sublimity of many of his ideas, the rich vein of deep thought, and powerful feeling running through most of his productions, may render them perfect studies for the poet.

The poem of "Queen Mab," which has been styled "his glory as a poet, and his shame as a man," was penned at the early age of 18. It contains many parts written in the most gorgeous and masterly style; and for descriptive power, perhaps is not excelled by any poem ever produced: but (as has been well observed) "the titles of the Divine Being are so often indecorously sported with in such outrageous paradoxes, coupled with much that is decidedly vile and detestable, that it may be safely asserted no individual retaining a spark of religious feeling, can ever have that spark extinguished by a perusal of the poem:"—this is an additional reason for retaining it in the present volume; it also contains peculiar and transcendent beauties which it might be deemed culpable to destroy.

# THE CENCI.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter COUNT CENCI  
and CARDINAL CAMILLO.*

*Cam.* THAT matter of the murder is hushed up  
If you consent to yield his Holiness  
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—  
It needed all my interest in the conclave  
To bend him to this point: he said that you  
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;  
That crimes like yours, if once or twice compounded,  
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell  
An erring soul which might repent and live:  
But, that the glory and the interest  
Of the high throne he fills, little consist  
With making it a daily mart of guilt  
As manifold and hideous as the deeds  
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

*Cen.* The third of my possessions—let it go!  
Ah, I once heard the nephew of the Pope  
Had sent his architect to view the ground,  
Meaning to build a villa on my vines  
The next time I compounded with his uncle:  
I little thought he should outwit me so!  
Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see  
That which the vassal threatened to divulge,  
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.  
The deed he saw could not have rated higher  
Than his most worthless life:—it angers me!  
Respited me from Hell!—So may the Devil  
Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,  
And his most charitable nephews, pray  
That the Apostle Peter and the saints  
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy  
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days,  
Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards  
Of their revenue.—But much yet remains  
To which they show no title.

*Cam.* Oh, Count Cenci!  
So much that thou might'st honourably live,

And reconcile thyself with thine own heart,  
 And with thy God, and with the offended world.  
 How hideously look deeds of lust and blood  
 Through those snow-white and venerable hairs!  
 Your children should be sitting round you now,  
 But that you fear to read upon their looks  
 The shame and misery you have written there.  
 Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?  
 Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else  
 Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.  
 Why is she barred from all society  
 But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?  
 Talk with me, Count:—you know I mean you well.  
 I stood beside your dark and fiery youth,  
 Watching its bold and bad career, as men  
 Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked  
 Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now  
 Do I behold you, in dishonoured age,  
 Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.  
 Yet have I ever hoped you would amend,  
 And in that hope have saved your life three times.

*Cen.* For which Aldobrandino owes you now  
 My fief beyond the Pincian. Cardinal,  
 One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,  
 And so we shall converse with less restraint.  
 A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter;  
 He was accustomed to frequent my house;  
 So the next day *his* wife and daughter came  
 And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:  
 I think they never saw him any more.

*Cam.* Thou execrable man, beware!—

*Cen.* Of thee?

Nay, this is idle:—we should know each other.  
 As to my character for what men call crime,  
 Seeing I please my senses as I list,  
 And vindicate that right with force or guile,  
 It is a public matter, and I care not  
 If I discuss it with you. I may speak  
 Alike to you and my own conscious heart;  
 For you give out that you have half reformed me  
 Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent  
 If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.  
 All men delight in sensual luxury,  
 All men enjoy revenge; and most exult  
 Over the tortures they can never feel;  
 Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.  
 But I delight in nothing else. I love  
 The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,  
 When this shall be another's, and that mine.  
 And I have no remorse, and little fear,

Which are, I think, the checks of other men.  
 This mood has grown upon me, until now  
 Any design my captious fancy makes  
 The picture of its wish, and it forms none  
 But such as men like you would start to know,  
 Is as my natural food and rest debarred  
 Until it be accomplished.

*Cam.* Art thou not  
 Most miserable?

*Cen.* Why miserable?—  
 No. I am what your theologians call  
 Hardened; which they must be in impudence,  
 So to revile a man's peculiar taste.  
 True, I was happier than I am, while yet  
 Manhood remained to act the thing I thought;  
 While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now  
 Invention palls: ay, we must all grow old:  
 But that there yet remains a deed to act  
 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite  
 Duller than mine—I'd do,—I know not what.  
 When I was young I thought of nothing else  
 But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:  
 Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees,  
 And I grew tired: yet, till I killed a foe,  
 And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,  
 Knew I not what delight was else on earth,  
 Which now delights me little. I the rather  
 Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals;  
 The dry fixed eyeball, the pale quivering lip,  
 Which tell me that the spirit weeps within  
 Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.  
 I rarely kill the body, which preserves,  
 Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,  
 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear  
 For hourly pain.

*Cam.* Hell's most abandoned fiend  
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,  
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me:  
 I thank my God that I believe you not.

*Enter ANDREA.*

*Andr.* My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca  
 Would speak with you.

*Cen.* Bid him attend me in the grand saloon.

*(Exit Andrea.)*

*Cam.* Farewell; and I will pray  
 Almighty God that thy false, impious words  
 Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee.

*(Exit Camillo.)*

*Cen.* The third of my possessions! I must use  
 Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,

Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday  
 There came an order from the Pope to make  
 Fourfold provision for my cursed sons;  
 Whom I have sent from Rome to Salamanca,  
 Hoping some accident might cut them off;  
 And meaning, if I could, to starve them there.  
 I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!  
 Bernardo and my wife could not be worse  
 If dead and damned:—then, as to Beatrice—

(*Looking around him suspiciously.*)

I think they cannot hear me at that door;  
 What if they should? And yet I need not speak,  
 Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.  
 O, thou most silent air, that shall not hear  
 What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread  
 Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk  
 Of my imperious step, scorning surprise,  
 But not of my intent!—Andrea!

*Enter* ANDREA.

*Andr.* My Lord!

*Cen.* Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber  
 This evening:—no, at midnight, and alone.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE II.

*A Garden of the Cenci Palace. Enter* BEATRICE *and*  
*ORSINO, as in conversation.*

*Beatr.* Pervert not truth,

*Orsino.* You remember where we held  
 That conversation;—nay, we see the spot  
 Even from this cypress;—two long years are past  
 Since, on an April midnight, underneath  
 The moonlight ruins of Mount Palatine,  
 I did confess to you my secret mind.

*Ors.* You said you loved me then.

*Beatr.* You are a priest:

Speak to me not of love.

*Ors.* I may obtain

The dispensation of the Pope to marry.  
 Because I am a priest, do you believe  
 Your image, (as the hunter some struck deer,)  
 Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

*Beatr.* As I have said, speak to me not of love.

Had you a dispensation, I have not;  
 Nor will I leave this home of misery  
 Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady  
 To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,  
 Must suffer what I still have strength to share.  
 Alas, Orsino! All the love that once



I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.  
 Ours was a youthful contract, which you first  
 Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.  
 And thus I love you still, but holily,  
 Even as a sister or a spirit might ;  
 And so I swear a cold fidelity.  
 And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.  
 You have a sly, equivocating vein  
 That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am !  
 Where shall I turn ? Even now you look on me  
 As you were not my friend, and as if you  
 Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles  
 Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.  
 Ah !—No, forgive me ; sorrow makes me seem  
 Sterner than else my nature might have been ;  
 I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,  
 And they forbode,—but what can they forbode  
 Worse than I now endure ?

*Ors.* All will be well.  
 Is the petition yet prepared ? You know  
 My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice ;  
 Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill  
 So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

*Beatr.* Your zeal for all I wish ?—Ah me, you are cold !  
 Your utmost skill—speak but one word—

*(Aside.)* Alas !

Weak and deserted creature that I am,  
 Here I stand bickering with my only friend ! *(To Orsino.)*  
 This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,  
 Orsino ; he has heard some happy news  
 From Salamanca, from my brothers there,  
 And with this outward show of love he mocks  
 His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,  
 For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,  
 Which I have heard him pray for on his knees :  
 Great God ! that such a father should be mine !—  
 But there is mighty preparation made,  
 And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,  
 And all the chief nobility of Rome.  
 And he has bidden me and my pale mother  
 Attire ourselves in festival array.  
 Poor lady ! she expects some happy change  
 In his dark spirit from this act ; I none.  
 At supper I will give you the petition :  
 Till when—farewell.

*Ors.* Farewell.

*(Exit Beatrice.)*

I know the Pope

Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow  
 But by absolving me from the revenue  
 Of many a wealthy see ; and, Beatrice,

I think to win thee at an easier rate.  
 Nor shall he read her eloquent petition:  
 He might bestow her on some poor relation  
 Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister,  
 And I should be debarred from all access.  
 Then, as to what she suffers from her father,  
 In all this there is much exaggeration:  
 Old men are testy, and will have their way;  
 A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,  
 And live a free life as to wine or women,  
 And with a peevish temper may return  
 To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;  
 Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.  
 I shall be well content, if on my conscience  
 There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer  
 From the devices of my love—A net  
 From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear  
 Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,  
 Whose beams anatomize me, nerve by nerve,  
 And lay me bare, and make me blush to see  
 My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl  
 Who clings to me, as to her only hope:—  
 I were a fool, not less than if a panther  
 Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,  
 If she escape me.

(Exit.)

## SCENE III.

*A magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace. A Banquet.*  
 Enter CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO,  
 NOBLES.

*Cen.* Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome, ye  
 Princes and Cardinals, Pillars of the church;  
 Whose presence honours our festivity.  
 I have too long lived like an anchorite,  
 And, in my absence from your merry meetings,  
 An evil word is gone abroad of me;  
 But I do hope that you, my noble friends,  
 When you have shared the entertainment here,  
 And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,  
 And we have pledged a health or two together,  
 Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;  
 Sinful, indeed, for Adam made all so,  
 But tender-hearted, meek, and pitiful.

1. *Guest.* In truth, my lord, you seem too light of heart,  
 Too sprightly and companionable a man,  
 To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.

(To his companion.)

I never saw such blithe and open cheer  
 In any eye!

2. *Guest.* Some most desired event,  
In which we all demand a common joy,  
Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count.

*Cen.* It is indeed a most desired event:  
If, when a parent, from a parent's heart,  
Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all  
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,  
And when he rises up from dreaming it;  
One supplication, one desire, one hope,  
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,  
Even all that he demands in their regard—  
And suddenly, beyond his dearest hope,  
It is accomplished:—he should then rejoice,  
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,  
And task their love to grace his merriment.  
Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

*Beatr.* (*to Lucretia.*) Great God! how horrible!  
Some dreadful ill  
Must have befallen my brothers.

*Lucr.* Fear not, child;  
He speaks too frankly.

*Beatr.* Ah! my blood runs cold.  
I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,  
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

*Cen.* Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;  
Beatrice, read them to your mother. God,  
I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,  
By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.  
My disobedient and rebellious sons  
Are dead!—Why dead!—What means this change of cheer?  
You hear me not, I tell you they are dead:  
And they will need no food nor raiment more:  
The tapers that did light them the dark way  
Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not  
Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.  
Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.

*Beatr.* (*Lucretia sinks, half fainting; Beatrice supports her.*)  
It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.  
Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,  
He would not live to boast of such a boon.  
Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

*Cen.* Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call  
To witness that I speak the sober truth;—  
And whose most favouring Providence was shown  
Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco  
Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,  
When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy;  
The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano  
Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,  
Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;

All in the self-same hour of the same night;  
 Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.  
 I beg those friends who love me, that they mark  
 The day a feast upon their calendars.  
 It was the twenty-seventh of December:  
 Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

*(The assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.)*

1. *Guest.* Oh, horrible! I will depart.—

2. *Guest.* And I.—

3. *Guest.* No, stay!

I do believe it is some jest; though, faith,  
 'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.  
 I think his son has married the Infanta,  
 Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado:  
 'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!  
 I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

*Cen. (Filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up.)*

Oh, thou bright wine, whose purple splendour leaps  
 And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl  
 Under the lamp-light, as my spirits do,  
 To hear the death of my accursed sons!  
 Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,  
 Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,  
 And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell;  
 Who, if a father's curses, as men say,  
 Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,  
 And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,  
 Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art  
 Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,  
 And I will taste no other wine to-night.  
 Here, Andrea! bear the bowl around.

*A Guest. (rising.)*

Thou wretch!

Will none among this noble company  
 Check the abandoned villain?

*Cam.*

For God's sake,

Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,  
 Some ill will come of this.

2. *Guest.* Seize, silence him!

1. *Guest.* I will!

3. *Guest.* And I!

*Cen. (Addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture.)*

Who moves? Who speaks? *(Turning to the company.)*

'Tis nothing,

Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! for my revenge  
 Is as the sealed commission of a king,  
 That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

*(The banquet is broken up; several of the guests are departing.)*

*Beatr.* I do intreat you, go not, noble guests;

What, although tyranny and impious hate  
 Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair?

What if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs  
 Who tortures them, and triumphs?—What, if we,  
 The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,  
 His children and his wife, whom he is bound  
 To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find  
 No refuge in this merciless wide world?  
 Oh, think what deep wrongs must have blotted out  
 First love, the reverence in a child's prone mind,  
 Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! Oh, think!  
 I have born much, and kissed the sacred hand  
 Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke  
 Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!  
 Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt  
 Remained, have sought by patience, love and tears,  
 To soften him; and, when this could not be,  
 I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights,  
 And lifted up to God, the Father of all,  
 Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard,  
 I have still borne —until I meet you here,  
 Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast  
 Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,  
 His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,  
 You soon may share such merriment again  
 As fathers make over their children's graves.  
 Oh! Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman;  
 Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain;  
 Camillo, thou art chief justiciary;  
 Take us away!

*Cen.* (*He has been conversing with Camillo during the first part of Beatrice's speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.*)

I hope my good friends here  
 Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps  
 Of their own throats—before they lend an ear  
 To this wild girl!

*Beatr.* (*Not noticing the words of Cenci.*)

Dare nō one look on me?

None answer? Can one tyrant overbear  
 The sense of many best and wisest men?  
 Or is it that I sue not in some form  
 Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?  
 Oh, God! that I were buried with my brothers!  
 And that the flowers of this departed spring  
 Were fading on my grave! And that my father  
 Were celebrating now one feast for all!

*Cam.* A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;  
 Can we do nothing?—

*Colon.*

Nothing that I see.

Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:  
 Yet I would second any one.

*Card.*

And I.

*Cen.* Retire to your chamber, insolent girl!

*Beatr.* Retire thou, impious man! Ay, hide thyself  
Where never eye can look upon thee more!  
Wouldst thou have honour and obedience,  
Who art a torturer? Father, never dream,  
That thou mayest overbear this company,  
But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me!  
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks  
My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!  
Cover thy face from every living eye,  
And start if thou but hear a human step:  
Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,  
Bow thy white head before offended God,  
And we will kneel around, and fervently  
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

*Cen.* My friends, I do lament this insane girl  
Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.  
Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer  
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.

Another time— *(Exeunt all but Cenci and Beatrice.)*

My brain is swimming around;  
Give me a bowl of wine!

*(To Beatrice.)* Thou painted viper!  
Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!  
I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,  
Now get thee from my sight! *(Exit Beatrice.)*

Here, Andrea,  
Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said  
I would not drink this evening, but I must;  
For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail  
With thinking what I have decreed to do. *(Drinking the wine.)*  
Be thou the resolution of quick youth  
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,  
And age's firm, cold, subtle villany;  
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood  
Which I did thirst to drink. The charm works well;  
It must be done, it shall be done, I swear! *(Exit.)*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

*An apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter LUCRETIA and  
BERNARDO.*

*Lucr.* Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me,  
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he  
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.  
Oh, God Almighty, do thou look down upon us,  
We have no other friend but only thee!

Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,  
I am not your true mother.

*Ber.* Oh, more, more  
Than ever mother was to any child,  
That have you been to me! Had he not been  
My father do you think that I should weep?

*Lucr.* Alas! poor boy, what else couldst thou have done!

*Enter BEATRICE.*

*Beatr. (in a hurried voice.)*

Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?  
Ah! no, that is his step upon the stairs;  
'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;  
Mother, if I to thee have ever been  
A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,  
Whose image upon earth a father is,  
Dost thou indeed abandon me? He comes;  
The door is opening now; I see his face;  
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,  
Even as he did after the feast last night.

*Enter a Servant.*

Almighty God, how merciful thou art!  
'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

*Serv.* My master bids me say, the Holy Father  
Has sent back your petition thus unopened. (*Giving a paper.*)  
And he demands at what hour 'twere secure  
To visit you again?

*Lucr.* At the Ave Mary. (*Exit Servant*)  
So, daughter, our last hope has failed; ah me,  
How pale you look! you tremble, and you stand  
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,  
As if one thought were over strong for you:  
Your eyes have a chill glare; oh, dearest child!  
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

*Beatr.* You see I am not mad; I speak to you.

*Lucr.* You talked of something that your father did  
After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse  
Than when he smiled, and cried, My sons are dead!  
And every one looked in his neighbour's face  
To see if others were as white as he?  
At the first word he spoke, I felt the blood  
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;  
And when it past I sat all weak and wild;  
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words  
Check'd his unnatural pride; and I could see  
The devil was rebuked that lives in him.  
Until this hour thus you have ever stood  
Between us and your father's moody wrath  
Like a protecting presence: your firm mind  
Has been our only refuge and defence:  
What can have thus subdued it? What can now

Have given you that cold melancholy look,  
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

*Beatr.* What is it that you say? I was just thinking  
'T were better not to struggle any more.

Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,  
Yet never—Oh! before worse comes of it,  
'T were wise to die: it ends in that at last.

*Lucr.* Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once  
What did your father do or say to you?  
He stayed not after that accursed feast  
One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

*Ber.* O, sister, sister, prithee speak to us!

*Beatr.* (*Speaking very slowly, with a forced calmness.*)  
It was one word, mother, one little word;  
One look, one smile. (*wildly.*)

Oh! he has trampled me  
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down  
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all  
Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh  
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,  
And we have eaten. He has made me look  
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust  
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,  
And I have never yet despaired—but now!  
What would I say? (*Recovering herself.*)

Ah! no, 'tis nothing new.

The sufferings we all share have made me wild:  
He only struck and cursed me as he passed;  
He said, he looked, he did,—nothing at all  
Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.  
Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,  
I should preserve my senses for your sake.

*Lucr.* Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl.  
If any one despairs it should be I,  
Who loved him once, and now must live with him  
Till God in pity call for him or me.  
For you may, like your sister, find some husband,  
And smile, years hence, with children round your knees;  
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil,  
Shall be remembered only as a dream.

*Beatr.* Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.  
Did you not nurse me when my mother died?  
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy?  
And had we any other friend but you  
In infancy, with gentle words and looks,  
To win our father not to murder us?  
And shall I now desert you? May the ghost  
Of my dead mother plead against my soul,  
If I abandon her who filled the place  
She left, with more even than a mother's love!



*Ber.* And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed  
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,  
Even though the Pope should make me free to live  
In some blithe place, like others of my age,  
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.  
Oh, never think that I will leave you, mother!

*Lucr.* My dear, dear children!

*Enter CENCI, suddenly.*

*Cen.* What, Beatrice here!  
Come hither! *(She shrinks back, and covers her face.)*  
Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair:

Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look  
With disobedient insolence upon me,  
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow  
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide  
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

*Beatr.* *(Wildly staggering towards the door.)*  
Oh, that the earth would gape! Hide me, O God!

*Cen.* Then it was I whose inarticulate words  
Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps  
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.  
Stay, I command you; from this day and hour  
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,  
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,  
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,  
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;  
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber!  
Thou, too, loathed image of thy cursed mother, *(To Ber.)*  
Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!

*(Exit Beatr. and Ber.)*

*(Aside.)* So much has pass'd between us as must make  
Me bold, her fearful. 'Tis an awful thing  
To touch such mischief as I now conceive:  
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,  
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in—  
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

*Lucr.* *(Advancing timidly towards him.)*  
O husband, pray forgive poor Beatrice;  
She meant not any ill.

*Cen.* Nor you perhaps?  
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote  
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?  
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred  
Enmity up against me with the Pope?  
Whom in one night merciful God cut off:  
Innocent lambs! they thought not any ill.  
You were not here conspiring? You said nothing  
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;  
Or be condemned to death for some offence,

And you would be the witness?—This failing,  
 How just it were to hire assassins, or  
 Put sudden poison in my evening drink?  
 Or smother me when overcome by wine?  
 Seeing we had no other judge but God,  
 And he had sentenced me, and there were none  
 But you to be the executioners  
 Of his decree enregistered in heaven?  
 Oh, no! You said not this?

*Lucr.* So help me God,  
 I never thought the things you charge me with!

*Cen.* If you dare speak that wicked lie again,  
 I'll kill you. What! it was not by your counsel  
 That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?  
 You did not hope to stir some enemies  
 Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn  
 What every nerve of you now trembles at?  
 You judged that men were bolder than they are:  
 Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

*Lucr.* Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation,  
 I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;  
 Nor do I think she designed any thing,  
 Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

*Cen.* Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!  
 But I will take you where you may persuade  
 The stones you tread on to deliver you:  
 For men shall there be none but those who dare  
 All things; not question that which I command.  
 On Wednesday next I shall set out; you know  
 That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella?  
 'Tis safely walled, and moated round about  
 Its dungeons under ground, and its thick towers,  
 Never told tales; though they have heard and seen  
 What might make dumb things speak. Why do you linger?  
 Make speediest preparation for the journey! (*Exit Lucretia.*)  
 The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear  
 A busy stir of men about the streets;  
 I see the bright sky through the window panes:  
 It is a garish, broad, and peering day;  
 Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears;  
 And every little corner, nook, and hole,  
 Is penetrated with the insolent light.  
 Come, darkness!—Yet, what is the day to me?  
 And wherefore should I wish for night, who do  
 A deed which shall confound both day and night?  
 'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist  
 Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven,  
 She shall not dare to look upon its beams,  
 Nor feel its warmth. Let her, then, wish for night;  
 The act I think shall soon extinguish all

For me : I bear a darker, deadlier gloom  
 Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,  
 Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,  
 In which I walk secure and unbeheld  
 Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done! (Exit.)

## SCENE II.

*A Chamber in the Vatican. Enter CAMILLO and GIACOMO, in conversation.*

*Cam.* There is an obsolete and doubtful law,  
 By which you might obtain a bare provision  
 Of food and clothing—

*Giac.* Nothing more? Alas!  
 Bare must be the provision which strict law  
 Awards, and aged sullen avarice pays.  
 Why did my father not apprentice me  
 To some mechanic trade? I should have then  
 Been trained in no high-born necessities  
 Which I could meet not by my daily toil.  
 The eldest son of a rich nobleman  
 Is heir to all his incapacities;  
 He has wide wants and narrow powers. If you,  
 Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once  
 From thrice-driven beds of down and delicate food,  
 A hundred servants and six palaces,  
 To that which nature doth indeed require——

*Cam.* Nay, there is reason in your plea; 't were hard.

*Giac.* 'T is hard for a firm man to bear : but I  
 Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,  
 Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father,  
 Without a bond or witness to the deed :  
 And children, who inherit her fine senses,  
 The fairest creatures in this breathing world ;  
 And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,  
 Do you not think the Pope would interpose,  
 And stretch authority beyond the law?

*Cam.* Though your peculiar case is hard, I know  
 The Pope will not divert the course of law.  
 After that impious feast the other night,  
 I spoke with him, and urged him then to check  
 Your father's cruel hand ; he frowned, and said  
 " Children are disobedient, and they sting  
 Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,  
 Requiring years of care with contumely.  
 I pity the Count Cenci from my heart ;  
 His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,  
 And thus he is exasperated to ill.  
 In the great war between the old and young,

I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,  
Will keep at least blameless neutrality."

*Enter ORSINO.*

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.

*Ors.* What words?

*Giac.* Alas, repeat them not again!

There then is no redress for me; at least  
None but that which I may achieve myself,  
Since I am driven to the brink. But say,  
My innocent sister and my only brother  
Are dying underneath my father's eye.  
The memorable torturers of this land,  
Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,  
Never inflicted on their meanest slave  
What these endure; shall they have no protection?

*Cam.* Why, if they would petition to the Pope,  
I see not how he could refuse it—yet  
He holds it of most dangcrous example  
In aught to weaken the paternal power,  
Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.  
I pray you now excuse me. I have business  
That will not bear delay. *(Exit Camillo.)*

*Giac.* But you, Orsino,  
Have the petition: wherefore not present it?

*Ors.* I have presented it, and backed it with  
My earnest prayers and urgent interest;  
It was returned unanswered. I doubt not  
But that the strange and execrable deeds  
Alleged in it (in truth, they might well baffle  
Any belief) have turned the Pope's displeasure  
Upon the accusers from the eriminal:  
So I should guess from what Camillo said.

*Giac.* My friend, that palace-walking devil, Gold,  
Has whispered silence to his Holiness,  
And, being left as scorpions ringed with fire,  
What should we do but strike ourselves to death?  
For he who is our murderous persecutor  
Is shielded by a father's holy name,  
Or I would—— *(Stops abruptly.)*

*Ors.* What? Fear not to speak your thought.  
Words are but holy as the deeds they cover:  
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;  
A judge who makes the truth weep at his decree;  
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,  
But as the mantle of some selfish guile:  
A father who is all a tyrant seems,  
Were the profaner for his sacred name.

*Giac.* Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain  
Feigns often what it would not: and we trust

Imagination with such fantasies  
 As the tongue dares not fashion into words ;  
 Which have no words, their horror makes them dim  
 To the mind's eye. My heart denies itself  
 To think what you demand.

*Ors.* But a friend's bosom  
 Is as the inmost cave of our own mind,  
 Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,  
 And from the all-communicating air.  
 You look what I suspected.

*Giac.* Spare me, now!  
 I am as one lost in a midnight wood,  
 Who dares not ask some harmless passenger  
 The path across the wilderness, lest he,  
 As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.  
 I know you are my friend, and all I dare  
 Speak to my soul, that will I trust with thee.  
 But now my heart is heavy, and would take  
 Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.  
 Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!  
 I would that to my own suspected self  
 I could address a word so full of peace.

*Ors.* Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.

(*Exit Giacomo.*)

I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo  
 To feed his hope with cold encouragement:  
 It fortunately serves my close designs  
 That 'tis a trick of this same family  
 To analyse their own and other minds.  
 Such self-anatomy shall teach the will  
 Dangerous secrets; for it tempts our powers,  
 Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,  
 Into the depth of darkest purposes:  
 So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,  
 Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,  
 And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,  
 Shew a poor figure to my own esteem,  
 To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do  
 As little mischief as I can: that thought  
 Shall fee the accuser conscience.

(*After a pause.*)

Now what harm  
 If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,  
 Wherefore by me? and what if I could take  
 The profit, yet omit the sin and peril  
 In such an action? Of all earthly things  
 I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;  
 And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives,  
 His daughter's dowry were a secret grave,  
 If a priest wins her.—O fair Beatrice!  
 Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee,

Could but despise danger and gold, and all  
 That frowns between my wish and its effect,  
 Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape!  
 Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,  
 And follows me to the resort of men,  
 And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,  
 So, when I awake, my blood seems liquid fire;  
 And if I strike my damp and dizzy head,  
 My hot palm scorches it: her very name,  
 But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart  
 Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably  
 I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights,  
 Till weak imagination half possesses  
 The self-created shadow. Yet much longer  
 Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:  
 From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo  
 I must work out my own dear purposes.  
 I see, as from a tower, the end of all:  
 Her father dead; her brother bound to me  
 By a dark secret, surer than the grave;  
 Her mother scared and unexpostulating,  
 From the dread manner of her wish achieved:  
 And she!—Once more take courage, my faint heart;  
 What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee?  
 I have such foresight as assures success:  
 Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,  
 When dread events are near, stir up men's minds  
 To black suggestions; and he prospers best,  
 Not who becomes the instrument of ill,  
 But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes  
 Its empire add its prey of other hearts,  
 Till it become his slave—as I will do.

(Exit.)

ACT III. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.* LUCRETIA; to her enter  
BEATRICE.

*Beatr.* (She enters staggering, and speaks wildly.)  
 Reach me the handkerchief!—My brain is hurt;  
 My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me—  
 I see but indistinctly:—

*Lucr.* My sweet child,  
 You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew  
 That starts from your dear brow—Alas! alas!  
 What has befallen?

*Beatr.* How comes this hair undone?  
 Its wandering strings must be what blind me,  
 And yet I tied it fast.—O horrible!  
 The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls  
 Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,

And standing calm and motionless, whilst I  
Slide giddily as the world reels—My God!  
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood!  
The sunshine on the floor is black! The air  
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe  
In charnel pits!—Pah! I am choked! There creeps

A clinging, black, contaminating mist  
About me—'tis substantial, heavy, thick;  
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues  
My fingers and my limbs to one another,  
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves  
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning  
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!  
My God! I never knew what the mad felt  
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!

(*More wildly.*)

No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs  
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul,  
Which would burst forth into the wandering air! (*A pause.*)  
What hideous thought was that I had e'en now?  
'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here  
O'er these dull eyes—upon this weary heart!  
O world! O life! O day! O misery!

*Lucr.* What ails thee, my poor child?—She answers not;  
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,  
But not its cause; suffering has dried away  
The source from which it sprung.

*Beatr. (frantically.)* Like parricide—  
Misery has killed its father: yet its father  
Never like mine—O God! what thing am I?

*Lucr.* My dearest child, what has your father done?

*Beatr. (doubtfully.)* Who art thou, questioner? I have no father  
(*Aside.*) She is the mad-house nurse, who tends on me.  
It is a piteous office.

(*To Lucretia, in a slow subdued voice.*) Do you know

I thought I was that wretched Beatrice  
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales  
From hall to hall by the entangled hair;  
At others, pens up naked in damp cells,  
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,  
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story  
So did I overact in my sick dreams,  
That I imagined—no, it cannot be!

Horrible things have been in this wild world,  
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange,  
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived  
Than ever there was found a heart to do.

But never fancy imagined such a deed

As—

(*Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.*)

Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die

With fearful expectation, that indeed

Thou art not what thou seemest—Mother!

*Lucr.* Oh!

My sweet child, know you—

*Beat.* Yet speak it not:

For then if this be truth, that other too  
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,  
Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,  
Never to change, never to pass away.

Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;

Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice.

I have talked some wild words, but will no more.

Mother, come near me: from this point of time,

I am—

*(Her voice dies away faintly.)*

*Lucr.* Alas! what has befallen thee, child?

What has thy father done?

*Beatr.*

What have I done?

Am I not innocent? Is it my crime

That one with white hair, and imperious brow,

Who tortured me from my forgotten years,

As parents only dare, should call himself

My father, yet should be!—Oh, what am I?

What name, what place, what memory, shall be mine?

What retrospects, outliving even despair?

*Lucr.* He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:

We know that death alone can make us free:

His death or ours. But what can he have done

Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?

Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth

A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me;

Unlock those pallid hands, whose fingers twine

With one another.

*Beatr.*

'Tis the restless life

Tortured within them. If I try to speak,

I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;

What, yet I know not—something which shall make

The thing that I have suffered but a shadow

In the dread lightning which avenges it;

Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying

The consequence of what it cannot cure.

Some such thing is to be endured or done:

When I know what, I shall be still and calm,

And never anything will move me more.

But now!—O blood, which art my father's blood,

Circling through these contaminated veins!

If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,

Could wash away the crime and punishment

By which I suffer—no, that cannot be!

Many might doubt there were a God above,

Who sees and permits evil, and so die:

That faith no agony shall obscure in me.



*Lucr.* It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;  
Yet what, I dare not guess. O my lost child!  
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief  
Thy sufferings from my fear.

*Beatr.* I hide them not.  
What are the words which you would have me speak?  
I, who can feign no image in my mind  
Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought  
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up  
In its own formless horror: of all words,  
That minister to mortal intercourse,  
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell  
My misery: if another ever knew  
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,  
And left it, as I must, without a name.  
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee  
A punishment and a reward.—Oh, which  
Have I deserved?

*Lucr.* The peace of innocence,  
Till in your season you be called to heaven.  
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done  
No evil. Death must be the punishment  
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down  
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path  
Which leads us to immortality.

*Beatr.* Ay, death—  
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,  
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.  
If I must live day after day, and keep  
These limbs, the unworthy temple of thy spirit,  
As a foul den from which what thou abhorrest  
May mock thee, unavenged—it shall not be!  
Self murder?—no, that might be no escape,  
For thy decree yawns like a Hell between  
Our will and it. Oh! in this mortal world  
There is no vindication and no law  
Which can adjudge and execute the doom  
Of that through which I suffer.

*Enter ORSINO.*

(*She approaches him solemnly.*) Welcome, friend!  
I have to tell you that, since last we met,  
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,  
That neither life nor death can give me rest.  
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds  
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

*Ors.* And what is he who has thus injured you?

*Beatr.* The man they call my father: a dread name.

*Ors.* It cannot be—

*Beatr.* What it can be, or not,

Forbid to think. It is, and it has been ;  
 Advise me how it shall not be again.  
 I thought to die ; but a religious awe  
 Restrains me, and the dread least death itself  
 Might be no refuge from the consciousness  
 Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak !

*Ors.* Accuse him of the deed, and let the law  
 Avenge thee.

*Beatr.* O ice-hearted counsellor !  
 If I could find a word that might make known  
 The crime of my destroyer ; and that done,  
 My tongue should, like a knife, tear out the secret  
 Which cankers my heart's core : ay, lay all bare,  
 So that my unpolluted fame should be  
 With vilest gossips a stale mouthed story ;  
 A mock, a byword, an astonishment :—  
 If this were done, which never shall be done,  
 Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,  
 And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,  
 Baffling belief, and overpowering speech :  
 Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapt  
 In hideous hints—O most assured redress !

*Ors.* You will endure it then ?

*Beatr.* Endure ! Orsino,  
 It seems your counsel is small profit.  
 (*Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.*) Ay,  
 All must be suddenly resolved and done.  
 What is this undistinguishable mist  
 Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,  
 Darkening each other ?

*Ors.* Should the offender live ?  
 Triumph in his misdeed ? and make, by use,  
 His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,  
 Thine element ; until thou mayest become  
 Utterly lost ; subdued even to the hue  
 Of that which thou permittest ?

*Beatr.* (*To herself.*) Mighty death !  
 Thou double-visaged shadow ! Only judge !  
 Rightfullest arbiter ! (*She retires absorbed in thought.*)

*Lucr.* If the lightning  
 Of God has e'er descended to avenge—

*Ors.* Blaspheme not ! His high Providence commits  
 Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs  
 Into the hands of men ; if they neglect  
 To punish crime—

*Lucr.* But if one, like this wretch,  
 Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power—  
 If there be no appeal to that which makes  
 The guiltiest tremble ? if, because our wrongs,  
 For that they are unnatural, strange, and monstrous,

Exceed all measure of belief?—O God!  
 If, for the very reasons which should make  
 Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs—  
 And we, the victims, bear worse punishment  
 Than that appointed for their torturer?—

*Ors.* Think not

But that there is redress where there is wrong,  
 So we be bold enough to seize it.

*Lucr.* How?

If there were any way to make all sure,  
 I know not—but I think it might be good  
 To—

*Ors.* Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;  
 For it is such, as I but faintly guess,  
 As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her  
 Only one duty, how she may avenge:  
 You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;  
 Me, but one counsel—

*Lucr.* For we cannot hope  
 That aid, or retribution, or resource,  
 Will arise thence, where every other one  
 Might find them with less need.

(*Beatrice advances.*)

*Ors.* Then—

*Beatr.* Peace, Orsino!—

And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray  
 That you put off, as garments overworn,  
 Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,  
 And all the fit restraints of daily life,  
 Which have been borne from chidhood, but which now  
 Would be a mockery to my holier plea.  
 As I have said, I have endured a wrong,  
 Which, though it be expressionless, is such  
 As asks atonement, both for what is past,  
 And lest I be reserved, day after day,  
 To load with crimes an overburthened soul,  
 And be—what ye can dream not. I have prayed  
 To God, and I have talked with my own heart,  
 And have unravelled my entangled will,  
 And have at length determined what is right.  
 Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?  
 Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

*Ors.* I swear

To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,  
 My silence, and whatever else is mine,  
 To thy commands.

*Lucr.* You think we should devise  
 His death?

*Beatr.* And execute what is devised,  
 And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

*Ors.* And yet most cautious.

*Lucr.* For the jealous laws  
Would punish us with death and infamy  
For that which it became themselves to do.

*Beatr.* Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,  
What are the means?

*Ors.* I know two dull fierce outlaws,  
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they  
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,  
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood  
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell  
What we now want.

*Lucr.* To-morrow, before dawn,  
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,  
Petrella, in the Apulian Appennines.  
If he arrive there—

*Beatr.* He must not arrive.

*Ors.* Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

*Lucr.* The sun will scarce be set.

*Beatr.* But I remember

Two miles on this side of the fort, the road  
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,  
And winds with short turns down the precipice;  
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,  
Which has, from unimaginable years,  
Sustained itself with terror and with toil  
Over a gulph, and with the agony  
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;  
Even as a wretched soul, hour after hour,  
Clings to the mass of life, yet clinging, leans;  
And, leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss  
In which it fears to fall,—beneath this crag  
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,  
The melancholy mountain yawns; below,  
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent  
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge  
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,  
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,  
Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair  
Is matted in one solid roof of shade  
By the dark ivy's twine. At noon-day here  
'Tis twilight, and at sunset, blackest night.

*Ors.* Before you reach that bridge, make some excuse  
For spurring on your mules, or loitering  
Until—

*Beatr.* What sound is that?

*Lucr.* Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step;  
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly  
Returned.—Make some excuse for being here.

*Beatr.* (To Orsino, as she goes out.)  
That step we hear approach must never pass

The bridge of which we spoke. (*Exeunt Lucretia and Beatrice.*)

*Ors.* What shall I do?

Cenci must find me here, and I must bear  
The imperious inquisition of his looks  
As to what brought me hither: let me mask  
Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

*Enter GIACOMO, in a hurried manner.*

How! Have you ventured thither? Know you then  
That Cenci is from home?

*Giac.* I sought him here,  
And now must wait till he returns.

*Ors.* Great God!  
Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

*Giac.* Ay,

Does my destroyer know his danger? We  
Are now no more, as once, parent and child,  
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed,  
The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe.  
He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,  
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;—  
And I spurn both. It is a father's throat  
Which I will shake, and say I ask not gold;  
I ask not happy years; nor memories  
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;  
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;  
But only my fair fame; only one hoard  
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,  
Under the penury heaped on me by thee;  
Or I will—God can understand and pardon,  
Why should I speak with man?

*Ors.* Be calm, dear friend.

*Giac.* Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.

This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,  
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,  
And then denied the loan; and left me so  
In poverty, the which I sought to mend  
By holding a poor office in the state.  
It had been promised to me, and already  
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,  
And my wife smiled, and my heart knew repose;  
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,  
Conferred this office on a wretch whom thus  
He paid for vilest service. I returned  
With this ill news, and we sat sad together  
Solacing our despondency with tears  
Of such affection and unbroken faith  
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,  
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,  
Mocking our poverty, and telling us

Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.  
 And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,  
 I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coined  
 A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted  
 The sum in secret riot; and he saw  
 My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.  
 And when I knew the impression he had made,  
 And felt my wife insult with silent scorn  
 My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,  
 I went forth too: but soon returned again;  
 Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught  
 My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,  
 "Give us clothes, father! give us better food;  
 What you in one night squander were enough  
 For months!" I looked, and saw that home was hell.  
 And to that hell will I return no more,  
 Until mine enemy has rendered up  
 Atonement, or, as he gave life to me,  
 I will, reversing nature's law—

*Ors.* Trust me,  
 The compensation which thou seekest here  
 Will be denied.

*Giac.* Then—Are you not my friend?  
 Did you not hint at the alternative,  
 Upon the brink of which you see I stand,  
 The other day when we conversed together?  
 My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,  
 Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

*Ors.* It must be fear itself, for the bare word  
 Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God  
 Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,  
 So sanctifying it: what you devise  
 Is, as it were, accomplished.

*Giac.* Is he dead?

*Ors.* His grave is ready. Know that since we met  
 Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

*Giac.* What outrage?

*Ors.* That she speaks not, but you may  
 Conceive such half conjectures as I do,  
 From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief  
 Of her stern brow, bent on the idle air,  
 And her severe unmodulated voice,  
 Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last  
 From this; that, whilst her step-mother and I,  
 Bewildered in our horror, talked together  
 With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood,  
 And darkly guessing, stumbling in our talk  
 Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,  
 She interrupted us, and with a look  
 Which told, before she spoke it, he must die!—

*Giac.* It is enough. My doubts are well appeased.  
 There is a higher reason for the act  
 Than mine; there is a holier judge than I,  
 A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,  
 Who, in the gentleness of thy sweet youth,  
 Has never trodden on a worm, or bruised  
 A living flower, but thou hast pitied it  
 With needless tears!—fair sister, thou in whom  
 Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom  
 Did not destroy each other!—is there made  
 Ravage of thee? O heart, I ask no more  
 Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,  
 Till he return, and stab him at the door?

*Ors.* Not so; some accident might interpose  
 To rescue him from what is now most sure;  
 And you are unprovided where to fly,  
 How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:  
 All is contrived; success is so assured  
 That—

*Enter BEATRICE.*

*Beatr.* 'Tis my brother's voice! You know me not?

*Giac.* My sister, my lost sister!

*Beatr.* Lost, indeed!

I see Orsino has talked with you, and  
 That you conjecture things too horrible  
 To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,  
 He might return; yet kiss me; I shall know  
 That then thou hast consented to his death.  
 Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,  
 Brotherly love, justice, and clemency,  
 And all things that make tender hardest hearts,  
 Make thine hard, brother. Answer not: farewell.

*(Exeunt severally.)*

SCENE II.

*A mean apartment in GIACOMO's house. GIACOMO alone.*

*Giac.* 'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

*(Thunder, and the sound of a storm.)*

What! can the everlasting elements  
 Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft  
 Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall  
 On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep:  
 They are now living in unmeaning dreams:  
 But I must wake, still doubting if that deed  
 Be just which was most necessary. O,  
 Thou un replenished lamp! whose narrow fire  
 Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge  
 Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,

Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,  
 Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,  
 Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail, and be  
 As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks  
 Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:  
 But that no power can fill with vital oil  
 That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood  
 Which fed these veins, that ebbs till all is cold;  
 It is the form that moulded mine, that sinks  
 Into the white and yellow spasms of death;  
 It is the soul by which mine was arrayed  
 In God's immortal likeness, which now stands  
 Naked before Heaven's judgment seat! *(A bell strikes.)*

One! Two!

The hour crawls on; and, when my hairs are white,  
 My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,  
 Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;  
 Chiding the tardy messenger of news  
 Like those which I expect. I almost wish  
 He be not dead, although my wrongs are great:  
 Yet—'tis Orsino's step—

*Enter ORSINO.*

Speak!

*Ors.*

I am come

To say he has escaped.

*Giac.*

Escaped!

*Ors.*

And safe

Within Petrella. He pass'd by the spot  
 Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

*Giac.* Are we the fools of such contingencies?

And do we waste in blind misgivings thus  
 The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,  
 Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter  
 With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth  
 Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done,  
 But my repentance.

*Ors.*

See, the lamp is out.

*Giac.* If no remorse is ours when the dim air  
 Has drunk this innocent flame, why should we quail  
 When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits  
 See the worse deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?  
 No, I am hardened.

*Ors.* Why, what need of this?

Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse  
 In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,  
 Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.  
 But light the lamp; let us not talk i'the dark.

*Giac.* *(lighting the lamp.)*

And yet, once quenched, I cannot thus relume



My father's life : do you not think his ghost  
Might plead that argument with God ?

*Ors.* Once gone,

You cannot now recal your sister's peace ;  
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope ;  
Nor your wife's bitter words ; nor all the taunts  
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes ;  
Nor your dead mother ; nor—

*Giac.* Oh, speak no more !

I am resolved, although this very hand  
Must quench the life that animated it.

*Ors.* There is no need of that. Listen : you know  
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella  
In old Colonna's time ; him whom your father  
Degraded from his post ; and Marzio,  
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year  
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due.

*Giac.* I knew Olimpio ; and they say he hated  
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage  
His lips grew white only to see him pass.  
Of Marzio I know nothing.

*Ors.* Marzio's hate  
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,  
But in your name, and as at your request,  
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

*Giac.* Only to talk ?

*Ors.* The moments which even now  
Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour,  
May memorise their flight with death : ere then  
They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,  
And made an end—

*Giac.* Listen ! What sound is that ?

*Ors.* The house-dog moans, and the beams crack : nought else.

*Giac.* It is my wife complaining in her sleep :  
I doubt not she is saying bitter things  
Of me ; and all my children round her dreaming  
That I deny them sustenance.

*Ors.* Whilst he  
Who truly took it from them, and who fills  
Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps  
Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly  
Mocks thee in visions of successful hate,  
Too like the truth of day.

*Giac.* If e'er he wakes  
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands—

*Ors.* Why, that were well. I must be gone ; good night.  
When next we meet may all be done !

*Giac.* And all  
Forgotten. Oh, that I had never been !

*(Exeunt.)*

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella. Enter CENCI.*

*Cen.* She comes not; yet I left her even now  
Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty  
Of her delay: yet what if threats are vain?  
Am I not now within Petrella's moat?  
Or fear I still the eyes and years of Rome?  
Might I not drag her by the golden hair?  
Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless, till her brain  
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?  
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone  
What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will,  
Which, by its own consent, shall stoop as low  
As that which drags it down.

*Enter LUCRETIA.*

Thou loathed wretch!  
Hide thee from my abhorrence! fly, begone!  
Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.

*Lucr.* Oh,  
Husband! I pray, for thine own wretched sake,  
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee  
Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,  
Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.  
And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary grey.  
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,  
Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend  
In marriage; so that she may tempt thee not  
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

*Cen.* What! like her sister, who has found a home  
To mock my hate from with prosperity?  
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee,  
And all that yet remain. My death may be  
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,  
Bid her come hither, and before my mood  
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

*Lucr.* She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence  
She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance;  
And in that trance she heard a voice which said,  
"Cenci must die! Let him confess himself!  
Even now the accusing angel waits to hear  
If God, to punish his enormous crimes,  
Harden his dying heart!"

*Cen.* Why—such things are:  
No doubt divine revealings may be made.  
'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,  
For when I cursed my sons they died—Ay—so—  
As to the right or wrong, that's talk—repentance—  
Repentance is an easy moment's work,

And more depends on God than me. Well—well—  
I must give up the greater point, which was  
To poison and corrupt her soul.

*(A pause ; Lucretia approaches anxiously, and then shrinks back  
as he speaks.)* One, two ;

Ay—Rocco and Cristofano my curse  
Strangled : and Giacomo, I think, will find  
Life a worse hell than that beyond the grave :  
Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,  
Die in despair, blaspheming : to Bernardo,  
He is so innocent, I will bequeath  
The memory of these deeds, and make his youth  
The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts  
Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.  
When all is done, out in the wide Campagna  
I will pile up my silver and my gold ;  
My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries ;  
My parchments, and all records of my wealth ;  
And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave  
Of my possessions nothing but my name ;  
Which shall be an inheritance to strip  
Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,  
My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign  
Into the hands of him who wielded it.  
Be it for its own punishment or theirs,  
He will not ask it of me till the lash  
Be broken in its last and deepest wound—  
Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,  
Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make  
Short work and sure— *(Going.)*

*Lucr. (stops him.)* Oh, stay ! It was a feint :  
She had no vision, and she heard no voice.  
I said it but to awe thee.

*Cen.* That is well.

Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,  
Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie !  
For Beatrice, worse terrors are in store,  
To bend her to my will.

*Lucr.* Oh ! to what will ?

What cruel sufferings, more than she has known,  
Canst thou inflict ?

*Cen.* Andrea, go call my daughter ;

And if she comes not, tell her that I come.  
What sufferings ? I will drag her, step by step,  
Through infamies unheard of among men :  
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon  
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,  
One among which shall be—What ?—Canst thou guess ?  
She shall become (for what she most abhors,  
Shall have a fascination to entrap

Her loathing will) to her own conscious self  
 All she appears to others; and, when dead,  
 As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,  
 A rebel to her father and her God,  
 Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;  
 Her name shall be the terror of the earth;  
 Her spirit shall approach the throne of God  
 Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make  
 Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

*Enter ANDREA.*

*Andr.* The lady Beatrice—

*Cen.* Speak, pale slave! What  
 Said she?

*Andr.* My Lord, 'twas what she looked; she said:  
 "Go, tell my father that I see the gulph  
 Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,—  
 I will not." *(Exit Andrea.)*

*Cen.* Go thou quick, Lucretia;  
 Tell her to come; yet let her understand  
 Her coming is consent; and say, moreover,  
 That if she come not I will curse her. *(Exit Lucretia.)*

Ha!

With what but with a father's curse doth God  
 Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale  
 Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father  
 Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,  
 Be he who asks even what men call me.  
 Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers  
 Awe her before I speak?—for I on them  
 Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

*Enter LUCRETIA.*

Well? what? Speak, wretch!

*Lucr.* She said, "I cannot come;  
 Go tell my father that I see a torrent  
 Of his owl blood raging between us."

*Cen.* *(kneeling.)* God!  
 Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh  
 Which thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,  
 This particle of my divided being;  
 Or rather, this my bane and my disease,  
 Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil,  
 Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant  
 To aught good use; if her bright loveliness  
 Was kindled to illumine this dark world;  
 If, nursed by thy selectest dew of love,  
 Such virtues blossom in her as should make  
 The peace of life, I pray thee, for my sake,  
 As thou the common God and Father art

Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!  
 Earth, in the name of God, let her food be  
 Poison, until she be encrusted round  
 With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head  
 The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,  
 Till she be speckled like a toad: parch up  
 Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs  
 To loathed lameness! All-beholding sun,  
 Strike in thy envy those life-darting eyes  
 With thine own blinding beams!

*Lucr.* Peace! Peace!

For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.  
 When high God grants, he punishes such prayers.

*Cen.* (*leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven.*)

He does his will, I mine! This in addition,  
 That, if she have a child—

*Lucr.* Horrible thought!

*Cen.* That if she ever have a child; and thou,  
 Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,  
 That thou be fruitful in her, and increase  
 And multiply, fulfilling his command,  
 And my deep imprecation! May it be  
 A hideous likeness of herself; that, as  
 From a distorting mirror, she may see  
 Her image mixed with what she most abhors,  
 Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.  
 And that the child may from its infancy  
 Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,  
 Turning her mother's love to misery;  
 And that both she and it may live, until  
 It shall repay her care and pain with hate,  
 Or, what may else be more unnatural,  
 So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs  
 Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.  
 Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,  
 Before my words are chronicled in heaven.

(*Exit Lucr.*)

I do not feel as if I were a man,  
 But like a fiend appointed to chastise  
 The offences of some unremembered world.  
 My blood is running up and down my veins:  
 A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:  
 I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe;  
 My heart is beating with an expectation  
 Of horrid joy.

*Enter LUCRETIA.*

What? Speak!

*Lucr.* She bids thee curse:  
 And if thy curses, as they cannot do,

Could kill her soul—

*Cen.* She would not come. 'Tis well,  
I can do both: first take what I demand,  
And then extort concession. To thy chamber,  
Fly, ere I spurn thee: and beware this night  
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer  
To come between the tiger and his prey. *(Exit Lucr.)*  
It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim  
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.  
Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies!  
'They say that sleep, that healing dew of heaven,  
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain  
Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go,  
First to belie thee with an hour of rest,  
Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then—  
O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake  
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!  
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven  
As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth  
All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things  
Shall, with a spirit of unnatural life,  
Stir and be quickened, even as I am now. \* *(Exit.)*

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SCENE II.

*Before the Castle of Petrella. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA  
above, on the ramparts.*

*Beatr.* They come not yet.

*Lucr.* 'Tis scarce midnight.

*Beatr.* How slow  
Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,  
Lags leaden-footed time!

*Lucr.* The minutes pass—  
If he should wake before the deed is done?

*Beatr.* O, Mother! he must never wake again.  
What thou hast said persuades me that our act  
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell  
Out of a human form.

*Lucr.* 'Tis true, he spoke  
Of death and judgment with strange confidence  
For one so wicked: as a man believing  
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.  
And yet to die without confession!—

*Beatr.* Oh!  
Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,  
And will not add our dread necessity  
To the amount of his offences.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO, below.*

*Lucr.* See,

They come.

*Beatr.* All mortal things must hasten thus  
To their dark end. Let us go down.

*(Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE from above.)*

*Olim.* How feel you to this work?

*Mar.* As one who thinks

A thousand crowns excellent market price  
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.

*Olim.* It is the white reflection of your own,  
Which you call pale.

*Mar.* Is that their natural hue?

*Olim.* Or 'tis my hate, and the deferred desire  
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

*Mar.* You are inclined then to this business?

*Olim.* Ay,

If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns  
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,  
I could not be more willing.

*Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA below.*

Noble ladies!

*Beatr.* Are ye resolved?

*Olim.* Is he asleep?

*Mar.* Is all

Quiet?

*Lucr.* I mixed an opiate with his drink:  
He sleeps so soundly—

*Beatr.* That his death will be  
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,  
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,  
Which God extinguish! But are ye resolved?  
Ye know it is a high and holy deed.

*Olim.* We are resolved.

*Mar.* As to the how this act  
Be warranted, it rests with you.

*Beatr.* Well, follow!

*Olim.* Hush! hark! What noise is that?

*Mar.* Ha! some one comes!

*Beatr.* Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest  
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,  
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,  
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!  
And be your steps like mine, light, quick, and bold.

*(Exeunt.)*

## SCENE III.

*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA.*

*Lucr.* They are about it now.

*Beatr.* Nay, it is done.

*Lucr.* I have not heard him groan.

*Beatr.* He will not groan.

*Lucr.* What sound is that?

*Beatr.* List! 'tis the tread of feet

About his bed.

*Lucr.* My God!

If he be now a cold stiff corpse!

*Beatr.* Oh, fear not

What may be done, but what is left undone :

The act seals all.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

Is it accomplished?

*Mar.* What?

*Olim.* Did you not call?

*Beatr.* When?

*Olim.* Now.

*Beatr.* I ask if all is over?

*Olim.* We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;

His thin grey hair, his stern and reverend brow,

His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,

And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,

Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

*Mar.* But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,

And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave,

And leave me the reward. And now my knife

Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man

Stirred in his sleep, and said, "God! hear, O hear,

A father's curse! What! art thou not our father?"

And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost

Of my dead father speaking through his lips,

And could not kill him.

*Beatr.* Miserable slaves!

Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,

Found ye the boldness to return to me

With such a deed undone? Base palterers!

Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience

Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge

Is an equivocation: it sleeps over

A thousand daily acts disgracing men;

And when a deed, where mercy insults Heaven——

Why do I talk?

*(Snatching a dagger from one of them, and raising it.)*

Hadst thou a tongue to say,



She murdered her own father, I must do it!  
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

*Olim.* Stop, for God's sake!

*Mar.* I will go back and kill him.

*Olim.* Give me the weapon; we must do thy will.

*Beatr.* Take it!—Depart! Return!

(*Exeunt OLIMPPIO and MARZIO.*)

How pale thou art!

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime  
To leave undone.

*Lucr.* Would it were done!

*Beatr.* Even whilst  
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world  
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and hell  
Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth  
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath  
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the gelid blood  
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

*Enter OLIMPPIO and MARZIO.*

He is——

*Olim.* Dead;

*Mar.* We strangled him, that there might be no blood;  
And then we threw his heavy corpse i'the garden,  
Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.

*Beatr.* (*Giving them a bag of coin.*)

Here, take this gold, and hasten to your homes.

And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed

By that which made me tremble, wear thou this!

(*Clothes him in a rich mantle.*)

It was the mantle which my grandfather  
Wore in his high prosperity, and men  
Envied his state: so may they envy thine.  
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God  
To a just use. Live long and thrive! and, mark,  
If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

(*A horn is sounded.*)

*Lucr.* Hark! 'tis the castle horn; my God! it sounds  
Like the last trump.

*Beatr.* Some tedious guest is coming.

*Lucr.* The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp  
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves!

(*Exeunt OLIMPPIO and MARZIO.*)

*Beatr.* Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;  
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:  
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs  
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep  
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past.

(*Exeunt.*)

## SCENE IV.

*Another Apartment in the Castle. Enter on one side the Legate SAVELLA, introduced by a Servant, and on the other LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

*Sav.* Lady, my duty to his Holiness  
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably  
I break upon your rest. I must speak with  
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

*Lucr. (in a hurried and confused manner.)*  
I think he sleeps;

Yet, wake him not, I pray. Spare me awhile,  
He is a wicked and a wrathful man;  
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,  
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,  
It were not well; indeed it were not well.  
Wait till day-break,—

*(aside.)* Oh, I am deadly sick!

*Sav.* I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count  
Must answer charges of the gravest import,  
And suddenly; such my commission is.

*Luc. (with increased agitation.)*  
I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare:  
'Twere perilous—you might as safely waken  
A serpent, or a corpse in which some fiend  
Were laid to sleep.

*Sav.* Lady, my moments here  
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,  
Since none else dare.

*Lucr. (aside.)* O terror! O despair!  
*(To Bernardo.)* Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to  
Your father's chamber. *(Exeunt SAVELLA and BERNARDO.)*

*Enter BEATRICE.*

*Beatr.* 'Tis a messenger  
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands  
Before the throne of unappealable God.  
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,  
Acquit our deed.

*Lucr.* O agony of fear!  
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard  
The Legate's followers whisper, as they passed,  
They had a warrant for his instant death.  
All was prepared by unforbidden means,  
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.  
Even now they search the tower, and find the body.  
Now they suspect the truth: now they consult,  
Before they come to tax us with the fact;  
O horrible, 'tis all discovered!

*Beatr.* Mother,  
 What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold  
 As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child  
 To fear that others know what thou hast done,  
 Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus  
 Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks  
 All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,  
 And fear no other witness but thy fear.  
 For if, as cannot be, some circumstance  
 Should rise in accusation, we can blind  
 Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,  
 Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,  
 As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,  
 And what may follow now regards not me.  
 I am as universal as the light;  
 Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm  
 As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,  
 Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock,  
 But shakes it not. (*A cry within, and tumult.*)  
*Voices.* Murder! murder! murder!

*Enter* BERNARDO and SAVELLA.

*Sav.* (*to his followers.*)

Go search the castle round; sound the alarm;  
 Look to the gates, that none escape.

*Beatr.* What now?

*Ber.* I know not what to say: my father's dead!

*Beatr.* How! dead? he only sleeps: you mistake, brother.  
 His sleep is very calm, very like death;  
 'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.  
 He is not *dead!*

*Ber.* Dead! murdered!

*Lucr.* (*with extreme agitation.*) Oh, no, no,  
 He is not murdered, though he may be dead;  
 I have alone the keys of those apartments.

*Sav.* Ha! Is it so?

*Beatr.* My Lord, I pray excuse us;  
 We will retire; my mother is not well:  
 She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

*Exeunt Lucretia and Beatrice.*

*Sav.* Can you suspect who may have murdered him?

*Ber.* I know not what to think.

*Sav.* Can you name any  
 Who had an interest in his death?

*Ber.* Alas!

I can name none who had not, and those most  
 Who most lament that such a deed is done;  
 My mother, and my sister, and myself.

*Sav.* 'Tis strange! There were clear marks of violence.  
 I found the old man's body in the moonlight

Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,  
 Among the branches of a pine: he could not  
 Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped  
 And effortless: 'tis true there was no blood.  
 Favour me, Sir, (it much imports your house  
 That all should be made clear) to tell the ladies  
 That I request their presence.

(Exit Ber.)

*Enter Guards, bringing in MARZIO.*

*Guard.* We have one.

*Officer.* My lord, we found this ruffian and another  
 Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt  
 But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci:  
 Each had a bag of coin. This fellow wore  
 A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright  
 Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon,  
 Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell  
 Desperately fighting.

*Sav.* What does he confess?

*Officer.* He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him  
 May speak.

*Sav.* Their language is at least sincere. (reads.)

“TO THE LADY BEATRICE.

“That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture  
 may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy brother's desire,  
 those who will speak and do more than I dare write—

Thy devoted servant,

ORSINO.”

*Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and BERNARDO.*

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

*Beatr.* No.

*Sav.* Nor thou?

*Lucr.* (Her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme  
 agitation.)

Where was it found? what is it? It should be  
 Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror  
 Which never yet found utterance, but which made  
 Between that hapless child and her dead father  
 A gulph of obscure hatred.

*Sav.* Is it so?

Is it true, Lady, that thy father did  
 Such outrages as to awaken in thee  
 Unfilial hate?

*Beatr.* Not hate, 'twas more than hate:  
 This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

*Sav.* There is a deed demanding question done;  
 Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

*Beatr.* What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

*Sav.* I do arrest all present in the name  
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

*Lucr.* Oh, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty.

*Beatr.* Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,  
I am more innocent of parricide  
Than is a child born fatherless. Dear mother,  
Your gentleness and patience are no shield  
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,  
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,  
Rather will ye who are their ministers,  
Bar all access to retribution first,  
And then, when heaven doth interpose to do  
What ye neglect, arming familiar things  
To the redress of an unwonted crime,  
Make ye the victims who demanded it  
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch,  
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,  
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was  
A sword in the right hand of justest God.  
Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless  
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name,  
God therefore scruples to avenge.

*Sav.* You own

That you desired his death?

*Beatr.* It would have been  
A crime no less than his, if, for one moment,  
That fierce desire had faded in my heart.  
'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,  
Ay, I even knew—for God is wise and just—  
That some strange sudden death hung over him.  
'Tis true that this did happen, and most true  
There was no other rest for me on earth,  
No other hope in Heaven: now what of this?

[both.

*Sav.* Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are  
I judge thee not.

*Beatr.* And yet, if you arrest me,  
You are the judge and executioner  
Of that which is the life of life: the breath  
Of accusation kills an innocent name,  
And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life,  
Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false  
That I am guilty of foul parricide;  
Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,  
That other hands have sent my father's soul  
To ask the mercy he denied to me.  
Now leave us free: stain not a noble house  
With vague surmises of rejected crime;  
Add to our sufferings and your own neglect  
No heavier sum; let them have been enough.

Leave us the wreck we have.

*Sav.* I dare not, Lady.  
I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:

There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

*Lucr.* Oh, not to Rome! Oh, take us not to Rome!

*Beatr.* Why not to Rome, dear mother? There, as here,  
Our innocence is an armed heel

To trample accusation. God is there,

As here, and with his shadow ever clothes

The innocent, the injured, and the weak;

And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady! lean

On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,

As soon as you have taken some refreshment,

And have all such examination made

Upon the spot as may be necessary

To the full understanding of this matter,

We shall be ready. Mother, will you come?

*Lucr.* Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest  
Self-accusation from our agony!

Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?

All present? all confronted? all demanding

Each from the other's countenance the thing

Which is in every heart? O, misery!

*(She faints, and is borne out.)*

*Sav.* She faints: an ill appearance this.

*Beatr.*

My Lord,

She knows not yet the uses of the world.

She fears that power is as a beast which grasps

And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes

All things to guilt, which is its nutriment.

She cannot know how well the supine slaves

Of blind authority read the truth of things

When written on a brow of guilelessness:

She sees not yet triumphant Innocence

Stand at the judgment-seat of mortal man,

A judge and an accuser of the wrong

Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord;

Our suite will join yours in the court below.

*(Exeunt.)*

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ACT V. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in ORSINO'S Palace. Enter ORSINO and  
GIACOMO.*

*Giac.* Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?

Oh, that the vain remorse which must chastise

Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn,

As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!

Oh, that the hour when present had cast off

The mantle of its mystery, and shewn

The ghastly form with which it now returns  
 When its sacred game is roused, echeering the hounds  
 Of conscience to their prey! Alas! alas!  
 It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,  
 To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

*Ors.* It has turned out unluckily in truth.

*Giac.* To violate the sacred doors of sleep;  
 To cheat kind Nature of the placid death  
 Which she prepares for over-wearied age;  
 To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul,  
 Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers  
 A life of burning crimes—

*Ors.* You cannot say  
 I urged you to the deed.

*Giac.* Oh, had I never  
 Found in thy smooth and ready countenance  
 The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou  
 Never with hints and questions made me look  
 Upon the monster of my thoughts, until  
 It grew familiar to desire—

*Ors.* 'Tis thus  
 Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts  
 Upon the abettors of their own resolve:  
 Or any thing but their weak guilty selves.  
 And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril  
 In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness  
 Of penitence; confess 'tis fear disguised  
 From its own shame that takes the mantle now  
 Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

*Giac.* How can that be? Already Beatrice,  
 Lucretia, and the murderer, are in prison.  
 I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,  
 Sent to arrest us.

*Ors.* I have all prepared  
 For instant flight. We can escape even now,  
 So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

*Giac.* Rather expire in tortures, as I may.  
 What! will you cast by self-accusing flight  
 Assured conviction upon Beatrice?  
 She who alone, in this unnatural work,  
 Stands like God's angel ministered upon  
 By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong  
 As turns black parricide to piety;  
 Whilst we for basest ends—I fear, Orsino  
 While I consider all your words and looks,  
 Comparing them with your proposal now,  
 That you must be a villain. For what end  
 Could you engage in such a perilous crime,  
 Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,  
 Even to this gulph? Thou art no liar? No,





As men wear daggers not for self-offence.  
 But if I am mistaken, where shall I  
 Find the disguise to hide from myself,  
 As now I skulk from every other eye?

(Exit.)

## SCENE II.

*A Hall of Justice. CAMILLO, Judges, &c. are discovered seated. MARZIO is led in.*

*1st Judge.* Accused, do you persist in your denial?  
 I ask you, are you innocent or guilty?  
 I demand who were the participators  
 In your offence? Speak truth, and the whole truth.

*Mar.* My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing;  
 Olimpio sold the robe to me from which  
 You would infer my guilt.

*2nd Judge.* Away with him! [kiss,

*1st Judge.* Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's  
 Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,  
 That you would bandy lovers' talk with it,  
 Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

*Mar.* Spare me! O spare! I will confess.

*1st Judge.* Then speak.

*Mar.* I strangled him in his sleep.

*1st Judge.* Who urged you to it?

*Mar.* His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate  
 Orsino sent me to Petrella; there  
 The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia  
 Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I  
 And my companion forthwith murdered him.  
 Now let me die.

*1st Judge.* This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,  
 Lead forth the prisoners.

*Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded.*

Look upon this man;  
 When did you see him last?

*Beatr.* We never saw him.

*Mar.* You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

*Beatr.* I know thee! How? where? when?

*Mar.* You know 'twas I

Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes  
 To kill your father. When the thing was done  
 You clothed me in a robe of woven gold,  
 And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.  
 You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,  
 You know that what I speak is true.

(*Beatrice advances towards him ; he covers his face, and shrinks back.*)

Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes  
On the dread earth ! Turn them away from me !  
They wound : 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,  
Having said this, let me be led to death,

*Beatr.* Poor wretch ! I pity thee : yet stay awhile.

*Cam.* Guards, lead him not away.

*Beatr.* Cardinal Camillo,

You have a good repute for gentleness  
And wisdom : can it be that you sit here  
To countenance a wicked farce like this ?  
When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged  
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart,  
And bade to answer, not as he believes,  
But as those may suspect, or do desire,  
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply :  
And that in peril of such hideous torments  
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now  
The thing you surely know, which is, that you,  
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,  
And you were told, " Confess that you did poison  
Your little nephew ; that fair blue-eyed child,  
Who was the load-star of your life : "—and though  
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,  
And all the things hoped for or done therein  
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,  
Yet you would say, " I confess any thing : "  
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,  
The refuge of dishonourable death.  
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert  
My innocence.

*Cam.* (*much moved.*) What shall we think, my Lords ?  
Shame on these tears ! I thought the heart was frozen  
Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul  
That she is guiltless.

*Judge.* Yet she must be tortured.

*Cam.* I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew  
(If he now lived he would be just her age ;  
His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes  
Like hers in shape, but blue, and not so deep)  
As that most perfect image of God's love  
That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.  
She is as pure as speechless infancy !

*Judge.* Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord,  
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness  
Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime  
By the severest forms of law ; nay, even

To stretch a point against the criminals.  
The prisoners stand accused of parricide,  
Upon such evidence as justifies  
Torture.

*Beatr.* What evidence? This man's?

*Judge.* Even so. [chosen forth,

*Beatr.* (to *Marzio*.) Come near. And who art thou, thus  
Out of the multitude of living men,  
To kill the innocent?

*Mar.* I am *Marzio*,  
Thy father's vassal.

*Beatr.* Fix thine eyes on mine;  
Answer to what I ask.

(*Turning to the Judges.*) I prithee mark  
His countenance: unlike bold calumny,  
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,  
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends  
His gaze on the blind earth.

(*To Marzio.*) What! wilt thou say  
That I did murder my own father?

*Mar.* Oh!  
Spare me! My brain swims round—I cannot speak—  
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.  
Take me away! Let her not look on me!  
I am a guilty, miserable wretch;  
I have said all I know; now let me die!

*Beatr.* My Lords, if by my nature I had been  
So stern as to have planned the crime alleged,  
Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,  
And the rack makes him utter, do you think  
I should have left this two-edged instrument  
Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife,  
With my own name engraven on the hilt,  
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,  
For my own death? That, with such horrible need  
For deepest silence, I should have neglected  
So trivial a precaution, as the making  
His tomb the keeper of a secret written  
On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?  
What are a thousand lives? A parricide  
Had trampled them like dust; and see, he lives!  
(*Turning to Marzio.*) And thou—

*Mar.* Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!  
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,  
Wound worse than torture.

(*To the Judges.*) I have told it all;  
For pity's sake lead me away to death.

*Cam.* Guards, lead him nearer the Lady *Beatrice*.  
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf  
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

*Beatr.* O thou, who tremblest on the giddy verge  
 Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me ;  
 So mayest thou answer God with less dismay :  
 What evil have we done thee ? I, alas !  
 Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,  
 And so my lot was ordered, that a father  
 First turned the moments of awakening life  
 To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope ; and then  
 Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul  
 And my untainted fame, and even that peace  
 Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart.  
 But the wound was not mortal : so my hate  
 Became the only worship I could lift  
 To our great Father, who in pity and love  
 Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off ;  
 And thus his wrong becomes my accusation :  
 And art thou the accuser ? If thou hopest  
 Mercy in heaven, shew justice upon earth :  
 Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.  
 If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path  
 Over the trampled laws of God and man,  
 Rush not before thy Judge, and say, " My Maker,  
 I have done this and more ; for there was one  
 Who was most pure and innocent on earth ;  
 And because she endured what never any,  
 Guilty or innocent, endured before ;  
 Because her wrongs could not be told, nor thought ;  
 Because thy hand at length did rescue her ;  
 I with my words killed her and all her kin."   
 Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay  
 The reverence living in the minds of men  
 Towards our ancient house and stainless fame !  
 Think what it is to strangle infant pity,  
 Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,  
 Till it become a crime to suffer. Think  
 What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood  
 All that which shews like innocence, and is,—  
 Hear me, Great God ! I swear, most innocent,—  
 So that the world lose all discrimination  
 Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,  
 And that which now compels thee to reply  
 To what I ask. Am I, or am I not,  
 A parricide ?

*Mar.* Thou art not !

*Judge.* What is this ?

*Mar.* I here declare those whom I did accuse  
 Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

*Judge.* Drag him away to torments : let them be  
 Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds  
 Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not

Till he confess.

*Mar.* Torture me as ye will:  
A keener pang has wrung a higher truth  
From my last breath. She is most innocent!  
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me!  
I will not give you that fine piece of nature  
To rend and ruin. *(Exit Marzio, guarded.)*

*Cam.* What say ye now, my Lords?

*Judge.* Let tortures strain the truth till it be white  
As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind.

*Cam.* Yet stained with blood.

*Judge. (to Beatrice.)* Know you this paper, Lady?

*Beatr.* Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here  
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,  
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,  
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name.  
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.  
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,  
And therefore on the chance that it may be  
Some evil, will ye kill us?

*Enter an Officer.*

*Officer.* Marzio's dead.

*Judge.* What did he say?

*Officer.* Nothing. As soon as we  
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,  
As one who baffles a deep adversary;  
And, holding his breath, died.

*Judge.* There remains nothing  
But to apply the question to those prisoners  
Who yet remain stubborn.

*Cam.* I overrule  
Further proceedings, and in the behalf  
Of these most innocent and noble persons  
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

*Judge.* Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. *Meanwhile*  
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells;  
And be the engines ready: for this night,  
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,  
Pious, and just, as once, I'll wring the truth  
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE III.

*The Cell of a Prison.* BEATRICE is discovered asleep  
on a Couch. *Enter* BERNARDO.

*Ber.* How gently slumber rests upon her face,  
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent,  
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.

After such torments as she bore last night,  
 How light and soft her breathing comes. Ah, me!  
 Methinks that I shall never sleep again.  
 But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest  
 From this sweet folded flower, thus—wake! awake!  
 What, sister, canst thou sleep?

*Beatr.* (*awaking.*) I was just dreaming  
 That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest  
 This cell seems like a kind of Paradise,  
 After our father's presence.

*Ber.* Dear, dear sister,  
 Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God!  
 How shall I tell?

*Beatr.* What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

*Ber.* Look not so calm and happy, or, even whilst  
 I stand considering what I have to say,  
 My heart will break.

*Beatr.* See now, thou makest me weep:  
 How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,  
 If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

*Ber.* They have confessed: they could endure no more  
 The tortures—

*Beatr.* Ha! What was there to confess?  
 They must have told some weak and wicked lie,  
 To flatter their tormentors. Have they said  
 That they were guilty? O white innocence,  
 That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide  
 Thine awful and serenest countenance  
 From those who know thee not!

*Enter JUDGE, with LUCRETIA and GIACOMO, guarded.*

Ignoble hearts!  
 For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least  
 As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,  
 Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust,  
 And that eternal honour which should live,  
 Sun-like, above the wreck of mortal fame,  
 Changed to a mockery and a bye-word? What,  
 Will you give up these bodies to be dragged  
 At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep  
 The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,  
 Who, that they may make our calamity  
 Their worship and their spectacle, will leave  
 The churches and the theatres as void  
 As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude  
 Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,  
 Sad funeral flow'rs to deck a living corpse,  
 Upon us as we pass, to pass away,  
 And leave—what memory of our having been?  
 Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou,

Who wert a mother to the parentless,  
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!  
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,  
And let us each be silent as a corpse;  
It soon will be as soft as any grave.  
'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear,  
Makes the rack cruel.

*Giac.* They will tear the truth  
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:  
For pity's sake, say thou art guilty now.

*Lucr.* Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die;  
And after death, God is our judge, not they;  
He will have mercy on us.

*Ber.* If indeed  
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;  
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,  
And all be well.

*Judge.* Confess, or I will warp  
Your limbs with such keen tortures—

*Beatr.* Tortures! Turn  
The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!  
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last  
He lapped the blood his master shed—not me!  
My pangs are of my mind, and of the heart,  
And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,  
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall,  
To see, in this ill world, where none are true,  
My kindred false to their deserted selves;  
And with considering all the wretched life  
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,  
And the small justice shewn by Heaven and Earth  
To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,  
And what slaves these; and what a world we make;  
The oppressor and the oppressed—such pangs compel  
My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

*Judge.* Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

*Beatr.* Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God,  
That he permitted such an act as that  
Which I have suffered, and which he beheld;  
Made it unutterable, and took from it  
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,  
But that which thou hast called my father's death?  
Which is or is not what men call a crime,  
Which either I have done, or have not done;  
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.  
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,  
And so an end of all. Now do your will;  
No other pains shall force another word.

*Judge.* She is convicted, but has not confessed.  
Be it enough. Until their final sentence,

Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,  
Linger not here!

*Beatr.* Oh, tear him not away!

*Judge.* Guards, do your duty.

*Ber.* (*Embracing Beatrice.*) Oh! would ye divide  
Body from soul?

*Officer.* That is the headsman's business.

(*Exeunt all but Lucretia, Beatrice, and Giacomo.*)

*Giac.* Have I confessed? Is it all over now?

No hope! No refuge! O weak, wicked tongue,  
Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been  
Cut out and thrown to dogs first. To have killed  
My father first, and then betrayed my sister;  
Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure  
In this black, guilty world, to that which I  
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!  
Destitute, helpless; and I—Father! God!  
Canst thou forgive even the unforgiving,  
When their full hearts break thus, thus?

*Lucr.* (*Covers her face, and weeps.*) O my child!

To what a dreadful end are we all come!  
Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain  
Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved  
Into these fast and unavailing tears,  
Which flow and feel not!

*Beatr.* What 'twas weak to do,

'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;  
Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made  
Our speedy act the angel of his wrath,  
Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.  
Let us not think that we shall die for this.  
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,  
You had a manly heart. Bear up! bear up!  
O dearest Lady, put your gentle head  
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:  
Your eyes look pale, hollow, and overworn,  
With heaviness of watching and slow grief.  
Come, I will sing you some low sleepy tune,  
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,  
Some outworn and unused monotony,  
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,  
Till they almost forget they live: lie down!  
So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?  
Faith! they are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG.

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep  
When my life is laid asleep?  
Little cares for a smile or a tear,  
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!  
Farewell! Heigho!  
What is this whispers low?



There is a snake in thy smile, my dear ;  
 And a bitter poison within thy tear.  
 Sweet sleep ! were death like to thee,  
 Or if thou couldst mortal be,  
 I would close these eyes of pain ;  
 When to wake ? Never again.

O World, farewell !  
 Listen to the passing bell !  
 It says, thou and I must part,  
 With a light and heavy heart.

(*The scene closes.*)

## SCENE IV.

*A Hall of the Prison. Enter CAMILLO and BERNARDO.*

*Cam.* The Pope is stern ; not to be moved or bent.  
 He looked as calm and keen as is the engine  
 Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself  
 From aught that it inflicts ; a marble form,  
 A rite, a law, a custom : not a man.  
 He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick  
 Of his machinery, on the advocates  
 Presenting the defences, which he tore  
 And threw behind, muttering, with hoarse, harsh voice :  
 " Which among ye defended their old father,  
 Killed in his sleep ? " Then to another : " Thou  
 Dost this in virtue of thy place ; 'tis well."  
 He turned to me then, looking sad deprecation,  
 And said these three words, coldly : " They must die !"

*Ber.* And yet you left him not ?

*Cam.* I urged him still ;  
 Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong  
 Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.  
 And he replied : " Paolo Santa Croce  
 Murdered his mother yester evening,  
 And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife,  
 That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young  
 Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.  
 Authority, and power, and hoary hair,  
 Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,  
 You come to ask their pardon ; stay a moment.  
 Here is their sentence ; never see me more  
 Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled."

*Ber.* O God ! not so ! I did believe indeed  
 That all you said was but sad preparation  
 For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks  
 To bend the sternest purpose ! Once I knew them :  
 Now I forget them at my dearest need.  
 What think you if I seek him out, and bathe  
 His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears ?  
 Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain  
 With my perpetual cries, until in rage  
 He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample

Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood  
 May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,  
 And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!  
 Oh, wait till I return!

(*Rushes out.*)

*Cam.* Alas! poor boy!  
 A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray  
 To the deaf sea.

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, *guarded.*

*Beatr.* I hardly dare to fear  
 That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

*Cam.* May God in heaven be less inexorable  
 To the Pope's prayers than he has been to mine.  
 Here is the sentence and the warrant.

*Beatr.* (*wildly.*) Oh,  
 My God! can it be possible I have  
 To die so suddenly? So young to go  
 Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!  
 To be nailed down into a narrow place;  
 To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more  
 Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again  
 Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost—  
 How fearful! To be nothing! or to be—  
 What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad!  
 Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be  
 No God, no Heaven, no Earth, in the void world;  
 The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!  
 If all things then should be—my father's spirit,  
 His eye, his voice, his touch, surrounding me;  
 The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!  
 If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,  
 Even the form which tortured me on earth,  
 Masked in grey hairs and wrinkles, he should come,  
 And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix  
 His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!  
 For was he not alone omnipotent  
 On earth, and ever present? Even though dead,  
 Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,  
 And work for me and mine still the same ruin,  
 Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned  
 To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm?  
 Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,  
 Oh, whither, whither?

*Lucr.* Trust in God's sweet love,  
 The tender promises of Christ: ere night,  
 Think we shall be in Paradise.

*Beatr.* 'Tis past!  
 Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more.  
 And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:  
 How tedious, false, and cold, seem all things! I

Have met with much injustice in this world ;  
 No difference has been made by God or man,  
 Or any power moulding my wretched lot,  
 'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.  
 I am cut off from the only world I know,  
 From light, and, life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.  
 You do well, telling me to trust in God :  
 I hope I do trust in him. In whom else  
 Can any trust ? And yet my heart is cold.

*(During the latter speeches, Giacomo has retired conversing  
 with Camillo, who now goes out. Giacomo advances.)*

*Giac.* Know you not, mother—sister, know you not—  
 Bernardo even now is gone to implore  
 The Pope to grant our pardon ?

*Lucr.* Child, perhaps  
 It will be granted. We may all then live  
 To make these woes a tale for distant years ;  
 O, what a thought ! It gushes to my heart  
 Like the warm blood.

*Beatr.* Yet both will soon be cold.  
 Oh, trample out that thought ! Worse than despair,  
 Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope :  
 It is the only ill which can find place  
 Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour  
 Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost  
 That it should spare the eldest flower of spring :  
 Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch  
 Even now a city stands, fair, strong, and free ;  
 Now stench and blackness yawns, like death. Oh, plead  
 With famine, or wind-walking pestilence,  
 Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man !  
 Cruel, cold, formal man ! righteous in words,  
 In deeds a Cain. No, mother, we must die,  
 Since such is the reward of innocent lives,  
 Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.  
 And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,  
 Smiling and slow, walk thro' a world of tears  
 To death as to life's sleep, 'twere just the grave  
 Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,  
 And wind me in thine all-embracing arms !  
 Like a foud mother hide me in thy bosom,  
 And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.  
 Live ye, who live, subject to one another,  
 As we were once, who now——

*BERNARDO rushes in.*

*Ber.* Oh, horrible !  
 That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,  
 Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,  
 Should all be vain ! The ministers of death

Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw  
 Blood on the face of one—what if 'twere fancy?  
 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth  
 Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off  
 As if 'twere only rain. O life! O world!  
 Cover me! let me be no more! To see  
 That perfect mirror of pure innocence  
 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,  
 Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,  
 Who made all lovely thou didst look upon—  
 Thee, light of life—dead, dark! while I say, sister,  
 To hear I have no sister; and thou, mother,  
 Whose love was a bond to all our loves—  
 Dead! The sweet bond broken!

*Enter CAMILLO and Guards.*

They come! Let me  
 Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves  
 Are blighted—white—cold. Say farewell, before  
 Death chokes that gentle voice! Oh, let me hear  
 You speak!

*Beatr.* Farewell, my tender brother. Think  
 Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:  
 And let mild pitying thoughts lighten for thee  
 Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,  
 But tears and patience. One thing more, my child;  
 For thine own sake, be constant to the love  
 Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,  
 Though wrapt in a strange cloud of crime and shame,  
 Lived ever holy and unstained. And though  
 Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name  
 Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow  
 For men to point at as they pass, do thou  
 Forbear, and never think a thought unkind  
 Of those who perhaps love thee in their graves.  
 So mayest thou die as I do, fear and pain  
 Being subdued. Farewell! farewell! farewell!

*Ber.* I cannot say, farewell!

*Cam.* O, Lady Beatrice!

*Beatr.* Give yourself no unnecessary pain,  
 My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie  
 My girdle for me, and bind up this hair  
 In any simple knot; ay, that does well.  
 And yours I see is coming down. How often  
 Have we done this for one another! now  
 We shall not do it any more. My Lord,  
 We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

END OF THE CENCI

## TO HARRIET \* \* \* \* \*

WHOSE love is the love that, gleaming through the world,  
Wards off the poisonous arrows of its scorn?  
Whose is the warm and partial praise,  
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving sou  
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?  
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,  
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind;  
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;  
Thine are these early wilding flowers,  
Though garlanded by me.

Then press unto thy breast this pledge of love,  
And know, though time may change, and years may roll,  
Each floweret gathered in my heart  
It consecrates to thine.

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## QUEEN MAB.

### I.

How wonderful is Death!  
Death and his brother Sleep!  
One, pale as yonder waning moon,  
With lips of lurid blue;  
The other, rosy as the morn  
When throned on ocean's wave,  
It blushes o'er the world:  
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power  
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres  
Seized on her sinless soul?  
Must then that peerless form  
Which love and admiration cannot view  
Without a beating heart, those azure veins  
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,  
That lovely outline, which is fair  
As breathing marble, perish?  
Must putrefaction's breath  
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight  
But loathsomeness and ruin?  
Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,  
On which the lightest heart might moralize?  
Or is it only a sweet slumber  
Stealing o'er sensation,  
Which the breath of roseate morning  
Chaseth into darkness?  
Will Ianthe wake again,

And give that faithful bosom joy,  
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch  
Light, life, and rapture, from her smile ?

Yes! she will wake again,  
Although her glowing limbs are motionless,  
And silent those sweet lips,  
Once breathing eloquence  
That might have soothed a tiger's rage,  
Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror.  
Her dewy eyes are closed,  
And on their lids, whose texture fine  
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,  
The baby Sleep is pillowed :  
Her golden tresses shade  
The bosom's stainless pride,  
Curling like tendrils of the parasite  
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound ?  
'Tis like the wondrous strain  
That round a lonely ruin swells,  
Which, wandering on the echoing shore,  
The enthusiast hears at evening:  
'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh ;  
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes  
Of that strange lyre whose strings  
The genii of the breezes sweep :  
Those lines of rainbow light  
Are like the moonbeams when they fall  
Through some cathedral window, but the tints  
Are such as may not find  
Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen !  
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air ;  
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,  
And stop obedient to the reins of light :  
These the Queen of Spells drew in,  
She spreads a charm around the spot,  
And, leaning graceful from the ethereal car,  
Long did she gaze, and silently,  
Upon the slumbering maid.  
Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams,  
When silvery clouds float through the wildered brain,  
When every sight of lovely, wild, and grand,  
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,  
When fancy at a glance combines  
The wondrous and the beautiful,—  
So bright, so fair, so wild a shape

Hath ever yet beheld,  
As that which reined the coursers of the air,  
And poured the magic of a gaze  
Upon the slumbering maid

The broad and yellow moon  
Shone dimly through her form—  
That form of faultless symmetry;  
The pearly and pellucid car  
Moved not the moonlight's line:  
'Twas not an earthly pageant.  
Those who had looked upon the sight,  
Passing all human glory,  
Saw not the yellow moon,  
Saw not the mortal scene,  
Heard not the night-wind's rush,  
Heard not an earthly sound,  
Saw but the fairy pageant,  
Heard but the heavenly strains  
That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight; yon fibrous cloud,  
That catches but the palest tinge of even,  
And which the straining eye can hardly seize  
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,  
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star  
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,  
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,  
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,  
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,  
Yet with an undulating motion,  
Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car  
The Fairy Queen descended,  
And thrice she waved her wand  
Circled with wreaths of amaranth:  
Her thin and misty form  
Moved with the moving air,  
And the clear silver tones,  
As thus she spoke, were such  
As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

*Fairy.* Stars! your balmiest influence shed!  
Elements! your wrath suspend!  
Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds  
That circle thy domain!  
Let not a breath be seen to stir  
Around yon grass-grown ruin's height,  
Let even the restless gossamer

Sleep on the moveless air!  
 Soul of Ianthe! thou,  
 Judged alone worthy of the envied boon  
 That waits the good and the sincere; that waits  
 Those who have struggled, and with resolute will  
 Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains,  
 The icy chains of custom, and have shone  
 The day-stars of their age;—Soul of Ianthe!  
 Awake! arise!

Sudden arose  
 Ianthe's Soul! It stood  
 All beautiful in naked purity,  
 The perfect semblance of its bodily frame.  
 Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace,  
 Each stain of earthliness  
 Had passed away: it reassumed  
 Its native dignity, and stood  
 Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay,  
 Wrapt in the depth of slumber:  
 Its features were fixed and meaningless,  
 Yet animal life was there,  
 And every organ yet performed  
 Its natural functions: 'twas a sight  
 Of wonder to behold the body and soul.  
 The self-same lineaments; the same  
 Marks of identity were there:  
 Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to heaven,  
 Pants for its sempiternal heritage,  
 And ever changing, ever rising still,  
 Wantons in endless being.  
 The other, for a time the unwilling sport  
 Of circumstance and passion, struggles on;  
 Fleets through its sad duration rapidly;  
 Then, like a useless and worn-out machine,  
 Rots, perishes, and passes.

*Fairy.* Spirit! who hast dived so deep;  
 Spirit! who hast soared so high;  
 Thou the fearless, thou the mild,  
 Accept the boon thy worth hath earned,  
 Ascend the car with me.

*Spirit.* Do I dream? is this new feeling  
 But a visioned ghost of slumber?  
 If indeed I am a soul,  
 A free, a disembodied soul,  
 Speak again to me.



*Fairy.* I am the Fairy MAB: to me'tis given  
 The wonders of the human world to keep:  
 The secrets of the immeasurable past,  
 In the unfailing consciences of men,  
 Those stern, unflattering chroniclers, I find:  
 The future, from the causes which arise  
 In each event, I gather: not the sting  
 Which retributive memory implants  
 In the hard bosom of the selfish man;  
 Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb  
 Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up  
 The thoughts and actions of a well-spent day,  
 Are unforeseen, unregistered by me:  
 And it is yet permitted me, to rend  
 The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,  
 Clothed in its changeless purity, may know  
 How soonest to accomplish the great end  
 For which it hath its being, and may taste  
 That peace which, in the end, all life will share.  
 This is the meed of virtue; happy Soul,  
 Ascend the car with me!

The chains of earth's immurement  
 Fell from Ianthe's spirit;  
 They shrank and brake like bandages of straw  
 Beneath a wakened giant's strength.  
 She knew her glorious change,  
 And felt in apprehension uncontrolled  
 New raptures opening round:  
 Each day-dream of her mortal life,  
 Each frenzied vision of the slumbers  
 That closed each well-spent day,  
 Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded;  
 The silver clouds departed;  
 And, as the car of magic they ascended,  
 Again the speechless music swelled,  
 Again the coursers of the air  
 Unfurled their azure pennons, and the Queen,  
 Shaking the beamy reins,  
 Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on.  
 The night was fair, and countless stars  
 Studded heaven's dark blue vaults,—  
 Just o'er the eastern wave  
 Peeped the first faint smile of morn:—  
 The magic car moved on—  
 From the celestial hoofs  
 The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew,

## QUEEN MAB.

And where the burning wheels  
 Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak,  
 Was traced a line of lightning.  
 Now it flew far above a rock,  
 The utmost verge of earth,  
 The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow  
 Lowered o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's path,  
 Calm as a slumbering babe,  
 Tremendous Ocean lay.  
 The mirror of its stillness showed  
 The pale and waning stars,  
 The chariot's fiery track,  
 And the grey light of morn  
 Tinging those fleecy clouds  
 That canopied the dawn.  
 Seemed it, that the chariot's way  
 Lay through the midst of an immense concave,  
 Radiant with million constellations, tinged  
 With shades of infinite colour,  
 And semicirled with a belt  
 Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.  
 As they approached their goal,  
 The coursers seemed to gather speed:  
 The sea no longer was distinguished; earth  
 Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere:  
 The sun's unclouded orb  
 Rolled through the black concave;  
 Its rays of rapid light  
 Parted around the chariot's swifter course,  
 And fell like ocean's feathery spray  
 Dashed from the boiling surge  
 Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.  
 Earth's distant orb appeared  
 The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven;  
 Whilst round the chariot's way  
 Innumerable systems rolled,  
 And countless spheres diffused  
 An ever-varying glory.  
 It was a sight of wonder: some  
 Were horned like the crescent moon;  
 Some shed a mild and silver beam  
 Like Hesperus o'er the western sea;  
 Some dash'd athwart with trains of flame,  
 Like worlds to death and ruin driven;

Some shone like suns and, as the chariot passed,  
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here!  
In this interminable wilderness  
Of worlds, at whose immensity  
Even soaring fancy staggers,  
Here is thy fitting temple.  
Yet not the lightest leaf  
That quivers to the passing breeze  
Is less instinct with thee:  
Yet not the meanest worm  
That lurks in graves, and fattens on the dead,  
Less shares thy eternal breath.  
Spirit of Nature! thou!  
Imperishable as this scene,  
Here is thy fitting temple.

## II.

IF solitude hath ever led thy steps  
To the wild ocean's echoing shore,  
And thou hast lingered there  
Until the sun's broad orb  
Seemed resting on the burnished wave,  
Thou must have marked the lines  
Of purple gold, that motionless  
Hung o'er the sinking sphere:  
Thou must have marked the billowy clouds,  
Edged with intolerable radiancy,  
- Towering like rocks of jet  
Crowned with a diamond wreath.  
And yet there is a moment,  
When the sun's highest point  
Peeps like a star o'er ocean's western edge,  
When those far clouds of feathery gold,  
Shaded with deepest purple, gleam  
Like islands on a dark blue sea;  
Then has thy fancy soared above the earth,  
And furled its wearied wing  
Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands  
Gleaming in yon flood of light,  
Nor the feathery curtains  
Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,  
Nor the burnished ocean's waves  
Paving that gorgeous dome,  
So fair, so wonderful a sight  
As Mab's ethereal palace could afford.  
Yet likest evening's vault, that fairy Hall!

A: Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread  
 Its floors of flashing light,  
 Its vast and azure dome,  
 Its fertile golden islands  
 Floating on a silver sea;  
 Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted  
 Through clouds of circumambient darkness,  
 And pearly battlements around  
 Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved.  
 The Fairy and the Spirit  
 Entered the Hall of Spells:  
 Those golden clouds,  
 That rolled in glittering billows  
 Beneath the azure canopy,  
 With the ethereal footsteps, trembled not:  
 The light and crimson mists,  
 Floating to strains of thrilling melody  
 Through that unearthly dwelling,  
 Yielded to every movement of the will.  
 Upon their passive swell the Spirit leaned,  
 And, for the varied bliss that pressed around,  
 Used not the glorious privilege  
 Of virtue and of wisdom.

Spirit! the Fairy said,  
 And pointed to the gorgeous dome,  
 This is a wondrous sight,  
 And mocks all human grandeur;  
 But, were it virtue's only meed to dwell  
 In a celestial palace, all resigned  
 To pleasureable impulses, immured  
 Within the prison of itself, the will  
 Of changeless nature would be unfulfilled.  
 Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come!  
 This is thine high reward:—the past shall rise;  
 Thou shalt behold the present: I will teach  
 The secrets of the future.

The Fairy and the Spirit  
 Approached the overhanging battlement.—  
 Below lay stretched the universe!  
 There, far as the remotest line  
 That bounds imagination's flight,  
 Countless and unending orbs,  
 In mazy motion intermingled,  
 Yet still fulfilled immutably  
 Ethereal nature's law.  
 Above, below, around,  
 The circling systems formed

A wilderness of harmony ;  
 Each with undeviating aim,  
 In eloquent silence, through the depths of space  
 Pursued its wondrous way.]

There was a little light  
 That twinkled in the misty distance :  
 None but a spirit's eye  
 Might ken that rolling orb ;  
 None but a spirit's eye,  
 And in no other place  
 But that celestial dwelling, might behold  
 Each action of this earth's inhabitants.  
 But matter, space, and time,  
 In those aerial mansions cease to act :  
 And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps  
 The harvest of its excellence, o'erbounds  
 Those obstacles of which an earthly soul  
 Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.  
 The Spirit's intellectual eye  
 Its kindred beings recognized.  
 The thronging thousands, to a passing view,  
 Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.  
 How wonderful ! that even  
 The passions, prejudices, interests,  
 That sway the meanest being, the weak touch  
 That moves the finest nerve,  
 And in one human brain  
 Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link  
 In the great chain of nature.

Behold, the Fairy cried,  
 Palmyra's ruined palaces !—  
 Behold ! where grandeur frowned ;  
 Behold ! where pleasure smiled ;  
 What now remains ?—the memory  
 Of senselessness and shame—  
 What is immortal there ?  
 Nothing—it stands to tell  
 A melancholy tale, to give  
 An awful warning : soon  
 Oblivion will steal silently  
 The remnant of its fame.  
 Monarchs and conquerors there  
 Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—  
 The earthquakes of the human race ;  
 Like them, forgotten when the ruin  
 That marks their shock is past.  
 Beside the eternal Nile

The pyramids have risen.  
 Nile shall pursue his changeless way :  
 Those pyramids shall fall :  
 Yea, not a stone shall stand to tell  
 The spot whereon they stood ;  
 Their very site shall be forgotten,  
 As is their builder's name !

Behold yon sterile spot,  
 Where now the wandering Arab's tent  
 Flaps in the desert blast.  
 There once old Salem's haughty fane  
 Reared high to heaven its thousand golden dames,  
 And in the blushing face of day  
 Exposed its shameful glory.  
 Oh ! many a widow, many an orphan, cursed  
 The building of that fane ; and many a father,  
 Worn out with toil and slavery, implored  
 The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth,  
 And spare his children the detested task  
 Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning  
 The choicest days of life,  
 To soothe a dotard's vanity.  
 There an inhuman and uncultured race  
 Howled hideous praises to their Demon-God ;  
 They rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb  
 The unborn child,—old age and infancy  
 Promiscuous perished ; their victorious arms  
 Left not a soul to breathe. Oh ! they were fiends :  
 But what was he that taught them that the God  
 Of nature and benevolence had given  
 A special sanction to the trade of blood ?  
 His name and theirs are fading, and the tales  
 Of this barbarian nation, which imposture  
 Recites till terror credits, are pursuing  
 Itself into forgetfulness.

Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood,  
 There is a moral desert now :  
 The mean and miserable huts,  
 The yet more wretched palaces,  
 Contrasted with those ancient fanes,  
 Now crumbling to oblivion ;  
 The long and lonely colonnades,  
 Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks,  
 Seem like a well-known tune,  
 Which in some dear scene we have loved to hear,  
 Remembered now in sadness.  
 But, oh ! how much more changed  
 How gloonier is the contrast.

Of human nature there !  
 Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,  
 A coward and a fool, spreads death around—  
     Then, shuddering, meets his own.  
 Where Cicero and Antonius lived,  
 A cowled and hypocritical monk  
     Prays, curses, and deceives.

Spirit! ten thousand years  
 Have scarcely past away,  
 Since, in the waste where now the savage drinks  
 His enemy's blood, and, aping Europe's sons,  
     Wakes the unholy song of war,  
     Arose a stately city,  
 Metropolis of the western continent :

There, now, the mossy column stone,  
 Indented by Time's unrelaxing grasp,  
     Which once appeared to brave  
     All, save its country's ruin ;  
     There the wide forest scene,  
 Rude in the uncultivated loveliness  
     Of gardens long run wild,  
 Seems, to the unwilling sojourner, whose steps  
     Chance in that desert has delayed,  
 Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.  
     Yet once it was the busiest haunt,  
 Whither, as to a common centre, flocked  
     Strangers, and ships, and merchandize :  
     Once peace and freedom blest  
     The cultivated plain :  
     But wealth, that curse of man,  
 Blighted the bud of its prosperity :  
 Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,  
 Fled, to return not, until man should know  
     That they alone can give the bliss  
     Worthy a soul that claims  
 Its kindred with eternity.

There's not one atom of yon earth  
     But once was living man ;  
 Nor the minutest drop of rain,  
 That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,  
     But flowed in human veins ;  
     And from the burning plains  
     Where Lybian monsters yell,  
     From the most gloomy glens  
     Of Greenland's sunless clime,  
     To where the golden fields

Of fertile England spread  
 Their harvest to the day,  
 Thou canst not find one spot  
 Whereon no city stood.

How strange is human pride !  
 I tell thee that those living things,  
 To whom the fragile blade of grass,  
 That springeth in the morn  
 And perishes ere noon,  
 Is an unbounded world :

I tell thee that those viewless beings,  
 Whose mansion is the smallest particle  
 Of the impassive atmosphere,  
 Think, feel, and live, like man :  
 That their affections and antipathies,  
 Like his, produce the laws  
 Ruling their moral state ;  
 And the minutest throb  
 That through their frame diffuses  
 The slightest, faintest motion,  
 Is fixed and indispensable  
 As the majestic laws  
 That rule yon rolling orbs.

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,  
 In ecstasy of admiration, felt  
 All knowledge of the past revived ; the events  
 Of old and wondrous times,  
 Which dim tradition interruptedly  
 Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded  
 In just perspective to the view,  
 Yet dim from their infinitude.

The Spirit seemed to stand  
 High on an isolated pinnacle ;  
 The flood of ages combating below,  
 The depth of the unbounded universe  
 Above, and all around  
 Nature's unchanging harmony

## III.

FAIRY ! the Spirit said,  
 And on the Queen of Spells  
 Fixed her ethereal eyes,  
 I thank thee. Thou hast given  
 A boon which I will not resign, and taught  
 A lesson not to be unlearned. I know  
 The past, and thence I will essay to glean  
 A warning for the future, so that man



May profit by his errors, and derive  
 Experience from his folly:  
 For when the power of imparting joy  
 Is equal to the will, the human soul  
 Requires no other heaven.

*Mab.* Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!  
 Much yet remains unscanned.  
 Thou knowest how great is man,  
 Thou knowest his imbecility:  
 Yet learn thou what he is;  
 Yet learn the lofty destiny  
 Which restless Time prepares  
 For every living soul.

Behold a gorgeous palace that, amid  
 Yon populous city, rears its thousand towers,  
 And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops  
 Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,  
 Encompass it around: the dweller there  
 Cannot be free and happy; hearest thou not  
 The curses of the fatherless, the groans  
 Of those who have no friend? He passes on:  
 The king, the wearer of a gilded chain  
 That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool  
 Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave  
 Even to the basest appetites—that man  
 Heeds not the shriek of penury; he smiles  
 At the deep curses which the destitute  
 Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy  
 Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan  
 But for those morsels which his wantonness  
 Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save  
 All that they love from famine: when he hears  
 The tale of horror, to some ready-made face  
 Of hypocritical assent he turns,  
 Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him,  
 Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal  
 Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he drags  
 His palled unwilling appetite. If gold,  
 Gleaming around, and numerous viands, culled  
 From every clime, could force the loathing sense  
 To overcome satiety,—if wealth  
 The spring it draws from poisons not,—or vice,  
 Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not  
 Its food to deadliest venom; then that king  
 Is happy; and the peasant who fulfils  
 His unforced task, when he returns at even,

And by the blazing faggot meets again  
Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped,  
Tastes not a sweeter meal

Behold him now,  
Stretched on the gorgeous couch; his fevered **brain**  
Reels dizzily awhile: but, ah! too soon  
The slumber of intemperance subsides,  
And conscience, that undying serpent, calls  
Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.  
Listen! he speaks! mark that frenzied eye—  
Oh! mark that deadly visage.

*King.* No cessation!  
Oh! must this last for ever! Awful death,  
I wish, yet fear to clasp thee!—Not one moment  
Of dreamless sleep! O dear and blessed peace!  
Why dost thou shroud thy vestal purity  
In penury and dungeons? wherefore lurkest  
With danger, death, and solitude; yet shunn'st  
The palace I have built thee? Sacred peace!  
Oh, visit me but once, and pitying shed  
One drop of balm upon my withered soul.

Vain man! that palace is the virtuous heart,  
And peace defileth not her snowy robes  
In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet he mutters;  
His slumbers are but varied agonies,  
They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.  
There needeth not the hell that bigots frame  
To punish those who err: earth in itself  
Contains at once the evil and the cure;  
And all-sufficing nature can chastise  
Those who transgress her law,—she only knows  
How justly to proportion to the fault  
The punishment it merits.

Is it strange  
That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe?  
Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug  
The scorpion that consumes him? Is it strange  
That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns,  
Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured  
Within a splendid prison, whose stern bounds  
Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth,  
His soul asserts not its humanity?  
That man's mild nature rises not in war  
Against a king's employ? No—'tis not strange,  
He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts, and lives  
Just as his father did; the unconquered powers  
Of precedent and custom interpose

Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger yet,  
 To those who know not nature, nor deduce  
 The future from the present, it may seem  
 That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes  
 Of this unnatural being ; not one wretch,  
 Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed  
 In earth's unpitying bosom, rears an arm  
 To dash him from his throne !

Those gilded flies,  
 That, basking, in the sunshine of a court,  
 Fatten on its corruption !—what are they ?  
 The drones of the community ; they feed  
 On the mechanic's labour : the starved hind  
 For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield  
 Its unshared harvests ; and yon squalid form,  
 Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes  
 A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,  
 Drags out in labour a protracted death,  
 To glut their grandeur ; many faint with toil,

That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.  
 Whence, thinkest thou, kings and parasites arose ?  
 Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap  
 Toil and unvanquishable penury  
 On those who build their palaces, and bring  
 Their daily bread ?—From vice, black, loathsome vice ;  
 From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong ;  
 From all that genders misery, and makes  
 Of earth this thorny wilderness ; from lust,  
 Revenge, and murder. . . . And when reason's voice,  
 Loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked  
 The nations ; and mankind perceive that vice  
 Is discord, war, and misery ; that virtue  
 Is peace, and happiness, and harmony ;  
 When man's maturer nature shall disdain  
 The playthings of its childhood ;—kingly glare  
 Will lose its power to dazzle ; its authority  
 Will silently pass by ; the gorgeous throne  
 Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,  
 Fast falling to decay ; whilst falsehood's trade  
 Shall be as hateful and unprofitable.  
 As that of truth is now.

Where is the fame  
 Which the vain-glorious mighty of the earth  
 Seek to eternize ? Oh ! the faintest sound  
 From time's light footfall, the minutest wave  
 That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing  
 The unsubstantial bubble. Aye ! to-day  
 Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze

That flashes desolation, strong the arm  
 That scatters multitude. To-morrow comes!  
 That mandate is a thunder-peal that died  
 In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash  
 On which the midnight closed, and on that arm  
 The worm has made his meal.

The virtuous man,

Who, great in his humility, as kings  
 Are little in their grandeur; he who leads  
 Invincibly a life of resolute good,  
 And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths  
 More free and fearless than the trembling judge,  
 Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove  
 To bind the impassive spirit;—when he falls  
 His mild eye beams benevolence no more:  
 Withered the hand outstretched but to relieve;  
 Sunk reason's simple eloquence, that rolled  
 But to appal the guilty. Yes! the grave  
 Hath quenched that eye, and death's relentless frost  
 Withered that arm: but the unfading fame  
 Which virtue hangs upon its votaries tomb;  
 The deathless memory of that man, whom kings  
 Call to their mind and tremble; the remembrance  
 With which the happy spirit contemplates  
 Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,  
 Shall never pass away.

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;  
 The subject, not the citizen: for kings  
 And subjects, mutual foes, for ever play  
 A losing game into each other's hands,  
 Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man  
 Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.  
 Power, like a desolating pestilence  
 Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,  
 Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,  
 Makes slaves of men, and, of the human frame,  
 A mechanized automaton.

When Nero,

High over flaming Rome, with savage joy  
 Lowered like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear  
 The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld  
 The frightful desolation spread, and felt  
 A new created sense within his soul  
 Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the sound;  
 Thinkest thou his grandeur had not overcome  
 The force of human kindness? and, when Rome,  
 With one stern blow, hurled not the tyrant down

Crushed not the arm red with her dearest blood,  
Had not submissive abjectness destroyed  
Nature's suggestions ?

Look on yonder earth :  
The golden harvests spring ; the unfailing sun  
Sheds light and life ; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,  
Arise in due succession ; all things speak  
Peace, harmony and love. The universe,  
In nature's silent eloquence, declares  
That all fulfil the works of life and joy,—  
All but the outcast, man. He fabricates  
The sword which stabs his peace ; he cherisheth  
The snakes that gnaw his heart ; he raiseth up  
The tyrants, whose delight is in his woe,  
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,  
Lights it the great alone ? Yon silver beams,  
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch,  
Than on the dome of kings ? Is mother earth  
A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn  
Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil ;  
A mother only to those puling babes  
Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men  
The playthings of their babyhood, and mar,  
In self-important childishness, that peace  
Which men alone appreciate ?

Spirit of Nature ! no !  
The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs  
Alike in every human heart.  
Thou, aye, erectest there  
Thy throne of power unappealable :  
Thou art the judge beneath whose nod  
Man's brief and frail authority  
Is powerless as the wind  
That passeth idly by.  
Thine the tribunal which surpasseth  
The shew of human justice,  
As God surpasseth man.

Spirit of Nature ! thou  
Life of interminable multitudes ;  
Soul of those mighty spheres  
Whose changeless paths thro' Heaven's deep silence lie ;  
Soul of that smallest being,  
The dwelling of whose life  
Is one faint April sun-gleam ;—  
Man, like these passive things,  
Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth :  
Like theirs, his age of endless peace,

Which time is fast maturing,  
 Will swiftly, surely come;  
 And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest,  
 Will be without a flaw  
 Marring its perfect symmetry.

## IV.

How beautiful this night! the balmiest sigh,  
 Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear  
 Were discord to the speaking quietude  
 That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,  
 Studded with stars unutterably bright,  
 Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,  
 Seems like a canopy which love has spread  
 To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,  
 Robed in a garment of untrodden snow;  
 Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend,  
 So stainless, that their white and glittering spires  
 Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon castle steep,  
 Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower  
 So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it  
 A metaphor of peace;—all form a scene  
 Where musing solitude might love to lift  
 Her soul above this sphere of earthliness;  
 Where silence undisturbed might watch alone,  
 So cold, so bright, so still.

## The orb of day

In southern climes, o'er ocean's waveless field  
 Sinks sweetly smiling: not the faintest breath  
 Steals o'er the unruffled deep; the clouds of eve  
 Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day;  
 And vesper's image on the western main  
 Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes:  
 Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,  
 Roll o'er the blackened waters; the deep roar  
 Of distant thunder mutters awfully;  
 Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom  
 That shrouds the boiling surge; the pitiless fiend,  
 With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey;  
 The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave  
 Beneath its jagged gulf.

Ah! whence yon glare,  
 That fires the arch of heaven?—that dark red smoke  
 Blotting the silver moon? The stars are quenched  
 In darkness, and pure and spangling snow  
 Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round!  
 Hark to that roar, whose swift and deafening peals

In countless echoes through the mountains ring,  
 Startling pale midnight on her starry throne!  
 Now swells the intermingling din; the jar  
 Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb;  
 The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,  
 The ceaseless clangor, and the rush of men  
 Inebriate with rage:—loud, and more loud  
 The discord grows; till pale death shuts the scene,  
 And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws  
 His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all the men  
 Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there,  
 In proud and vigorous health; of all the hearts  
 That beat with anxious life at sun-set there;  
 How few survive, how few are beating now!  
 All is deep silence, like the fearful calm  
 That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause;  
 Save when the frantic wail of widowed love  
 Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan  
 With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay  
 Wrapt round its struggling powers.

The grey morn

Dawns on the mournful scene; the sulphurous smoke  
 Before the icy wind slow rolls away,  
 And the bright beams of frosty morning dance  
 Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood  
 Even to the forest's depth, and scattered arms,  
 And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments  
 Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path  
 Of the outsallying victors: far behind,  
 Black ashes note where their proud city stood.  
 Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—  
 Each tree which guards its darkness from the day,  
 Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink,

Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human else?  
 I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet  
 Across thy stainless features: yet fear not;  
 This is no unconnected misery,  
 Nor stands uncaused, and irretrievable.  
 Man's evil nature, that apoolgy  
 Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up  
 For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood  
 Which desolates the discord-wasted land.  
 From kings, and priests, and statesmen war arose,  
 Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,  
 Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe  
 Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall;  
 And where its venom'd exhalations spread

Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay  
 Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones  
 Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast  
 A garden shall arise, in loveliness  
 Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul,  
 That formed this world so beautiful, that spread  
 Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord  
 Strung to unchanging unison, that gave  
 The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,  
 That yielded to the wanderers of the deep  
 The lovely silence of the unfathomed main,  
 And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust  
 With spirit, thought, and love; on Man alone,  
 Partial in causeless malice, wantonly  
 Heaped ruin, vice and slavery; his soul  
 Blasted with withering curses; placed afar  
 The meteor happiness, that shuns his grasp,  
 But serving on the frightful gulph to glare,  
 Rent wide beneath his footsteps?

Nature!—no!  
 Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower,  
 Even in its tender bud; their influence darts  
 Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins  
 Of desolate society. The child,  
 Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,  
 Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts  
 His baby-sword even in a hero's mood.  
 This infant-arm becomes the bloodiest scourge  
 Of devastated earth; whilst specious names,  
 Learnt in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour  
 Serve as the 'sophisms with which manhood dims  
 Bright reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword  
 Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood.  
 Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man  
 Inherits vice and misery, when force  
 And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,  
 Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.

Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps  
 From its new tenement, and looks abroad  
 For happiness and sympathy, how stern  
 And desolate a tract is this wide world!  
 How withered all the buds of natural good!  
 No shade, no shelter from the sweeping storms  
 Of pitiless power! On its wretched frame,  
 Poisoned, perchance, by the disease and woe  
 Heaped on the wretched parent whence it sprung,



By morals, law, and custom, the pure winds  
 Of heaven, that renovate the insect tribes,  
 May breathe not. The untainting light of day  
 May visit not its longings. It is bound  
 Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are forged  
 Long ere its being: all liberty and love  
 And peace is torn from its defencelessness;  
 Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doomed  
 To abjectness and bondage!

Throughout this varied and eternal world  
 Soul is the only element, the block  
 That for uncounted ages has remained.  
 The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight  
 Is active, living spirit. Every grain  
 Is sentient both in unity and part,  
 And the minutest atom comprehends  
 A world of loves and hatreds; these beget  
 Evil and good: hence truth and falsehood spring;  
 Hence will, and thought, and action, all the germs  
 Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,  
 That variegate the eternal universe.  
 Soul is not more polluted than the beams  
 Of heaven's pure orb, ere round their rapid lines  
 The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.

Man is of soul and body, formed for deeds  
 Of high resolve, on fancy's boldest wing  
 To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn  
 The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste  
 The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield.  
 Or he is formed for abjectness and woe,  
 To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,  
 To shrink at every sound, to quench the flame  
 Of natural love in sensualism, to know  
 That hour as blest when on his worthless days  
 The frozen hand of death shall set its seal,  
 Yet fear the cure, though hating the disease.  
 The one is man that shall hereafter be;  
 The other, man as vice as made him now.

War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,  
 The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade,  
 And, to those royal murderer's, whose mean thrones  
 Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore,  
 The bread they eat, the staff on which they lean.  
 Guards, garbed in blood-red livery, surround  
 Their palaces, participate the crimes  
 That force defends, and from a nation's rage  
 Secure the crown, which all the curses reach

That famine, frenzy, woe and penury breathe.  
 These are the hired bravos who defend(c)  
 The tyrant's throne—the bullies of his fear:  
 These are the sinks and channels of worst vice,  
 The refuse of society, the dregs  
 Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend  
 Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,  
 All that is mean and villanous, with rage  
 Which hopelessness of good, and self-contempt,  
 Alone might kindle; they are decked in wealth,  
 Honour and power, then are sent abroad  
 To do their work. The pestilence that stalks  
 In gloomy triumph through some Eastern land  
 Is less destroying. They cajole with gold,  
 And promises of fame, the thoughtless youth  
 Already crushed with servitude: he knows  
 His wretchedness too late, and cherishes  
 Repentance for his ruin, when his doom  
 Is sealed in gold and blood!  
 Those too the tyrant serve, who skilled to snare  
 The feet of justice in the toils of law,  
 Stand, ready to oppress the weaker still;  
 And, right or wrong, will vindicate for gold,  
 Sneering at public virtue, which beneath  
 Their pitiless tread lies torn and trampled, where  
 Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.

Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites,  
 Without a hope, a passion, or a love,  
 Who, through a life of luxury and lies,  
 Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,  
 Support the system whence their honours flow . . . .  
 They have three words:—well tyrants know their use,  
 Well pay them for the loan, with usury  
 Torn from a bleeding world!—God, Hell, and Heaven.  
 A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend,  
 Whose mercy is a nick-name for the rage  
 Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.  
 Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,  
 Where poisonous and undying worms prolong  
 Eternal misery to those hapless slaves  
 Whose life has been a penance for its crimes.  
 And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie  
 Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe  
 Before the mockeries of earthly power.

These tools the tyrant tempers to his work,  
 Wields in his wrath, and as he wills, destroys,  
 Omnipotent in wickedness: the while  
 Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does

His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend  
 Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.  
 They rise, they fall; one generation comes  
 Yielding its harvest to destruction's scythe.  
 It fades, another blossoms: yet behold!  
 Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom,  
 Withering and cankering deep its passive prime.  
 He has invented lying words and modes,  
 Empty and vain as his own coreless heart;  
 Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound,  
 To lure the heedless victim to the toils  
 Spread round the valley of its paradise.

Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or prince!  
 Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts  
 Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,  
 With whom thy master was:—or thou delight'st  
 In numbering o'er the myriads of thy slain,  
 All misery weighing nothing in the scale  
 Against thy short-lived fame: or thou dost load  
 With cowardice and crime the groaning land,  
 A pomp-fed king. Look to thy wretched self!  
 Aye, art thou not the veriest slave that e'er  
 Crawled on the loathing earth? Are not thy days  
 Days of unsatisfying listlessness?  
 Dost thou not cry, ere night's long rack is o'er,  
 When will the morning come? Is not thy youth  
 A vain and feverish dream of sensualism?  
 Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease?  
 Are not thy views of unregretted death  
 Drear, comfortless, and horrible? Thy mind,  
 Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,  
 Incapable of judgment, hope, or love?  
 And dost thou wish the errors to survive  
 That bar thee from all sympathies of good,  
 After the miserable interest  
 Thou hold'st in their protraction? When the grave  
 Has swallowed up thy memory and thyself,  
 Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth  
 To twine its roots around thy confined clay,  
 Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb,  
 That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die?

## V.

Thus do the generations of the earth (*d*)  
 Go to the grave, and issue from the womb,  
 Surviving still the imperishable change  
 That renovates the world; even as the leaves (*e*)  
 Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year

Has scattered on the forest soil, and heaped  
 For many seasons there, though long they choke,  
 Loading with loathsome rottenness the land,  
 All germs of promise. Yet, when the tall trees  
 From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes,  
 Lie level with the earth to moulder there,  
 They fertilize the land they once deformed,  
 Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs  
 Of youth, integrity, and loveliness ;  
 Like that which gave it life, to spring and die.  
 Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights  
 The fairest feelings of the opening heart,  
 Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil  
 Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love,  
 And judgment cease to wage unnatural war  
 With passion's unsubduable array.

Twin-sister of religion, selfishness !  
 Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all  
 The wanton horrors of her bloody play ;  
 Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,  
 Shunning the light, and owning not its name ;  
 Compelled, by its deformity, to screen  
 With flimsy veil of justice and of right,  
 Its unattractive lineaments, that scare  
 All, save the brood of ignorance : at once  
 The cause and the effect of tyranny ;  
 Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and vile ;  
 Dead to all love but of its abjectness,  
 With heart impassive by more noble powers  
 Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame ;  
 Despising its own miserable being,  
 Which still it longs, yet fears to disenthral.

Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange  
 Of all that human art or nature yield ;  
 Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand,  
 And natural kindness hasten to supply  
 From the full fountain of its boundless love,  
 For ever stifled, drained, and tainted now.  
 Commerce ! beneath whose poison-breathing shade  
 No solitary virtue dares to spring,  
 But poverty and wealth with equal hand  
 Scatter their withering curses, and unfold  
 The doors of premature and violent death,  
 To pining famine and full-fed disease,  
 To all that shares the lot of human life,  
 Which poisoned body and soul, scarce drags the chain  
 That lengthens as it goes and clanks behind.

Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,  
 The signet of its all-enslaving power,  
 Upon a shining ore, and called it gold :  
 Before whose image bow the vulgar great,  
 The vainly rich, the miserable proud,  
 The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings, (f)  
 And with blind feelings reverence the power  
 That grinds them to the dust of misery.  
 But in the temple of their hireling hearts  
 Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn  
 All earthly things but virtue.

Since tyrants, by the sale of human life,  
 Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame  
 To their wide-wasting and insatiate pride,  
 Success has sanctioned to a credulous world  
 The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war.  
 His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes  
 The despot numbers ; from his cabinet  
 These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,  
 Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,  
 Beneath a vulgar master, to perform  
 A task of cold and brutal drudgery ;—  
 Hardened to hope, insensible to fear,  
 Scarce living pullies of a dead machine,  
 Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,  
 That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth !

The harmony and happiness of man  
 Yields to the wealth of nations ; that which lifts  
 His nature to the heaven of its pride,  
 Is bartered for the poison of his soul ;  
 The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,  
 Blighting all prospect but of seltish gain,  
 Withering all passion but of slavish fear,  
 Extinguishing all free and generous love  
 Of enterprise and daring, even the pulse  
 That fancy kindles in the beating heart  
 To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—  
 Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self,  
 The grovelling hope of interest and gold,  
 Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed,  
 Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast  
 Of wealth ! (g) The wordy eloquence that lives  
 After the ruin of their hearts, can gild  
 The bitter poison of a nation's woe,  
 Can turn the worship of the servile mob  
 To their corrupt and glaring idol Fame,

From Virtue, trampled by its iron tread,  
 Although its dazzling pedestal be raised  
 Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,  
 With desolated dwellings smoking round.  
 The man of ease, who, by his warm fire-side,  
 To deeds of charitable intercourse  
 And bare fulfilment of the common laws  
 Of decency and prejudice, confines  
 The struggling nature of his human heart,  
 Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds  
 A passing tear perchance upon the wreck  
 Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door  
 The frightful waves are driven,—when his son  
 Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion(*h*)  
 Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man.  
 Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;  
 Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;  
 Who ever hears his famished offspring scream,  
 Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze  
 For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye  
 Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene  
 Of thousands like himself;—he little heeds  
 The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate  
 Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn  
 The vain and bitter mockery of words,  
 Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds,  
 And unrestrained but by the arm of power,  
 That knows and dreads his enmity,

The iron rod of penury still compels  
 Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth,  
 And poison, with unprofitable toil,  
 A life too void of solace to confirm  
 The very chains that bind him to his doom.  
 Nature, impartial in munificence,  
 Has gifted man with all-subduing will:  
 Matter, with all its transitory shapes,  
 Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,  
 That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread.  
 How many a rustic Milton has past by,  
 Stiffing the speechless longings of his heart,  
 In unremitting drudgery and care!  
 How many a vulgar Cato has compelled  
 His energies, no longer tameless then,  
 To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!  
 How many a Newton, of whose passive ken  
 Those mighty spheres that gem infinity  
 Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in heaven  
 To light the midnights of his native town!

Yet every heart contains perfection's germ :  
 The wisest of the sages of the earth,  
 That ever from the stores of reason drew  
 Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,  
 Were but a weak and inexperienced boy,  
 Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued  
 With pure desire a universal love  
 Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,  
 Untainted passion, elevated will,  
 Which death (who even would linger long in awe  
 Within his noble presence, and beneath  
 His changeless eye-beam,) might alone subdue.  
 Him, every slave now dragging though the filth  
 Of some corrupted city his sad life,  
 Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,  
 Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense  
 With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,  
 Or madly rushing through all violent crime,  
 To move the deep stagnation of his soul,—  
 Might imitate and equal.

But mean lust  
 Has bound its chains so tight around the earth,  
 That all within it but the virtuous man  
 Is venal: gold or fame will surely reach  
 The price prefixed by selfishness, to all  
 But him of resolute and unchanging will;  
 Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile crowd,  
 Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,  
 Can bribe to yield his elevated soul  
 To tyranny or falsehood, though they wield  
 With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world.

All things are sold: the very light of heaven  
 Is venal; earth's unsparing gifts of love,  
 The smallest and most despicable things  
 That lurk in the abysses of the deep,  
 All objects of our life, even life itself,  
 And the poor pittance which the laws allow  
 Of liberty, the fellowship of man,  
 Those duties which his heart of human love  
 Should urge him to perform instinctively,  
 Are bought and sold as in a public mart  
 Of undisguising selfishness, that sets  
 On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.  
 Even love (*i*) is sold; the solace of all woe  
 Is turned to deadliest agony, old age  
 Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,  
 And youth's corrupted impulses prepare  
 A life of horror from the blighting bane

Of commerce: whilst the pestilence that springs  
From unenjoying sensualism, has filled  
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs  
Of outraged conscience; for the-slavish priest  
Sets no great value on his hireling faith:  
A little passing pomp, some servile souls  
Whom cowardice itself might safely chain,  
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe  
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,  
Can make him minister to tyranny.  
More daring crime requires a loftier meed:  
Without a shudder the slave-soldier lends  
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,  
When the dread eloquence of dying men,  
Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,  
Assails that nature, whose applause he sells  
For the gross blessings of the patriot mob,  
For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,  
And for a cold world's good word,—viler still!

There is a nobler glory, which survives  
Until our being fades, and, solacing  
All human care, accompanies its change;  
Deserts not the virtue in the dungeon's gloom,  
And in the precincts of the palace, guides  
Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime;  
Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,  
Even when, from power's avenging hand, he takes  
Its sweetest, last, and noblest title—death;  
—The consciousness of good, which neither gold,  
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss,  
Can purchase; but a life of resolute good,  
Unalterable will, quenchless desire  
Of universal happiness, the heart  
That beats with it in unison, the brain,  
Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to change  
Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.

This commerce of sincerest virtue needs  
No mediative signs of selfishness  
No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,  
No balancings of prudence, cold and long;  
In just and equal measure all is weighed,  
One scale contains the sum of human weal,  
And one, the good man's heart.

How vainly seek  
The selfish for that happiness denied



To aught but virtue! Blind and hardened, they,  
 Who hope for peace amid the storms of care,  
 Who covet power they know not how to use,  
 And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give;—  
 Madly they frustrate still their own designs;  
 And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy  
 Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul,  
 Pining regrets, and vain repentances,  
 Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade  
 Their valueless and miserable lives.

But hoary-headed selfishness has felt  
 Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:  
 A brighter morn awaits the human day,  
 When every transfer of earth's natural gifts  
 Shall be a commerce of good words and works;  
 When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,  
 The fear of infamy, disease, and woe,  
 War, with its million horrors, and fierce hell,  
 Shall live but in the memory of time,  
 Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,  
 Look back, and shudder at his younger years.

## VI.

ALL touch, all eye, all ear,  
 The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech.  
 O'er the thin texture of its frame,  
 The varying periods painted changing glows;  
 As on a summer even,  
 When soul-enfolding music floats around,  
 The stainless mirror of the lake  
 Re-images the eastern gloom,  
 Mingling convulsively its purple hues  
 With sunset's burnished gold.

Then thus the Spirit spoke:  
 It is a wild and miserable world!  
 Thorny, and full of care,  
 Which every fiend can make his prey at will.  
 O Fairy! in the lapse of years,  
 Is there no hope in store?  
 Will yon vast suns roll on  
 Interminably, still illumining  
 The night of so many wretched souls,  
 And see no hope for them?  
 Will not the universal Spirit e'er  
 Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?

The Fairy calmly smiled

In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope  
 Suffused the spirits lineaments.  
 Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts,  
 Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul,  
 That sees the chains which bind it to its doom.  
 Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth,  
 Falsehood, mistake, and lust;  
 But the eternal world  
 Contains at once the evil and the cure.  
 Some eminent in virtue shall start up,  
 Even in perversesest time;  
 The truths of their pure lips, that never die,  
 Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath  
 Of ever-living flame,  
 Until the monster sting itself to death.

How sweet a scene will earth become!  
 Of purest spirits, a pure dwelling-place,  
 Symphonious with the planetary spheres;  
 When man with, changeless nature coalescing,  
 Will undertake regeneration's work,  
 When its ungenial poles no longer point  
 To the red and baleful sun (*k*)  
 That faintly twinkles there.

Spirit, on yonder earth,  
 Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power  
 Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth!  
 Madness and misery are there!  
 The happiest is most wretched! yet confide  
 Until pure health-drops, from the cup of joy  
 Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.  
 Now, to the scene I shew, in silence turn,  
 And read the blood-stained charter of all woe,  
 Which nature soon, with re-creating hand,  
 Will blot in mercy from the book of earth.  
 How bold the flight of passion's wandering wing,  
 How swift the step of reason's firmer tread  
 How calm and sweet the victories of life,  
 How terrorless the triumph of the grave!  
 How powerless were the mightest monarch's arm,  
 Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown!  
 How ludicrous the priests dogmatic roar!  
 The weight of his exterminating curse,  
 How light! and his affected charity,  
 To suit the pressure of the changing times,  
 What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,  
 Religion! bnt for thee, prolific fiend,  
 Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,  
 And heaven with slaves!

Thou taintest all thou look'st upon!—the stars,  
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet,  
Were gods to the distempered playfulness  
Of thy untutored infancy: the trees,  
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,  
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,  
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon  
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest a boy,  
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,  
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,  
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;  
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,  
The genii of the elements, the powers  
That give a shape to nature's varied works,  
Had life and place in the corrupt belief  
Of thy blind heart; yet still thy youthful hands  
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave  
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;  
Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene,  
Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride;  
Their everlasting and unchanging laws  
Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodst  
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up  
The elements of all that thou didst know;  
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,  
The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,  
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,  
The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,  
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,  
And all their causes, to an abstract point,  
Converging, thou didst bend, and called it God!  
The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,  
The merciful, and the avenging God!  
Who, prototype of human misrule, sits  
High in heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,  
Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work,  
Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves  
Of fate, whom he created in his sport,  
To triumph in their torments when they fell!  
Earth heard the name; earth trembled, as the smoke  
Of his revenge ascended up to heaven,  
Blotting the constellations; and the cries  
Of millions butchered in sweet confidence  
And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds  
Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths  
Sworn in his dreadful name, rung through the land;  
Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,  
And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek  
Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel  
Felt cold in her torn entrails!

Religion! thou wert then in manhood's prime :  
 But age crept on: one God would not suffice  
 For senile puerility; thou framedst  
 A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut  
 Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend  
 Thy wickedness had pictured, might afford  
 A plea for sating the unnatural thirst  
 For murder, rapine, violence, and crime,  
 That still consumed thy being, even when  
 Thou heardst the step of fate; that flames might light  
 Thy funeral scene, and the shrill horrid shrieks  
 Of parents dying on the pile that burned  
 To light their children to thy paths, the roar  
 Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries  
 Of thine apostles, loud commingling there,  
     Might sate thine hungry ear  
     Even on the bed of death!

But now contempt is mocking thy grey hairs;  
 Thou art descending to the darksome grave,  
 Unhonoured and unpitied, but by those  
 Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds,  
 Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun  
 Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night  
 That long has lowered above the ruined world.

Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,  
 Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused  
 A spirit of activity and life,  
 That knows no term, cessation, or decay;  
 That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,  
 Extinguished in the dampness of the grave,  
 Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe  
 In the dim newness of its being feels  
 The impulses of sublunary things,  
 And all is wonder to unpractised sense:  
 But active, steadfast, and eternal, still  
 Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,  
 Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,  
 Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease;  
 And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly  
 Rolls round the eternal universe, and shakes  
 Its undecaying battlement, presides,  
 Apportioning with irresistible law  
 The place each spring of its machine shall fill;  
 So that, when waves on waves tumultuous heap  
 Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven  
 Heaven's lightnings scorch the up-rooted ocean-fords,  
 Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner,  
 Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock,  
 All seems unlinked contingency and chance:

No atom of this turbulence fulfils (*l*)  
 A vague and unnecessitated task,  
 Or acts but as it must and ought to act.  
 Even the minutest molecule of light,  
 That in an April sun-beam's fleeting glow,  
 Fulfils its destined, though invisible work,  
 The universal Spirit guides; nor less  
 When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,  
 Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-field,  
 That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves,  
 And call the sad work glory, does it rule  
 All passions: not a thought, a will, an act,  
 No working of the tyrant's moody mind,  
 Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast  
 Their servitude, to hide the shame they feel,  
 Nor the events enchaining every will,  
 That from the depths of unrecorded time  
 Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass  
 Unrecognised, or unforeseen by thee,  
 Soul of the Universe! eternal spring  
 Of life and death, of happiness and woe,  
 Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene  
 That floats before our eyes in wavering light,  
 Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison,  
     Whose chains and massy walls  
     We feel, but cannot see.

Spirit of Nature! all sufficing Power,  
 Necessity! (*m*) thou mother of the world!  
 Unlike the God of human error, thou  
 Requirest no prayers or praises; the caprice  
 Of Man's weak will belongs no more to thee  
 Than do the changeful passions of his breast  
 To thy unvarying harmony: the slave,  
 Whose horrible lusts spread misery o'er the world,  
 And the good man, who lifts, with virtuous pride,  
 His being, in the sight of happiness,  
 That springs from his own works; the poison-tree,  
 Beneath whose shade all life is withered up,  
 And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords  
 A temple where the vows of happy love  
 Are register'd, are equal in thy sight:  
 No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge,  
 And favouritism, and worst desire of fame,  
 Thou knowest not: all that the wide world contains,  
 Are but thy passive instruments, and thou  
 Regard'st them all with an impartial eye,  
 Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,  
     Because thou hast not human sense,  
     Because thou art not human mind.

Yes! when the sweeping storm of time  
 Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined fanes  
 And broken altars of the Almighty fiend  
 Whose name usurps thy honours, and the blood,  
 Through centuries clotted there, has floated down  
 The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live  
 Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee,  
 Which, nor the tempest-breath of time,  
 Nor the interminable flood,  
 Over earth's slight pageant rolling,  
 Availeth to destroy,—  
 The sensitive extension of the world.  
 That wondrous and eternal fane,  
 Where pain and pleasure, good and evil join,  
 To do the will of strong necessity,  
 And life in multitudinous shapes,  
 Still pressing forward where no term can be,  
 Like hungry and unresting flame  
 Curls round the eternal columns of its strength.

## VII.

*Spirit.* I was an infant when my mother went  
 To see an atheist burned. She took me there:  
 The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;  
 The multitude was gazing silently;  
 And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,  
 Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,  
 Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:  
 The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;  
 His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;  
 His death-pang rent my heart! the insensate mob  
 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.  
 Weep not, child! cried my mother, for that man  
 Has said, There is no God. (*n*)

*Fairy.* There is no God!  
 Nature confirms the faith his death-groan seal'd:  
 Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,  
 His ceaseless generations, tell their tale;  
 Let every part depending on the chain  
 That links it to the whole, point to the hand  
 That grasps its term! Let every seed that falls,  
 In silent eloquence unfold its store  
 Of argument: infinity within,  
 Infinity without, belie creation;  
 The exterminable spirit it contains;  
 Is nature's only God; but human pride  
 Is skilful to invent most serious names  
 To hide its ignorance.

The name of God !  
 Has fenced about all crime with holiness,  
 Himself the creature of his worshippers,  
 Whose names and attributes and passions change,  
 Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord,  
 Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,  
 Still serving o'er the war-polluted world  
 For desolation's watch-word ; whether hosts  
 Stain his death-blushing chariot-wheels, as on  
 Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise  
 A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans ;  
 Or countless partners of his power divide  
 His tyranny to weakness ; or the smoke  
 Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,  
 Unarmed old age, and youth, and infancy,  
 Horribly massacred, ascend to heaven  
 In honour of his name ; or, last and worst,  
 Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,  
 And priests dare babble of a God of peace,  
 Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood,  
 Murdering the while, uprooting every germ  
 Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,  
 Making the earth a slaughter-house !

O Spirit ! through the sense  
 By which thy inner nature was apprised  
 Of outward shows, vague dreams have roll'd,  
 And varied reminiscences have waked  
 Tablets that never fade :  
 All things have been imprinted there—  
 The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,  
 Even the unshapeliest lineaments  
 Of wild and fleeting visions  
 Have left a record there  
 To testify of earth.

These are my empire, for to me is given  
 The wonders of the human world to keep,  
 And fancy's thin creations to endow  
 With manner, being, and reality ;  
 Therefore a wondrous phantom, from the dreams  
 Of human error's dense and purblind faith,  
 I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.  
 Ahasuerus, rise ! (o)

A strange and woe-worn wight  
 Arose beside the battlement,  
 And stood unmoving there.  
 His inessential figure cast no shade  
 Upon the golden floor ;

His port and mien bore mark of many years,  
 And chronicles of untold ancientness  
 Were legible within his beamless eye :  
     Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth ;  
 Freshness and vigour knit his manly frame ;  
 The wisdom of old age was mingled there  
     With youth's primæval dauntlessness ;  
     And inexpressible woe,  
 Chasten'd by fearless resignation, gave  
 An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.

*Spirit.*      Is there a God ?

*Ahasuerus.* Is there a God!—ay, an almighty God,  
 And vengeful as almighty ! Once his voice  
 Was heard on earth : earth shudder'd at the sound ;  
 The fiery-visaged firmament express'd  
 Abhorrence, and the grave of nature yawn'd  
 To swallow all the dauntless and the good  
 That dared to hurl defiance at his throne,  
 Girt as it was with power. None but slaves  
 Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who did the work  
 Of tyrannous omnipotence ; whose souls  
 No honest indignation ever urged  
 To elevated daring, to one deed  
 Which gross and sensual self did not pollute.  
 These slaves built temples for the omnipotent fiend,  
 Gorgeous and vast : the costly altars smoked  
 With human blood, and hideous pæans rung  
 Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard  
 His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts  
 Had raised him to his eminence in power,  
 Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,  
 And confidant of the all-knowing one.

    These were Jehovah's words.

From an eternity of idleness  
 I, God, awoke : in seven days' toil made earth  
 From nothing ; rested, and created man :  
 I placed him in a paradise, and there  
 Planted the tree of evil, so that he  
 Might eat and perish, and my soul procure  
 Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,  
 Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,  
 All misery to my fame. The race of men,  
 Chosen to my honour, with impunity  
 May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.  
 Here I command thee hence to lead them on,  
 Until, with harden'd feet, their conquering troops  
 Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,  
 And make my name be dreaded through the land.



Yet—ever burning flame and ceaseless woe  
 Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,  
 With every soul on this ungrateful earth,  
 Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—even all  
 Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge  
 (Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.

The murderer's brow  
 Quiver'd with horror.

God omnipotent,  
 Is there no mercy? must our punishment  
 Be endless? will long ages roll away,  
 And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast thou made  
 In mockery and wrath this evil earth?  
 Mercy becomes the powerful—be but just:  
 O God! repent and save.

One way remains:  
 I will beget a son, and he shall bear (*p*)  
 The sins of all the world; he shall arise  
 In an unnoticed corner of the earth,  
 And there shall die upon a cross, and purge  
 The universal crime; so that the few  
 On whom my grace descends, those who are mark'd  
 As vessels to the honour of their God,  
 May credit this strange sacrifice, and save  
 Their souls alive: millions shall live and die,  
 Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name,  
 But, unredeemed, go to the gaping grave.  
 Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale,  
 Such as the nurses frighten babes withal:  
 These in a gulph of anguish and of flame  
 Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,  
 Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow,  
 Even on their beds of torment, where they howl,  
 My honour, and the justice of their doom.  
 What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts  
 Of purity, with radiant genius bright,  
 Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?  
 Many are called, but few will I elect.  
 Do thou my bidding, Moses!

Even the murderer's cheek  
 Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips  
 Scarce faintly uttered—O Almighty one,  
 I tremble and obey!

O Spirit! centuries have set their seal  
 On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,  
 Since the incarnate came: humbly he came,  
 Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape

Of man, scorned by the world, his name unheard,  
 Save by the rabble of his native town,  
 Even as a parish demagogue. He led  
 The crowd: he taught them justice, truth, and peace,  
 In semblance; but he lit within their souls  
 The quenchless flames of zeal, and blest the sword  
 He brought on earth to satiate with the blood  
 Of truth and freedom his malignant soul.  
 At length his mortal frame was led to death.  
 I stood beside him; on the torturing cross  
 No pain assailed his untrerestral sense,  
 And yet he groaned. Indignantly I summed  
 The massacres and miseries which his name  
 Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried—  
 Go! Go! in mockery.

A smile of God-like malice re-illuminated  
 His fading lineaments.—I go, he cried,  
 But thou shalt wander o'er the unquiet earth  
 Eternally.—The dampness of the grave  
 Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,  
 And long lay tranced upon the charm'd soil.  
 When I awoke hell burned within my brain,  
 Which staggered on its seat; for all around  
 The mouldering relics of my kindred lay,  
 Even as the Almighty's ire arrested them,  
 And in their various attitudes of death  
 My murdered children's mute and eyeless skulls  
 Glared ghastly upon me.

But my soul,  
 From sight and sense of the polluting woe  
 Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer  
 Hell's freedom to the servitude of heaven.  
 Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began  
 My lonely and unending pilgrimage,  
 Resolved to wage unwearable war  
 With my almighty tyrant, and to hurl  
 Defiance at his impotence to harm  
 Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand  
 That barred my passage to the peaceful grave  
 Has crushed the earth to misery, and given  
 Its empire to the chosen of his slaves.  
 These have I seen, even from the earliest dawn  
 Of weak, unstable, and precarious power;  
 Then preaching peace, as now they practice war,  
 So, when they turned but from the massacre  
 Of unoffending infidels, to quench  
 Their thirst for ruin in the very blood  
 That flowed in their own veins, and pitiless zeal  
 Froze every human feeling, as the wife

Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel,  
 Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love ;  
 And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood  
 Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,  
 Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught waged  
 Drunk from the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath ;  
 Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,  
 Pointed to victory ! When the fray was done,  
 No remnant of the exterminated faith  
 Survive to tell its ruin, but the flesh,  
 With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere,  
 That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.

Yes ! I have seen God's worshippers unsheathe  
 The sword of his revenge, when grace descended,  
 Confirming all unnatural impulses,  
 To sanctify their desolating deeds ;  
 And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross  
 O'er the unhappy earth : then shone the sun  
 On showers of gore from the upflashing steel  
 Of safe assassination, and all crime  
 Made stingless by the spirits of the Lord,  
 And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.

Spirit ! no year of my eventful being  
 Has passed unstained by crime and misery, [slaves  
 Which flows from God's own faith. I've masked his  
 With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile  
 The insensate mob and, whilst one hand was red  
 With murder, feign to stretch the other out  
 For brotherhood and peace ; and, that they now  
 Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds  
 Are marked with all the narrowness and crime  
 That freedom's young arm dares not yet chastise,  
 Reason may claim our gratitude, who now  
 Establishing the imperishable throne  
 Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain  
 The unprevailing malice of my foe,  
 Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave,  
 Adds impotent eternities to pain,  
 Whilst keenest disappointment racks his breast  
 To see the smiles of peace around them play,  
 To frustrate, or to sanctify their doom.

Thus have I stood,—through a wild waste of years  
 Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony,  
 Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-enshrined,  
 Mocking my powerless tyrant's horrible curse  
 With stubborn and unalterable will,  
 Even as a giant oak, which heaven's fierce flame

Had scathed in the wilderness, to stand  
 A monument of fadeless ruin there ;  
 Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves  
 The midnight conflict of the wintry sotrn,  
     As in the sun-light's calm it spreads  
     Its worn and withered arms on high  
 To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.

The fairy waved her wand :  
 Ahasuerus fled  
 Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist,  
     Flee from the morning beam :  
 The matter of which dreams are made  
 Not more endowed with actual life  
 Than this phantasmal portraiture  
 Of wandering human thought.

## VIII.

The present and the past thou last beheld :  
 It was a desolate sight. Now Spirit, learn,  
     The secrets of the future.—Time !  
 Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom,  
 Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,  
 And from the cradles of eternity,  
 Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep  
 By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,  
 Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold  
     Thy glorious destiny !

Joy to the Spirit came.  
 Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil,  
 Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear :  
     Earth was no longer hell ;  
     Love, freedom, health, had given  
 Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,  
     And all its pulses beat  
 Symphonious to the planetary spheres :  
     Then dulcet music swelled  
 Concordant with the life-strings of the soul ;  
 It throbb'd in sweet and languid beatings there,  
 Catching new life from tansitory death,—  
 Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,  
 That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea,  
 And dies on the creation of its breath,  
 And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits :  
     Was the pure stream of feeling  
     That sprung from these sweet notes,  
 And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies  
 With mild and gentle motion calmly flow'd.

Joy to the Spirit came,—  
 Such joy as when a lover sees  
 The chosen of his soul in happiness,  
 And witnesses her peace  
 Whose woe to him were bitterer than death ;  
 Sees her unfaded cheek  
 Glow mantling in first luxury of health,  
 Thrills with her lovely eyes,  
 Which like two stars amid the heaving main  
 Sparkle through liquid bliss.

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen :  
 I will not call the ghost of ages gone  
 To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore ;  
 The present now is past,  
 And those events that desolate the earth  
 Have faded from the memory of Time,  
 Who dares not give reality to that  
 Whose being I annul. To me is given  
 The wonders of the human world to keep,  
 Space, matter, time, and mind. Futurity  
 Exposes now its treasure ; let the sight  
 Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.  
 O human Spirit ! spur thee to the goal  
 Where virtue fixes universal peace,  
 And, 'midst the ebb and flow of human things,  
 Shew somewhat stable, somewhat certain still,  
 A light-house o'er the wild of dreary waves.

The habitable earth is full of bliss ;  
 Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled  
 By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,  
 Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,  
 But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude  
 Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed ;  
 And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles  
 Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls  
 Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,  
 Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet  
 To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves,  
 And melodize with man's blest nature there.

Those deserts of immeasurable sand,  
 Whose age-collected fervours scarce allowed  
 A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,  
 Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love  
 Broke on the sultry silentness alone,  
 Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,  
 Corn-fields, and pastures, and white cottages ;  
 And where the startled wilderness beheld

A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,  
 A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs  
 The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs,  
 Whilst shouts and howlings through the desert rang ;  
 Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,  
 Offering sweet incense to the sun-rise, smiles  
 To see a babe before his mother's door,  
     Sharing his morning's meal  
 With the green and golden basilisk  
     That comes to lick his feet.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail  
 Has seen above the illimitable plain,  
 Morning on night, and night on morning rise,  
 Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread  
 Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea,  
 Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves  
 So long have mingled with the gusty wind  
 In melancholy loneliness, and swept  
 The desert of those ocean solitudes,  
 But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,  
 The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm ;  
 Now to the sweet and many mingling sounds  
 Of kindest human impulses respond.  
 Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,  
 With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,  
 And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,  
 Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,  
 Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,  
 To meet the kisses of the flowrets there.

All things are recreated, and the flame  
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life :  
 The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck  
 To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,  
 Rewarding her with their pure perfectness :  
 The balmy breathings of the wind inhale  
 Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad :  
 Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,  
 Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream :  
 No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,  
 Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride  
 The foliage of the ever-verdant trees ;  
 But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,  
 And autumn proudly bears her matron grace,  
 Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of spring,  
 Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit  
 Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The lion now forgets to thirst for blood :

There might you see him sporting in the sun  
 Besides the dreadless kid ; his claws are sheathed,  
 His teeth are harmless, custom's force has made  
 His nature as the nature of a lamb.  
 Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's tempting bane  
 Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows :  
 All bitterness is past ; the cup of joy  
 Unmingled mantles to the goblet's brim,  
 And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

But chief, ambiguous man, he that can know  
 More misery, and dream more joy than all ;  
 Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast  
 To mingle with a loftier instinct there,  
 Lending their power to pleasure and to pain,  
 Yet raising, sharpening, and refining each ;  
 Who stands amid the ever-varying world,  
 The burden or the glory of the earth ;  
 He chief perceives the change ; his being notes  
 The gradual renovation, and defines  
 Each movement of its progress on his mind.

Man, where the gloom of the long polar night  
 Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,  
 Where scarce the hardest herb that braves the frost  
 Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,  
 Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night ;  
 His chilled and narrow energies, his heart,  
 Insensible to courage, truth, or love,  
 His stunted stature and imbecile frame,  
 Marked him for some abortion of the earth,  
 Fit compeer of the bears that roamed around,  
 Whose habits and enjoyments were his own :  
 His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe,  
 Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfilled,  
 Appraised him ever of the joyless length  
 Which his short being's wretchedness had reached :  
 His death a pang which famine, cold, and toil,  
 Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark  
 Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought :  
 All was inflicted here that earth's revenge  
 Could wreak on the infringers of her law ;  
 One curse alone was spared—the name of God.

Now, where the tropics bound the realms of day  
 With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,  
 Where blue mists the unmoving atmosphere  
 Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed  
 Unnatural vegetation, where the land  
 Teemed with all earthquake, tempest, and disease,

Was man a nobler being; slavery  
 Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust;  
 Or he was bartered for the fame of power,  
 Which, all internal impulses destroying,  
 Makes human will an article of trade;  
 Or he was changed with Christians for their gold,  
 And dragged to distant isles, where to the sound  
 Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work  
 Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,  
 Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads  
 The long protracted fulness of their woe;  
 Or he was led to legal butchery,  
 To turn to worms beneath that burning sun  
 Where kings first leagued against the rights of men,  
 And priests first traded with the name of God.

Even where the milder zone afforded man  
 A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,  
 Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,  
 Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth till late  
 Aailed to arrest its progress, or create  
 That peace which first in bloodless victory waved  
 Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime:  
 There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,  
 The mimic of surrounding misery,  
 The jackall of ambition's lion-rage,  
 The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning  
 This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;  
 Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,  
 Which gently in his noble bosom wake  
 All kindly passions and all pure desires.  
 Him, (still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing, (*g*)  
 Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal  
 Draws on the virtuous mind,) the thoughts that rise  
 In time-destroying infiniteness, gift  
 With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks  
 The unprevailing hoariness of age,  
 And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene  
 Swift as an unremembered vision, stands  
 Immortal upon earth: no longer now (*r*)  
 He slays the lamb that looks him in the face,  
 And horribly devours his mangled flesh,  
 Which still avenging nature's broken law,  
 Kindled all putrid humours in his frame,  
 All evil passions, and all vain belief,  
 Hatred, despair, and loathing in his mind,  
 The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.  
 No longer now the winged habitants,



That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,  
 Flee from the form of man; but gather round,  
 And prune their sunny feathers on the hands  
 Which little children stretch in friendly sport  
 Towards these dreadless partners of their play.  
 All things are void of terror: man has lost  
 His terrible prerogative, and stands  
 An equal amidst equals: happiness  
 And science dawn, though late upon the earth;  
 Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame  
 Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,  
 Reason and passion cease to combat there;  
 Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth extends  
 Its all-subduing energies, and wields  
 The sceptre of a vast dominion there:  
 Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends  
 Its force to the omnipotence of mind,  
 Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth  
 To decorate its paradise of peace.

## IX.

O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!  
 To which those restless souls that ceaselessly  
 Throng through the human universe, aspire;  
 Thou consummation of all mortal hope!  
 Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!  
 Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,  
 Verge to one point, and blend for ever there:  
 Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!  
 Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,  
 Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:  
 O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,  
 And dim forebodings of thy loveliness  
 Haunting the human heart, have there entwined  
 Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss  
 Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.  
 Thou art the end of all desire and will,  
 The product of all action; and the souls  
 That by the paths of an aspiring change  
 Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,  
 There rest from the eternity of toil  
 That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear;  
 That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,  
 So long had ruined the world, that nations fell  
 Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,  
 That for millenniums had withstood the tide

Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand  
 Across that desert where their stones survived  
 The name of him whose pride had heaped them there.  
 Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,  
 Was but the mushroom of a summer day,  
 That his light-winged footsteps pressed to dust ;  
 Time was the king of earth : all things gave way  
 Before him, but the fixed and virtuous will,  
 The sacred sympathies of soul and sense,  
 That mocked his fury and prepared his fall.  
 Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn of love ;  
 Long lay the clouds of darkness o'er the scene,  
 Till from its native heaven they rolled away :  
 First, crime triumphant o'er all hope careered  
 Unblushing, undisguising, bold and strong ;  
 Whilst falsehood, tricked in virtue's attributes,  
 Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,  
 Till done by her own venomous sting to death,  
 She left the moral world without a law,  
 No longer fettering passion's fearless wing,  
 Nor searing reason with the brand of God.  
 Then steadily the happy ferment worked ;  
 Reason was free ; and wild though passion went  
 Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,  
 Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,  
 Yet, like the bee returning to her queen,  
 She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,  
 Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,  
 No longer trembling at the broken rod.

Mild was the slow necessity of death :  
 The tranquil spirit failed beneath its grasp,  
 Without a groan, almost without a fear,  
 Calm as a voyager to some distant land,  
 And full of wonder, full of hope as he.  
 The deadly germs of languor and disease  
 Died in the human frame, and purity  
 Blest with all gifts her earthly worshippers.  
 How vigorous then the athletic form of age !  
 How clear its open and unwrinkled brow !  
 Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care,  
 Had stamped the seal of grey deformity  
 On all the mingling lineaments of time.  
 How lovely the intrepid front of youth ?  
 Which meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace ;  
 Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name,  
 And elevated will, that journeyed on  
 Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,  
 While with virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.  
 Then, that sweet bondage which is freedom's self,

And rivets with sensation's softest tie  
 The kindred sympathies of human souls,  
 Needed no fetters of tyrannic law :  
 Those delicate and timid impulses  
 In nature's primal modesty arose,  
 And with undoubting confidence disclosed  
 The growing longings of its dawning love,  
 Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,  
 That virtue of the cheaply virtuous,  
 Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost.  
 No longer prostitution's venomed bane  
 Poisoned the springs of happiness and life ;  
 Woman and man, in confidence and love,  
 Equal and free and pure, together trod  
 The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more  
 Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride  
 The palace of the monarch-slave had mocked  
 Famine's faint groan, and penury's silent tear,  
 A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw  
 Year after year their stones upon the field,  
 Wakening a lonely echo ; and the leaves  
 Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower  
 Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook  
 In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower  
 And whispered strange tales in the whirlwind's ear.  
 Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles  
 The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung :  
 It were a sight of awfulness to see  
 The works of faith and slavery, so vast,  
 So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal !  
 Even as the corpse that rests beneath its wall.  
 A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death  
 To-day ; the breathing marble glows above  
 To decorate its memory, and tongues  
 Are busy of its life ; to-morrow, worms  
 In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,  
 Fearless and free, the ruddy children played,  
 Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows  
 With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,  
 That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom ;  
 The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,  
 There rusted amid heaps of broken stone  
 That mingled slowly with their native earth :  
 There the broad beam of day, which feebly once  
 Lighted the cheek of lean captivity  
 With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone

On the pure smiles of infant playfulness :  
 No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair  
 Peeled through the echoing vaults, but soothing note  
 Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds  
 And merriment were resonant around.

These ruins soon left not a wreck behind :  
 Their elements, wide scattered o'er the globe,  
 To happier shapes were moulded, and became  
 Ministrant to all blissful impulses :  
 Thus human things were perfected, and earth,  
 Even as a child beneath it's mother's love,  
 Was strengthened in all excellence, and grew  
 Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene  
 Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past  
 Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done :  
 Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,  
 With all the fear and all the hope they bring  
 My spells are past : the present now recurs.  
 Ah me ! a pathless wilderness remains  
 Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,  
 Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue  
 The gradual paths of an aspiring change ;  
 For birth and life, and death, and that strange state  
 Before the naked soul has found its home,  
 All tend to perfect happiness, and urge  
 The restless wheels of being on their way,  
 Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,  
 Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal :  
 For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense  
 Of outward shews, whose inexperienced shape  
 New modes of passion to its frame may lend ;  
 Life is its state of action, and the store  
 Of all events is aggregated there  
 That variegate the eternal universe ;  
 Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,  
 That leads to azure isles and beaming skies  
 And happy regions of eternal hope.  
 Therefore, O Spirit ! fearlessly bear on :  
 Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,  
 Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,  
 Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,  
 To feed with kindest dews its favorite flower,  
 That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,  
 Lighting the green-wood with its sunny smile.  
 Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,

So welcome when the tyrant is awake,  
 So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns ;  
 Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,  
 The transient gulph-dream of a startling sleep.  
 Death is no foe to virtue : earth has seen  
 Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,  
 Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,  
 And presaging the truth of vision'd bliss.  
 Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene  
 Of linked and gradual being has confirmed ?  
 Whose stings bade thy heart look further still,  
 When, to the moonlight walk, by Henry led,  
 Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death?  
 And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,  
 Listening supinely to a bigot's creed ;  
 Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod,  
 Whose iron thongs are red with human gore ?  
 Never : but bravely bearing on, thy will  
 Is destined an eternal war to wage  
 With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot  
 The germs of misery from the human heart.  
 Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe  
 The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,  
 Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,  
 Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease :  
 Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy  
 Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,  
 When fenced by power and master of the world.  
 Thou art sincere and good ; of resolute mind,  
 Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,  
 Of passion lofty, pure, and unsubdued.  
 Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,  
 And therefore art thou worthy of the boon  
 Which thou hast now received : virtue shall keep  
 Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,  
 And many days of beaming hope shall bless  
 Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.  
 Go, happy one ! and give that bosom joy,  
     Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch  
     Light, life, and rapture from thy smile.

The fairy waves her wand of charm.  
 Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car  
     That rolled beside the battlement,  
 Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.  
     Again the enchanted steeds were yoked,  
     Again the burning wheels inflame  
 The steep descent of heaven's untrodden way.  
     Fast and far the chariot flew :  
     The vast and fiery globes that rolled

Around the Fairy's palace-gate  
Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared  
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs  
That there attendant on the solar power  
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.

Earth floated then below:  
The chariot paused a moment there;  
The Spirit then descended:  
The restless coursers pawed the ungenial soil,  
Snuffed the gross air, and then, their errand done,  
Unfurled their pinions to the winds of heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then;  
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:  
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;  
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained  
She looked around in wonder, and beheld  
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,  
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,  
And the bright-beaming stars  
That through the casement shone.

END OF QUEEN MAB.

# NOTES

TO

## QUEEN MAB.

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(a) PAGE 62.

*The sun's unclouded orb  
Rolled through the black concave.*

BEYOND our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire, in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibrations propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than eight minutes seven seconds in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the fixed stars, when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

(b) PAGE 62.

*Whilst round the chariot's way  
Innumerable systems rolled.*

The plurality of worlds—the indefinite immensity of the universe—is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur, is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine, begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the consequences of that necessity, which is a synonyme of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcilable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of his fingers have borne witness against him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Sirius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth.\* That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud streaking the heaven, is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them. Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

\* See Nicholson's Encyclopædia, art. Light.

(c) PAGE 78

*These are the hired bravos who defend  
The tyrant's throne.*

To employ murder as a means of justice, is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate with gratulation and delight. A battle we suppose is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connection between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth, or the maintenance of justice.

Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed, are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men's iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is, of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and self-consequence: he is like the puppet of a showman, who, at the very time he is made to strut and swell and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.—*Godwin's Enquirer, Essay v.*

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depicted so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

## FALSEHOOD AND VICE.

A DIALOGUE.

WHILST monarchs laughed upon their thrones  
To hear a famished nation's groans,  
And hugged the wealth wrung from the woe  
That makes its eyes and veins o'erflow,—  
Those thrones high built upon the heaps  
Of bones where frenzied famine sleeps,  
Where slavery wields her scourge of iron,  
Red with mankind's unheeded gore,  
And War's mad fiends the scene environ,  
Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar,  
There Vice and Falsehood took their stand,  
High raised above the unhappy land.

FALSEHOOD.

Brother! arise from the dainty fare  
Which thousands have toiled and bled to bestow,  
A finer feast for thine hungry ear  
Is the news that I bring of human woe.



## VICE.

And, secret one! what hast thou done,  
To compare, in thy tumid pride, with me?  
I, whose career, through the blasted year,  
Has been track'd by despair and agony.

## FALSEHOOD.

What have I done!—I have torn the robe  
From baby truth's unshelter'd form,  
And round the desolated globe  
Borne safely the bewildering charm:  
My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor  
Have bound the fearless innocent,  
And streams of fertilizing gore  
Flow from her bosom's hideous rent,  
Which this unfailing dagger gave. . . .  
I dread that blood!—no more—this day  
Is ours, though her eternal ray  
Must shine upon our grave.  
Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given  
To thee the robe I stole from heaven,  
Thy shape of ugliness and fear  
Had never gained admission here.

## VICE.

And know, that had I disdain'd to toil  
But sate in my loathsome cave the while,  
And ne'er to these hateful sons of heaven,  
GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER, given;  
Hadst thou with all thine art essay'd  
One of thy games then to have play'd  
With all thine overweening boast,  
Falsehood! I tell thee thou hadst lost!—  
Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend,  
Fraternal, to one common end;  
In this cold grave, beneath my feet,  
Will our hopes, our fears, and our labours, meet.

## FALSEHOOD.

I brought my daughter, RELIGION, on earth:  
She smother'd Reason's babes in their birth;  
But dreaded their mother's eye severe,—  
So the crocodile slunk off slyly in fear,  
And loosed her bloodhounds from the den. . . .  
They started from dreams of slaughter'd men,  
And by the light of her poison eye,  
Did her work o'er the wide earth frightfully:  
The dreadful stench of her torches' flare,  
Fed with human fat, polluted the air:  
The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless cries  
Of the many-mingling miseries,  
As on she trod, ascended high,  
And trumpeted my victory!—  
Brother, tell what thou hast done.

## VICE.

I have extinguish'd the noon-day sun,  
In the carnage smoke of battles won:  
Famine, murder, hell, and power  
Were glutt'd in that glorious hour

Which searchless Fate had stamp'd for me  
 With the seal of her security. . . .  
 For the bloated wretch on yonder throne  
 Commanded the bloody fray to rise.  
 Like me, he joy'd at the stifled moan  
 Wrung from a nation's miseries ;  
 While the snakes, whose slime even him *defiled*,  
 In extacies of malice smiled :  
 They thought 't was theirs,—but mine the deed !  
 Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed—  
 Ten thousand victims madly bleed.  
 They dream that tyrants goad them there,  
 With poisonous war to taint the air :  
 These tyrants, on their beds of thorn,  
 Swell with the thoughts of murderons fame,  
 And with their gains, to lift my name.  
 Restless they plan from night to morn :  
 I—I do all ; without my aid  
 Thy daughter, that relentless maid,  
 Could never o'er a death-bed urge  
 The fury of her venom'd scourge.

## FALSEHOOD.

Brother, well :—the world is ours ;  
 And whether thou or I have won,  
 The pestilence expectant lowers  
 On all beneath yon blasted sun.  
 Our joys, our toils, our honours, meet  
 In the milk-white and wormy winding-sheet :  
 A short-lived hope, unceasing care,  
 Some heartless scraps of godly prayer,  
 A moody curse and a frenzied sleep,  
 Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep,  
 A tyrant's dream, a coward's start,  
 The ice that clings to a priestly heart,  
 A judge's frown, a courtier's smile,  
 Make the great whole for which we toil ;  
 And, brother, whether thou or I  
 Have done the work of misery,  
 It little boots : thy toil and pain,  
 Without my aid, were more than vain ;  
 And but for thee I ne'er had sate  
 The guardian of heaven's palace gate.

(d) PAGE 80.

*Thus do the generations of the earth  
 Go to the grave, and issue from the womb.*

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south and turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full ; unto the place whence the rivers come, thither shall they return again.—*Ecclesiastes*, chap. i.

(e) PAGE 80

*Even as the leaves  
 Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year  
 Has scatter'd on the forest soil.*

Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found—  
 Now green in youth, now withering on the ground :

Another race the following spring supplies;  
 They fall successive, and successive rise:  
 So generations in their course decay;  
 So flourish these, when those are past away.

*Pope's Homer.*

(f) PAGE 81.

*The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings.*

When the wide ocean maddening whirlwinds sweep,  
 And heave the billows of the boiling deep,  
 Pleased we from land the reeling bark survey,  
 And rolling mountains of the watery way,  
 Not that we joy another's woes to see,  
 But to reflect that we ourselves are free.  
 So, the dread battle, ranged in distant fields,  
 Ourselves secure, a secret pleasure yields;  
 But what more charming than to gain the height  
 Of true philosophy? What pure delight  
 From wisdom's citadel to view below,  
 Deluded mortals, as they wandering go  
 In quest of happiness! ah, blindly weak!  
 For fame, for vain nobility they seek;  
 Labour for heavy treasures night and day,  
 And pant for power and magisterial sway.  
 Oh, wretched mortals! souls devoid of light,  
 Lost in the shades of intellectual night!

*Dr Busby's Lucretius.*

(g) PAGE 82.

*And statesmen boast*

*Of wealth!*

There is no real wealth but the labour of man. Were the mountains of gold, and the valleys of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expense of the necessities of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterize the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes pride to himself as the promoter of his country's prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until "*jam pauca aratro jugera, regie moles retinquent,*"\* flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The shew and pomp of courts adduces the same apology for its continuance; and many a *fête* has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates, whilst it palliates, the countless diseases of society! The poor are set to labour,—for what? Not the food for which they famish; not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels; not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him:—no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact; those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an inverse ratio to their usefulness:† the jeweler, the toyman, the actor gains fame

\* These piles of royal structure will soon leave but few acres for the plough.

† See Rousseau, "*De l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes,*" note 7.

and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to exist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which, but for his unceasing exertions, would annihilate the rest of mankind.

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability; so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, *cæteris paribus*,\* be preferred: but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both, would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man; hence it follows, that, to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour, is wantonly depriving them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement; and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude, and *ennui*, by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures, but the true pension-list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort.

The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue; they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided among all, each man's share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come, when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life, may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art, but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But, surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.—*Godwin's Enquirer, Essay II. See also Pol. Jus., book viii. chap. 11.*

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

(h) PAGE 82.

*Or religion*

*Drives his wife raving mad.*

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the

\* Making allowances on both sides.

mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to an incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

For some, the approach of Death and Hell to stay,  
Their parents, friends, and country, will betray.

*Dr. Busby's Lucretius.*

(i) PAGE 84.

*Even love is sold.*

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection, would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious an usurpation of the right of private judgment should that law be considered, which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling! \*

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and dis-unions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the objects of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman, is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed! such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all enquiry. The language of the votarist is this: the woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one, and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them.—Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

\* The first Christian emperor made a law by which seduction was punished with death: if the female pleaded her own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates were confiscated; the slaves who might be accessory were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence.—*Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, &c. vol. ii. page 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love, and even marriage, page 269.

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners, which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable, and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse: they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach, is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature?—society declares war against her; pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the criminal, *she* the froward and untameable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathematizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one-tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted wordlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiotcy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigotted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that, from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary; it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage, will be natural and right, be cause choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

(k) PAGE 87.

*To the red and baleful sun  
That faintly twinkles there.*

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology, and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption, that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been surmised by some late astronomers.\* Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany, which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production.† The researches of M. Bailly‡ establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract of land in Tartary 49 degrees north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany, and France, were much colder than at present, and that their great rivers were annually frozen over. Astronomy teaches us, also, that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished.

(l) PAGE 89.

*No atom of this turbulence fulfils  
A vague and unnecessitated task,  
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.*

Two instances will serve to render more sensible to us the principle here laid down; we will borrow one from natural, the other from moral philosophy. In a whirlwind of dust raised by an impetuous wind, however confused it may appear to our eyes, in the most dreadful tempest excited by opposing winds, which convulse the waves, there is not a single particle of dust or of water that is placed by chance, that has not its sufficient cause for occupying the situation in which it is, and which does not rigorously act in the mode it should act. A geometrician who knew equally the different powers which operate in both cases, and the properties of the particles which are propelled, would shew that, according to the given causes, each particle acts precisely as it should act, and cannot act otherwise than it does.

In those terrible convulsions which sometimes agitate political societies, and which frequently bring on the overthrow of an empire, there is not a single action, a single word, a single thought, a single volition, a single passion in the agents, which concur in the revolution as destroyers, or as victims, which is not necessary, which does not act as it should act, which does not infallibly produce the effects which it should produce, according to the place occupied by these agents in the moral whirlwind.

This would appear evident to an intelligence which would be in a state to seize and appreciate all the actions and re-actions of the minds and bodies of those who contribute to this revolution.—*System of Nature*, vol. i

\* Laplace, *Système du Monde*.† Cabanis, *Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme*, vol. ii. page 406.‡ *Lettres sur les Sciences*, à Voltaire.—BAILLY.



(m) PAGE 90.

*Necessity, thou mother of the world!*

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity, means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is, to voluntary action in the human mind, what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance, as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act; in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an enemy to-morrow him from whom we have parted in friendship to-night; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty, as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is an uniform, undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician? Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects by the application of those moral causes which experience has shown to be effectual. Some actions may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, or ever has it been, the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the Herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasoning, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes, than that his machinery will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But while none have scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connexion of motive and action: but as we know "nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes." The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is, to voluntary action, what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunc-



tion of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes." The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is, to voluntary action, what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other: wherever this is the case, necessity is clearly established.

The idea of liberty applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—*id quod potest*, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power, is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the loadstone as to the human will. Do you think these motives which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive: but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd. But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive, as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice. It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crime; he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality: that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and though the crime of Damiens must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man, cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel, that a viper is a poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men, does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or even more, to hesitate in destroying them; but he would surely be of a hard heart, who meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles, if he indulges in hatred or contempt: the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmingled with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes: whilst cowardice, curiosity, and inconsistency only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions, religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind: moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe, is to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression

denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities, and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us, that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, he is also the author of evil; that, if he is entitled to our gratitude for the one, he is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, he is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God, will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and then damned him for being so: for to say that God was the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity.

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created, and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshipped by the angels, and placed in paradise, whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for his apostle, and entrusted with his word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom he vouchsafed to admit to discourse with himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore, blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created; nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—*Salé's Prelim. Disc. to the Koran*, p. 164.

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*There is no God!*

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit, co-eternal with the universe, remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition, is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance, that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction, we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed *belief*. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove, in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation, in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation being confused with the perception, has in-

duced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief; of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach to the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently, no testimony can be admitted which is contrary to reason; reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st. The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if he should convince our senses of his existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared, have the strongest possible conviction of his existence. But the God of Theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2nd. Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is, must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows, that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated, we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity, than to conceive a being beyond its limits capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he was not; consequently, there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects, causes exactly adequate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration; we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent being, leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3rd. Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of his existence, can only be admitted by us, if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived, than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for he commanded that he should be believed; he proposed the highest rewards for faith; eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active:

from: this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather, that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shewn that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind *cannot* believe the existence of a creative God; it is also evident, that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and as such, stands in needs of proof: the *onus probandi* \* rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: "Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phænomenis non deducitur, hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel meta physicæ, vel physicæ, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicæ, in philosophia locum non habent."† To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the *effluvium* of Boyle, and the *crinities* or *nebulæ* of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; he is contained under every *prædicate in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even his worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of him: they exclaim with the French poet,

*Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même.‡*

Lord Bacon says, that "atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and every thing that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men: hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life."—*Bacon's Moral Essays*.

The primary theology of man made him first fear and worship even the elements, gross and material objects, he then paid his adorations to the presiding agents of the elements, to inferior genii, to heroes, or to men endowed with great qualities. By continuing to reflect he thought to simplify things, by submitting all nature to a single agent, to a spirit, to an universal soul, which put this nature and its parts into motion. In ascending from cause to cause, mankind have ended by seeing nothing, and it is in the midst of this obscurity that they have placed their God: it is in this dark abyss that their restless imagination is always labouring to form chimeras, which will afflict them, until a knowledge of nature shall dissipate the phantoms which they have always so vainly adored.

If we wish to render an account to ourselves, of our ideas respecting the Deity, we shall be obliged to confess that by the word God, men have never been able to designate any thing else but the most hidden, the

\* The burthen of proof.

† I do not invent hypotheses, for whatever is not deduced from phenomena, is to be called an hypothesis; and hypotheses, either metaphysical or physical, or grounded on occult qualities, should not be allowed any room in philosophy.

‡ To tell what he is, you must be himself.

most remote, the most unknown cause of the effects which they perceive ; they only make use of this word, when the springs of natural and known causes cease to be visible to them ; the instant they loose the thread, or their understanding can no longer follow the chain of these causes, they cut the knot of their difficulty, and terminate their researches by calling God the last of these causes, that is to say, that which is beyond all the causes with which they are acquainted. Thus they merely assign a vague denomination to an unknown cause, at which their indolence or the limits of their information compels them to stop. Whenever we are told, that God is the author of any phenomenon, that signifies that we are ignorant how such a phenomenon can be produced, with the assistance only of the natural powers or causes with which we are acquainted. It is thus that the generality of mankind, whose lot is ignorance, attribute to the Deity, not only the uncommon effects which strike them, but even the most simple events, whose causes are the most easily discoverable, to all who have had the opportunity of reflecting on them. In a word, man has always respected the unknown causes of those surprising effects, which his ignorance prevented him from unravelling. It was upon the ruins of nature that men first raised the imaginary colossus of a Deity.

If the ignorance of nature gave birth to gods, a knowledge of nature is calculated to destroy them. In proportion as man becomes informed, his powers and resources increase with his knowledge, the sciences, the conservative arts, and industry furnish him with assistance, experience inspires him with confidence, or procures him the means of resisting the efforts of many causes, which cease to alarm him, as soon as he becomes acquainted with them. In a word, his terrors are dissipated in the same proportion as his mind is enlightened. A well-informed man ceases to be superstitious.

It is never but on trust, that whole nations worship the God of their fathers and their priests ; authority, confidence, submission, and custom, to them supply the place of proofs and conviction ; they prostrate themselves and pray, because their fathers have taught them to prostrate themselves and pray, but wherefore did the latter kneel ? Because, in remote periods, their guides and legislators taught them it was a duty. "Worship and believe," said they, "gods which you cannot comprehend, rely on our profound wisdom, we know more than you concerning the Deity." "But why should I rely on you?" "Because it is the will of God ; because he will punish you if you dare to resist." "But is not this God the thing in question?" Thus men have always been satisfied with this vicious circle, the indolence of their minds led them to believe the shorter mode was to rely on the opinions of others. All religious notions are founded upon authority alone, all the religions of the world forbid investigation, and will not permit reasoning : it is authority which requires us to believe in God, this God himself is only founded upon the authority of some men who pretend to know him, and to be sent by him to announce him to the world. A God made by men has, doubtless, need of men to make him known to men.

It is, then, only for the priests of the inspired, for metaphysicians, that a conviction of the existence of a God is reserved, and which is, nevertheless, said to be necessary to all mankind. But do we find a harmony of theological opinion among the inspired, or the reflective, in the different parts of the world ? Are those, even, who profess to worship the same God agreed respecting him ? Are they satisfied with the proofs of his existence which their colleagues bring forward ? Do they unanimously subscribe to the ideas which they adduce respecting his nature, his conduct, and the mode of understanding his pretended oracles ? Is there a country, throughout the earth, in which the knowledge of God is really perfected ? Has it assumed in any quarter the consistency and uniformity which we perceive human knowledge to have assumed in the most trifling arts, in trades the most despised ? The words *spirit, immateriality, creation, predestination, grace*—this crowd of subtle distinctions with which theology, in some countries, is universally filled—these ingenious inventions, imagined by the successive reasoners of ages, have, alas ! only embroiled the question, and never has the science the most

important to mankind been able to acquire the least stability. For thousands of years have these idle dreamers transmitted to each other the task of meditating on the Deity, of discovering his secret paths, of inventing hypotheses calculated to solve this important enigma. The little success they have met with has not discouraged theological vanity. God has always been talked of, mankind have cut each other's throat for him, and this great Being still continues to be the most unknown, and the most sought after.

Fortunate would it have been for mankind, if, confining themselves to the visible objects in which they are interested, they had employed in perfecting true science, laws, morals, and education, half the exertions they have made in their researches after a Deity. They would have been still wiser and more fortunate, could they have resolved to leave their blind guides to quarrel among themselves, and to sound the depths calculated only to turn their brains, without meddling with their senseless disputes. But it is the very essence of ignorance to attach importance to what it does not understand. Human vanity is such, that the mind becomes irritated by difficulty. In proportion as an object fades from our sight do we exert ourselves to seize it, because it then stimulates our pride, it excites our curiosity, and becomes interesting. In contending for his God, every one, in fact, is only contending for the interests of his own vanity, which, of all the passions produced by the mal-organization of society, is the most prompt to take alarm, and the most calculated to give birth to great absurdities.

If, laying aside for a moment the gloomy ideas which theology gives us of a capricious God, whose partial and despotic decrees decide the fates of men, we fix our eyes upon the pretended goodness which all men, even whilst trembling before this God, agree in giving to him, if we suppose him to be actuated by the project which is attributed to him, of having only laboured for his own glory, of exacting the adoration of intelligent beings, of seeking only in his works the welfare of the human race, how can we reconcile his views and dispositions with the truly invincible ignorance in which this God, so good and glorious, leaves the greater part of mankind respecting himself? If God wishes to be known, beloved, and praised, why does he not reveal himself, under some favourable features, to all those intelligent beings by whom he wishes to be loved and worshipped? Why does he not manifest to all the earth in an unequivocal manner, much more calculated to convince us, than by these particular revelations, which seem to accuse the Deity of an unjust partiality for some of his creatures. Would not the omnipotent possess more convincing means of revealing himself to mankind than these ridiculous metamorphoses, these pretended incarnations, which are attested to us by writers who so little agree among themselves in the recitals they give of them? Instead of so many miracles invented to prove the divine mission, of so many legislators revered by the different nations of the world, could not the supreme Being convince in an instant the human mind of the things which he chose to make known to it? Instead of suspending the sun in the vault of the firmament, instead of dispersing the stars and the constellations, which occupy space without order, would it not have been more conformable to the views of a God so jealous of his glory, and so well disposed to man, to write, in a mode not liable to be disputed, his name, his attributes, and his unchangeable will, in everlasting characters, equally legible to all the inhabitants of the earth? No one could then have doubted the existence of a God, his manifest will, his visible intentions. Under the eye of this terrible Deity, no one would have had the audacity to violate his ordinances, no mortal would have dared to place himself in the situation of drawing down his wrath; and, lastly, no man would have had the effrontery to impose on his fellow-creatures, in the name of the Deity, or to interpret his will according to his own fancy.

In fact, even should the existence of the theological God be admitted, and the reality of the discordant attributes which are given to him, nothing could be inferred from it, to authorise the conduct or the modes of worship which we are told to observe towards him. Theology is truly

the *tub of the Danaïdes*. By dint of contradictory qualities and rash assertions, it has so trammelled, as it were, its God, that it has made it impossible for him to act. If he is infinitely good, what reason have we to fear him? If he is infinitely wise, why should we be uneasy for our future state? If he knows all, why inform him of our wants, and tease him with our prayers? If he is omnipresent, why raise temples to him? If he is master of all, why sacrifice and make offerings to him? If he is just, how can we believe that he punishes creatures whom he has afflicted with weaknesses? If grace does all in them, for what reason should he reward them? If he is omnipotent, how can we offend, how resist him? If he is reasonable, how could he be incensed against his blind creatures, to whom he has only left the liberty of falling into error? If he is immutable, by what right do we pretend to make him change his decrees? If he is incomprehensible, why do we busy ourselves in endeavouring to understand him? IF HE HAS SPOKEN, WHY IS NOT THE UNIVERSE CONVINCED? If the knowledge of a God is the most necessary, why is it not the clearest and most evident?—*System of Nature, London, 1781.*

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:

For which reason, I consider that the inquiry after the form and figure of the Deity, must be attributed to human weakness. Whatever God may be (if indeed there be one), and wherever he may exist, he must be all sense, all sight, all hearing, all life, all mind, self-existent. \* \* \* \* But it is a great consolation to man, with all his infirmities, to reflect that God himself cannot do all things: for he cannot inflict on himself death, even if he should wish to die, that best of gifts to man amidst the cares and sufferings of life; neither can he make men eternal, nor raise the dead, nor prevent those who have lived from living, nor those who have borne honours from wearing them; he has no power over the past, except that of oblivion, and (to relax our gravity awhile and indulge in a joke) he cannot prevent twice ten from being twenty, and many other things of a similar nature. From these observations, it is clearly apparent that the powers of nature are what we call God.—*Plin. Nat. Hist.*

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See *Sir W. Drummond's Academical Questions*, chap. iii.—Sir W. seems to consider the atheism to which it leads, as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation; but, surely, it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts, than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the mob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic, and the toleration of the philosopher.

All things are made by the power of God, yet, doubtless, because the power of nature is the power of God; besides, we are unable to understand the power of God, so far as we are ignorant of natural causes; therefore, we foolishly recur to the power of God whenever we are unacquainted with the natural cause of any thing, or, in other words, with the power of God.—*Spinosa, Tract. Theologico. Pol.* chap. i. p. 14.

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*Ahasuerus, rise!*

“Ahasuerus, the Jew, crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of his cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed, indignantly, ‘Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of Man: be it denied thee also, until he comes to judge the world.’

“A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now



from country to country: he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

"Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel; he shook the dust from his beard; and taking up one of the skulls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. 'This was my father!' roared Ahasuerus. Seven more skulls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed, 'And these were my wives!' He still continued to hurl down skull after skull, roaring in dreadful accents, 'And these—and these—and these were my children! They *could die*; but I! reprobate wretch; alas! I cannot die! Dreadful, beyond conception, is the judgment that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell; I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans; but alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair—and I could not die!

" 'Rome, the giantess, fell; I placed myself before the falling statue; she fell; and did not crush me! Nations sprung up, and disappeared before me; but I remained—and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months polluting, with my groans, the Mount's sulphureous mouth; ah, ten long months! The volcano fermented, and, in a fiery stream of lava, cast me up. I lay, torn by the torture-snakes of hell, amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist. A forest was on fire: I darted, on wings of fury and despair, into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them. I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul—defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my skull; balls, in vain, hissed upon me; the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins; in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air; I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could not strangle me; the tiger's tooth could not pierce me; nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon. The serpent stung, but could not destroy me; the dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me. I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero—Thou art a bloodhound! I said to Christiern—Thou art a bloodhound! I said to Muley Ismail—Thou art a bloodhound! The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me.—Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to hold, for milleniums, that yawning monster, Sameness; and Time, that hungry hyena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring! Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful avenger in heaven! hast thou in thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful?—then let it thunder upon me; command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant—and writhe—and die!"

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty, and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-inn-fields.

(p) PAGE 94.

*I will beget a Son, and he shall bear  
The sins of all the world.*

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the pur-



port of whose history is briefly this:—That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which he placed the first pair of human beings. In the midst of the garden he planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which, God condemned both them, and their posterity yet unborn, to satisfy his justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events (the human race in the mean while having gone, unredeemed, to perdition), God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea (whose virginity was nevertheless, uninjured), and begat a Son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified, and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, he bearing the burthen of his Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states, in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but, at length, men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived, and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the the shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar that, if they did not believe in the Bible, they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains, is called Christianity. A Roman governor of Judea, at the instances of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus, eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgement of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name. Whilst the one is a hypocritical demon, who announces himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst he stretches forth his blood red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity; the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty, in the cause of suffering humanity.\*

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

*Christianity* is now the established religion: he who attempts to impugn it, must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion; though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was persecuted in the name of his predecessor in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief, have

\* Since writing the above note, I have seen reason to suspect, that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of his religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Even under a government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man, who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor, who, daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion that, as like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so, like them, it will decay and perish; that, as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsolescence of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them, that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true, or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question if he leaves those doctrines, most essential to the well-being of man, in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcilable hatred. *If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?*

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: "Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction." This is the pivot upon which all religions turn: they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from, and unconnected with, volition: it is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any proposition. Belief is a passion, of involun-

tary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally unconnected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Deity. Prayer may be considered under two points of view; as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of servility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience, indeed, is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed, which had not its prophets, its attested miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law, by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that he may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of his precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the following question: \*—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is not more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a son, who, in his legislation, measuring merit by belief, evidenced himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies; none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes: but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to his own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost; but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the church-yard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before our eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the Son of God;—the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and because it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the sons of God. All that we have a right to infer from our ignorance of the cause of any event is, that we do not know it: had the Mexicans attended to this simple rule when they heard the cannon of the Spaniards, they would not have considered them as gods: the experiments of modern chemistry would have defied the wisest philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome to have accounted for them on natural princi-

\* See Hume's Essay, vol. ii. page 121.

ples. An author of strong common sense has observed, that "a miracle is no miracle at second-hand;" he might have added, that a miracle is no miracle in any case; for until we are acquainted with all natural causes, we have no reason to imagine others.

There remains to be considered another proof of Christianity—Prophecy. A book is written before a certain event, in which this event is foretold; how could the prophet have foreknown it without inspiration? how could he have been inspired without God? The greatest stress is laid on the prophecies of Moses and Hosea on the dispersion of the Jews, and that of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy of Moses is a collection of every possible cursing and blessing: and it is so far from being marvellous that the one of dispersion should have been fulfilled, that it would have been more surprising if, out of all these, none should have taken effect. In Deuteronomy xxviii. 64, where Moses explicitly foretels the dispersion, he states that they shall there serve gods of wood and stone: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other, *and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even gods of wood and stone.*" The Jews are, at this day, remarkably tenacious of their religion. Moses also declares that they shall be subjected to these causes for disobedience to his ritual: "And it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all the commandments and statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee." Is this the real reason? The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of Hosea are a piece of immodest confession. The indelicate type might apply in a hundred senses to a hundred things. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more explicit, yet it does not exceed in clearness the oracles of Delphos. The historical proof, that Moses, Isaiah, and Hosea did write, when they are said to have written, is far from being clear and circumstantial.

But prophecy requires proof in its character as a miracle; we have no right to suppose that a man foreknew future events from God, until it is demonstrated that he neither could know them by his own exertions, nor that the writings which contain the prediction could possibly have been fabricated after the event pretended to be foretold. It is more probable that writings, pretending to divine inspiration, should have been fabricated after the fulfilment of their pretended prediction, than that they should have really been divinely inspired; when we consider that the latter supposition makes God at once the creator of the ~~human~~ human mind, and ignorant of its primary powers, particularly as we have numberless instances of false religions, and forged prophecies of things long past, and no accredited case of God having conversed with men directly or indirectly. It is, also, possible that the description of an event might have foregone its occurrence; but this is far from being a legitimate proof of a divine revelation, as many men, not pretending to the character of a prophet, have, nevertheless, in this sense, prophesied.

Lord Chesterfield was never yet taken for a prophet, even by a bishop, yet he uttered this remarkable prediction: "The despotic government of France is screwed up to the highest pitch; a revolution is fast approaching; that revolution, I am convinced, will be radical and sanguinary." This appeared in the letters of the prophet long before the accomplishment of this wonderful prediction. Now, have these particulars come to pass, or have they not? If they have, how could the Earl have foreknown them without inspiration? If we admit the truth of the Christian religion on testimony such as this, we must admit, on the same strength of evidence, that God has affixed the highest rewards to belief, and the eternal tortures of the never-dying worm to disbelief; both of which have been demonstrated to be involuntary.

The last proof of the Christian religion depends on the influence of the Holy Ghost. Theologians divide the influence of the Holy Ghost into its ordinary and extraordinary modes of operation. The latter is supposed to be that which inspired the Prophets and Apostles; and the former to be the grace of God, which summarily makes known the truth of his revelation, to those whose minds are fitted for its reception by a sub-

missive perusal of his word. Persons convinced in this manner, can do anything but account for their conviction, describe the time at which it happened, or the manner in which it came upon them. It is supposed to enter the mind by other channels than those of the senses, and, therefore, professes to be superior to reason founded on their experience.

Admitting, however, the usefulness or possibility of a divine revelation, unless we demolish the foundations of all human knowledge, it is requisite that our reason should previously demonstrate its genuineness; for, before we extinguish the steady ray of reason and common sense, it is fit that we should discover whether we cannot do without their assistance, whether or no there be any other which may suffice to guide us through the labyrinth of life: \* for, if a man is to be inspired upon all occasions, if he is to be sure of a thing *because he is sure*, if the ordinary operations of the spirit are not to be considered very extraordinary modes of demonstration, if enthusiasm is to usurp the place of proof, and madness that of sanity, all reasoning is superfluous. The Mahometan dies fighting for his prophet; the Indian immolates himself at the chariot-wheels of Brahma; the Hottentot worships an insect; the Negro a bunch of feathers; the Mexican sacrifices human victims! Their degree of conviction must, certainly, be very strong: it cannot arise from conviction; it must from feelings, the reward of their prayers. If each of these should affirm, in opposition to the strongest possible arguments, that inspiration carried internal evidence, I fear their inspired brethren, the orthodox Missionaries, would be so uncharitable as to pronounce them obstinate.

Miracles cannot be received as testimonies of a disputed fact, because all human testimony has ever been insufficient to establish the possibility of miracles. That, which is incapable of proof itself, is no proof of any thing else. Prophecy has also been rejected by the test of reason. Those, then, who have been actually inspired, are the only true believers in the Christian religion.

Mox numine viso  
Virginei tumuere sinus, innuptaque mater  
Arcano stupuit compleri viscera partu,  
Auctorem paritura sum. Mortalia corda  
Artificem texere poli, latuitque sub uno  
Pectore, qui totum late complectitur orbem.

CLAUDIANS *Carmen Paschale*.†

Does not so monstrous and disgusting an absurdity carry its own infamy and refutation with itself.

(q) PAGE 102.

*Him (still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,  
Which, from the exhaustless store of human weal  
Dawns on the virtuous mind), the thoughts that rise  
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift  
With self-enshrined eternity, &c.*

Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. Vivid sensation, of either pain or pleasure, makes the time seem long, as the common phrase is, because it renders us more acutely conscious of our ideas. If a mind be conscious of a hundred ideas during one minute, by the clock, and of two hundred during another, the latter of these spaces would actually occupy so much greater extent in the mind, as two exceed one in quantity. If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do

\* See Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, book iv. chapter xix. on Enthusiasm.

† Upon seeing the Divinity, the Virgin's womb soon swelled, and the unmarried mother was amazed to find herself filled with a mysterious progeny, and that she was to bring forth to the world her own Creator. A mortal frame veiled the Framer of the Heavens, and he, who embraces the wide surrounding circle of the world lay, himself, concealed in the recesses of the womb.

not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours, another sleeps soundly in his bed: the difference of time perceived by these two persons is immense; one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony. Thus, the life of a man of virtue and talent, who should die in his thirtieth year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dullness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business;—the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.

Dark flood of time!

Roll as it listeth thee—I measure not  
By months or moments thy ambiguous course.  
Another may stand by me on the brink,  
And watch the bubble whirl'd beyond his ken  
That pauses at my feet. The sense of love,  
The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought,  
Prolong my being: if I wake no more,  
My life more actual living will contain  
Than some grey veteran's, of the world's cold school,  
Whose listless hours unprofitably roll,  
By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed.

See GODWIN's *Pol. Just.* vol. i. page 411; and Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progres de l'Esprit Humain*, epoque ix.

(r) PAGE 91.

*No longer now*

*He slays the lamb that took him in the face.*

I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life. The origin of man, like that of the universe of which he is a part, is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. His generations either had a beginning, or they had not. The weight of evidence in favour of each of these suppositions seems tolerably equal; and it is perfectly unimportant to the present argument, which is assumed. The language spoken, however, by the mythology of nearly all religions seems to prove, that at some distant period man forsook the path of nature, and sacrificed the purity and happiness of his being to unnatural appetites. The date of this event seems to have also been that of some great change in the climates of the earth, with which it has an obvious correspondence. The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon their posterity the wrath of God, and the loss of everlasting life, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet. Milton was so well aware of this, that he makes Raphael thus exhibit to Adam the consequence of his disobedience:—

Immediately a place

Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;  
A lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid  
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies  
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms  
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,  
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,  
Intestine stone and ulcer, cholick pangs,  
Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,  
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,  
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,  
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums."

And how many thousands more might not be added to this frightful catalogue!

The story of Prometheus is one likewise which, although universally admitted to be allegorical, has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven, and was chained for this crime to Mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says, that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. Again, so general was this opinion, that Horace, a poet of the Augustan age, writes—

Thus, from the sun's ethereal beam  
When bold Prometheus stole th' enlivening flame,  
Of fevers dire a ghastly brood,  
Till then unknown, th' unhappy fraud pursu'd;  
On earth their horrors baleful spread,  
And the pale monarch of the dead,  
Till then slow-moving to his prey,  
Precipitately rapid swept his way.

*Francis's Horace, book i. ode 3.*

How plain a language is spoken by all this! Prometheus (who represents the human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied fire to culinary purposes; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease. It consumed his being in every shape of its loathsome and infinite variety, inducing the soul-quelling sinkings of premature and violent death. All vice arose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality, were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion. I conclude this part of the subject with an extract from Mr. Newton's *Defence of Vegetable Regimen*, from whom I have borrowed this interpretation of the fable of Prometheus.

“ Making allowance for such transposition of the events of the allegory as time might produce after the important truths were forgotten, which this portion of the ancient mythology was intended to transmit, the drift of the fable seems to be this:—Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly, suffering creature, as we now see him, but to enjoy health, and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth without disease or pain. Prometheus first taught the use of animal food (*primus bovem occidit Prometheus\**) and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. Jupiter, and the rest of the gods, foreseeing the consequences of these inventions, were amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them. Thirst, the necessary concomitant of a flesh diet,” (perhaps of all diet vitiated by culinary preparation,) “ ensued; water was resorted to, and man forfeited the inestimable gift of health which he has received from heaven: he became diseased, the partaker of a precarious existence, and no longer descended slowly to his grave.”†

But just disease to luxury succeeds,  
And every death its own avenger breeds;  
The fury passions from that blood began,  
And turned on man a fiercer savage—man.

Man, and the animals whom he has infected with his society, or depraved by his dominion, are alone diseased. The wild hog, the mouflon, the bison, and the wolf, are perfectly exempt from malady, and invariably die either from external violence, or natural old age. But the

Prometheus first killed an ox. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* lib. vii. sect. 57.  
*Return to Nature.* Cadell 1811.



domestic hog, the sheep, the cow, and the dog, are subject to an incredible variety of distempers; and, like the corrupters of their nature, have physicians who thrive upon their miseries. The supereminence of man is like Satan's, a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease, and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event, that, by enabling him to communicate his sensations, raised him above the level of his fellow animals. But the steps that have been taken are irrevocable. The whole of human science is comprised in one question:—How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life? How can we take the benefits, and reject the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?—I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.

It is true, that mental and bodily derangement is attributable in part to other deviations from rectitude and nature than those which concern diet. The mistakes cherished by society respecting the connexion of the sexes, whence the misery and diseases of unsatisfied celibacy, unenjoying prostitution, and the premature arrival of puberty necessarily spring; the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities; the exhalations of chemical processes; the muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel; the absurd treatment of infants:—all these, and innumerable other causes, contribute their mite to the mass of human evil.

Comparative anatomy teaches us that man resembles frugivorous animals in every thing, and carnivorous in nothing; he has neither claws wherewith to seize his prey, nor distinct and pointed teeth to tear the living fibre. A Mandarin of the first class, with nails two inches long, would probably find them alone inefficient to hold even a hare. After every subterfuge of gluttony, the bull must be degraded into the ox, and the ram into the wether, by an unnatural and inhuman operation, that the flaccid fibre may offer a fainter resistance to rebellious nature. It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation, that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust. Let the advocate of animal food force himself to a decisive experiment on its fitness, and, as Plutarch recommends, tear a living lamb with his teeth, and plunging his head into its vitals, slake his thirst with the steaming blood; when fresh from the deed of horror, let him revert to the irresistible instincts of nature that would rise in judgment against it, and say, Nature formed me for such work as this. Then, and then only, would he be consistent.

Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons.

The orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth. The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphous of the ape tribe, all of which are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals, which live on different food, in which this analogy exists.\* In many frugivorous animals, the canine teeth are more pointed and distinct than those of man. The resemblance also of the human stomach to that of the orang-outang, is greater than to that of any other animal.

The intestines are also identical with those of herbivorous animals, which present a larger surface for absorption, and have ample and cellulated colons. The cæcum also, though short, is larger than that of carnivorous animals; and even here the orang-outang retains its accustomed similarity.

The structure of the human frame then is that of one fitted to a pure vegetable diet, in every essential particular. It is true, that the reluctance to abstain from animal food, in those who have been long accustomed to its stimulus, is so great in some persons of weak minds, as to be scarcely overcome; but this is far from bringing any argument in its

Cuvier, *Leçons d'Anat. Comp.* tom. iii. pages 169, 373, 418, 465 480. *Bees's Cyclo-ædæia*, art. Man.



favour. A lamb, which was fed for some time on flesh by a ship's crew, refused its natural diet at the end of the voyage. There are numerous instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live upon flesh. until they have loathed their natural aliment. Young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit, to the flesh of animals; until, by the gradual deprivation of the digestive organs, the free use of vegetables has for a time produced serious inconveniences; for a time, I say, since there never was an instance wherein a change from spirituous liquors and animal food to vegetables and pure water, has failed ultimately to invigorate the body, by rendering its juices bland and consentaneous, and to restore to the mind that cheerfulness and elasticity, which not one in fifty possesses on the present system. A love of strong liquors is also with difficulty taught to infants. Almost every one remembers the wry faces which the first glass of port produced. Unsophisticated instinct is invariably unerring; but to decide on the fitness of animal food, from the perverted appetites which its constrained adoption produces, is to make the criminal a judge in his own cause: it is even worse; it is appealing to the infatuated drunkard in a question of the salubrity of brandy.

What is the cause of morbid action in the animal system? Not the air we breathe, for our fellow-denizens of nature breathe the same uninjured; not the water we drink, (if remote from the pollutions of man and his inventions,†) for the animals drink it too; not the earth we tread upon; not the unobscured sight of glorious nature, in the wood, the field, or the expanse of sky and ocean; nothing that we are, or do, in common with the undiseased inhabitants of the forest. Something, then, wherein we differ from them: our habit of altering our food by fire, so that our appetite is no longer a just criterion for the fitness of its gratification. Except in children, there remain no traces of that instinct which determines, in all other animals, what aliment is natural or otherwise; and so perfectly obliterated are they in the reasoning adults of our species, that it has become necessary to urge considerations drawn from comparative anatomy to prove that we are naturally frugivorous.

Crime is madness. Madness is disease. Whenever the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root, from which all vice and misery have so long overshadowed the globe, will lie bare to the axe. All the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind, in a sane body, resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, blood-shot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder. The system of a simple diet promises no Utopian advantages. It is no mere reform of legislation, whilst the furious passions and evil propensities of the human heart, in which it had its origin, are still unassuaged. It strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals. In no cases has a return to vegetable diet produced the slightest injury: in most, it has been attended with changes undeniably beneficial. Should ever a physician be born with the genius of Locke, I am persuaded that he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced all knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons that have been introduced for its extirpation! How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors; who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived but to diffuse the happiness of their own unperverted feelings. How many groundless opinions and absurd institutions have not received a general sanction from the sottishness and intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that, had the populace of Paris satisfied their hunger at

† The necessity of resorting to some means of purifying water, and the disease which arises from its adulteration in civilized countries, is sufficiently apparent.— See Dr. Lambe's *Reports on Cancer*. I do not assert that the use of water is in itself unnatural, but that the unperverted palate would swallow no liquid capable of occasioning disease.

the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription-list of Robespierre? Could a set of men, whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness on an *auto da fe*? Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? Could you read calm health in his cheek, flushed with ungovernable propensities of hatred for the human race? Did Muley Ismail's pulse beat evenly? was his skin transparent? did his eyes beam with healthfulness, and its invariable concomitants, cheerfulness and benignity? Though history has decided none of these questions, a child could not hesitate to answer in the negative. Surely, the bile-suffused cheek of Buonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system, speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition, than his murders and his victories. It is impossible, had Buonaparte descended from a race of vegetable feeders, that he could have had either the inclination or the power to ascend the throne of the Bourbons. The desire of tyranny could scarcely be excited in the individual; the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated by a society neither frenzied by inebriation, nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease. Pregnant, indeed, with inexhaustible calamity is the renunciation of instinct, as it concerns our physical nature; arithmetic cannot enumerate, nor reason, perhaps, suspect, the multitudinous sources of disease in civilized life. Even common water, that apparently innocuous *pabulum*, when corrupted by the filth of populous cities, is a deadly and insidious destroyer.\* Who can wonder that all the inducements held out by God, himself, in the Bible to virtue should have been vainer than a nurse's tale; and that those dogmas, by which he has there excited and justified the most ferocious propensities, should have alone been deemed essential; whilst Christians are in the daily practice of all those habits which have infected with disease and crime, not only the reprobate sons, but these favoured children of the common Father's love. Omnipotence itself could not save them from the consequences of this original and universal sin.

There is no disease, bodily or mental, which adoption of vegetable diet and pure water has not infallibly mitigated, wherever the experiment has been fairly tried. Debility is gradually converted into strength; disease into healthfulness; madness, in all its hideous variety, from the ravings of the fettered maniac, to the unaccountable irrationalities of ill temper, that make a hell of domestic life, into a calm and considerate evenness of temper, that alone might offer a certain pledge of the future moral reformation of society. On a natural system of diet, old age would be our last and our only malady: the term of our existence would be protracted; we should enjoy life, and no longer preclude others from the enjoyment of it: all sensual delights would be infinitely more exquisite and perfect; the very sense of being would then be a continued pleasure, such as we now feel it in some few and favoured moments of our youth. By all that is sacred in our hopes for the human race, I conjure those who love happiness and truth, to give a fair trial to the vegetable system. Reasoning is surely superfluous on a subject whose merits an experience of six months would set for ever at rest. But it is only among the enlightened and benevolent that so great a sacrifice of appetite and prejudice can be expected, even though its ultimate excellence should not admit of dispute. It is found easier, by the short-sighted victims of disease, to palliate their torments by medicine, than to prevent them by regimen. The vulgar of all ranks are invariably sensual and indocile; yet I cannot but feel myself persuaded, that when the benefits of vegetable diet are mathematically proved; when it is as clear, that those who live naturally are exempt from premature death, as that one is not nine, the most sottish of mankind will feel a preference towards a long and tranquil, contrasted with a short and painful, life. On the average, out of sixty persons, four die in three years. Hopes are entertained that, in April, 1814

\* Lamb's Reports on Cancer.

a statement will be given that sixty persons, all having lived more than three years on vegetables and pure water, are then *in perfect health*. More than two years have now elapsed; *not one of them has died*; no such example will be found in any sixty persons taken at random. Seventeen persons of all ages (the families of Dr. Lambe and Mr. Newton) have lived for seven years on this diet without a death, and almost without the slightest illness. Surely, when we consider that some of these were infants, and one a martyr to asthma, now nearly subdued, we may challenge any seventeen persons taken at random in this city to exhibit a parallel case. Those who may have been excited to question the rectitude of established habits of diet, by these loose remarks, should consult Mr. Newton's luminous and eloquent essay.\*

When these proofs come fairly before the world, and are clearly seen by all who understand arithmetic, it is scarcely possible that abstinence from aliments demonstrably pernicious should not become universal. In proportion to the number of proselytes, so will be the weight of evidence; and when a thousand persons can be produced, living on vegetables and distilled water, who have to dread no disease but old age, the world will be compelled to regard animal flesh and fermented liquors as slow but certain poisons. The change which would be produced by simpler habits on political economy is sufficiently remarkable. The monopolizing eater of animal flesh would no longer destroy his constitution by devouring an acre at a meal, and many loaves of bread would cease to contribute to gout, madness, and apoplexy, in the shape of a pint of porter, or a dram of gin, when appeasing the long-protracted famine of the hard-working peasant's hungry babes. The quantity of nutritious vegetable matter, consumed in fattening the carcase of an ox, would afford ten times the sustenance, undepraving indeed, and incapable of generating disease, if gathered immediately from the bosom of the earth. The most fertile districts of the habitable globe are now actually cultivated by men for animals, at a delay and waste of aliment absolutely incapable of calculation. It is only the wealthy that can, to any great degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh, and they pay for the greater licence of the privilege by subjection to supernumerary diseases. Again, the spirit of the nation that should take the lead in this great reform, would insensibly become agricultural; commerce, with all its vice, selfishness, and corruption, would gradually decline; more natural habits would produce gentler manners, and the excessive complication of political relations would be so far simplified, that every individual might feel and understand why he loved his country, and took a personal interest in its welfare. How would England, for example, depend on the caprices of foreign rulers, if she contained within herself all the necessaries, and despised whatever they possessed of the luxuries of life? How could they starve her into compliance with their views? Of what consequence would it be that they refused to take her woollen manufactures, when large and fertile tracts of the island ceased to be allotted to the waste of pasturage? On a natural system of diet, we should require no spices from India; no wines from Portugal, Spain, France, or Madeira; none of those multitudinous articles of luxury, for which every corner of the globe is rifled, and which are the causes of so much individual rivalry, such calamitous and sanguinary national disputes. In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord, to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indocility to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered, that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered, that it is a foe to every thing of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of all that is good in chivalry or republicanism; and luxury is the forerunner of a barbarism scarce capable of cure. Is it impossible to realize a state of society, where all the energies of man shall be directed to the production of his solid happi

\* Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen. Cadell, 1811.

ness? Certainly if this advantage (the object of all political speculation) be in any degree attainable, it is attainable only by a community which holds out no factitious incentives to the avarice and ambition of the few, and which is internally organized for the liberty, security, and comfort of the many. None must be entrusted with power (and money is the completest species of power) who do not stand pledged to use it exclusively for the general benefit. But the use of animal flesh and fermented liquors, directly militates with this equality of the rights of man. The peasant cannot gratify these fashionable cravings without leaving his family to starve. Without disease and war, those sweeping curtailers of population, pasturage would include a waste too great to be afforded. The labour requisite to support a family is far lighter \* than is usually supposed. The peasantry, work not only for themselves, but for the aristocracy, the army, and the manufacturers.

The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of the evil. To remedy the abuses of legislation, before we annihilate the propensities by which they are produced, is to suppose, that by taking away the effect, the cause will cease to operate. But the efficacy of this system depends on the proselytism of individuals, and grounds its merits, as a benefit to the community, upon the total change of the dietetic habits in its members. It proceeds securely from a number of particular cases to one that is universal, and has this advantage over the contrary mode, that one error does not invalidate all that has gone before.

Let not too much, however, be expected from this system. The healthiest among us is not exempt from hereditary disease. The most symmetrical, athletic, and long-lived, is a being inexpressibly inferior to what he would have been had not the unnatural habits of his ancestors accumulated for him a certain portion of malady and deformity. In the most perfect specimen of civilized man, something is still found wanting by the physiological critic. Can a return to nature, then, instantaneously eradicate predispositions that have been slowly taking root in the silence of innumerable ages?—Indubitably not. All that I contend for is, that from the moment of the relinquishing all unnatural habits, no new disease is generated; and that the predisposition to hereditary maladies gradually perishes, for want of its accustomed supply. In cases of consumption, cancer, gout, asthma, and scrofula, such is the invariable tendency of a diet of vegetables and pure water.

Those who may be induced, by these remarks, to give the vegetable system a fair trial, should, in the first place, date the commencement of their practice from the moment of their conviction. All depends upon breaking through a pernicious habit resolutely, and at once. Dr. Trotter† asserts, that no drunkard was ever reformed by gradually relinquishing his dram. Animal flesh, in its effects on the human stomach, is analogous to a dram. It is similar to the kind, though differing in the degree, of its operation. The proselyte to a pure diet must be warned to a temporary diminution of muscular strength. The subtraction of a powerful stimulus will suffice to account for this event. But it is only temporary, and is succeeded by an equable capability for exertion, far surpassing his former various and fluctuating strength. Above all, he will acquire an easiness of breathing, by which such exertion is performed with a remarkable exemption from that painful and difficult panting now felt by almost every one, after hastily climbing an ordinary mountain. He will be equally capable of bodily exertion, or mental application, after as before his simple meal. He will feel none of the narcotic effects of ordinary diet. Irritability, the direct consequence of exhausting stimuli, would yield to the power of natural and tranquil impulses. He will no longer

\* It has come under the author's experience, that some of the workmen on an embankment in North Wales, who, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor to pay them, seldom received their wages, have supported large families by cultivating small spots of sterile ground by moonlight. In the notes to Pratt's poem, "Bread, or the Poor," is an account of an industrious labourer, who, by working in a small garden before and after his day's task, attained to an enviable state of independence.

† See "Trotter on the Nervous Temperament."

pine under the lethargy of ennui, that unconquerable weariness of life more to be dreaded than death itself. He will escape the epidemic madness which broods over its own injurious notions of the Deity, and "realises the veil that priests and beldams feign." Every man forms, as it were, his god from his own character; to the divinity of one of simple habits no offering would be more acceptable than the happiness of his creatures. He would be incapable of hating or persecuting others for the love of God. He will find, moreover, a system of simple diet to be a system of perfect epicurism. He will no longer be incessantly occupied in blunting and destroying those organs from which he expects his gratification. The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a desert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and, in winter, oranges, apples, and pears, is far greater than is supposed. Those who wait until they can eat this plain fare with the sauce of appetite, will scarcely join with the hypocritical sensualist at a lord-mayor's feast, who declaims against the pleasures of the table. Solomon kept a thousand concubines, and owned in despair that all was vanity. The man whose happiness is constituted by the society of one amiable woman, would find some difficulty in sympathising with the disappointment of this venerable debauchee.

I address myself not only to the young enthusiast, the ardent devotee of truth and virtue, the pure and passionate moralist, yet unvitiated by the contagion of the world. He will embrace a pure system from its abstract truth, its beauty, its simplicity, and its promise of wide, extended benefit; unless custom has turned poison into food, he will hate the brutal pleasures of the chase by instinct; it will be a contemplation, full of horror and disappointment to his mind, that beings capable of the gentlest and most admirable sympathies, should take delight in the death-pangs and last convulsions of dying animals. The elderly man, whose youth has been poisoned by intemperance, or who has lived with apparent moderation, and is afflicted with a variety of painful maladies, would find his account in a beneficial change produced without the risk of poisonous medicines. The mother, to whom the perpetual restlessness of disease, and unaccountable deaths incident to her children, are the causes of incurable unhappiness, would, on this diet, experience the satisfaction of beholding their perpetual health and natural playfulness.\* The most valuable lives are daily destroyed by diseases, that it is dangerous to palliate, and impossible to cure by medicine. How much longer will man continue to pimp for the gluttony of death, his most insidious, implacable, and eternal foe?

"You apply the term wild to lions, panthers, and serpents, yet in your own savage slaughters, you far surpass them in ferocity, for the blood shed by them is a matter of necessity, and requisite for their subsistence.

\* \* \* \* \*

That man is not by nature destined to devour animal food, is evident from the construction of the human frame, which bears no resemblance to wild beasts, or birds of prey. Man is not provided with claws or talons, or sharpness of fang, or tusk, so well adapted to tear and lacerate: nor is his stomach so well braced and muscular, nor his animal spirits so warm as to enable him to digest this solid mass of animal flesh. On the contrary, nature has made his teeth smooth, his mouth narrow, and his tongue soft; and has contrived, by the slowness of his digestion, to divert

\* See Mr. Newton's book. His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the girls are perfect models for a sculptor; their dispositions are also the most gentle and conciliating: the judicious treatment which they experience in other points, may be a correlative cause of this. In the first five years of their life, of 18,000 children that are born, 7,500 die of various diseases; and how many more of those that survive are rendered miserable by maladies not immediately mortal? The quality and quantity of a woman's milk are materially injured by the use of dead flesh. In an island, near Iceland, where no vegetables are to be got, the children invariably die of tetanus, before they are three weeks old, and the population is supplied from the main land.—*Sir G. Mackenzie's Hist. of Iceland.* See also *Emile*, chap. i. p. 53, 54, 56.

him from devouring a species of food so ill adapted to his frame and constitution.

But if you still maintain, that such is your natural mode of subsistence, then follow nature in your mode of killing your prey, and employ neither knife, hammer, or hatchet, but, like wolves, bears, and lions, seize an ox with your teeth, grasp a boar round the body, or tear asunder a lamb or a hare, and, like the savage tribe, devour them still panting in the agonies of death.

\* . \* . \* . \* . \* . \*

We carry our luxury still farther, by the variety of sauces and seasonings which we add to our beastly banquets, mixing together oil, wine, honey, pickles, vinegar, and Syrian and Arabian ointments and perfumes, as if we intended to bury and embalm the carcasses on which we feed. The difficulty of digesting such a mass of matter reduced in our stomachs to a state of liquefaction and putrefaction, is the source of endless disorders in the human frame.

First of all, the wild, mischievous animals were selected for food, and then the birds, and fishes were dragged to slaughter; next the human appetite directed itself against the laborious ox, the useful and fleece-bearing sheep, and the cock, the guardian of the house. At last, by this preparatory discipline, man became matured for human massacres, slaughters, and wars.

## DEDICATION

TO

MARY —————.

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,  
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home ;  
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faery,  
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome ;  
Nor thou disdain, that, ere my fame become  
A star among the stars of mortal night,  
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,  
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite  
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour  
Is ended, and the fruit is at thy feet !  
No longer where the woods, to frame a bower,  
With interlaced branches mix and meet,  
Or where, with sound like many voices sweet,  
Water-falls leap among wild islands green,  
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat  
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen :  
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first  
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.  
I do remember well the hour which burst  
My spirits' sleep : a fresh May-dawn it was,  
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,  
And wept, I knew not why : until there rose  
From the near school-room voices, that, alas !  
Were but one echo from a world of woes—  
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—  
But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,  
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—  
So without shame I spake :—" I will be wise,  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power, for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise  
Without reproach or check." I then controlled  
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought  
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,  
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught  
I cared to learn, but from that secret store  
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before  
It might walk forth to war among mankind ;  
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more  
Within me, till there came upon my mind  
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

Alas ! that love should be a blight and snare  
To those who seek all sympathies in one !—  
Such once I sought in vain ; then black despair,  
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown  
Over the world in which I moved alone :—  
Yet never found I one not false to me—  
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone,  
Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be  
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart  
Fell like bright Spring upon some herbless plain,  
How beautiful, and calm, and free thou wert  
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain  
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,  
And walked as free as light the clouds among,  
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain  
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung  
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.

## DEDICATION.

No more alone through the world's wilderness,  
Although I trod the paths of high intent,  
I journeyed now: no more companionless,  
Where solitude is like despair, I went.—  
There is the wisdom of a stern content  
When Poverty can blight the just and good,  
When Infamy dares mock the innocent,  
And cherished friends turn with the multitude  
To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

Now has descended a serener hour,  
And with inconstant fortune friends return:  
Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power  
Which says—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.  
And from thy side two gentle babes are born,  
To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we  
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn:  
And these delights, and thou, have been to me  
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers  
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?  
Or must the lyre on which my spirit lingers  
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,  
Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,  
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway,  
Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain  
Reply in hope—but I am worn away,  
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:  
Time may interpret to his silent years.  
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,  
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,  
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,  
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy  
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:  
And through thine eyes, even in thy soul, I see  
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,  
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.  
I wonder not—for One then left this earth  
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,  
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled  
Of its departing glory; still her fame  
Shines on thee through the tempests dark and wild  
Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim  
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,  
Which was the echo of three thousand years;  
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,  
As some lone man who in a desert hears  
The music of his home:—unwonted fears  
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,  
And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,  
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space  
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!  
If there must be no response to my cry—  
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind  
On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,  
Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity  
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,  
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by  
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,  
That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.



THE  
REVOLT OF ISLAM.

---

CANTO I.

---

WHEN the last hope of trampled France had failed  
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,  
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled  
The peak of an aerial promontory,  
Whose caverned base with the vexed surge was hoary ;  
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken  
Each cloud, and every wave :—but transitory  
The calm : for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,  
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder  
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,  
When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,  
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,  
Until their complicating lines did steep  
The orient sun in shadow :—not a sound  
Was heard ; one horrible repose did keep  
The forests and the floods, and all around  
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

Hark ! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps  
Earth and the ocean. See ! the lightnings yawn  
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps  
Glitter and boil beneath : it rages on,  
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,  
Lightning and hail, and darkness eddying by,  
There is a pause--the sea-birds, that were gone  
Into their caves to shriek, come forth to spy  
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven  
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen  
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven  
Most delicately, and the ocean green,  
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,  
Quivered like burning emerald : calm was spread  
On all below ; but far on high, between  
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,  
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

For ever, as the war became more fierce  
Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,

That spot grew more serene ; blue light did pierce  
 The woof of those white clouds, which seemed to lie  
 Far, deep, and motionless ; while thro' the sky  
 The pallid semicircle of the moon  
 Pass'd on, in slow and moving majesty ;  
 Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon  
 But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

I could not choose but gaze ; a fascination  
 Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew  
 My fancy thither, and in expectation  
 Of what I knew not, I remained :—the hue  
 Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,  
 Suddenly stained with shadow did appear ;  
 A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,  
 Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere  
 Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear—

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,  
 Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river  
 Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,  
 Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,  
 Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour ;  
 So, from that chasm of light a winged Form  
 On all the winds of heaven approaching ever  
 Floated, dilating as it came : the storm  
 Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,  
 Suspending thought and breath ; a monstrous sight !  
 For in the air do I behold indeed  
 An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight :—  
 And now, relaxing its impetuous flight  
 Before the aerial rock on which I stood,  
 The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,  
 And hung with lingering wings over the flood,  
 And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,  
 And every golden feather gleamed therein—  
 Feather and scale inextricably blended.  
 The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin  
 Shone thro' the plumes ; its coils were twined within  
 By many a swollen and knotted fold, and high  
 And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,  
 Sustained a crested head, which warily  
 Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's stedfast eye.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling,  
 With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed

Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing  
 Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,  
 Drooped through the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,  
 And casting back its eager head, with beak  
 And talon unremittingly assailed  
 The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek  
 Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

What life, what power, was kindled and arose  
 Within the sphere of that appalling fray!  
 For, from the encounter of those wond'rous foes,  
 A vapour like the sea's suspended spray  
 Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,  
 Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap,  
 Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,  
 Like sparks into the darkness:—as they sweep,  
 Blood stains the snowy form of the tumultuous deep.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,  
 And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;  
 Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck  
 Locked in stiff rings his adamantine coil,  
 Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,  
 Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea  
 Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil  
 His adversary, who then reared on high  
 His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

Then, on the white edge of the bursting surge,  
 Where they had sunk together, would the Snake  
 Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge  
 The wind with his wild writhings; for, to break  
 That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake  
 The strength of his unconquerable wings  
 As in despair, and with his sinewy neck  
 Dissolve in sudden shock those linked rings,  
 Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

Wile baffled wile, and strengten—countered strength,  
 Thus long, but unprevailing: the event  
 Of that portentous fight appeared at length:  
 Until the lamp of day was almost spent  
 It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,  
 Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last,  
 Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent,  
 With clang of wings and scream the Eagle past,  
 Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean  
 And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—

Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion  
 Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere  
 Of sun-set sweep, and their fierce roar to hear  
 Amid the calm : down the steep path I wound  
 To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear  
 And beautiful, and there the sea I found  
 (Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,  
 Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand  
 Of the waste seafair— as one flower adorning  
 An icy wilderness—each delicate hand  
 Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band  
 Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate  
 Looking upon the waves ; on the bare strand  
 Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,  
 Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon  
 That unimaginable fight, and now  
 That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,  
 As brightly it illustrated her woe ;  
 For in the tears which silently to flow  
 Paused not, its lustre hung : she, watching aye  
 The foam-wreathes which the faint tide wove below  
 Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,  
 And after every groan looked up over the sea.

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make  
 His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,  
 Parted, and quivered ; the tears ceased to break  
 From her immovable eyes ; no voice of wail  
 Escaped her ; but she rose, and, on the gale  
 Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair,  
 Poured forth her voice, the caverns of the vale,  
 That opened to the ocean, caught it there,  
 And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

She spake in language whose strange melody  
 Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,  
 What made its music more melodious be,  
 The pity and the love of every tone ;  
 But to the snake those accents sweet were known,  
 His native tongue and hers ; nor did he beat  
 The hoar spray idly then, but, winding on  
 Through the green shadows of the waves that meet  
 Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,  
 And wept and clasped her hands, and all between,

Renewed the unintelligible strain  
 Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien ;  
 And she unveiled her bosom, and the green  
 And glancing shadows of the sea did play  
 O'er its marmoreal depth :—one moment seen,  
 For ere the next, the Serpent did obey  
 Her voice, and, coiled in rest, in her embrace it lay.

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes  
 Serene, yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,  
 While yet the day-light lingereth in the skies  
 Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,  
 And said: To grieve is wise, but the despair  
 Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep :  
 This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare  
 With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,  
 A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,  
 Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.  
 I wept. Shall this fair woman all alone  
 Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go ?  
 His head is on her heart, and who can know  
 How soon he may devour his feeble prey?—  
 Such were my thoughts, when the tide 'gan to flow:  
 And that strange boat, like the moon's shade, **did sway**  
 Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay.

A boat of rare device, which had no sail  
 But its own carved prow of thin moonstone,  
 Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,  
 To catch those gentlest winds which are not known  
 To breath, but by the steady speed alone  
 With which it cleaves the sparkling sea ; and now  
 We are embarked, the mountains hang and frown  
 Over the starry deep that gleams below  
 A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

And, as we sailed, a strange and awful tale  
 That Woman told, like such mysterious dream  
 As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale !  
 'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,  
 Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme  
 Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent  
 Her looks on mine : those eyes a kindling beam  
 Of love divine into my spirit sent,  
 And, ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

Speak not to me, but hear ! Much shalt thou learn,  
 Much must remain untaught, and more untold,

In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn :  
 Know them, that, from the depths of ages old,  
 Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold,  
 Ruling the world with a divided lot,  
 Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,  
 Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought  
 Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

The earliest dweller of the world alone  
 Stood on the verge of chaos: Lo! afar  
 O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,  
 Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar :  
 A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star  
 Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,  
 All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,  
 In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood  
 That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood.

Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,  
 One Power of many shapes which none may know,  
 One Shape of many names: the Fiend did revel  
 In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,  
 For the new race of man went to and fro,  
 Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,  
 And hating good—for his immortal foe  
 He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mil',  
 To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.  
 The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things  
 Was Evil's breath and life: this made him strong  
 To soar aloft with overshadowing wings ;  
 And the great Spirit of Good did creep among  
 The nations of mankind, and every tongue  
 Cursed and blasphemed him as he passed ; for none  
 Knew good from evil, though their names were hung  
 In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,  
 As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own.

The fiend, whose name was Legion ; Death, Decay,  
 Earthquake, and Blight, and want, and Madness pale,  
 Winged and wan disease, and array  
 Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale ;  
 Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil  
 Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head ;  
 And, without whom all these might nought avail,  
 Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread  
 Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

His spirit is their power, and they his slaves  
 In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell ;  
 And keep their state from palaces to graves,

In ail resorts of men—invisible,  
 But when, in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell,  
 To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,  
 Black-winged demon forms—whom from the hell,  
 His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,  
 He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

In the world's youths his empire was as firm  
 As its foundations—soon the Spirit of Good,  
 Though in the likeness of a loathsome worm,  
 Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,  
 Which shrank and fled; and with that fiend of blood  
 Renewed the doubtful war—thrones then first shook,  
 And earth's immense and trampled multitude  
 In hope on their own powers began to look,  
 And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.

Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,  
 In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,  
 Even where they slept amid the night of ages  
 Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame  
 Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!  
 And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave  
 New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame  
 Upon the combat shone—a light to save,  
 Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive  
 With its oppressors in a strife of blood,  
 Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive;  
 And in each bosom of the multitude  
 Justice and truth, which custom's hydra brood,  
 Wage silent war;—when priests and kings dissemble  
 In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,  
 When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,  
 The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble.

Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home  
 Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears;  
 Though thou may'st hear that earth is now become  
 The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,  
 The vile reward of their dishonoured years  
 He will dividing give—the victor Fiend  
 Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears  
 His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend  
 An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

List, stranger, list! Mine is a human form,  
 Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now!  
 My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm

With human blood.—'Twas many years ago,  
 Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know  
 The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep  
 My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe,  
 Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep  
 In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

Woe could not be mine own—since far from men  
 I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,  
 By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain glen ;  
 And near the waves, and through the forests wild,  
 I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled,  
 For I was calm while tempest shook the sky :  
 But, when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,  
 I wept sweet tears, yet too tumultuously  
 For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in ecstasy.

These were forebodings of my fate.—Before  
 A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,  
 It had been nurtured in divinest lore :  
 A dying poet gave me books, and blest  
 With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest  
 In which I watched him as he died away—  
 A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest  
 Of our lone mountains—and this lore did sway  
 My spirit like a storm, contending there away.

Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold,  
 I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,  
 For they weep not ; and Wisdom had unrolled  
 The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe :  
 To few can she that warning vision show,  
 For I loved all things with intense devotion ;  
 So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,  
 Like earthquake, did uplift the stagnant ocean  
 Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

When first the living blood through all these veins  
 Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth  
 And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains  
 Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.  
 I saw, and started from my cottage hearth ;  
 And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness  
 Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth—  
 And laughed in light and music : soon, sweet madness  
 Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

Deep slumber fell on me ;—my dreams were fire,  
 Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover  
 Like shadows o'er my brain ; and strange desire,  
 The tempest of a passion, raging over



My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,  
 Which past ; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far  
 Came—then I loved ; but not human lover !  
 For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star [were.  
 Shone thro' the woodbine wreaths which round my casement

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.  
 I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank  
 Under the billows of the heaving sea ;  
 But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,  
 And to my brain the boundless world now shrank  
 Into one thought—one image—yea, for ever !  
 Even like the day spring, poured on vapours dank,  
 The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver  
 Through my benighted mind—and were extinguished never.

The day past thus : at night, methought in dream  
 A shape of speechless beauty did appear ;  
 It stood like light on a careering stream  
 Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere ;  
 A winged youth, his radiant brow did wear  
 The Morning Star : a wild dissolving bliss  
 Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,  
 And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness  
 Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,—

And said : A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden :  
 How wilt thou prove thy worth ? Then joy and sleep  
 Together fled ; my soul was deeply laden,  
 And to the shore I went to muse and weep ;  
 But, as I moved, over my heart did creep  
 A joy less soft, but more profound and strong  
 Than my sweet dream ; and it forbade to keep  
 The path of the sea-shore : that Spirit's tongue  
 Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

How, to that vast and peopled city led,  
 Which was a field of holy warfare then,  
 I walked among the dying and the dead,  
 And shared in fearless deeds with evil men.  
 Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—  
 How I braved death for liberty and truth,  
 And spurned at peace, and power, and fame ; and when  
 Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,  
 How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth.

Warm tears thron'g fast ! the tale may not be said—  
 Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,  
 I was not left, like others, cold and dead ;  
 The Spirit whom I loved in solitude  
 Sustained his child : the tempest-shaken wood,

The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—  
 These were his voice, and well I understood  
 His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright  
 With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight

In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,  
 When the dim nights were moonless, have I known  
 Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers  
 When thought revisits them:—know thou alone,  
 That, after many wondrous years were flown,  
 I was awakened by a shriek of woe;  
 And over me a mystic robe was thrown,  
 By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow  
 Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.

Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?  
 Fear it! she said, with brief and passionate cry,  
 And spake no more: that silence made me start—  
 I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,  
 Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky.  
 Beneath the rising moon seen far away;  
 Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high  
 Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay  
 On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,  
 So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—  
 Wild music woke me: we had passed the ocean  
 Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—  
 And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain  
 Of waters, azure with the noon-tide day.  
 Ethereal mountains shone around—a Fane  
 Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay,  
 On the blue sunny deep, resplendent, far away.

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand  
 Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream,  
 Reared in the cities of enchanted land:  
 'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream  
 Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam  
 Of the unrisen moon among the clouds  
 Is gathering—when with many a golden beam  
 The thronging constellations rush in crowds,  
 Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,  
 When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce,  
 Genius beholds it rise, his native home,  
 Girt by the deserts of the Universe,  
 Yet, nor painting's light, or mightier verse,

Or sculpture's marble language, can invest  
That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse  
That incommunicable sight, and rest  
Upon the labouring brain and over-burthened breast.

Winding among the lawny islands fair,  
Whose bloomy forests starred the shadowy deep,  
The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair  
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,  
Encircling that vast fane's aerial heap:  
We disembarked, and through a portal wide  
We past—whose roof, of moonstone carved, did keep  
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,  
Sculptures like life and thought; immovable, deep-eyed.

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof  
Was diamond, which had drunk the lightning's sheen  
In darkness, and now poured it through the woof  
Of spell-inwoven clouds, hung there to screen  
Its blinding splendour—through such veil was seen  
That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;  
Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,  
And horned moons, and meteors strange and fair,  
On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light  
Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away  
The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright  
With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day:  
And, on the jasper walls around, there lay  
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,  
Which did the Spirit's history display;  
A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,  
Which, in their winged dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne  
The Great, who had departed from mankind,  
A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone  
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind;  
Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;  
And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;  
And some had lyres, whose strings were intertwined  
With pale and clinging flames, which ever there  
Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,  
Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,  
Distinct with circling steps which rested on  
Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came  
Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name,

And fell ; and vanished slowly from the sight.  
 Darkness rose from her dissolving frame,  
 Which gathering, filled that dome of woven light,  
 Blotting it's sphered stars, with supernatural night.

Then, first, two glittering lights were seen to glide  
 In circles on the amethystine floor,  
 Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,  
 Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,  
 They round each other rolled, dilating more  
 And more—then rose, commingling into one,  
 One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er  
 A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown  
 Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.

The cloud that rested on that cone of flame  
 Was cloven ; beneath the planet sate a Form,  
 Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,  
 The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm  
 Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform  
 The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state  
 Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm  
 Sinking upon their hearts and mine—He sate  
 Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw  
 Over my brow—a hand supported me,  
 Whose touch was magic strength : an eye of blue  
 Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly ;  
 And a voice said—'Thou must a listener be  
 This day—two mighty Spirits now return,  
 Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea ;  
 They pour fresh light from hope's immortal urn ;  
 A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn.

I looked, and lo ! one stood forth eloquently :  
 His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow  
 Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,  
 The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when, in their flow  
 Through the bright air, the soft winds as they blow  
 Wake the green world—his gestures did obey  
 The ocular mind that made his features glow,  
 And, where his curved lips half open lay,  
 Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair  
 He stood thus beautiful : but there was One  
 Who sate beside him like his shadow there,  
 And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known  
 To be thus fair, by the few lines alone

Which through her floating locks and gathered cloke,  
 Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone :—  
 None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke  
 Memories which found a tongue, as thus he silence broke.

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 CANTO II.

The star-light smile of children, the sweet looks  
 Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,  
 The murmur of the unreposing brooks,  
 And the green light which, shifting overhead,  
 Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,  
 The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,  
 The lamp-light through the rafters cheerly spread,  
 And on the twining flax—in life's young hours  
 These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded powers.

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,  
 Such impulses within my mortal frame  
 Arose, and they were dear to memory,  
 Like tokens of the dead :—but others came  
 Soon, in another shape : the wondrous fame  
 Of the past world, the vital words and deeds  
 Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,  
 Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds  
 Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

I heard, as all have heard, the various story  
 Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.  
 Feeble historians of its shame and glory,  
 False disputants on all its hopes and fears,  
 Victims who worshipped ruin,—chroniclers  
 Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state ;  
 Yet flattering power had given its ministers  
 A throne of judgment in the grave :—'twas fate  
 That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane  
 Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,  
 And stabled in our homes,—until the chain  
 Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide  
 That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied  
 In evil, slave and despot ; fear with lust  
 Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,  
 Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,  
 Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,  
 And the ethereal shapes which are suspended

Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,  
 The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended  
 The colours of the air since first extended  
 It cradled the young world, none wandered forth  
 To see or feel : a darkness had descended  
 On every heart: the light which shows its worth,  
 Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,  
 Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind :  
 All that despair from murdered hope inherits  
 They sought, and, in their helpless misery blind,  
 A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,  
 And stronger tyrants :—a dark gulph before,  
 The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned ; behind,  
 Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore  
 On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.

Out of that Oceans' wrecks had Guilt and Woe  
 Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,  
 And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro  
 Glided o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought  
 The worship thence which they each other taught.  
 Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn  
 Even to the ills again from which they sought  
 Such refuge after death !—well might they learn  
 To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern !

For they all pined in bondage ; body and soul,  
 Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent  
 Before one Power, to which supreme controul  
 Over their will by their own weakness lent,  
 Made all its many names omnipotent ;  
 All symbols of things evil, all divine ;  
 And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent  
 The air from all its fanes, did intertwine  
 Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,  
 And in no careless heart transcribed the tale ;  
 But, from the sneers of men, who had grown hoary  
 In shame and scorn, from groans and crowds made pale  
 By famine, from a mother's desolate wail  
 O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood  
 Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale  
 With the heart's warfare ; did I gather food  
 To feed my many thoughts ;—a tameless multitude.

I wandered through the wrecks of days departed  
 For by the desolated shore, when even

O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted  
 The light of moonrise ; in the northern Heaven,  
 Among the clouds near the horizon driven,  
 The mountains lay beneath one planet pale ;  
 Around me, broken tombs and columns riven  
 Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale  
 Waked in those ruins grey its everlasting wail ;

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,  
 Nor had I heard the story of their deeds ;  
 But dwellings of a race of mightier men,  
 And monuments of less ungentle creeds,  
 Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds  
 The language which they speak ; and now, to me  
 The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,  
 The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,  
 Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.

Such man has been, and such may yet become !  
 Aye, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they  
 Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome  
 Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway  
 Of the vast stream of ages bear away  
 My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—  
 Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray  
 Of the still moon, my spirit onward past  
 Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

It shall be thus no more ! Too long, too long,  
 Sons of the glorious dead ! have ye lain bound  
 In darkness and in ruin.—Hope is strong ;  
 Justice and Truth their winged child have found—  
 Awake ! arise ! until the mighty sound  
 Of your career shall scatter in its gust  
 The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground  
 Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,  
 Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust.

It must be so—I will arise and waken  
 The multitude, and, like a sulphurous hill  
 Which on a sudden from its snow has shaken  
 The swoon of ages, it shall burst, and fill  
 The world with cleansing fire ; it must, it will—  
 It may not be restrained !—and who shall stand  
 Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still,  
 But Laon ? on high Freedom's desert land  
 A tower whose marble walls the leagued storms withstand !

One summer night, in commune with the hope  
 Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins grey

I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope ;  
 And ever from that hour upon me lay  
 The burden of this hope, and night or day,  
 In vision or in dream, clove to my breast :  
 Among mankind, or when gone far away  
 To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest  
 Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

These hopes found words through which my spirit sought  
 To weave a bondage of such sympathy  
 As might create some response to the thought  
 Which ruled me now—and, as the vapours lie  
 Bright in the out-spread mornings's radiancy,  
 So were these thoughts invested with the light  
 Of language ; and all bosoms made reply  
 On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might  
 Thro' darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite.

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,  
 And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,  
 When I could feel the listener's senses swim.  
 And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother,  
 Even as my words evoked them—and another,  
 And yet another, I did fondly deem,  
 Felt that we all were sons of one great mother ;  
 And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,  
 As to awake in grief from some delightful dream

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth  
 Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,  
 Did Laon and his friend on one grey plinth,  
 Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,  
 Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep :  
 And that his friend was false, may now be said  
 Calmly—that he like other men could weep  
 Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread  
 Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,  
 I must have sought dark respite from its stress  
 In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—  
 For, to tread life's dismaying wilderness  
 Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,  
 Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,  
 Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less  
 With love that scorned return sought to unbind  
 The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

With deathless minds, which leave where they have past  
 A path of light, my soul communion knew ;



Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,  
 As from a mine of magic store, I drew  
 Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew  
 The adamantine armour of their power—  
 And from my fancy wings of golden hue  
 Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower,  
 A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes  
 Were loadstars of delight, which drew me home  
 When I might wander forth: nor did I prize  
 Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome  
 Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,  
 And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,  
 Since kin were cold, and friends had now become  
 Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,  
 Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,  
 Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age  
 In all but its sweet looks and mien divine;  
 Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage  
 A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,  
 When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought,  
 Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage  
 To overflow with tears, or converse fraught  
 With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,  
 A power, that from its objects scarcely drew  
 One impulse of her being— in her lightness  
 Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,  
 Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,  
 To nourish some far desert; she did seem  
 Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,  
 Like the bright shade of some immortal dream [stream.  
 Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark

As mine own shadow was this child to me,  
 A second self, far dearer and more fair;  
 Which clothed in undissolving radiancy  
 All those steep paths which languor and despair  
 Of human things had made so dark and bare,  
 But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft  
 Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,  
 Knew I what solace for that loss was left,  
 Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

Once she was dear, now she was all I had  
 To love in human life—this playmate sweet,

This child of twelve years old—so she was made  
 My sole associate, and her willing feet  
 Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,  
 Beyond the ærial mountains whose vast cells  
 The unreposing billows ever beat,  
 Through forests wide and old, and lawny dells,  
 Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand  
 When twined in mine: she followed where I went,  
 Through the lone paths of our immortal land.  
 It had no waste, but some memorial lent  
 Which strung me to my toil—some monument  
 Vital with mind: then Cythna by my side,  
 Until the bright and beaming day were spent,  
 Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,  
 Too earnest and to sweet ever to be denied.

And soon I could not have refused her—thus  
 For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er  
 Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:  
 And, when the pauses of the lulling air  
 Of noon beside the sea had made a lair  
 For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,  
 And I kept watch over her slumbers there,  
 While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,  
 Amid her innocent rest by turns she smil'd and wept.

And, in the murmur of her dreams, was heard  
 Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly  
 She would arise, and, like the secret bird  
 Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky  
 With her sweet accents—a wild melody!  
 Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong  
 The source of passion, whence they rose to be  
 Triumphant strains, which, life a spirit's tongue,  
 To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung.

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream  
 Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great  
 Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme  
 Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate  
 Amid the calm which rapture doth create  
 After its tumult, her heart vibrating,  
 Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state  
 From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing  
 Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song  
 Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,

A mighty congregation, which were strong  
 Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse  
 The cloud of that unutterable curse  
 Which clings upon mankind:—all things became  
 Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,  
 Earth, sea, and sky, the planets, life, and fame,  
 And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

And this beloved child thus felt the sway  
 Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud  
 The very wind on which it rolls away :  
 Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed  
 With music and with light, their fountains flowed  
 In poesy; and her still and earnest face,  
 Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed  
 Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,  
 Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace.

In me, communion with this purest being  
 Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise  
 In knowledge, which in hers mine own mind seeing,  
 Left in the human world few mysteries :  
 How without fear of evil or disguise  
 Was Cythna!—what a spirit strong and mild,  
 Which death, or pain, or peril, could despise,  
 Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild,  
 Yet mighty, was inclosed within one simple child

New lore was this—old age with its grey hair,  
 And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,  
 And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare  
 To burst the chains which life for ever flings  
 On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,  
 So is it cold and cruel, and is made  
 The careless slave of that dark power which brings  
 Evil, like blight on man, who, still betrayed,  
 Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep  
 The empire of the world: thus Cythna taught  
 Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,  
 Unconscious of the power through which she wrought  
 The woof of such intelligible thought,  
 As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay  
 In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought  
 Why the deceiver and the slave has sway  
 O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

Within that fairest form, the female mind  
 Untainted by the poison clouds which rest

On the dark world, a sacred home did find:  
 But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,  
 Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed  
 All native power, had those fair children torn,  
 And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,  
 And minister to lust its joys forlorn,  
 Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

This misery was but coldly felt, 'till she  
 Became my only friend, who had indued  
 My purpose with a wider sympathy;  
 Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude  
 In which the half of human kind were mewed,  
 Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,  
 She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food  
 To the hyena lust, who, among graves,  
 Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves.

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,  
 Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her :—"Cythna sweet  
 Well with the world art thou unreconciled;  
 Never will peace and human nature meet,  
 Till free and equal man and woman greet  
 Domestic peace; and ere this power can make  
 In human hearts its calm and holy seat,  
 This slavery must be broken."—As I spake,  
 From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

She replied earnestly :—"It shall be mine,  
 This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain;  
 Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,  
 If she should lead a happy female train  
 To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,  
 When myriads at thy call shall throng around  
 The Golden City."—Then the child did strain  
 My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound  
 Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

I smiled, and spake not.—"Wherefore dost thou smile  
 At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,  
 And, though my cheek might become pale the while,  
 With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek  
 Through their array of banded slaves to wreak  
 Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought  
 It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek  
 To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot  
 And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not."

"Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest  
 How a young child should thus undaunted be;

Methinks, it is power which thou bestowest,  
 Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,  
 So to become most good, and great, and free ;  
 Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar  
 In towers and huts are many like to me,  
 Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore  
 As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

"Think'st thou that I shall speak unskilfully,  
 And none will heed me ? I remember now,  
 How once a slave, in tortures doomed to die,  
 Was saved, because in accents sweet and low  
 He sang a song his Judge loved long ago,  
 As he was led to death.—All shall relent  
 Who hear me—tears as mine have flowed, shall flow,  
 Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent  
 As renovates the world ;—a will omnipotent !

"Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,  
 Through Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells  
 Will I descend, where'er in abjectness  
 — Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,  
 There with the music of thine own sweet spells  
 Will disenchant the captives, and will pour  
 For the despairing, from the crystal wells  
 Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,  
 And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

"Can man be free if woman be a slave ?  
 Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air  
 To the corruption of a closed grave !  
 Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear  
 Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare  
 To trample their oppressors ? In their home  
 Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear  
 The shape of woman—hoary crime would come  
 Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

"I am a child :—I would not yet depart.  
 When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp  
 Aloft which thou has kindled in my heart,  
 Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp  
 Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp  
 Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm  
 Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp  
 Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm  
 Upon her children's brow, dark falsehood to disarm.

"Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—  
 Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand

Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean grey :  
 Amid the dwellers of this lonely land  
 I shall remain alone—and thy command  
 Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,  
 And, multitudinous as the desert sand  
 Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance,  
 Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

“Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,  
 Which from remotest glens two warring winds  
 Involve in fire, which not the loosened fountain  
 Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds  
 Of evil catch from our uniting minds  
 The spark which must consume them.—Cythna then  
 Will have cast off the impotence that binds  
 Her childhood now, and through the paths of men  
 Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den.

“We part!—O Laon, I must dare, nor tremble  
 To meet those looks no more,—Oh, heavy stroke!  
 Sweet brother of my soul; can I dissemble  
 The agony of this thought?”—As thus she spoke  
 The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,  
 And in my arms she hid her beating breast.  
 I remained still for tears—sudden she woke  
 As one awakes from sleep, and wildly prest  
 My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possest.

“We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,  
 Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess  
 Within whose happy silence, thus embraced  
 We might survive all ills in one caress:  
 Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—  
 Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again  
 Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless  
 Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain  
 When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.”

I could not speak, though she had ceased, for now  
 The fountains of her feelings, swift and deep,  
 Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow!  
 So we arose, and by the star-light steep  
 Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,  
 But pale, were calm.—With passion thus subdued,  
 Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep  
 We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,  
 Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

## CANTO III.

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber  
 That night, I know not; but my own did seem  
 As if they might ten thousand years outnumber  
 Of waking life, the visions of a dream,  
 Which hid in one dim gulph the troubled stream  
 Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,  
 Whose limits yet were never memory's theme:  
 And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds past,  
 Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace  
 More time than might make grey the infant world,  
 Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:  
 When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,  
 From my dim sleep, a shadow was unfurled:  
 Methought, upon the threshold of a cave  
 I sate with Cythna; drooping briny, pearly  
 With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,  
 Hung, where we sate, to taste the joys which Nature gave.

We lived a day as we were wont to live,  
 But nature had a robe of glory on,  
 And the bright air o'er every shape did weave  
 Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,  
 The leafless bough among the leaves alone,  
 Had being clearer than its own could be,  
 And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown  
 In this strange vision, so divine to me,  
 That if I loved before, now love was agony.

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,  
 And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere  
 Of the calm moon—when, suddenly was blended  
 With our repose a nameless sense of fear;  
 And from the cave behind I seemed to hear  
 Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete,  
 And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,  
 A tumult and a rush of thronging feet  
 The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!  
 Through the air and over the sea we sped,  
 And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,  
 And the winds bore me,—through the darkness spread  
 Around, the gaping earth then vomited  
 Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung

Upon my flight ; and ever as we fled  
 They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung  
 A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

And I lay struggling in the impotence  
 Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,  
 Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense  
 To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound  
 Which in the light of morn was poured around  
 Our dwelling—breathless, pale and unaware  
 I rose, and all the cottage crowded found  
 With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare,  
 And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

And ere with rapid lips and gathered brow  
 I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—  
 It was a feeble shriek, faint, far, and low,  
 Arrested me—my mein grew calm and meek,  
 And, grasping a small knife, I went to seek  
 That voice among the crowd— 'twas Cythna's cry !  
 Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak  
 Its whirlwind rage :—so I past quietly  
 Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie.

I started to behold her, for delight  
 And exultation, and a joyance free,  
 Solemn, serene, and lofty, filled the light  
 Of the calm smile with which she looked on me :  
 So that I feared some brainless ecstasy,  
 Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her—  
 "Farewell ! farewell !" she said, as I drew nigh.  
 "At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,  
 Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

"Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope :  
 These bloody men are but the slaves who bear  
 Their mistress to her task—it was my scope  
 The slavery where they drag me now to share,  
 And among captives willing chains to wear  
 Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend !  
 Let our first triumph trample the despair  
 Which would ensnare us now, for in the end,  
 In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend."

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,  
 Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew  
 With seeming careless glance ; not many were  
 Around her, for their comrades just withdrew  
 To guard some other victim—so I drew  
 My knife, and with one impulse suddenly,



All unaware, three of their number slew,  
 And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry  
 My countrymen invoked to death or liberty !

What followed then, I know not—for a stroke  
 On my raised arm and naked head came down,  
 Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke,  
 I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,  
 And up a rock which overhangs the town,  
 By the steep path were bearing me : below,  
 The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown  
 The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow  
 Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,  
 Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,  
 Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude  
 Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,  
 Had many a landmark ; o'er its height to fly  
 Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,  
 Has power—and when the shades of evening lie  
 On Earth and Ocean, its carved summits cast  
 The sunken day-light far through the aërial waste.

They bore me to a cavern in the hill  
 Beneath that column, and unbound me there :  
 And one did strip me stark : and one did fill  
 A vessel from the putrid pool ; one bare  
 A lighted torch, and four with friendless care  
 Guided my steps the cavern paths along,  
 Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair  
 We wound, until the torches' fiery tongue  
 Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

They raised me to the platform of the pile,  
 That column's dizzy height :—the grate of brass  
 Through which they thrust me, open stood the while.  
 As to its ponderous and suspended mass,  
 With chains which eat into the flesh, alas !  
 With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound :  
 The grate, as they departed to repass,  
 With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound  
 Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom was drowned.

The noon was calm and bright :—around that column  
 The overhanging sky and circling sea  
 Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn  
 The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,  
 So that I knew not my own misery :  
 The islands and the mountains in the day

Like clouds reposed afar ; and I could see  
 The town among the woods below that lay,  
 And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed  
 Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone  
 Swayed in the air :—so bright that noon did breed  
 No shadow in the sky beside mine own—  
 Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.  
 Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame  
 Rested like night ; all else was clearly shown  
 In the broad glare, yet sound to me none came,  
 But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon !  
 A ship was lying on the sunny main ;  
 Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—  
 Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again  
 Waked with its presence, in my tranced brain  
 — The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold :  
 I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain  
 Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,  
 And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

I watched, until the shades of evening wrapt  
 Earth like an exhalation—then the bark  
 Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapt.  
 It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark ;  
 Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark  
 Its path no more !—I sought to close mine eyes,  
 But, like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark ;  
 I would have risen, but, ere that I could rise,  
 My parched skin was split with piercing agonies.

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever  
 Its adamantine links, that I might die.  
 O liberty ! forgive the base endeavour,  
 Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,  
 The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—  
 That starry night, with its clear silence, sent  
 Tameless resolve which laughed at misery  
 Into my soul—linked remembrance lent  
 To that such power, to me such a severe content.

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair  
 And die, I questioned not ; nor, though the Sun  
 Its shafts of agony kindling through the air  
 Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,  
 Or when the stars their visible courses run,  
 Or morning, the wide universe was spread

In dreary calmness round me, did I shun  
 Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead  
 From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

Two days thus past—I neither raved nor died—  
 Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest  
 Built in mine entrails ; I had spurned aside  
 The water-vessel, while despair possess'd  
 My thoughts, and now no drop remained ! The uprest  
 Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust,  
 Which, had been left, was to my craving breast  
 Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust,  
 And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn  
 Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,  
 Which, through the caverns dreary and forlorn  
 Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep  
 With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—  
 A gulph, a void, a sense of senselessness—  
 These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep  
 Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,  
 A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless !

The forms which peopled this terrific trance  
 I well remember—like a quire of devils,  
 Around me they involved a giddy dance ;  
 Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels  
 Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,  
 Foul ceaseless shadows :—thought could not divide  
 The actual world from these entangling evils,  
 Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried  
 All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

The sense of day and night, of false and true,  
 Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst  
 That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,  
 Was not a phantom of the realms accurst,  
 Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first  
 I know not yet, was it a dream or no.  
 But both, though not distincter, were immersed  
 In hues which, when through memory's waste they flow  
 Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now

Methought that gate was lifted, and the seven,  
 Who brought me thither, four stiff corpses bare,  
 And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven  
 Hung them on high by the entangled hair :  
 Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair ;  
 As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,

And eagerly, out in the giddy air,  
Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung  
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,  
The dwelling of the many-coloured worm  
Hung there, the white and hollow cheek I drew  
To my dry lips—what radiance did inform  
Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?  
Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost  
Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm  
Within my teeth!—a whirlwind keen as frost  
Then in its sinking gulphs my sickening spirit tost.

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane  
Arose, and bore me in its dark career  
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane  
On the verge of formless space—it languished there,  
And, dying, left a silence lone and drear,  
More horrible than famine:—in the deep  
The shape of an old man did then appear,  
Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep  
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw  
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,  
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw  
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon  
Of senseless death would be accorded soon;—  
When from that stony gloom a voice arose,  
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune  
The midnight pines; the grate did then unclose,  
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:  
As they were loosened by that Hermit old,  
Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,  
To answer those kind looks.—He did unfold  
His giant arms around me, to uphold  
My wretched frame; my scorched limbs he wound  
In linen moist and balmy, and as cold  
As dew to drooping leaves:—the chain, with sound [bound  
Like earthquake, through the chasm of that steep stair did

As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,  
Were billows leaping on the harbour bar,  
And the shrill seawind, whose breathe idly stirred  
My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star  
Shining beside a sail, and distant far  
That mountain and its column, the known mark

Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,  
So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,  
In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

For now, indeed, over the salt sea billow  
I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape  
Of him who ruled the helm, although the pillow  
For my light head was hollowed in his lap,  
And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,  
Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent  
O'er me his aged face; as if to snap  
Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,  
And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent

A soft and healing potion to my lips  
At intervals he raised—now looked on high,  
To mark if yet the starry giant dips  
His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,  
Though he said little, did he speak to me.  
"It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,  
Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!"  
I joyed as those a human tone to hear,  
Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft  
Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams  
Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft  
The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams  
Of morn descended on the ocean streams,  
And still that aged man, so grand and mild,  
Tended me, even as some sick mother seems  
To hang in hope over a dying child,  
Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

And then the night-wind, steaming from the shore,  
Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,  
And the swift boat the little waves which bore,  
Were cut by its keen keel, though slantingly;  
Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see  
The myrtle blossoms starring the dim grove,  
As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee  
On sidelong wing into a silent cove,  
Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

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CANTO IV.

The old man took the oars, and soon the bark  
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;  
It was a crumbling heap whose portal dark

With blooming ivy trails was overgrown ;  
 Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,  
 And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,  
 Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown  
 Within the walls of that grey tower, which stood  
 A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

When the old man his boat had anchored,  
 He wound me in his arms with tender care,  
 And very few but kindly words he said,  
 And bore me through the tower adown a stair,  
 Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear  
 For many a year had fallen.—We came at last  
 To a small chamber, which with mosses rare  
 Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed  
 Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

The moon was darting through the lattices  
 Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—  
 So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,  
 The old man opened them ; the moonlight lay  
 Upon a lake whose waters wove their play  
 Even to the threshold of that lonely home :  
 Within was seen, in the dim wavering ray,  
 The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome  
 Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—  
 And I was on the margin of a lake,  
 A lonely lake, amid the forests vast  
 And snowy mountains ;—did my spirit wake  
 From sleep, as many-coloured as the snake  
 That girls eternity ? in life and truth,  
 Might not my heart its cravings ever slake ?  
 Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,  
 And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth ?

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness,  
 Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow  
 With supernatural shades of clinging sadness ;  
 That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,  
 By my sick couch was busy to and fro,  
 Like a strong spirit ministrant of good :  
 When I was healed, he led me forth to show  
 The wonders of his sylvan solitude,  
 And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill  
 From all my madness told : like mine own heart,  
 Of Cythna would he question me, until

That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,  
 From his familiar lips—it was not art,  
 Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—  
 When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart  
 A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke  
 When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,  
 My thoughts their due array did re-assume  
 Through the enchantments of that Hermit old;  
 Then I bethought me of the glorious doom  
 Of those who sternly struggle to relume  
 The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,  
 And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom  
 Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought—  
 That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

That hoary man had spent his livelong age  
 In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp  
 Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,  
 When they are gone into the senseless damp  
 Of graves!—his spirit thus became a lamp  
 Of splendour, like to those on which it fed.  
 Through peopled haunts, the city, and the camp,  
 Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,  
 And all the ways of men among mankind he read.

But custom maketh blind and obdurate  
 The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe  
 In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate  
 Which made them abject would preserve them so;  
 And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know,  
 He sought this cell: but, when fame went abroad  
 That one in Argolis did undergo  
 Torture for liberty, and that the crowd  
 High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood,

And that the multitude was gathering wide,  
 His spirit leaped within his aged frame;  
 In lonely peace he could no more abide,  
 But to the land on which the victor's flame  
 Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:  
 Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue  
 Was as a sword of truth—young Laon's name  
 Rallied their secret hopes, through tyrants sung  
 Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

He came to the lone column on the rock,  
 And with his sweet and mighty eloquence  
 The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,

And made them melt in tears of penitence.  
 They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.  
 "Since this," the old man said, "seven years are spent,  
 While slowly truth on thy benighted sense  
 Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent,  
 Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

"Yes, from the records of my youthful state,  
 And from the lore of bards and sages old,  
 From whatso'er my wakened thoughts create  
 Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,  
 Have I collected language to unfold  
 Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore  
 Doctrines of human power my words have told;  
 They have been heard, and men aspire to more  
 Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

"In secret chambers parents read, and weep,  
 My writings to their babes, no longer blind;  
 And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,  
 And vows of faith each to the other bind;  
 And marriageable maidens, who have pined  
 With love, till life seemed melting through their look,  
 A warmer zeal, a nobler hope, now find;  
 And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,  
 Like autumn, myriad leaves in one swollen mountain brook.

"The tyrants of the Golden City tremble  
 At voices which are heard about the streets;  
 The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble  
 The lies of their own heart; but when one meets  
 Another at the shrine, he inly weets,  
 Though he says nothing, that the truth is known;  
 Murderers are pale upon the judgment-seats,  
 And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,  
 And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

"Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds  
 Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law  
 Of mild equality and peace succeeds  
 To faiths which long have held the world in awe,  
 Bloody, and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw  
 All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway  
 Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw  
 This hope, compels all spirits to obey,  
 Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

"For I have been thy passive instrument"—  
 (As thus the old man spake, his countenance  
 Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—"thou hast lent



To me, to all, the power to advance  
Towards this unforeseen deliverance  
From our ancestral chains—ay, thou didst rear  
That lamp of hope on high, which time, nor chance,  
Nor change may not extinguish, and my share  
Of good was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear.

“ But I, alas! am both unknown and old,  
And, though the woof of wisdom I know well  
To die in hues of language, I am cold  
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell  
My manners note that I did long repel;  
But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng  
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel  
And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue  
Were as a lance to quell the mailed crest of wrong.

“ Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length  
Would'st rise: perchance the very slaves would spare  
Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength  
Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,  
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear  
The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make  
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear;  
And with these quiet words—‘ for thine own sake  
I prithee spare me, ’—did with ruth so take

“ All hearts, that even the torturer, who had bound  
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,  
Loosened her weeping then; nor could be found  
One human hand to harm her—unassailed  
Therefore she walks through the great City, veiled  
In virtue's adamant e eloquence,  
'Gainst scorn, and death, and pain, thus trebly mailed,  
And, blending in the smiles of that defence  
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

“ The wild-eyed women throng around her path:  
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust  
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,  
Or the caresses of his sated lust,  
They congregate:—in her they put their trust;  
The tyrants send their armed slaves to quell  
Her power:—they, even like a thunder gust  
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell  
Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

“ Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach  
To woman, outraged and polluted long;  
Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach

For those fair hands now free, while armed wrong  
Trembles before her look, though it be strong ;  
Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,  
And matrons with their babes, a stately throng !  
Lovers renew the vows which they did plight  
In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite.

“ And homeless orphans find a home near her,  
And those poor victims of the proud, no less,  
Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir,  
Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness :—  
In squalid huts, and in its palaces  
Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne  
Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress  
All evil, and her foes relenting turn,  
And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

“ So in the populous City, a young maiden  
Has baffled havoc of the prey which he  
Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen  
Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,  
False arbiter between the bound and free ;  
And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns,  
The multitudes collect tumultuously,  
And throng in arms ; but tyranny disowns  
Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones.

“ Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed  
The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,  
The hood-winked Angel of the blind and dead,  
Custom, with iron mace points to the graves  
Where her own standard desolately waves  
Over the dust of Prophets and of kings.  
Many yet stand in her array—' she paves  
Her path with human hearts,' and o'er it flings  
The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

“ There is a plain beneath the City's wall,  
Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast ;  
Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call  
Ten thousand standards wide ; they load the blast  
Which bears one sound of many voices past,  
And startles on his throne their sceptered foe :  
He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,  
And that his power hath past away, doth know—  
Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow ?

“ The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain :  
Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood ;  
They stand a speck amid the peopled plain ;

Carnage and ruin have been made their food  
 From infancy—ill has become their good,  
 And for its hateful sake their will has wove  
 The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude  
 Surrounding them, with words of human love,  
 Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

“ Over the land is felt a sudden pause,  
 As night and day those ruthless bands around  
 The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes  
 The thoughts of men with hope—as when the sound  
 Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds confound,  
 Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear  
 Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,  
 The conqueror's pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er  
 Clasp the relentless knees of Dread, the murderer!

“ If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice  
 Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice  
 A wretched fall!—uplift thy charmed voice,  
 Pour on those evil men the love that lies  
 Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—  
 Arise, my friend, farewell!”—As thus he spake,  
 From the green earth lightly I did arise  
 As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,  
 And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake.

I saw my countenance reflected there;—  
 And then my youth fell on me like a wind  
 Descending on still waters—my thin hair  
 Was prematurely grey, my face was lined  
 With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,  
 Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek  
 And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find  
 Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak  
 A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak;

And, though their lustre now was spent and faded,  
 Yet in my hollow looks and withered mien  
 The likeness of a shape for which was braided  
 The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—  
 One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,  
 And left it vacant—'twas her lover's face—  
 It might resemble her—it once had been  
 The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace  
 Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.  
 Glory, and joy, and peace had come and gone.  
 Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled

Which steeped its sk'rts in gold? or dark, and lone,  
 Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,  
 On outspread wings of its own wind upborne  
 Pour rain upon the earth? the stars are shown,  
 When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn  
 Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man  
 I left, with interchange of looks and tears,  
 And lingering speech, and to the camp began  
 My way. O'er many a mountain chain which rears  
 Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears  
 My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,  
 And gaily now me seems serene earth wears  
 The bloomy spring's star-bright investiture,  
 A vision which ought sad from sadness might allure.

My powers revived within me, and I went  
 As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,  
 Through many a vale of that broad continent.  
 At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass  
 Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was  
 Not like a child of death, among them ever;  
 When I arose from rest, a woeful mass  
 That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,  
 As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

Aye, as I went, that maiden, who had reared  
 The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds  
 The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,  
 Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds  
 With whatsoe'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!  
 Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade  
 Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?  
 Why was this hope not torture? yet it made  
 A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

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CANTO V.

Over the utmost hill at length I sped,  
 A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low  
 Over the Asian mountains, and outspread  
 The plain, the City, and the Camp, below,  
 Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow,  
 The City's moon-lit spires and myriad lamps,  
 Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,  
 And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps. [stamps.  
 Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,  
And those who sate tending the beacon's light,  
And the few sounds from that vast multitude  
Made silence more profound—Oh, what a night  
Of human thought was cradled in that night!  
How many hearts, impenetrably veiled,  
Beat underneath its shade! what secret fight,  
Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,  
Waged through that silent throng—a war that never failed!

And now the Power of Good held victory,  
So, through the labyrinth of many a tent,  
Among the silent millions who did lie  
In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;  
The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent  
From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed  
An armed youth—over his spear he bent  
His downward face.—“A friend!” I cried aloud,  
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

I sate beside him while the morning beam  
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him  
Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!  
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:  
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim,  
As if it drowned in remembrance were  
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:  
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,  
He looked on me, and cried in wonder—“Thou art here!”

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth  
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;  
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,  
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,  
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,  
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded.  
The truth now came upon me; on the ground  
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,  
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes  
We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread,  
As from the earth did suddenly arise;  
From every tent, roused by that clamour dread,  
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped  
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far,  
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead  
Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war,  
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child  
 Who brings them food, when winter tales and fair  
 Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild  
 They rage among the camp;—they overbear  
 The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair  
 Descends like night—when “Laon!” one did cry:  
 Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare  
 The slaves, and, widening through the vaulted sky,  
 Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,  
 Like insect tribes before the northern gale:  
 But, swifter still, our hosts encompassed  
 Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,  
 Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,  
 Hemmed them around!—and then revenge and fear  
 Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:  
 One pointed on his foe the mortal spear—  
 I rushed before its point, and cried, “Forbear, forbear!”

The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted  
 In swift expostulation, and the blood  
 Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—“Oh! thou gifted  
 With eloquence which shall not be withstood,  
 Flow thus!”—I cried in joy, “thou vital flood,  
 Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause  
 For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—  
 Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—  
 ’Tis well! ye feel the truth of love’s benignant laws.

“Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.  
 Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!  
 Alas, what have ye done? The slightest pain  
 Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep;  
 But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep  
 Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in weep;  
 And those whom love did set his watch to keep  
 Around your tents truth’s freedom to bestow,  
 Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now

“Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,  
 And pain still keener pain for ever breed?  
 We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill  
 For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed  
 On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed  
 With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven!  
 And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed  
 And all that lives, or is to be, hath given,  
 Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven.

“Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past  
 Be as a grave which gives not up its dead  
 To evil thoughts.”—A film then overcast  
 My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled  
 Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.  
 When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,  
 And earnest countenances on me shed  
 The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close  
 My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

And one, whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside  
 With quivering lips and humid eyes;—and all  
 Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide  
 Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall  
 In a strange land, round one whom they might call  
 Their friend, their chief, their father, for essay  
 Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall  
 Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array  
 Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation  
 Towards the city, then the multitude,  
 And I among them, went in joy—a nation  
 Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood  
 Linked by a jealous interchange of good;  
 A glorious pageant, more magnificent  
 Than kingly slaves, arrayed in gold and blood,  
 When they return from carnage, and are sent  
 In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.

Afar, the city walls were thronged on high,  
 And myriads on each giddy turret clung,  
 And to each spire, far lessening in the sky,  
 Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;  
 As we approached, a shout of joyance sprung  
 At once from all the crowd, as if the vast  
 And peopled Earth its boundless skies among  
 The sudden clamour of delight had cast,  
 When from before its face some general wreck had past.

Our armies through the City's hundred gates  
 Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair  
 Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,  
 Throng from the mountains when the storms are there;  
 And, as we passed through the calm sunny air,  
 A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed,  
 The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,  
 And fairest hands bound them on many a head,  
 Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:  
 Those bloody bands so lately reconciled,  
 Were, ever as they went, by the contrition  
 Of anger turned to love from ill beguiled,  
 And every one on them more gently smiled,  
 Because they had done evil:—the sweet awe  
 Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,  
 And did with soft attraction ever draw  
 Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

And they, and all, in one loud symphony  
 My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,  
 "The friend and the preserver of the free!  
 The parent of this joy! and fair eyes, gifted  
 With feelings caught from one who had uplifted  
 The light of a great spirit, round me shone;  
 And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted  
 Like restless clouds before the stedfast sun.—  
 Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

Laone was the name her love had chosen,  
 For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:  
 Where was Laone now?—The words were frozen  
 Within my lips with fear; but to subdue  
 Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,  
 And, when at length one brought reply that she  
 To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew  
 To judge what need for that great throng might be,  
 For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,  
 Even though that multitude was passing great,  
 Since each one for the other did prepare  
 All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate  
 Of the Imperial House, now desolate,  
 I pass'd, and there was found aghast, alone,  
 The Fallen Tyrant!—Silently he sate  
 Upon the footstool of his golden throne,  
 Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

Alone, but for one child, who led before him  
 A graceful dance: the only living thing  
 Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him  
 Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring  
 In his abandonment!—She knew the King  
 Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove  
 Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring  
 'Mid her sad task of unregarded love,  
 That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.



She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet  
 When human steps were heard :—he moved nor spoke,  
 Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet  
 The gaze of strangers.—Our loud entrance woke  
 The echoes of the hall, which circling broke  
 The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb  
 Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke  
 Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom  
 Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

The little child stood up when we came nigh ;  
 Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,  
 But on her forehead and within her eye  
 Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon  
 Sick with excess of sweetness ;—on the throne  
 She leaned. The King, with gathered brow, and lips  
 Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown  
 With hue like that when some great painter dips  
 His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided  
 Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast  
 From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded.  
 A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast  
 One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast.  
 O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,  
 A shade of vanished days,—as the tears past  
 Which wrapt it, even as with a father's kiss  
 I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

The sceptred wretch then from that solitude  
 I drew, and of his change compassionate,  
 With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.  
 But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,  
 With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate  
 Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare ;  
 Pity, not scorn, I felt, though desolate  
 The desolator now, and unaware  
 The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

I led him forth from that which now might seem  
 A gorgeous grave : through portals sculptured deep  
 With imagery beautiful as dream  
 We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep  
 Over its unregarded gold to keep  
 Their silent watch.—The child trod faintly,  
 And, as she went, the tears which she did weep,  
 Glanced in the star-light ; wildered seemed she—  
 And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

At last the tyrant cried, "She hungers, slave!  
 Stab her, or give her bread!"—It was a tone  
 Such as sick fancies in a new made grave  
 Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known,  
 He with this child had thus been left alone,  
 And neither had gone forth for food,—but he  
 In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,  
 And she, a nursling of captivity, [might be.  
 Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn  
 Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more—  
 That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone  
 Which once made all things subject to its power—  
 Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour  
 The past had come again; and the swift fall  
 Of one so great and terrible of yore  
 To desolateness, in the hearts of all  
 Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours  
 Once in a thousand years, now gathered round  
 The fallen tyrant;—like the rush of showers  
 Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground,  
 Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound  
 From the wide multitude: that lonely man  
 Then knew the burthen of his change, and found,  
 Concealing in the dust his visage wan,  
 Refuge from the keen looks which thro' his bosom ran.

And he was faint withal. I sate beside him  
 Upon the earth, and took that child so fair  
 From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him  
 Or her:—when food was brought to them, her share  
 To his averted lips the child did bear:  
 But, when she saw he had enough, she ate  
 And wept the while;—the lonely man's despair  
 Hunger then overcame, and of his state  
 Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

Slowly the silence of the multitudes  
 Past, as when far is heard in some lone dell  
 The gathering of a wind among the woods—  
 And he is fallen! they cry; he who did dwell  
 Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell,  
 Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer  
 Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well  
 Of blood and tears with ruin! He is here!  
 Sunk in a gulph of scorn from which none may him rear!

Then was heard—He who judged let him be brought  
 To judgment! Blood for blood cries from the soil  
 On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!  
 Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?  
 Shall they, who by the stress of grinding toil  
 Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,  
 Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil,  
 Or creep within his veins at will?—Arise!  
 And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.

“What do ye seek? what fear ye?” then I cried,  
 Suddenly starting forth, “that ye should shed  
 The blood of Othman—if your hearts are tried  
 In the true love of freedom, cease to dread  
 This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven shed  
 In purest light above us all, through earth,  
 Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles spread  
 For all, let him go free; until the worth  
 Of human nature win from these a second birth.

“What call ye *justice*? Is there one who ne'er  
 In secret thought has wished another's ill?—  
 Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear,  
 And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,  
 If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill  
 With the false anger of the hypocrite?  
 Alas, such were not pure—the chastened will  
 Of virtue sees that justice is the light  
 Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despise.”

The murmur of the people, slowly dying,  
 Paused as I spake; then those who near me were  
 Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying  
 Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair  
 Clasped on her lap in silence;—through the air  
 Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet  
 In pity's madness, and, to the despair  
 Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet  
 His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

Then to a home, for his repose assigned,  
 Accompanied by the still throng he went  
 In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,  
 Some likeness of his ancient state was lent;  
 And, if his heart could have been innocent  
 As those who pardoned him, he might have ended  
 His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,  
 Men said, into a smile which guile portended.  
 A sight with which that child-like hope with fear was blended.

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day,  
 Whereon the many nations at whose call  
 The chains of earth like mist melted away,  
 Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,  
 A rite to attest the equality of all  
 Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake  
 All went. The sleepless silence did recal  
 Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make  
 The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains  
 I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,  
 As to the plain between the misty mountains  
 And the great City, with a countenance pale  
 I went:—It was a sight which might avail  
 To make men weep exulting tears, for whom  
 Now first from human power the reverend veil  
 Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb  
 Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,  
 The signs of that innumerable host,  
 To hear one sound of many made, the warning  
 Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tost,  
 While the eternal hills, and the sea lost  
 In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky  
 The city's myriad spires of gold, almost  
 With human joy made mute society  
 Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be.

To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,  
 The Altar of the Federation rear  
 Its pile i'the midst; a work which the devotion  
 Of millions in one night created there,  
 Sudden as when the moonrise makes appear  
 Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid  
 Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear  
 The light of genius; its still shadow hid  
 Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

To hear the restless multitudes for ever  
 Around the base of that great Altar flow,  
 As on some mountain islet burst and shiver  
 Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow  
 As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,  
 To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim  
 Like beams through floating clouds on waves below,  
 Falling in pauses from that Altar dim  
 As silver-sounding tongues breathed an ærial hymn.

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn  
Lethan joy! so that all those assembled  
Cast off their memories of the past outworn :  
Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,  
And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled,  
So with a beating heart I went, as one,  
Who having much, covets yet more, resembled ;  
A lost and dear possession, which not won,  
He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

To the great pyramid I came : its stair  
With female quires was thronged: the loveliest  
Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare.  
As I approached, the morning's golden mist,  
Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kist  
With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone  
Like Athos seen from Samothracia, drest  
In earliest light by vintagers, and one  
Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne.

A form most like the imagined habitant  
Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,  
By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to enchant  
The faiths of men; all mortal eyes were drawn,  
As famished mariners through strange seas gone  
Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light  
Of those divinest lineaments—alone  
With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight  
I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

And, neither did I hear the acclamations,  
Which, from brief silence bursting, filled the air  
With her strange name and mine, from all the nations  
Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there  
From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair  
Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind  
And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,  
Leaning upon my friend, till, like a wind  
To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

Like music of some minstrel heavenly gifted,  
To one whom fiends enthral, this voice to me ;  
Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted  
I was so calm and joyous.—I could see  
The platform where we stood, the statues three  
Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,  
The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea ;  
As, when eclipse hath past, things sudden shine  
To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:  
 But soon her voice that calmness which it shed  
 Gathered, and—"thou art whom I sought to see  
 And thou art our first votary here," she said,  
 "I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—  
 And of all those on the-wide earth who breathe,  
 Thou dost resemble him alone,—I spread  
 This veil between us two, that thou beneath  
 Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

"For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?  
 Yes, but those joys which silence well requite  
 Forbid reply:—why men have chosen me  
 To be the Priestess of this holiest rite  
 I scarcely know, but that the floods of light  
 Which flow over the world, have borne me hither  
 To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite  
 Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither  
 From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beats together.

"If our own will as others' law we bind,  
 If the foul worship trampled here we fear;  
 If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!"—  
 She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there  
 Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;  
 One was a Giant, like a child asleep  
 On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were  
 In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep  
 Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk  
 Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast  
 A human babe and a young basilisk;  
 Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest  
 In Autumn eves.—The third Image was drest  
 In white wings, swift as clouds in winter skies.  
 Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repress  
 Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,  
 While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

Beside that Image then I sate, while she  
 Stood, 'mid the throngs which ever ebb'd and flow'd  
 Like light amid the shadows of the sea  
 Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd  
 That touch, which none who feels forgets, bestowed;  
 And, whilst the sun returned the steadfast gaze  
 Of the great Image as o'er Heaven it glode,  
 That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze  
 Burn'd o'er the isles; all stood in joy and deep amaze;

When in the silence of all spirits there  
 Laone's voice was felt, and through the air  
 Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair.

1. "Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong  
 As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,  
 That float among the blinding beams of morning;  
 And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,  
 Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—  
 Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning  
 Of thy voice sublime and holy;  
 Its free spirits, here assembled,  
 See thee, feel thee, know thee now:—  
 To thy voice their hearts have trembled,  
 Like ten thousand clouds which flow  
 With one wide wind as it flies!—  
 Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise  
 To hail thee, and the elements they chain  
 And their own will to swell the glory of thy train.

2. "O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!  
 Mother and soul of all to which is given  
 The light of life, the loveliness of being,  
 Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,  
 Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert,  
 In dreams of Poets old, grown pale by seeing  
 The shade of thee:—now, millions start  
 To feel thy lightnings through them burning:  
 Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,  
 Or Sympathy, the sad tears turning  
 To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,  
 Descends amidst us;—Scorn and Hate,  
 Revenge and Selfishness, are desolate—  
 A hundred nations swear that there shall be  
 Pity, and Peace, and Love, among the good and free!

3. Eldest of things, divine Equality!  
 Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,  
 The angels of thy sway, who pour around thee  
 Treasures from all the cells of human thought,  
 And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,  
 And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:  
 The powerful and the wise had sought  
 Thy coming; thou in light descending  
 O'er the wide land which is thine own,  
 Like the spring whose breath is blending  
 All blasts of fragrance into one,  
 Comest upon the paths of men!—  
 Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,

And all her children here in glory meet  
To feed thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4. "My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains  
The grey sea shore, the forests, and the fountains,  
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,  
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow  
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow,  
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.

A stormy night's serenest morrow,  
Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,  
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die  
Like infants, without hopes or fears,  
And whose beams are joys that lie  
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;  
The dawn of mind, which, upwards on a pinion  
Borne, swift as sun-rise, far illumines space,  
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

5. "My brethren, we are free! the fruits are glowing  
Beneath the stars, and the night-winds are flowing  
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—  
Never again may blood of bird or beast  
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,  
To the pure skies in accusation steaming;  
Avenging poisons shall have ceased

To feed disease and fear and madness,  
The dwellers of the earth and air  
Shall throng around our steps in gladness,  
Seeking their food or refuge there.  
Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,  
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,  
And Science, and her sister Poesy,  
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6. "Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!  
Bear witness, Night, and ye, mute Constellations,  
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!  
Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!  
Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,  
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,  
The green lands cradled in the roar

Of western waves, and wildernesses  
Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans  
Where morning dyes her golden tresses,  
Shall soon partake our high emotions:  
Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear,  
The Fiend God, when our charmed name he hear,  
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,  
While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!"



Ere she had ceased, the mists of night entwining  
 Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;  
 She, like a spirit through the darkness shining,  
 In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,  
 As if to lingering winds they did belong,  
 Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech  
 With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,  
 Which whoso heard, was mute, for it could teach  
 To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.

Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps  
 The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,  
 And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps  
 In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake  
 Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make  
 Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,  
 The multitude so moveless did partake  
 Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew  
 As o'er that speechless calm Delight and wonder grew.

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then  
 In groups around the fires, which from the sea  
 Even to the gorge of the first mountain glen  
 Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free  
 Was spread beneath many a dark cypress tree,  
 Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red light,  
 Reclining as they ate, of Liberty,  
 And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,  
 Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,  
 Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles  
 In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other  
 As when some parent fondly reconciles  
 Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles  
 With her own sustenance; they relenting weep:  
 Such was this festival, which from their isles,  
 And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,  
 All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep:

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore  
 Or poison none this festal did pollute,  
 But piled on high, an overflowing store  
 Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit  
 Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root  
 Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet  
 Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute  
 Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set  
 In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

Laonc had descended from the shrine,  
 And every deepest look and holiest mind  
 Fed on her form, though now those tones divine  
 Were silent as she past; she did unwind  
 Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind  
 She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain  
 From seeking her that night, so I reclined  
 Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain  
 A festal watch-fire burned beside the dusky main.

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,  
 And wit, and harmony of choral strains,  
 While fair Orion o'er the waves did walk  
 That flow among the isles, held us in chains  
 Of sweet captivity, which none disdains  
 Who feels: but, when his zone grew dim in mist  
 Which clothes the ocean's bosom, o'er the plains  
 The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,  
 Which that delightful day with its own shadow blest.

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CANTO VI.

BESIDE the dimness of the glimmering sea,  
 Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,  
 With that dear friend I lingered, who to me  
 So late had been restored, beneath the gleams  
 Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams  
 Of future love and peace sweet converse lapt  
 Our willing fancies, till the pallid beams  
 Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapt  
 The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapt.

And till we came even to the City's wall  
 And the great gate, then, none knew whence or why,  
 Disquiet on the multitudes did fall:  
 And first, one pale and breathless passed us by,  
 And stared and spoke not; then with piercing cry  
 A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks  
 Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously  
 Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,  
 Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger  
 Resounded: and—"They come! to arms! to arms!  
 The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger  
 Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!"  
 In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms  
 Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept

Like waves before the tempest—these alarms  
Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt  
On the gate's turret, and in rage, and grief, and scorn, I wept!

For to the North I saw the town on fire,  
And its red light made morning pallid now,  
Which burst over wide Asia.—Louder, higher,  
The yells of victory and the screams of woe  
I heard approach, and saw the throng below  
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls  
Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow  
Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals  
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.

And now the horsemen come—and all was done  
Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld  
Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.  
I rushed among the rout to have repelled  
That miserable flight—one moment quelled  
By voice, and looks, and eloquent despair,  
As if reproach from their own hearts withheld  
Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there  
New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

I strove, as drifted on some cataract  
By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive  
Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact  
Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive  
With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive  
Their ranks with bloodier chasm;—into the plain  
Disgorged at length the dead and the alive,  
In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain  
Of blood from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain

For now the despot's blood-hounds with their prey  
Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep  
Their gluttony of death; the loose array  
Of horsemen o'er the wide fields' murdering sweep,  
And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap  
A harvest sown with other hopes; the while,  
Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep  
A killing rain of fire:—when the waves smile  
As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano isle.

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread  
For the carrion fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—  
I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead,  
Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light,  
I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,  
But with loud cries of scorn which whose heard

That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might  
Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred,  
And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

A band of brothers, gathering round me, made,  
Although unarmed, a stedfast front, and still  
Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade  
Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill  
With doubt even in success; deliberate will  
Inspired our growing troop; not overthrown,  
It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,  
And ever still our comrades were hewn down,  
And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.

Immoveably we stood—in joy I found,  
Beside me then, firm as a giant pine  
Among the mountain vapours driven around,  
The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine  
With a mild look of courage answered mine,  
And my young friend was near, and ardently  
His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line  
Of war extended, to our rallying cry,  
As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven  
The horsemen hewed our unarmed myriads down  
Safely, though, when by thirst of carnage driven  
Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown  
By hundreds leaping on them: flesh and bone  
Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft  
Of the artillery from the sea was thrown  
More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laughed  
In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,  
So vast that phalanx of unconquered men,  
And there the living in their blood did welter  
Of the dead and dying, which, in that green glen,  
Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen  
Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged  
While the sun clomb Heaven's eastern steep—but when  
It 'gan to sink, a fiercer combat raged,  
For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

Within a cave upon the hill were found  
A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument  
Of those who war but on their native ground  
For natural rights; a shout of joyance sent  
Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,

As those few arms the bravest and the best  
 Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present  
 A line which covered and sustained the rest,  
 A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest.

That onset turned the foes to flight almost,  
 But soon they saw their present strength, and knew  
 That coming night would to our resolute host  
 Bring victory; so, dismounting close, they drew  
 Their glittering files, and then the combat grew  
 Unequal, but most horrible;—and ever  
 Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,  
 Or the red sword, failed like a mountain river  
 Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever.

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind  
 Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood  
 To mutual ruin armed by one behind,  
 Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,  
 Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,  
 Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair,  
 With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed  
 Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,  
 And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst  
 I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell,  
 O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st  
 For love. The ground in many a little dell  
 Was broken, up and down whose steeps befel  
 Alternate victory and defeat, and there  
 The combatants with rage most horrible  
 Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,  
 And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air.

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging:  
 Want, and Moon-madness, and the Pest's swift bane  
 When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—  
 Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;  
 And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain  
 Thou loathed slave. I saw all shapes of death,  
 And ministered to many, o'er the plain,  
 While carnage in the sun-beam's warmth did seethe,  
 Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm,  
 Around me fought. At the decline of day,  
 Winding above the mountain's snowy term,  
 New banners shone: they quivered in the ray  
 Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array  
 Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands

I soon survived alone—and now I lay  
Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands  
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands ;

When on my foes a sudden terror came,  
And they fled, scattering.—Lo ! with reinless speed  
A black Tartarian horse of giant frame  
Comes trampling o'er the dead ; the living bleed  
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,  
On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,  
Sate one waving a sword :—the hosts recede  
And fly, as through their ranks, with awful might  
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright ;

And its path made a solitude.—I rose  
And marked its coming ; it relaxed its course  
As it approached me, and the wind, that flows  
Through night, bare accents to mine ear whose force  
Might create smiles in death.—The Tartar horse  
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,  
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source  
Of waters in the desert, as she said,  
“ Mount with me, Laon, now ! ”—I rapidly obeyed.

Then “ Away ! away ! ” she cried, and stretched her sword  
As 'twere a scourge over the courser's head,  
And lightly shook the reins.—We spake no word,  
But like the vapour of the tempest fled  
Over the plain ; her dark hair was dispread,  
Like the pine's looks upon the lingering blast ;  
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread  
Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,  
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow past ;

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,  
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray,  
And turbulence, as if a whirlwind's gust  
Surrounded us :—and still away ! away !  
Through the desert night we sped, while she always  
Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest  
Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray  
Of the obscure stars gleamed ;—its rugged breast  
The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean :—  
From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted  
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion  
Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted  
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted  
To music by the wand of Solitude,

That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted  
 Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood  
 Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood.

One moment these were heard and seen—another  
 Past ; and the two who stood beneath that night,  
 Each only heard, or saw, or felt, the other.  
 As from the lofty steed she did alight,  
 Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light  
 Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale  
 With influence strange of mournfullest delight,  
 My own sweet Cythna looked,) with joy did quail,  
 And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

And for a space in my embrace she rested,  
 Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,  
 While my faint arms her languid frame invested :  
 At length she looked on me, and, half unclosing  
 Her tremulous lips, said, " Friend, thy bands were losing  
 The battle, as I stood before the King  
 In bonds.—I burst them then, and, swiftly choosing  
 The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring  
 Upon his horse, and swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

" Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer;  
 And we are here."—Then, turning to the steed,  
 She pressed the white moon on his front with pure  
 And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed  
 From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed ;—  
 But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,  
 And, kissing her fair eyes, said, " Thou hast need  
 Of rest," and I heaped up the courser's bed  
 In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread.

Within that ruin, (where a shattered portal  
 Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now  
 By man, to be the home of things immortal,  
 Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,  
 And must inherit all he builds below,  
 When he is gone), o'er whose roof  
 Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,  
 Claspings its grey rents with a verdurous woof  
 A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

Th' autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made  
 A natural couch of leaves in that recess,  
 Which seasons none disturbed, but in the shade  
 Of flowering parasites did spring love to dress  
 With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness  
 Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er

The wandering wind her nurslings might caress ;  
Whose intertwining fingers ever there,  
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream  
May pilot us through caverns strange and fair  
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream  
Of life, our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,  
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air :  
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion  
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there  
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean  
Of universal life, attaining its commotion.

To the pure, all things are pure ! Oblivion wrapt  
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow  
Of public hope was from our being snapt,  
Though linked years had bound it there ; for now  
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below  
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,  
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,  
Come on us, as we sate in silence there,  
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air.

In silence which doth follow talk that causes  
The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,  
When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses  
Of inexpressive speech :—the youthful years  
Which we together past, their hopes and fears,  
The blood itself which ran within our frames,  
That likeness of the features which endears  
The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,  
And all the winged hours which speechless memory claims,

Had found a voice :—and ere that voice did pass,  
The night grew damp and dim, and through a rent  
Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass,  
A wandering Meteor, by some wild wind sent,  
Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent  
A faint and pallid lustre ; while the song  
Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent,  
Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among :  
A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

The Meteor shewed the leaves on which we sate,  
And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties  
Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight  
My neck near her's, her dark and deepening eyes,  
Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies  
O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,



Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,  
 Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses,  
 With their own fragrance pale, which spring but half uncloses.

The meteor to its far morass returned :  
 The beating of our veins one interval  
 Made still ; and then I felt the blood that burned  
 Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall  
 Around my heart like fire ; and over all  
 A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep  
 And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall  
 Two disunited spirits when they leap  
 In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.

Was it one moment that confounded thus  
 All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one  
 Unutterable power, which shielded us  
 Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone  
 Into a wide and wild oblivion  
 Of tumult and of tenderness ? or now  
 Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,  
 The seasons and mankind, their changes know,  
 Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below ?

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps  
 The failing heart in languishment, or limb  
 Twined within limb ? or the quick dying gasps  
 Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim  
 Through tears of a wide mist, boundless and dim,  
 In one caress ? What is the strong control  
 Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,  
 Where far over the world those vapours roll,  
 Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul ?

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,  
 But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,  
 Whose divine darkness fled not from that green  
 And lone recess, where lapt in peace did lie  
 Our linked frames, till, from the changing sky,  
 That night and still another day had fled ;  
 And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,  
 And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread  
 Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering over head.

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,  
 Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,  
 And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn  
 O'er her pale bosom :—all within was still,  
 And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill  
 The depth of her unfathomable look :—

And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,  
The waves contending in its caverns strook,  
For they foreknew the storm, and the grey ruin shook.

There we unheeding sate, in the communion  
Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite  
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.—  
Few were the living hearts which could unite  
Like ours, or celebrate a bridal night  
With such close sympathies, for they had sprung  
From linked youth, and from the gentle might  
Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,  
Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong.

And such is Nature's law divine, that those  
Who grow together, cannot choose but love,  
If faith or custom do not interpose,  
Or common slavery mar what else might move  
All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove  
Which shades the springs of Æthiopian Nile,  
That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove  
Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,  
But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sun-beams smile;

And clings to them, when darkness may dissever  
The close caresses of all duller plants  
Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we for ever  
Were linked, for love had nursed us in the haunts  
Where knowledge from its secret source enchants  
Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,  
Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,  
As the great Nile feeds Egypt: ever flinging  
Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were  
Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,  
Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,—  
And so we sate, until our talk befel  
Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,  
And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,  
Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well  
For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,  
But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken  
The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane,  
Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,  
Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,  
Following me obediently; with pain  
Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,

When lips and heart refuse to part again  
Till they have told their fill, could scarce express  
The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness.

Cythna beheld me part as I bestrode  
That willing steed—the tempest and the night,  
Which gave my path its safety as I rode  
Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite  
The darkness and the tumult of their might,  
Borne on all winds.—Far through the streaming rain  
Floating at intervals the garments white  
Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again  
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain.

I dreaded not the tempest nor did he  
Who bore me, but his eye-balls wide and red  
Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly ;  
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread  
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread  
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously  
Mock the fierce peal with neighings ;—thus we sped  
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry  
Where death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

There was a desolate village in a wood  
Whose bloom inwoven leaves now scattering fed  
The hungry storm : it was a place of blood,  
A heap of heartless walls :—the flames were dead  
Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled  
From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky  
Flooded with lightning, was ribbed overhead  
By the black rafters, and around did lie  
Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

Beside the fountain in the market place  
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare  
With horny eyes upon each other's face,  
And on the earth and on the vacant air,  
And upon me, close to the waters where  
I stooped to slake my thirst :—I shrank to taste,  
For the salt bitterness of blood was there !  
But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste  
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

No living thing was there beside one woman,  
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she  
Was withered from a likeness of aught human  
Into a fiend, by some strange misery  
Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,  
And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed.

With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,  
 And cried, "Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed  
 The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the  
 draught!

"My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry  
 Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—  
 When I came home, one in the blood did lie  
 Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other!  
 Since then I have no longer been a mother,  
 But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither  
 I flit about, that I may slay and smother;—  
 All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,  
 But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together!

"What seekest thou here? the moonlight comes in flashes,—  
 The dew is rising dankly from the dell;  
 'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes  
 In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell  
 First what thou seek'st."—"I seek for food."—" 'Tis well,  
 Thou shalt have food; Famine, my paramour,  
 Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell  
 Is famine, but he drives not from his door  
 Those whom these lips have kissed, alone. No more, no more!"

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength  
 Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth  
 She led, and over many a corpse:—at length  
 We came to a lone hut, where, on the earth  
 Which made its floor, she, in her ghastly mirth  
 Gathering from all those homes now desolate,  
 Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth  
 Among the dead—round which she set in state  
 A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high  
 Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: "Eat!  
 Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!"  
 And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet,  
 Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,  
 Mine eyes and my heart ached, and, but that she  
 Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat  
 Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;  
 But now I took the food that woman offered me.

And, vainly having with her madness striven,  
 If I might win her to return with me,  
 Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven  
 The lightning now grew pallid—rapidly,  
 As by the shore of the tempestuous sea

The dark steed bore me, and the mountain grey  
 Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see  
 Cythna among the rocks, where she alway  
 Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,  
 Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast  
 My arms around her, lest her steps should fail  
 As to our home we went, and thus embraced,  
 Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste  
 Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind  
 Trod peacefully along the mountain waste:  
 We reached our home ere morning could unbind  
 Night's latest veil, and on our bridal couch reclined.

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,  
 And sweetest kisses past, we two did share  
 Our peaceful meal:—as an autumnal blossom  
 Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,  
 After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,  
 Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit  
 Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere  
 Of health, and hope; and sorrow languished near it,  
 And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

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 CANTO VII.

So we sate joyous as the morning ray  
 Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm,  
 Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play  
 Among the dewy weeds; the sun was warm,  
 And we sate linked in the inwoven charm  
 Of converse and caresses sweet and deep,—  
 Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm  
 Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep,  
 And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,  
 And how, awakened from that dreamy mood  
 By Liberty's uprising, the strength of gladness  
 Came to my spirit in my solitude;  
 And all that now I was, while tears pursued  
 Each other down her fair and listening cheek  
 Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood  
 From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,  
 Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,  
 Like broken memories of many a heart  
 Woven into one; to which no firm assurance,  
 So wild were they, could her own faith impart.  
 She said that not a tear did dare to start  
 From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm  
 When from all mortal hope she did depart,  
 Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,  
 And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

One was she among many there, the thralls  
 Of the cold tyrant's cruel lust: and they  
 Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;  
 But she was calm and sad, musing alway  
 On loftiest enterprise, till on a day  
 The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute  
 A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,  
 Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute  
 The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.

Even when he saw her wondrous loveliness,  
 One moment to great Nature's sacred power  
 He bent, and was no longer passionless;  
 But, when he bade her to his secret bower  
 Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore  
 Her locks in agony, and her words of flame  
 And mightier looks availed not; then he bore  
 Again his load of slavery, and became  
 A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

She told me what a loathsome agony  
 Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,  
 Foul as in dreams most fearful imagery  
 To dally with the mowing dead—that night  
 All torture, fear, or horror, made seem light  
 Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day  
 Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight  
 Where like a Spirit in fleshy chains she lay  
 Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

Her madness was a beam of light, a power  
 Which dawned through the rent soul; and words it gave  
 Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore  
 Which might not be withstood, whence none could save  
 All who approached their sphere, like some calm wave  
 Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;  
 And sympathy made each attendant slave  
 Fearless and free, and they began to breathe  
 Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

The king felt pale upon his noonday throne :  
 At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,  
 One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown  
 From human shape into an instrument  
 Of all things ill—distorted, bowed and bent.  
 The other was a wretch from infancy  
 Made dumb by poison ; who nought knew or meant  
 But to obey: from the fire-isles came he,  
 A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke  
 Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,  
 Until upon their path the morning broke ;  
 They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze,  
 The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades  
 Shakes with the sleepless surge ;—the *Æthiop* there  
 Wound his long arms around her, and with knees  
 Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her  
 Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.

“ Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain  
 Of morning light, into some shadowy wood  
 He plunged through the green silence of the main  
 Through many a cavern which the eternal flood  
 Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood ;  
 And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,  
 And among mightier shadows which pursued  
 His heels, he wound ; until the dark rocks under  
 He touched a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder.

“ A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling  
 Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven  
 As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling :  
 And in that roof of crags a space was riven  
 Through which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,  
 Shot through the lines of many waves inwoven,  
 Like sunlight through acacia woods at even,  
 Through which, his way the diver having cloven,  
 Past like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

“ And then,” she said, “ he laid me in a cave  
 Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,  
 A fountain round and vast, in which the wave  
 Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,  
 Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,  
 Winning the adverse depth ; that spacious cell  
 Like an upaithric temple wide and high,  
 Whose airy dome is inaccessible, [fell.  
 Was pierced with one round cleft through which the sun-beams

“ Below, the fountain’s brink was richly paven  
With the deep’s wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand  
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven  
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,  
Left there, when, thronging to the moon’s command,  
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate  
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand  
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state  
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

“ The fiend of madness, which had made its prey  
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile :  
There was an interval of many a day,  
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,  
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,  
And who, to be the jailer, had been taught,  
Of that strange dungeon ; as a friend whose smile  
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought,  
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought ;—

“ The misery of a madness slow and creeping,  
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,  
And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping  
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,  
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there ;  
And the sea-eagle looked a fiend who bore  
Thy mangled limbs for food !—Thus all things were  
Transformed into the agony which I wore,  
Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom’s core.

“ Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing,  
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air ;  
Another frenzy came—there seemed a being  
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,  
As if some living thing had made its lair  
Even in the fountains of my life :—a long  
And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,  
Then grew, like sweet reality among  
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

“ Methought I was about to be a mother—  
Month after month went by, and still I dreamed  
That we should soon be all to one another,  
I and my child ; and still new pulses seemed  
To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed  
There was a babe within—and when the rain  
Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed,  
Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,  
I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.



“ It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—  
 It was like thee, dear love! its eyes were thine,  
 Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth  
 It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine  
 Thine own, beloved!—’twas a dream divine ;  
 Even to remember how it fled, how swift,  
 How utterly, might make the heart repine,—  
 Though ’twas a dream.”—Then Cythna did uplift  
 Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:—

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness  
 Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears ;  
 Which, having past, as one whom sobs oppress,  
 She spoke :—“ Yes, in the wilderness of years  
 Her memory, aye, like a green home appears,  
 She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,  
 For many months I had no mortal fears :  
 Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—  
 It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.

I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon  
 When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,  
 Or when the beams of the invisible moon,  
 Or sun, from many a prism within the cave  
 Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,  
 Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,  
 From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,  
 She would mark one, and laugh, when that command  
 Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

“ Methought her looks began to talk with me ;  
 And no articulate sounds, but something sweet  
 Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,  
 That it was meaningless ; her touch would meet  
 Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat  
 In response while we slept : and on a day  
 When I was happiest in that strange retreat,  
 With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—  
 Both infants, weaving wings for time’s perpetual way.

“ Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown  
 Weary with joy, and tired with our delight,  
 We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down  
 On one fair mother’s bosom :—from that night  
 She fled ;—like those illusions clear and bright,  
 Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high  
 Pause ere it wakens tempest ;—and her flight,  
 Though ’twas the death of brainless phantasy,  
 Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

“ It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver  
 Who brought me thither came again, and bore  
 My child away. I saw the waters quiver,  
 When he so swiftly sunk, as once before :  
 Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,  
 But I was changed—the very life was gone  
 Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,  
 Day after day, and, sitting there alone,  
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

“ I was no longer mad, and yet methought  
 My breasts were swoln and changed :—in every vein  
 The blood stood still one moment, while that thought  
 Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain  
 It ebbd even to its withered springs again :  
 When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned  
 From that strange delusion, which would fain  
 Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned  
 With more than human love,—then left it unreturned.

“ So now my reason was restored to me,  
 I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast  
 Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory  
 Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast ;  
 But all that cave and all its shapes possess  
 By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one  
 Some smile, some look, some gesture, which had blest  
 Me heretofore : I, sitting there alone,  
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

“ Time past, I know not whether months or years ;  
 For day nor night, nor change of seasons, made  
 Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears :  
 And I became at last even as a shade,  
 A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,  
 ’Till it be thin as air ; until, one even,  
 A Nautilus upon the fountain played,  
 Spreading his azure sail where breath of heaven  
 Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

“ And when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,  
 Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,  
 Fled near me as for shelter ; on slow wing,  
 The Eagle, hovering o’er his prey, did float ;  
 But, when he saw that I with fear did note  
 His purpose, proffering my own food to him,  
 The eager plumes subsided on his throat—  
 He came where that bright child of sea did swim,  
 And o’er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

"This wakened me; it gave me human strength,  
 And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,  
 But I resumed my ancient powers at length;  
 My spirit felt again like one of those,  
 Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes  
 Of human kind their prey—what was this cave?  
 Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows,  
 Immutable, resistless, strong to save,  
 Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

"And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,  
 While that far dearer heart could move and be?  
 Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,  
 Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free,  
 Could I but win that friendly bird to me,  
 To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought  
 By intercourse of mutual imagery  
 Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;  
 But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

"We live in our own world, and mine was made  
 From glorious phantasies of hope departed:  
 Aye, we are darkened with their floating shade,  
 Or cast a lustre on them.—Time imparted  
 Such power to me, I became fearless-hearted;  
 My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,  
 And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted  
 Its lustre on all hidden things, behind  
 Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

"My mind became the book through which I grew  
 Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,  
 Which like a mine I rifled through, and through  
 To me the keeping of its secrets gave—  
 One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave  
 Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,  
 Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,  
 And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;  
 Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

"And on the sand, would I make signs to range  
 These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;  
 Clear elemental shapes, whose smallest change  
 A subtler language within language wrought:  
 The key of truths which once were dimly taught  
 In old Crotona, and sweet melodies  
 Of love, in that lone solitude I caught  
 From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes  
 Shone through my sleep, and did that utterance harmonise

"Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will  
 As in a winged chariot o'er the plain  
 Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill  
 My heart with joy, and there we sate again  
 On the grey margin of the glimmering main,  
 Happy as then but wiser far, for we  
 Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain  
 Fear, Faith, and Slavery; and mankind was free,  
 Equal, and pure, and wise, in wisdom's prophecy.

"For to my will my fancies were as slaves  
 To do their sweet and subtle ministries;  
 And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves  
 They would make human throngs gather and rise  
 To combat with my overflowing eyes,  
 And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew  
 Familiar with the shock and the surprise  
 And war of earthly minds from which I drew  
 The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

"And thus my prison was the populous earth,  
 Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn  
 Before the east has given its glory birth—  
 Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn  
 Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn,  
 And dwellings of mild people interspersed  
 With undivided fields of ripening corn,  
 And love made free,—a hope which we have nurst  
 Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

"All is not lost! There is some recompense  
 For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,  
 Even throned Evil's splendid impotence,  
 Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound  
 Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound  
 Of life and death past fearlessly and well,  
 Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,  
 Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,  
 And what may else be good and irresistible.

"Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare  
 In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet  
 In this dark ruin—such were mine even there:  
 As in its sleep some odorous violet,  
 While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,  
 Breathes in prophetic dreams of days uprise,  
 Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met  
 Spring's messengers descending from the skies,  
 The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

“So years had past, when sudden earthquake rent  
 The depth of ocean, and the cavern crackt  
 With sound, as if the world's wide continent  
 Had fallen in universal ruin wrackt;  
 And through the cleft streamed in one cataract  
 The stifling waters:—when I woke, the flood,  
 Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked,  
 Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode  
 Before me yawnd—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

“Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:  
 I stood upon a point of shattered stone,  
 And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously  
 With splash and shock into the deep—anon  
 All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.  
 I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray  
 Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone  
 Around, and in my hair the winds did play,  
 Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way.

“My spirit moved upon the sea-like wind  
 Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover  
 Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind  
 The strength of tempest: day was almost over,  
 When through the fading light I could discover  
 A ship approaching—its white sails were fed  
 With the north wind—its moving shade did cover  
 The twilight deep:—the mariners in dread  
 Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

“And when they saw one sitting on a crag,  
 They sent a boat to me:—the sailors rowed  
 In awe through many a new and fearful jag  
 Of overhanging rock, through which there flowed  
 The foam of streams that cannot make abode.  
 They came and questioned me, but, when they heard  
 My voice, they became silent, and they stood  
 And moved as men in whom new love had stirred  
 Deep thoughts: so to the ship we pass'd without a word.

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 CANTO VIII.

“I SATE beside the steersman then, and, gazing  
 Upon the west, cried, ‘Spread the sails! behold!  
 The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing  
 Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold  
 Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;

The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily  
 Beneath the stars; they tremble with the cold!  
 Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea;—  
 Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!

„ The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood  
 Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,  
 ‘ Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued  
 By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,  
 The night before we sailed, came to my bed  
 In dream like that!’ The Pilot then replied,  
 ‘ It cannot be—she is a human Maid—  
 Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride,  
 Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside.

“ We past the islets, borne by wind and stream,  
 And as we sailed, the Mariners came near,  
 And thronged around to listen;—in the gleam  
 Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear  
 May not attain, and my calm voice did rear;  
 ‘ Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light  
 To millions who the self-same likeness wear.  
 Even while I speak—beneath this very night,  
 Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

“ “ What dream ye? Your own hands have built a home,  
 Even for yourselves on a beloved shore;  
 For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,  
 How they will greet him when his toils are o’er,  
 And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!  
 Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—  
 Ye feel and think—has some immortal power  
 Such purposes? or in a human mood,  
 Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

“ “ What is that Power? Ye mock yourselves, and give  
 A human heart to what ye cannot know:  
 As if the cause of life could think and live!  
 ’Twere as if man’s own works should feel, and shew  
 The hopes, and fears, and thoughts, from which they flow,  
 And he be like to them. Lo! Plague is free  
 To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,  
 Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity  
 Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny.

“ “ What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood  
 Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown  
 Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood  
 The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,  
 His likeness in the world’s vast mirror shewn;

And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith,  
Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,  
And that men say, that Power has chosen Death  
On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

“Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,  
Or known from others who have known such things,  
A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between  
Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,  
Custom, domestic sway, aye, all that brings  
Man's free born soul beneath the oppressor's heel,  
Are his strong ministers, and that the stings  
Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,  
Though truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

“And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;  
Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!  
And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,  
Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain,  
Which like a plague, a burthen, and a bane,  
Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,  
Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—  
The will of strength is right—this human state  
Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies, thus desolate.

“Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail  
Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon  
Even while we gaze, though it awhile avail  
To hide the orb of truth—and every throne  
Of Earth or Heaven, though shadow rest thereon,  
One shape of many names:—for this ye plough  
The barren waves of ocean; hence each one  
Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,  
Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

“Its names are each a sign which maketh holy  
All power—aye, the ghost, the dream, the shade,  
Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly  
The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,  
A law to which mankind has been betrayed;  
And human love is as the name well known  
Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid  
In bloody grave, and, into darkness thrown,  
Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own

“O love who to the hearts of wandering men  
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves!  
Justice, or truth, or joy! thou only can  
From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves

Guide us, as one clear star the seamen saves.  
 To give to all an equal share of good,  
 To track the steps of freedom, though through graves  
 She pass, to suffer all in patient mood, [blood.  
 To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's dearest

“ To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,  
 To own all sympathies, and outrage none,  
 And, in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,  
 Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,  
 To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,  
 To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe ;  
 To live, as if to love and live were one,—  
 This is not faith or law, nor those who bow  
 To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

“ But children near their parents tremble now,  
 Because they must obey—one rules another,  
 And as one Power rules both high and low,  
 So man is made the captive of his brother,  
 And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother  
 Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,  
 Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,  
 Are darkened—Woman, as the bond-slave, dwells  
 Of man a slave ; and life is poisoned in its wells.

“ Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave  
 A lasting chain for his own slavery ;—  
 In fear and restless care that he may live  
 He toils for others, who must ever be  
 The joyless thralls of like captivity ;  
 He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin ;  
 He builds the altar, that its idol's fee  
 May be his very blood ; he is pursuing,  
 O blind and willing wretch ! his own obscure undoing.

“ Woman !—she is his slave ; she has become  
 A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,  
 The outcast of a desolated home.  
 Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn  
 Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,  
 As calm decks the false Ocean :—well ye know  
 What Woman is, for none of Woman born  
 Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,  
 Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

“ This need not be ; ye might arise, and will  
 That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory ;  
 That love, which none may bind, be free to fill  
 The world like light ; and evil faith, grown hoary



With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory  
 Even now eclipses the descending moon!—  
 Dungeons and palaces are transitory—  
 High temples fade like vapour—Man alone  
 Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

“Let all be free and equal!—From your hearts  
 I feel an echo; through my inmost frame  
 Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts—  
 Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name  
 All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,  
 On your worn faces; as in legends old  
 Which make immortal the disastrous fame  
 Of conquerors and impostors false and bold,  
 The discord of your hearts I in your looks behold.

“Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood  
 Forth on the earth? or bring ye steel and gold,  
 That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?  
 Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold,  
 Bear ye the earnings of their toil? Unfold!  
 Speak! are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue  
 Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?  
 Know yourselves thus? ye shall be pure as dew,  
 And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

“Disguise it not—we have one human heart—  
 All mortal thoughts confess a common home:  
 Blush not for what may to thyself impart  
 Stains of inevitable crime: the doom  
 Is this, which has, or may, or must, become  
 Thine, and all human kind's. Ye are the spoil  
 Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,  
 Thou and thy thoughts, and they, and all the toil  
 Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

“Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate,  
 And Enmity is sister unto Shame;  
 Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—  
 Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name  
 Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;  
 But the dark fiend who, with his iron pen  
 Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame  
 Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men  
 Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

“Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing  
 Of many names, all evil, some divine,  
 Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;  
 Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine

Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine  
 To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside  
 It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine  
 When Amphibæna some fair bird has tied,  
 Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

“ Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,  
 Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.  
 It is the dark idolatry of self,  
 Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,  
 Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan :  
 O vacant expiation ! be at rest.—  
 The past is death's, the future is thine own ;  
 And love and joy can make the foulest breast  
 A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.”

“ Speak, thou ! whence come ye ?”—A Youth made reply  
 ‘ Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep  
 We sail :—Thou readest well the misery  
 Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep  
 Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,  
 Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow ;  
 Even from our childhood have we learned to steep  
 The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,  
 And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now.

“ Yes—I must speak—my secret would have perished  
 Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand  
 Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,  
 But that no human bosom can withstand  
 Thee, wondrous Lady, and the wild command  
 Of thy keen eyes :—yes, we are wretched slaves,  
 Who from their wonted loves and native land  
 Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves  
 The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

“ We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest  
 Among the daughters of those mountains lone ;  
 We drag them there, where all things best and rarest  
 Are stained and trampled :—years have come and gone  
 Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known  
 No thought ;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid  
 On mine with light of mutual love have shone—  
 She is my life,—I am but as the shade  
 Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

“ For she must perish in the tyrant's hall—  
 Alas, alas ! He ceased, and by the sail  
 Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,  
 And still before the ocean and the gale

The ship fled fast 'till the stars 'gan to fail.  
 All round me gathered with mute countenance,  
 The seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale  
 With toil, the Captain with grey locks, whose glance  
 Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

“Recede not! pause not now! thou art grown old,  
 But Hope will make thee young for Hope and Youth  
 Are children of one mother, even Love—behold!  
 The eternal stars gaze on us!—is the truth  
 Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth  
 For other's sufferings? do ye thirst to bear  
 A heart which not the serpent custom's tooth  
 May violate?—Be free! and even here [swear!  
 Swear to be firm till death! They cried, 'We swear! we

“The very darkness shook, as with a blast  
 Of subterranean thunder at the cry;  
 The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast  
 Into the night, as if the sea, and sky,  
 And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,  
 For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,  
 And on the deck with unaccustomed eye  
 The captives gazing stood, and every one  
 Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.

“They were earth's purest children, young and fair,  
 With eyes the shrine of unawakened thought,  
 And brows as bright as spring or morning, ere  
 Dark time had there its evil legend wrought  
 In characters of cloud which wither not—  
 The change was like a dream to them; but soon  
 They knew the glory of their altered lot,  
 In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,  
 Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

“But one was mute: her cheeks and lips most fair,  
 Changing their hue, like lilies newly blown  
 Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,  
 Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,  
 Shewed that her soul was quivering; and full soon  
 That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look  
 On her and me, as for some speechless boon:  
 I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,  
 And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

## CANTO IX.

“That night we anchored in a woody bay,  
 And sleep no more around us dared to hover  
 Than, when all doubt and fear has past away,  
 It shades the couch of some unresting lover,  
 Whose heart is now at rest; thus night past over  
 In mutual joy :—around, a forest grew  
 Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover  
 The waning stars, pranked in the waters blue,  
 And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

“The joyous mariners, and each free maiden,  
 Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,  
 With woodland spoil most innocently laden;  
 Soon wreathes of budding foliage seemed to flow  
 Over the mast and sails; the stern and prow  
 Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while  
 On the slant sun’s path o’er the waves we go  
 Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle  
 Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

“The many ships, spotting the dark blue deep  
 With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,  
 In fear and wonder; and on every steep  
 Thousands did gaze: they heard the startling cry,  
 Like earth’s own voice lifted unconquerably  
 To all her children, the unbounded mirth,  
 The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!  
 They heard!—As o’er the mountains of the earth  
 From peak to peak leap on the beams of morning’s birth.

“So from that cry, over the boundless hills,  
 Sudden was caught one universal sound,  
 Like a volcano’s voice, whose thunder fills  
 Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found  
 A path through human hearts with stream which drowned  
 Its struggling fears and cares, dark custom’s brood;  
 They knew not whence it came, but felt around  
 A wide contagion poured—they called aloud  
 On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

“We reached the port—alas! from many spirits  
 The wisdom which had waked that cry was fled,  
 Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits  
 From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,  
 Upon the night’s devouring darkness shed:  
 Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm  
 Of fire to burn the shrouds, outworn and dead,  
 Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,  
 To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake’s spasm!

“ I walked through the great City then, but free  
 From shame or fear. Those toil-worn Mariners  
 And happy Maidens did encompass me ;  
 And, like a subterranean wind that stirs  
 Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears  
 From every human soul, a murmur strange  
 Made as I past : and many wept with tears  
 Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range,  
 And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

“ For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid  
 Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—  
 As one who from some mountain’s pyramid,  
 Points to the unrisen sun !—The shades approve  
 His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.  
 Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,—  
 Wisdom the mail of tried affections wove  
 For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill  
 Thrice steep’d in molten steel the unconquerable will.

“ Some said I was a maniac wild and lost ;  
 Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,  
 The Prophet’s virgin bride, a heavenly ghost :—  
 Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,  
 Who had stolen human shape, and o’er the wave,  
 The forest, and the mountain, came ;—some said  
 I was the child of God, sent down to save  
 Women from bonds and death, and on my head  
 The burthen of their sins would frightfully be laid.

“ But soon my human words found sympathy  
 In human hearts ; the purest and the best,  
 As friend with friend made common cause with me,  
 And they were few, but resolute ; the rest,  
 Ere yet success the enterprise had blest,  
 Leagued with me in their hearts :—their meals, their slumber,  
 Their hourly occupations, were possest  
 By hopes which I had arm’d to outnumber [encumber.  
 Those hosts of meaner cares, which life’s strong wings

“ But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken  
 From their cold, careless, willing slavery,  
 Sought me : one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—  
 They looked around, and lo ! they became free !  
 Their many tyrants sitting desolately  
 In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain ;  
 For wrath’s red fire had withered in the eye,  
 Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain,  
 Could tempt one captive now to lock another’s chain.

“ Those, who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt  
 Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped their round,  
 Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt  
 In the white furnace ; and a visioned swound,  
 A pause of hope and awe, the City bound,  
 Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,  
 When in its awful shadow it has wound  
 The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,  
 Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leapt forth.

“ Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,  
 By winds from distant regions meeting there,  
 In the high name of truth and liberty,  
 Around the City millions gathered were,  
 By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair ;  
 Words, which the lore of truth in hues of grace  
 Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air  
 Like homeless odours floated, and the name  
 Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

“ The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,  
 The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—  
 That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,  
 And whatso'er when force is impotent,  
 To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,  
 Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.  
 Therefore throughout the streets the Priests he sent  
 To curse the rebels.—To their gods did they  
 For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.

“ And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell  
 From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,  
 How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,  
 Because her sons were free,—and that among  
 Mankind the many to the few belong,  
 By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.  
 They said, that age was truth, and that the young  
 Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,  
 With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free

“ And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips  
 They breathed on the enduring memory  
 Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse :  
 There was one teacher, whom necessity  
 Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind,  
 His slave and his avenger aye to be ;  
 That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,  
 And that the will of one was peace, and we  
 Should seek for nought on earth but toil and miser

" 'For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.'  
 So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied ;  
 Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter  
 Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride  
 Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide ;  
 And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,  
 And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue, and wide,  
 Said, that the rule of men was over now,  
 And hence the subject world to woman's will must bow.

" And gold was scattered through the streets, and wine  
 Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.  
 In vain ! the steady towers in Heaven did shine  
 As they were wont, nor at the priestly call  
 Left Plague her banquet in the Æthiop's hall,  
 Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,  
 Where at her ease she ever prays on all  
 Who throng to kneel for food : nor fear, nor shame,  
 Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly-kindled flame.

" For gold was as a god, whose faith began  
 To fade, so that its worshippers were few ;  
 And Faith itself, which in the heart of man  
 Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew  
 Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,  
 Till the Priests stood alone within the fane ;  
 The shafts of falsehood unpointing flew,  
 And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,  
 The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.

" The rest thou knowest,—Lo !—we two are here—  
 We have survived a ruin wide and deep—  
 Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve nor fear,  
 Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep  
 I smile, though human love should make me weep.  
 We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,  
 And I do feel a mighty calmness creep  
 Over my heart, which can no longer borrow  
 Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

" We know not what will come—Yet, Laon, dearest,  
 Cythna shall be the prophetess of love,  
 Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,  
 To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove  
 Within the homeless future's wintry grove ;  
 For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem  
 Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,  
 And violence and wrong are as a dream  
 Which rolls from steadfast truth, an unreturning stream.

“ The blasts of autumn drive the winged seeds  
 Over the earth—next come the snows, and rain,  
 And frosts, and storms, which dreary winter leads  
 Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train ;  
 Behold ! Spring sweeps over the world again,  
 Shedding soft dews from her ætherial wings ;  
 Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,  
 And music on the waves and woods she flings,  
 And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

“ O Spring ! of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness,  
 Wind-winged emblem ! brightest, best, and fairest !  
 Whence comest thou, when, with dark winter's sadness  
 The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest ?  
 Sister of joy ! thou art the child who bearest  
 Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet ;  
 Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest  
 Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,  
 Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding sheet.

“ Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,  
 Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves.  
 Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven  
 Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves ?  
 Lo, Winter comes !—the grief of many graves,  
 The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,  
 The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves  
 Stagnate like ice at Faith, the enchanter's word,  
 And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred.

“ The seeds are sleeping in the soil : meanwhile  
 The tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey ;  
 Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile  
 Because they cannot speak ; and, day by day,  
 The moon of wasting Science wanes away  
 Among her stars, and in that darkness vast  
 The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,  
 And grey Priests triumph, and like blight or blast  
 A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

“ This is the Winter of the world ;—and here  
 We die, even as the winds of autumn fade,  
 Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—  
 Behold ! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made  
 The promise of it's birth,—even as the shade  
 Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings  
 The future, a broad sunrise ; thus arrayed  
 As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,  
 From its dark gulph of chains, Earth like an Eagle springs.



“O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold  
Before this morn may on the world arise:  
Would'st thou the glory of its dawn behold?  
Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes  
On thine own heart—it is a paradise  
Which everlasting spring has made its own  
And, while drear Winter fills the naked skies,  
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh blown  
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

“In their own hearts the earnest of the hope  
Which made them great, the good will ever find;  
And though some envious shade may interlope  
Between the effect and it, one comes behind,  
Who aye the future to the past will bind—  
Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever  
Evil with evil, good with good, must wind  
In bands of union, which no power may sever;  
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

“The good and mighty of departed ages  
Are in their graves, the Innocent and free,  
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,  
Who leave the vesture of their majesty  
To adorn and clothe this naked world:—and we  
Are like to them—such perish, but they leave  
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,  
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive  
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

“So be the turf heaped over our remains  
Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,  
Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins  
The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought  
Pass from our being, or be numbered not  
Among the things that are; let those who come  
Behind, for whom our stedfast will has bought  
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,  
Insult with careless tread our undivided tomb.

“Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,  
Our happiness, and all that we have been,  
Immortally must live, and burn, and move,  
When we shall be no more;—the world has seen  
A type of peace; and as some most serene  
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,  
After long years, some sweet and moving scene  
Of youthful hope returning suddenly,  
Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee

“And calumny meanwhile shall feed on us  
 As worms devour the dead, and near the throne  
 And at the altar, most accepted thus  
 Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done  
 None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;  
 That record shall remain, when they must pass  
 Who built their pride on its oblivion;  
 And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,  
 Survive the perished scrolls of unending brass.

“The while we two, beloved, must depart,  
 And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,  
 Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart  
 That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:  
 These eyes, these lips, this blood, seem, darkly there  
 To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep,  
 Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,  
 Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep  
 In joy:—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

“These are blind fancies. Reason cannot know  
 What sense can neither feel nor thought conceive;  
 There is delusion in the world—and woe,  
 And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,  
 Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give  
 Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,  
 Or even these thoughts.—Come near me! I do weave  
 A chain I cannot break—I am possest  
 With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human breast.

“Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—  
 O! willingly, beloved, would these eyes,  
 Might they no more drink being from thy form,  
 Even as to sleep whence we again arise,  
 Close their faint orbs in death. I fear nor prize  
 Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—  
 Yes, Love, when wisdom fails, makes Cythna wise;  
 Darkness and death, if death be true, must be  
 Dearer than life and hope if unerjoyed with thee.

“Alas! our thoughts flew on with stream, whose waters  
 Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven,  
 The ocean and the Sun, the clouds their daughters,  
 Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,  
 All that we are or know, is darkly driven  
 Towards one gulph.—Lo! what a change is come  
 Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,  
 Though it change all but thee!” She ceased—night’s gloom  
 Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky’s sunless dome.

Though she had ceased, her countenance, uplifted  
 To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright ;  
 Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted  
 The air they breathed with love, her locks undight ;  
 "Fair star of life and love," I cried, "my soul's delight,  
 Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies ?  
 O that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,  
 Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes !"  
 She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise :

## CANTO X.

Was there a human spirit in the steed,  
 That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,  
 He broke our linked rest ? or do indeed  
 All living things a common nature own,  
 And thought erect a universal throne,  
 Where many shapes one tribute ever bear ?  
 And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan  
 To see her sons contend ? and makes she bare  
 Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share ?

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue  
 Which was not human—the lone Nightingale  
 Has answered me with her most soothing song,  
 Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale  
 With grief, and sighed beneath ; from many a dale  
 The Antelopes who flocked for food have spoken  
 With happy sounds, and motions, that avail  
 Like man's own speech : and such was now the token  
 Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken

Each night that mighty steed bore me abroad,  
 And I returned with food to our retreat,  
 And dark intelligence ; the blood, which flowed  
 Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet ;—  
 Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew ;—then meet  
 The vulture, and the wild-dog, and the snake,  
 The wolf, and hyæna grey, and eat  
 The dead in horrid truce : their throngs did make  
 Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring  
 The banded slaves whom every despot sent  
 At that throned traitor's summons ; like the roaring  
 Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent  
 In the scorched pastures of the South ; so bent  
 The armies of the leagued kirgs around

Their files of steel and flame ;—the continent  
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound ;  
Beneath their feet the sea shook with their navies' sound.

From every nation of the earth they came,  
The multitude of moving heartless things,  
Whom slaves call men ; obediently they came,  
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings  
To the stall, red with blood ; their many kings  
Led them thus, thus erring, from their native home ;  
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings  
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band  
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

Fertile in prodigies and lies ;—so their  
Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.  
The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear  
His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will  
Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill  
Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure ;  
But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,  
And savage sympathy : those slaves impure,  
Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe  
His countenance in lies ;—even at the hour  
When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,  
With secret signs from many a mountain tower,  
With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power  
Of kings and priests, those dark conspirators  
He called :—they knew his cause their own, and swore  
Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars  
Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors.

Myriads had come—millions were on their way ;  
The tyrant past, surrounded by the steel  
Of hired assassins, through the public way,  
Choked with his country's dead ;—his footsteps reel  
On the fresh blood—he smiles. "Aye, now I feel  
I am a King in truth !" he said, and took  
His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel  
Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,  
And scorpions, that his soul on its revenge might look.

"But first, go slay the rebels.—Why return  
The victor bands ?" he said : "millions yet live,  
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn  
The scales of victory yet ;—let none survive  
But those within the walls—each fifth shall give  
The expiation for his brethren here.—"

Go forth, and waste and kill!"—"O king, forgive  
My speech," a soldier answered;—"but we fear  
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

"For we were slaying still without remorse,  
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand  
Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,  
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand  
Which flashed among the stars, passed"—"Dost thou stand  
Parleying with me, thou wretch?" the king replied;  
"Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band  
Whoso will drag that woman to his side  
That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

"And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!"  
They rushed into the plain—Loud was the roar  
Of their career; the horsemen shook the earth;  
The wheeled artillery's speed the pavement tore;  
The Infantry, file after file did pour  
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew  
Among the wasted fields: the sixth saw gore  
Stream through the city; on the seventh, the dew  
Of slaughter became stiff; and there was peace anew.

Peace in the desert fields and villages,  
Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!  
Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries  
Of victims, to their fiery judgment led,  
Made pale their voiceless lips, who seemed to dread  
Even in their dearest kindred lest some tongue  
Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayed;  
Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng  
Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!

Day after day the burning Sun rolled on  
Over the death-polluted land;—it came  
Out of the East like fire, and fiercely shone  
A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame  
The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became  
Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast  
Languished and died; the thirsting air did claim  
All moisture, and a rotting vapour past  
From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

First want, then Plague, came on the beasts; their food  
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.  
Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood  
Had lured, or who, from regions far away,  
Had tracked the hosts in festival array  
From their dark deserts, gaunt and wasting now,

Stalked like fell shades among their perish'd prey ;  
 In their green eyes a strange disease did glow ;  
 They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

The fish were poisoned in the streams ; the birds  
 In the green woods perished ; the insect race  
 Was withered up ; the scattered flocks and herds,  
 Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase,  
 Died moaning, each upon the other's face  
 In helpless agony gazing ; round the City  
 All night the lean hyænas their sad case  
 Like starving infants wailed—a woeful ditty !  
 And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

Amid the ærial minarets on high,  
 The Ethiopian vultures fluttering fell  
 From their long line of brethren in the sky,  
 Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well  
 These signs the coming mischief did foretell :—  
 Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread  
 Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,  
 A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread  
 With the quick glance of eyes like withering lightning shed.

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts  
 Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare ;  
 So on those strange and congregated hosts  
 Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air  
 Groaned with the burden of a new despair ;  
 Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter  
 Feeds from her thousand breasts, though sleeping there  
 With lidless eyes lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,  
 A ghastly brood conceived of Lethe's sullen water.

There was no food ; the corn was trampled down,  
 The flocks and herds had perished ; on the shore  
 The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown :  
 The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more  
 Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before  
 Those winged things sprang forth, were void of shade ;  
 The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,  
 Were burned ;—so that the meanest food was weighed  
 With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

There was no corn—in the wide market- place  
 All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold  
 They weighed it in small scales—and many a face  
 Was fixed in eager horror then : his gold  
 The miser brought ; the tender maid, grown bold  
 Through hunger, bared her scorned charms in vain ;

The mother brought her eldest born, controlled  
By instinct blind as love but turned again  
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.  
"Oh, for the sheathed steel, so late which gave  
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran  
With brothers' blood! Oh, that the earthquakes grave  
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!"  
Vain cries— throughout the streets, thousands pursued  
Each by his fiery torture, howl and rave  
Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,  
Upon fresh heaps of dead— a ghastly multitude.

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well  
Was choked with rotting corpses, and became  
A cauldron of green mist made visible  
At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,  
Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,  
Which raged like poison through their bursting veins;  
Naked they were from torture, without shame,  
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains  
Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

It was not thirst but madness! Many saw  
Their own lean image every where; it went  
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe  
Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent  
Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,  
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed  
Contagion on the sound; and others rent  
Their matted hair, and cried aloud, "We tread  
On fire! The avenging Power his hell on earth has spread."

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid,  
Near the great fountain in the public Square,  
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid  
Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer  
For life, in the hot silence of the air:  
And strange 'twas amid that hideous heap to see  
Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,  
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly  
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

Famine had spared the palace of the king:—  
He rioted in festival the while,  
He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling  
One shadow upon all. Famine can smile  
On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile  
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier grey,

The house-dog of the throne ; but many a mile  
Comes Plague, a winged wolf, who loathes alway  
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

So, near the throne, amid the gorguous feast,  
Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight  
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased  
That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might  
Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night  
In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes ; he fell  
Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright  
Among the guests, or raving mad, did tell  
Strange truths ; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror ;  
That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind  
Fell, like a shaft loosened by the bowman's error,  
On their own hearts : they sought and they could find  
No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind !  
So, through the desolate streets to the high fane,  
The many-tongued and endless armies wind  
In sad procession : each among the train  
To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

" O God ! " they cried, " we know our secret pride  
Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name ;  
Secure in human power, we have defied  
Thy fearful might ; we bend in fear and shame  
Before thy presence ; with the dust we claim  
Kindred. Be merciful, O King of Heaven !  
Most justly have we suffered for thy fame  
Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,  
Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven.

" O King of Glory ! Thou alone hast power !  
Who can resist thy will ? who can restrain  
Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower  
The shafts of thy revenge,—a blistering rain ?  
Greatest and best, be merciful again !  
Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made  
The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,  
Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid  
Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have  
weighed ?

" Well didst thou loosen on this impious City  
Thine angels of revenge : recall them now ;  
Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,  
And bind their souls by an immortal vow :  
We swear by thee ! and to our oath do thou



Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,  
That we will kill with fire and torments slow,  
The last of those who mocked thy holy name,  
And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim.

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips  
Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,  
Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse  
The light of other minds;—troubled they past  
From the great Temple.—Fiercely, still, and fast  
The arrows of the plague among them fell,  
And they on one another gazed aghast,  
And through the hosts contention wild befell,  
As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,  
Moses, and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,  
A tumult of strange names, which never met  
Before, as watchwords of a single woe,  
Arose. Each raging votary 'gan to throw  
Aloft his armed hands, and each did howl  
"Our God alone is God!" and slaughter now  
Would have gone forth, when, from beneath a cowl  
A voice came forth, which pierced like ice through every soul.

'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,  
A zealous man, who led the legions west  
With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,  
To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest  
Even to his friends was he, for in his breast  
Did hate and guile lay watchful, intertwined  
Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest:  
He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined  
To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.

But more he loathed and hated the clear light  
Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,  
Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,  
Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near  
Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear  
That faith and tyranny were trampled down;  
Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share  
The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,  
The Priests his children drag for slaves to serve **their own.**

He dared not kill the infidels with fire  
Or steel, in Europe: the slow agonies  
Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:  
So he made truce with those who did despise  
The expiation, and the sacrifice,

That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed  
Might crush for him those deadlier enemies ;  
For fear of God did in his bosom breed  
A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

"Peace! Peace!" he cried, "When we are dead, the Day  
Of Judgment comes, and all shall surely know  
Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay  
The errors of his faith in endless woe!  
But there is sent a mortal vengeance now  
On earth, because an impious race had spurned  
Him whom we all adore,—a subtle foe,  
By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,  
And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

"Think ye, because we weep, and kneel, and pray,  
That God will lull the pestilence? It rose  
Even, from beneath his throne, where, many a day  
His mercy soothed it to a dark repose :  
It walks upon the earth to judge his foes,  
And what art thou and I, that he should deign  
To curb his ghastly minister, or close  
The gates of death, ere they receive the twain  
Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

"Aye, there is famine in the gulph of hell ;  
Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn,—  
Their lurid eyes are on us! Those who fell  
By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn,  
Are in their jaws! They hunger for the spawn  
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent  
To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn  
Like dogs, and they will sleep, with luxury spent,  
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent!

"Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep :—  
Pile high the pyre of expiation now!  
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap  
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,  
When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,  
A stream of clinging fire,— and fix on high  
A net of iron, and spread forth below  
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry  
Of centipedes and worms,— earth's hellish progeny!

"Let Jaon and Laone on that pyre,  
Linked tight with burning brass, perish!—then pray  
That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire  
Of Heaven may be appeased." He ceased, and they  
A space stood silent, as far, far away

The echoes of his voice among them died ;  
 And he knelt down upon the dust, alway  
 Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,  
 Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal  
 Of fabled hell ; and, as he spake, each one  
 Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,  
 And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne  
 Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone  
 Their King and Judge. Fear killed in every breast  
 All natural pity then, a fear unknown  
 Before, and, with an inward fire possest,  
 They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

'Twas morn.—At noon the public crier went forth,  
 Proclaiming through the living and the dead,  
 "The Monarch saith, that his great empire's worth  
 Is set on Laon and Laone's head :  
 He who but one yet living here can lead,  
 Or who the life from both their hearts can wring  
 Shall be the kingdoms heir,— a glorious meed !  
 But he, who both alive can hither bring,  
 The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King."

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron  
 Was spread above the fearful couch below ;  
 It overtopped the towers that did environ  
 That spacious square ; for Fear is never slow  
 To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,  
 So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude  
 To rear this pyramid— tottering and slow,  
 Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued  
 By gad-flies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood.

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.  
 Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation  
 Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb  
 Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation ;  
 And, in the silence of that expectation,  
 Was heard on high the reptiles hiss and crawl—  
 It was so deep, save when the devastation  
 Of the swift pest with fearful interval,  
 Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

Morn came.—Among those sleepless multitudes  
 Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine, still  
 Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods  
 The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill  
 Earth's cold and sullen brooks. In silence still

The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear  
 Of Hell became a panic, which did kill  
 Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear, [is near!"  
 As "Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour

And Priests rushed through their ranks, some counterfeiting  
 The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed  
 With their own lies. They said their god was waiting  
 To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—  
 And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need  
 Of human souls.—Three hundred furnaces  
 Soon blazed through the wide City, where, with speed,  
 Men brought their infidel kindred to appease [knees.  
 God's wrath, and, while they burned, knelt round on quivering

Then noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,  
 The winds of eve dispersed those ashes grey.  
 The madness, which these rites had lulled, awoke  
 Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say  
 The deeds which night and fear brought forth or weigh  
 In balance just the good and evil there?  
 He might man's deep and searchless heart display,  
 And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where  
 Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,  
 To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,  
 And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,  
 Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,  
 Looked from their meal, and saw an angel tread  
 The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!  
 And, on that night, one without doubt or dread  
 Came to the fire, and said, "Stop, I am he!  
 Kill me!"—They burned them both with hellish mockery.

And, one by one, that night, young maidens came,  
 Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone  
 Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame  
 Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,  
 And sung a low sweet song, of which alone  
 One word was heard, and that was Liberty;  
 And that some kiss'd their marble feet, with moan  
 Like love, and died, and then that they did die  
 With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquility.

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 CANTO XI.

SHE saw me not—she heard me not—alone  
 Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;  
 She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown

Over her look, the shadow of a mood  
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,  
A thought of voiceless death.—She stood alone,  
Above, the Heavens were spread ;—below, the flood  
Was murmuring in its caves ;—the wind had blown  
Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains ;  
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying  
Grey mists poured forth from the unresting fountains  
Of darkness in the North :—the day was dying :—  
Sudden, the sun shone forth ; its beams were lying  
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,  
And on the shattered vapours, which, defying  
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly  
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank  
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made ;  
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,  
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and, as if swayed  
By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*. The shade  
Of her bright image floated on the river  
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—  
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver ;  
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—  
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth.  
Rapture, and love, and admiration, wrought  
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,  
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth  
From common joy, which, with the speechless feeling  
That led her there, united, and shot forth  
From her fair eyes a light of deep revealing,  
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath  
Was now heard there ;—her dark and intricate eyes,  
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,  
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,  
Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,  
Burst from her looks and gestures ;—and a light  
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise  
From her whole frame,—an atmosphere which quite  
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame :  
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed  
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame  
Which now the cold winds stole ;—she would have laid

Upon my languid heart her dearest head ;  
 I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet ;  
 Her eyes, mingling with mine, might soon have fed  
 My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet  
 I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet !

Never but once to meet on earth again !  
 She heard me as I fled—her eager tone  
 Sank on my heart, and almost wove a chain  
 Around my will to link it with her own,  
 So that my stern resolve was almost gone.  
 " I cannot reach thee ! whither dost thou fly ?  
 My steps are faint.—Come back, thou dearest one—  
 Return, ah me ! return !" —The wind passed by  
 On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

Woe ! woe ! that moonless midnight.—Want and Pest  
 Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,  
 As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest,  
 Eminent among those victims—even the Fear  
 Of Hell : each girt by the hot atmosphere  
 Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung  
 By his own rage upon his burning bier  
 Of circling coals of fire ; but still there clung  
 One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung :

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest ;  
 Not life—it was despair to be !—not sleep,  
 For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossessed  
 All natural dreams ; to wake was not to weep,  
 But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap  
 To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,  
 Or like some tyrant's eye which aye doth keep  
 Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge  
 Their steps :—they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge.

Each of that multitude alone, and lost  
 To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew ;  
 As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tost,  
 Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew  
 Whilst now the ship is splitting through and through,  
 Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,  
 Started from sick despair, or if there flew  
 One murmur on the wind, or if some word  
 Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death,  
 Paler from hope ? they had sustained despair.  
 Why watched those myriads with suspended breath  
 Sleepless a second night ? they are not here

The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,  
 Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead ;  
 And even in death their lips are writhed with fear.—  
 The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead  
 Silent Arcturus shine—ha ! hear'st thou not the tread

Of rushing feet ? laughter ? the shout, the scream,  
 Of triumph not to be contained ? See ! hark !  
 They come, they come ! give way ! Alas, ye deem  
 Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark  
 Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark  
 From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,  
 A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark  
 From its blue train, and, spreading widely, clung  
 To their wild hair, like mist the topmast pines among

And many, from the crowd collected there,  
 Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies ;  
 There was the silence of a long despair,  
 When the last echo of those terrible cries  
 Came from a distant street, like agonies  
 Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne  
 All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes  
 In stony expectation fixed ; when one  
 Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him  
 With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest  
 Concealed his face ; but, when he spake, his tone,  
 Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,  
 Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast  
 Void of all hate or terror, made them start ;  
 For as with gentle accents he addressed  
 His speech to them, on each unwilling heart  
 Unusual awe did fall—A spirit-quelling dart.

“ Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast  
 Amid the ruin which yourselves have made ;  
 Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,  
 And sprang from sleep !—dark Terror has obeyed  
 Your bidding—Oh that I, whom ye have made  
 Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free  
 From pain and fear ! but evil casts a shade  
 Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be  
 The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

“ Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress ;  
 Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise,  
 Who, if he dared, might not aspire to less  
 Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies

Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries  
 To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought,  
 An empty and a cruel sacrifice  
 Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought  
 Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

“Ye seek for happiness—alas the day!  
 Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,  
 Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway  
 For which, O willing slaves to Custom old  
 Severe task mistress! ye your hearts have sold.  
 Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream  
 No evil dreams; all mortal things are cold  
 And senseless then. If aught survive, I deem  
 It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

“Fear not the future, weep not for the past.  
 Oh, could I win your ears to dare be now  
 Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast  
 Into the dust those symbols of your woe,  
 Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go  
 Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,  
 That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;  
 And that mankind is free, and that the shame  
 Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame.

“If thus 'tis well—if not, I come to say  
 That Laon—.” While the stranger spoke, among  
 The Council sudden tumult and affray  
 Arose, for many of those warriors young  
 Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung  
 Like bees on mountain-flowers! they knew the truth,  
 And from their thrones in vindication sprung;  
 The men of faith and law then without ruth  
 Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.

They stabbed them in the back and sneered.—A slave,  
 Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew  
 Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave;  
 And one more daring raised his steel anew  
 To pierce the stranger: “What hast thou to do  
 With me, poor wretch?”—Calm, solemn, and severe,  
 That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw  
 His dagger on the ground, and, pale with fear,  
 Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

“It doth avail not that I weep for ye—  
 Ye cannot change, since ye are old and grey,  
 And ye have chosen your lot.—Your fame must be  
 A book of blood, whence in a milder day



Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapt in clay:  
 Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,  
 And him to your revenge will I betray,  
 So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!  
 For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

"There is a People mighty in its youth,  
 A land beyond the Oceans of the West,  
 Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth  
 Are worshipped; from a glorious mother's breast,  
 Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest  
 Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,  
 Or inbred monsters outraged and oppressed  
 Turns to her chainless child for succour now,  
 And draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

"This land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze  
 Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume  
 Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze  
 Of sun-rise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom;  
 An epitaph of glory for the tomb  
 Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,  
 Great People! As the sands shalt thou become;  
 Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;  
 The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

"Yes, in the desert then is built a home  
 For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear  
 The monuments of man beneath the dome  
 Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,  
 Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,  
 Drive from their wasted homes. The boon I pray  
 Is this—that Cythna shall be conveyed there,—  
 Nay, start not at the name—America!  
 And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

"With me do what ye will. I am your foe!"  
 The light of such a joy as makes the stare  
 Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,  
 Shone in a hundred human eyes.—"Where, where  
 Is Laon? haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!  
 We grant thy boon."—"I put no trust in ye.  
 Swear by the Power ye dread."—"We swear, we swear!"  
 The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,  
 And smiled in gentle pride, and said, "Lo! I am he!"

## CANTO XII.

THE transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness  
 Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying  
 Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness  
 The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,  
 Among the corpses in stark agony lying,  
 Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope  
 Closed their faint eyes, from house to house replying  
 With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,  
 And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array  
 Of guards in golden arms, and priests beside,  
 Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray  
 The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;  
 And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide  
 Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—  
 A Shape of light is sitting by his side,  
 A child most beautiful. In the midst appears  
 Laon—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

His head and feet are bare his hands are bound  
 Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak  
 Their scoffs on him, though myriads throng around;  
 There are no sneers upon his lip which speak  
 That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek  
 Resolve has not turned pale,—his eyes are mild  
 And calm, and, like the morn about to break,  
 Smile on mankind—his heart seems reconciled  
 To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

Tumult was in the soul of all beside,  
 Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those, who saw  
 Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide  
 Into their brain, and became calm with awe.—  
 See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw,  
 A thousand torches in the spacious square  
 Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,  
 Await the signals round: the morning fair  
 Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,  
 Upon a platform level with the pile,  
 The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,  
 Girt by the chieftains of the host. All smile  
 In expectation, but one child: the while  
 I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier  
 Of fire, and look around. Each distant isle  
 Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near  
 Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

There was such silence through the host, as when  
 An earthquake, trampling on some populous town,  
 Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men  
 Expect the second. All were mute but one,  
 That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone  
 Stood up before the King, without avail,  
 Pleading for Laon's life—Her stifled groan  
 Was heard—she trembled like an aspen pale  
 Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun,  
 Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,  
 Even like a tyrant's wrath?—The signal-gun  
 Roared—hark, again! In that dread pause he lay  
 As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—  
 A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last  
 Bursts on that awful silence. Far away  
 Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,  
 Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear  
 Has started the triumphant!—they recede!  
 For, ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear  
 The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed,  
 Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,  
 Bursts through their ranks: a woman sits thereon,  
 Fairer it seems than aught that earth can breed,  
 Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,  
 A spirit from the caves of day-light wandering gone.

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep  
 The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;  
 The tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—  
 Her innocence his child from fear did save.  
 Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave  
 Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,  
 And, like the reflux of a mighty wave  
 Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude  
 With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood.

They pause, they blush, they gaze; a gathering shout  
 Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams  
 Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout  
 One checked, who never in his mildest dreams  
 Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams  
 Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed  
 Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems  
 That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed  
 Inly for self; thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed;

And others, too, thought he was wise to see,  
 In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine ;  
 In love and beauty—no divinity.—  
 Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine  
 Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,  
 He said, and the persuasion of that sneer  
 Rallied his trembling comrades—" Is it mine  
 To stand alone when kings and soldiers fear  
 A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here."

"Were it not impious," said the King, "to break  
 Our holy oath?"—"Impious to keep it, say!"  
 Shrieked the exulting Priest:—"Slaves, to the stake  
 Bind her, and on my head the burthen lay  
 Of her just torments:—at the Judgment Day  
 Will I stand up before the golden throne  
 Of Heaven, and cry, to thee I did betray  
 An Infidel! but for me she would have known  
 Another moment's joy!—the glory be thine own."

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,  
 Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprang  
 From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade  
 Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among  
 Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung  
 Upon his neck, and kissed his mooned brow.  
 A piteous sight, that one so fair and young  
 The clasp of such a fearful death should woo  
 With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear  
 From many a tremulous eye, but, like soft dews  
 Which feed spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,  
 Frozen by doubt,—alas! they could not choose  
 But weep; for, when her faint limbs did refuse  
 To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;  
 And with her eloquent gestures and the hues  
 Of her quick lips, even as a weary child  
 Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind  
 Near me, among the snakes. When then had fled  
 One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,  
 She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,  
 But each upon the other's countenance fed  
 Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil  
 Which doth divide the living and the dead  
 Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—  
 All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

Yet,—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam  
 Of dying flames, the stainless air around  
 Hung silent and serene.—A blood-red gleam  
 Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground  
 The globed smoke.—I heard the mighty sound  
 Of its uprising, like a tempestuous ocean ;  
 And, through its chasms I saw, as in a swoond,  
 The tyrant's child fall without life or motion  
 Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

And is this death ? The pyre has disappeared,  
 The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng ;  
 The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard  
 The music of a breath-suspending song,  
 Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,  
 Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep ;  
 With ever changing notes it floats along,  
 Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep  
 A melody like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand  
 Wakened me then ; lo, Cythna sate reclined  
 Beside me, on the waved and golden sand  
 Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined  
 With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind  
 Breathed divine odour ; high above, was spread  
 The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,  
 Whose moonlight blooms and bright fruit overhead  
 A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain  
 With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves  
 Of marble-radiance to that mighty fountain ;  
 And, where the flood its own bright margin laves,  
 Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,  
 Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed  
 Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,  
 Till through a chasm of hills they roll, and feed  
 A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder,  
 A boat approached, borne by the musical air  
 Along the waves which sung and sparkled under  
 Its rapid keel—a winged shape sate tiere,  
 A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,  
 That, as her bark did through the waters glide,  
 The shadow of the lingering waves did wear  
 Light, as from starry beams ; from side to side,  
 While veering to the wind, her plumes the bark did guide.

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl,  
 Almost translucent with the light divine  
 Of her within; the prow and stern did curl,  
 Horned on high, like the young moon supine,  
 When, o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,  
 It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,  
 Whose golden waves in many a purple line  
 Fade fast, till, borne on sun-light's ebbing streams,  
 Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;—  
 Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes,  
 Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet  
 Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,  
 Glanced as she spake: "Aye, this is Paradise  
 And not a dream, and we are all united!  
 Lo, that is mine own child, who, in the guise  
 Of madness, came like day to one benighted  
 In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!"

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms  
 Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair  
 Than her own human hues and living charms;  
 Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,  
 Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,  
 Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight;  
 The glossy darkness of her streaming hair  
 Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapt from sight  
 The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

Then the bright child, the plumed Seraph, came,  
 And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,  
 And said, "I was disturbed by tremulous shame  
 When once we met, yet knew that I was thine  
 From the same hour in which thy lips divine  
 Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,  
 Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine  
 Thine image with *her* memory dear—again  
 We meet; exempted now from mortal fear or pain.

"When the consuming flames had wrapt ye round,  
 The hope which I had cherished went away;  
 I fell in agony on the senseless ground,  
 And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray  
 My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,  
 The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,  
 And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,  
 'They wait for me, beloved!'—Then I knew  
 The death mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

“ It was the calm of love—for I was dying.  
I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre  
In its own grey and shrunken ashes lying ;  
The pitchy smoke of the departed fire  
Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire  
Above the towers, like night ; beneath whose shade,  
Awd by the ending of their own desire,  
The armies stood ; a vacancy was made  
In expectation’s depth, and so they stood dismayed.

“ The frightful silence of that altered mood,  
The tortures of the dying clove alone,  
Till one arose among the multitude,  
And said—‘ the flood of time is rolling on,  
We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone  
To glide in peace down death’s mysterious stream.  
Have ye done well ? They moulder flesh and bone,  
Who might have made this life’s envenomed dream  
A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

“ These perish as the good and great of yore  
Have perished, and their murderers will repent.  
Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before  
Yon smoke has faded from the firmament ;  
Even for this cause, that ye, who must lament  
The death of those that made this world so fair,  
Cannot recall them now ; but then is lent  
To man the wisdom of a high despair  
When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

“ Aye, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,  
From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn ;  
All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence  
In pain and fire have unbelievers gone ;  
And ye must sadly turn away, and moan  
In secret, to his home each one returning ;  
And to long ages shall this hour be known ;  
And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,  
Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.

“ For me the world is grown too void and cold,  
Since hope pursues immortal destiny  
With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold  
How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die ;  
Tell to your children this !’ Then suddenly  
He sheathed a dagger in his heart, and fell ;  
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me  
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell  
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

"Then suddenly I stood a winged Thought  
 Before the immortal Senate, and the seat  
 Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought  
 The strength of its dominion, good and great,  
 The better Genius of this world's estate.  
 His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,  
 Elysian islands bright and fortunate,  
 Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,  
 Where I am sent to lead!" These winged words she said,

And with the silence of her eloquent smile  
 Bade us embark in her divine canoe;  
 Then at the helm we took our seat, the while  
 Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue  
 Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,  
 Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer,  
 On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew  
 O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,  
 Whose shores receded fast, while we seemed lingering there;

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,  
 Between a chasm of cedar mountains riven,  
 Chased by the thronging winds, whose viewless feet,  
 As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,  
 From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,  
 The boat flew visibly.—Three nights and days,  
 Borne like a cloud through morn, and noon, and even,  
 We sailed along the winding watery ways  
 Of the vast stream,—a long and labyrinthine maze.

A scene of joy and wonder to behold  
 That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,  
 Where the broad sunrise, filled with deepening gold  
 Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver,  
 And where melodious falls did burst and shiver  
 Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray  
 Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,  
 Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,  
 One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran  
 The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud  
 Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,  
 Which fieth forth and cannot make abode;  
 Sometimes through forests, deep like night, we glode,  
 Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned  
 With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,  
 The homes of the departed, dimly frowned  
 O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.



Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,  
 Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight  
 To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows  
 Over the grass. Sometimes beneath the night  
 Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright  
 With starry gems, we fled whilst, from their deep  
 And dark-green chasms, shades, beautiful and white,  
 Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,  
 Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full  
 Of love and wisdom, which would overflow  
 In converse wild, and sweet and wonderful ;  
 And in quick smiles whose light would come and go,  
 Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow  
 Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—  
 For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know,  
 That virtue, though obscured on Earth, not less  
 Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness,

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling  
 Number delightful hours—for through the sky  
 The sphered lamps of day and night, revealing  
 New changes and new glories, rolled on high,  
 Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny  
 Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair :  
 On the fourth day, wild as a wind-wrought sea,  
 The stream became, and fast and faster bare  
 The spirit-winged boat, steadily speeding there.

Steadily and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains  
 Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour  
 Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,  
 The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar  
 Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,  
 Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child  
 Securely fled, that rapid stress before,  
 Amid the topmast spray, and sunbows wild,  
 Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.

The torrent of that wide and raging river,  
 Is past, and our aerial speed suspended.  
 We look behind, a golden mist did quiver  
 When its wild surges with the lake were blended :  
 Our bark hung there, as one line suspended  
 Between two heavens, that windless waveless lake ;  
 Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended  
 By mists, aye feed, from rocks and clouds they break,  
 And of that azure sea a silent refuge make

Motionless, resting on the lake awhile,  
I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear  
Their peaks aloft. I saw each radiant isle,  
And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere  
Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear  
The Temple of the Spirit ; on the sound  
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near.  
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,  
The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

END OF THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

# PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

## A LYRICAL DRAMA.

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### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.	ASIA. } PANTHEA. } IONE. }	<i>Oceanides.</i>
DEMOGORGON.		
JUPITER.		
THE EARTH.	THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.	
OCEAN.	THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.	
APOLLO.	THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON	
MERCURY.	SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.	
HERCULES.	SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. &c.	

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### ACT I.

SCENE, *a Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS is discovered bound to the Precipice. PANTHEA and IONE are seated at his feet. Time, Night. During the Scene, Morning slowly breaks.

*Pro.* MONARCH of Gods and Demons, and all Spirits  
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds  
Which Thou and I alone of living things  
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth,  
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou  
Requittest for knee-worship, prayer and praise,  
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,  
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.  
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,  
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,  
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.  
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,  
And moments aye divided by keen pangs  
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,  
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.  
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest  
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!  
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame  
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here  
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,  
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,  
Insect, or beast, or shape, or sound of life.  
Ah me, alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.  
 I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?  
 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,  
 Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,  
 Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,  
 Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?  
 Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears  
 Of their moon-freezing chrystals; the bright chains  
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.  
 Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips  
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up  
 My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,  
 The ghastly people of the realm of dream,  
 Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged  
 To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds  
 When the rocks split and close again behind:  
 While from their loud abysses howling throng  
 The genii of the storm, urging the rage  
 Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail;  
 And yet to me welcome is day and night,  
 Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,  
 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs  
 The leaden-coloured east: for then they lead  
 The wingless crawling hours, one among whom  
 —As some Dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—  
 Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood  
 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee  
 If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.  
 Disdain! ah no! I pity thee. What ruin  
 Will hunt thee undefended through the wide Heaven!  
 How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,  
 Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,  
 Not exultation, for I hate no more,  
 As then ere misery made me wise. The curse  
 Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,  
 Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist  
 Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!  
 Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,  
 Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept  
 Shuddering thro' India! Thou serenest Air,  
 Through which the Sun walks burning without beams;  
 And ye, swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings  
 Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,  
 As thunder, louder than your own, made rock  
 The orbed world! If then my words had power,  
 Though I am changed so that aught evil wish  
 Is dead within; although no memory be  
 Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!  
 What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

*First Voice : (from the mountains.)*

Thrice three hundred thousand years  
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood :  
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,  
We trembled in our multitude.

*Second Voice : (from the springs.)*

Thunder-bolts had parched our water,  
We had been stained with bitter blood,  
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,  
Through a city and a solitude.

*Third Voice : (from the air.)*

I had clothed, since earth uprose,  
Its wastes in colours not their own ;  
And oft had my serene repose  
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

*Fourth Voice : (from the whirlwinds.)*

We had soared beneath these mountains  
Unresting ages ; nor had thunder,  
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,  
Nor any power above or under,  
Ever made us mute with wonder.

*First Voice.*

But never bowed our snowy crest  
As at the voice of thine unrest.

*Second Voice.*

Never such a sound before  
To the Indian waves we bore.  
A pilot asleep on the howling sea  
Leaped up from the deck in agony,  
And heard, and cried, " Ah, woe is me !"  
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

*Third Voice.*

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven  
My still realm was never riven :  
When its wound was closed, there stood  
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

*Fourth Voice.*

And we shrank back : for dreams of ruin  
To frozen caves our flight pursuing  
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—  
Though silence is as hell to us.

*The Earth.* The tongueless caverns of the craggy hills  
Cried, " Misery ! " then ; the hollow Heaven replied,  
" Misery ! " And the Ocean's purple waves,

Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,  
And the pale nations heard it, "Misery!"

*Pro.* I hear a sound of voices: not the voice  
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons, and thou  
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will  
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,  
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist  
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,  
The Titan? He who made his agony  
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?  
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow fed streams,  
Now seen athwart froze vapours, deep below,  
Thro' whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once  
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;  
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now  
To commune with me? me alone, who check'd,  
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,  
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns  
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves  
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:  
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

*The Earth.* They dare not.

*Pro.* Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.  
Ha! what an awful whisper rises up!  
'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles thro' the frame  
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.  
Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice  
I only know that thou art moving near  
And love. How cursed I him?

*The Earth.* How canst thou hear  
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

*Pro.* Thou art a living spirit: speak as they. [King]

*The Earth.* I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell  
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain  
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.  
Subtle thou art and good, and tho' the Gods  
Hear not his voice, yet thou art more than God,  
Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.

*Pro.* Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,  
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel  
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love,  
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

*The Earth.* No, thou canst not hear:  
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known  
Only to those who die.

*Pro.* And what art thou,  
O melancholy voice?

*The Earth.* I am the earth,  
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,  
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree

Whose thin leaves tremble in the frozen air,  
 Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,  
 When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud  
 Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!  
 And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted  
 Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,  
 And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread  
 Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.  
 Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll  
 Around us: their inhabitants beheld  
 My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea  
 Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire  
 From earthquake-grifted mountains of bright snow  
 Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;  
 Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;  
 Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads  
 Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:  
 When Plague had fallen on man and beast, and worm  
 And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;  
 And in the corn, and vines, and meadow grass,  
 Teemed in eradicable poisonous weeds  
 Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry  
 With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained  
 With the contagion of a mother's hate  
 Breathed on her child's destroyer; aye, I heard  
 Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,  
 Yet my innumerable seas and streams,  
 Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,  
 And the inarticulate people of the dead,  
 Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate  
 In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,  
 But dare not speak them.

*Pro.* Venerable mother!

All else who live and suffer take from thee  
 Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,  
 And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine,  
 But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

*The Earth.* They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,  
 The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,  
 Met his own image walking in the garden.  
 That apparition, sole of men, he saw.  
 For know there are two worlds of life and death.  
 One, that which thou beholdest; but the other  
 Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit  
 The shadows of all forms that think and live  
 Till death unite them and they part no more;  
 Dreams and the light imaginings of men,  
 And all that faith creates or love desires  
 Terrible, strange, sublime, and beautiful shapes.  
 There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,

Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods  
 Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,  
 Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;  
 And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;  
 And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne  
 Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter  
 The curse which all remember. Call at will  
 Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,  
 Hades, or Typhon, or what mightier Gods  
 From all-prolific Evil since thy ruin  
 Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons,  
 Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge  
 Of the Supreme may sweep thro' vacant shades,  
 As rainy wind thro' the abandoned gate  
 Of a fallen palace.

*Pro.* Mother, let not aught  
 Of that which may be evil pass again  
 My lips, or those of aught, resembling me.  
 Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

*Ione.* My wings are folded o'er mine ears:  
 My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes:  
 Yet thro' their silver shade appears  
 And thro' their lulling plumes arise,  
 A shape, a throng of sounds;  
 May it be no ill to thee,  
 O thou of many wounds!  
 Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,  
 Ever thus we watch and wake.

*Pan.* The sound is of whirlwind underground,  
 Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;  
 The shape is awful like the sound,  
 Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.  
 A sceptre of pale gold  
 To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud  
 His veined hand doth hold.  
 Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,  
 Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

*Phantasm of Jupiter.* Why have the secret powers of this  
 strange world

Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither  
 On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds  
 Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice  
 With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk  
 In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

*Pro.* Tremendous Image! as thou art must be  
 He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,  
 The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,



Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

*The Earth.* Listen! And tho' your echoes must be mute  
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,  
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,  
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

*Phan.* A spirit seizes me and speaks within.  
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

*Pan.* See, how he lifts his mighty looks! the Heaven  
Darkens above.

*Ione.* He speaks! O shelter me!

*Pro.* I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,  
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,  
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,  
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

*Phantasm.* Fiend, I defy thee! With a calm, fixed mind,  
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;  
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,  
One only being shalt thou not subdue.  
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,  
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;  
And let alternate frost and fire  
Eat into me, and be thine ire  
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms  
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.

O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,  
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent  
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.

Let thy malignant spirit move  
In darkness over those I love:  
On me and mine I imprecate  
The utmost torture of thy hate;

And thus devote to sleepless agony,  
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O thou  
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,  
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow  
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!

I curse thee! Let a sufferer's curse  
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;  
'Till thine Infinity shall be

A robe of envenomed agony,  
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,  
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,

Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good ;  
 Both infinite as is the universe,  
 And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.  
 An awful image of calm power  
 Though now thou sittest, let the hour  
 Come, when thou must appear to be  
 That which thou art internally.  
 And after many a false and fruitless crime  
 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

*Pro.* Were these my words, O Parent ?

*The Earth.* They were thine

*Pro.* It doth repent me : words are quick and vain ;  
 Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.  
 I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

*The Earth.* Misery, O misery to me,  
 That Jove at length should vanquish thee.  
 Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,  
 The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.  
 Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,  
 Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and vanquished.

*First Echo.* Lies fallen and vanquished !

*Second Echo.* Fallen and vanquished !

*Ione.* Fear not : 'tis but some passing spasm,  
 The Titan is unvanquished still.  
 But see, where, through the azure chasm  
 Of yon forked and snowy hill,  
 Trampling the slant winds on high  
 With golden-sandalled feet, that glow  
 Under plumes of purple dye,  
 Like rose-ensanguined ivory,  
 A Shape comes now,  
 Stretching on high from his right hand  
 A serpent-cinctured wand.

*Pan.* 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

*Ione.* And who are those with hydra tresses  
 And iron wings that climb the wind,  
 Whom the frowning God represses  
 Like vapours steaming up behind,  
 Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

*Pan.* These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,  
 Whom he gluts with groans and blood,  
 When charioted on sulphurous cloud  
 He bursts Heaven's bounds.

*Ione.* Are they now led, from the thin dead  
 On new pangs to be fed ?

*Pan.* The Titan looks, as ever, firm, not proud.

*First Fury.* Ha! I scent life!

*Second Fury.* Let me but look into his eyes!

*Third Fury.* The hope of torturing him smells like a heap  
Of corpses to a death-bird after battle. [Hounds

*First Fury.* Darest thou delay, O Herald! Take cheer,  
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon  
Should make us food and sport—who can please long  
The Omnipotent?

*Mer.* Back to your towers of iron,  
And gnash beside the streams of fire, and wail  
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,  
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends,  
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,  
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:  
These shall perform your task.

*First Fury.* O mercy! mercy!  
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

*Mer.* Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer;

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly  
I come, by the Great Father's will driven down,  
To execute a doom of new revenge.  
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself  
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight  
Returning, for a season, heaven seems hell,  
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,  
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,  
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife  
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps  
That measure and divide the weary years  
From which there is no refuge, long have taught  
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms  
With the strange might of unimagined pains  
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,  
And my commission is to lead them here,  
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends  
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.  
Be it not so! There is a secret known  
To thee, and to none else of living things,  
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,  
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:  
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne  
In intercession: bend thy soul in prayer,  
And, like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,  
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:  
For benefits and meek submission tame  
The fiercest and the mightiest.

*Pro.* Evil minds

Change good to their own nature. I gave all

He has; and in return he chains me here  
 Years, ages, night, and day: whether the Sun  
 Split my parched skin, or in the moony night  
 The crystal-winged snow cling round my hair:  
 Whilst my beloved race is trampled down  
 By his thought-executing ministers.  
 Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just:  
 He who is evil can receive no good:  
 And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,  
 He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:  
 He but requites me for his own misdeed.  
 Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks  
 With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.  
 Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:  
 For what submission but that fata' word,  
 The death-seal of mankind's captivity,  
 Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,  
 Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,  
 Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.  
 Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned  
 In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:  
 For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down  
 Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,  
 Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,  
 Enduring thus, the retributive hour,  
 Which since we spake is even nearer now,  
 But hark, the hell-hound clamour. Fear delay!  
 Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

*Mer.* Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict,  
 And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:  
 Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

*Pro.* I know but this, that it must come.

*Mer.*

Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

*Pro.* They last while Jove must reign; nor more, nor less  
 Do I desire or fear.

*Mer.* Yet pause, and plunge  
 Into Eternity, where recorded time,  
 Even all that we imagine, age on age,  
 Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind  
 Flings, wearily in its unending flight,  
 Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;  
 Perchance it has not numbered the slow years  
 Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved.

*Pro.* Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

*Mer.* If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while  
 Lapped in voluptuous joy?

*Pro.* I would not quit  
 This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

*Mer.* Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

*Pro.* Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,  
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,  
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!  
Call up the fiends.

*Ione.* O, sister, look! White fire  
Has cloven to the roots of yon huge snow-loaded cedar;  
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

*Mer.* I must obey his words and thine: alas!  
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

*Pan.* See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,  
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

*Ione.* Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes  
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come,  
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,  
And hollow underneath like death.

*First Fury.* Prometheus!

*Second Fury.* Immortal Titan!

*Third Fury.* Champion of Heaven's slaves!

*Pro.* He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,  
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,  
What and who are ye? Never yet there came  
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell  
From the all-creative brain of Jove;  
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,  
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,  
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

*First Fury.* We are the ministers of pain, and fear,  
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,  
And clinging crime; and, as lean dogs pursue  
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,  
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,  
When the great King betrays them to our will.

*Pro.* Oh! many fearful natures in one name,  
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know  
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.  
But why more hideous than your loathed selves  
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

*Second Fury.* We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice.

*Pro.* Can aught exult in its deformity?

*Second Fury.* The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,  
Gazing on one another: so are we,  
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels  
To gather for her festal crown of flowers  
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,  
So from our victim's destined agony  
The shade, which is our form, invests us round,  
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

*Pro.* I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,  
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

*First Fury.* Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,  
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

*Pro.* Pain is my element, as hate is thine  
Ye rend me now: I care not.

*Second Fury.* Dost imagine  
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

*Pro.* I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,  
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called  
You, or aught else so wretched, into light. [one.

*Third Fury.* Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by  
Like animal life, and though we can obscure not  
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell  
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude  
Vexing the self-content of wisest men:  
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,  
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,  
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins  
Crawling like agony.

*Pro.* Why, ye are thus now;  
Yet am I king over myself, and rule  
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,  
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous,

*Chorus of Furies.*

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,  
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,  
Come, come, come!

Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,  
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye  
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,  
And, close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,  
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;

Come, come, come!

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,  
Strewed beneath a nation dead;  
Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning:  
'Twill burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning:  
Leave the self-contempt implanted  
In young spirits, sense enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel:  
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted,  
To the maniac dreamer: cruel

More than ye can be with hate  
Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate,  
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,  
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

*Ione.* Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

*Pan.* These solid mountains quiver with the sound  
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make  
The space within my plumes more black than night.

*First Fury.* Your call was as a winged car  
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;  
It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

*Second Fury.* From wide cities, famine-wasted;

*Third Fury.* Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

*Fourth Fury.* Kingly conclaves, stern and cold,  
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

*Fifth Fury.* From the furnace, white and hot,  
In which—

*A Fury.* Speak not; whisper not:  
I know all that ye would tell,  
But to speak might break the spell  
Which must bend the Invincible,  
The stern of thought;  
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

*Fury.* Tear the veil!

*Another Fury.* It is torn.

*Chorus.* The pale stars of the morn

Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.

Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran

Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,

Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.

One came forth of gentle worth,  
Smiling on the sanguine earth:  
His words outlived him, like swift poison

Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

Look! where round the wide horizon

Many a million-peopled city  
Vomits smoke in the bright air.

Mark that outcry of despair!

'Tis his mild and gentle ghost

Wailing for the faith he kindled:

Look again! the flames almost

To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:

The survivors round the embers

Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy! .

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers;

And the future is dark, and the present is spread

Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

*Semichorus I.* Drops of bloody agony flow

From his white and quivering brow.

Grant a little respite now:

See a disenchantèd nation  
 Springs like day from desolation ;  
 To truth its state is dedicate,  
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate ;  
 A legionèd band of linkèd brothers,  
 Whom Love calls children—

*Semichorus II.*

'Tis another's

See how kindred murder kin !  
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin.  
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within :  
 'Till Despair smothers

The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[*All the FURIES vanish, except one.*]

*Ione.* Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan  
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart  
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,  
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.  
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

*Pan.* Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

*Ione.* What didst thou see ?

*Pan.* A woful sight : a youth  
 With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

*Ione.* What next ?

*Pan.* The heaven around, the earth below  
 Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,  
 All horrible, and wrought by human hands,  
 And some appeared the work of human hearts.  
 For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles :  
 And other sights too foul to speak and live  
 Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear  
 By looking forth : those groans are grief enough.

*Fury.* Behold an emblem : those who do endure  
 Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap  
 Thousand-fold torment on themselves and him.

*Pro.* Remit the anguish of that lighted stare ;  
 Close those wan lips : let that thorn-wounded brow  
 Stream not with blood ; it mingles with thy tears !  
 Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,  
 So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,  
 So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.  
 O horrible ! Thy name I will not speak,  
 It hath become a curse. I see, I see  
 The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,  
 Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,  
 Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,  
 An early-chosen, late-lamented home ;  
 As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind ;  
 Some linkèd to corpses in unwholesome cells :  
 Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh leud ?—



Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms  
 Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,  
 Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood  
 By the red light of their own burning homes.

*Fury.* Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans:  
 Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

*Pro.* Worse?

*Fury.* In each human heart terror survives  
 The ravin it has gorged: the loftiest fear  
 All that they would disdain to think were true:  
 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds  
 The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.  
 They dare not devise good for man's estate,  
 And yet they know not that they do not dare.  
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.  
 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.  
 The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;  
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.  
 Many are strong and rich, and would be just,  
 But live among their suffering fellow-men  
 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

*Pro.* Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;  
 And yet I pity those they torture not.

*Fury.* Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [*Vanishes.*]

*Pro.*

Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!  
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear  
 Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,  
 Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.  
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good:  
 I am a God, and cannot find it there,  
 Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,  
 This is defeat, fierce king! not victory.  
 The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul  
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives  
 When they shall be no types of things which are.

*Pan.* Alas! what sawest thou?

*Pro.*

There are two woes;

To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.  
 Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words, they  
 Were born aloft in bright emblazonry;  
 The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,  
 As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!  
 Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven  
 Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:  
 Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.  
 This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

*The Earth.* I fe't thy torture, son, with such mixed joy  
 As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state  
 I bid ascend those subtle and fair spinitis,

Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,  
 And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,  
 Its world-surrounding ether: they behold  
 Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,  
 The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

*Pan.* Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,  
 Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,  
 Thronging in the blue air!

*Ione.* And see! more come,  
 Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,  
 That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.  
 And, hark! is it the music of the pines?  
 Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

*Pan.* 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

*Chorus of Spirits.* From unremembered ages we  
 Gentle guides and guardians be  
 Of heaven-oppressed mortality!  
 And we breathe, and sicken not,  
 The atmosphere of human thought:  
 Be it dim, and dank, and grey,  
 Like a storm-extinguished day,  
 Travelled o'er by dying gleams:  
 Be it bright as all between  
 Cloudless skies and windless streams,  
 Silent, liquid, and serene;  
 As the birds within the wind,  
 As the fish within the wave,  
 As the thoughts of man's own mind  
 Float through all above the grave:  
 We make there our liquid lair,  
 Voyaging cloud-like and unpent  
 Through the boundless element:  
 Thence we bear the prophecy  
 Which begins and ends in thee!

*Ione.* More yet come, one by one: the air around them  
 Looks radiant as the air around a star.

*First Spirit.* On a battle-trumpet's blast  
 I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,  
 'Mid the darkness upward cast.  
 From the dust of creeds outworn,  
 From the tyrants banner torn,  
 Gathering round me, onward borne,  
 There was mingled many a cry—  
 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!  
 Till they faded through the sky;  
 And one sound, above, around,  
 One sound beneath, around, above,  
 Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;

'Twas the hope, the prophecy,  
Which begins and ends in thee.

*Second Spirit.* A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,  
Which rocked beneath, immovably ;  
And the triumphant storm did flee,  
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,  
Between with many a captive cloud  
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,  
Each by lightning riven in half :  
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh :  
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff  
And spread beneath a hell of death  
O'er the white waters. I alit  
On a great ship lightning-split,  
And speeded hither on the sigh  
Of one who gave an enemy  
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

*Third Spirit.* I sate beside a sage's bed,  
And the lamp was burning red  
Near the book where he had fed,  
When a Dream with plumes of flame  
To his pillow hovering came,  
And I knew it was the same  
Which had kindled long ago  
Pity, eloquence, and woe ;  
And the world awhile below  
Wore the shade its lustre made.  
It has borne me here as fleet  
As Desire's lightning feet :  
I must ride it back ere morrow  
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

*Fourth Spirit.* On a poet's lips I slept  
Dreaming like a love-adept  
In the sound his breathing kept :  
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,  
But feeds on the ærial kisses  
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.  
He will watch from dawn to gloom  
The lake-reflected sun illumine  
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,  
Nor heed nor see, what things they be ;  
But from these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality !  
One of these awakened me,  
And I sped to succour thee.

*Ione.* Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west  
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,

Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air  
 On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?  
 And, hark! their sweet sad voices! 'tis despair  
 Mingled with love, and then dissolved in sound.

*Pan.* Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

*Ione.* Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float  
 On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,  
 Orange and azure deepening into gold:  
 Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

*Chorus of Spirits.* Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

*Fifth Spirit.* As over wide dominions [nesses,  
 I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wilder-  
 That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided  
 pinions,  
 Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:  
 His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I pass'd  
 'twas fading,  
 And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,  
 And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unup-  
 braiding, [sadness,  
 Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of  
 Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

*Sixth Spirit.* Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:  
 It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,  
 But treads with silent footstep, and fans with silent wing  
 The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest  
 bear;  
 Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above  
 And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,  
 Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster, Love,  
 And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

*Chorus.* Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,  
 Following him, destroyingly,  
 On Death's white and winged steed,  
 Which the fleetest cannot flee,  
 Trampling down both flower and weed,  
 Man and beast, and foul and fair,  
 Like a tempest through the air;  
 Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,  
 Woundless though in heart or limb.

*Pro.* Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

*Chorus.* In the atmosphere we breathe,  
 As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,  
 From spring gathering up beneath,  
 Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,  
 And the wandering herdsmen know:  
 That the white-thorn soon will blow:

Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,  
When they struggle to increase,  
Are to us as soft winds be  
To shepherd boys, the prophecy,  
Which begins and ends in thee.

*Ione.* Where are the Spirits fled?

*Panthea.* Only a sense

Remains of them, like the omnipotence  
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute  
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,  
Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul  
Like echoes thro' long caverns, wind and roll.

*Pro.* How fair these air-born shapes! and yet I feel  
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,  
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,  
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine  
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.  
All things are still: alas! how heavily  
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;  
Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief,  
If slumber were denied not. I would fain

Be what it is my destiny to be,  
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,  
Or sink into the original gulph of things:  
There is no agony, and no solace left;  
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

*Pan.* Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee  
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when  
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

*Pro.* I said all hope was vain but love; thou lovest.

*Pan.* Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,  
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale  
The scene of her sad exile: rugged once  
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;  
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,  
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow  
Among the woods and waters, from the ether  
Of her transforming presence, which would fade  
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

*Morning. A lonely Vale in the Indian Caucasus. ASIA alone.*

*Asia.* From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:  
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes  
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,  
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,  
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended  
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!

O child of many winds ! As suddenly  
 Thou comest as the memory of a dream,  
 Which now is sad, because it hath been sweet ;  
 Like genius, or like joy which riseth up  
 As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds  
 The desert of our life.  
 This is the season, this the day, the hour ;  
 At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,  
 'Too long desired, too long delaying, come !  
 How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl !  
 The point of one white star is quivering still  
 Deep in the orange light of widening morn  
 Beyond the purple mountains : through a chasm  
 Of wind-divided mist the darker lake  
 Reflects it : now it wanes : it gleams again  
 As the waves fade, and as the burning threads  
 Of woven cloud unravel in pale air :  
 'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloudlike snow  
 The roseate sun-light quivers : hear I not  
 The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes  
 Winnowing the crimson dawn ?

PANTHEA enters.

I feel, I see,  
 Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,  
 Like stars half-quenched in mists of silver dew.  
 Belov'd and most beautiful, who wearest  
 The shadow of that soul by which I live,  
 How late thou art ! the sphered sun had climbed  
 The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before  
 The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

*Pan.* Pardon, great Sister ! but my wings were faint  
 With the delight of a remembered dream,  
 As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds  
 Satiated with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep  
 Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm  
 Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy  
 Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,  
 Both love and woe familiar to my heart  
 As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept  
 Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean,  
 Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,  
 Our young Ione's soft and milky arms  
 Locked then, as now, behind my dark moist hair,  
 While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within  
 The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :  
 But not as now, since I am made the wind  
 Which falls beneath the music that I bear  
 Of thy most wordless converse ; since dissolved  
 Into the sense with which love talks, my rest

Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours  
Too full of care and pain.

*Asia.* Lift up thine eyes,  
And let me read thy dream.

*Pan.* As I have said  
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.  
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice  
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,  
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.  
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.  
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs  
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night  
Grew radiant with the glory of that form  
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell  
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,  
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:  
"Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world  
Whose loveliness—more fair than aught but her  
With shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me."  
I lifted them: the overpowering light  
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er  
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,  
And passion-parted lips, and keen faint eyes,  
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere  
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,  
As the warm ether of the morning sun  
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.  
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt  
His presence flow and mingle through my blood  
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,  
And I was thus absorb'd, until it past,  
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,  
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,  
And tremulous as they, in the deep night  
My being was condensed; and as the rays  
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear  
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died  
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name  
Among the many sounds alone I heard  
Of what might be articulate; though still  
I listened through the night when sound was none.  
Ione wakened then, and said to me:  
"Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?  
I always knew what I desired before,  
Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.  
But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;  
I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet  
Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;  
Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,  
Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept

And mingled it with thine: for when just now  
 We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips  
 The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth  
 Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,  
 Quivered between our intertwining arms."'  
 I answered not, for the eastern star grew pale,  
 But fled to thee.

*Asia.* Thou speakest, but thy words  
 Are as the air: I feel them not. Oh, lift  
 Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!

*Pan.* I lift them, though they droop beneath the load  
 Of that they would express: what canst thou see  
 But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

*Asia.* Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven,  
 Contracted to two circles underneath  
 Their long fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,  
 Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

*Pan.* Why lookest thou as if a spirit past?

*Asia.* There is a change: beyond their inmost depth  
 I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed  
 In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread  
 Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded morn.  
 Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!  
 Say not those smiles that we shall meet again  
 Within that bright pavilion which their beams  
 Shall build on the waste world? The dream is told.  
 What shape is that between us? Its rude hair  
 Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard  
 Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,  
 For through its grey robe gleams the golden dew  
 Whose stars the noon has quench'd not.

*Dream.* Follow! Follow!

*Pan.* It is mine other dream.

*Asia.* It disappears.

*Pan.* It passes now into my mind. Methought  
 As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds  
 Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,  
 When swift from the white Scythian wilderness  
 A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost;  
 I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;  
 But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells  
 Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief.  
 Oh, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

*Asia.* As you speak, your words  
 Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep  
 With shapes. Methought among the lawns together  
 We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,  
 And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds  
 Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains



Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind ;  
 And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,  
 Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently ;  
 And there was more which I remember not ;  
 But on the shadows of the morning clouds,  
 Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written  
 FOLLOW, OH, FOLLOW ! As they vanished by,  
 And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,  
 The like was stamped, as with a withering fire  
 A wind arose among the pines ; it shook  
 The clinging music from their boughs, and then  
 Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,  
 Were heard : OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME !  
 And then I said : " Panthea, look on me."  
 But in the depth of those beloved eyes  
 Still I saw FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

*Echo.*

Follow, follow

*Pan.* The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices  
 As they were spirit tongued.

*Asia.*

It is some being

Around the crags. What fine clear sounds ! O, list !  
 ECHOES, *unseen.* Echoes we : listen !

We cannot stay :

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean !

*Asia.* Hark ! Spirits, speak. The liquid responses  
 Of their aerial tongues yet sound.

*Pan.*

I hear.

*E h e s.*

Oh, follow, follow,

As our voice recedeth

Through the caverns hollow !

Where the forest spreadeth

(*More distant*) Oh follow, follow,

Through the caverns hollow.

As the song floats thou pursue,

Where the wild bee never flew ;

Through the noon-tide darkness deep,

By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night flowers, and the waves

At the fountain-lighted caves,

While our music, wild and sweet,

Mocks thy gently falling feet,

Child of Ocean !

*Asia.* Shall we pursue the sound ? It grows more faint  
 And distant.

*Pan.*

List ! the strain floats nearer now.

*Ereos.*

In the world unknown  
 Sleeps a voice unspoken ;  
 By that step alone  
 Can its rest be broken ;  
 Child of Ocean !

*Asia.* How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind !

*Echoes.*

Oh, follow, follow !  
 Through the caverns hollow,  
 As the song floats thou pursue,  
 By the woodland noon-tide dew ;  
 By the forests, lakes, and fountains,  
 Through the many-folded mountains ;  
 To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,  
 Where the Earth reposed from spasms,  
 On the day when He and thou  
 Parted, to commingle now ;  
 Child of Ocean !

*Asia.* Come sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,  
 And follow, ere the voices fade away.

## SCENE II.

*A forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns. ASIA and PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a rock, listening.*

*Semichorus I. of Spirits.*

The path through which that lovely twain  
 Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,  
 And each dark tree that ever grew,  
 Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue ;  
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,  
 Can pierce its interwoven bowers,  
 Nor ought, save where some cloud of dew,  
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,  
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,  
 Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers  
 Of the green laurel, blown anew ;  
 And bends, and then fades silently,  
 One frail and fair anemone :  
 Or when some star, of many a one  
 That climbs and wanders through steep night,  
 Has found the cleft through which alone  
 Bears fall from high those depths upon  
 Ere it is borne away, away,  
 By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,  
 It scatters drops of golden light,  
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :

And the gloom divine is all around,  
And underneath is the mossy ground.     n. 40.

*Semichorus II.* There the voluptuous nightingales  
Are awake through all the broad noon-day,  
When one with bliss or sadness fails,  
And through the windless ivy-boughs,  
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away  
On its mate's music-panting bosom ;  
Another from the swinging blossom  
Watching to catch the languid close  
Of the last strain, then lifts on high  
The wings of the weak melody,  
Till some new strain of feeling bear  
The song, and all the woods are mute ;  
When there is heard through the dim air  
The rush of wings, and rising there  
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,  
Sounds overflow the listener's brain  
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

*Semichorus I.* There those enchanted eddies play  
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,  
By Demogorgon's mighty law,  
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,  
All spirits on that secret way ;  
As inland boats are driven to Ocean  
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw ;  
And first there comes a gentle sound  
To those in talk or slumber bound,  
And wakes the destined, soft emotion.  
Attracts, impels them ; those who saw  
Say from the breathing earth behind  
There streams a plume-uplifting wind  
Which drives them on their path, while they  
Believe their own swift wings and feet  
The sweet desires within obey :  
And so they float upon their way,  
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,  
The storm of sound is driven along,  
Sucked up and hurrying : as they fleet  
Behind, its gathering billows meet,  
And to the fatal mountain bear  
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

*First Faun.* Canst thou imagine where those spirit live  
Which make such delicate music in the woods?  
We haunt within the least frequented caves  
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,  
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:  
Where may they hide themselves ?

*Second Faun.* 'Tis hard to tell :

I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,  
 The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun  
 Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave  
 The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,  
 Are the pavillions where such dwell and float  
 Under the green and golden atmosphere  
 Which noon-tide kindles through the woven leaves ;  
 And, when these burst, and the thin fiery air,  
 The which they breathed within those lucent domes,  
 Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,  
 They ride on them, and rein the headlong speed,  
 And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire  
 Under the waters of the earth again.

*First Faun* If such live thus, have others other lives,  
 Under pink blossoms or within the bells  
 Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,  
 Or on their dying odours, when they die ?  
 Or on the sunlight of the sphered dew ?

*Second Faun.* Aye, many more which we may well  
 divine  
 But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,  
 And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,  
 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs  
 Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,  
 And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom.  
 And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth  
 One brotherhood : delightful strains which cheer  
 Our solitary twilights, and which charm  
 To silence the unenvying nightingales.

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### SCENE III.

*A Pinnacle of Rocks among Mountains. ASIA and PANTHEA*

*Pan.* Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm  
 Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,  
 Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,  
 Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up  
 Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,  
 And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,  
 That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain  
 To deep intoxication ; and uplift,  
 Like Mænads who cry loud, Evœ ! Evœ !  
 The voice which is contagion to the world.

*Asia.* Fit throne for such a Power ! Magnificent  
 How glorious art thou, Earth ! And if thou be  
 The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,  
 Though evil stain its work, and it should be  
 Like its creation, weak, yet beautiful,  
 I could fall down and worship that and thee.

Even now my heart adareth : Wonderful !  
 Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain :  
 Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,  
 As a lake, paving in the morning sky,  
 With azure waves which burst in silver light,  
 Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on  
 Under the curdling winds, and islanding  
 The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,  
 Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,  
 Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,  
 And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;  
 And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains  
 From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling  
 The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,  
 From some Atlantic islet scattered up,  
 Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.  
 The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl  
 Of Cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines  
 Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,  
 Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !  
 The sun awakened avalanche ! whose mass,  
 Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there  
 Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds  
 As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth  
 Is loosened, and the nations echo round,  
 Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

*Pan.* Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking  
 In crimson foam, even at our feet ! It rises  
 As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon  
 Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

*Asia.* The fragments of the cloud are scattered up ;  
 The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;  
 Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain  
 Grows dizzy ; I see thin shapes within the mist.

*Pan* A countenance with beckoning smiles : there burns  
 An azure fire within its golden locks !  
 Another and another : hark ! they speak !

*Song of Spirits.* To the deep, to the deep,  
 Down, down !

Through the shade of sleep,  
 Through the cloudy strife  
 Of Death and of Life ;  
 Through the veil and the bar  
 Of things which seem and are,  
 Even to the steps of the remotest throne,  
 Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,  
 Down, down !



A living Spirit.

*Dem.* Ask what thou wouidst know.

*Asia.* What canst thou tell?

*Dem.* All things thou dar'st demand.

*Asia.* Who made the living world?

*Dem.* God.

*Asia.* Who made all  
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,  
Imagination?

*Dem.* God: Almighty God. [spring

*Asia.* Who made that sense which, when the winds on  
In rarest visitation, or the voice  
Of one beloved heard in youth alone,  
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim  
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,  
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude  
When it returns no more?

*Dem.* Merciful God.

*Asia.* And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,  
Which, from the links of the great chain of things,  
To every thought within the mind of man,  
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels  
Under the load towards the pit of death;  
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;  
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;  
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech  
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;  
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

*Dem.* He reigns.

*Asia.* Utter his name: a world pining in pain  
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.

*Dem.* He reigns.

*Asia.* I feel, I know it: who?

*Dem.* He reigns. [at first,

*Asia.* Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth  
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne  
Time fell, an envious shadow; such the state  
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,  
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves  
Before the wind or sun has withered them  
And Semi-vital worms; but he refused  
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,  
The skill which wields the elements, the thought  
Which pierces this dim universe; like light,  
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;  
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus  
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,  
And with this law alone, "Let man be free,"  
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.  
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be

Omnipotent but friendless, is to reign ;  
 And Jove now reigned ; for on the race of man  
 First famine, and then toil, and then disease,  
 Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,  
 Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove,  
 With alternating shafts of frost and fire,  
 Their shelterless pale tribes to mountain caves :  
 And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,  
 And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle  
 Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,  
 So ruining the lair wherein they raged.  
 Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes  
 Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,  
 Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,  
 That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings  
 The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind.  
 The disunited tendrils of that vine  
 Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;  
 And he tamed fire, which, like some beast of prey,  
 Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath  
 The frown of man ; and tortured to his will  
 Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,  
 And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms  
 Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.  
 He gave man speech, and speech created thought,  
 Which is the measure of the universe ;  
 And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,  
 Which shook, but fell not : and the harmonious mine  
 Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song ;  
 And music lifted up the listening spirit  
 Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,  
 Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound ;  
 And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,  
 With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,  
 The human form, till marble grew divine ;  
 And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see  
 Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.  
 He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,  
 And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.  
 He taught the implicated orbits woven  
 Of the wide-wandering stars : and how the sun  
 Changes his lair, and by what secret spell  
 The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye  
 Gazes not on the interlunar sea :  
 He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,  
 The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,  
 And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then  
 Were built and through their snow-like columns flowed  
 The warm winds, and the azure æther shone,  
 And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.



Such the alleviations of his state,  
 Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs  
 Withering in destined pain; but who reigns down  
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while  
 Man looks on his creation like a God  
 And sees that it is glorious, drives him on  
 The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,  
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?  
 Not Jove: while yet his frown shook heaven, aye, when  
 His adversary from adamantine chains  
 Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare  
 Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

*Dem.* All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:  
 Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

*Asia.* Whom call'dst thou God?

*Dem.* I spoke but as ye speak,  
 For Jove is the supreme of living things.

*Asia.* Who is the master of the slave?

*Dem.* If the abysm  
 Could vomit forth its secrets. But a voice  
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;  
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze  
 On the revolving world? What to bid speak  
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these  
 All things are subject but eternal Love.

*Asia.* So much I asked before, and my heart gave  
 The response thou hast given; and of such truths  
 Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand; and do thou answer me  
 As my own soul would answer, did it know  
 That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise  
 Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:  
 When shall the destined hour arrive?

*Dem.* Behold! [night

*Asia.* The rocks are cloven, and through the purple  
 I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds  
 Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands  
 A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight  
 Some look behind, as fiends pursued them, there,  
 And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars;  
 Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink  
 With eager lips the wind of their own speed,  
 As if the thing they loved fled on before,  
 And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks  
 Stream like a comet's flashing hair; they all  
 Sweep onward.

*Dem.* These are the immortal Hours,  
 Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

*Asia.* A spirit with a dreadful countenance  
 Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.

Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,  
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

*Spirit.* I am the shadow of a destiny  
More dread than is my aspect; ere yon planet  
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me  
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

*Asia.* What meanest thou?

*Pan.* That terrible shadow floats  
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke  
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.  
Lo! it ascends the ear; the coursers fly  
Terrified: watch its path among the stars,  
Blackening the night!

*Asia.* Thus I am answered: strange!

*Pan.* See, near the verge, another chariot stays;  
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,  
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim  
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit  
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;  
How its soft smiles attract the soul as light  
Lures winged insects through the lampless air,

*Spirit.* My coursers are fed with the lightning,  
They drink of the whirlwind's stream.  
And when the red morning is brightning  
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;  
They have strength for their swiftness I deem  
They ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire; and their speed makes night kindle;  
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;  
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle  
We encircle the earth and the moon:  
We shall rest from long labours at noon:  
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

#### SCENE V.

*The Car pauses within a cloud on the top of a snowy mountain.  
ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.*

*Spirit.* On the brink of the night and the morning  
My coursers are won to respire;  
But the earth has just whispered a warning  
That their flight must be swifter than fire:  
They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

*Asia.* Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath  
Would give them swifter speed.

*Spirit.* Alas! it could not.

*Pan.* O Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light  
Which fills the cloud! The sun is yet unrisen.

*Spirit.* The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo

Is held in heaven by wonder ; and the light  
Which fills this vapour, as the ærial hue  
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,  
Flows from thy mighty sister.

*Pan.* Yes, I feel—

*Asia.* What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

*Pan.* How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee ;

I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure  
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change  
Is working in the elements, which suffer  
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell  
That on the day when the clear hyaline  
Was cloven at thy uprising, and thou didst stand  
Within a veined shell, which floated on  
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,  
Among the Egean isles, and by the shores  
Which bear thy name ; Love, like the atmosphere  
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,  
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven,  
And the deep ocean, and the sunless caves,  
And all that dwells within them ; till grief cast  
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came :  
Such art thou now ; nor is it I alone,  
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,  
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.  
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speaks the love  
Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not  
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List! [*Music.*]

*Asia.* Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his  
Whose echoes they are : yet all love is sweet,  
Given or returned. Common as light is love,  
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.  
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,  
It makes the reptile equal to the God :  
They who inspire it most are fortunate,  
As I am now ; but those who feel it most  
Are happier still, after long sufferings,  
As I shall soon become.

*Pan.* List! Spirits, speak.

*Voice in the air, singing.*

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle  
With their love the breath between them ;  
And thy smiles before they dwindle  
Make cold air fire then screen them  
In those looks, where whoso gazes  
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of light! thy limbs are burning  
Through the vest which seems to hide them ;

As the radiant lines of morning  
 'Through the clouds, ere they divide them;  
 And this atmosphere divinest  
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinnest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,  
 But thy voice sounds low and tender  
 Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
 From the sight, that liquid splendour,  
 And all feel yet see thee never,  
 As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest,  
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
 And the souls of whom thou lovest  
 Walk upon the winds with lightness  
 Till they fail, as I am failing,  
 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

*Asia.* My soul is an enchanted boat,  
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;  
 And thine doth like an angel sit  
 Beside the helm conducting it,  
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
 It seems to float ever, for ever,  
 Upon that many-winding river  
 Between mountains, woods, abysses,  
 A paradise of wildernesses!  
 Till, like one in slumber bound,  
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
 Into a sea profound of ever spreading sound.

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions  
 In music's most serene dominions,  
 Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.  
 And we sail on, away, afar,  
 Without a course, without a star,  
 But, by the instinct of sweet music driven,  
 Till through Elysian garden islets  
 By thee, most beautiful of pilots,  
 Where never mortal pinnacle glided,  
 The boat of my desire is guided:  
 Realms where the air we breathe is love,  
 Which in the winds on the waves doth move,  
 Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have pass'd Age's icy caves,  
 And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,  
 And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray:  
 Beyond the glassy gulphs we flee  
 Of shadow-peopled Infancy,

Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day ;  
 A paradise of vaulted bowers,  
 Lit by downward-gazing flowers,  
 And watery paths that wind between  
 Wildernesses calm and green,  
 Peopled by shapes too bright to see,  
 And rest, having beheld ; somewhat like thee ;  
 Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously !

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*Heaven.* JUPITER on his *Throne* ; THETIS and the other *Deities*  
*assembled.*

*Jup.* Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share  
 The glory and the strength of him ye serve,  
 Rejoice ! henceforth I am omnipotent.  
 All else had been subdued to me : alone  
 The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,  
 Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,  
 And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,  
 Hurling up insurrection, which might make  
 Our antique empire insecure, though built  
 On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear ;  
 And, though my curses through the pendulous air,  
 Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,  
 And cling to it ; though under my wrath's might  
 It climb the crags of life, step after step,  
 Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandled feet  
 It yet remains supreme o'er misery,  
 Aspiring, unredressed, yet soon to fall :  
 Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,  
 That fatal child, the terror of the earth,  
 Who waits but till the destined hour arrive,  
 Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne  
 The dreadful might of ever-living limbs  
 Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,  
 To redescend, and trample out the spark.

Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,  
 And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,  
 And from the flower-inwoven soil divine,  
 Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,  
 As dew from earth under the twilight stars :  
 Drink ! be the nectar circling through your veins  
 The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,  
 Till exultation burst in one wide voice  
 Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou  
 Ascend beside me, veiled in the light

Of the desire which makes thee one with me,  
 Thetis, bright image of eternity!  
 When thou didst cry, "Insufferable might!  
 God! spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,  
 The penetrating presence; all my being,  
 Like him whom the Numidian steeps did thaw  
 Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,  
 Sinking through its foundations:" even then  
 Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third  
 Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,  
 Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,  
 Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,  
 (Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels  
 Grinding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.  
 Victory! Victory! Feel'st thou not, O world!  
 The earthquake of his chariot thundering up  
 Olympus?

[*The Car of the Hour arrives. DEMOGORGON descends, and  
 moves towards the Throne of Jupiter.*]

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

*Dem.* Eternity. Demand no direr name.  
 Descend, and follow me down the abyss.  
 I am thy child as thou wert Saturn's child;  
 Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together  
 Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.  
 The tyranny of heaven none may retain,  
 Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:  
 Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny  
 Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,  
 Put forth thy might.

*Jup.* Detested prodigy!  
 Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons  
 I trample thee! Thou lingerest?

Mercy! mercy!  
 No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,  
 That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,  
 Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,  
 On Caucasus! He would not doom me thus.  
 Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not  
 The monarch of the world? What then art thou?  
 No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then.  
 We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,  
 Even as a vulture and a snake outspent  
 Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,  
 Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock  
 Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,  
 And whelm on them into the bottomless void  
 This desolated world, and thee, and me,

The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck  
Of that for which they combated.

Ai! Ai!

The elements obey me not. I sink  
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down!  
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above  
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai! Ai!

SCENE II.

*The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis. OCEAN is discovered reclining near the Shore; Apollo stands beside him.*

*Ocean.* He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

*Apollo.* Aye, when the strife was ended which made dim  
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,  
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven  
With sanguine light, through the thick rugged skirts  
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:  
Like the last glare of day's red agony,  
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,  
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

*Ocean.* He sunk to the abyss? to the dark void?

*Apollo.* An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud  
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings  
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes  
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded  
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail  
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length  
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

*Ocean.* Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea,  
Which are my realm, will, heave unstained with blood,  
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn  
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow  
Round many-peopled continents, and round  
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones  
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark  
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see  
The floating bark of the light laden moon  
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,  
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;  
Tracking their path no more by blood, and groans,  
And desolation, and the mingled voice  
Of slavery and command; but by the light  
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,  
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,  
That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

*Apollo.* And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make  
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse  
Darkens the sphere I guide. But list, I hear  
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit

That sits i' the morning star.

*Ocean.* Thou must away!  
 Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell:  
 The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it  
 With azure calm out of the emerald urns  
 Which stand for ever full beside my throne.  
 Behold the Nereids under the green sea,  
 Their wavering limbs born on the wind-like stream,  
 Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair  
 With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,  
 Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

*(A sound of waves is heard.)*

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.

Peace, monster! I come now. Farewell.

*Apollo.*

Farewell.

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### SCENE III.

*Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, the EARTH  
 SPIRITS, ASIA, and PANTHEA, borne in the car with the  
 SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

*Hercules unbinds PROMETHEUS, who descends.*

*Hercules.* Most glorious among spirits! thus doth strength  
 To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,  
 And thee, who art the form they animate,  
 Minister like a slave.

*Pro.* Thy gentle words  
 Are sweeter even than freedom long desired  
 And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,  
 Shadow of beauty, unbeheld; and ye,  
 Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain  
 Sweet to remember, through your love and care;  
 Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,  
 All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,  
 Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,  
 And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain,  
 Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.  
 From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears,  
 Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,  
 Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:  
 And there is heard the ever-moving air,  
 Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,  
 And bees; and all around are mossy seats,  
 And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;—  
 A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;  
 Where we will sit and talk of time and change,  
 As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.  
 What can hide man from mutability?



And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,  
 Ione, shall chaunt fragments of sea-music,  
 Until I weep, when ye shall smile away  
 The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.  
 We will entangle buds and flowers and beams  
 Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make  
 Strange combinations out of common things,  
 Like human babes in their brief innocence;  
 And we will search, with looks and words of love,  
 For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,  
 Our unexhausted spirits; and, like lutes  
 Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,  
 Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,  
 From difference sweet where discord cannot be;  
 And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,  
 Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees  
 From every flower ærial Enna feeds,  
 At their known island-homes in Himera,  
 The echoes of the human world, which tell  
 Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,  
 And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,  
 Itself the echo of the heart, and all  
 That tempers or improves man's life, now free;  
 And lovely apparitions, dim at first,  
 Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright  
 From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms  
 Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them  
 The gathered rays, which are reality,  
 Shall visit us, the progeny immortal  
 Of Painting, Sculpture, and wrapt Poesy,  
 And Arts, though unimagined, yet to be.  
 The wandering voices and the shadows these  
 Of all that man becomes, the mediators  
 Of that best worship, love, by him and us  
 Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds which grow  
 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,  
 And veil by veil, evil and error fall:  
 Such virtue as the cave and place around.

*(Turning to the Spirit of the Hour.)*

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,  
 Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old,  
 Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it  
 A voice to be accomplished, and which thou  
 Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

*Ione.* Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely  
 Than all thy sisters, this the mystic shell.

See the pale azure fading into silver  
 Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:  
 Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

*Spirit.* It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:

Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

*Pro.* Go, borne over the cities of mankind  
On whirlwind-footed coursers : once again  
Outspeed the sun around the orb'd world,  
And, as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,  
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,  
Loosening its mighty music ; it shall be  
As thunder mingled with clear echoes : then  
Return, and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.—  
And thou, O Mother Earth !—

*The Earth.* I hear, I feel ;  
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down  
Even to the adamantine central gloom  
Along these marble nerves ; 'tis life, 'tis joy,  
And, through my withered, old, and icy frame,  
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down  
Circling. Henceforth, the many children fair  
Folded in my sustaining arms : all plants,  
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,  
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,  
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,  
Draining the poison of despair, shall take  
And interchange sweet nutriment ; to me  
Shall they become like sister-antelopes  
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind  
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.  
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float  
Under the stars like balm : night-folded flowers  
Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose :  
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather  
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy ;  
And death shall be the last embrace of her  
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother,  
Folding her child, says, " Leave me not again."

*Asia.* Oh, mother ! wherefore speak the name of death ?  
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,  
Who die ?

*The Earth.* It would avail not to reply :  
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known  
But to the uncommunicating dead.  
Death is the veil which those who live call life :  
They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile  
In mild variety the seasons mild,  
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,  
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,  
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's  
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain  
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,  
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even  
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,

With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.—  
 And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit  
 Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain  
 Made my heart mad, and those that did inhale it  
 Became mad too, and built a temple there,  
 And spoke, and were oracular, and lured  
 The erring nations round to mutual war,  
 And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;  
 Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds  
 A violet's exhalation, and it fills  
 With a serene light and crimson air  
 Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;  
 It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,  
 And the dark-linked ivy tangling wild,  
 And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms  
 Which star the winds with points of coloured light,  
 As they rain through them, and bright golden globes  
 Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,  
 And through their veined leaves and amber stems  
 The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls  
 Stand ever mantling with aerial dew,  
 The drink of spirits: and it circles round,  
 Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,  
 Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,  
 Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.  
 Arise! Appear!

*[A Spirit rises in the likeness of a winged child.]*

This is my torch-bearer;

Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing  
 On eyes from which he kindled it anew  
 With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,  
 For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,  
 And guide this company beyond the peak  
 Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,  
 And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,  
 Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes  
 With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,  
 And up the green ravine, across the vale  
 Beside the windless and crystalline pool,  
 Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,  
 The image of a temple, built above,  
 Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,  
 And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,  
 And populous most with living imagery,  
 Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles  
 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love,  
 It is deserted now, but once it bore  
 Thy name, Prometheus. There the emulous youths  
 Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom  
 The lamp which was thine emblem: even as those

Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope  
 Into the grave, across the night of life,  
 As thou hast borne it most triumphantly  
 To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.  
 Beside that temple is the destined cave.

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 SCENE IV.

*A forest. In the Back-ground a Cave. PROMETHEUS, ASIA,  
 PANTHEA, IONE, and the SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.*

*Ione.* Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides  
 Under the leaves! how on its head there burns  
 A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams  
 Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,  
 The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!  
 Knowest thou it?

*Pan.* It is the delicate spirit  
 That guides the earth through heaven. From afar  
 The populous constellations call that light  
 The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes  
 It floats along the spray of the salt sea,  
 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,  
 Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,  
 Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,  
 Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,  
 Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned  
 It loved our sister Asia, and it came  
 Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light  
 Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted  
 As one bit by a dipsas, and with her  
 It made its childish confidence, and told her  
 All it had known or seen, for it saw much,  
 Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her,  
 From whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,  
 Mother, dear Mother.

*The Spirit of the Earth, (running to Asia.)*

Mother, dearest Mother;

May I then talk to thee as I was wont?  
 May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,  
 After thy looks have made them tired of joy;  
 May I then play beside thee the long noons,  
 When work is none in the bright silent air?

*Asia.* I love thee, gentlest being! and henceforth  
 Can cherish thee unenvied. Speak, I pray:  
 Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights. [child

*Spirit of the Earth.* Mother, I am grown wiser, though a  
 Cannot be wise like thee, within this day,  
 And happier too; happier and wiser both.  
 Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms

And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs  
 That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever  
 A hindrance to my walks o'er the green world ;  
 And that, among the haunts of humankind,  
 Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,  
 Or cold staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,  
 Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,  
 Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts  
 Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man ;  
 And women too, ugliest of all things evil,  
 (Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,  
 When good and kind, free and sincere, like thee,)  
 When false or frowning, made me sick at heart  
 To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen,  
 Well, my path lately lay through a great city  
 Into the woody hills surrounding it :  
 A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :  
 When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook  
 The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet  
 Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all,—  
 A long, long sound, as it would never end :  
 And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly  
 Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,  
 Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet  
 The music pealed along. I hid myself  
 Within a fountain in the public square,  
 Where I lay like the reflex of the moon  
 Seen in a wave under green leaves, and soon  
 Those ugly human shapes and visages,  
 Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,  
 Pass'd floating through the air, and fading still  
 Into the winds that scattered them ; and those  
 From whom they pass'd seemed mild and lovely forms  
 After some foul disguise had fallen, and all  
 Were somewhat changed, and, after brief surprise  
 And greetings of delighted wonder, all  
 Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn  
 Came, would'st thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,  
 Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,  
 And that with little change of shape or hue :  
 All things had put their evil nature off.—  
 I cannot tell my joy, when, o'er a lake  
 Upon a drooping bough with night-shade twined,  
 I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward  
 And thinning one bright bunch of amberberries.  
 With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay  
 Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky: •  
 So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,  
 We meet again, the happiest change of all.

*Asu.* And never will we part, till thy chaste sister,

Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon,  
Will look on thy more warm and equal light  
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow,  
And love thee.—

*Spirit of the Earth.* What! as Asia loves Prometheus.

*Asia.* Peace, wanton! thou art yet not old enough.

Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes  
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill  
With sphered fires the interlunar air?

*Spirit of the Earth.* Nay, mother, while my sister trims her [lamp  
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

*Asia.* Listen; look!

*The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters.*

*Pro.* We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

*Spirit of the Hour.* Soon as the sound had ceased whose  
thunder filled

The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,  
There was a change: the impalpable thin air  
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,  
As if the sense of love dissolved in them,  
Had folded itself round the sphered world.  
My vision then grew clear, and I could see  
Into the mysteries of the universe:  
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,  
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,  
My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,  
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,  
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire.  
And where my moonlight car will stand within  
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms  
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,  
And you fair nymphs, looking the love we feel,  
In memory of the tidings it has borne;  
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,  
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,  
And open to the bright and liquid sky.  
Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake,  
The likeness of those winged steeds will mock  
The flight from which they find repose. Alas,  
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue  
When all remains untold which ye would hear?  
As I have said, I floated to the earth:  
It was as it is still, the pain of bliss  
To move, to breathe, to be. I wandering went  
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,  
And first was disappointed not to see  
Such mighty change, as I had felt within,  
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,  
And, behold! thrones were kingless, and men walked

One with the other even as spirits do,  
 None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,  
 Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows  
 No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,  
 "All hope abandon ye who enter here;"  
 None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear  
 Gazed on another's eye of cold command,  
 Until the subject of a tyrant's will  
 Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,  
 Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.  
 None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines  
 Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;  
 None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart  
 The sparks of love and hope till there remained  
 Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,  
 And the wretch crept a vampire among men,  
 Infecting all with his own hideous ill;  
 None talked that cominon, false, cold, hollow talk,  
 Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,  
 Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy  
 With such a self-mistrust as has no name,  
 And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind  
 As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew  
 On the wide earth, pass'd; gentle radiant forms,  
 From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;  
 Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,  
 Looking emotions once they feared to feel,  
 And changed to all which once they daied not be,  
 Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,  
 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,  
 The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,  
 Spoil the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons, wherein,  
 And beside which, by wretched men were borne  
 Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes  
 Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,  
 Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,  
 The ghosts of a no more remembered fame,  
 Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth  
 In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs  
 Of those who were their conquerors; mouldering round  
 Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,  
 A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide  
 As is the world it wasted, and are now  
 But an astonishment; even so the tools  
 And emblems of its last captivity,  
 Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,  
 Stand not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.  
 And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,



Which, under many a name and many a form,  
 Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,  
 Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world ;  
 And which the nations, panic-stricken, served  
 With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love  
 Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,  
 And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,  
 Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,  
 Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines ;  
 The painted veil, by those who were, called life,  
 Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,  
 All men believed and hoped, is torn aside ;  
 The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains  
 Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man  
 Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,  
 Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
 Over himself ; just, gentle, wise : but man  
 Passionless ; no, yet free from guilt or pain,  
 Which were, for his will made or suffered them,  
 Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,  
 From chance, and death, and mutability,  
 The clogs of that which else might oversoar  
 The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
 Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

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 ACT IV.

*Scene, a part of the Forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS,  
 PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping ; they awake gradually  
 during the first Song.*

*Voice of unscen Spirits.*

The pale stars are gone !  
 For the sun, their swift shepherd,  
 To their folds them compelling,  
 In the depths of the dawn,  
 Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee  
 Beyond his blue dwelling  
 As fawns flee the leopard.  
 But where are ye ?

*A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly singing*

Here, oh ! here :  
 We bear the bier  
 Of the Father of many a cancelled year !  
 Spectres we,  
 Of the dead Hours be,  
 We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.  
 Strew, oh, strew  
 Hair, not yew !



Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!  
 Be the faded flowers  
 Of Death's bare bowers  
 Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!  
 Haste, oh, Haste!  
 As shades are chased,  
 Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.  
 We melt away,  
 Like dissolving spray,  
 From the children of a diviner day,  
 With the lullaby  
 Of winds that die  
 On the bosom of their own harmony!

*Ione.* What dark forms were they?  
*Pan.* The past Hours, weak and grey

With the spoil which their toil  
 Raked together  
 From the conquest but One could foil.

*Ione.* Have they pass'd?

*Pan.* They have pass'd;  
 They outsped the blast,  
 While 'tis said, they are fled.

*Ione.* Wither, oh, whither?

*Pan.* To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

*Voice of unseen Spirits.*

Bright clouds float in heaven,  
 Dew stars gleam on earth,  
 Waves assemble on ocean,  
 They are gathered and driven  
 By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!  
 They shake with emotion,  
 They dance in their mirth.  
 But where are ye?

The pine-boughs are singing  
 Old songs with new gladness,  
 The billows and fountains  
 Fresh music are flinging,  
 Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea:  
 The storms mock the mountains  
 With the thunder of gladness,  
 But where are ye?

*Ione.* What charioteers are these?

*Pan.* Where are their chariote?

*Semichorus of Hours.*

The voice of the Spirits of Air and Earth  
 Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep

Which covered our being and darkened our birth  
In the deep

*A voice.*

In the deep?

*Semichorus II.*

Oh, below the deep.

*Semichorus I.* A hundred ages we had been kept  
Cradled in visions of hate and care,  
And each one who waked as his brother slept  
Found the truth—

*Semichorus II.*

Worse than his visions were!

*Semichorus I.* We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;

We have known the voice of Love in dreams,  
We have felt the wand of Power and leap—

*Semichorus II.* As the billows leap in the morning beams?

*Chorus.* Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,  
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,  
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,  
To check its light ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds  
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,  
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds  
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure  
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light:  
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,  
Like the clouds and sunbeams unite.

*A voice.*

Unite!

*Pan.* See, where the Spirits of the human mind,  
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils approach.

*Chorus of Spirits.* We join the throng,  
Of the dance and the song,  
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;  
As the flying-fish leap  
From the Indian deep,  
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep

*Chorus of Hours.* Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet  
For sandals of lightning are on your feet  
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,  
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

*Chorus of Spirits.* We come from the mind  
Of human kind,  
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind:  
Now 'tis an ocean  
Of clear emotion,  
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.  
From that deep abyss  
Of wonder and bliss,

Whose caverns are crystal palaces;  
 From those skiey towers  
 Where Thought's crowned powers  
 Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses  
 Of woven caresses,  
 Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;  
 From the azure isles  
 Where sweet Wisdom smiles,  
 Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.

From the temples high  
 Of Man's ear and eye,  
 Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;\*  
 From the murmurings  
 Of the unsealed springs  
 Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,  
 Through, blood and tears,  
 And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears  
 We waded and flew,  
 And the islets were few  
 Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,  
 Are sandall'd with calm,  
 And the dew of our wings is a reign of balm;  
 And beyond our eyes,  
 The human love lies  
 Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

*Chorus of Spirits and Hours.*

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;  
 From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth  
 Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,  
 Fill the dance and the music of mirth,  
 As the waves of a thousand streams rush by  
 To an ocean of slendour and harmony!

*Chorus of Spielts.* Our spoil is won,  
 Our task is done,  
 We are free to dive, or soar, or run:  
 Beyond and around,  
 Or within the bound  
 Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes  
 Of the starry skies

Into the hear deep to colonize :  
 Death, Chaos, and Night,  
 From the sound of our flight,  
 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,  
 And the Spirit of Might,  
 Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;  
 And Love, Thought, and Breath,  
 The powers that quell Death,  
 Wherever we soar, shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build  
 In the void's loose field  
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ;  
 We will take our plan  
 From the new world of man,  
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

*Chorus of Hours.* Break the dance, and scatter the song ;  
 Let some depart, and some remain.

*Semichorus I.* We, beyond heaven, are driven along :

*Semichorus II.* Us the enchantments of earth retain :

*Semichorus I.* Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,

With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,  
 And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

*Semichorus II.* Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright.

Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,  
 With the powers of a world of perfect light.

*Semichorus I.* We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering  
 sphere,

Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds, appear  
 From its chaos, made calm by love, not fear.

*Semichorus II.* We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,  
 And the happy forms of its death and birth  
 Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

*Chorus of Hours and Spirits.*

Break the dance and scatter the song,  
 Let some depart, and some remain ;  
 Wherever we fly we lead along  
 In leashes, like star-beams, soft yet strong,  
 The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

*Pan.* Ha ! they are gone !

*Ione.*  
 From the past sweetness ?

Yet feel you no delight

*Pan.*  
 When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,  
 Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water  
 To the unpavilioned sky !

Even whilst we speak

*Ione.*

New notes arise. What is that awful sound ?

*Pan.* 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world  
Kindling within the strings of the waved air  
Æolian modulations.

*Ione.* Listen too,  
How every pause is filled with under-notes,  
Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones,  
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,  
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air,  
And gaze upon themselves with in the sea

*Pan.* But see where, through two openings in the forest,  
Which hanging branches overcanopy,  
And where two runnels of a rivulet,  
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,  
Have made their path of melody, like sisters  
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,  
Turning their dear disunion to an isle  
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;  
Two visions of strange radiance float upon  
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,  
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet,  
Under the ground and through the windless air.

*Ione.* I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,  
In which the mother of the months is borne  
By ebbing night into her western cave,  
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,  
O'er which is curved an orb-like canopy  
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods  
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,  
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass ;  
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,  
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm  
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea  
When the sun rushes under it ; they roll,  
And move, and grow, as with an inward wind ;  
Within it sits a winged infant ; white  
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow ;  
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost ;  
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds  
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl,  
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light  
Scattered in strings ; yet its two eyes are heavens  
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity  
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured  
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,  
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,  
With fire that is not brightness ; in its hand  
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point  
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow  
Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll,

Over the grass, and flowers, and waves wake sound,  
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

*Pan.* And from the other opening at the wood  
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,  
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,  
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass  
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:  
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,  
Purple and azure, white, green and golden,  
Sphere within sphere; and every space between  
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,  
Such as ghosts dream, dwell in the lampless deep,  
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl  
Over each other with a thousand motions,  
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,  
And with the force of self-destroying swift seas,  
Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on,  
Kindling with mingled sounds and many tones,  
Intelligible words and music wild.

With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb  
Grind the bright brook into an azurr mist  
Of elemental subtlety, like light:  
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,  
The music of the living grass and air,  
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams  
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,  
Seem kneaded into one ærial mass  
Which drown the sense. Within the orb itself,  
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,  
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,  
On its own folded wings and wavy hair.  
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,  
And you can see its little lips are moving,  
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,  
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

*Ione.* 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

*Pan.* And from a star upon its forehead shoot  
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears  
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwin'd  
Embleming heaven and earth united now  
Vast beams like soke of some invisible wheel  
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,  
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,  
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,  
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass  
Make bare the secret of the earth's deep heart;  
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,  
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,  
And caverns on crystalline columns poised  
With vegetable silver overspread;

Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs  
 Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,  
 Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops  
 With kingly ermine snow. The beams flash on  
 And make appear the melancholy ruins  
 Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;  
 Planks turned to marble: quivers, helms, and spears,  
 And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels  
 Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry  
 Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,  
 Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems  
 Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!  
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,  
 Whose population which the earth grew over  
 Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie  
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,  
 Their statues, homes, and fanes; prodigious shapes,  
 Huddled in grey annihilation, split,  
 Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these  
 The anatomies of unknown winged things,  
 And fishes which were isles of living scale,  
 And serpents, bony chains, twisted around  
 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust  
 To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs  
 Had crushed the iron crags; and over these  
 The jagged alligator, and the might  
 Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once  
 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,  
 And weed over-grown continents of earth,  
 Increased and multiplied like summer worms  
 On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe  
 Wrapt deluge round it like a cloak, and they  
 Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God,  
 Whose throne was in a comet, pass'd, and cried,  
 Be not! And like my words, they were no more.

*The Earth.* The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!  
 The boundless, overflowing, bursting, gladness,  
 The vaporous exultation not to be confined!

Ha! ha! the animation of delight  
 Which wraps me like an atmosphere of light,  
 And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

*The Moon.* Brother mine, calm wanderer,  
 Happy globe of land and air,  
 Some spirit is darted like a beam from thee,  
 Which penetrates my frozen frame,  
 And passes, with the warmth of flame,  
 With love, and odour, and deep melody,  
 Through me, through me!

*The Earth.* Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,  
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,  
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.

The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,  
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,  
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud, as I do. Sceptred curse,  
Who all our green and azure universe  
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending  
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,  
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,  
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending.

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,  
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,  
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow and fire;  
My sea like forests, every blade and blossom  
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,  
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up  
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup,  
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all!  
And from beneath, around, within, above,  
Filling thy void annihilation, love  
Bursts in, like light, on caves cloven by thunder-ball.

*The Moon.* The snow upon my lifeless mountains  
Is loosened into living fountains,  
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :  
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,  
It clothes, with unexpected birth,  
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine  
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee, I feel, I know,  
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,  
And living shapes upon my bosom move :  
Music is in the sea and air,  
Winged clouds soar here and there,  
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :  
'Tis love, all love !

*The Earth.* It interpenetrates my granite mass,  
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,  
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;  
Upon the winds, among the clouds, 'tis spread,  
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,  
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm, bursting its cloudy prison  
With thunder, and, with whirlwind, has arisen



Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :  
 With earthquake shock and swiftmess making shiver  
 Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,  
 Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,  
 Which could distort to many a shape of error,  
 This true fair world of things, a sea-reflecting love ;  
 Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven  
 Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,  
 Darting from starry depths radiance and light, doth move :

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,  
 Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft  
 Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured ;  
 Then, when it wanders home, with rosy smile,  
 Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile  
 It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linked thought,  
 Of love and might to be divided not,  
 Compelling the elements, with adamant stress ;  
 As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,  
 The unquiet republic of the maze  
 Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,  
 Whose nature is its own divine control,  
 Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea :  
 Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;  
 Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove  
 Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,  
 And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,  
 A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,  
 Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm  
 Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,  
 Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass  
 Of marble and of colour his dreams pass ; [wear ;  
 Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children  
 Language is a perpetual Orphic song  
 Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng  
 Of thoughts and forms, which else, senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep  
 Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep  
 They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on !  
 The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ;  
 And the abyss shouts, from her depth laid bare,  
 Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I have none.

*The Moon.* The shadow of white death has pass'd  
 From my path in heaven at last,  
 A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;  
 And through my newly-woven bowers  
 Wander, happy paramours,  
 Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep  
 Thy vales more deep.

*The Earth.* As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold  
 A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,  
 And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,  
 And wanders up the vault of the blue day,  
 Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray  
 Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

*The Moon.* Thou art folded, thou art lying  
 In the light, which is undying,  
 Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;  
 All suns and constellations shower  
 On thee a light, a life, a power  
 Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pourest thine  
 On mine, on mine !

*The Earth.* I spin beneath my pyramid of night,  
 Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,  
 Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;  
 As a youth lulled in love-dreams, faintly sighing,  
 Under the shadow of his beauty lying,  
 Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

*The Moon.* As in the soft and sweet eclipse  
 When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,  
 High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull,  
 So, when thy shadow falls on me,  
 Then am I mute and still, by thee  
 Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,  
 Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun,  
 Brightest world of many a one ;  
 Green and azure sphere, which shinest  
 With a light which is divinest  
 Among all the lamps of Heaven,  
 To whom life and light is given ;  
 I, thy crystal paramour,  
 Borne beside thee by a power  
 Like the polar Paradise,  
 Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes ;  
 I, a most enamour'd maiden,  
 Whose weak brain is overladen  
 With the pleasure of her love,  
 Maniac-like, around thee move,  
 Gazing, an insatiate bride,

On thy form from every side,  
 Like a Mænad, round the cup  
 Which Agave lifted up  
 In the weird Cadmæan forest.  
 Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest  
 I must hurry, whirl and follow  
 Through the heavens wide and hollow,  
 Sheltered by the warm embrace  
 Of thy soul from hungry space,  
 Drinking, from thy sense and sight,  
 Beauty, majesty, and might,  
 As a lover or cameleon  
 Grows like what it looks upon,  
 As a violet's gentle eye  
 Gazes on the azure sky  
 Until its hue grows like what it beholds,  
 As a grey and watery mist  
 Glows like solid amethyst  
 Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,  
 When the sunset sleeps  
 Upon its snow.

*The Earth.* And the weak day weeps  
 That it should be so.

O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight  
 Falls on me like thy clear and tender light  
 Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night  
 Through isles for ever calm ;  
 O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce  
 The caverns of my pride's deep universe,  
 Charming the tiger joy, whose tramlings fierce  
 Made wounds which need thy balm.

*Pan.* I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,  
 A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,  
 Out of the stream of sound.

*Ione.* Ah me ! sweet sister,  
 The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,  
 And you pretend to rise out of its wave,  
 Because your words fall like the clear soft dew  
 Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

*Pan.* Peace, peace ! A mighty Power, which is as darkness,  
 Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky  
 Is showered like night, and from within the air  
 Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up  
 Into the pores of sunlight : the bright visions,  
 Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,  
 Glean like pale meteors through a watery night.

*Ione.* There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

*Pan.* An universal sound like words : Oh, list !

*Dem.* Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,  
 Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,

Beautiful orb ! gathering as thou dost roll  
The love which paves thy path along the skies :

*The Earth.* I hear : I am as a drop of dew that dies.

*Dem.* Thou Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth  
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee ;

Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth  
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony :

*The Moon.* I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee !

*Dem.* Ye kings of suns and stars ! Dæmons and Gods,  
Æthereal Dominations ! who possess

Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes  
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

*A Voice from above.*

Our great Republic hears ; we are blest, and bless.

*Dem.* Ye happy dead ! whom beams of brightest verse  
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,

Whether your nature is that universe  
Which once ye saw and suffered—

*A Voice from beneath.* Or as they  
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

*Dem.* Ye elemental Genii, who have homes  
From man's high mind even to the central store

Of sullen lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes  
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

*A confused voice.*

We hear : thy words waken Oblivion.

*Dem.* Spirits ! whose homes are flesh : ye beasts, and birds,  
Ye worms and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;

Lightning and wind ; and ye untameable herds,  
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes.

*A Voice.* Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

*Dem.* Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;  
A dupe and a deceiver ; a decay ;

A traveller from the cradle to the grave  
Through the di'n night of this immortal day :

*All.* Speak ! thy strong words may never pass away.

*Dem.* This the day, which down the void abysm  
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,

And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep  
Love from its awful throne of patient power

In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour  
Of dread endurance, from the slippery steep,

And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs  
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,  
These are the seals of that most firm assurance  
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;  
And if with infirm hand, Eternity,  
Mother of many acts and hours, should free

The serpent that would clasp her with his length,  
These are the spells by which to re-assume  
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.  
To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;  
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;  
This, like thy glory, Titan ! is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free .  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory !

# ROSALIND AND HELEN, A MODERN ECLOGUE.

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ROSALIND, HELEN, *and her CHILD.*

SCENE—*The Shore of the Lake of Como.*

*Helen.* Come hither, my sweet Rosalind.  
'Tis long since thou and I have met :  
And yet methinks it were unkind  
'Those moments to forgot.  
Come, sit by me. I see thee stand  
By this lone lake, in this far land,  
Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,  
'Thy sweet voice to each tone of even  
Unit'd, and thine eyes replying  
To the hues of yon fair heaven.  
Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me ?  
And be as thou wert wont to be  
Ere we were disunited ?  
None doth behold us now : the power  
That led us forth at this lone hour  
Will be but ill requited  
If thou depart in scorn : oh ! come,  
And talk of our abandoned home.  
Remember, this is Italy,  
And we are exiles. Talk with me  
Of that our land, whose wilds and floods  
Barren and dark although they be,  
Were dearer than these chestnut woods :  
Those heathy paths, that inland stream,  
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem  
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream :  
Which that we have abandoned now,  
Weighs on the heart like that remorse  
Which altered friendship leaves. I seek  
No more our youthful intercourse.  
That cannot be ! Rosalind, speak,  
Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,  
When evening fell upon our common home,  
When for one hour we parted,— do not frown :  
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken :  
But turn to me. Oh ! by this cherished token,

Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,  
Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,  
And not my scorned self who prayed to thee.

*Rosalind.* Is it a dream, or do I see  
And hear, frail Helen? I would flee  
Thy tainting touch; but former years;  
Arise, and bring forbidden tears;  
And my o'erburthened memory  
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee.  
I share thy crime. I cannot chose  
But weep for thee: mine own strange grief  
But seldom stoops to such relief:  
Nor ever did I love thee less,  
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness  
Even with a sister's woe. I knew  
What to the evil world is due,  
And therefore sternly did refuse  
To link me with the infamy  
Of one so lost as Helen. Now,  
Bewildered by my dire despair,  
Wondering I blush, and weep that thou  
Should'st love me still,—thou only!—There,  
Let us sit on that grey stone,  
Till our mournful talk be done.

*Helen.* Alas! not there; I cannot bear  
The murmur of this lake to hear.  
A sound from thee, Rosalind dear,  
Which never yet I heard elsewhere  
But in our native land, recurs,  
Even here where now we meet. It stirs  
Too much of suffocating sorrow!  
In the dell of yon dark chestnut wood  
Is a stone seat, a solitude  
Less like our own. The ghost of peace  
Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,  
If thy kind feeling should not cease,  
We may sit here.

*Rosalind.* Thou lead, my sweet,  
And I will follow.

*Henry.* 'Tis Finici's seat  
Where you are going. This is not the way,  
Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow  
Close to the little river.

*Helen.* Yes—I know—  
I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be gay,  
Dear boy, why do you sob?

*Henry.* I do not know :  
But it might break any one's heart to see  
You and the lady cry so bitterly.

*Helen.* It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,  
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.  
We only cried with joy to see each other,  
We are quite merry now—Good night.

The boy  
Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,  
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy  
Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee  
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,  
And whispered in her ear, "Bring home with you  
That sweet strange lady-friend." Then off he flew,  
But stopt, and beckoned with a meaning smile,  
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,  
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way  
Beneath the forest's solitude,  
It was a vast and antique wood,  
Thro' which they took their way ;  
And the grey shades of evening  
O'er that green wilderness did fling  
Still deeper solitude.  
Pursuing still the path that wound  
The vast and knotted trees around  
Thro' which slow shades were wandering,  
To a deep lawny dell they came,  
To a stone seat beside a spring,  
O'er which the columned wood did frame  
A roofless temple, like the fane  
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,  
Man's early race once knelt beneath  
The overhanging deity.  
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,  
The pale snake, that with eager breath  
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,  
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,  
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood  
In the light of his own loveliness ;  
And the birds that in the fountain dip  
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship  
Above and round him wheel and hover.  
The fitful wind is heard to stir  
One solitary leaf on high ;  
The chirping of the grasshopper



Fills every pause. There is emotion  
 In all that dwells at noontide here :  
 Then, thro' the intricate wild wood,  
 A maze of life and light and motion  
 Is woven. But there is stillness now ;  
 Gloom, and the trance of Nature now :  
 The snake is in his cave asleep  
 The birds are on the branches dreaming ;  
 Only the shadows creep ;  
 Only the glow-worm is gleaming ;  
 Only the owls and the nightingales  
 Wake in this dell when day-light fails,  
 And grey shades gather in the woods ;  
 And the owls have all fled far away  
 In a merrier glen to hoot and play,  
 For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.  
 The accustomed nightingale still broods  
 On her accustomed bough,  
 But she is mute ; for her false mate  
 Has fled and left her desolate.

This silent spot tradition old  
 Had peopled with the spectral dead.  
 For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold  
 And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told  
 That a hellish shape at midnight led  
 The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,  
 And sate on the seat beside him there,  
 Till a naked child came wandering by,  
 When the fiend would change to a lady fair!  
 A fearful tale ! The truth was worse  
 For here a sister and a brother  
 Had solemnized a monstrous curse,  
 Meeting in this fair solitude :  
 For beneath yon very sky,  
 Had they resigned to one another  
 Body and soul. The multitude,  
 Tracking them to the secret wood,  
 Tore limb from limb their innocent child,  
 And stabbed and trampled on its mother ;  
 But the youth, for God's most holy grace,  
 A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came  
 To this lone silent spot,  
 From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow  
 So much of sympathy to borrow.  
 As soothed her own dark lot.  
 Duly each evening from her home,  
 With her fair child would Helen come  
 To sit upon that antique seat,

While the hues of day were pale ;  
 And the bright boy beside her feet  
 Now lay, lifting at intervals  
 His broad blue eyes on her ;  
 Now, where some sudden impulse calls,  
 Following. He was a gentle boy ;  
 And in all gentle sports took joy ;  
 Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,  
 With a small feather for a sail,  
 His fancy on that spring would float,  
 If some invisible breeze might stir  
 Its marble calm : and Helen smiled  
 Thro' tears of awe on the gay child,  
 To think that a boy as fair as he,  
 In years which never more may be,  
 By that same fount, in that same wood,  
 The like sweet fancies had pursued ;  
 And that a mother, lost like her,  
 Had mournfully sate watching him.  
 Then all the scene was wont to swim  
 Thro' the mist of a burning tear.

For many months had Helen known  
 This scene ; and now she thither turned  
 Her footsteps not alone.  
 The friend, whose falsehood she had mourned,  
 Sate with her on that seat of stone.  
 Silent they sate ; for evening  
 And the power its glimpses bring,  
 Had, with one awful shadow, quelled  
 The passion of their grief. They sate  
 With linked hands, for, unrepelled  
 Had Helen taken Rosalind's.  
 Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds  
 The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,  
 Which is twined in the sultry summer air  
 Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,  
 Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,  
 And the sound of her heart that ever beat,  
 As with sighs and words she breathed on her,  
 Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,  
 Till her thoughts were free to float and flow ;  
 And from her labouring bosom now,  
 Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,  
 The voice of a long-pent sorrow came.

*Rosalind.* I saw the dark earth fall upon  
 The coffin ;—and I saw the stone  
 Laid over him whom this cold breast  
 Had pillowed to his nightly rest !  
 Thou knowest not, thou can'st not know

My agony. Oh! ~~the~~ ~~not~~ ~~weep~~ :  
 The sources whence such blessings flow  
 Were not to be approached by me!  
 But I could smile, and I could sleep,  
 Though with a self-accusing heart,  
 In morning's light, and evening's gloom,  
 I watched, — ~~and~~ would not thence depart—  
 My husband's unlamented tomb.  
 My children knew their sire was gone,  
 But when I told them, 'he is dead,'—  
 They laughed aloud in frantic glee  
 They clapped their hands and leaped about  
 Answering each other's ecstasy  
 With many a prank and merry shout;  
 But I sat silent and alone,  
 Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead : but I  
 Sate with a hard and tearless eye,  
 And with a heart which would deny  
 The secret joy it could not quell,  
 Low muttering o'er his loathed name;  
 Till from that self-contention came  
 Remorse where sin was none ; a hell  
 Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man  
 Hard, selfish, loving only gold,  
 Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran  
 With tears, which each some falsehood told,  
 And oft his smooth and bridled tongue  
 Would give the lie to his flushing cheek :  
 He was a coward to the strong ;  
 He was a tyrant to the weak,  
 On whom his vengeance he would wreak :  
 For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,  
 From many a stranger's eye would dart,  
 And on his memory cling, and follow  
 His soul to it's home so cold and hollow.  
 He was a tyrant to the weak,  
 And we were such, alas the day!  
 Oft, when my little ones at play,  
 Were in youth's natural lightness gay,  
 Or if they listened to some tale  
 Of travellers, or of fairy land,—  
 When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand  
 Flashed on their faces,—if they heard  
 Or thought they heard upon the stair  
 His footstep, the suspended word  
 Died on my lips! we all grew pale ;

The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear  
 If it thought it heard its father near ;  
 And my two wild boys would near my knee  
 Cling, cowed, and cowering fearfully.

I'll tell thee truth. I loved another.  
 His name in my ear was ever ringing,  
 His form to my brain was ever clinging ;  
 Yet if some stranger breathed that name,  
 My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast :  
 My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,  
 My days were dim in the shadow cast,  
 By the memory of the same !  
 Day and night, day and night,  
 He was my breath and life and light,  
 For three short years, which soon were past.  
 On the fourth, my gentle mother  
 Led me to the shrine to be  
 His sworn bride eternally,  
 And now we stood on the altar stair,  
 When my father came from a distant land,  
 And with a loud and fearful cry  
 Rushed between us suddenly.  
 I saw the stream of his thin grey hair,  
 I saw his lean and lifted hand,  
 And heard his words,—and live ! O God !  
 Wherefore do I live ?—' Hold, hold !'  
 He cried.—' I tell thee 'tis her brother !  
 Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod  
 Of yon church-yard rests in her shroud so cold :  
 I am now weak, and pale, and old :  
 We were once dear to one another,  
 I and that corpse ! Thou art our child !'  
 Then with a laugh both long and wild  
 The youth upon the pavement fell :  
 They found him dead ! All looked on me,  
 The spasms of my despair to see ;  
 But I was calm. I went away ;  
 I was clammy-cold like clay !  
 I did not weep—I did not speak ;  
 But day by day, week after week,  
 I walked about like a corpse alive !  
 Alas, sweet friend, you must believe  
 This heart is stone ; it did not break.  
 My father lived a little while,  
 But all might see that he was dying,  
 He smiled with such a woful smile !  
 When he was in the church-yard lying  
 Among the worms, we grew quite poor,  
 So that no one would give us bread ;  
 My mother looked at me, and said

Faint words of cheer, which only meant  
That she cou'd die and be content ;  
So I went forth from the same church door  
To another husband's bed.  
And this was he who died at last,  
When weeks, and months, and years had past,  
Through which I firmly did fulfil  
My duties, a devoted wife,  
With the stern step of vanquished will,  
Walking beneath the night of life,  
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain  
Falling for ever, pain by pain  
The very hope of death's dear rest :  
Which, since the heart within my breast  
Of natural life was dispossesst,  
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green  
Upon my mother's grave,—that mother  
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make  
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,  
Was my vowed task, the single care  
Which once gave life to my despair,—  
When she was a thing that did not stir,  
And the crawling worms were cradling her  
To a sleep more deep, and so more sweet  
Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,  
I lived ; a living pulse then beat  
Beneath my heart that awakened me.  
What was this pulse so warm and free ?  
Alas ! I knew it could not be  
My own dull blood : 'twas like a thought  
Of liquid love, that spread and wrought  
Under my bosom and in my brain,  
And crept with the blood through every vein ;  
And hour by hour, day after day,  
The wonder could not charm away,  
But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,  
Until I knew it was a child,  
And then I wept. For long long years  
These frozen eyes had shed no tears :  
But now—'twas the season fair and mild  
When April has wept itself to May :  
I sate through the sweet sunny day  
By my window bowered round with leaves,  
And down my checks the quick tears ran  
Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,  
When warm spring showers are passing o'er,  
O Helen, none can ever tell  
The joy it was to weep once more !

I wept to think how hard it were  
To kill my babe, and take from it  
The sense of light, and the warm air,  
And my own fond and tender care,  
And love, and smiles; ere I knew yet  
That these for it might, as for me,  
Be the masks of a grinning mockery.  
And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet  
To feed it from my faded breast,  
Or mark my own heart's restless beat  
Rock it to its untroubled rest;  
And watch the growing soul beneath  
Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath  
Half interrupted by calm sighs,  
And search the depth of its fair eyes  
For long departed memories!  
And so I lived till that sweet load  
Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed  
The stream of years, and on it bore  
Two shapes of gladness to my sight;  
Two other babes, delightful more  
In my lost soul's abandoned night,  
Than their own country ships may be  
Sailing towards wrecked mariners,  
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.  
For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,  
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay,  
Sucking the sullen milk away,  
About my frozen heart, did play,  
And weaned it, oh how painfully!  
As they themselves were weaned each one  
From that sweet food,—even from the thirst  
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,  
Strange inmate of a living breast!  
Which all that I had undergone  
Of grief and shame, since she, who first  
'The gates of that dark refuge closed,  
Came to my sight, and almost burst  
The seal of that Lethean spring;  
But these fair shadows interposed:  
For all delights are shadows now!  
And from my brain to my dull brow  
The heavy tears gather and flow:  
I cannot speak; Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes  
Glimmered among the moonlight dew!  
Her deep hard sobs, and heavy sighs,  
Their echoes in the darkness threw.

When she grew calm, she thus did keep  
The tenor of her tale :

He died :

I know not how. He was not, old  
If age be numbered by its years :  
But he was bowed and bent with fears,  
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,  
Which, like fierce fever left him weak ;  
And his strait lip and bloated cheek  
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers  
And selfish cares with barren plough,  
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,  
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed  
Upon the withering life within,  
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.  
Whether his ill were death or sin  
None knew, until he died indeed,  
And then men owned they were the same.

Seven days within my chamber lay  
That corse, and my babes made holiday ;  
At last, I told them what is death ;  
The eldest, with a kind of shame,  
Came to my knees, with silent breath,  
And sate awe-stricken at my feet ;  
And soon the others left their play,  
And sate there too. It is unmeet  
To shed on the brief flower of youth  
The withering knowledge of the grave ;  
From me remorse then wrung that truth.  
I could not bear the joy which gave  
Too just a response to mine own.  
In vain. I dared not feign a groan ;  
And in their artless looks I saw,  
Between the mists of fear and awe,  
That my own thought was theirs : and they  
Expressed it not in words, but said,  
Each in its heart, how every day  
Will pass in happy work and play,  
Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin  
Assembled, and the will was read.  
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead  
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,  
To blast and torture. Those who live  
Still fear the living, but a corse  
Is merciless, and power doth give  
To such pale tyrants half the spoil  
He rends from those who groan and toil,

Because they blush not with remorse  
 Among their crawling worms. Behold,  
 I have no child! my tale grows old  
 With grief, and staggers: let it reach  
 The limits of my feeble speech,  
 And languidly at length recline  
 On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty  
 Among the fallen on evil days;  
 'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,  
 And houseless Want in frozen ways  
 Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,  
 And, worse than all, that inward stan  
 Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers  
 Youth's star-light smile, and makes it, tears  
 First like hot gall, then dry for ever!  
 And well thou knowest a mother never  
 Could doom her children to this ill,  
 And well he knew the same. The will  
 Imported, that if e'er again  
 I sought my children to behold,  
 Or in my birth-place did remain  
 Beyond three days, whose hours were told,  
 They should inherit nought; and he,  
 To whom next came their patrimony,  
 A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,  
 Aye watched me, as the will was read,  
 With eyes askance, which sought to see  
 The secrets of my agony;  
 And with close lips and anxious brow  
 Stood canvassing still to an fro  
 The chance of my resolve, and all  
 The dead man's caution just did call:  
 For in that killing lie 'twas said—  
 "She is adulterous, and doth hold  
 In secret that the Christian creed  
 Is false, and therefore is much need  
 That I should have a care to save  
 My children from eternal fire."  
 Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,  
 And therefore dared to be a liar!  
 In truth, the Indian on the pyre  
 Of her dead husband, half consumed,  
 As well might there be false, as I  
 To those abhorred embraces doomed,  
 Far worse than fire's brief agony.  
 As to the Christian creed, if true  
 Or false, I never questioned it;  
 I took it as the vulgar do:



Nor my vext soul had leisure yet  
To doubt the things men say, or deem  
That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear,  
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,  
Men, women, children, slunk away,  
Whispering with self-contented pride,  
Which half suspects its own base lie.  
I spoke to none, nor did abide,  
But silently I went my way.  
Nor noticed I, where joyously  
Sate my two younger babes at play,  
In the court-yard through which I past;  
But went with footsteps firm and fast  
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,  
And there, a woman with grey hairs,  
Who had my mother's servant been,  
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,  
Made me accept a purse of gold,  
Half of the earnings she had kept  
To refuge her when weak and old.

With woe, which never sleeps or slept.  
I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought  
But on yon alp, whose snowy head  
'Mid the azure air is islanded,  
(We see it o'er the flood of cloud,  
Which sunrise from its eastern caves  
Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,  
Hung with its precipices proud,  
From that grey stone where first we met)  
There, now who knows the dead feel nought?  
Should be my grave; for he who yet  
Is my soul's soul, once said: "Twere sweet  
'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,  
And winds and lulling snows, that beat  
With their soft flakes the mountain wide,  
When weary meteor lamps repose,  
And languid storm's their pinions close:  
And all things strong and bright and pure,  
And ever-during, aye endure:  
Who knows, if one were buried there,  
But the e things might our spirits make,  
Amid the all-surrounding air,  
Their own eternity partake?"  
Then 'twas a wild and playful saying  
At which I laughed, or seemed to laugh;  
They were his words: now heed my praying,  
And let them be my epitaph.

Thy memory for a term may be  
 My monument. Wilt remember me?  
 I know thou wilt, and canst forgive  
 Whilst in this erring world to live  
 My soul disdained not, that I thought  
 Its lying forms were worthy aught,  
 And much less thee.

*Helen.* Oh speak not so,  
 But come to me and pour thy woe  
 Into this heart, full though it be,  
 Aye overflowing with its own:  
 I thought that grief had severed me  
 From all beside who weep and groan;  
 Its likeness upon earth to be,  
 Its express image; but thou art  
 More wretched. Sweet! we will not part  
 Henceforth, if death be not division;  
 If so, the dead feel no contrition.  
 But wilt thou hear, since last we parted  
 All that has left me broken-hearted?

*Ros.* Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn  
 Of their thin beams, by that delusive morn  
 Which sinks again in darkness, like the light  
 Of early love, soon lost in total night.

*Helen.* Alas! Italian winds are mild,  
 But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—  
 When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves  
 Soft music, my poor brain is wild,  
 And I am weak like a nursling child,  
 Though my soul with grief is grey and old.

*Ros.* Weep not at thine own words, tho' they must make  
 Me weep. What is thy tale?

*Helen.* I fear 'twill shake  
 Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well  
 Rememberest when we met no more  
 And, though I dwelt with Lionel,  
 That friendless caution pierced me sore  
 With grief; a wound my spirit bore  
 Indignantly, but when he died,  
 With him lay dead both hope and pride.

Alas! all hope is buried now.  
 But then men dreamed the aged earth  
 Was labouring in that mighty birth,  
 Which many a poet and a sage  
 Has aye foreseen—the happy age  
 When truth and love shall dwell below

Among the works and ways of men ;  
Which on this world not power, but will,  
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell  
Of strife, how vain, is known too well ;  
When liberty's dear pæan fell  
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,  
Though of great wealth and lineage high,  
Yet through those dungeon walls there came  
Thy thrilling light, O liberty !  
And as the meteor's midnight flame  
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth  
Flashed on his visionary youth,  
And filled him, not with love, but faith,  
And hope, and courage mute in death ;  
For love and life in him were twins,  
Born at one birth : in every other  
First life, then love its course begins,  
Though they be children of one mother ;  
And so through this dark world they fleet  
Divided, till in death they meet :  
But he loved all things ever. Then  
He past amid the strife of men,  
And stood at the throne of armed power  
Pleading for a world of woe :  
Secure as one on a rock-built tower  
O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,  
'Mid the passions wild of human kind  
He stood, like a spirit calming them ;  
For, it was said, his words could bind  
Like music the lulled crowd, and stem  
That torrent of unquiet dream  
Which mortals truth and reason deem,  
But is revenge and fear and pride.  
Joyous he was ; and hope and peace  
On all who heard him did abide,  
Raining like dew from his sweet talk,  
As where the evening star may walk  
Along the brink of the gloomy seas,  
Liquid mists of splendour quiver.  
His very gestures touched to tears  
The unpersuaded tyrant, never  
So moved before : his presence stung  
The torturers with their victims' pain,  
And none knew how ; and through their ears,  
The subtle witchcraft of his tongue  
Unlocked the hearts of those who keep  
Gold, the world's bond of slavery.  
Men wondered, and some sneered to see

One sow what he could never reap :  
For he is rich, they said, and young,  
And might drink from the depths of luxury.  
If he seeks fame, fame never crowned  
The champion of a trampled creed :  
If he seeks power, power is enthroned  
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed  
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,  
Those who would sit near power must toil ;  
And such, there sitting, all may see.  
What seeks he ? All that others seek  
He casts away, like a vile weed  
Which the sea casts unreturningly.  
That poor and hungry men should break  
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn,  
We understand ; but Lionel  
We know is rich and nobly born.  
So wondered they ; yet all men loved  
Young Lionel, though few approved ;  
All but the priests, whose hatred fell  
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,  
The withering honey-dew, which clings  
Under the bright green buds of May,  
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings :  
For he made verses wild and queer  
On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,  
Because they bring them land and gold.  
Of devils and saints, and all such gear,  
He made tales which whoso heard or read  
Would laugh till he were almost dead.  
So this grew a proverb : " don't get old  
Till Lionel's banquet in hell ! you hear,  
And then you will laugh yourself young again."  
So the priests hated him, and he  
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.  
Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,  
For public hope grew pale and dim  
In an altered time and tide,  
And in its wasting withered him,  
As a summer flower that blows too soon  
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,  
When it scatters through an April night  
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.  
None now hoped more. Grey Power was seated  
Safely on her ancestral throne ;  
And Faith, the Python, undefeated,  
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on  
Her foul and wounded train, and men  
Were trampled and deceived again,  
And words and shows again could bind

The wailing tribes of human kind  
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood  
Raged round the raging multitude,  
To fields remote by tyrants sent  
To be the scorned instrument,  
With which they drag from mines of gore  
The chains their slaves yet ever wore ;  
And in the streets men met each other,  
And by old altars and in halls,  
And smiled again at festivals.  
But each man found in his heart's brother  
Cold cheer ; for all, though half deceived,  
The outworn creeds again believed,  
And the same round anew began,  
Which the weary world yet ever ran.  
Many then wept, not tears, but gall,  
Within their hearts, like drops which fall  
Wasting the fountain-stone away.  
And in that dark and evil day  
Did all desires and thoughts, that claim  
Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,  
Love, hope, though hope was now despair—  
Indue the colours of this change,  
As from the all-surrounding air  
The earth takes hues obscure and strange,  
When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell  
To many, most to Lionel,  
Whose hope was like the life of youth  
Within him, and, when dead, became  
A spirit of unresting flame,  
Which goaded him in his distress  
Over the world's vast wilderness.  
Three years he left his native land,  
And on the fourth, when he returned  
None knew him : he was stricken deep  
With some disease of mind, and turned  
Into aught unlike Lionel.  
On him—on whom, did he pause in sleep,  
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,  
And, did he wake, a winged band  
Of bright persuasions, which had fed  
On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,  
Kept their swift pinions half outspread,  
To do on men his least command—  
On him, whom once t'was paradise  
Even to behold, now misery lay :  
In his own heart t'was merciless,  
To all things else none may express

Its innocence and tenderness.

'Twas said that he had refuge sought  
In love from his unquiet thought  
In distant lands, and been deceived  
By some strange show : for there were found,  
Blotted with tears as those relieved  
By their own words are wont to do,  
These mournful verses on the ground,  
By all who read them blotted too.

“ How am I changed ! my hopes were once like fire,  
I loved, and I believed that life was love.  
How am I lost ! on wings of swift desire  
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.  
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire  
My liquid sleep. I woke, and did approve  
All nature to my heart, and thought to make  
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

“ I love but I believe in love no more.  
I feel desire, but hope not. Oh, from sleep  
Most vainly must my weary brain inplore  
Its long lost flattery now. I wake to weep,  
And sit through the long day gnawing the core  
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,  
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure  
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.”

He dwelt beside me near the sea ;  
And oft in evening did we meet,  
When the waves, beneath the star-light, flee  
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,  
And talked. Our talk was sad and sweet,  
Till slowly from his mien there passed  
The desolation which it spoke ;  
And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast  
Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,  
The next spring shews leaves pale and rare,  
But like flowers delicate and fair,  
On its rent boughs— again arrayed  
His countenance in tender light :  
His words grew subtle fire, which made  
The air his hearers breathed delight :  
His motions, like the winds, were free,  
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,  
Then fade away in circlets faint :  
And winged hope, on which upborne  
His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,  
Like some bright spirit newly born  
Floating amid the sunny skies,  
Sprang forth from his rent heart anew,

Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,  
Tempering their loveliness too keen,  
Past woe its shadow backward threw,  
Till like an exhalation, spread  
From flowers half drunk with evening dew,  
They did become infectious : sweet  
And subtle mists of sense and thought  
Which rapt us soon, when we might meet,  
Almost from our own looks, and aught,  
The wide world holds. And so, his mind  
Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear :  
For ever now his health declined,  
Like some frail bark which cannot bear  
The impulse of an altered wind,  
Though prosperous : and my heart grew full  
'Mid its new joy of a new care :  
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,  
As rose o'er shadowed lilies are ;  
And soon his deep and sunny hair,  
In this alone less beautiful,  
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.  
The blood in his translucent veins  
Beat, not like animal life, but love  
Seemed now its sullen springs to move,  
When life had failed, and all its pains ;  
And sudden sleep would seize him oft  
Like death, so calm, but that a tear,  
His pointed eye-lashes between,  
Would gather in the light serene  
Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft  
Beneath lay undulating there.  
His breath was like inconstant flame,  
As eagerly it went and came ;  
And I hung o'er him in his sleep,  
Till like an image in the lake  
Which rains disturb, my tears would break  
The shadow of that slumber deep ;  
Then he would bid me not to weep,  
And say with flattery false, yet sweet,  
That death and he could never meet,  
If I would never part with him.  
And so we loved, and did unite  
All that in us was yet divided :  
For when he said, that many a rite,  
By men to bind but once provided,  
Could not be shared by him and me,  
Or they would kill him in their glee,  
I shuddered, and then laughing said—  
" We will have rights our faith to bind,  
But our church shall be the starry night,

Our altar the grassy earth outspread,  
And our priest the muttering wind."

"Twas sunset as I spoke : one star  
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar  
The ministers of misrule sent,  
Seized upon Lionel, and bore  
His chained limbs to a dreary tower,  
In the midst of a city vast and wide.  
For he, they said, from his mind had bent  
Against their gods keen blasphemy,  
For which, though his soul most roasted be  
In hell's red lakes immortally,  
Yet even on earth must he abide  
The vengeance of their slaves—a trial,  
I think, men call it. What avail  
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial  
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate ?  
What the knit soul, that pleading and pale  
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late  
It painted with its own delight ?  
We were divided. As I could,  
I stilled the tingling of my blood,  
And followed him in their despite,  
As a widow follows, pale and wild,  
The murderers and corse of her only child ;  
And when we came to the prison door,  
And I prayed to share his dungeon floor  
With prayers which rarely have been spurned,  
And when men drove me forth, and I  
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,  
A farewell look of love he turned,  
Half calming me ; then gazed awhile,  
As if through that black and massy pile,  
And through the crowd around him there,  
And through the dense and murky air,  
And the thronged streets, he did espy  
What poets knew and prophecy :  
And said, with voice that made them shiver,  
And clung like music in my brain,  
And which the mute walls spoke again  
Prolonging it with deepened strain—  
" Fear not, the tyrants shall rule for ever,  
Or the priests of the bloody faith ;  
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,  
Whose waves they have tainted with death :  
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,  
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,  
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see  
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity."



I dwelt besides the prison gate,  
And the strange crowd that out and in  
Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,  
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,  
But the fever of care was louder within.  
Soon, but too late, in penitence  
Or fear, his foes released him thence :  
I saw his thin and languid form,  
As leaning on the jailer's arm,  
Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,  
To meet his mute and faded smile,  
And hear his words of kind farewell,  
He tottered forth from his damp cell.  
Many had never wept before,  
From whom fast tears then gushed and fell ;  
Many will relent no more,  
Who sobbed like infants then ; aye, all  
Who thronged the prison's stony hall,  
The rulers or the slaves of law,  
Felt with a new surprise and awe  
That they were human, till strong shame  
Made them again become the same.  
The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,  
From human looks the infection caught,  
And fondly crouched and fawned on him ;  
And men have heard the prisoners say,  
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,  
That from that hour, throughout one day,  
The fierce despair and hate, which kept  
Their trampled bosoms almost slept  
When, like twin vultures, they hung feeding  
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,  
Because their jailer's rule, they thought,  
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.  
I know not how, but we were free,  
And Lionel sate alone with me,  
As the carriage drove through the streets apace  
And we looked upon each other's face  
And the blood in our fingers intertwined  
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,  
As the swift emotions went and came  
Through the veins of each united frame.  
So through the long long streets we past  
Of the million-peopled City vast ;  
Which is that desert, where each one  
Seeks his mate, yet is alone,  
Beloved and sought and mourned of none ;  
Until the clear blue sky was seen,  
And the grassy meadows bright and green  
And then I sunk in his embrace,

Enclosing there a mighty space  
 Of love : and so we travelled on  
 By woods, and fields of yellow flowers  
 And towns, and villages, and towers,  
 Day after day of happy hours.  
 It was the azure time of June,  
 When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,  
 And the warm and fitful breezes shake  
 The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar,  
 And there were odours then to make  
 The very breath we did respire  
 A liquid element, whereon  
 Our spirits, like delighted things  
 That walk the air on subtle wings,  
 Floated and mingled far away,  
 'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.  
 And when the evening star came forth  
 Above the curve of the new bent moon,  
 And light and sound ebbed from the earth,  
 Like the tide of the full and weary sea  
 To the depths of its own tranquillity,  
 Our natures to its own repose  
 Did the earth's breathless sleep attune:  
 Like flowers, which on each other close  
 Their languid leaves when day-light's gone,  
 We lay, till new emotions came,  
 Which seemed to make each mortal frame  
 One soul of interwoven flame,  
 A life in life, a second birth-  
 In worlds diviner far than earth,  
 Which, like two strains of harmony  
 That mingle in the silent sky,  
 Then slowly disunite, past by  
 And left the tenderness of tears,  
 A soft oblivion of all fears,  
 A sweet sleep : so we travelled on  
 Till we came to the home of Lionel,  
 Among the mountains wild and lone,  
 Beside the hoary western sea,  
 Which near the verge of the echoing shore  
 The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,  
 As we alighted, wept to see  
 His master changed so fearfully ;  
 And the old man's sobs did waken me  
 From my dream of unremaining gladness ;  
 The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness  
 When I looked, and saw that there was death  
 On Lionel : yet day by day

He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,  
And in my soul I dared to say,  
Nothing so bright can pass away :  
Death is dark, and foul and dull,  
But he is—O how beautiful !  
Yet day by day he grew more weak,  
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,  
Which ne'er was loud, became more low ;  
And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek  
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow  
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow :  
And death seemed not like death in him,  
For the spirit of life o'er every limb  
Lingered, a mist of sence and thought.  
When the summer wind faint odours brought  
From mountain flowers, even as it passed,  
His cheek would change, as the noon-day sea  
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.  
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,  
You might see his colour come and go,  
And the softest strain of music made  
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade  
Amid the dew of his tender eyes ;  
And the breath, with intermitting flow,  
Made his pale lips quiver and part.  
You might hear the beatings of his heart ;  
Quick, but not strong, and with my tresses  
When oft he playfully would bind  
In the bowers of mossy lonelinesses  
His neck, and win me so to mingle  
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,  
And our faint limbs were intertwined,  
Alas ! the unquiet life did tingle  
From mine own heart through every vein,  
Like a captive in dreams of liberty,  
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.  
But his, it seemed already free,  
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me !  
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell  
That spirit as it passed, till soon,  
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,  
Beneath its light invisible,  
Is seen when it folds its grey wings again  
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,  
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul  
Passed from beneath that strong control,  
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear  
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,  
On a green and sea-girt promontory,

Not far from where we dwelt, there stood  
 In record of a sweet sad story,  
 An altar and a temple bright  
 Circled by steps, and o'er the gate  
 Was sculptured, "To Fidelity;"  
 And in the shrine an image sate,  
 All veiled; but there was seen the light  
 Of smiles, which faintly could express  
 A mingled pain and tenderness  
 Through that ethereal drapery.  
 The left hand held the head, the right—  
 Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,  
 You might see the nerves quivering withiu—  
 Was forcing the point of a barbed dart  
 Into its side-convulsing heart.  
 An unskilled hand, yet one informed  
 With genius, had the marble warmed  
 With that pathetic life. This tale  
 It told: A dog had from the sea,  
 When the tide was raging fearfully,  
 Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,  
 Then died beside her on the sand,  
 And she that temple thence had planned;  
 But it was Lionel's own hand  
 Had wrought the image. Each new moon  
 That lady did, in this lone fane,  
 The rites of a religion sweet,  
 Whose god was in her heart and brain:  
 The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn  
 On the marble floor beneath her feet,  
 And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,  
 Whose odour is so sweet and faint,  
 And weeds, like branching chrysolite.  
 Woven in devices fine and quaint,  
 And tears from her brown eyes did stain  
 The altar: need but look upon  
 That dying statue, fair and wan,  
 If tears should cease, to weep again;  
 And rare Arabian odours came,  
 Though the myrtle copses steaming thence  
 From the hissing frankincense,  
 Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,  
 Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,  
 That ivory dome, whose azure night  
 With golden stars, like heaven was bright  
 O'er the split cedars, pointed flame;  
 And the lady's harp would kindle there  
 The melody of an old air  
 Softer than sleep; the villagers  
 Mixt their religion up with her's  
 And, as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane ;  
 Daylight on its last purple cloud  
 Was lingering grey, and soon her strain  
 The nightingale began ; now loud,  
 Climbing in circles the windless sky,  
 Now dying music ; suddenly  
 'Tis scattered in a thousand notes ;  
 And now to the hushed ear it floats  
 Like field-smells known in infancy,  
 Then failing soothes the air again.  
 We sate within that temple lone,  
 Pavilioned round with Parian stone :  
 His motner's harp stood near, and oft  
 I had awakened music soft  
 Amid its wires ; the nightingale  
 Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale :  
 " Now drain the cup," said Lionel,  
 " Which the poet-bird has crowned so well  
 With the wine of her bright and liquid song !  
 Heardst thou not sweet words among  
 That heaven-resounding minstrelsy ?  
 Heardst thou not, that those who die  
 Awake in a world of extasy ?  
 That love, when limbs are interwoven,  
 And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,  
 And thought, to the world's dim boundaries cūging  
 And music, when one beloved is singing,  
 Is death ? Let us drain right joyously  
 The cup which the sweet bird fills for me."  
 He paused, and to my lips he bent  
 His own : like spirit his words went  
 Through all my limbs with the speed of fire ;  
 And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,  
 Filled me with the flame divine,  
 Which in their orbs was burning far,  
 Like the light of an unmeasured star,  
 In the sky of midnight dark and deep :  
 Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire  
 Sounds which my skill could ne'er awaken  
 And first, I felt my fingers sweep  
 The harp, and a long quivering cry  
 Burst from my lips in symphony :  
 The dusk and solid air was shaken,  
 As swift and swifter the notes came  
 From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,  
 And from my bosom, labouring  
 With some unutterable thing ;  
 The awful sound of my own voice made  
 My faint lips tremble ; in some mood  
 Of wordless thought Lionel stood

So pale, that even beside his cheek  
 The snowy colour from its shade  
 Caught whiteness : yet his countenance  
 Raised upward, buried with radiance  
 Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,  
 Like the moon struggling through the night  
 Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break  
 With beams that might not be confined.  
 I paused, but soon his gestures kindled  
 New power, as by the moving wind  
 The waves are lifted, and my song  
 To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,  
 And from the twinkling wires among,  
 My languid fingers drew and flung  
 Circles of life-dissolving sound  
 Yet faint : in airy rings they bound  
 My Lionel, who, as every strain  
 Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien  
 Sunk with the sound relaxedly ;  
 And slowly now he turned to me,  
 As slowly faded from his face  
 That awful joy : with looks serene  
 He was soon drawn to my embrace,  
 And my wild song then died away  
 In murmurs : words, I dare not say  
 We mixed, and on his lips mine fell  
 Till they methought felt still and cold :  
 "What is it with thee, love ?" I said ;  
 No word, no look, no motion I yes,  
 There was a change, but spare to guess,  
 Nor let that moment's hope be told,  
 I looked, and knew that he was dead,  
 And fell, as the eagle on the plain  
 Falls, when life deserts, her brain,  
 And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

Oh that I were now dead ! but such,  
 Did they not, love, demand too much  
 Those dying murmurs ? He forbade.  
 Oh that I once again were mad !  
 And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,  
 For I would live to share thy woe.  
 Sweet boy, did I forget thee too ?  
 Alas, we know not what we do  
 When we speak words.

No memory more

Is in my mind of that sea shore.  
 Madness came on me, and a troop

Of misty shapes did seem to sit  
Beside me, on a vessel's poop,  
And the clear north-wind was driving it.  
Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,  
And the stars methought grew unlike ours,  
And the azure sky and the stormless sea  
Made me believe that I had died,  
And waked in a world, which was to me  
Drear hell, though heaven to all beside.  
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,  
Whilst animal life many long years  
Had rescued from a chasm of tears ;  
And when I woke, I wept to find  
That the same lady, bright and wise,  
With silver locks and quick brown eyes,  
The mother of my Lionel,  
Had tended me in my distress,  
And died some months before. Nor less  
Wonder, but far more peace and joy,  
Brought in that hour my lovely boy ;  
For through that trance my soul had well  
The impress of thy being kept :  
And if I waked, or if I slept,  
No doubt, though memory faithless be,  
Thy image ever dwelt on me ;  
And thus, O Lionel ! like thee  
Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange  
I knew not of so great a change,  
As that which gave him birth, who now  
Is all the solace of my woe.  
That Lionel great wealth had left  
By will to me, and that of all  
The ready lies of law bereft  
My child and me might well befall.  
But let me think not of the scorn,  
Which from the meanest I have borne,  
When, for my child's beloved sake,  
I mixed with slaves, to vindicate  
The very laws themselves do make :  
Let me not say scorn is my fate,  
Lest I be proud, suffering the same  
With those who live in deathless fame.  
She ceased.—“ Lo, where red morning through the woods  
Is burning o'er the dew !” said Rosalind.  
And with these words they rose, and towards the flood  
Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind  
With equal steps and fingers intertwined :  
Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore  
Is shadowed with rocks, and cypresses  
Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,

And with their shadows the clear depths below,  
 And where a little terrace from its bowers,  
 Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers,  
 Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o'er  
 The liquid marble of the windless lake ;  
 And where the aged forest's limbs look hoar,  
 Under the leaves which their green garments make,  
 They come ; 'tis Helen's home, and clean and white  
 Like one which tyrants spare on our own land  
 In some such solitude, its casements bright  
 Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,  
 And even within 'twas scarce-like Italy.  
 And when she saw how all things there were planned,  
 As in an English home, dim memory  
 Disturbed poor Rosalind : she stood as one  
 Whose mind is where his body cannot be,  
 Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,  
 And said, " Observe, that brow was Lionel's,  
 Those lips were his, and so he ever kept  
 One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.  
 You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells  
 Of liquid love : let us not wake him yet."'  
 But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept  
 A shower of burning tears, which fell upon  
 His face, and so his opening lashes shone  
 With tears unlike his own, as he did leap  
 In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together  
 Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,  
 Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather  
 They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain.  
 And after many years, for human things  
 Change even like the ocean and the wind,  
 Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,  
 And in their circle thence some visitings  
 Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene :  
 A lovely child she was, of looks serene,  
 And motions which o'er things indifferent shed  
 The grace and gentleness from whence they came.  
 And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed  
 From the same flowers of thought, until each mind  
 Like springs which mingle in one flood became.  
 And in their union soon their parents saw  
 The shadow of the peace denied to them.  
 And Rosalind, for when the living stem  
 Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,  
 Died ere her time ; and with deep grief and awe  
 The pale survivors followed her remains  
 Beyond the region of dissolving rains,



Up the cold mountain she was wont to call  
Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice  
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,  
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun,  
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,  
The last, when it had sunk; and though the night  
The charioteers of Arctos wheeled round  
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,  
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come  
With willing steps, climbing that rugged height,  
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound  
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,  
Filled the froze air with unaccustomed light;  
Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom  
Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,  
Whose sufferings too were less, death slower led  
Into the peace of his dominion cold;  
She died among her kindred, being old;  
And know, that if love die not in the dead  
As in the living, none of mortal kind  
Are blest as now Helen and Rosalind.

END OF ROSALIND AND HELEN.

## EPIPSYCHIDION:

VERSES ADRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE

LADY EMILIA V—,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF—

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few  
 Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,  
 Of such hard matter, dost thou entertain;  
 Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring  
 Thee to base company, (as chance may do)  
 Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,  
 I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,  
 My last delight! tell them that they are dull,  
 And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,  
 Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,  
 In my heart's temple I suspend to thee  
 These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage,  
 Pourest such music, that it might assuage  
 The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,  
 Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;  
 This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale  
 Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!  
 But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,  
 And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart! who dost for ever  
 Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,  
 Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed  
 It over-soared this low and worldly shade,  
 Lie shattered; and thy panting wounded breast  
 Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!  
 I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,  
 Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.  
 Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human.  
 Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman

All that is insupportable in thee  
 Of light, and love, and immortality!  
 Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!  
 Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!  
 Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form  
 Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!  
 Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror;  
 Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror  
 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,  
 All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!  
 Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now  
 Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;  
 I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song  
 All of its much mortality and wrong,  
 With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew  
 From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkness through,  
 Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy;  
 Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see  
 Youth's vision thus made perfect: Emily,  
 I love thee; though the world by no thin name  
 Will hide that love, from its unvalued shame.  
 Would we two had been twins of the same mother!  
 Or, that the name my heart lent to another  
 Could be a sister's bond for her and thee.  
 Blending two beams of one eternity!  
 Yet were one lawful and the other true,  
 These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,  
 How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!  
 I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings,  
 Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,  
 Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,  
 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,  
 A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless?  
 A well of sealed and secret happiness,  
 Whose waters like blithe light and music are,  
 Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star  
 Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone?  
 A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone  
 Amid rude voices? a beloved light?  
 A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?  
 A Lute, which those whom love has taught to play  
 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day,  
 And lull fond grief asleep? a buried treasure?  
 A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?  
 A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure  
 The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,  
 And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon Life's rough way,  
 And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day  
 Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,  
 Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,  
 In the suspended impulse of its lightness,  
 Were less ethereally light: the brightness  
 Of her divinest presenee trembles through  
 Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew  
 Embodied in the windless Heaven of June,  
 Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon  
 Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:  
 And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full  
 Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,  
 Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops  
 Of planetary music heard in trance.  
 In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,  
 The sun-beams of those wells which ever leap  
 Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep  
 For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.  
 The glory of her being, issuing thence,  
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air, with a warm shade  
 Of unentangled intermixture made  
 By Love, of light and motion; one intense  
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,  
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing  
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing  
 With the unintermitted blood, which there  
 Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air  
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,)  
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,  
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled  
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world:  
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.  
 Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,  
 And her loose hair, and where some heavy tress  
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,  
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind:  
 And in the soul a wild odour is felt,  
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt  
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.  
 See where she stands! a mortal shape endued  
 With love and life and light and deity,  
 And motion which may change but cannot die;  
 An image of some bright Eternity;  
 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour  
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender  
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love  
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move;  
 A Metaphor or Spring and Youth and Morning;  
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,

With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy  
Into his summer grave.

Ah! woe is me!

What have I dared? where am I lifted? how  
Shall I descend, and perish not? I know  
That love makes all things equal: I have heard  
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:  
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod,  
In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate  
Whose course has been so starless! O too late  
Beloved! O too soon adored, by me!  
For in the fields of immortality  
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
A divine presence in a place divine:  
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,  
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;  
But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel  
That on the fountain of my heart a seal  
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright  
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.  
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are  
For one another, though dissimilar;  
Such difference without discord, as can make  
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake  
As trembling leaves in a continuous air

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare  
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.  
I never was attached to that great sect,  
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select  
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code  
Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,  
Who travel to their home among the dead  
By the broad highway of the world, and so,  
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,  
That to divide is not to take away.  
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,  
Imagination! which, from earth and sky,  
And from the depths of human phantasy,  
As from a thousand prisons and mirrors, fills  
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills  
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow

Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow  
 The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,  
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates  
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby  
 A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:  
 Evil from good ; misery from happiness ;  
 The baser from the nobler: the impure  
 And frail, from what is clear and must endure.  
 If you divide suffering and dross, you may  
 Diminish till it is consumed away ;  
 If you divide pleasure and love and thought,  
 Each part exceeds the whole : and we know not  
 How much, while any yet remains unshared,  
 Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared ;  
 This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw  
 The unenvied light of hope ; the eternal law  
 By which those live, to whom this world of life  
 Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife  
 Tills for the promise of a later birth  
 The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft  
 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,  
 In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,  
 Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
 Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves  
 Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves  
 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
 Paved her light steps ;—on an imagined shore,  
 Under the grey beak of some promontory  
 She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,  
 That I beheld her not. In solitudes  
 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,  
 And from the fountains, and the odours deep  
 Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep  
 Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,  
 Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air ;  
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,  
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,  
 And from the singing of the summer-birds,  
 And from all sounds, all silence. In the words  
 Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,  
 Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm  
 Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;  
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste  
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom  
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ;  
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth  
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,  
And towards the loadstar of my one desire,  
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight  
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,  
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere  
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre  
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—  
But She, whom prayers or tears, then could not tame,  
Past, like a God throned on a winged planet,  
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,  
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;  
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,  
I would have followed, though the grave between  
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen:  
When a voice said :—" O Thou of hearts the weakest,  
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest."  
Then I—" where ?" the world's echo answered " where !"  
And in that silence, and in my despair,  
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew  
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew  
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;  
And murmured names and spells which have controul  
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate :  
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate  
The night which closed on her ; nor uncreate  
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,  
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,  
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her  
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear,  
And every gentle passion sick to death,  
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,  
Into the wintry forest of our life ;  
And struggling through its error with vain strife,  
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,  
And half bewildered by new forms, I past  
Seeking among those untaught foresters  
If I could find one form resembling hers,  
In which she might have masked herself from me.  
There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody  
Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers ;  
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,  
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame  
Out of her looks into my vitals came,  
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew  
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew  
Into the core of my green heart, and lay  
Upon its leaves : until as hair grown grey  
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime  
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought  
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.  
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away :  
 Others were wise—but honeyed words betray  
 And One was true—oh ! why not true to me ?  
 Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,  
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,  
 Wounded and weak and panting : the cold day  
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain,  
 When, like a noon-day dawn, there shone again  
 Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed  
 As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,  
 As is the Moon, whose changes ever run  
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun ;  
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,  
 Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,  
 That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame  
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,  
 And warms not but illumines. Young and fair  
 As the descended Spirit of that sphere,  
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night  
 From its own darkness, until all was bright  
 Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,  
 And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,  
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,  
 And sate beside me, with her downward face  
 Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon  
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.  
 And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,  
 And all my being became bright or dim  
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,  
 According as she smiled or frowned on me ;  
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed :  
 Alas, I then was, nor alive nor dead :—  
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,  
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,  
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,  
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned, mother,  
 And through the cavern without wings they flew,  
 And cried, " Away ! he is not of our crew."  
 I wept, and, though it be a dream, I weep.—

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,  
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips  
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse ;—  
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,  
 And who was then its Tempest ; and when She,  
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost  
 Crept o'er those waters, 'till from coast to coast  
 The moving billows of my being fell



Into a death of ice, immoveable ;—  
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,  
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,  
 The *o* words conceal :—If not, each word would be  
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me !

At length, into the obscure Forest came  
 The vision I had sought through grief and shame.  
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns  
 Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's  
 And from her presence life was radiated  
 Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead :  
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above  
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love ;  
 And music from her respiration spread  
 Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated  
 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,  
 So that the savage winds hung mute around ;  
 And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair  
 Dissolving the dull cold in the froze air :  
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun.  
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One  
 Floated into the cavern where I lay  
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay  
 Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below  
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauties glow  
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night  
 Was penetrating me with living light :  
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me  
 So many years—that it was Emily.

Thin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,  
 This world of love, this *me* : and into birth  
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart  
 Magnetic might into its central heart ;  
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide  
 By everlasting laws each wind and tide  
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave ;  
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave  
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers  
 The armies of the rainbow-winged showers :  
 And, as those married lights, which from the towers  
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe  
 In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe ;  
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,  
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end ;—  
 So ye, bright regents with alternate sway  
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day !  
 Thou, not disdainng even a borrowed might ;  
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light ;

And, through the shadow of the seasons three,  
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity  
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,  
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.  
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,  
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe  
 Towards thine own ; till, wreckt in that convulsion,  
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,  
 Thine went astray, and that was rent in twain ;  
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again !  
 Be there love's folding-star at thy return ;  
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn  
 Of golden fire ; the Moon will veil her horn  
 In thy last smiles ; adoring Even and Morn  
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath  
 And lights and shadows : as the star of Death  
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild  
 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled  
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine  
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine

Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth  
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth  
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,  
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.  
 To whatso'er of dull mortality  
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still ;  
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,  
 Not mine, but me, henceforth be thou united  
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.  
 The hour is come :—the destined Star has risen  
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.  
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thickset  
 The sentinels—but true love never yet  
 Was thus constrained : it overleaps all fence :  
 Like lightning, with invisible violence  
 Piercing its continents ; like Heaven's free breath,  
 Which he who grasps can hold not ; liker Death,  
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way  
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array  
 Of arms : more strength has Love than he or they ;  
 For he can burst its charnel, and make free  
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,  
 The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbour now,  
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow ;

There is a path on the sea's azure floor,  
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before  
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles ;  
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles ;  
 The merry mariners are bold and free :  
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me ?  
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest  
 Is a far Eden of the purple East ;  
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night,  
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,  
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,  
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.  
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,  
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise  
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,  
 This land would have remained a solitude  
 But for some pastoral people native there,  
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air  
 Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,  
 Simple and spirited ; innocent and bold.  
 The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,  
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam,  
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar ;  
 And all the winds wandering along the shore  
 Undulate with the undulating tide :  
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide ;  
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,  
 As clear as elemental diamond,  
 Or serene morning air ; and far beyond,  
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer  
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year.)  
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls  
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls  
 Illumining, with sound that never fails  
 Accompany the noon-day nightingales ;  
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs ;  
 The light clear element which the isle wears  
 Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,  
 Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,  
 And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep ;  
 And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,  
 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain  
 'Till you might faint with that delicious pair.  
 And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,  
 With that deep music is in unison :  
 Which is a soul within the soul—they seem  
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—  
 It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,  
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity ;  
 Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,

Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air  
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,  
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light  
Upon its mountain-peaks blind vultures, they  
Sail onward far upon their fatal way :  
The winged storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm  
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm  
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,  
From which its fields and woods ever renew  
Their green and golden immortality.  
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky  
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,  
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,  
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,  
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride  
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,  
Blushes and trembles at its own excess :  
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less  
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,  
An atom of the Eternal, whose own smile  
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen  
O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,  
Filling their bare and void interstices.—  
But the chief marvel of the wilderness  
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how  
None of the rustic island-people know ;  
Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height  
It overtops the woods ; but for delight,  
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime  
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,  
Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,  
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house  
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.  
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,  
But, as it were, Titanic ; in the heart  
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown  
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,  
Lifting itself in caverns light and high :  
For all the antique and learned imagery  
Has been erased, and in the place of it  
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit  
The volumes of their many-twining stems ;  
Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems  
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky  
Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery  
With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen,  
Or fragments of the day's intense serene ;  
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.  
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers  
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem

To sleep in one another's arms, and dream  
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we  
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed  
Thee to be lady of the solitude.—  
And I have fitted up some chambers there  
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,  
And level with the living winds, which flow  
Like waves' above the living waves below.—  
I have sent books and music there, and all  
Those instruments with which high spirits call  
The future from its cradle, and the past  
Out of its grave, and make the present last  
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,  
Folded within their own eternity.  
Our simple life wants little, and true taste  
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to waste  
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,  
Nature, with all her children, haunts the hill,  
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet  
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls fit  
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance  
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;  
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight  
Before our gate, and the slow silent night  
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.  
Be this our home in life, and when years heap  
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,  
Let us become the overhanging day,  
The living soul of this Elysian isle,  
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile  
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,  
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,  
And wander in the meadows, or ascend  
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend  
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;  
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,  
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea  
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—  
Possessing and possessed by all that is  
Within that calm circumference of bliss,  
And by each other, till to love and live  
Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive  
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep  
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,  
Through which the awakened day can never peep:  
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,  
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;

Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain  
 Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.  
 And we will talk, until thought's melody  
 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die  
 In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
 With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart  
 Harmonizing silence without a sound.  
 Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,  
 And our veins beat together; and our lips,  
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse  
 The soul that burns between them, and the wells  
 Which boil under our being's inmost cells,  
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be  
 Confused in passion's golden purity,  
 As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.  
 We shall become the same, we shall be one  
 Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?  
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,  
 Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,  
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same  
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still  
 Burning, yet ever unconsumable:  
 In one another's substance finding food,  
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued  
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,  
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:  
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath  
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,  
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,  
 And one annihilation. Woe is me!  
 The winged words on which my soul would pierce  
 Into the height of love's rare Universe,  
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.—  
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,  
 And say:—"We are the masters of thy slave:  
 What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?"  
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,  
 All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet  
 But its reward is in the world divine,  
 Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.  
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste  
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet  
 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,  
 And bid them love each other and be blest  
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,  
 And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

## ADONAI8,

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

I WEEP for ADONAI8—he is dead !  
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears  
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
 And teach them thine own sorrow; say: with me  
 Died Adonais!—till the Future dares  
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
 An echo and a light unto eternity!

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,  
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania  
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,  
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,  
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath  
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!  
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed  
 Thy fiery tears. and let thy loud heart keep,  
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;  
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
 Descend:—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep  
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;  
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

Most musical of mourners, weep again! *Mother*  
 Lament anew, Urania!—He died,  
 Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,  
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride.  
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite  
 Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,  
 Into the gulph of death; but his clear Sprite  
 Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!  
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb;  
 And happier they their happiness who knew,  
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time  
 In which suns perished: others more sublime,  
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,  
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;  
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

But now thy youngest, dearest one has perished,  
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;  
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew!  
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
 The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew  
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste,  
 The broken lilly lies—the storm is overpast.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death  
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,  
 A grave among the eternal.—Come away!  
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still  
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;  
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill  
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!  
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace  
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace  
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;  
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface  
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law  
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,  
 The passion-winged Ministers of thought,  
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams  
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
 The love which was its music, wander not,—  
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,  
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot  
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,  
 They ne'er will gather strength, nor find a home again.



And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,  
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,  
 "Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead :  
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,  
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain,"  
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise,  
 She knew not 'twas her own ; as with no stain  
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
 Wash'd his light limbs, as if embalming them ;  
 Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw  
 'The wreath upon him, like an anadem,  
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls began ;  
 Another in her wilful grief would break  
 Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem  
 A greater loss with one which was more weak ;  
 And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,  
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath  
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,  
 And pass into the panting heart beneath  
 With lightning and with music : the damp death  
 Quench'd its caress upon its icy lips ;  
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath  
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,  
 It flushed, through his pale limbs, and pass'd to its eclipse.

And others came,—Desires and Adorations,  
 Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,  
 Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations  
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies ;  
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,  
 Came in slow pomp :—the moving pomp might seem  
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought  
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
 Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day :  
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,  
 And the wild winds flew around, sobbing in their dismay

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray  
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day ;  
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
 Than those for whose disdain they pined away  
 Into a shadow of all sounds :—a drear  
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down  
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
 Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is flown,  
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year ?  
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,  
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
 Thou Adonais ; wan they stand and sere  
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
 With dew all turned to tears ; odour, to sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,  
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;  
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,  
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,  
 As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain  
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast  
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest !

Ah, woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,  
 But grief returns with the revolving year ;  
 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;  
 The ants, the bees, the swallows, re-appear ;  
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier ;  
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
 And build their mossy homes in field and brere ;  
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood, and stream, and field, and hill, and Ocean,  
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,  
 As it has ever done, with change and motion,  
 From the great morning of the world, when first  
 God dawn'd on Chaos ; in its stream immersed,  
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light ;  
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst ;  
 Diffuse themselves ; and spend in love's delight  
 The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,  
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;  
 Like incarnations of the stars when splendour  
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,  
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath ;  
 Nought we know dies. Shall that alone which knows  
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
 By sightless lightning ?—th' intense atom glows  
 A moment, then is quench'd in a most cold repose.

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be  
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
 And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !  
 Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene—  
 The actors or spectators ? Great and mean  
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.  
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

He will awake no more, oh, never more !  
 " Wake thou," cried Misery, " childless Mother, rise  
 Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,  
 A wound more fierce than his tears and sighs."  
 And all the Dreams that watch'd Urania's eyes,  
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song  
 Had held in holy silence, cried ; " Arise !"  
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night that springs  
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear  
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
 Has left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
 So struck, so roused, so rapt, Urania ;  
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere  
 Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way,  
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
 Through camps and cities rough with stone and steel,  
 And human hearts, which to her acry thread  
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell :  
 And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,  
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,  
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,  
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,  
 Blush'd to annihilation, and the breath  
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light  
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight  
 "Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!  
 Leave me not!" cried Urania; her distress  
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

"Stay yet a while! speak to me once again:  
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;  
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
 That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,  
 With food of saddest memory kept alive,  
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give  
 All that I am to be as thou now art,  
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,  
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
 Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart  
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?  
 Defenceless as thou wert, oh! where was then  
 Wisdom the mirror'd shield, or scorn the spear?  
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when  
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;  
 The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;  
 The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,  
 Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
 And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,  
 When, like Appollo, from his golden bow,  
 The Pythian of the age one arrow sped  
 And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,  
 They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;  
 He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
 Is gathered into death without a dawn,  
 And the immortal stars awake again;  
 So it is in the world of living men.  
 A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight  
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when  
 It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light  
 Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,  
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;  
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent,  
 An early but enduring monument,  
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
 In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent  
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
 And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

Midst others of less note came one frail Form,  
 A Phantom among men, companionless  
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm,  
 Whose thunder is its knell; he as I guess,  
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,  
 Actæon-like, and now he fled astray  
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,  
 Pursued, like raging hounds their father and their prey.

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—  
 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power  
 Girt round with weakness;—it can scare uplift  
 The weight of the superincumbent hour;  
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,  
 A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak  
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower  
 The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek  
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,  
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;  
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,  
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew,  
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,  
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart  
 Shook the weak hand that grasp'd it; of that crew  
 He came the last; neglected and apart;  
 A herd-abandon'd deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan  
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band  
 Who in another's fate now wept his own;  
 As in the accents of an unknown land  
 He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scanned  
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured; "Who art thou?"  
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand  
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,  
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's.—Oh! that it should be so!

What softer voice is hushed over the dead ?  
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown ?  
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,  
 In mockery of monumental stone,  
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan ?  
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,  
 Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed one :  
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,  
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh !  
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown  
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe ?  
 The nameless worm would now itself disown :  
 It felt, yet could escape the magic tone  
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,  
 But what was howling in one breast alone,  
 Silent with expectation of the song,  
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !  
 Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,  
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !  
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be !  
 And ever at thy season be thou free  
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow :  
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee ;  
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,  
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled  
 Far from these carrion-kites that scream below ;  
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;  
 Thou canst nor soar where he is sitting now.—  
 Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall flow  
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,  
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow  
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,  
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

Peace, peace ! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
 He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
 'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep  
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
 And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife  
 Invulnerable nothings—*We* decay  
 Like corpses in a charnel ; fear and grief  
 Convulse us and consume us day by day,  
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

He has outscared the shadow of our night;  
 Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
 Can touch him not and torture not again  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;  
 Mourn not for Adonais,—Thou young Dawn,  
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;  
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!  
 Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,  
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hardst thrown  
 O'er the abandon'd Earth, now leave it bare  
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair.

He is made one with Nature: there is heard  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;  
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear  
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there  
 All new successions to the forms they wear:  
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;  
 And bursting in its beauty and its might  
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heavens' light.

The splendours of the firmament of time  
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb,  
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
 And love and life contend in it, for what  
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there,  
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfill'd renown  
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,  
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton  
 Rose pale, his solemn agony had not  
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought  
 And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,  
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:  
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,  
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.  
 "Thou art become as one of us," they cry:  
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
 Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
 Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.  
 Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

Who mourns for Adonais? oh, come forth,  
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.  
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;  
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light  
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
 Satiates the void circumference: then shrink  
 Even to a point within our day and night;  
 And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink  
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,  
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought  
 That ages, empires, and religions, there  
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;  
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not  
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;  
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought,  
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,  
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,  
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness:  
 And where its wrecks like shatter'd mountains rise,  
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses, dress  
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,  
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead  
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,  
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead  
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread,



And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;  
 And one keen pyramid, with wedge sublime,  
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned  
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
 Like flame transform'd to marble; and beneath  
 A field is spread, on which a newer band  
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,  
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguish'd breath.

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet,  
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consign'd  
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,  
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find  
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change and pass;  
 Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
 Life, like a dome of many-colour'd glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,  
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek;  
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,  
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak,  
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart  
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here  
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!  
 A light is passed from the revolving year,  
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear  
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
 The soft sky smiles—the low wind whispers near—  
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,  
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
 Which, through the web of being blindly wove  
 By man and beast, and earth, and air, and sea,  
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
 The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,  
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;  
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven !  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;  
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

*phoetele*

**END OF ADONAIS.**

# HELLAS;

## A LYRICAL DRAMA.

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### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHMUD.  
HASSAN.

DAOOD.  
AHASUERUS, a Jew.

*Chorus of Greek Captive Women.*

*Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.*

SCENE—Constantinople.

TIME—Sunset.

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SCENE—*A Terrace on the Seraglio.*

MAHMUD (*sleeping*), an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.

*Chorus of Greek Captive Women.*

We strew these opiate flowers  
On thy restless pillow,—  
They were stript from Orient bowers  
By the Indian billow.

Be thy sleep  
Calm and deep,

Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

*Indian.* Away, unlovely dreams!  
Away, false shapes of sleep.  
Be his, as heaven seems,  
Clear, and bright, and deep!

Soft as love, and calm as death,  
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

*Chorus.* Sleep, sleep. our song is laden  
With the soul of slumber:

It was sung by a Samian maiden,  
Whose lover was of the number

Who now keep  
That calm sleep

Whence none may wake, where none shall weep

*Indian.* I touch thy temples pale !  
 I breathe my soul on thee !  
 And, could my prayers avail,  
 All my joy should be  
 Dead, and I would live to weep,  
 So thou might'st win one hour of quiet sleep.

*Chorus.* Breathe low, low,  
 The spell of the mighty mistress now !  
 When Conscience lulls her sated snake,  
 And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.  
 Breathe low, low,  
 The words, which, like secret fire, shall flow  
 Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low !

*Semicho. I.* Life may change, but it may fly not ;  
 Hope may vanish, but can die not ;  
 Truth be veiled, but still it burneth ;  
 Love repulsed,—but it returneth !

*Semi. II.* Yet were life a charnel, where  
 Hope lay confined with despair ;  
 Yet were truth a sacred lie,  
 Love were lust—

*Semi. I.* If Liberty  
 Lent not life its soul of light,  
 Hope its iris of delight,  
 Truth its prophet's robe to wear,  
 Love its power to give and bear.

*Chorus.* In the great morning of the world,  
 The spirit of God with might unfurled  
 The flag of Freedom over Chaos,  
 And all its banded anarchs fled,  
 Like vultures frightened from Imaus,  
 Before an earthquake's tread.—  
 So from Time's tempestuous dawn  
 Freedom's splendour burst and shone :—  
 Thermopylæ and Marathon  
 Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,  
 The springing Fire.—The winged glory  
 On Philippi half-alighted,  
 Like an eagle on a promontory.  
 Its unwearied wings could fan  
 The quenchless ashes of Milan. \*  
 From age to age, from man to man,  
 It lived, and lit from land to land

\* Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin.—See Sismondi's "*Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*," a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors

Florence, Albion, Switzerland.  
 Then night fell: and, as from night,  
 Re-assuming fiery flight,  
 From the West swift Freedom came,  
 Against the course of heaven and doom,  
 A second sun arrayed in flame:  
 To burn, to kindle, to illumine,  
 From far Atlantis its young beams  
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.  
 France, with all her sanguine streams,  
 Hid but quench'd it not; again  
 Through clouds its shafts of glory rain  
 From utmost Germany to Spain.  
 As an eagle fed with morning  
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,  
 When she seeks her aerie hanging  
 In the mountain-cedar's hair,  
 And her brood expect the clanging  
 Of her wings through the wild air,  
 Sick with famine;—Freedom, so  
 To what of Greece remaineth now  
 Returns; her hoary ruins glow  
 Like orient mountains lost in day;  
 Beneath the safety of her wings  
 Her renovated nurslings play,  
 And in the naked lightnings  
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes,  
 Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,  
 A Desert or a Paradise;  
 Let the beautiful and the brave  
 Share her glory or a grave.

- Semicho. I.* With the gifts of gladness  
 Greece did thy cradle strew;  
*Semi. II.* With the tears of sadness  
 Greece did thy shroud bedew;  
*Semi. I.* With an orphan's affection  
 She followed thy bier through time!  
*Semi. II.* And at thy resurrection  
 Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime!  
*Semi. I.* If Heaven should resume thee,  
 To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;  
*Semi. II.* If Hell should entomb thee,  
 To Hell shall her high hearts bend.  
*Semi. I.* If Annihilation—  
*Semi. II.* Dust let her glories be;  
 And a name and a nation  
 Be forgotten, Freedom with thee!

*Indian.* His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not!  
 He starts—he shudders;—ye that love not,

With your panting loud and fast  
Have awakened him at last.

MAHMUD (*starting from his sleep.*)

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate.  
What! from a cannonade of three short hours?  
'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus  
Cannot be practicable yet.—Who stirs?  
Stand to the match; that, when the foe prevails,  
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin  
The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower  
Into the gap—wrench off the roof!

*Enter HASSAN.*

Ha! what!

The truth of day lightens upon my dream,  
And I am Mahmud still.

*Has.* Your Sublime Highness  
Is strangely moved.

*Mah.* The times do cast strange shadows  
On those who watch and who must rule their course,  
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,  
Be whelm'd in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.  
Thrice has a gloomy vision haunted me  
As thus from sleep into the troubled day;  
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,  
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.  
Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest  
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle  
Of strange and secret and forgotten things,  
I bade thee summon him:—'tis said his tribe  
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

*Has.* The Jew of whom I spake, is old,—so old  
He seems to have outlived a world's decay;  
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean  
Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard  
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow:  
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries  
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct  
With light, and to the soul that quickens them  
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift  
To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth  
A life of unconsumed thought, which pierces  
The present, and the past, and the to-come.  
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet  
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery  
Mock'd with the curse of immortality.  
Some feign that he is Enoch; others dream  
He was pre-adamite, and has survived  
Cycles of generation and of ruin.  
The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence

And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,  
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,  
 In years outstretch'd beyond the date of man,  
 May have obtain'd to sovereignty and science  
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts  
 Which others fear and know not.

*Mah.* I would talk

With this old Jew.

*Has.* Thy will is even now

Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern

'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible

Than thou or God! He who would question him

Must sail alone at sun-set, where the stream

Of ocean sleeps around those foamless isles

When the young moon is westering as now,

And evening airs wander upon the wave;

And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,

Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow

Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water;

Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud,

Ahasuerus! and the caverns round

Will answer, Ahasuerus! If his prayer

Be granted, a faint meteor will arise,

Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind

Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,

And with the wind a storm of harmony

Unutterably sweet, and pilot him

Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:

Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance,

Fit for the matter of their conference,

The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare,

Win the desired communion—but that shout

Bodes—

[*A shout within.*]

*Mah.* Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.

Let me converse with spirits.

*Has.* That shout again;

*Mah.* This Jew whom thou hast summon'd—

*Has.* Will be here—

*Mah.* When the omnipotent hour, to which are yoked

He, I, and all things, shall compel—enough.

Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew

That crowd about the pilot in the storm.

Aye! strike the foremost shorter by a head!

They weary me, and I have need of rest.

Kings are like stars—they rise and set: they have

The worship of the world, but no repose.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

*Chorus.* Worlds on worlds are rolling ever

From creation to decay

Like the bubbles on a river,

Sparkling, bursting, borne away.  
 But they are still immortal  
 Who, through birth's orient portal,  
 And Death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,  
 Clothe their unceasing flight  
 In the brief dust and light  
 Gather'd around their chariots as they go ;  
 New shapes they still may weave,  
 New Gods, new laws, receive,  
 Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last  
 On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,  
 A Promethean conqueror came ;  
 Like a triumphal path he trod  
 The thorns of death and shame.  
 A mortal shape to him  
 Was like the vapour dim  
 Which the orient planet animates with light :  
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery, came  
 Like blood-hounds mild and tame,  
 Nor prey'd until their lord had taken flight.  
 The moon of Mahomet  
 Arose, and it shall set ;  
 While blazon'd as on heaven's immortal noon  
 The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep,  
 From one whose dreams are paradise,  
 Fly when the fond wretch wakes to weep,  
 And day peers forth with her blank eye  
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,  
 The powers of earth and air  
 Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem :  
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,  
 And even Olympian Jove  
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glare on them.  
 Our hills, and seas, and streams,  
 Dispeopled of their dreams,  
 Their waters turn'd to blood, their dew to tears,  
 Wailed for the golden years.

*Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.*

*Mah.* More gold? Our ancestors bought gold with victory,  
 And shall I sell it for defeat?

*Daood.* The Janizars  
 Clamour for pay.

*Mah.* Go! bid them pay themselves  
 With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins  
 Whose shrieks, and spasms, and tears, they may enjoy?  
 No infidel children to impale on spears?



No hoary priests after the patriarch  
 Who bent the curse against his country's heart,  
 Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill:  
 Blood is the seed of gold.

*Daood.* It has been sown,  
 And yet the harvest to the sickle-men  
 Is as a grain to each.

*Mah.* Then take this signet,  
 Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie  
 The treasures of victorious Solyman.  
 An empire's spoils stored for a day of ruin—  
 O spirit of my sires! is it not come?  
 The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged, and sleep;  
 But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,  
 Hunger for gold, which fills not. See them fed;  
 Then lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [*Exit Daood.*]

O miserable dawn after a night  
 More glorious than the day which it usurped!  
 O faith in God! O power on earth! O word  
 Of the great Prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings  
 Darkened the thrones and idols of the west,  
 Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour,  
 Even as a father by an evil child,  
 When the orient moon of Islam roll'd in triumph  
 From Caucasus to white Ceraunia!  
 Ruin above, and anarchy below;  
 Terror without, and treachery within:  
 The chalice of destruction full, and all  
 Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares  
 To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

*Has.* The lamp of our dominion still rides high.  
 One God is God—Mahomet is his Prophet.  
 Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits  
 Of utmost Asia irresistibly  
 Throng, like full clouds at the Scirocco's cry,  
 But not like them to weep their strength in tears;  
 They have destroying lightning, and their step  
 Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,  
 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,  
 Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen  
 With horrent arms, and lofty ships, even now,  
 Like vapours anchor'd to a mountain's edge,  
 Freight with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala  
 The convoy of the ever-veering wind.  
 Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid  
 Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.  
 The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far  
 When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah!  
 Rose like the war cry of the northern wind,  
 Which kills the sluggish clouds and leaves a flock

Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.  
 So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day !  
 If night is mute, yet the returning sun,  
 Kindles the voices of the morning birds ;  
 Nor at thy bidding less exultingly  
 Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,  
 The Anarchies of Africa unleash  
 Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,  
 To speak in thunder to the rebel world.  
 Like sulphureous clouds half-shatter'd by the storm,  
 They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen  
 Of Ocean, bound upon her island throne,  
 Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons,  
 Who frown on Freedom, spare a smile for thee :  
 Russia still hovers, as an eagle might  
 Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane  
 Hang tangled in inextricable fight,  
 To stoop upon the victor ;—for she fears  
 The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine ;  
 But recreant Austria loves thee as the grave  
 Loves pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,  
 Flesh'd with the chase, come up from Italy,  
 And howl upon their limits ; for they see  
 The panther Freedom fled to her old cover,  
 Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood  
 Crouch around. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,  
 Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,  
 Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes ?  
 Our arsenals and our armories are full ;  
 Our forts defy assaults ; ten thousand cannon  
 Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour  
 Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city ;  
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale  
 The Christian merchant, and the yellow Jew  
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.  
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,  
 Over the hills of Anatolia,  
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry  
 Sweep :—the far-flashing of their starry lances  
 Reverberates the dying light of day.  
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law ;  
 But many-headed Insurrection stands  
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall.  
*Mah.* Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable ;  
 Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazon'd  
 Upon that shatter'd flag of fiery cloud  
 Which leads the rear of the departing day,  
 Wan emblem of an empire fading now !  
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,  
 And, like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent,  
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,

One star with insolent and victorious light  
Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,  
Like arrows through a fainting antelope,  
Strikes its weak form to death.

*Has.* Even as that moon

Renews itself——

*Mah.* Shall we be not renew'd ?

Far other bark than ours were needed now  
To stem the torrent of descending time :  
The spirit that lifts the slave before its lord  
Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,  
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness ;  
Exults in chains ; and, when the rebel falls,  
Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust ;  
And the inheritors of earth, like beasts  
When earthquake is unleash'd, with idiot fear  
Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.  
What were defeat, when Victory must appal ?  
Or Danger, when Security looks pale ?  
How said the messenger—who, from the fort  
Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle  
Of Bucharest ?—that—

*Has.* Ibrahim's cimitar

Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven,  
To burn before him in the night of battle—  
A light and a destruction.

*Mah.* Ay ! the day

Was ours ; but how ?—

*Has.* The light Wallachians,

The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies,  
Fled from the glance of our artillery  
Almost before the thunder-stone alit :  
One half the Grecian army made a bridge  
Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead ;  
The other—

*Mah.* Speak—tremble not—

*Has.* Islanded

By victor myriads, form'd in hollow square  
With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back  
The deluge of our foaming cavalry ;  
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.  
Our baffled army trembled like one man  
Before a host, and gave them space ; but soon,  
From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,  
Kneading them down with fire and iron rain.  
Yet none approach'd : till, like a field of corn  
Under the hook of the swart sickle-man,  
The bands, intrench'd in mounds of Turkish dead,  
Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, " Slaves,  
Render yourselves !—They have abandon'd you—

What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?  
We grant your lives."—"Grant that which is thine own,"  
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!  
Another—"God, and man, and hope, abandon me;  
But I to them and to myself remain  
Constant;"—he bowed his head, and his heart burst.  
A third exclaim'd, "There is a refuge, tyrant,  
Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,  
Shouldst thou pursue: there we shall meet again."  
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,  
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment  
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!  
So these survivors, each by different ways,  
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,  
Met in triumphant death; and when our army,  
Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame,  
Held back the base hyenas of the battle,  
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,  
One rose out of the chaos of the slain;  
And, if it were a corpse which some dread spirit  
Of the old saviours of the land we rule  
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;  
Or if there burn'd within the dying man  
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith  
Creating what it feign'd, I cannot tell;  
But he cried, "Phantoms of the free, we come!  
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike  
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,  
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,  
And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew!—  
O ye who float around this clime, and weave  
The garment of the glory which it wears;  
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasp'd,  
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;  
Progenitors of all that yet is great,  
Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept,  
In your high ministrations, us, your sons—  
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!  
And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale  
When the crush'd worm rebels beneath your tread—  
The vultures, and the dogs, your pensioners tame,  
Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still  
They crave the relie of destruction's feast.  
The exhalations and the thirsty winds  
Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death—  
Heaven's light is quench'd in slaughter; thus where'er  
Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,  
The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast  
Of these dead limbs, upon your streams and mountains,  
Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,

Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,  
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down  
 With poison'd light—Famine, and Pestilence,  
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!  
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved  
 Against ye; Time has found ye light as foam.  
 The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake  
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men  
 On this one cast. But, ere the die be thrown,  
 The renovated genius of our race,  
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends  
 A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding  
 The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,  
 Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,  
 And you to Oblivion!"—More he would have said,  
 But—

*Mah.* Died—as thou shouldst, ere thy lips had painted  
 Their ruin in the hues of our success.  
 A rebel's crime, guilt with a rebel's tongue!  
 Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

*Has.* It may be so:  
 A spirit not my own wrench'd me within,  
 And I have spoken words I fear and hate;  
 Yet would I die for—

*Mah.* Live! O live! outlive  
 Me and this sinking empire;—but the fleet—

*Has.* Alas!

*Mah.* The fleet which, like a flock of clouds  
 Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!  
 Our winged castles from their merchant ships!  
 Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!  
 Our arms before their chains! our years of empire  
 Before their centuries of servile fear!  
 Death is awake! Repulsed on the waters,  
 They own no more the thunder-bearing banner  
 Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,  
 Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

*Has.* Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae, saw  
 The wreck—

*Mah.* The caves of the Icarian isles  
 Hold each to the other in loud mockery,  
 And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes  
 First of the sea-convulsing fight—and then—  
 Thou dardest to speak—senseless are the mountains;  
 Interpret thou their voice.

*Has.* My presence bore  
 A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet  
 Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung  
 As multitudinous on the ocean line  
 As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.

Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,  
 Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle  
 Was kindled —  
 First through the hail of our artillery  
 The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail  
 Dash'd:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man  
 To man, were grappled in the embrace of war,  
 Inextricable but by death or victory.  
 The tempest of the raging fight convulsed  
 To its crystaline depths that stainless sea,  
 And shook heaven's roof of golden morning clouds  
 Poised on a hundred azure mountain-isles.  
 In the brief trances of the artillery,  
 One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer  
 Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt  
 The unforeseen event, till the north wind  
 Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil  
 Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!  
 For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers  
 Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon  
 The abhorr'd cross glimmer'd behind, before,  
 Among, around us; and that fatal sign  
 Dried with its beams the strength of Moslem hearts,  
 As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!  
 Our noonday path over the sanguine foam  
 Was beacon'd, and the glare struck the sun pale,  
 By our consuming transports: the fierce light  
 Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,  
 And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding  
 The ravening fire even to the water's level:  
 Some were blown up: some settling heavily,  
 Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died  
 Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,  
 Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perish'd!  
 We met the vultures legion'd in the air,  
 Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind:  
 They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peaks,  
 Stoop'd through the sulphureous battle-smoke, and perch'd  
 Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,  
 Like its ill angel or its damned soul.  
 Riding upon the bosom of the sea,  
 We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast,  
 Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,  
 And ravening famine left his ocean-cave  
 To dwell with war, with us, and with despair.  
 We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,  
 And, with night, tempest—

*Mah*

Cease!

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Me*

Your Sublime Highness,

That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,  
Has left the city. If the rebel fleet  
Had anchor'd in the port, had victory  
Crown'd the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,  
Panic were tamer.—Obedience and mutiny,  
Like giants in contention planet-struck,  
Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace  
In Stamboul.—

*Mah.* Is the grave not calmer still?  
Its ruins shall be mine.

*Has.* Fear not the Russian;  
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay  
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,  
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,  
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.  
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian  
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion  
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,  
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,  
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves!

*Enter Second Messenger.*

*2nd Mes.* Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,  
Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,  
Corinth, and Thebes, are carried by assault:  
And every Islamite who made his dogs  
Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves,  
Pass'd at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood,  
Which made our warriors drunk, is quench'd in death;  
But, like a fiery plague, breaks out anew  
In deeds which makes the Christian cause look pale  
In its own light. The garrison of Patras  
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope  
But from the Briton; at once slave and tyrant,  
His wishes still are weaker than his fears;  
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain  
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway;  
And, if you buy him not, your treasury  
Is empty even of promises—his own coin.  
The freeman of a western poet chief\*  
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels.  
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont;  
The aged Ali sits in Yanina,  
A crownless metaphor of empire:

\* A Greek, who had been Lord Byron's servant commanded the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or greatness, whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

His name, that shadow of his withered might,  
 Holds our besieging army like a spell  
 In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny :  
 He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth  
 Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors  
 The ruins of the city where he reign'd  
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reap'd  
 The costly harvest his own blood matured,  
 Not the sower, Ali,—who has bought a truce  
 From Ypsilanti, with ten camel-loads  
 Of Indian gold.

*Enter a Third Messenger.*

*Mah.*

What more ?

*3rd Mes.*

The Christian tribes

Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness  
 Are in revolt ;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo,  
 Tremble ;—the Arab menaces Medina ;  
 The Ethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,  
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employ'd  
 Who denies homage, claims investiture  
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands  
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians  
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,  
 Like mountain-twins, that from each other's veins  
 Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,  
 Shake in the general fever. Through the city,  
 Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,  
 And prophesyings horrible and new  
 Are heard among the crowd ; that sea of men  
 Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.  
 A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches  
 That it is written how the sins of Islani  
 Must raise up a destroyer even now.  
 The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west ;\*  
 Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,  
 But in the omnipresence of that spirit  
 In which all live and are. Ominous signs  
 Are blazon'd broadly on the noon-day sky ;  
 One saw a red cross stamp'd upon the sun ;  
 It has rained blood ; and monstrous births declare  
 The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.  
 The army encamp'd upon the Cydaris  
 Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,

\* It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedæmon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.



And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,—  
 The shadows doubtless of the unborn time,  
 Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet  
 The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm  
 Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.  
 At the third watch the spirit of the plague  
 Was heard abroad flapping among the tents :  
 Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.  
 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand  
 Have sickened, and—

*Enter Fourth Messenger.*

*Mah.* And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow  
 Of some untimely rumour, speak !

*4th Mes.* One comes  
 Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood ;  
 He stood, he says, upon Clelonit's  
 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan  
 Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters  
 Then trembling in the splendour of the moon ;  
 When, as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid  
 Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets  
 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,  
 Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,  
 And smoke which strangled every infant wind  
 That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.  
 At length the battle slept, but the Scirocco  
 Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds  
 Over the sea-horizon, blotting out  
 All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse  
 He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral  
 And two, the loftiest of our ships of war,  
 With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,  
 Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed ;  
 And the abhorred cross—

*Enter an Attendant.*

*Atten.* Your Sublime Highness,  
 The Jew, who—

*Mah.* Could not come more seasonably :  
 Bid him attend. I'll hear no more ! Too long  
 We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,  
 And multiply upon our shatter'd hopes  
 The images of ruin. Come what will !  
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps  
 Set in our path to light us to the edge  
 Through rough and smooth : nor can we suffer aught  
 Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Exeunt,*

*Semicho. I.* Would I were the winged cloud  
 Of a tempest swift and loud,

I would scorn  
 The smile of morn,  
 And the wave where the moon-rise is born !  
 I would leave  
 The spirits of eve  
 A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave  
 From other threads than mine !  
 Bask in the blue noon divine  
 Who would, not I .

*Semicho. II.*

Whither to fly ?

*Semicho. I.*

Where the rocks that gird th' Ægean  
 Echo to the battle pæan  
 Of the free—  
 I would flee  
 A tempestuous herald of victory !  
 My golden rain  
 For the Grecian slain  
 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main ;  
 And my solemn thunder-knell  
 Should ring to the world the passing-bell  
 Of tyranny ! .

*Semicho. II.*

Ah, King ! wilt thou chain  
 The rack and the rain ?  
 Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane ?  
 The storms are free,  
 But we—

*Chorus.*

O slavery ! thou frost of the world's prime,  
 Killing its flowers, and leaving its thorns bare  
 Thy touch has stamp'd these limbs with crime,  
 These brows thy branding garland bear !  
 But the free heart, the impassive soul,  
 Scorn thy control !

*Semicho. I.*

Let there be light ! said Liberty ;  
 And, like sunrise from the sea,  
 Athens arose !—Around her born,  
 Shone, like mountains in the morn,  
 Glorious states ;—and are they now  
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion ?

*Semicho. II.*

Go  
 Where Thermæ and Asopus swallow'd  
 Persia, as the sand does foam.  
 Deluge upon deluge followed,  
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome :  
 And, lastly, thou !

*Semicho. I.*

Temples and towers,  
 Citadels and marts, and they  
 Who live and die there, have been ours,  
 And may be thine, and must decay ;

But Greece and her foundations are  
 Built below the tide of war,  
 Based on the crystalline sea  
 Of thought and its eternity ;  
 Her citizens, imperial spirits,  
 Rule the present from the past,  
 On all this world of men inherits  
 Their seal is set.

*Semicho. II.*

Hear ye the blast,  
 Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls  
 From ruin her Titanian walls ?  
 Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones  
 Of Slavery ? Argos, Corinth, Crete,  
 Hear, and from their mountain thrones  
 The dæmons and the nymphs repeat  
 The harmony.

*Semicho. I.*

I hear ! I hear !

*Semicho. II.*

The world's eyeless charioteer,  
 Destiny, is hurrying by !  
 What faith is crush'd, what empire bleeds,  
 Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds ?  
 What eagle-winged victory sits  
 At her right hand ? what shadow flits  
 Before ? what splendour rolls behind ?  
 Ruin and renovation cry,  
 Who but we ?

*Semicho. I.*

I hear ! I hear !

The hiss as of a rushing wind,  
 The roar as of an ocean foaming,  
 The thunder as of earthquake coming,

I hear ! I hear !

The crash as of an empire falling,  
 The shrieks as of a people calling  
 Mercy ! Mercy !—How they thrill !  
 Then a shout of " Kill ! kill ! kill !"  
 And then a small still voice, thus—

*Semicho. II.*

For

Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind,  
 The foul cubs like their parents are ;  
 Their den is in their guilty mind,  
 And Conscience feeds them with despair.

*Semicho. I.*

In sacred Athens, near the fane  
 Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood ;  
 Serve not the unknown God in vain,  
 But pay that broken shrine again  
 Love for hate, and tears for blood.

*Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.*

*Mah.* Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we—

*Ahas.* No more!

*Mah.* But raised among thy fellow men  
By thought, as I by power.

*Ahas.* Thou sayest so.

*Mah.* Thou art an adept in the difficult lore  
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest  
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;  
Thou severest element from element;  
Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees  
The birth of this old world through all its cycles  
Of desolation and of loveliness;  
And when man was not, and how man became  
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,  
And all its narrow circles—it is much.  
I honour thee, and would be what thou art  
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,  
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms  
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any  
Mighty or wise. I apprehend not  
What thou hast taught me, but now I perceive  
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;  
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,  
Can make the future present—let it come!  
Moreover, thou disdainest us and ours:  
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

*Ahas.* Disdain thee!—Not the worm beneath my feet  
The Fathomless has care for meaner things  
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those  
Who would be what they may not, or would seem  
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more  
Of thee and me, the future and the past;  
But look on that which cannot change—the one  
The unborn, and the undying. Earth and ocean,  
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem  
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,  
This firmament pavilion'd upon chaos,  
With all its cressets of immortal fire,  
Whose outwalls, bastioned impregvably  
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them  
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this whole  
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,  
With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
Is but a vision:—all that it inherits  
Are notes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams;  
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less  
The future and the past are idle shadows  
Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being,  
Nought is but that it feels itself to be.

*Mah.* What meanest thou? thy words stream like a tempest

Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake  
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night  
 On heaven above me. What can they avail?  
 They cast on all things, surest, brightest, best,  
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

*Ahas.* Mistake me not! All is contained in each.

Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup,  
 Is that which has been or will be, to that  
 Which is—the absent to the present. Thought  
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,  
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die;  
 They are what that which they regard appears,  
 The stuff whence mutability can weave  
 All that it hath dominion over,—worlds, worms,  
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought  
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance?  
 Wouldst thou behold the future?—ask and have!  
 Knock and it shall be open'd—look, and lo!  
 The coming age is shadowed on the past  
 As on a glass.

*Mah.* Wild, wilder thoughts convulse  
 My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second  
 Win Stamboul?

*Ahas.* Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit  
 The written fortunes of thy house and faith:  
 Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell  
 How what was born in blood must die.

*Mah.* Thy words  
 Have power on me! I see—

*Ahas.* What hearest thou?

*Mah.* A far whisper—  
 Terrible silence.

*Ahas.* What succeeds?

*Mah.* The sound \*

As of the assault of an imperial city,  
 The hiss of inextinguishable fire,  
 The roar of giant cannon;—the earthquaking  
 Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,  
 The shock of crags shot from strange engin'ry,  
 The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,  
 And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck  
 Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast  
 Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,  
 And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,  
 And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,  
 As of a joyous infant waked and playing  
 With its dead mother's breast; and now more loud

\* For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1445, see  
 Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223.

The mingled battle-cry—ha! hear I not

Εν τούτῳ νικῆ. Allah-illah-Allah!

*Ahas.* The sulphureous mist is raised—thou seest—

*Mah.*

A chasm,

As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;

And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,

Like giants on the ruins of a world,

Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust

Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one

Of regal port has cast himself beneath

The stream of war. Another, proudly clad

In golden arms, spurs a Tartarian barb

Into the gap, and with his iron mace

Directs the torrent of that tide of men,

And seems—he is—Mahomet.

*Ahas.*

What thou seest

Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream;

A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that

Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold

How cities, on which empire sleeps enthroned,

Bow their towered crests to mutability.

Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,

Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power

Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,

Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourish'd

With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes

Of that whose birth was but the same. The past

Now stands before thee like an Incarnation

Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with

That portion of thyself which was, ere thou

Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death:

Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion

Which call'd it from the uncreated deep,

Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms

Of raging death; and draw with mighty will

The imperial shade hither.

[*Exit Ahasuerus.*

*Mah.*

Approach!

*Phantom.*

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter

To take the living than give up the dead;

Yet has thy faith prevail'd, and I am here.

The heavy fragments of the power which fell

When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,

Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices

Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,

Wailing for glory never to return.—

A later empire nods in its decay;

The autumn of a greener faith is come

And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip

The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built

Her ærie while Dominion whelp'd below.  
 The storm is in its branches, and the frost  
 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects  
 Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,  
 Ruin on ruin : thou art slow, my son ;  
 The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep  
 A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies  
 Boundless and mute ; and for thy subjects thou,  
 Like us, shall rule the ghosts of murder'd life,  
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—  
 Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,  
 And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die !  
 Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.  
 Islam must fall, but we will reign together,  
 Over its ruins in the world of death :—  
 And, if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed  
 Unfold itself even in the shape of that  
 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe ! woe !  
 To the weak people tangled in the grasp  
 Of its last spasms.

*Mah.* Spirit, woe to all !  
 Woe to the wrong'd and the avenger ! Woe  
 To the destroyer, woe to the destroy'd !  
 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver !  
 Woe to the oppress'd, and woe to the oppressor !  
 Woe both to those that suffer and inflict !  
 Those who are born, and those who die ! But say,  
 Imperial shadow of the thing I am,  
 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish  
 Her consummation ?

*Phan.* Ask the cold, pale Hour,  
 Rich in reversion of impending death,  
 When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs  
 Sit care, and sorrow, and infirmity—  
 The weight which crime, whose wings are plumed with years,  
 Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart  
 Over the heads of men, under which burthen  
 They bow themselves unto the grave ; fond wretch !  
 He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years  
 To come, and how, in hours of youth renew'd,  
 He will renew lost joys, and—

*Voice without.*

Victory ! victory !

(*The Phantom vanishes.*)

*Mah.* What sound of the importunate earth has broken  
 My mighty trance ?

*Voice without.* Victory ! victory !

*Mah.* Weak lightning before darkness ! poor faint smile  
 Of dying Islam ! Voice which art the response  
 Of hollow weakness ! Do I wake and live ?  
 Were there such things ? or may the unquiet brain,

Vex'd by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,  
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear?  
 It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,  
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth  
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,  
 The future must become the past, and I,  
 As they were, to whom once this present hour,  
 This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,  
 Seem'd an Elysian isle of peace and joy  
 Never to be attain'd.—I must rebuke  
 This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,  
 And, dying, bring despair,—Victory!—poor slaves!

(Exit MAHMUD.)

*Voice without.* Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks  
 Are as a brood of lions in the net,  
 Round which the kingiy hunters of the earth  
 Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food  
 Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,  
 From Thule to the girdle of the world,  
 Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men—  
 The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,  
 Famine and Thirst await :—eat, drink, and die!

*Semicho. I.* Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,  
 Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day!

I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,  
 Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,  
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilion'd lay  
 In visions of the dawning undelight?

Who shall impede her flight?

Who rob her of her prey?

*Voice without.* Victory! victory! Russia's famish'd eagles  
 Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.  
 Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!  
 Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

*Semicho. II.* Thou voice which art  
 The herald of the ill in splendour hid!

Thou echo of the hollow heart

Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode,

When desolation flashes o'er a world destroy'd.

O bear me to those isles of jagged cloud

Which float like mountains on the earthquakes, 'mid  
 The momentary oceans of the lightning;

Or to some toppling promontory proud

Of solid tempest, whose black pyramid,

Riven, overhangs the founts intently brightening

Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire

Before their waves expire,

When heaven and earth are light, and only light

In the thunder-night!

*Voice without.* Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,



And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,  
 Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak!  
 Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes!  
 These chains are light, fitter for slaves and prisoners  
 Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

*Semicho. I.* Alas for Liberty!

If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years

Or fate, can quell the free;

Alas for Virtue! when

Torments, or contumely, or the sneers

Of erring-judging men,

Can break the heart where it abides.

Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid

Can change, with its false times and tides,

Like hope and terror—

Alas for Love! \*

And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,

If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror

Before the dazzled eyes of error.

Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

*Semicho. II.* Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,

Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn

Through many a hostile Anarchy!

At length they wept aloud and cried, "The sea! the sea!"

Through exile, persecution, and despair,

Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become

The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb,

Of all whose step wakes power, lull'd in her savage lair.

But Greece was as a hermit child,

Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built

To woman's growth by dreams so mild,

She knew not pain or guilt;

And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble,

When ye desert the free!

If Greece must be

A wreck, yet shall its fragments re-assemble,

And build themselves again impregnably

In a diviner clime,

To Amphionic music, on some cape sublime,

Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

*Semicho. I.* Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;

Let the free possess the Paradise they claim;

Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weigh'd

With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

*Semicho. II.* Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,

Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,

Our adversity a dream to pass away—

Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

*Voice without.* Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends  
 The keys of Ocean to the Islamite.

Now shall the blazon of the cross be veil'd,  
 And British skill directing, Othman might,  
 Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy  
 This jubilee of unrevenged blood!  
 Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

*Semicho. I.* Darkness has dawn'd in the East  
 On the noon of time:  
 The death-birds descend to their feast  
 From the hungry clime.  
 Let Freedom and Peace flee far  
 To a sunnier strand,  
 And follow Love's folding star  
 To the evening land!

*Semicho. II.* The young moon has fed  
 Her exhausted horn  
 With the sunset's fire;  
 The weak day is dead,  
 But the night is not born;  
 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire,  
 While it trembles with fear and delight,  
 Hesperus flies from awakening night,  
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light  
 Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.  
 Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!  
 Guide us far, far away,  
 To climes where now, veil'd by the ardour of day,  
 Thou art hidden  
 From waves on which weary Noon  
 Faints in her summer swoon,  
 Between kingless continents, sinless as Eden,  
 Around mountains and islands inviolably  
 Prankt on the sapphire sea.

*Semicho. I.* Through the sunset of hope,  
 Like the shapes of a dream,  
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam  
 Beneath Heaven's cope.  
 Their shadows more clear float by—  
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,  
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe,  
 Burst like morning on dreams, or like Heaven on death,  
 Through the walls of our prison;  
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

*Cho.* The world's great age begins anew,  
 The golden years return,  
 The earth doth like a snake renew  
 Her winter weeds outworn:  
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam  
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
 From waves serener far ;  
 A new Peneus rolls its fountains  
 Against the morning-star.  
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
 Young Cyclads, on a sunnier deep.  
 A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
 Fraught with a later prize ;  
 Another Orpheus sings again,  
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.  
 A new Ulysses leaves once more  
 Calypso for his native shore.  
 Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,  
 If earth Death's scroll must be !  
 Nor mix with Lajian rage the joy  
 Which dawns upon the free :  
 Although a subtler sphinx renew  
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew  
 Another Athens shall arise,  
 And to remoter time  
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
 The splendour of its prime ;  
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.  
 Saturn and Love their long repose  
 Shall burst, more bright and good  
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,  
 Than many unsubdued :  
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
 But votive tears, and symbol flowers.  
 Oh, cease ! must hate and death return ?  
 Cease ! must men kill and die ?  
 Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn  
 Of bitter prophecy.  
 The world is weary of the past,  
 Oh, might it die or rest at last !

# JULIAN AND MADDALO;

## A CONVERSATION.

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I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo  
 Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow  
 Of Adria towards Venice : a bare strand  
 Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,  
 Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,  
 Such as from earth's embrace the salt-ooze breeds,  
 Is this ; an uninhabited sea-side,  
 Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,  
 Abandons ; and no other object breaks  
 The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes  
 Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes  
 A narrow space of level sand thereon,  
 Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went **down** :  
 This ride was my delight. I love all waste  
 And solitary places ; where we taste  
 The pleasure of believing what we see  
 Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be :  
 And such was this wide ocean, and this shore  
 More barren than its billows ; and yet more  
 Than all, with a remembered friend I love  
 To ride as then I rode ;—for the winds drove  
 The living spray along the sunny air  
 Into our faces : the blue heavens were bare,  
 Stripped to their depths by the awakening north ;  
 And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth,  
 Harmonizing with solitude, and sent  
 Into our hearts aërial merriment.

So, as we rode, we talked ; and the swift thought,  
 Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,  
 But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,  
 Charged with light memories of remembered hours,  
 None slow enough for sadness : till we came  
 Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.  
 This day had been cheerful but cold, and now  
 The sun was sinking, and the wind also.  
 Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be  
 Talk interrupted with such raillery  
 As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn

The thoughts it would extinguish :—'twas forlorn,  
Yet pleasing ; such as once, so poets tell,  
The devils held within the dales of hell,  
Concerning God, freewill, and destiny.  
Of all that Earth has been, or yet may be ;  
All that vain men imagine or believe,  
Or hope can paint, or suffering can achieve,  
We descanted ; and I ( for ever still  
Is it not wise to make the best of ill ? )  
Argued against despondency ; but pride  
Made my companion take the darker side.  
The sense that he was greater than his kind  
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
By gazing on its own exceeding light.  
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight  
Over the horizon of the mountains—Oh !  
How beautiful is sunset, when the glow  
Of heaven descends upon a land like thee,  
Thou paradise of exiles, Italy !  
Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers  
Of cities they encircle !—It was ours  
To stand on thee, beholding it : and then,  
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men  
Were waiting for us with the gondola.  
As those who pause on some delightful way,  
Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood  
Looking upon the evening and the flood,  
Which lay between the city and the shore,  
Paved with the image of the sky : the hoar  
And airy Alps, towards the north, appeared,  
Through mist, a heaven-sustaining bulwark, reared  
Between the east and west ; and half the sky  
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,  
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue  
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent  
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent  
Among the many-folded hills—they were  
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,  
As seen from Lido through the harbour piles,  
The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—  
And then, as if the earth and sea had been  
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
Those mountains towering, as from waves of flame,  
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
Their very peaks transparent. “ Ere it fade,”  
Said my companion, “ I will show you soon  
A better station.” So, o'er the lagune  
We glided ; and from that funereal bark

I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark  
How from their many isles in evening's gleam,  
Its temples and its palaces did seem  
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heaven.  
I was about to speak, when—"We are even  
Now at the point I meant," said Maddalo,  
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.  
"Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well  
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell."  
I looked, and saw between us and the sun  
A building on an island, such a one  
As age to age might add, for uses vile,—  
A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile;  
And on the top an open tower, where hung  
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung,  
We could just hear its coarse and iron tongue:  
The broad sun sank behind it, and it tolled  
In strong and black relief.—"What we behold  
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,"—  
Said Maddalo; "and even at this hour,  
Those who may cross the water hear that bell  
Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,  
To vespers."—"As much skill as need to pray,  
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they,  
To their stern maker," I replied.—"O, ho!  
You talk as in years past," said Maddalo.  
"Tis strange men change not. You were ever still  
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs: if you can't swim,  
Beware of Providence." I looked on him,  
But the gay smile had faded from his eye.  
"As such," he cried, "is our mortality;  
And this must be the emblem and the sign  
Of what should be eternal and divine:  
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,  
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower must toll  
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below  
Round the rent heart, and pray—as madmen do:  
For what? they know not, till the night of death,  
As sunset that strange vision, severeth  
Our memory from itself, and us from all  
We sought, and yet were baffled." I recall  
The sense of what he said, although I mar  
The force of his expressions. The broad star  
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill;  
And the black bell became invisible;  
And the red tower looked grey; and all between,  
The churches, ships, and palaces, were seen  
Huddled in gloom; into the purple sea  
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.

We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola  
Conveyed me to my lodging by the way.

The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim :  
Ere Maddalo arose I called on him,  
And whilst I waited, with his child I played ;  
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made ;  
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being ;  
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing ;  
With eyes—Oh ! speak not of her eyes ! which seem  
Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
With such deep meaning as we never see  
But in the human countenance. With me  
She was a special favourite : I had nursed  
Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first  
To this bleak world ; and yet she seemed to know  
On second sight her ancient playfellow,  
Less changed than she was by six months or so.  
For, after her first shyness was worn out,  
We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,  
When the Count entered. Salutations pass'd :  
“The words you spoke last night might well have cast  
A darkness on my spirit :—if man be  
The passive thing you say, I should not see  
Much harm in the religions and old saws,  
( Tho' I may never own such leaden laws )  
Which break a teachless nature to the yoke :  
Mine is another faith,”—Thus much I spoke  
And, noting he replied not, added—“ See  
This lovely child ; blithe, innocent, and free ;  
She spends a happy time, with little care ;  
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are,  
As came on you last night. It is our will  
Which thus enchains us to permitted ill.  
We might be otherwise ; we might be all  
We dream of, happy, high, majestic.  
Where is the beauty, love, and truth, we seek,  
But in our minds ? And, if we were not weak,  
Should we be less in deed than in desire ?”—  
—“ Aye, if we were not weak,—and we aspire,  
How vainly ! to be strong,” said Maddalo :  
“ You talk Utopian”—

“ It remains to know,”

I then rejoined, “ and those who try, may find  
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind :  
Brittle perchance as straw. We are assured  
Much may be conquered, much may be endured,  
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know  
That we have power over ourselves to do

And suffer—*what*, we know not till we try ;  
 But something nobler than to live and die :  
 So taught the kings of old philosophy,  
 Who reigned before religion made men blind ;  
 And those who suffer with their suffering kind,  
 Yet feel this faith, religion."

" My dear friend,"  
 Said Maddalo, " my judgment will not bend  
 To your opinion, though I think you might  
 Make such a system refutation-tight,  
 As far as words go. I knew one like you,  
 Who to this city came some months ago,  
 With whom I argued in this sort,—and he  
 Is now gone mad—and so he answered me,  
 Poor fellow !—But if you would like to show,  
 We'll visit him, and his wild talk will shew  
 How vain are such aspiring theories."—

" I hope to prove the induction otherwise,  
 And that a want of that true theory still,  
 Which seeks a soul of goodness in things ill,  
 Or in himself or others, has thus bow'd  
 His being :—there are some by nature proud,  
 Who, patient in all else, demand but this—  
 To love and be beloved with gentleness :—  
 And being scorned, what wonder if they die—  
 Some living death ? This is not destiny,  
 But man's own wilful ill."

As thus I spoke,  
 Servants announced the gondola, and we  
 Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought *sea*,  
 Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.  
 We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,  
 Fierce yells and howlings, and lamentings keen,  
 And laughter where complaint had merrier been,  
 Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs  
 Into an old court-yard. I heard on high,  
 Then, fragments of most touching melody,  
 But looking up saw not the singer there.—  
 Through the black bars in the tempestuous air  
 I saw, like weeds on a wreck'd palace growing,  
 Long tangled locks flung wildly forth and flowing,  
 Of those on a sudden who were beguiled  
 Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled,  
 Hearing sweet sounds. Then I :—

" Methinks there were  
 A cure of these with patience and kind care,  
 If music can thus move. But what is he,  
 Whom we seek here ?"



“Of his sad history  
 I know but this,” said Maddalo; “he came  
 To Venice a dejected man, and fame  
 Said he was wealthy, or he had been so.  
 Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe,  
 But he was ever talking in such sort  
 As you do,—but more sadly;—he seem’d hurt,  
 Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,  
 To hear but of the oppression of the strong,  
 Or those absurd deceits (I think with you  
 In some respects, you know) which carry through  
 The excellent impostors of this earth  
 When they outface detection. He had worth,  
 Poor fellow! but a humourist in his way.”

—“Alas, what drove him mad!”

“I cannot say:  
 A lady came with him from France, and when  
 She left him and returned, he wander’d then  
 About yon lonely isles of desert sand,  
 Till he grew wild. He had no cash nor land  
 Remaining:—the police had brought him here—  
 Some fancy took him, and he would not bear  
 Removal, so I fitted up for him  
 Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim;  
 And sent him busts, and books, and urns for flowers,  
 Which had adorned his life in happier hours,  
 And instruments of music. You may guess  
 A stranger could do little more or less  
 For one so gentle and unfortunate—  
 And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight  
 From madmen’s chains, and make this hell appear  
 A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.”

“Nay, this was kind of you,—he had no claim,  
 As the world says.”

“None but the very same  
 Which I on all mankind, were I, as he,  
 Fall’n to such deep reverse. His melody  
 Is interrupted now: we hear the din  
 Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin:  
 Let us now visit him: after this strain,  
 He ever communes with himself again,  
 And sees and hears not any.”

Having said  
 These words, we called the keeper, and he led  
 To an apartment opening on the sea—  
 There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully  
 Near a piano, his pale fingers twined

One with the other ; and the ooze and wind  
 Rushed through an open easement, and did sway  
 His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray :  
 His head was leaning on a music-book,  
 And he was muttering ; and his lean limbs shook ;  
 His lips were pressed against a folded leaf,  
 In hue too beautiful for health, and grief  
 Smiled in their motions as they lay apart  
 As one who wrought from his own fervid heart  
 The eloquence of passion : soon he raised  
 His sad meek face, and eyes lustrous and glazed,  
 And spoke,—sometimes as one who wrote and thought  
 His words might move some heart that heeded not,  
 If sent to distant land :—and then as one  
 Reproaching deeds never to be undone,  
 With wondering self-compassion ; then his speech  
 Was lost in grief, and then his words came each  
 Unmodulated and expressionless,—  
 But that from one jarred accent you might guess  
 It was despair made them so uniform :  
 And all the while the loud and gusty storm  
 Hissed through the window, and we stood behind,  
 Stealing his accents from the envious wind,  
 Unseen. I yet remember what he said  
 Distinctly, such impression his words made.

“ Month after month,” he cried, “ to bear this load,  
 And, as a jade urged by the whip and goad,  
 To drag life on—which like a heavy chain  
 Lengthens behind with many a link of pain,  
 And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare  
 To give a human voice to my despair ;  
 But live, and move, and, wretched thing ! smile on,  
 As if I never went aside to groan,  
 And wear this mask of falsehood even to those  
 Who are most dear—not for my own repose.  
 Alas ! no scorn, nor pain, nor hate, could be  
 So heavy as that falsehood is to me—  
 But that I cannot bear more altered faces  
 Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,  
 More misery, disappointment, and mistrust,  
 To own me for their father. Would the dust  
 Were covered in upon my body now !  
 That the life ceased to toil within my brow !  
 And then these thoughts would at the last be fled :  
 Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

“ What Power delights to torture us ? I know  
 That to myself I do not wholly owe  
 What now I suffer, though in part I may.

Alas! none strewed fresh flowers unon the way  
 Where, wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain,  
 My shadow, which will leave me not again.  
 If I have erred, there was no joy in error,  
 But pain, and insult, and unrest, and terror;  
 I have not, as some do, bought penitence  
 With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence;  
 For then if love, and tenderness, and truth,  
 Had overlived Hope's momentary youth,  
 My creed should have redeemed me from repenting;  
 But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting  
 Met love excited by far other seeming  
 Until the end was gained:—as one from dreaming  
 Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state  
 Such as it is.—

“O thou, my spirit's mate

Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,  
 Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes  
 If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see;  
 My secret groans must be unheard by thee,  
 Thou wouldst weep tears, bitter as blood, to know  
 Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.  
 Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed  
 In friendship, let me not that name degrade,  
 By placing on your hearts the secret load  
 Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road  
 To peace, and that is truth, which follow ye!  
 Love sometimes leads astray to misery!  
 Yet think not, tho' subdued (and I may well  
 Say that I am subdued)—that the full hell  
 Within me would infect the untainted breast  
 Of sacred nature with its own unrest;  
 As some perverted being, think to find  
 In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind  
 Which scorn or hate hath wounded. O, how vain!  
 The dagger heals not, but may rend again.  
 Believe that I am ever still the same  
 In creed as in resolve; and what may tame  
 My heart, must leave the understanding free,  
 Or all would sink under this agony—  
 Nor dream that I will join the vulgar eye,  
 Or with my silence sanction tyranny,  
 Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain  
 In any madness which the world calls gain;  
 Ambition, or revenge, or thoughts as stern  
 As those which make me what I am, or turn  
 To avarice or misanthropy or lust.  
 Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust!  
 'Till then the dungeon may demand its prey:  
 And Poverty and Shame may meet and say,  
 Halting beside me, in the public way.—

' That love-devoted youth is ours : let's sit  
Beside him : he may live some six months yet,'—  
Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,  
May ask some willing victim ; or ye, friends,  
May fall under some sorrow, which this heart  
Or hand may share, or vanquish, or avert :  
I am prepared, in truth, with no proud joy,  
To do or suffer aught, as when a boy  
I did devote to justice, and to love,  
My nature, worthless now.

“ I must remove  
A veil from my pent mind. 'Tis torn aside !  
O ! pallid as Death's dedicated bride,  
Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,  
Am I not wan like thee ? At the grave's call  
I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball,  
To meet the ghastly paramour, for whom  
Thou hast deserted me,—and made the tomb  
Thy bridal bed. But I beside thy feet  
Will lie, and watch ye from my winding-sheet  
Thus—wide awake, though dead—Y et stay, O stay !  
Go not so soon—I know not what I say—  
Hear but my reasons—I am mad, I fear,  
My fancy is o'erwrought—thou art not here,  
Pale art thou, 'tis most true—but thou art gone—  
Thy work is finished ; I am left alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Nay, was it I who woo'd thee to this breast,  
Which like a serpent thou envenomest,  
As in repayment of the warmth it lent ?  
Didst thou not seek me for thine own content ?  
Did not thy love awaken mine ? I thought  
That thou wert she who said, ' You kiss me not  
Ever ; I fear you do not love me now.'  
In truth, I loved even to my overthrow  
Her, who would fain forget these words, but they  
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ You say that I am proud ; that when I speak,  
My lip is tortured with the wrongs, which break  
The spirit it expresses.—Never one  
Humbled himself before, as I have done !  
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread  
Turns, though it wound not—then, with prostrate head,  
Sinks in the dust, and writhes like me—and dies :  
—No :—wears a living death of agonies !  
As the slow shadows of the pointed grass  
Mark the eternal periods, its pangs pass,  
Slow, ever-moving, making moments be

As mine seem,—each an immortality!

\* \* \* \* \*

“ That you had never seen me ! never heard  
 My voice ! and, more than all, had ne'er endured  
 The deep pollution of my loathed embrace !  
 That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face !  
 That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out  
 The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root  
 With mine own quivering fingers ! so that ne'er  
 Our hearts had for a moment mingled there,  
 To disunite in horror ! These were not  
 With thee like some suppressed and hideous thought,  
 Which flits athwart our musings, but can find  
 No rest within a pure and gentle mind—  
 Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,  
 And sear'dst my memory o'er them—for I heard,  
 And can forget not—they were ministered,  
 One after one, those curses. Mix them up,  
 Like self-destroying poisons, in one cup ;  
 And they will make one blessing, which thou ne'er  
 Didst imprecate for on me——death !

“ It were  
 A cruel punishment for one most cruel,  
 If such can love, to make that love the fuel  
 Of the mind's hell—hate, scorn, remorse, despair ;  
 But *me*, whose heart a stranger's tear might wear,  
 As water-drops the sandy fountain stone ;  
 Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan  
 For woes which others hear not, and could see  
 The absent with the glass of phantasy,  
 And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,  
 Following the captive to his dungeon deep ;  
*Me*, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
 The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth,  
 And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,  
 When all beside was cold :—that thou on me  
 Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony—  
 Such curses are from lips once eloquent  
 With love's too partial praise ! Let none relent  
 Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name  
 Henceforth, if an example for the same  
 They seek : for thou on me lookedst so and so,  
 And didst speak thus and thus. I live to shew  
 How much men bear, and die not.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Thou wilt tell,  
 With the grimace of hate, how horrible  
 It was to meet my love when thine grew less ;  
 Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address

Such features to love's work. . . . This taunt, though true,  
 (For indeed, Nature nor in form nor hue  
 Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)  
 Shall not be thy defence: for since thy life  
 Met mine first, years long past,—since thine eye kindled  
 With soft fire under mine,—I have not dwindled,  
 Nor changed in mind, or body, or in ought  
 But as love changes what it loveth not  
 After long years and many trials.

\* \* \* \* \*

“How vain

Are words! I thought never to speak again,  
 Not even in secret, not to my own heart—  
 But from my lips the unwilling accents start,  
 And from my pen the words flow as I write,  
 Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears—my sight  
 Is dim to see that charactered in vain,  
 On this unfeeling leaf, which burns the brain  
 And eats into it, blotting all things fair,  
 And wise, and good, which time had written there.  
 Those who inflict must suffer, for they see  
 The work of their own hearts, and that must be  
 Our chastisement or recompense.—O child!  
 I would that thine were like to be more mild  
 For both our wretched sakes,—for thine the most,  
 Who feel'st already all that thou hast lost,  
 Without the power to wish it thine again.  
 And, as slow years pass, a funeral train,  
 Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend  
 Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend  
 No thought on my dead memory?

\* \* \* \* \*

“Alas, love!

Fear me not: against thee I'd not move  
 A finger in despite. Do I not live  
 That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve?  
 I give thee tears for scorn, and love for hate;  
 And, that thy lot may be less desolate  
 Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain  
 From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.  
 Then, when thou speakest of me, never say,  
 ‘He could forgive not.’—Here I cast away  
 All human passions, all revenge, all pride;  
 I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide  
 Under these words, like embers, every spark  
 Of that which has consumed me. Quick and dark  
 The grave is yawning:—as its roof shall cover  
 My limbs with dust and worms, under and over,  
 So let oblivion hide this grief.—The air  
 Closes upon my accents, as despair  
 Upon my heart—let death upon my care!”

He ceased, and overcome, leant back awhile ;  
 Then rising, with a melancholy smile,  
 Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept  
 A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept,  
 And muttered some familiar name, and we  
 Wept without shame in his society.  
 I think I never was impress'd so much ;  
 The man, who was not, must have lacked a touch  
 Of human nature.—Then we linger'd not,  
 Although our argument was quite forgot ;  
 But, calling the attendants, went to dine  
 At Maddalo's :—yet neither cheer, nor wine,  
 Could give us spirits, for we talked of him,  
 And nothing else, till day-light made stars dim.  
 And we agreed it was some dreadful ill  
 Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,  
 By a dear friend ; some deadly change in love  
 Of one vow'd deeply which he dreamed not of ;  
 For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot  
 Of falsehood in his mind, which flourish'd not  
 But in the light of all-beholding truth ;  
 And having stamped this canker on his youth,  
 She had abandoned him :—and how much more  
 Might be his woe, we guessed not :—he had store  
 Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess  
 From his nice habits and his gentleness :  
 These now were lost ; it were a grief indeed  
 If he had changed one unsustaining reed  
 For all that such a man might else adorn.  
 The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn ;  
 For the wild language of his grief was high—  
 Such as in measure were called poetry.  
 And I remember one remark, which then  
 Maddalo made : he said—“ Most wretched men  
 Are cradled into poetry by wrong ;  
 They learn in suffering what they teach in song.”

• If I had been an unconnected man,  
 I from the moment should have form'd some plan  
 Never to leave sweet Venice ; for to me  
 It was delight to ride by the lone sea :  
 And then the town is silent ; one may write  
 Or read in gondolas, by day or night,  
 Having the little brazen lamp alight,  
 Unseen, uninterrupted :—books are there,  
 Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair  
 Which were twin-born with poetry ;—and all  
 We seek in towns, with little to recall  
 Regret for the green country :—I might sit  
 In Maddalo's great palace and his wit,

And subtle talk would cheer the winter night,  
 And make me know myself:—and the fire-light  
 Would flash upon our faces, till the day  
 Might dawn, and make me wonder at my stay.  
 But I had friends in London too. The chief  
 Attraction here was that I sought relief  
 From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought  
 Within me: 'twas perhaps an idle thought,  
 But I imagined that if, day by day,  
 I watched him, and seldom went away,  
 And studied all the beatings of his heart  
 With zeal, as men study some stubborn art  
 For their own good, and could by patience find  
 An entrance to the caverns of his mind,  
 I might reclaim him from his dark estate.  
 In friendships I had been most fortunate,  
 Yet never saw I one whom I would call  
 More willingly my friend:—and this was all  
 Accomplish'd not;—such dreams of baseless good  
 Oft come and go, in crowds or solitude,  
 And leave no trace!—but what I now design'd,  
 Made, for long years, impression on my mind.  
 The following morning, urged by my affairs,  
 I left bright Venice.

After many years,  
 And many changes, I returned; the name  
 Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same;  
 But Maddalo was travelling, far away,  
 Among the mountains of Armenia.  
 His dog was dead: his child had now become  
 A woman, such as it has been my doom  
 To meet with few; a wonder of this earth,  
 Where there is little of transcendent worth—  
 Like one of Shakspeare's women. Kindly she,  
 And with a manner beyond courtesy,  
 Receiv'd her father's friend; and, when I ask'd  
 Of the lorn maniac, she her memory task'd,  
 And told, as she had heard, the mournful tale:  
 "That the poor sufferer's health began to fail  
 Two years from my departure; but that then  
 The lady, who had left him, came again.  
 Her mien had been imperious, but she now  
 Look'd meek; perhaps remorse had brought her low.  
 Her coming made him better; and they stayed  
 Together at my father's,—for I played,  
 As I remember, with the lady's shawl;  
 I might be six years old;—But, after all,  
 She left him."—

“Why her heart must have been tough;  
 How did it end?”



— “And was not this enough?  
They met, they parted.”

“Child, is there no more?”

“Something within that interval, which bore  
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met;—  
Yet, if thine aged eyes disdain to wet  
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remember'd tears.  
Ask me no more; but let the silent years  
Be closed and cered over their memory,  
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.”  
I urged and questioned still; she told me how  
All happen'd—but the cold world shall not know.

*Rome, May, 1819.*

END OF JULIAN AND MADDALO.

## THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

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Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth  
 Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,  
 Error and Truth, had hunted from the earth  
 All those bright natures which adorned its prime,  
 And left us nothing to believe in, worth  
 The pains of putting into learned rhyme,  
 A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain,  
 Within a cavern by a secret fountain.

Her mother was one of the Atlantides :  
 The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden  
 In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas  
 So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden  
 In the warm shadow of her loveliness ;—  
 He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden  
 The chamber of grey rock in which she lay—  
 She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

'Tis said, she was first changed into a vapour,  
 And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,  
 Like splendour-winged moths about a taper,  
 Round the red west when the sun dies in it :  
 And then into a meteor, such as caper  
 On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit ;  
 Then, into one of those mysterious stars  
 Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent  
 Her bow beside the folding star, and bidden  
 With that bright sign the billows to indent  
 The sea-deserted sand ; like children chidden,  
 At her command they ever came and went :—  
 Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden,  
 Took shape and motion ; with the living form  
 Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.

A lovely lady garmented in light  
 From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are  
 Two openings of unfathomable night  
 Seen through a tempest's cloven roof ;—her hair  
 Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,  
 Picturing her form ;—her soft smiles shone afar,  
 And her low voice was heard like love, and drew  
 All living things towards this wonder new.

And first the spotted camel-leopard came,  
 And then the wise and fearless elephant ;  
 Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame  
 Of his own volumes interolved ;—all gaunt  
 And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.  
 They drank before her at her sacred fount ;  
 And every beast of beating heart grew bold,  
 Such gentleness and power even to behold.

The brindled lioness led forth her young,  
 That she might teach them how they should forego  
 Their inborn thirst of death ; the pard unstrung  
 His sinews at her feet, and sought to know  
 With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue  
 How he might be as gentle as the doe.  
 The magic circle of her voice and eyes  
 All savage natures did imparadise.

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick  
 Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew  
 Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick,  
 Cicadæ are, drunk with the noonday dew :  
 And Driope and Faunus followed quick,  
 Teazing the God to sing them something new,  
 Till in this cave they found the lady lone,  
 Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,  
 And though none saw him,—through the adamant  
 Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,  
 And through those living spirits, like a want  
 He pass'd out of his everlasting lair  
 Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant  
 And felt that wondrous lady alone,—  
 And she felt him upon her emerald throne.

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,  
 And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,  
 Who drives her white waves over the green sea ;  
 And Oceans, with the brine on his grey locks,  
 And quaint Priapus with his company  
 All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks  
 Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth :—  
 Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,  
 And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant—  
 Their spirits shook within them, as a flame  
 Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt ;  
 Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name.  
 Centaurs, and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt  
 Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead,  
 Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

For she was beautiful : her beauty made  
 The bright world dim, and every thing beside  
 Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade :  
 No thought of living spirit could abide,  
 Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,  
 On any object in the world so wide,  
 On any hope within the circling skies,  
 But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle  
 And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three  
 Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle  
 The clouds, and waves and mountains with, and she  
 As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle  
 In the belated moon, wound skilfully ;  
 And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—  
 A shadow for the splendour of her love.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
 Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,  
 Which had the power all spirits of compelling,  
 Folded in cells of crystal silence there ;  
 Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
 Will never die—yet ere we are aware,  
 The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
 And the regret they leave remains alone.

And there lay visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,  
 Each in his thin sheath like a chrysalis :  
 Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint  
 With the soft burthen of intensest bliss :  
 It is its work to bear to many a saint  
 Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,  
 Even Love's—and others white, green, grey and black,  
 And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

And odours, in a kind of aviary  
 Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept,  
 Clipt in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy  
 Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept,  
 As bats at the wired window of a dairy,  
 They beat their vans ; and each was an adept,  
 When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,  
 To stir sweet thoughts, or sad, in destined minds.

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might  
 Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,  
 And change eternal death into a night  
 Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep,  
 Could make their tears all wonder and delight,  
 She in her crystal vials did closely keep :  
 If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said  
 Theli'ving were not envied of the dead.

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,  
 The works of some Saturnian Archmage,  
 Which taught the expiations at whose price  
 Men from the Gods might win that happy age  
 Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;  
 And which might quench the earth-consuming rage  
 Of gold and blood—till men should live and move  
 Harmonious as the sacred stars above.

And how all things that seem untameable,  
 Not to be checked and not to be confined,  
 Obey the spells of wisdom's wizard skill;  
 Time, Earth, and Fire—the Ocean and the Wind,  
 And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;  
 And other scrolls whose writings did unbind  
 The inmost lore of Love—let the profane  
 Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.

And wondrous works of substances unknown,  
 To which the enchantment of her fathers power  
 Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,  
 Were heaped in the recesses of her bower:  
 Carved lamps and chalices, and phials which shone  
 In their own golden beams—each like a flower,  
 Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light  
 Under a cypress in a starless night.

At first she lived alone in this wild home,  
 And her thoughts were each a minister,  
 Clothing themselves, or with the ocean-foam,  
 Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,  
 To work whatever purposes might come  
 Into her mind: such power her mighty Sire  
 Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,  
 Through all the regions which he shines upon.

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,  
 Oreads and Naiads with long weedy locks,  
 Offered to do her bidding through the seas,  
 Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,  
 And far beneath the matted roots of trees,  
 And in the gnarled heart of stubborn oaks,  
 So they might live for ever in the light  
 Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

This may not be," the wizard maid replied;  
 "The fountains where the Naiades bedew  
 Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried;  
 The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew  
 Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;  
 The boundless ocean, like a drop of dew  
 Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must  
 Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

‘And ye with them will perish one by one :  
 If I must sigh to think that this shall be,  
 If I must weep when the surviving Sun  
 Shall smile on your decay—Oh, ask not me  
 To love you till your little race is run ;  
 I cannot die as ye must—over me  
 Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell  
 Shall be my paths henceforth, and so farewell !’

She spoke and wept: the dark and azure well  
 Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,  
 And every little circllet where they fell,  
 Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres  
 And intertangled lines of light:—a knell  
 Of sobbing voices came upon her ears  
 From those departing Forms, o’er the serene  
 Of the white streams and of the forest green.

All day the wizard lady sat aloof,  
 Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity,  
 Under the cavern’s fountain-lighted roof ;  
 Or broidering the pictured poesy  
 Of some high tale upon her growing woof,  
 Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye  
 In hues outshining heaven—and ever she  
 Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece  
 Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon ;  
 Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is,  
 Each flame of it is as a precious stone  
 Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this  
 Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.  
 The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand  
 She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

This lady never slept, but lay in trance  
 All night within the fountain—as in sleep.  
 Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty’s glance :  
 Through the green splendour of the water deep  
 She saw the constellations reel and dance  
 Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep  
 The tenor of her contemplations calm,  
 With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended  
 From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,  
 She pass’d at dew-fall to a space extended,  
 Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel  
 Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,  
 There yawned an inextinguishable well  
 Of crimson fire, full even to the brim,  
 And overflowing all the margin trim.

Within the which she lay, when the fierce war  
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor  
In many a mimic moon and bearded star,  
O'er woods and lawns—the serpent heard it flicker  
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar—  
And when the windless snow descended thicker  
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came,  
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

She had a Boat which some say Vulcan wrought  
For Venus, as the chariot of her star ;  
But it was found too feeble to be fraught  
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,  
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought  
And gave it to this daughter : from a car  
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat  
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

And others say, that, when but three hours old,  
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,  
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,  
And like a horticultural adept,  
Stole a strange seed, and wrapt it up in mould,  
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept  
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,  
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

The plant grew strong and green—the snowy flower  
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began  
To turn the light and dew by inward power  
To its own substance : woven tracery ran  
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er  
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan,  
Of which Love scooped this boat, and with soft motion  
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit  
A living spirit within all its frame,  
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.  
Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,  
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit ;  
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame,  
Or on blind Homer's heart a winged thought,—  
In joyous expectation lay the boat.

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow  
Together, tempering the repugnant mass  
With liquid love—all things together grow  
Through which the harmony of love can pass ;  
And a fair shape out of her hands did flow  
A living Image, which did far surpass

In beauty that bright shape of vital stone  
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth  
It seemed to have developed no defect  
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—  
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked ;  
The bosom lightly swelled with its full youth,  
The countenance was such as might select  
Some artist that his skill should never die,  
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,  
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,  
Tipt with the speed of liquid lightnings,  
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere :  
She led her creature to the boiling springs  
Where the light boat was moored,—and said—“ Sit here !”  
And pointed to the prow, and took *her* seat  
Beside the rudder with opposing feet.

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast  
Around their inland islets, and amid  
The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast  
Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid  
In melancholy gloom, the pinnacle pass'd ;  
By many a star-surrounded pyramid  
Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,  
And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

The silver noon into that winding dell,  
With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,  
Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell ;  
A green and glowing light, like that which drops  
From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,  
When earth, over her face night's mantle wraps ;  
Between the severed mountains lay on high  
Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

And ever as she went, the Image lay  
With folded wings and unawakened eyes ;  
And o'er its gentle countenance did play  
The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,  
Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,  
And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs  
Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,  
They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud  
Upon a stream of wind, the pinnae went :  
Now lingering on the pools, in which abode



The calm and darkness of the deep content  
 In which they paused ; now o'er the shallow road  
 Of white and dancing waters, all besprent  
 With sand and polished pebbles ;—mortal boat  
 In such a shallow rapid could not float.

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver  
 Their snow-like waters into golden air,  
 Or under chasms unfathomable ever  
 Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear  
 A subterranean portal for the river,  
 It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear  
 Its fall, down the hoar precipice of spray,  
 Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

And when the wizard lady would ascend  
 The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,  
 Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—  
 She called “ Hermaphroditus !” and the pale  
 And heavy hue which slumber could extend  
 Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale  
 A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,  
 Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,  
 With stars of fire spotting the stream below ;  
 And from above into the Sun's dominions  
 Flinging a glory, like the golden glow  
 In which spring clothes her emerald-winged minions,  
 All interwoven with fine feathery snow  
 And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,  
 With which frost paints the pines in winter time.

And then it winnowed the Elysian air  
 Which ever hung about that lady bright,  
 With its ethereal vans—and speeding there,  
 Like a star up the torrent of the night,  
 Or a swift eagle in the morning glare  
 Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight ;  
 The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,  
 Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

The water flashed like sunlight, by the prow  
 Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven ;  
 The still air seemed as if its waves did flow  
 In tempest down the mountains,—loosely driven  
 The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro ;  
 Beneath, the billows, having vainly striven  
 Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel  
 The swift and steady motion of the keel.

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,  
 Or in the noon of interlunar night,

The lady-witch in visions could not chain  
 Her spirit ; but sailed forth under the light  
 Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain  
 His storm-outsweeping wings, th' Hermaphrodite ;  
 She to the Austral waters took her way,  
 Beyond the fabulous Thamondoconia.

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,  
 Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,  
 With the Antarctic constellations paven,  
 Canopus and his crew, lay th' Austral lake—  
 There she would build herself a windless haven  
 Out of the clouds, whose moving turrets make  
 The bastions of the storm, when through the sky  
 The spirits of the tempest thundered by.

A haven, beneath whose translucent floor  
 The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,  
 And around which, the solid vapours hoar,  
 Based on the level waters, to the sky  
 Lifted their dreadful crags ; and like a shore  
 Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly  
 Hemmed in with rifts and precipices grey,  
 And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash  
 Of the winds' scourge, foamed like a wounded thing ;  
 And the incessant hail with stony clash  
 Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing  
 Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash  
 Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering  
 Fragment of inky thunder smoke—this haven  
 Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,

On which that lady played her many pranks,  
 Circling the image of a shooting star,  
 Even as a tyger on Hydaspes' banks  
 Outspeeds the Antelopes, which speediest are,  
 In her light boat ; and many quips and cranks  
 She played upon the water ; till the car  
 Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,  
 To journey from the misty east began.

And then she called out of the hollow turrets  
 Of those high clouds, white, golden, and vermilion,  
 The armies of her ministering spirits—  
 In mighty legions, million after million  
 They came, each troop emblazoning its merits  
 On meteor flags ; and many a proud pavilion,  
 Of the intertexture of the atmosphere,  
 They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen  
 Of woven exhalations, underlaid  
 With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen  
 A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid  
 With crimson silk—cressets from the serene  
 Hung there, and on the water for her tread,  
 A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,  
 Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

And on a throne o'erlaid with star-light, caught  
 Upon those wandering isles of æry dew,  
 Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,  
 She sate, and heard all that had happened new  
 Between the earth and moon, since they had brought  
 The last intelligence—and now she grew  
 Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—  
 And now she wêpt, and now she laughed outright.

These were tame pleasures.—She would often climb  
 The steepest ladder of the crudded rack  
 Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime,  
 And like Arion on the dolphin's back  
 Ride singing through the shoreless air. Oft time  
 Following the serpent lightning's winding track,  
 She ran upon the platforms of the wind,  
 And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

And sometimes to those streams of upper air,  
 Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,  
 She would ascend, and win the spirits there,  
 To let her join their chorus. Mortals found  
 That on those days the sky was calm and fair,  
 And mystic snatches of harmonious sound  
 Wandered upon the earth where'er she pass'd,  
 And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,  
 To glide adown old Nilus, when he threads  
 Egypt and Æthiopia, from the steep  
 Of utmost Axumé, until he spreads,  
 Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,  
 His waters on the plain: and crested heads  
 Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
 And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

By Mœris and the Mareotid lakes,  
 Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors;  
 Where naked boys, bridling tame water-snakes,  
 Or charioteering ghastly alligators,  
 Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes  
 Of those huge forms:—within the brazen doors

Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,  
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

And where, within the surface of the river,  
The shadows of the massy temples lie,  
And never are erased—but tremble ever  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,  
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that sereneest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight  
To wander in the shadow of the night,

With motion, like the spirit of that wind  
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet  
Past through the peopled haunts of human kind,  
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,  
Through fane and palace-court and labyrinth mined  
With many a dark and subterranean street  
Under the Nile; through chambers high and deep  
She past, observing mortals in their sleep.

A pleasure sweet, doubtless, it was to see  
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.  
Here lay two sister-twins in infancy:  
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;  
Within, two lovers linked innocently  
In their loose locks which over both did creep  
Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm,  
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,  
Not to be mirrored in a holy song,  
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,  
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong,  
And all the code of custom's lawless law  
Written upon the brows of old and young:  
"This," said the wizard maiden, "is the strife  
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life."

And little did the sight disturb her soul—  
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake  
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,  
Our course unpiloted, and starless make  
O'er its wide surface to an unknown goal,—  
But she in the calm depths her way could take,  
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide,  
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

And she saw princes couched under the glow  
Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court  
In dormitories ranged, row after row,  
She saw the priests asleep,—all of one sort,

For all were educated to be so.—

The peasants in their huts, and in the port  
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,  
And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves.

And all the forms in which those spirits lay,  
Were to her sight like the diaphanos  
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array  
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us  
Only their scorn of all concealment: they  
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.  
But these, and all now lay with sleep upon them,  
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

She all those human figures breathing there  
Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes  
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,  
And often through a rude and worn disguise  
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—  
And then,—she had a charm of strange device  
Which murmured on mute lips with tender tone  
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

Alas, Aurora! what wouldst thou have given  
For such a charm, when Tithon became grey?  
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven  
Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina  
Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven  
Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,  
To any witch who would have taught you it?  
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

'Tis said in after times her spirit free  
Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—  
But holy Dian could not chaster be  
Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,  
Than now this lady—like a sexless bee  
Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none—  
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden  
Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave  
Strange panacea in a chrystal bowl.  
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,  
And lived thenceforth as if some controul,  
Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave  
Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,  
Was a green and over-arching Bower  
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

For on the night that they were buried, she  
Restored the embalmers ruining, and shook

The light out of the funeral lamps, to be  
 A mimic day within that deathly nook :  
 And she unwound the woven imagery  
 Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took  
 The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,  
 And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

And there the body lay, age after age,  
 Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying,  
 Like one asleep in a green hermitage,  
 With gentle sleep about its eyelids playing,  
 And living in its dreams beyond the rage  
 Of death or life : while they were still arraying  
 In liveries ever new the rapid, blind,  
 And fleeting generations of mankind.

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain  
 Of those who were less beautiful, and make  
 All harsh and crooked purposes more vain  
 Than in the desert is the serpent's wake  
 Which the sand covers,—all his evil gain  
 The miser in such dreams would rise and shake  
 Into a beggar's lap :—the lying scribe  
 Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

The priests would write an explanation full,  
 Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,  
 How the god Apis really was a bull,  
 And nothing more ; and bid the herald stick  
 The same against the temple doors, and pull  
 The old cant down : they licensed all to speak  
 Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats and geese,  
 By pastoral letters to each diocese.

The king would dress an ape up in his crown  
 And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,  
 And on the right hand of the sunlike throne  
 Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat  
 The chattering of the mockey.—Every one  
 Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet  
 Of their great Emperor when the morning came ;  
 And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same !

The soldiers dreamed that that were blacksmiths, and  
 Walked out of quarters in sonambulism,  
 Round the red anvils you might see them stand  
 Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,  
 Beating their swords to ploughshares ;—in a band  
 The jailors sent those of the liberal schism  
 Free through the streets of Memphis ; much, I wist,  
 To the annoyance of king Amasis.

And timid lovers who had been so coy,  
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,  
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,  
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;  
And when next day the maiden and the boy  
Met one another, both like sinners caught,  
Blushed at the thing which each believed was done  
Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:  
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find  
The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill  
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.  
Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,  
Were torn apart, a wide wound; mind from mind  
She did unite again with visions clear  
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

These were the pranks she played among the cities  
Of mortal men, and what she did to sprites  
And gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties  
To do her will, and show their subtle slights,  
I will declare another time; for it is  
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights—  
Than for these garish summer days, when we  
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

END OF THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

## THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

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Swift as a spirit hastening to his task  
 Of glory and of good, the sun sprang forth  
 Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask  
 Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth—  
 The smokeless altars of the mountain snows  
 Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth  
 Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,  
 To which the birds tempered their matin lay,  
 All flowers in field or forest which unclose  
 Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,  
 Swinging their censers in the element,  
 With orient incense lit by the new ray  
 Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent  
 Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air ;  
 And, in succession due, did continent,  
 Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear  
 The form and character of mortal mould,  
 Rise as the sun their father rose, to bear  
 Their portion of the toil, which he of old  
 Took as his own and then imposed on them :  
 But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold  
 Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem  
 The cone of night, now they were laid asleep  
 Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem  
 Which an old chesnut flung athwart the steep  
 Of a green Apennine ; before me fled  
 The night ; behind me rose the day ; the deep  
 Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,  
 When a strange trance over my fancy grew  
 Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread  
 Was so transparent, that the scene came through  
 As clear as when a veil of light is drawn  
 O'er evening hills they glimmer ; and I knew  
 That I had felt the freshness of that dawn,  
 Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair,  
 And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn  
 Under the self-same bough, and heard as there  
 The birds, the fountains, and the ocean, hold,



Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air,  
And then a vision on my brain was rolled.

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As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,  
This was the tenor of my waking dream :  
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream  
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,  
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

A'l hastening onward, yet none seemed to know  
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why  
He made one of the multitude ; and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky  
One of the million leaves of summer's bier ;  
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear ;  
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some  
Seeking the object of another's fear ;

And others as with steps towards the tomb,  
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,  
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked and called it death ;  
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,  
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath :

But more with motions, which each other crost,  
Pursued or spurned the shadows the clouds threw,  
Or birds within the noon-day ether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,  
And weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,  
Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells for ever burst ;  
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told  
Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed,

With over-arching elms and caverns cold,  
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they  
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way  
The throng grew wilder, and the woods of June  
When the south wind shakes the extinguished day

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,  
But icy cold, obscured with [blinding] light  
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon

When on the sunlit limits of the night  
 Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,  
 And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might,

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear  
 The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form  
 Bends in dark ether from her infant's chair,—

So came a chariot on the silent storm  
 Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape  
 So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,  
 Crouching within the shadow of a tomb,  
 And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint ethereal gloom  
 Tempering the light upon the chariot beam;  
 A Janus-visaged shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-winged team;  
 The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings  
 Were lost:—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.  
 All the four faces of that charioteer  
 Had their eyes banded; little profit brings

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,  
 Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun  
 Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been, or will be done;  
 So ill was the car guided—but it past  
 With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,  
 Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,  
 And saw, like clouds upon the thunders blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance  
 Raging around—such seemed the jubilee  
 As when to meet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea  
 From senate house, and forum, and theatre,  
 When [                    ] upon the free

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.  
 Nor wanted here the just similitude  
 Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude  
 Was driven;—all those who had grown old in power  
 Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour  
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,  
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow  
Till the great winter lay the form and name  
Of this green earth with them for ever low;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame  
Their spirits to the conquerors—but as soon  
As they had touched the world with living flame,

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,  
Or those who put aside the diadem  
Of earthly thrones or gems [                    ]

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem,  
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen,  
Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before, fierce and obscene.  
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those  
Who lead it—fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose  
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure  
To savage music, wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,  
Convulsed, and on the rapid whirlwinds spun  
Of that fierce spirit, whose unholy leisure

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,  
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair;  
And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air.  
As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now  
Bending within each other's atmosphere

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow,  
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,  
Oft to their bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled,  
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle  
And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—the shock still may tingle;  
One falls and then another in the path  
Senseless—nor is the desolation single,

Yet ere I can say *where*—the chariot hath  
Past over them—nor other trace I find  
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore :—behind,  
 Old men and women foully disarrayed,  
 Shake their grey hairs in the insulting wind,  
 And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed.  
 Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still  
 Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will  
 They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose  
 Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their part and in the dust from whence they rose  
 Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,  
 And past in these performs what [        ] in those.

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,  
 Half to myself I said—And what is this ?  
 Whose shape is that within the car ? And why—

I would have added—is all here amiss ?—  
 But a voice answered—“ Life ! ”—I turned, and knew  
 ( O heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness ! )

That what I thought was an old root which grew  
 To strange distortion out of the hill side,  
 Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide  
 And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,  
 And that the holes it vainly sought to hide,

Were, or had been, eyes :—“ If thou canst, forbear  
 To join the dance, which I had well forborne ! ”  
 Said the grim Feature of my thought : “ Aware,

“ I will unfold that which to this deep scorn  
 Led me and my companions, and relate  
 The progress of the pageant since the morn ;

“ If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,  
 Follow it thou even to the night, but I  
 Am weary.”—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily .  
 He paused ; and, ere he could resume, I cried ;  
 “ First, who art thou ? ”—“ Before thy memory,

“ I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died,  
 And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit  
 Had been with purer sentiment supplied,

“ Corruption would not now thus much inherit  
 Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise  
 Stained that which ought to have disdained to wear it ;

"If I have been extinguished, yet there rise  
 A thousand beacons from the spark I bore"—  
 "And who are those chained to the car?"—"The wise,  
 "The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore  
 Mitres, and helms, and crowns, or wreaths of light,  
 Signs of thought's empire over thought—their lore  
 "Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might  
 Could not repress the mystery within,  
 And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night,  
 "Caught them ere evening."—"Who is he with chin  
 Upon his breast, and hands crost on his chain?"—  
 "The **C**hild of a fierce hour; he sought to win  
 "The world, and lost all that it did contain  
 Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more  
 Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain  
 "Without the opportunity which bore  
 Him on its eagle pinions to the peak  
 From which a thousand climbers have before  
 "Fall'n, as Napoleon fell."—I felt my cheek  
 Alter, to see the shadow pass away,  
 Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak,  
 That every pigmy kicked it as it lay:  
 And much I grieved to think how power and will  
 In opposition rule our mortal day,  
 And why God made irreconcilable  
 Good and the means of good; and for despair  
 I half disdained mine eyes desire to fill  
 With the spent vision of the times that were  
 And scarce have ceased to be.—"Dost thou behold,"  
 Said my guide, "those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire,  
 "Frederic, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,  
 And hoary anarchists, demagogues, and sage—  
 —name which the world thinks always old,  
 "For in the battle life and they did wage,  
 She remained conqueror. I was overcome  
 By my own heart alone, which neither age,  
 "Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb  
 Could temper to its object."—"Let them pass,"  
 I cried, "the world and its mysterious doom  
 "Is not so much more glorious than it was,  
 That I desire to worship those who drew  
 New figures on its false and fragile glass

"As the old faded."—"Figures ever new  
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may ;  
We have but thrown, as those before us threw,

"Our shadows on it as it past away.  
But mark how chained to the triumphal chair  
The mighty phantoms of an elder day ;

"All that is mortal of great Plato there  
Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not :  
The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,

"And life, where long that flower of heaven grew not,  
Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,  
Or age, or sloth, or slavery, could subdue not.

"And near him walk the [ ] twain,  
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion  
Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

"The world was darkened beneath either pinion  
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors  
Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion ;

"The other long outlived both woes and wars,  
Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept  
The jealous key of truth's eternal doors,

"If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt  
Like lightning out of darkness—he compelled  
The Proteus shape of Nature as it slept

"To wake, and lead him to the caves that held  
The treasure of the secrets of its reign,  
See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

"The passions which they sung, as by their strain  
May well be known : their living melody  
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

"Of those who are infected with it—I  
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain,  
And so my words have seeds of misery !"—



[There is a chasm here in the M.S. which it is impossible to fill up. It appears from the context, that other shapes pass, and that Rousseau still stood beside the dreamer, as]

————— he pointed to a company,  
Midst whom I quickly recognised the heirs  
Of Cæsar's crime, from him to Constantine ;  
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,  
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad :  
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God :  
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,  
Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched—"Their power was given  
But to destroy," replied the leader:—"I  
Am one of those who have created, even,

"If it be but a world of agony."—

"Whence comest thou? and whither goest thou?  
How did thy course begin?" I said, "and why?"

"Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow  
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought—  
Speak!"—"Whence I am, I partly seem to know

"And how and by what paths I have been brought  
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;—  
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

"Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;—  
But follow thou, and from spectator turn  
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

"And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn  
From thee. Now listen:—In the April prime,  
When all the forest tips began to burn

"With kindling green, touched by the azure clime  
Of the young year's dawn, I was laid asleep  
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

"Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;  
And from it came a gentle rivulet,  
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep

"Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet  
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove  
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

"All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,  
Which they had known before that hour of rest;  
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

"Her only child who died upon her breast  
At eventide—a king would mourn no more  
The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

"When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor,  
To gild his rival's new prosperity.  
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

" Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee,  
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,  
Nor other music blot from memory,

" So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;  
And whether life had been before that sleep  
The heaven which I imagine, or a hell

" Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,  
I know not. I arose, and for a space  
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

" Though it was now broad day, a gentle traee  
Of light diviner than the common sun  
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

" Was filled with magic sounds woven into one  
Oblivious melody, confusing sense  
Amid the gilding waves and shadows dun ;

" And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence  
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,  
And the sun's image radiantly intense

" Burned on the waters of the well that glowed  
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze  
With winding paths of emerald fire ; there stood

" Amid the sun, as he amid the Liaze  
Of his own glory, on the vibrating  
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

" A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling  
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,  
And the invisible rain did ever sing

" A silver music on the mossy lawn ;  
And still before me on the dusky grass,  
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn :

" In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,  
Mantling with bright Nepenthe ; the fierce splendour  
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

" Out of the deep cavern, with palms so tender,  
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow ;  
She glided along the river, and did bend her

" Head under the dark boughs, till, like a willow,  
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream  
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

" As one enamoured is upborne in dream  
O'er lily-paven lakes mid silver mist,  
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem



“ Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed  
The dancing foam ; partly to glide along  
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

“ Or the faint morning beams that fell among  
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees ;  
And her feet ever to the ceaseless song

“ Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,  
And falling drops, moved to a measure new  
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

“ Up from the lake a shape of golden dew  
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,  
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew ;

“ And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune  
To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot  
The thoughts of him who gazed on them ; and soon

“ All that was, seemed as if it had been not ;  
And all the gazer's mind was strewed beneath  
Her feet like embers ; and she, thought by thought,

“ Trampled its sparks into the dust of death ;  
As day upon the threshold of the east  
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

“ Of darkness re-illumine even the least  
Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,  
Making the night a dream ; and ere she ceased

“ To move, as one between desire and shame  
Suspended, I said—If, as it doth seem,  
Thou comest from the realm without a name,

“ Into this valley of perpetual dream,  
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why—  
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

“ Arise and quench thy thirst,” was her reply.  
And as a shut lily, stricken by the wand  
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

“ I rose ; and, bending at her sweet command,  
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,  
And suddenly my brain became as sand,

“ Where the first wave had more than half erased  
The track of deer on desert Labrador ;  
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

“ Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,  
Until the second bursts ;—so on my sight  
Burst a new vision never seen before,

“ And the fair shape waned in the coming light,  
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops  
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

“ Of sun-rise, ere it tinge the mountain tops ;  
And as the presence of that fairest planet.  
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

“ That his day's path may end as he began it,  
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent  
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

“ Or the soft note in which his dear lament  
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress  
That turned his weary slumber to content ; \*

“ So knew I in that light's severe excess  
The presence of that shape which on the stream  
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

“ More dimly than a day-appearing dream,  
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep :  
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

“ Through the sick day in which we wake to weep,  
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost ;  
So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

“ Beside my path, as silent as a ghost ;  
But the new vision and the cold bright car,  
With solemn speed and stunning music, crost

“ The forest, and as if from some dread war  
Triumphantly returning, the loud million  
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

“ A moving arch of victory, the vermilion  
And green, and azure plumes of Iris, had  
Built high over her wind-winged pavilion,

“ And underneath ethereal glory clad  
The wilderness, and far before her flew  
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

“ Shalow to fall from leaf and stone ; the crew  
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance  
Within a sunbeam ;—some upon the new

“ Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance  
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,  
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance ;

\* The favourite song, “*Stanco di pascolar le peccorelle,*” is a Brescian national air.

“ Others stood gazing, till within the shade  
Of the great mountain its light left them dim ;  
Others outspeeded it ; and others made

“ Circles around it, like the clouds that swim  
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air ;  
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

“ The chariot and the captives fettered there :—  
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood  
Fell into the same track at last, and were

“ Borne onward. I among the multitude  
Was swept—me, sweetest flowers delayed not long ;  
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude ;

“ Me, not that falling stream’s Lethean song ;  
Me, not the phantom of that early form,  
Which moved upon its motion—but among

“ The thickest billows of that living storm  
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime  
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

“ Before the chariot had begun to climb  
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,  
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

“ Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,  
Through every paradise and through all glory,  
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

“ The words of hate and care ; the wondrous story  
How all things are transfigured except Love ;  
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

“ The world can hear not the sweet notes that move  
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers—  
A wonder worthy of his rhyme—the grove

“ Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,  
The earth was grey with phantoms, and the air  
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

“ A flock of vampire-bats before the glare  
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,  
Strange night upon some Indian vale ;—thus were

“ Phantoms diffused around ; and some did fling  
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,  
Behind them ; some like eaglets on the wing

“ Were lost in the white day ; others like elves  
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes  
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves ;

“ And others sate chattering like restless apes  
On vulgar hands, \* \* \* \* \*  
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes

“ Of kingly mantles ; some across the tire  
Of pontiff's rode, like demons ; others played  
Under the crown which girt with empire

“ A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made  
Their nests in it. The old anatomies  
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

“ Of demon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes  
To re-assume the delegated power,  
Array'd in which those worms did monarchise.

“ Who made this earth their charnel. Others more  
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist  
Of common men, and round their heads did soar ;

“ Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist  
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow  
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest, and theorist ;—

“ And others, like discoloured flakes of snow  
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,  
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

“ Which they extinguished ; and, like tears, they were  
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained  
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

“ Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained  
The track in which we moved. After brief space,  
From every form the beauty slowly waned ;

“ From every firmest limb and fairest face  
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left  
The action and the shape without the grace

“ Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft  
With care ; and in those eyes where once hope shone,  
Desire, like a lioness bereft

“ Of her last cub, glared ere it died ; each one  
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly  
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

“ In autumn evening from a poplar tree,  
Each like himself, and like each other were  
At first ; but some distorted seemed to be

“ Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air ;  
And of this stuff the car's creative ray  
Wrapt all the busy phantoms that were there,

“ As the sun shapes the clouds ; thus on the way  
Mask after mask fell from the countenance  
And form of all ; and long before the day

“ Was old, the joy which waked like heaven’s glance  
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died ;  
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

“ And fell, as I have fallen, by the way-side ;—  
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows past,  
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

“ Then, what is life ? I cried.”—

END OF THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

### ODE TO HEAVEN.

#### CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

- First Spirit.* Palace-roof of cloudless nights !  
 Paradise of golden lights !  
 Deep, immeasurable, vast,  
 Which art now, and which wert then !  
 Of the present and the past,  
 Of the eternal where and when,  
 Presence-chamber, temple, home,  
 Ever-canopying dome,  
 Of acts and ages yet to come !
- Glorious shapes have life in thee,  
 Earth, and all earth's company ;  
 Living globes which ever throng  
 Thy deep chasms and wildernesses ;  
 And green worlds that glide along ;  
 And swift stars with flashing tresses ;  
 And icy moons most cold and bright,  
 And mighty suns beyond the night,  
 Atoms of intensesst light.
- Even thy name is as a god,  
 Heaven ! for thou art the abode  
 Of that power which is the glass  
 Wherein man his nature sees.  
 Generations as they pass  
 Worship thee with bended knees.  
 Their unremaining gods and they  
 Like a river roll away :  
 Thou remainest such alway.
- Second Spirit.* Thou art but the mind's first chamber,  
 Round which its young fancies clamber,  
 Like weak insects in a cave,  
 Lighted up by stalactites ;  
 But the portal of the grave,  
 Where a world of new delights  
 Will make thy best glories seem

But a dim and noonday gleam  
From the shadow of a dream !

*Third Spirit.* Peace ! the abyss is wreathed with scorn  
At your presumption, atom-born !  
What is heaven ? and what are ye  
Who its brief expanse inherit ?  
What are suns and spheres which flee  
With the instinct of that spirit  
Of which ye are but a part ?  
Drops which Nature's mighty heart  
Drives through thinnest veins. Depart !

What is heaven ? a globe of dew,  
Filling in the morning new  
Some eyed flower, whose young leaves waken  
On an unimagined world :  
Constellated suns unshaken,  
Orbits measureless, are furled  
In that frail and fading sphere  
With ten millions gathered there,  
To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

---

### AN EXHORTATION.

CAMELEONS feed on light and air ;  
Poet's food is love and fame :  
If in this wide world of care  
Poets could but find the same  
With as little toil as they,  
Would they ever change their hue  
As the light cameleons do,  
Suiting it to every ray  
Twenty times a-day ?

Poets are on this cold earth,  
As cameleons might be,  
Hidden from their early birth  
In a cave beneath the sea ;  
Where light is, cameleons change !  
Where love is not, poets do :  
Fame is love disguised : if few  
Find either, never think it strange  
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power  
A poet's free and heavenly mind :  
If bright cameleons should devour  
Any food but beams and wind,

They would grow as earthly soon  
 As their brother 'lizards are,  
 Children of a sunnier star,  
 Spirits from beyond the moon,  
 Oh, refuse the boon !

---

THE CLOUD.

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
 From the seas and the streams ;  
 I bear light shades for the leaves when laid  
 In their noon-day dreams.  
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
 The sweet buds every one,  
 When rock'd to rest, on their mother's breast,  
 As she dances about the sun.  
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
 And whiten the green plains under,  
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below  
 And their great pines groan aghast ;  
 And all the night, 'tis my pillow white,  
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
 Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,  
 Lightning, my pilot, sits ;  
 In a cavern under, is fettered the thunder,  
 It struggles and howls at fits :  
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
 This pilot is guiding me,  
 Lured by the love of the genii that move  
 In the depths of the purple sea ;  
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
 Over the lakes and the plains,  
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
 The Spirit he loves, remains ;  
 And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,  
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

'The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
 And his burning plumes outspread,  
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
 When the morning star shines dead.  
 As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
 An eagle alit, one moment may sit  
 In the light of its golden wings.



And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,  
 Its ardours of rest and of love,  
 And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
 From the depth of heaven above,  
 With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,  
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden,  
 - Whom mortals call the moon,  
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;  
 And, wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
 Which only the angels hear,  
 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
 - The stars peep behind her and peer ;  
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
 Like a swarm of golden bees,  
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
 Till the calm river, lakes, and seas,  
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,  
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl :  
 The volcano's are dim, and the stars reel and swim,  
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
 From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
 Over a torrent sea,  
 Sunbeam proof, I hang like a roof,  
 The mountains its columns be.  
 The triumphal arch, through which I march,  
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,  
 When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,  
 Is the million-coloured bow ;  
 The sphere-fire above, its soft colours wove,  
 While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,  
 And the nursling of the sky ;  
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;  
 I change, but I cannot die.  
 For after the rain, when with never a stain,  
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
 And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,  
 Build up the blue dome of air—  
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
 And out of the caverns of rain,  
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
 I rise and unbuild it again.

## TO A SKYLARK.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.  
 Higher still, and higher,  
 From the earth thou springest  
 Like a cloud of fire;  
 The blue deep thou wingest,  
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever, singest.  
 In the golden lightning  
 Of the sunken sun,  
 O'er which clouds are brightening,  
 Thou dost float and run,  
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.  
 The pale purple even  
 Melts around thy flight;  
 Like a star of heaven,  
 In the broad day-light  
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.  
 Keen as are the arrows  
 Of that silver sphere,  
 Whose intense lamp narrows  
 In the white dawn clear,  
 Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.  
 All the earth and air  
 With thy voice is loud,  
 As, when night is bare,  
 From one lonely cloud  
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.  
 What thou art we know not;  
 What is most like thee?  
 From rainbow clouds there flow not  
 Drops so bright to see,  
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.  
 Like a poet hidden  
 In the light of thought,  
 Singing hymns unbidden,  
 Till the world is wrought  
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not;  
 Like a high-born maiden  
 In a palace tower,

Soothing her love-laden  
 Soul in secret hour,  
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower ;  
 Like a glow-worm golden  
 In a dell of dew,  
 Scattering unbeholden  
 Its ærial hue  
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view :  
 Like a rose embower'd  
 In its own green leaves,  
 By warm winds deflower'd,  
 Till the scent it gives  
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves.  
 Sound of vernal showers  
 On the twinkling grass,  
 Rain-awakened flowers,  
 All that ever was  
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass :  
 Teach us, sprite or bird,  
 What sweet thoughts are thine ;  
 I have never heard,  
 Praise of love or wine  
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.  
 Chorus hymeneal,  
 Or triumphal chaunt,  
 Matched with thine would be all  
 But an empty vaunt,—  
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.  
 What objects are the fountains  
 Of thy happy strain ?  
 What fields, or waves, or mountains ?  
 What shapes of sky or plain ?  
 What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?  
 With thy clear keen joyance  
 Langour cannot be :  
 Shadow of annoyance  
 Never came near thee :  
 Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.  
 Waking or asleep,  
 Thou of death must deem  
 Things more true and deep  
 Than we mortals dream,  
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?  
 We look before and after,  
 And pine for what is not :

Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught ;  
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn  
 Hate, and pride, and fear ;  
 If we were things born  
 Not to shed a tear,  
 I know not how thy joy we ever could come near.

Better than all measures  
 Of delight and sound,  
 Better than all treasures  
 That in books are found,  
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness  
 That thy brain must know,  
 Such harmonious madness  
 From my lips would flow,  
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

---

### OH! THERE ARE SPIRITS.

Oh ! there are spirits in the air,  
 And genii of the evening breeze,  
 And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair  
 As star-beams among twilight trees :—  
 Such lovely ministers to meet  
 Oft hast thou turn'd from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,  
 And mountain seas, that are the voice  
 Of these inexplicable things,  
 Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice  
 When they did answer thee ; but they  
 Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes  
 Beams that were never meant for thine,  
 Another's wealth ;—tame sacrifice  
 To a fond faith ! still dost thou pine ?  
 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,  
 Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands ?

Ah ! wherefore didst thou build thine hope  
 On the false earth's inconstancy ?  
 Did thine own mind afford no scope  
 Of love, or moving thoughts to thee ?

That natural scenes or human smiles  
 Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled

Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted ;

The glory of the moon is dead ;

Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed ;

Thine own soul still is true to thee,

But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever

Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,

Dream not to chase ;—the mad endeavour

Would scourge thee to severer pangs.

Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,

Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

---

### SUPERSTITION.

Thou taintest all thou look'st upon ! The stars,  
 Which on thy cradle beam'd so brightly sweet,  
 Were gods to the distemper'd playfulness  
 Of thy untutor'd infancy ; the trees,  
 The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,  
 All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,  
 Were gods ; the sun had homage, and the moon  
 Her worshipper. Then thou becamest, a boy,  
 More daring in thy frenzies : every shape,  
 Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,  
 Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls ;  
 The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,  
 The genii of the elements, the powers  
 That give a shape to nature's varied works,  
 Had life and place in the corrupt belief  
 Of thy blind heart : yet still thy youthful hands  
 Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave  
 Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain :  
 Thine eager gaze scann'd the stupendous scene,  
 Whose wonders mock'd the knowledge of thy pride ;  
 Their everlasting and unchanging laws  
 Reproach'd thine ignorance. A while thou stoodest  
 Baffled and gloomy ; then thou didst sum up  
 The elements of all that thou didst know ;  
 The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,  
 The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,  
 The eternal orbs that beautify the night,  
 The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,  
 Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,

And all their causes, to an abstract point,  
 Converging, thou didst give it name, and form,  
 Intelligence, and unity, and power.

---

MUTABILITY.

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon ;  
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,  
 Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon  
 Night closes round, and they are lost for ever :

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings  
 Give various response to each varying blast,  
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings  
 One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest—A dream has power to poison sleep ;  
 We rise—One wandering thought pollutes the day ;  
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep,  
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away :

It is the same !—For, be it joy or sorrow,  
 The path of its departure still is free :  
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow ;  
 Nought may endure but Mutability.

---

A BRIDAL SONG.

The golden gates of sleep unbar  
 Where strength and beauty met together,  
 Kindle their image like a star  
 In a sea of glassy weather.  
 Night, with all thy stars look down,—  
 Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—  
 Never smiled the inconstant moon  
 On a pair so true.  
 Let eyes not see their own delight ;—  
 Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight  
 Oft renew.

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her.  
 Holy stars, permit no wrong !  
 And return to wake the sleeper,  
 Dawn,—ere it be long.  
 O joy ! O fear ! what will be done  
 In the absence of the sun !  
 Come along !

THE  
 MASQUE OF ANARCHY.

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## I.

As I lay asleep in Italy,  
 There came a voice from over the sea,  
 And with great power it forth led me.  
 To walk in the visions of Poesy.

## II.

I met Murder on the way—  
 He had a mask like Castlereagh—  
 Very smooth he looked, yet grim;  
 Seven bloodhounds followed him:

## III.

All were fat; and well they might  
 Be in admirable plight,  
 For one by one, and two by two,  
 He tossed them human hearts to chew,  
 Which from his wide cloak he drew.

## IV.

Next came Fraud, and he had on,  
 Like Lord E——, an ermine gown;  
 His big tears, for he wept well,  
 Turned to mill-stones as they fell;

## V.

And the little children, who  
 Round his feet played to and fro,  
 Thinking every tear a gem,  
 Had their brains knocked out by them.

## VI.

Clothed with the bible as with light,  
 And the shadow of the night,  
 Like S \* \* \* next, Hypocrisy,  
 On a crocodile came by.

## VII.

And many more Destructions played  
 In this ghastly masquerade,  
 All disguised, even to the eyes,  
 Like bishops, lawyers, peers, or spies.

## VIII.

Last came Anarchy ; he rode  
 On a white horse splashed with blood ;  
 He was pale even to the lips,  
 Like Death in the Apocalypse.

## IX.

And he wore a kingly crown ;  
 In his hand a sceptre shone ;  
 On his brow this mark I saw—  
 " I am God, and King, and Law !"

## X.

With a pace stately and fast,  
 Over English land he past,  
 Trampling to a mire of blood  
 The adoring multitude.

## XI.

And a mighty troop around,  
 With their trampling shook the ground,  
 Waving each a bloody sword,  
 For the service of their Lord.

## XII.

And, with glorious triumph, they  
 Rode through England, proud and gay,  
 Drunk as with intoxication  
 Of the wine of desolation.

## XIII.

O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea,  
 Passed the pageant swift and free,  
 Tearing up, and trampling down,  
 Till they came to London town.

## XIV.

And each dweller, panic-stricken,  
 Felt his heart with terror stricken,  
 Hearing the tremendous cry  
 Of the triumph of Anarchy.



## XV.

For with pomp to meet him came,  
Clothed in arms like blood and flame,  
The hired murderers who did sing,  
"Thou art God, and Law, and King.

## XVI.

"We have waited, weak and lone,  
For thy coming, Mighty One!  
Our purses are empty, our swords are cold,  
Give us glory, and blood, and gold."

## XVII.

Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd,  
To the earth their pale brows bowed,  
Like a bad prayer not over loud,  
Whispering—"Thou art Law and God!"

## XVIII.

Then all cried with one accord,  
"Thou art King, and Law, and Lord;  
Anarchy, to thee we bow,  
Be thy name made holy now!"

## XIX.

And Anarchy, the skeleton,  
Bowed and grinned to every one,  
As well as if his education  
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

## XX.

For he knew the palaces  
Of our kings were nightly his;  
His the sceptre, crown, and globe,  
And the gold-inwoven robe.

## XXI.

So he sent his slaves before  
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,  
And was proceeding with intent  
To meet his pensioned parliament,

## XXII.

When one fled past, a maniac maid,  
And her name was Hope, she said:  
But she looked more like despair;  
And she cried out in the air:

## XXIII.

“ My father, Time is weak and gray  
 With waiting for a better day ;  
 See how idiot-like he stands,  
 Trembling with his palsied hands !

## XXIV.

“ He has had child after child,  
 And the dust of death is piled  
 Over every one but me,—  
 Misery ! oh, Misery !”

## XXV.

Then she lay down in the street,  
 Right before the horses' feet,  
 Expecting with a patient eye,  
 Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

## XXVI.

When between her and her foes  
 A mist, a light, an image rose,  
 Small at first, and weak and frail  
 Like the vapour of the vale :

## XXVII.

Till as clouds grow on the blast,  
 Like tower-crowned giants striding fast,  
 And glare with lightnings as they fly,  
 And speak in thunder to the sky.

## XXVIII.

It grew—a shape arrayed in mail  
 Brighter than the viper's scale,  
 And upborne on wings whose grain  
 Was like the light of sunny rain.

## XXIX.

On its helm, seen far away,  
 A planet, like the morning's lay ;  
 And those plumes it light rained through,  
 Like a shower of crimson dew.

## XXX.

With step as soft as wind it passed  
 O'er the heads of men—so fast  
 That they knew the presence there,  
 And looked,—and all was empty air.

## XXXI.

As flowers beneath May's footsteps waken,  
As stars from night's loose hair are shaken,  
As waves arise when loud winds call,  
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.

## XXXII.

And the prostrate multitude  
Looked—and ankle-deep in blood,  
Hope, that maiden most serene,  
Was walking with a quiet mien :

## XXXIII.

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,  
Lay dead earth upon the earth ;  
The Horse of Death, tameless as wind,  
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind  
To dust the murderers thronged behind.

## XXXIV.

A rushing light of clouds and splendour,  
A sense, awakening and yet tender,  
Was heard and felt—and at its close  
These words of joy and fear arose :

## XXXV.

As if their own indignant earth,  
Which gave the sons of England birth,  
Had felt their blood upon her brow,  
And shuddering with a mother's throe,

## XXXVI.

Had turned every drop of blood,  
By which her face had been bedewed,  
To an accent unwithstood,  
As if her heart had cried aloud :

## XXXVII.

“ Men of England, Heirs of Glory,  
Heroes of unwritten story,  
Nurslings of one mighty mother,  
Hopes of her, and one another!

## XXXVIII.

“ Rise, like lions after slumber,  
In unvanquishable number,

Shake your chains to earth like dew,  
Which in sleep had fall'n on you.  
Ye are many, they are few.

## XXXIX.

"What is Freedom? Ye can tell  
That which Slavery is too well,  
For its very name has grown  
To an echo of your own.

## XL.

"'Tis to work, and have such pay  
As just keeps life from day to day  
In your limbs as in a cell  
For the tyrants use to dwell:

## XLI.

"So that ye for them are made,  
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade;  
With or without your own will, bent  
To their defence and nourishment.

## XLII.

"'Tis to see your children weak  
With their mothers pine and peak,  
When the winter winds are bleak:—  
They are dying whilst I speak.

## XLIII.

"'Tis to hunger for such diet  
As the rich man in his riot  
Casts to the fat dogs that lie  
Surfeiting beneath his eye.

## XLIV.

"'Tis to let the Ghost of Gold  
Take from toil a thousand-fold  
More than e'er its substance could  
In the tyrannies of old:

## XLV.

"Paper coin—that forgery  
Of the title deeds, which ye  
Hold to something of the worth  
Of the inheritance of Earth.

## XLVI.

" 'Tis to be a slave in soul,  
And to hold no strong controul  
Over your own wills, but be  
All that others make of ye.

## XLVII.

" And at length when ye complain,  
With a murmur weak and vain,  
'Tis to see the tyrant's crew  
Ride over your wives and you :—  
Blood is on the grass like dew !

## XLVIII.

" Then it is to feel revenge,  
Fiercely thirsting to exchange  
Blood for blood—and wrong for wrong :  
Do not thus when ye are strong !

## XLIX.

" Birds find rest in narrow nest,  
When weary of their winged quest ;  
Beasts find fare in woody lair,  
When stern and snow are in the air.

## L.

" Horses, oxen, have a home,  
When from daily toil they come ;  
Household dogs, when the wind roars,  
Find a home within warm doors.

## LI.

" Asses, swine, have litter spread,  
And with fitting food are fed ;  
All things have a home but one :  
Thou, O Englishman, hast none !

## LII.

" This is slavery—savage men,  
Or wild beasts within a den,  
Would endure not as ye do :  
But such ills they never knew.

## LIII.

" What art thou, Freedom ? Oh ! could slaves  
Answer from their living graves  
This demand, tyrants would flee  
Like a dream's dim imagery.

## LIV.

“Thou art not, as impostors say,  
A shadow soon to pass away,  
A superstition, and a name  
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

## LV.

“For the labourer thou art bread  
And a comely table spread,  
From his daily labour come,  
In a neat and happy home.

## LVI.

“Thou art clothes, and fire, and food  
For the trampled multitude:  
No—in counties that are free  
Such starvation cannot be,  
As in England now we see.

## LVII.

“To the rich thou art a check;  
When his foot is on the neck  
Of his victim, thou dost make  
That he treads upon a snake.

## LVIII.

“Thou art Justice—ne'er for gold  
May thy righteous laws be sold,  
As laws are in England:—thou  
Shieldedst alike the high and low.

## LVIX.

“Thou art Wisdom—freemen never  
Dream that God will doom for ever  
All who think those things untrue,  
Of which priests make such ado.

## LX.

“Thou art Peace—never by thee  
Would blood and treasures wasted be,  
As tyrants wasted them, when all  
Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

## LXI.

“What if English toil and blood  
Was poured forth, even as a flood?

It availed,—O Liberty!  
To dim—but not extinguish thee.

## LXII.

“Thou art Love—the rich have kist  
Thy feet; and like him following Christ,  
Given their substance to the free,  
And through the rough world followed thee.

## LXIII.

“Oh turn their wealth to arms, and make  
War for thy beloved sake,  
On wealth and war and fraud; whence they  
Drew the power which is their prey.

## LXIV.

“Science, and Poetry, and Thought,  
Are thy lamps; they make the lot  
Of the dwellers in a cot  
Such, they curse their maker not.

## LXV.

“Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,  
All that can adorn and bless,  
Art thou: let deeds, not words, express  
Thine exceeding loveliness.

## LXVI.

“Let a great assembly be  
Of the fearless and the free,  
On some spot of English ground,  
Where the plains stretch wide around.

## LXVII.

“Let the blue sky overhead,  
The green earth on which ye tread,  
All that must eternal be,  
Witness the solemnity.

## LXVIII.

“From the corners uttermost  
Of the bounds of English coast;  
From every hut, village, and town,  
Where those who live and suffer, moan  
For other's misery, or their own:

## LXIX.

“ From the workhouse and the prison,  
Where pale as corpses newly risen,  
Women, children, young, and old,  
Groan for pain, and weep for cold ;

## LXX.

“ From the haunts of daily life,  
Where is waged the daily strife  
With common wants and common cares,  
Which sow the human heart with tares.

## LXXI.

“ Lastly, from the palaces,  
Where the murmur of distress  
Echoes, like the distant sound  
Of a wind, alive, around ;

## LXXII.

“ Those prison-halls of wealth and fashion,  
Where some few feel such compassion  
For those who groan, and toil, and wail,  
As must make their brethren pale ;

## LXXIII.

“ Ye who suffer woes untold,  
Or to feel, or to behold  
Your lost country bought and sold  
With a price of blood and gold.

## LXXIV.

“ Let a vast assembly be,  
And with great solemnity  
Declare with ne'er said words, that ye  
Art, as God has made ye, free.

## LXXV.

“ Be your strong and simple words  
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,  
And wide as targes let them be,  
With their shade to cover ye.

## LXXVI.

“ Let the tyrants pour around  
With a quick and startling sound,  
Like the loosening of a sea,  
Troops of armed emblazonry



## LXXVII.

“ Let the charged artillery drive,  
Till the dead air seems alive  
With the clash of clanging wheels,  
And the tramp of horses' heels.

## LXXVIII.

“ Let the fixed bayonet  
Gleam with sharp desire to wet  
Its bright point in English blood,  
Looking keen as one for food.

## LXXIX.

“ Let the horsemen's scimitars  
Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars,  
Thirsting to eclipse their burning  
In a sea of death and mourning.

## LXXX.

“ Stand ye calm and resolute,  
Like a forest close and mute,  
With folded arms, and looks which are  
Weapons of an unvanquished war.

## LXXXI.

“ And let Panic, who outspeeds  
The career of armed steeds  
Pass, a disregarded shade,  
Through your phalanx undismayed.

## LXXXII.

“ Let the laws of your own land,  
Good or ill, between ye stand,  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,  
Arbiters of the dispute.

## LXXXIII.

“ The old laws of England—they  
Whose reverend heads with age are grey,  
Children of a wiser day;  
And whose solemn voice must be  
Thine own echo—Liberty!

## LXXXIV.

“ On those who first should violate  
Such sacred heralds in their state,  
Rest the blood that must ensue  
And it will not rest on you.

## LXXXV.

“ And if then the tyrants dare,  
 Let them ride among you there ;  
 Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew ;  
 What they like, that let them do.

## LXXXVI.

“ With folded arms and steady eyes,  
 And little fear, and less surprise,  
 Look upon them as they slay,  
 Till their rage has died away :

## LXXXVII.

“ Then they will return with shame,  
 To the place from which they came  
 And the blood thus shed will speak  
 In hot blushes on their cheek :

## LXXXVIII.

“ Every woman in the land  
 Will point at them as they stand—  
 They will hardly dare to greet  
 Their acquaintance in the street

## LXXXIX.

“ And the bold true warriors,  
 Who have hugged danger in the wars,  
 Will turn to those who would be free,  
 Ashamed of such base company :

## XC.

“ And that slaughter to the nation  
 Shall steam up like inspiration,  
 Eloquent, oracular,  
 A volcano heard afar :

## XCI.

“ And these words shall then become  
 Like Oppression's thundered doom,  
 Ringing through each heart and brain,  
 Heard again—again—again !

## XCII.

“ Rise, like lions after slumber  
 In unvanquishable number !  
 Shake your chains to earth, like dew  
 Which in sleep had fallen on you :  
 Ye are many—they are few !”

## ALASTOR ;

OR,

## THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebam quid amarem amans  
amare.—*Confess. St. August.*

EARTH, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood !  
If our great Mother have imbued my soul  
With aught of natural piety to feel  
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine ;  
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,  
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers  
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness ;  
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,  
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns  
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs ;  
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes  
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me ;  
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast  
I consciously have injured, but still loved  
And cherished these my kindred ;—then forgive  
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw  
No portion of your wonted favour now !

Mother of this unfathomable world !  
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved  
Thee ever, and thee only ; I have watched  
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps  
And my heart ever gazes on the depth  
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed  
In charnels and on coffins, where black death  
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,  
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,  
Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,  
When night makes a wierd sound of its own stillness,  
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist  
Staking his very life on some dark hope,  
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks  
With my most innocent love, until strange tears,  
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made  
Such magic as compels the charmed night

To render up thy charge and though ne'er yet  
 Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary ;  
 Enough from incommunicable dream,  
 And twilight phantasms and deep noonday thought,  
 Has shone within me, that serenely now,  
 And moveless as a long-forgotten lyre,  
 Suspended in the solitary dome  
 Of some mysterious and deserted fane,  
 I wait thy breath, Great Parent that my strain  
 May modulate with murmurs of the air,  
 And motions of the forests, and the sea,  
 And voice of living beings, and woven hymns  
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb  
 No human hands with pious reverence reared,  
 But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds  
 Built over his mouldering bones a pyramid  
 Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness  
 A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked  
 With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,  
 The lone couch of his everlasting sleep ;  
 Gentle, and brave, and generous, no lorn bard  
 Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh  
 He lived, he died, he sang, in solitude.  
 Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,  
 And virgins as unknown he pass'd, have pined  
 And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.  
 The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,  
 And Silence too, enamoured of that voice,  
 Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream  
 His infancy was nurtured. Every sight  
 And sound from the vast earth and ambient air  
 Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.  
 The fountains of divine philosophy  
 Fled not his thirsting lips ; and all of great  
 Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past  
 In truth or fable consecrates, he felt  
 And knew. When early youth had past, he left  
 His cold fire-side and alienated home  
 To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.  
 Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness  
 Has lured his fearless steps ; and he has bought  
 With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,  
 His rest and food.

Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,  
In joy and exultation held his way ;  
Till in the vale of Cachmire, far within  
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine  
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,  
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched  
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep  
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet  
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid  
Sat near him, talking in low solemn tones.  
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
Heard in the calm of thought ; its music long  
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held  
His inmost sense suspended in its web  
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.  
Knowledge, and truth, and virtue were her theme,  
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,  
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood  
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame  
A permeating fire : wild numbers then  
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs  
Subdued by its own pathos : her fair hands  
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp  
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins  
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.  
The beating of her heart was heard to fill  
The pauses of her music, and her breath  
Tumultuously accorded with those fits  
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,  
As if her heart impatiently endured  
Its bursting burthen : at the sound he turned,  
And saw by the warm light of their own life  
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
Of woven wind ; her outspread arms now bare,  
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night  
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.  
His strong heart sank and sickened with excess  
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled  
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet  
Her panting bosom : she drew back awhile,  
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,  
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry  
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.  
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night  
Involved and swallowed up the vision ; sleep,  
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,  
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

He would linger long  
 In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,  
 Until the doves and squirrels would partake  
 From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,  
 Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,  
 And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er  
 The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend  
 Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form  
 More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,  
 Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
 The awful ruins of the days of old :  
 Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste  
 Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers  
 Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,  
 Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange  
 Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,  
 Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphinx,  
 Dark Ethiopia on her desert hills  
 Conceals. Among the ruined temples there  
 Stupendous columns, and wild images  
 Of more than man, where marble demons watch  
 The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
 Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,  
 He lingered, pouring on memorials  
 Of the world's youth, through the long burning day  
 Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon  
 Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,  
 Suspended he that task—but ever gazed  
 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
 Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw  
 The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,  
 Her daily portion, from her fathers tent,  
 And spread her matting for his couch, and stole  
 From duties and repose to tend his steps :—  
 Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe  
 To speak her love :—and watched his nightly sleep  
 Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips  
 Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath  
 Of innocent dreams arose ; then when red morn  
 Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home,  
 Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet, wandering on, through Arabia  
 And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,  
 And o'er the aerial mountains which pour down

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance—  
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon  
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,  
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods,  
 Spread round him where he stood.—Whither have fled  
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower  
 Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,  
 The mystery and the majesty of Earth,  
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes  
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly  
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.  
 The spirit of sweet human love has sent  
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues  
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;  
 He overleaps the bounds. Alas! alas!  
 Were limbs and breath and being intertwined  
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,  
 In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,  
 That beautiful shape! does the dark gate of death  
 Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,  
 O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,  
 And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,  
 Lead only to a black and watery depth,  
 While death's blue vault with loathliest vapours hung,  
 Where every shade which the foul grave exhales  
 Hides its dead eye from the detested day,  
 Conduct, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?  
 This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart,  
 The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung  
 His brain even like despair.

While day-light held  
 The sky, the Poet kept mute conference  
 With his still soul. At night the passion came,  
 Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,  
 And shook him from his rest, and led him forth  
 Into the darkness.—As an eagle, grasped  
 In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast  
 Burn with the poison, and precipitates  
 Through night and day, tempest, and calm and cloud,  
 Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight  
 O'er the wild æry wilderness: thus driven  
 By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,  
 Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,  
 Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous ælls,  
 Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,  
 He fled.—Red morning dawned upon his flight,  
 Shedding the mockery of its vital hues

Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on,  
 Till vast Aornos, seen from Petra's steep,  
 Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud ;  
 Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs  
 Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
 Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,  
 Day after day, a weary waste of hours,  
 Bearing within his life the brooding care  
 That ever fed on its decaying flame.  
 And now his limbs were lean ; his scattered hair,  
 Sere'd by the autumn of strange suffering,  
 Sung dirges in the wind ; his listless hand  
 Hung like dead bone within its withered skin ;  
 Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone  
 As in a furnace burning secretly  
 From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,  
 Who ministered with human charity  
 His human wants, beheld with wondering awe  
 Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,  
 Encountering on some dizzy precipice  
 That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind  
 With lightning eyes, and eager breath and feet  
 Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused  
 In his career. The infant would conceal  
 His troubled visage in his mother's robe  
 In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,  
 To remember their strange light in many a dream  
 Of after-times : but youthful maidens, taught  
 By nature, would interpret half the woe  
 That wasted him, would call him false names,  
 Brother, and friend ; would press his pallid hand  
 At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path  
 Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasman shore  
 He paused, a wide and melancholy waste  
 Of putrid marshes—a strong impulse urged  
 His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,  
 Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.  
 It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings  
 Sealing the upward sky, bent its bright course  
 High over the immeasurable main.  
 His eyes pursued its flight.—“Thou hast a home,  
 Beautiful bird ! thou voyagest to thine home,  
 Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck  
 With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes  
 Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.  
 And what am I that I should linger here,  
 With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,



Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
 To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
 In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven  
 That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile  
 Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.  
 For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly  
 Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,  
 Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,  
 With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts, he looked around:  
 There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight  
 Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.  
 A little shallop floating near the shore  
 Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.  
 It had been long abandoned, for its sides  
 Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints  
 Swayed with the undulations of the tide.  
 A restless impulse urged him to embark  
 And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;  
 For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves  
 The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny: sea and sky  
 Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind  
 Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.  
 Following his eager soul, the wanderer  
 Leaped in the boat; he spread his cloak aloft  
 On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,  
 And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea  
 Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats  
 Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds  
 Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly  
 Along the dark and ruffled waters fled  
 The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on,  
 With fierce gusts and precipitating force  
 Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.  
 The waves arose. Higher and higher still  
 Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge  
 Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.  
 Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war  
 Of wave running on wave, and blast on blast  
 Descending, and black flood, on whirlpool driven  
 With dark obliterating course, he sate:  
 As if their genii were the ministers  
 Appointed to conduct him to the light  
 Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate

Holding the steady helm. Evening came on ;  
 The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues  
 High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray  
 That canopied his path o'er the waste deep ;  
 Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,  
 Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks  
 O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day :  
 Night followed, clad with stars. On every side  
 More horribly the multitudinous streams  
 Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war  
 Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock  
 The calm and spangled sky. The little boat  
 Still fled before the storm ; still fled, like foam  
 Down the steep cataract of a wintry river ;  
 Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave ;  
 Now leaving far behind the bursting mass  
 That fell, convulsing ocean. Safely fled—  
 As if that frail and wasted human form  
 Had been an elemental god.

#### At midnight

The moon arose : and lo ! the ethereal cliffs  
 Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone  
 Among the stars like sunlight, and around  
 Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves,  
 Bursting and eddying irresistibly  
 Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save ?  
 The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—  
 The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,  
 The shattered mountain overhung the sea,  
 And faster still, beyond all human speed,  
 Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,  
 The little boat was driven. A cavern there  
 Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths  
 Ingulphed the rushing sea. The boat fled on  
 With unrelaxing speed. “ Vision and Love,”  
 The Poet cried aloud, “ I have beheld  
 The path of thy departure. Sleep and death  
 Shall not divide us long.”

#### The boat pursued

The windings of the cavern.—Day-light shone  
 At length upon that gloomy river's flow ;  
 Now, where the fiercest war among the waves  
 Is calm, on the unfathomable stream  
 The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,  
 Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,  
 Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell  
 Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound

That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass  
 Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;  
 Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,  
 Circling immeasurably fast, and laved  
 With alternating dash the gnarled roots  
 Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms  
 In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,  
 Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,  
 A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm,  
 Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,  
 With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,  
 Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,  
 Till on the verge of the extremest curve,  
 Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,  
 The waters overflow, and a smooth spot  
 Of glassy quiet, 'mid those battling tides  
 Is left,—the boat paused, shuddering. Shall it sink  
 Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress  
 Of that resistless gulf embosom it?  
 Now shall it fall? A wandering stream of wind,  
 Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,  
 And lo! with gentle motion between banks  
 Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,  
 Beneath a woven grove, it sails, and, hark!  
 The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar  
 With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.  
 Where the embowering trees recede, and leave  
 A little space of green expanse, the cove  
 Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers  
 For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,  
 Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave  
 Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,  
 Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,  
 Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay  
 Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed  
 To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,  
 But on his heart its solitude returned,  
 And he forbore. Not the strong impulse did  
 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,  
 Had yet performed its ministry: it hung  
 Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud  
 Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods  
 Of night close over it.

The noonday sun  
 Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass  
 Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence  
 A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,  
 Scoped in the dark base of those æry rocks

Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever.  
 The meeting boughs and implicated leaves  
 Wove twilight o'er the Poets path, as led  
 By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,  
 He sought in Nature's dearest hunt some bank,  
 Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark  
 And dark the shades accumulate—the oak,  
 Expanding its immense and knotty arms,  
 Embraces the light beech. The pyramids  
 Of the tall cedar overarching, frame  
 Most solemn domes within, and far below,  
 Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
 The ash and the acacia floating hang  
 Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed  
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around  
 The grey trunks; and, as gamesome infants' eyes,  
 With gentle meanings and most innocent wiles,  
 Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,  
 These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs  
 Uniting their close union; the woven leaves  
 Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,  
 And the night's noontide clearness, mutable  
 As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns  
 Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
 Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms  
 Minute, yet beautiful. One darkest glen  
 Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,  
 A soul-dissolving odour, to invite  
 To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,  
 Silence and Twilight here twin-sisters, keep  
 Their noontide watch, and sail among the shades  
 Like vaporous shapes half seen: beyond, a well,  
 Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,  
 Images all the woven boughs above,  
 And each depending leaf, and every speck  
 Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;  
 Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves  
 Its portraiture, but some inconstant star  
 Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,  
 Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon  
 Or gorgeous insect, floating motionless,  
 Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings  
 Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld  
 Their own wan light through the reflected lines  
 Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth  
 Of that still fountain; as the human heart,

Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
 Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard  
 The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung  
 Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel  
 An unaccustomed presence, and the sound  
 Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs  
 Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed  
 To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes  
 Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,  
 Borrowed from aught the visible world affords  
 Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—  
 But undulating woods, and silent well,  
 And rippling rivulet, and evening gloom  
 Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming  
 Held commune with him, as if he and it  
 Were all that was,—only—when his regard  
 Was raised by intense pensiveness,—two eyes,  
 Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,  
 And seemed with their serene and azure smiles  
 To beckon him.

Obedient to the light  
 That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing  
 The windings of the dell.—The rivulet  
 Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine  
 Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell  
 Among the moss, with hollow harmony  
 Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones  
 It danced; like childhood laughing as it went:  
 Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,  
 Reflecting every herb and drooping bud  
 That overhung its quietness.—“O stream!  
 Whose source is inaccessiblely profound,  
 Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?  
 Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,  
 Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,  
 Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course,  
 Have each their type in me: And the wide sky,  
 And measureless ocean may declare as soon  
 What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud  
 Contains thy waters, as the universe  
 Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched  
 Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste  
 I' the passing wind!”

Beside the grassy shore  
 Of the small stream he went; he did impress  
 On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught  
 Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one

Roused by some joyous madness from the couch  
Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,  
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame  
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,  
He must descend. With rapid steps he went  
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow  
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now  
The forest's solemn canopies were changed  
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.  
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed  
The struggling brook: tall spires of windlestræ  
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope  
And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines  
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots  
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,  
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,  
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin  
And white; and where irradiate dewy eyes  
Had shone, gleam stony orbs: so from his steps  
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade  
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds  
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued  
The stream, that with a larger volume now  
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there  
Fretted a path through its descending curves  
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose  
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,  
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles  
In the light of evening, and its precipice,  
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,  
'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs, and yawning caves,  
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues  
To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands  
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,  
And seems, with its accumulated crags,  
To overhang the world: for wide expand  
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon  
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,  
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom  
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills  
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge  
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,  
In naked and severe simplicity,  
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,  
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy  
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast  
Yielding one only response, at each pause,  
In most familiar cadence, with the howl  
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams,

Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,  
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,  
Fell into that immeasurable void,  
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

The dim and horned moon hung low, and poured  
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge  
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist  
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank  
Wan moonlight even to fulness: not a star  
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds  
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice  
Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O storm of death!  
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night:  
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still  
Guiding its irresistible career  
In thy devastating omnipotence,  
Art king of this frail world, from the red field  
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,  
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed  
Of innocence, the scaffold, and the throne,  
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls  
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey  
He hath prepared, prowling around the world;  
Glutted with which thou may'st repose, and men  
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,  
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine  
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess  
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death  
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,  
Did he resign his high and holy soul  
To images of the majestic past,  
That paused within his passive being now,  
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe  
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place  
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk  
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone  
Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest,  
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink  
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,  
Surrendering to their final impulses  
The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,  
The torturers, slept: no mortal pain or fear  
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,  
And his own being unalloyed by pain,  
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed  
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there  
At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight

Was the great moon, which o'er the western line  
 Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,  
 With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed  
 To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills  
 It rests, and still as the divided frame  
 Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,  
 That ever beat in mystic sympathy  
 With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:  
 And when two lessening points of light alone  
 Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp  
 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir  
 The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray  
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.  
 It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained  
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved  
 An image, silent, cold, and motionless,  
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.  
 Even as a vapour fed with golden beams  
 That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
 Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—  
 No sense, no motion, no divinity—  
 A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
 The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream  
 Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream  
 Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever  
 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Oh, for Medea's wondrous alchymy,  
 Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam  
 With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale  
 From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! Oh, that God,  
 Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice  
 Which but one living man has drained, who now,  
 Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
 No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
 He bears, over the world wanders for ever,  
 Lone as incarnate death! Oh! that the dream  
 Of dark magician in his visioned cave,  
 Raking the cinders of a crucible  
 For life and power, even when his feeble hand  
 Shakes in its last decay, were the true law  
 Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled  
 Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn  
 Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!  
 The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,  
 The child of grace and genius.

Upon those pallid lips  
 So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes  
 That image sleep in death, upon that form



Yet safe from the worms outrage, let no tear  
 Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues  
 Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,  
 Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone  
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,  
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory  
 Of that which is no more, or paintings woe  
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery  
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,  
 And all the shows o' the world, are frail and vain  
 To weep a loss that turns their light to shade.  
 It is a woe "too deep for tear's," when all  
 Is left at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves  
 Those who remain behind nor sobs, nor groans,  
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;  
 But pale despair and cold tranquility,  
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

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### MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

The everlasting universe of things  
 Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,  
 Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—  
 Now lending splendour, where from secret springs  
 The source of human thought its tribute brings  
 Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,  
 Such as a feeble brook will oft assume  
 In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,  
 Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,  
 Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river  
 Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.  
 Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—  
 Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,  
 Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns, sail  
 Fast clouds, shadows, and sunbeams; awful scene,  
 Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down  
 From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,  
 Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame  
 Of lightning through the tempest:—thou dost lie,  
 The giant brood of pines around thee clinging,  
 Children of elder time, in whose devotion,  
 The chainless winds still come, and ever came  
 To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging

To hear—an old and solemn harmony :  
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep  
 Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil  
 Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep  
 Which, when the voices of the desert fail,  
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity :—  
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion  
 A loud, lone sound, no other sound can tame ;  
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,  
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound—  
 Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee  
 I seem as in a trance, sublime and strange  
 To muse on my own separate phantasy—  
 My own, my human mind, which passively  
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,  
 Holding an unremitting interchange  
 With the clear universe of things around ;  
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings  
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest  
 Where that, or thou art, no unbidden guest,  
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy,  
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by  
 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,  
 Some phantom, some faint image ; till the breast  
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !  
 Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
 Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber—  
 And that it shapes the busy thoughts outnumber  
 Of those who wake and live—I look on high ;  
 Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled  
 The veil of life and death ? or do I lie  
 In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep  
 Speed far around and inaccessiblely  
 Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,  
 Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep  
 That vanishes among the viewless gales !  
 Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,  
 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—  
 Its subject mountains their unearthly forms  
 Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between  
 Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,  
 Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread  
 And wind among the accumulated steeps ;  
 A desert peopled by the storms alone,  
 Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,  
 And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously  
 Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and high,  
 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene  
 Where the old Earthquake-demon taught her young

Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea  
 Of fire envelope once this silent snow?  
 None can reply—all seems eternal now.  
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue  
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,  
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be  
 But for such faith with nature reconciled;  
 Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal  
 Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood,  
 By all, but which the wise, and great, and good,  
 Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,  
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell  
 Within the dædal earth; lightning, and rain,  
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,  
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams  
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep  
 Holds every future leaf and flowers;—the bound  
 With which from that detested trance they leap:  
 The works and ways of man, their death and birth,  
 And that of him, and all that his may be;  
 All things that move and breathe with toil and sound  
 Are born and die, revolve, subside, and swell.  
 Power dwells apart in its tranquillity  
 Remote, serene and inaccessible:  
 And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,  
 On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains,  
 Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep  
 Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains.  
 Slowly rolling on; there, many a precipice  
 Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power  
 Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,  
 A city of death, distinct with many a tower  
 And wall impregnable of beaming ice.  
 Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin  
 Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky  
 Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing  
 Its destined path, or in the mangled soil  
 Branchless and scattered stand; the rocks, drawn down  
 From yon remotest waste, have overthrown  
 The limits of the dead and living world,  
 Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place  
 Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;  
 Their food and their retreat, for ever gone,  
 So much of life and joy is lost. The race  
 Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling  
 Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,  
 And their place is not known. Below, vast caves

Shine in the rushing torrent's restless gleam,  
Which from those secret chasms in tumult dwelling  
Meet in the Vale, and one majestic River,  
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever  
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,  
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high :—the power is there,  
The still and solemn power of many sights  
And many sounds, and much of life and death.  
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,  
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend  
Upon that Mountain ; none beholds them there,  
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,  
Or the star-beams dart through them :—Winds contend  
Silently there, and heap the snow, with breath  
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home  
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes  
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods  
Over the snow. The secret strength of things,  
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome  
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !  
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,  
If to the human mind's imaginings  
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?



### GINEVRA.

Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one  
Who staggers forth into the air and sun  
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,  
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever  
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain  
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train  
Of objects and of persons, passed like things  
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,  
Genevra from the nuptial altar went ;  
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent  
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,  
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,  
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,  
And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,  
And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—  
And of the gold and jewels glittering there  
She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare

Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,  
 Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight.  
 A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud  
 Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed,  
 And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair,  
 Were mirrored in the polished marble stair,  
 Which led from the cathedral to the street;  
 And even as she went, her light fair feet  
 Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,  
 Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,  
 Envyng the unenviable; and others  
 Making the joy which should have been another's  
 Their own by gentle sympathy; and some  
 Sighing to think of an unhappy home;  
 Some few admiring what can ever lure  
 Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure  
 Of parent's smiles for life's great cheat; a thing  
 Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and lo! she stands  
 Looking in idle grief on her white hands,  
 Alone within the garden now her own;  
 And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,  
 The music of the merry marriage-bells,  
 Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—  
 Absorbed, like one within a dream who dreams  
 That he is dreaming, until slumber seems  
 A mockery of itself—when suddenly  
 Antonio stood before her, pale as she.  
 With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,  
 He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,  
 And said—"Is this thy faith?" and then as one  
 Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun  
 With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise  
 And look upon his day of life with eyes  
 Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,  
 Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore  
 To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood  
 Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued  
 Said—"Friend, if earthly violence or ill,  
 Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will  
 Of parents, chance, or custom, time, or change,  
 Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,  
 Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,  
 With all their stings and venom, can inpeach  
 Our love,—we love not:—if the grave, which hides  
 The victim from the tyrant, and divides

The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart  
Imperious inquisition to the heart  
That is another's, could dissever ours,  
We love not."—"What! do not the silent hours  
Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?  
Is not that ring"—a pledge, he would have said,  
Of broken vows, but she with patient look  
The golden circle from her finger took,  
And said—"Accept this token of my faith,  
The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;  
And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell  
Will mix its music with that merry bell;  
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said,  
'We toll a corpse out of the marriage bed?'  
The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn  
Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon  
That even the dying violet will not die  
Before Ginevra." The strong phantasy  
Had made her accents weaker and more weak,  
And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek,  
And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere  
Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,  
Making her but an image of the thought,  
Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought  
News of the terrors of the coming time.  
Like an accuser branded with the crime  
He would have cast on a beloved friend,  
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end  
The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance,  
Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence—  
Antonio stood and would have spoken, when  
The compound voice of women and of men  
Was heard approaching: he retired, while she  
Was led amid the admiring company  
Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon  
Changed her attire for the afternoon,  
And left her at her own request to keep  
An hour of quiet and rest:—like one asleep  
With open eyes and folded hands she lay,  
Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,  
And in the lighted hall the guests are met;  
The beautiful looked lovelier in the light  
Of love, and admiration, and delight,  
Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes  
Kindling a momentary Paradise.  
This crowd is safer than the silent wood,

Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude ;  
 On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine  
 Falls, and the dew of music more divine  
 Tempers the deep emotions of the time  
 To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—  
 How many meet, who never yet have met,  
 To part too soon, but never to forget ?  
 How many saw the beauty, power, and wit  
 Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet !  
 But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,  
 As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,  
 And unprophetic of the coming hours,  
 The matin winds from the expanded flowers  
 Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken  
 The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken  
 From every living heart which it possesses,  
 Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,  
 As if the future and the past were all  
 Treasured i' the instant:—so Gherardi's hall  
 Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,  
 Till some one asked—" Where is the Bride ?" And then  
 A bride's-maid went,—and ere she came again  
 A silence fell upon the guests—a pause  
 Of expectation, as when beauty awes  
 All hearts with its approach, though, unheheld :  
 Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled ;—  
 For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew  
 The colour from the hearers cheeks, and flew  
 Louder and swifter round the company :  
 And then Gherardi entered with an eye  
 Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd  
 Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead ! if it be death,  
 To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,  
 With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,  
 And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light  
 Mocked at the speculation they had owned.  
 If it be death, when there is felt around  
 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,  
 And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair  
 From the scalp to the ancles, as it were  
 Corruption from the spirit passing forth,  
 And giving all it shrouded to the earth,  
 And leaving as swift lightning in its flight  
 Ashes, and smoke, and darkness : in our night  
 Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more  
 Than the unborn dream of our life before  
 Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore.

The marriage feast and its solemnity  
 Was turned to funeral pomp—the company,  
 With heavy hearts and looks, broke up ; nor they  
 Who loved the dead went weeping on their way  
 Alone—but sorrow, mixed with sad surprise  
 Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,  
 On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,  
 Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.  
 The lamps, which, half-extinguished in their haste,  
 Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast,  
 Showed as it were within the vaulted room  
 A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom  
 Had passed out of men's minds into the air.  
 Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,  
 Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,  
 A loveless man, accepted torpidly  
 The consolation that he wanted not,  
 Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.  
 Their whispers made the solemn silence seem  
 More still—some wept, [            ]  
 Some melted into tears without a sob,  
 And some with hearts that might be heard to throb  
 Leant on the table, and at intervals  
 Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls  
 And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came  
 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame  
 Of every torch and taper as it swept  
 From out the chamber where the women kept ;—  
 Their tears fell on the dear companion cold  
 Of pleasures now departed ; then was knolled  
 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,  
 And finding death their penitent had shrived,  
 Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon  
 A vulture has just feasted to the bone.  
 And then the mourning women came.—

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#### THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone  
 In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,  
           And the spring came down  
 From the planet that hovers upon the shore  
 Where the sea of sunlight encroaches  
 On the limits of wintry night ;—  
 If the land, and the air, and the sea,  
 Rejoice not when spring approaches,  
 We did not rejoice in thee,  
           Genevra !



She is still, she is cold  
 On the bridal couch,  
 One step to the white death bed,  
 And one to the bier,  
 And one to the charnel—and one, Oh where?  
 The dark arrow fled  
 In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has roll'd,  
 The rats in her heart  
 Will have made their nest,  
 And the worms be alive in her golden hair,  
 While the spirit that guides the sun  
 Sits throned in his flaming chair,  
 She shall sleep.

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## THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

### PART FIRST.

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A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,  
 And the young winds fed it with silver dew,  
 And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,  
 And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
 And the Spirit of Love fell every where;  
 And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
 Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss  
 In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,  
 Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,  
 As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snow-drop, and then the violet,  
 Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,  
 And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent  
 From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,  
 And narcissi, the fairest among them all,  
 Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,  
 Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,  
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,  
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen  
Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,  
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew  
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,  
It was felt like an odour within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath address,  
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,  
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air  
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare ;

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up  
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,  
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,  
Gazed through the clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,  
The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;  
And all rare blossoms from every clime  
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom  
Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,  
With golden and green light, slanting through  
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,  
And starry river-buds glimmered by,  
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance  
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,  
Which led through the garden along and across,  
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,  
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells,  
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,  
And flowrets which drooping as day drooped too,  
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,  
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise  
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes  
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet  
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it,)

When heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,  
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,  
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one  
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ;

For each one was interpenetrated  
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,  
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear,  
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit  
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,  
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,  
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver ;—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower ;  
Radiance and odour are not its dower ;  
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,  
It desires what it has not, the beautiful !

The light winds, which from unsustaining wings  
Shed the music of many murmurings ;  
The beams which dart from many a star  
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

The plumed insects swift and free,  
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,  
Laden with light and odour, which pass  
Over the gleam of the living grass ;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie  
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,  
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,  
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,  
Which, like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,  
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,  
Move, as reeds in a single stream ;

Each and all like ministering angels were  
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,  
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by  
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,  
And the earth was all rest, and the air was all love,  
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,  
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep.

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned  
 In an ocean of dreams without a sound ;  
 Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress  
 The light sand which paves it, consciousness ;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale  
 Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,  
 And snatches of its Elysian chaunt  
 Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.)

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest  
 Up-gathered into the bosom of rest ;  
 A sweet child weary of its delight,  
 The feeblest and yet the favourite,  
 Cradled within the embrace of night.

## PART SECOND.

There was a power in this sweet place,  
 An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling grace  
 Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream  
 Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,  
 Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind,  
 Which, dilating, had moulded her mein and motion  
 Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :  
 And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,  
 Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,  
 Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,  
 But her tremulous breath and her flushing face  
 Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,  
 That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise :

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake  
 Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,  
 As if yet around her he lingering were,  
 Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest :  
 You might hear, by the heaving of her breast,  
 That the coming and going of the wind  
 Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,  
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod  
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,  
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet,  
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;  
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came  
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream  
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;  
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers  
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,  
And sustained them with rods and ozier bands;  
If the flowers had been her own infants, she  
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,  
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,  
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,  
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,  
The freshest her gentle hands could pull  
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,  
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beam-like ephemeris,  
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss  
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she  
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,  
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,  
She left clinging round the smooth and dark  
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring  
Thus moved through the garden, ministering  
All the sweet season of summer tide,  
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died!

## PART THIRD.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair  
Like stars, when the moon is awakened, were,  
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous  
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant  
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,  
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,  
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low ;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,  
And the silent motions of passing death,  
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,  
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank ;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,  
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;  
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,  
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,  
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul :  
Which at first was lovely, as if in sleep,  
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap  
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,  
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,  
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,  
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,  
Paved the turf and the moss below,  
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,  
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scents and hue  
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew  
Leaf after leaf, day by day,  
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red  
And white with the whiteness of what is dead  
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past :  
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the winged seeds  
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,  
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem  
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet,  
Fell from the stalks on which they were set :  
And the eddies drove them here and there,  
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks  
Were bent and tangled across the walks ;  
And the leafless net-work of parasite bowers  
Massed into ruin, and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,  
All loathliest weeds began to grow,  
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck  
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,  
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,  
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,  
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,  
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,  
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,  
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould,  
Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;  
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead  
With a spirit of growth had been animated !

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,  
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,  
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,  
Infecting the winds that wander by.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,  
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,  
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes  
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,  
The vapours arose which have strength to kill  
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,  
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray  
Crept and flitted in broad noon-day  
Unseen ; every branch on which they alit  
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid  
Wept, and the tears within each lid  
Of its folded leaves which together grew,  
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon  
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn :  
The sap shrank to the root, through every pore,  
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came ; the wind was his whip :  
One choppy finger was on his lip :  
He had torn the cataracts from the hills,  
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound  
The earth, and the air, and the water bound :  
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne  
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death  
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath :  
Their decay and sudden flight from the frost  
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost !

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant  
The moles and the dormice died for want :  
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air,  
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain,  
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,  
Then there steamed up a freezing dew,  
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about  
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,  
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,  
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back,  
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;  
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,  
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.



# PETER BELL THE THIRD.

BY

MICHING MALLECHO, ESQ.

---

Is it a party in a parlour,  
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,  
Some sipping punch—some sipping tea ;  
But, as you by their faces see,  
All silent, and all—damned !

*Peter Bell, by W. WORDSWORTH.*

---

OPHELIA.—What means this, my lord ?

HAMLET.—Marry, this is Miching Mallecho ; it means mischief  
SHAKSPERE.

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## PROLOGUE.

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PETER BELLS, one, two and three,  
O'er the wide world wandering be.—  
First, the antenatal Peter,  
Wrapt in weeds of the same metre,  
The so long predestined raiment  
Clothed, in which to walk his way meant  
The second Peter ; whose ambition  
Is to link the proposition,  
As the mean of two extremes—

(This was learnt from Aldric's themes)  
 Shielding from the guilt of schism  
 The orthodoxal syllogism ;  
 The First Peter—he who was  
 Like the shadow in the giass  
 Of the second, yet unripe,  
 His substantial antitype.—  
 Then came Peter Bell the Second,  
 Who henceforward must be reckoned  
 The body of a double soul,  
 And that portion of the whole  
 Without which the rest would seem  
 Ends of a disjointed dream.—  
 And the Third is he who has  
 O'er the grave been forced to pass  
 To the other side, which is,—  
 Go and try else,—just like this.

Peter Bell, the first was Peter  
 Smugger, milder, softer, neater,  
 Like the soul before it is  
 Born from *that* world into *this*.  
 The next Peter Bell was he,  
 Predevote, like you and me,  
 To good or evil as may come ;  
 His was the severer doom,—  
 For he was an evil Cotter,  
 And a polygamic Potter.  
 And the last is Peter Bell,  
 Danned since our first parents fell,  
 Danned eternally to Hell—  
 Surely he deserves it well !

## PART THE FIRST.

### Death.

AND Peter Bell, when he had been  
 With fresh-imported hell-fire warmed,  
 Grew serious—from his dress and mien  
 'Twas very plainly to be seen  
 Peter was quite reformed.

His eyes turned up, his mouth turned down ;  
 His accent caught a nasal twang ;  
 He oiled his hair, there might be heard  
 The grace of God in every word  
 Which Peter said or sang.

But Peter now grew old, and had  
An ill no doctor could unravel;  
His torments almost drove him mad;—  
Some said it was a fever bad—  
Some swore it was the gravel.

His holy friends then came about,  
And with long preaching and persuasion  
Convinced the patient that, without  
The smallest shadow of a doubt,  
He was predestined to damnation.

They said—"Thy name is Peter Bell;  
Thy skin is of a brimstone hue;  
Alive or dead—aye, sick or well—  
The one God made to rhyme with hell;  
The other, I think, rhymes with you."

Then Peter set up such a yell!—  
The nurse, who with some water gruel  
Was climbing up the stairs, as well  
As her old legs could climb them—fell,  
And broke them both—the fall was cruel.

The Parson from the casement leapt  
Into the lake of Windermere—  
And many an eel—though no adept  
In God's right reason for it—kept  
Gnawing his kidneys half a year.

And all the rest rushed through the door,  
And tumbled over one another,  
And broke their skulls.—Upon the floor  
Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and swore,  
And cursed his father and his mother;

And raved of God, and sin, and death,  
Blaspheming like an infidel;  
And said, that with his clenched teeth,  
He'd seize the earth from underneath,  
And drag it with him down to hell.

As he was speaking came a spasm,  
And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder  
Like one who sees a strange phantasm  
He lay,—there was a silent chasm  
Between his upper jaw and under.

And yellow death lay on his face ;  
 And a fixed smile that was not human  
 Told, as I understand the case,  
 That he was gone to the wrong place :—  
 I heard all this from the old woman.

Then there came down from Langdale Pike  
 A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail ;  
 It swept over the mountains like  
 An ocean,—and I heard it strike  
 The woods and crags of Grasmere vale.

And I saw the black storm come  
 Nearer, minute after minute ;  
 Its thunder made the cataracts dumb ;  
 With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum  
 It neared as if the Devil was in it.

The Devil *was* in it :—he had bought  
 Peter for half-a-crown ; and when  
 The storm which bore him vanished, nought  
 That in the house that storm had caught  
 Was ever seen again.

The gaping neighbours came next day—  
 They found all vanished from the shore :  
 The Bible, whence he used to pray,  
 Half scorched under a hen-coop lay ;  
 Smashed glass—and nothing more !

## PART THE SECOND.

### *The Devil.*

THE DEVIL, I safely can aver,  
 Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting ;  
 Nor is he, as some sages swear,  
 A spirit, neither here nor there,  
 In nothing—yet in everything.

He is—what we are ; for sometimes  
 The Devil is a gentleman ;  
 At others a bard bartering rhymes  
 For sack ; a statesman spinning crimes ;  
 A swindler, living as he can ;

A thief, who cometh in the night,  
 With whole boots and net pantaloons,  
 Like some one whom it were not right  
 To mention ;—or the luckless wight,  
 From whom he steals nine silver spoons.

But in this case he did appear  
 Like a slop-merchant from Wapping,  
 And with smug face, and eye severe,  
 On every side did perk and peer  
 Till he saw Peter dead or napping.

He had on an upper Benjamin  
 (For he was of the driving schism)  
 In the which he wrapt his skin  
 From the storm he travelled in,  
 For fear of rheumatism.

He called the ghost out of the corse ;—  
 It was exceedingly like Peter,—  
 Only its voice was hollow and hoarse—  
 It had a queerish look of course—  
 Its dress too was a little neater.

The Devil knew not his name and lot ;  
 Peter knew not that he was Bell :  
 Each had an upper stream of thought,  
 Which made all seem as it was not ;  
 Fitting itself to all things well.

Peter thought he had parents dear,  
 Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies,  
 In the fens of Lincolnshire ;  
 He perhaps had found them there  
 Had he gone and boldly shown his

Solemn phiz in his own village ;  
 Where he thought oft when a boy  
 He'd clomb the orchard walls to pillage  
 The produce of his neighbour's tillage,  
 With marvellous pride and joy.

And the Devil thought he had,  
 'Mid the misery and confusion  
 Of an unjust war, just made  
 A fortune by the gainful trade  
 Of giving soldiers rations bad—  
 The world is full of strange delusion.

That he had a mansion planned  
 In a square like Grosvenor-square,  
 That he was aping fashion, and  
 That he now came to Westmorland  
 To see what was romantic there.

And all this, though quite ideal,—  
 Ready at a breath to vanish,—  
 Was a state not more unreal  
 Than the peace he could not feel,  
 Or the care he could not banish.

After a little conversation,  
 The Devil told Peter, if he chose,  
 He'd bring him to the world of fashion  
 By giving him a situation  
 In his own service—and new clothes.

And Peter bowed, quite pleased and proud,  
 And after waiting some few days  
 For a new livery—dirty yellow  
 Turned up with black—the wretched fellow  
 Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's chaise.

### PART THE THIRD.

#### Hell.

HELL is a city much like London—  
 A populous and a smoky city ;  
 There are all sorts of people undone,  
 And there is little or no fun done ;  
 Small justice shown, and still less pity.

There is a Castles, and a Canning,  
 A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh ;  
 All sorts of caitiff corpses planning,  
 All sorts of cozening for trepanning  
 Corpses less corrupt than they.

There is a \* \* \* , who has lost  
 His wits, or sold them, none knows which ;  
 He walks about a double ghost,  
 And though as thin as Fraud almost—  
 Ever grows more grim and rich.

There is a Chancery Court ; a King ;  
 A manufacturing mob ; a set  
 Of thieves who by themselves are sent  
 Similar thieves to represent ;  
 An army ; and a public debt.

Which last is a scheme of paper money,  
 And means—being interpreted—  
 Bees, “ keep your wax—give us the honey,  
 And we will plant, while skies are sunny,  
 Flowers, which in winter serve instead.”

There is great talk of revolution—  
 And a great chance of despotism—  
 German soldiers—camps—confusion—  
 Tumults—lotteries—rage—delusion—  
 Gin—suicide—and methodism.

Taxes too, on wine and bread,  
 And meat, and beer, and tea, and cheese,  
 From which those patriots pure are fed,  
 Who gorge before they reel to bed  
 The tenfold essence of all these.

There are mincing women, mew'ing,  
 (Like cats, who *amant misere*,)  
 Of their own virtue, and pursuing  
 Their gentler sisters to that ruin,  
 Without which—what were chastity

Lawyers—judges—old hobnobbers  
 Are there—bailiffs—chancellors—  
 Bishops—great and little robbers—  
 Rhymesters—pamphleteers—stock-jobbers—  
 Men of glory in the wars—

Things whose trade is, over ladies  
 To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper,  
 Till all that is divine in woman  
 Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, inhuman,  
 Crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper.

Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling,  
 Frowning, preaching—such a riot!  
 Each with never-ceasing labour,  
 Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbour,  
 Cheating his own heart of quiet.

And all these meet at levees;—  
 Dinners convivial and political;—  
 Suppers of epic poets;—teas,  
 Where small talk dies in agonies;—  
 Breakfasts professional and critical;

Lunches and snacks so aldermanic  
 That one would furnish forth ten dinners,  
 Where reigns a Cretan-tongued panic,  
 Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Alemannic  
 Should make some losers, and some winners

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

At conversazioni—balls—  
 Conventicles—and drawing-rooms—  
 Courts of law—committees—calls  
 Of a morning—clubs—book-stalls—  
 Churches—masquerades—and tombs.

And this is Hell—and in this smother  
 All are damnable and damned;  
 Each one damning, damns the other;  
 They are damned by one another,  
 By none other are they damned.

'Tis a lie to say, "God damns!"  
 Where was Heaven's Attorney General  
 When they first gave out such flams?  
 Let there be an end of shams,  
 They are mines of poisonous mineral.

Statesmen damn themselves to be  
 Cursed; and lawyers damn their souls  
 To the auction of a fee;  
 Churchmen damn themselves to see  
 God's sweet love in burning coals.

The rich are damned, beyond all cure,  
 To taunt, and starve, and trample on  
 The weak and wretched; and the poor  
 Damn their broken hearts to endure  
 Stripe on stripe, with groan on groan.

Sometimes the poor are damned indeed  
 To take,—not means for being blest,—  
 But Cobbett's snuff, revenge; that weed  
 From which the worms that it doth feed  
 Squeeze less than they before possessed.

And some few, like we know who.  
 Damned—but God alone knows why—  
 To believe their minds are given  
 To make this ugly Hell a Heaven;  
 In which faith they live and die.

Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,  
 Each man be he sound or no  
 Must indifferently sicken;  
 As when day begins to thicken,  
 None knows a pigeon from a crow,—



So good and bad, sane and mad,  
 The oppressor and the oppressed ;  
 Those who weep to see what others  
 Smile to inflict upon their brothers ;  
 Lovers, haters, worst and best ;

All are damned—they breathe an air,  
 Thick, infected, joy-dispelling :  
 Each pursues what seems most fair,  
 Mining like moles, through mind, and there  
 Scoop palace-caverns vast, where Care  
 In throned state is ever dwelling.

## PART THE FOURTH.

## Sit.

Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor-Square,  
 A footman in the devil's service !  
 And the misjudging world would swear  
 That every man in service there  
 To virtue would prefer vice.

But Peter, though now damned, was not  
 What Peter was before damnation.  
 Men oftentimes prepare a lot  
 Which ere it finds them, is not what  
 Suits with their genuine station.

All things that Peter saw and felt  
 Had a peculiar aspect to him ;  
 And when they came within the belt  
 Of his own nature, seemed to melt,  
 Like cloud to cloud into him.

And so the outward world uniting  
 To that within him, he became  
 Considerably uninviting  
 To those, who meditation slighting,  
 Were moulded in a different frame.

And he scorned them, and they scorned him ;  
 And he scorned all they did ; and they  
 Did all that men of their own trim  
 Are wont to do to please their whim,  
 Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

Such were his fellow-servants ; thus  
 His virtue, like our own, was built  
 Too much on that indignant fuss  
 Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us  
 To bully out another's guilt.

He had a mind which was somehow  
 At once circumference and centre  
 Of all he might or feel or know ;  
 Nothing went ever out, although  
 Something did ever enter.

He had as much imagination  
 As a pint-pot ;—he never could  
 Fancy another situation,  
 From which to dart his contemplation,  
 Than that wherein he stood.

Yet his was individual mind,  
 And new created all he saw  
 In a new manner, and refined  
 Those new creations, and combined  
 Them, by a master-spirit's law.

Thus—though unimaginative—  
 An apprehension clear, intense,  
 Of his mind's work, had made alive  
 The things it wrought on ; I believe  
 Wakening a sort of thought in sense.

But from the first 'twas Peter's drift  
 To be a kind of mortal eunuch,  
 He touched the hem of nature's shift,  
 Felt faint—and never dared uplift  
 The closest, all-concealing tunic.

She laughed the while, with an arch smile,  
 And kissed him with a sister's kiss,  
 And said—" My best Diogenes,  
 I love you well—but, if you please,  
 Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

" 'Tis you are cold—for I, not coy,  
 Yield love for love, frank, warm and true ;  
 And Burns, a Scottish peasant boy—  
 His errors prove it—knew my joy  
 More, learned friend, than you.

*" Bocca bacciata non perde ventura  
 Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna:—*  
 So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet words might cure a  
 Male prude, like you, from what you now endure, a  
 Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant laguna."

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe,  
 And smoothed his spacious forehead down,  
 With his broad palm;—'twixt love and fear,  
 He looked, as he no doubt felt, queer,  
 And in his dream sate down.

The Devil, was no uncommon creature;  
 A leaden-witted thief—just huddled  
 Out of the dross and scum of nature ;  
 A toad-like lump of limb and feature,  
 With mind, and heart, and fancy muddled.

He was that heavy, dull, cold thing,  
 The spirit of evil well may be :  
 A drone too base to have a sting ;  
 Who gluts, and grimes his lazy wing,  
 And calls lust, luxury.

Now he was quite the kind of wight  
 Round whom collect, at a fixed æra,  
 Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,—  
 Good cheer—and those who come to share it—  
 And best East Indian madeira !

It was his fancy to invite  
 Men of science, wit, and learning,  
 Who came to lend each other light ;  
 He proudly thought that his gold's might  
 Had set those spirits burning.

And men of learning, science, wit  
 Considered him as you and I  
 Think of some rotten tree, and sit  
 Lounging and dining under it,  
 Exposed to the wide sky.

And all the while, with loose fat smile,  
 The willing wretch sat winking there,  
 Believing 'twas his power that made  
 That jovial scene—and that all paid  
 Homage to his unnoticed chair.

Though to be sure this place was Hell ;  
 He was the Devil—and all they—  
 What though the claret circled well,  
 And wit, like ocean, rose and fell ?—  
 Were damned eternally.

## PART THE FIFTH.

## Grace.

AMONG the guests who often staid  
 Till the Devil's petits-soupers,  
 A man there came, fair as a maid,  
 And Peter noted what he said,  
 Standing behind his master's chair.

He was a mighty poet—and  
 A subtle-souled psychologist ;  
 All things he seemed to understand,  
 Of old or new—of sea or land—  
 But his own mind—which was a mist.

This was a man who might have turned  
 Hell into Heaven—and so in gladness  
 A Heaven unto himself have earned ;  
 But he in shadows undiscerned  
 Trusted,—and damned himself to madness.

He spoke of poetry, and how  
 " Divine it was, a light, a love,  
 A spirit which like wind doth blow  
 As it listeth, to and fro ;  
 A dew rained down from God above.

" A power which comes and goes like dream,  
 And which none can ever trace—  
 Heaven's light on earth—Truth's brightest beam."  
 And when he ceased there lay the gleam  
 Of those words upon his face.

Now Peter, when he heard such talk,  
 Would, heedless of a broken pate,  
 Stand like a man asleep, or baulk  
 Some wishing guest of knife or fork,  
 Or drop and break his master's plate.

At night he oft would start and wake  
Like a lover, and began  
In a wild measure songs to make  
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,  
And on the heart of man.

And on the universal sky—  
And the wide earth's bosom green,—  
And the sweet, strange mystery  
Of what beyond these things may lie,  
And yet remain unseen.

For in his thought he visited  
The spots in which, ere dead and damned,  
He his wayward life had led,  
Yet knew not whence the thoughts were fed,  
Which thus his fancy crammed.

And these obscure remembrances  
Stirred such harmony in Peter,  
That whensoever he should please,  
He could speak of rocks and trees  
In poetic metre.

For though it was without a sense  
Of memory, yet he remembered well  
Many a ditch and quick-set fence;  
Of lakes he had intelligence,  
He knew something of heath, and fell.

He had also dim recollections  
Of pedlars tramping on their rounds;  
Milk-pans and pails; and odd collections  
Of saws, and proverbs; and reflections  
Old parsons make in burying-grounds.

But Peter's verse was clear, and came  
Announcing from the frozen hearth  
Of a cold age, that none might tame  
The soul of that diviner flame  
It augured to the Earth.

Like gentle rains, on the dry plains,  
Making that green which late was grey,  
Or like the sudden moon, that stains  
Some gloomy chamber's window panes  
With a broad light like day.

For language was in Peter's hand,  
 Like clay, while he was yet a potter ;  
 And he made songs for all the land,  
 Sweet both to feel and understand,  
 As pipkins late to mountain Cotter.

And Mr. ——, the bookseller,  
 Gave twenty pounds for some ;—then scorning  
 A footman's yellow coat to wear,  
 Peter, too proud of heart, I fear,  
 Instantly gave the Devil warning.

Whereat the Devil took offence,  
 And swore in his soul a great oath then,  
 "That for his damned impertinence,  
 He'd bring him to a proper sense  
 Of what was due to gentlemen!"—

## PART THE SIXTH.

### Damnation.

"O THVT mine enemy had written  
 A book!"—cried Job :—a fearful curse ;  
 If to the Arab, as the Briton,  
 'Twas galling to be critic-bitten :—  
 The Devil to Peter wished no worse.

When Peter's next new book found vent,  
 The Devil to all the first Reviews  
 A copy of it slyly sent,  
 With five-pound note as compliment,  
 And this short notice—" Pray abuse."

Then *seriatim*, month and quarter,  
 Appeared such mad tirades.—One said—  
 "Peter seduced Mrs. Foy's daughter,  
 Then drowned the mother in Ullswater,  
 The last thing as he went to bed."

Another—" Let him shave his head !  
 Where's Dr. Willis ?—Or is he joking ?  
 What does the rascal mean or hope,  
 No longer imitating Pope,  
 In that barbarian Shakspeare poking ?"

One more, "Is incest not enough?  
 And must there be adultery too?  
 Grace after meat? Miscreant and Liar!  
 Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel! Fool! Hell-fire  
 Is twenty times too good for you.

"By that last book of yours we think  
 You've double damned yourself to scorn;  
 We warned you whilst yet on the brink  
 You stood. From your black name will shrink  
 The babe that is unborn."

All these Reviews the Devil made  
 Up in a parcel, which he had  
 Safely to Peter's house conveyed.  
 For carriage, ten-pence Peter paid—  
 Untied them—read them—went half mad.

"What!" cried he, "this is my reward  
 For nights of thought, and days of toil?  
 Do poets, but to be abhorred  
 By men of whom they never heard,  
 Consume their spirits' oil?"

"What have I done to them?—and who  
 Is Mrs. Foy? 'Tis very cruel  
 To speak of me and Emma so!  
 Adultery! God defend me! Oh!  
 I've half a mind to fight a duel.

"Or," cried he, a grave look collecting,  
 "Is it my genius, like the moon,  
 Sets those who stand her face inspecting,  
 That face within their brain reflecting,  
 Like a crazed bell-chime, out of tune?"

For Peter did not know the town,  
 But thought, as country readers do  
 For half a guinea or a crown,  
 He bought oblivion or renown  
 From God's own voice in a review.

All Peter did on this occasion  
 Was, writing some sad stuff in prose.  
 It is a dangerous invasion  
 When poets criticise; their station  
 Is to delight, not pose.

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair,  
 For Born's translation of Kant's book ;  
 A world of words, tail foremost, where  
 Right—wrong—false—true—and foul, and fair—  
 As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

Five thousand crammed octavo pages  
 Of German psychologies,— he  
 Who his *furor verborum* assuages  
 Thereon, deserves just seven months' wages  
 More than will e'er be due to me.

I looked on them nine several days,  
 And then I saw that they were bad ;  
 A friend, too, spoke in their dispraise,—  
 He never read them ;—with amaze  
 I found Sir William Drummond had.

When the book came, the Devil sent  
 It to P. Verbovale, Esquire,  
 With a brief note of compliment,  
 By that night's Carlisle mail. It went,  
 And set his soul on fire.

Fire, which *ex luce præbens fumum*,  
 Made him beyond the bottom see  
 Of truth's clear well—when I and you Ma'am,  
 Go as we shall do, *subter humum*,  
 We may know more than he.

Now Peter ran to seed in soul  
 Into a walking paradox ;  
 For he was neither part nor whole,  
 Nor good, nor bad—nor knave nor fool,  
 —Among the woods and rocks.

Furious he rode, where late he ran,  
 Lashing and spurring his tame hobby ;  
 Turned to a formal puritan,  
 A solemn and unsexual man,—  
 He half believed *White Obi*.

This steed in vision he would ride,  
 High trotting over nine-inch bridges  
 With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,  
 Mocking and moving by his side—  
 A mad-brained goblin for a guide—  
 Over corn-fields, gates, and hedges.



After these ghastly rides, he came  
 Home to his heart, and found from thence  
 Much stolen of its accustomed flame;  
 His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame  
 Of their intelligence.

To Peter's view, all seemed one hue;  
 He was no whig, he was no tory;  
 No Deist and no Christian he;—  
 He got so subtle, that to be  
 Nothing, was all his glory.

One single point in his belief  
 From his organisation sprung,  
 The heart-enrooted faith, the chief  
 Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,  
 That "happiness is wrong,"

So thought Calvin and Dominic;  
 So think their fierce successors, who  
 Even now would neither stint nor stick  
 Our flesh from off our bones to pick,  
 If they might "do their do."

His morals thus were undermined:  
 The old Peter—the hard, old Peter  
 Was born anew within his mind;  
 He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,  
 As when he tramped beside the Otter.

In the death hues of agony  
 Lambently flashing from a fish,  
 Now Peter felt amused to see  
 Shades like a rainbow's rise and flee,  
 Mixed with a certain hungry wish.

So in his Country's dying face  
 He looked—and lovely as she lay,  
 Seeking in vain his last embrace,  
 Wailing her own abandoned case,  
 With hardened sneer he turned away:

And coolly to his own soul said;—  
 "Do you not think that we might make,  
 A poem on her when she's dead:—  
 Or, no—a thought is in my head—  
 Her shroud for a new sheet I'll take.

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

“ My wife wants one.—Let who will bury  
 This mangled corpse ! And I and you,  
 My dearest soul, will then make merry,  
 As the Prince Regent did with Sherry,—  
 Ay—and at last desert me too.”

And so his Soul would not be gay,  
 But moaned within him ; like a fawn  
 Moaning within a cave, it lay  
 Woundeand wasting, day by day,  
 Till all its life of life was gone.

As troubled skies stain waters clear,  
 The storm in Peter's heart and mind  
 Now made his verses dark and queer :  
 They were the ghosts of what they were,  
 Shaking dim grave-clothes in the wind.

For he now raved enormous folly,  
 Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools, and Graves,  
 'Twould make George Colman melancholy,  
 To have heard him, like a male Molly,  
 'Chaunting those stupid staves.

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse  
 On Peter while he wrote for freedom,  
 So soon as in his song they spy,  
 The folly which soothes tyranny,  
 Praise him, for those who feed 'em.

“ He was a man, too great to scan ;—  
 A planet lost in truth's keen rays :—  
 His virtue, awful and prodigious ;—  
 He was the most sublime, religious,  
 Pure-minded Poet of these days.”

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,  
 “ Eureka ! I have found the way  
 To make a better thing of metre  
 Than e'er was made by living creature  
 Up to this blessed day.”

Then Peter wrote odes to the Devil ;—  
 In one of which he meekly said :  
 “ May Carnage and Slaughter,  
 Thy niece and thy daughter,  
 May Rapine and Famine,  
 Thy gorge ever cramming,  
 Glut thee with living and dead !

“ May death and damnation,  
 And consternation,  
 Flit up from hell with pure intent!  
 Slash them at Manchester,  
 Glasgow, Leeds and Chester;  
 Drench all with blood from Avon to Trent.

“ Let thy body-guard yeomen  
 Hew down babes and women,  
 And laugh with bold triumph till Heaven be rent,  
 When Moloch in Jewry,  
 Munched children with fury,  
 It was thou, Devil, dining with pure intent.”

## PART THE SEVENTH.

**Double Damnation.**

THE Devil now knew his proper cue,—  
 Soon as he read the ode, he drove  
 To his friend Lord Mac Murderhouse's,  
 A man of interest in both houses,  
 And said:—“ For money or for love,

“ Pray find some cure or sinecure ;  
 To feed from the superfluous taxes,  
 A friend of ours—a poet—fewer  
 Have fluttered tamer to the lure  
 Than he.” His Lordship stands and racks his

Stupid brains, while one might count  
 As many beads as he had boroughs,—  
 At length replies ; from his mean front,  
 Like one who rubs out an account,  
 Smoothing away the unmeaning furrows :

“ It happens fortunately, dear Sir,  
 I can. I hope I need require  
 No pledge from you, that he will stir  
 In our affairs ;—like Oliver,  
 That he'll be worthy of his hire.”

These words exchanged, the news went off  
 To Peter, home the Devil hied,—  
 Took to his bed ; he had no cough,  
 No doctor,—meat and drink enough,—  
 Yet that same night he died.

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

The Devil's corpse was leaded down ;  
 His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf,  
 Mourning-coaches, many a one,  
 Followed his hearse along the town :—  
 Where was the Devil himself ?

When Peter heard of his promotion,  
 His eyes grew like two stars for bliss :  
 There was a bow of sleek devotion,  
 Engendering in his back ; each motion  
 Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

He hired a house, bought plate, and made  
 A genteel drive up to his door,  
 With sifted gravel neatly laid,—  
 As if defying all who said,  
 Peter was ever poor.

But a disease soon struck into  
 The very life and soul of Peter—  
 He walked about—slept—had the hue  
 Of health upon his cheeks—and few  
 Dug better—none a heartier eater.

And yet a strange and horrid curse  
 Clung upon Peter, night and day,  
 Month after month the thing grew worse,  
 And deadlier than in this my verse,  
 I can find strength to say.

Peter was dull—he was at first  
 Dull—O, so dull—so very dull !  
 Whether he talked, wrote, or rehearsed—  
 Still with this dullness was he cursed—  
 Dull—beyond all conception—dull.

No one could read his books—no mortal,  
 But a few natural friends, would hear him ;  
 The parson came not near his portal ;  
 His state was like that of the immortal  
 Described by Swift—no man could bear him.

His sister, wife, and children yawned,  
 With a long, slow, and drear ennui,  
 All human patience far beyond ;  
 Their hopes of Heaven each would have pawned,  
 Any where else to be.

But in his verse, and in his prose,  
The essence of his dullness was  
Concentred and compressed so close,  
'Twould have made Guatimozin doze  
On his red gridiron of brass.

A printer's boy, folding those pages,  
Fell slumbrously upon one side ;  
Like those famed seven who slept three ages.  
To wakeful frenzy's vigil rages,  
As opiates, were the same applied.

Even the Reviewers who were hired  
To do the work of his reviewing,  
With adamantine nerves, grew tired ;—  
Gaping and torpid they retired,  
To dream of what they should be doing.

And worse and worse, the drowsy curse  
Yawned in him, till it grew a pest—  
A wide contagious atmosphere,  
Creeping like cold through all things near ;  
A power to infect and to infest.

His servant-maids and dogs grew dull ;  
His kitten, late a sportive elf,  
The woods and lakes, so beautiful,  
Of dim stupidity were full,  
All grew dull as Peter's self.

The earth under his feet—the springs,  
Which lived within it a quick life,  
The air, the winds of many wings,  
That fan it with new murmurings,  
Were dead to their harmonious strife

The birds and beasts within the wood,  
The insects, and each creeping thing,  
Were now a silent multitude ;  
Love's work was left unwrought—no brood  
Near Peter's house took wing.

And every neighbouring cottager  
Stupidly yawned upon the other :  
No jackass brayed ; no little cur  
Cocked up his ears ;—no man would stir  
To save a dying mother.

Yet all from that charmed district went  
But some half-idiot and half-knave,  
Who rather than pay any rent,  
Would live with marvellous content,  
Over his father's grave.

No bailiff dared within that space,  
For fear of the dull charm, to enter;  
A man would bear upon his face,  
For fifteen months in any case,  
The yawn of such a venture.

Seven miles above—below—around—  
This pest of dulness holds its sway;  
A ghastly life without a sound;  
To Peter's soul the spell is bound—  
How should it ever pass away?

**THE END.**



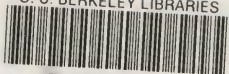
The following is a list of the  
 names of the persons who  
 were present at the meeting  
 held at the residence of  
 Mr. J. W. [unclear] on  
 the 15th day of [unclear] 18[unclear].





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