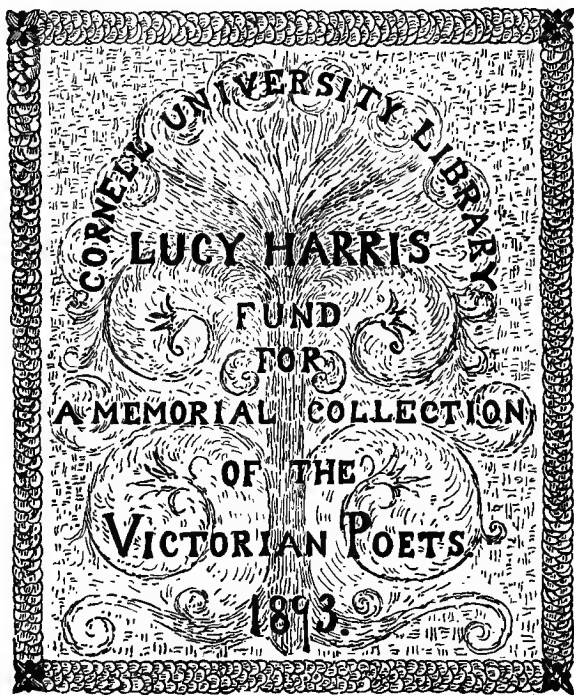


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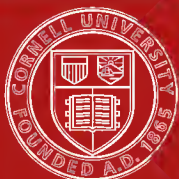
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LONDON: KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & Co.

VISIONS OF THE NIGHT

IN BALLAD AND SONG

BY

WILLIAM HENRY SEAL

AUTHOR OF "IONE, AND OTHER POEMS"

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1888

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TO
ALFRED
LORD TENNYSON,
POET-LAUREATE,
THIS VOLUME IS
BY PERMISSION
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.



FOUR years ago, under the title of "Ione, and other Poems," I published my first volume.

Unaccompanied by a preface, that child of my thoughts and feelings, born of my own inexperience, was ushered into the world, and committed to its fostering care, where, if it still lives, it has been nurtured and sheltered by strange hands.

Its publication, however, brought me many friends, and much kindly criticism; and if I have not profited by their generous advice, the fault is wholly mine, not theirs.

The present volume is, in the main, an unpretentious attempt to revive a modern taste for Ballad Literature, a taste which, by reason of long neglect, is in danger of becoming impaired.

With the exception of the great epic writers, the Ballad was formerly almost the only medium—certainly

it was the most popular form—of poetical treatment. Any attempt, therefore, from whatever source, to resuscitate that taste is an object good in itself, and worthy of commendation by all those who value and appreciate the Ballad as a “sweet teller of unfamiliar themes.”

Though the subjects I have chosen vary greatly in material as well as treatment, I have, whilst occasionally allowing myself to stray into the by-paths of soliloquy and reflection, always endeavoured to keep in view the main object of the story, and to maintain the native simplicity which characterizes the true English Ballad.

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VISIONS OF THE NIGHT.



A SONG UNSUNG.

ALONE in a little chamber,
 Away from the noisome throng,
Whose revels and babel voices
 Disturb the dreamland of song,
I sat, with the restless longing
 Of a bird with broken wing,
That cannot mount to the æther
 Whither 'twould soar and sing.

Before me a book lay open,
 But strangely it seems that night
I could not obey the inspiring
 That bade me, "Arise and write ;"
The past with a present sadness
 O'ershadowed the years to be :—
When a child looked in at the window,
 And brought a letter to me.

I smoothed out the folded missive,
And wondering, eagerly scanned
The words on its tear-stained pages,
Writ by an unknown hand ;
And shall I regret the revealing,
Or even forbear to recall
That touch of a kindlier nature
Which thrilled me at evenfall.

'Twas a song that a child had written,
The gush of a grateful heart
For some little act of compassion
In which I had borne a part ;
So sweetly the innocent rhythm
Unfaltering rippled along,
My heart went out on the stillness
To the child that had lisped in song.

It came in that hour of sadness,
When life's dark problem seems
More strange in its mystic workings
Than the wonders seen in dreams.
It came and delivered a message
That ever shall solace me,
Till the life which is has perished,
And pass'd to the life to be.

It came like a ray of sunlight
When the chastening storm has ceased,
Like the first sweet song unchallenged
Of a captured bird released ;

Though it tells but a simple story,
The song that it sings to me
Is sweeter far than the music
Of a perfect song could be.

And oft when my heart is weary,
And the winter nights seem long,
I muse o'er the child's glad message,
And read again that song ;
But I cannot efface one blemish,
Nor alter one simple strain,
For the words, in their wondrous sweetness,
Resound in my heart again.

So the music remains unwritten,
The song is still unsung,
And the language lisped in childhood
Is still in the childlike tongue ;
But it may be from angel voices,
With a heavenly chorus sweet,
I shall hear that song repeated
When the child and man may meet.

WANTED, A LEADER OF MEN.

WANTED, a light in the darkness, a leader to love and
obey,
A guide through the mist and shadows, that darken,
endanger the way ;
From cottage and crowded city, from mountain, valley,
and fen,
Comes the cry of a nation's travail, "Wanted, a leader of
men."

A leader unblinded by passion, with feelings unbittered
by hate,
Not all for the voice of the people, nor all for the
strength of the state ;
A heart with a mind to govern, a mind with a heart to
control,
Not always forgetting the body, nor ever forgetting the
soul.

Not a man of one party or faction, but a zealous uniter
of creeds,
Not an engine of wordy vapour, but a doer of worthy
deeds ;

Not a speaker of veiled sedition, but a guide for the
struggling mass

Who crowd through the valley of labour, crying, " Room
for the millions to pass."

Not a man of a priestly compassion, giving alms at
charity's door,

Who sees through the eye of a needle the woes and
wants of the poor ;

Nor a man of the people's passions, who sees through a
widening glass

The faults of those in high places, ever urging on class
against class.

But a leader grave and earnest, like some patriarch seer
of old,

Who saw with visions prophetic the scroll of the future
unrolled,

And heard in his heart a message like love to the ears of
a bride,

And felt in his soul's aspiring, the God-given wisdom to
guide.

To gather the lost that are scattered, and speak with no
faltering voice,

To counsel our hearts in sorrow, and joy with us when
we rejoice ;

Not seeking with blind adoration the praise of idolatrous
fame,

Nor making the goal of ambition the bribe of a gilded
name.

But to guide in a great reunion, to lead in a righteous
cause,
Distributing mercy with justice, not ruling by rigour of
laws ;
Not bidding the poor to rebellion, nor teaching the rich
how to give,
But telling a sorrowing nation how nobler and better
to live.

New faith for the weak and faltering, new paths for the
struggling to tread,
New strength for the strong who are fallen, new life for
the hopes that are dead ;
New pride for the proud ones vanquished, the great ones
we cannot recall,
And the heart of our country's honour, unbroken, un-
blemished through all.

LAST OF THE CORNISH WRECKERS.

THE wind howls wild round Sandy Cove,
The sea-birds screech in flight,
The darkling storm-clouds fret the skies,
“ There'll be a storm to-night.”

Thus spake a Cornish wrecker, as
He scanned the foam-ribbed sea,
Whose climbing billows seemed to touch
Night's lowering canopy.

And now the sullen breakers roar,
The waters rage and hiss,
God guide the ships at sea to port
On such a night as this.

Amidst a swarthy smuggler group
The daring wrecker stood,
A flaming torch was in his hand,
And higher still the wood,

Was heaped to flash the snaring flame
 Across the stormy deep,
And lure the luckless mariner
 Where breakers rage and leap.

But wilder than the storm, his voice
 Was heard in mocking glee,
Exulting with a scornful laugh
 More cruel than the sea.

The thunder echoed from the cliffs
 And rolled along the shore ;
With ominous rebuke it swelled
 The tempest's deepening roar.

From peak to peak the lightning flashed
 Until it touched the sea,
Where, battling with the waves, a ship
 Was drifting helplessly.

And now the wreckers crowd the beach,
 The cry goes up, " A sail,
A ship, a wreck," with joy they shout,
 " She drives before the gale."

Anon she rides the billow's crest
 And now she sinks from view,
Again the lightning leaps around
 And shows her ghastly crew,

Clinging among the riven shrouds
That flutter in the light,
Yet still the torch burned in his hand,
The beacon-fire gleamed bright.

Once more the lightning flashed, once more
The thunder smote the main,
The wreckers from the rocky beach
Glance seaward, but in vain.

No more the vessel braves the storm,
No more she stems the tide,
The restless waters break between,
The sullen waves divide

Her treasures as their prey, the ship
Shall plough the deep no more ;
Her fragments strew the tide that bears
Her wreckage to the shore.

Among the reefs the wreckers stood
And watched with eager eyes,
Till one more daring braved the tide
That bore a drifting prize.

With jealous haste they gathered round,
But foremost of the band
Was he who piled the fatal heap,
And held the fiery brand.

“ The prize is mine, if prize there be,”
He shouted hoarse and loud ;
With angry threat his horny hands
Beat back the surging crowd.

He stooped amid the blinding surf
That swept the foam-girt strand,
And seized—but not the prize he sought—
And claspt—a human hand.

But ere the wrecker had despoiled
The burthen which he bore,
A wild unmanning cry was heard
Along the surf-bound shore.

The burning torch beside him lay,
The beacon-fire gleamed bright,
The flames leapt high with ghastly pride,
But, by their mocking light,

He saw, he knew, alas, too late,
The savage work was done,
For in his arms the wrecker bore
His lifeless sailor son.

In silent awe he laid him down,
But never word spake he ;
No sign of sorrow answering
That message from the sea.

But who can tell the secret grief,
The agony of woe
That riots in the strong, and chills
The tears that will not flow.

None are all evil, hidden deep
Some virtue may be found
To diadem the erring soul
By sullen vice discrown'd.

Unknown the wrecker's mute despair,
Unseen its chilling blight,
Until a wild despairing cry
Resounded through the night,

And he was gone ; henceforth the cliffs
His hermit home shall be,
The eagle crags his resting-place,
Beside the moaning sea.

And ever when a storm descends
With devastating might,
The fishermen of Sandy Cove
Look oft towards the height

Where, to and fro, o'er crag and peak,
He climbs with outstretch'd hands,
As if to warn some passing ship
Against the shifting sands.

But once a deadlier storm arose,
And, watchful as of yore,
The fisher-folk of Sandy Cove
Were grouped upon the shore ;

When from the height a cry arose,
And, strangely as they tell,
Above the storm's confusing din
Was heard a deathly knell.

Three days and nights the tempest raged,
But nevermore was seen,
Where the tall cliffs divide the sky,
The wrecker's savage mien.

And when the storm had spent its strength,
They searched the cliffs around,
And, broken, bruised, where he fell,
The wrecker's corse was found.

Unloved, unmourned, they buried him,
All broken, where he fell ;
The nightwinds howled his funeral dirge,
The ocean moaned " Farewell."

And peasant wooers, as they stray
Beside the restless tide,
Ne'er linger by the wrecker's grave,
But turn their steps aside.

And where the rugged cliffs resound
With ocean's deepening roar,
The fishermen of Sandy Cove
Ne'er run their craft ashore.

And evermore those awful cliffs
Shall frown above his tomb ;
Each barren peak and eyrie crag
Shall point the wrecker's doom.

SIC TRANSIT.

THE day declines—its fleeting hours have run ;
O'er yonder distant hills the setting sun
Disrobes its mightiness, the victory won.

The daylight wanes—the peasant homeward hies ;
Dull, drifting clouds descend from eastern skies,
Day wrestles with the night, and daylight dies.

The twilight falls—the dark clouds darklier mass,
And, as their shadows trail the dewy grass,
I sit and watch the dim procession pass.

The twilight fades—and night's ethereal gloom
Shrouds the great oak and hides the timid bloom,
While strange weird fancies fill the silent room.

The night is come—some mystic sound appals
My weary heart, and on the stillness calls
Like whispering echoes through deserted halls.

Night reigns supreme—but sleepless Time creeps on,
While those we love pass from us one by one ;
Many are with us still, but *some* are gone.

The morning breaks—with mute resistless might
Dawn moves triumphant in the van of light,
Chasing the scattered clouds of vanquished night.

And night is gone—in manifold array
Glad nature smiles, or, drooping, mourns decay ;
Angels of Life and Death have passed this way.

And things are changed—o'er each familiar scene
Time's ruthless hand has passed with sickle keen ;
We see what is, and mourn what *might* have been.

And this is life—a passing to and fro
From love and hate, joy, sorrow, mirth, and woe—
A little more or less is all we know.

A RETROSPECT.

Rise, streamlet, rise
Amongst my native hills,
Where countless secret waters stray
From ever rippling rills ;
By each unguarded path
Of wild, familiar flowers,
I played—as children love to play—
In childhood's happy hours.

Flow, streamlet, flow
By hillock, wood, and dell,
Where oft in after-years I roved,
For I have loved thee well,
And love thee still. E'en now,
While memories grow dim,
Beside thy winding path I stray
Toward the river's brim.

Roll, river, roll ;
Thy silent strength so strong
Reflects the stealthy years that steal
So silently along,

And bear our youth away
Unseen, as, page by page,
The Book of Life records the lapse
Of manhood into age.

Tell, river, tell
What I have told to thee ;
From mountain, flood, and brooklet bear
My message to the sea.
Like thee, through storm and calm,
Endeavours come and go,
And still our aimless years, like thee,
For ever, ever flow.

Break, ocean, break
Thy power at my feet ;
A belt of sand has wasted thee,
And bade thy strength retreat.
The baffled tide returns
To chide the restless main ;
The ebb and flow of waters meet
To gather strength again.

And often, as we fail
Or fall from what is best,
Our strength, like thine, renewed, must rise,
And never, never rest
Until the tide shall turn
Toward that distant shore,
Where sweet familiar voices chant
The ever evermore.

THE IVY AND THE OAK.

LONG the ivy loved the oak,
But the ivy never spoke,
Still content to climb and cling
Where the sighing branches swing
To and fro.

But a storm broke o'er the wood
Where the spreading oak-tree stood,
And the lightning's lurid dart
Piercing to its mighty heart,
Laid it low.

And a traveller from St. Kell
Found it lying where it fell,
But the ivy, ever true,
Round its withered branches grew,
As of yore.

When the heart with sorrow sown
Mourns its fairest hopes o'erthrown,
As we linger where they fell,
May the friends we love so well
Love us more.

“*HIDE THOSE REGRETS.*”

HIDE those regrets, forbear to bid me grieve ;
No sorrow shall from thee my heart estrange,
Nor deem me cold, unheeding, for, believe,
Among the changing, *one* shall never change.

Long have I loved thee, and will love thee still,
Though jealous tongues may whisper to defame,
And seek to blight by real or fancied ill,
Thy virtues rare they cannot share nor claim.

Too prone to chide, yet feeling no regret,
Themselves untaught, yet teaching how to live,
Rebuking what the goodly should forget,
Reviling where the Master saith “Forgive.”

Why heed their slanders, who with Judas kiss,
Would fawn to-day, and faithless be to-morrow ?
Who smile exulting in the morn of bliss,
But prove inconstant with the night of sorrow.

We may not wed, yet each for each may feel
That pure sweet sympathy akin to love,
For kindred woe unites in common weal,
And welds the bond which sorrow strangely wove.

Time was when love was parent to desire,
Ere I was taught that friendship was an art,
To which the baser natures might aspire
To coin deceit, and play a traitor's part.

Presumption is not folly—'tis a crime
When linked to hatred, daring to defame
With guilt the errors o'er which youth must climb,
And blight regrets with undeserving blame.

I would not plead for vice a gilded name,
Or deck the guilty head with virtue's crown,
Nor mingle with my song the transient fame
Of those who err to win a brief renown.

There lives no love that never knew a doubt,
Nor joy unbittered with no jealous pang,
No strength so strong that hatred may not rout,
Nor pleasure freed from envy's poisoned fang.

Though some desert thee, I will not forsake,
Though others leave thee, I'll not love thee less,
There is a strength misfortune cannot shake,
A pride that stoops to outcast loneliness.

Fair play's a jewel, and a jewel fair
Will brighter shine with virtue's constant use ;
Unworn, its beauty dulls with jealous care,
Rusts with neglect, and deadens with abuse.

Go, gaping crowd, and cruel babblers, go ;
Let him among you sinless cast the stone :
What fawning friend would strike the Brutus blow ?
See thou art guiltless, and—let her alone.

Though calumny condemn thy lonely lot,
And callous tongues conspire to whisper ill,
Think not thy rarer virtues are forgot ;
Unchanged to me, thou art a woman still.

A woman—though not all divinely fair,
A woman—frail and friendless though thou be,
Unbowed by hate, unbroken by despair,
Be to the world what thou hast been to me.

There is an earthly Paradise untrod,
An Eden guiltless of Creation's fall ;
There is a height where man may walk with God,
Unclouded by despair's desponding thrall.

Sustained by faith, undaunted still aspire
From lesser glory to the greater good,
Where love reanimates each true desire,
And honour rules the cause of humanhood.

*“ MORE LIGHT ! ” **

As in his chamber, shadows deep
Oppressed the hours of fitful sleep,
Surrounded by death's disarray,
The laureate bard was heard to say,
“ More light ! ”

And as a watcher o'er him leant
With kindly smile and sweet intent,
To smooth his pillow, soothe his pain,
She heard the whispered words again :
“ More light ! ”

And ever when his watchful guest
An answer sought, or made request,
With sorrow's unsubmitive pride,
The dying poet's voice replied,
“ More light ! ”

No more shall love enthral his will,
No more may inspiration fill

* Goethe's last words are said to have been “ More light ! ”

His daring fancies with the fire
That flashed from his immortal lyre—
“More light!”

Let jealous tongues his virtues chide,
Reprove his faults, assail his pride,
Let slander eat her loathsome fill,
His words shall echo sweeter still—
“More light!”

He asked not glory, honour, fame ;
He sought not praise, nor heeded blame ;
He asked not longer years to live ;
He only asked that Time would give
“More light!”

Through childhood's dim unfolded years,
Through youth's regrets, ambitions, fears,
Through every fault that dulls the page
Of manhood's might or feebler age,
“More light!”

For those who walk where folly leads,
For doubting hearts, and erring creeds,
For all who search but dimly see
The truth that is, and is to be,
“More light!”

The mighty truths the poet told,
The glorious songs he sang of old,
The legend lore he loved so well,
No sweeter words than these shall tell,
“More light!”

“THEY PLAYED TOGETHER.”

THEY played together, boy and girl,
 Upon the village green,
And roamed unhindered side by side
 O'er each familiar scene ;
By meadow, streamlet, wood, and grove,
They played and loved—as children love.

They grew together, youth and maid,
 And one was beautiful,
The joy of every rural home,
 Loved, loving, dutiful ;
But one, his soul with song inspired,
To fame's ambitious heights aspired.

She dwelt where Arno's streamlet strayed
 Beside a rustic cot,
And lived with uncomplaining pride
 A peasant's lowly lot ;
And he, when evening's work was done,
Came oft to woo what love had won.

But once there chanced that way to pass
A dame of high degree,
Who heard the maiden as she sang
And saw her girlish glee ;
Childless was she of noble blood,
And lonely was her widowhood.

A daughter once the lady had,
A sweet-souled, loving child,
In whom affection's cloudless morn
Looked from her eyes, and smiled ;
But ere she grew to youth and pride,
That tender floweret drooped and died.

And often as the lady passed
That cottage by the stream,
The maiden's voice and song awoke
The past, as from a dream
Of sorrow and regrets,—alas !—
And yet she could not choose but pass.

And once, while yet the year was young,
Beside the open door
The lady paused, to hear again
The song she heard before ;
And listening there, forgot the pride
That would have turned her steps aside.

She loved the song, but more she loved
The little maid who sang,
Though sad sweet memories would come,
With many a secret pang ;
She sought by love to chide regret,
And soothe what love could not forget.

And wealth forsook its proud estate,
There—at that cottage door ;
What recked it as they talked, that one
Was rich, and one was poor ?
Ere evening drew its darkening pall,
She took her to her lordly hall.

And so they parted, youth and maid,
Upon the village green
Where they had played so oft, and where
Love hallowed every scene ;
With vows from each true plighted heart,
They parted there,—as lovers part.

And months passed by, the months that seem
To those who love like years,
When Time one only tribute brings,
The absence that endears ;
Yet still he strove, toiled, hoped for fame,
To wed her with a glorious name.

And when a year had almost sped,
It was agreed, they say,
The maid across the hills should come,
And name the wedding day ;
But she came not as love arranged,
For one was true—but one had changed.

No more she came by wood and grove,
To seek her cottage home ;
No more she strayed by vale and stream
Where they had loved to roam ;
Her peasant lover she forgot,
For one was true—but one was not.

She dwelt amidst beguiling wealth
In luxury and ease,
And lovers, false as she was fair,
Came oft to fawn and please ;
In secret hours she nursed the scorn
That would despise the lowly born.

And when he came to plead his cause
With all a poet's pride,
To tell the praise his toil had won
And claim her for his bride,
She laughed and tossed her pretty head
But when he spake of love, she said—

" I cannot love the old love now,
For Time's unwearied wing
Has swept the sweetness from the past,
Where love was wont to cling ;
I treasure not thy bookish lore,
As lovers we must meet no more.

" My lover must a hero be,
Of glory, honour, fame,
By valour tried, of great renown,
Or high historic name ;
And thou, if thou wouldst worthy be,
Go, prove thy worth of love to me.

" The war-notes sung on hostile shores
Resound across the main,
Our country's dangers call to thee,
And must they call in vain ?
Shall honour, love, and patriot pride
Appeal to thee, and be denied ? "

With keen reproach, the maiden cast
That fatal look of scorn,
Which withers more the trusting heart
Than love's unloved return ;
A brief farewell—and lo, the light
Of love was lost in darkest night.

Then forth he went in broken hope
To foreign lands afar,
A martyr soul in strength so weak,
Went forth to wounds and war ;
To fight for honour, love, and pride,
He fought—and fighting—fell, and died.

As falls a leaf in woodland groves,
Unheeded there, he fell,
No comrade near to press his hand,
No friend to sigh "farewell ;"
For blame or praise, for good or ill,
He loved—and love is something still.

With strangers buried, friend and foe,
And in a stranger's land,
He sleeps beneath Hispania's soil,
Where haply some rude hand
Has reared a stone above the grave
Where rest the unforgotten brave.

*LINES TO "CATO," MY FAITHFUL
ST. BERNARD.**

FRIEND of my youthful years, I do no wrong
To mourn thy loss with sad impassioned song,
Though some deride, upbraid, that I should deem
A dog's fidelity a poet's theme ;
Yet lives less worthy often gather praise
From minstrel's songs and Fame's historic lays.

Friend, said I in my grief? nay, more than friend,
Since thou changed not as fawning friendships bend,
So strong of limb, so full of every grace
That made thee worthy of thy faithful race ;
How shall I grieve for thee? how may I show
What I now feel, but thou canst never know?

But most I mourn, that in an evil hour
An unseen hand despoiled thee of thy pow'r,

* For some unknown cause, treacherously poisoned by some one who failed to appreciate in a dog the higher instincts and human sympathies they lacked themselves.

The coward hireling of some baser mind,
Who dared to harm thee—thou—who wert so kind,
And stilled a heart that could not faithless be,
And chilled the blood which would have flowed for me.

Did I not say I mourned? yet can it be
That death hath made thee dearer unto me?
In life I loved thee—loved as only such
Can love who treasure faith at worth so much,
Now thou art gone, with vain regrets I bend,
And mourn thy loss, companion—guardian—friend.

UNWRITTEN THOUGHTS.

THE book was open, but its pages bare
Reproached me with no records written there ;
From night to morn, from morning until night,
I heard a voice within me, saying, " Write ! "

But yet I wrote not. Silently the hours,
O'erburdened with the strife of secret pow'rs,
Full of mysterious meaning, one by one
Passed, as I sat in stillness dreaming on.

Like love's sweet charms reflected in a glass,
I saw, as in a dream, strange visions pass
Of beauty rare ; but now the book is closed,
The voice is still, the sweetness undisclosed.

Twice round the clock the circling hands have passed,
And I am worn and hungered with the fast
Of many hours ; the whirl of eddying doubt
Has parched my lips, as leaves by summer's drought.

· Opprest with words that tell of hidden things,
And tortured with the wild imaginings
Of fancies strange that tempt my thoughts astray,
I dream the hours in idleness away.

For still by shadowy paths they seem to come :
I see and hear them—yet my voice is dumb ;
With eager ears I listen what they say—
Yet I reply not ; and they pass away.

They pass away, and come, and pass again,
Theme urging theme in one unending train ;
Strange lands and language, people stranger still,
Crowd through my fancy and the visions fill.

But when I would recount what I have seen,
The visions change, they are not what have been ;
Thought fails to fathom, language cannot tell
What I have seen, and loved, and loved so well.

Afar in distant thought, yet ever near,
Some fancy beckons and they reappear ;
Like memories sweet of old familiar themes,
They come and linger long in waking dreams.

Yet I'll repine not, and if thus to live
Is to misuse occasions youth doth give,
Then I have sinned—and sinning, now confess
To those more fain to censure than to bless.

Nor will I chide ; 'tis sweet to live apart
In that ideal which beautifies the heart,
Nor would I one mysterious scene forget,
Or cloud remembrance with one sad regret. .

Why should I mourn? There is, or there has been,
Some lingering sweetness with each transient scene,
Some subtle charm I could not but obey,
That filled the hours my youth has dreamed away.

And it may be, in other years to come,
My soul will wake and be no longer dumb,
Reveal the thoughts my inner life has known,
And reap the fruits of silent labours sown.

*DEMOSTHENES' ADDRESS TO THE
ATHENIANS.*

“SONS of Athens, arm ! awaken !
’Tis your country on you calls ;
Slavery’s shackles shall be shaken,
Freedom reigns where fear enthral.
By the vows which we have taken,
Freedom stands or freedom falls.

“By our life’s fair morning fretted
With the lowering storm-clouds nigh,
By our country’s wrongs regretted,
By each holy, kindred tie,
Honour claims our hearts indebted ;
Duty bids us do or die.

“By the hopes within us rising
And the sacred cause we serve,
Dangers braved, all fears despising,
We will ne’er from duty swerve ;
Freedom, as our birthright prizing,
Liberty our homes preserve.

“Not for fame or martial glory
Do I now invoke thy zeal ;
Though the path be rough and gory,
Strike, and make the tyrants feel.
Noblest in historic story,
They who fight for common weal.

“Let no rival factions sever,
We must all united be ;
With true purpose, high endeavour,
Raise the banner of the free.
Sons of Athens, now or never,
Strike for home and liberty !”

THE LAST OF RONALD'S LINE.

DARKLY the lowering storm-clouds loomed,
The surly thunder roared,
And weirdly the arrowy lightning flashed
Where mountain torrents poured,

As through fair Teviot's winding vale,
Revealed by the fitful light,
Two travellers with impatient zeal
Rode hard through the stormy night.

Though ride they both for Teviot's hall,
They do not ride abreast ;
One is a vassal of low degree
In the garb of serfdom drest.

But one is returned from Eastern lands,
From Araby's sands afar ;
He has fought beside Christ's sepulchre,
He comes from the holy war.

The hallowed cross of a sacred cause
He wears on his mail-clad breast,
And wildly the chilling nightwinds toss
The plume of his helmet's crest.

But why is the horseman's weary steed
Spurred on through the stormy night?
Why rests he not at a wayside inn,
To ride with the morning light?

Nay, ask him not, for his anxious brow
Is rife with rebellious pain ;
The brave in secret hide their grief,
And the strong do not complain.

But answer, good serf, what sorrow sits
So hard on thy liege's brow?
What maid is false to her plighted troth?
What news of a broken vow?

"'Tis not the loss of a maiden's love,"
The faithful serf replied ;
"The voice of a dying mother bids
My lord through the tempest ride."

But now they have reached a steep ascent,
Where, riding with slackened rein,
The warrior o'er his courser leaned,
And peered through the mists again.

“Hark! hark! dost thou not hear,” he asked,
“The cry of a child’s distress?”
“Nay, nay, my lord, ’twas the whistling winds,
Or the storm-fiend’s wild caress.”

Then on through the night their steeds were spurred,
Yet still as they onward sped
He heard that voice, which louder seemed
Than the thunder overhead.

And the warrior checked his courser then;
“Let us backward ride,” said he;
“May God in His goodness guide aright
To the child, if such there be.”

He turned his steed to the angry storm,
His brow was bared to the blast,
And wildly the restless night-winds shook
The pine trees as they passed;

But his prayer was heard. All shelterless
From the howling tempest, stood
A little maid, who had wandered far
Astray in the pathless wood.

The rain-drops wooed her clustering hair,
The winds moaned wild regrets,
Yet still in her tiny hands she claspt
Some frail spring flowerets.

The warrior stooped to the timid child
To relieve her gushing tears ;
Soft was his touch, his accents kind,
As he soothed her childlike fears.

And when he mounted his steed once more,
To challenge the stormy night,
A burthen strange to his breast he held
Secure from the tempest's might.

On, on they rode, but the warrior's heart
Was filled with a strange unrest ;
His thoughts recalled his youth's bright dreams,
As he kissed his foundling guest.

The ride is o'er ; the steeds are stalled ;
A mother has kissed her son,
While blessing and prayer commingled rise,
With many a faint " Well done."

The vassals have welcomed back their lord
With loyal homage due,
But the child to him was fairer far
Than the pomp of retinue.

And as he watched her innocent glee,
From sorrow and grief beguiled,
The secret love of a loving life
Went out to that little child.

He took her in his outstretched arms,
And kissed her three times three ;
"What is thy name, little one?" he asked,
"Wilt thou come and live with me?"

The child looked into his eyes replete
With love's rekindled flame,
And thrust her hands through his shaggy locks,
As she lisped her sire's proud name.

But why does the warrior start and frown,
And his swarthy cheeks grow pale?
Why do the locks of his drooping head
Shadow his breast of mail?

A name that a child had lightly told,
Yet it dims his fearless eyes,
As he sees the old familiar scenes
Of his dead-past youth arise,

Where love's first prize was wooed and won,
Till a scheming courtier came,
And a broken vow was all that told
Of a faithless maiden's shame.

And solace meet for a wounded soul
He had sought in lands afar,
Beneath the heat of Arabia's sun,
In the changing chance of war.

But he hears a maiden's false reply
Come back through the distant years,
Like the strain of a sad, sad song, and now
He sees through a mist of tears,

That faithless one by another's hand
To the bridal altar led,
And the light unsullied still gleams bright
That shone from her jewelled head.

And this is the child of that fair false one—
An only child is she,
How strange that a soul so sweet should bring
So sad a memory!

While through his thoughts in that bitter hour,
Temptation's withering blast
Like a whirlwind swept, and a voice he heard
Saying to him as it passed—

“If love's regret or jealous hate
Revive some slumbering wrong,
Is pride more slow to avenge, or is
Thy valiant arm less strong?

“Or dost thou seek by subtler means
To strike at a secret foe,
And vengeance wreak by an unseen hand
For the wrongs of long ago?

“Then let this child be in secret borne
To an isle of the western sea ;
Some yeoman’s wife would gladly vow
To serve thy gold, and thee.

“With rustics schooled, her tender years
Should share a peasant’s lot,
Her name and lineage unknown,
Or known, be soon forgot.

“Thus guiltless thou of human blood,
Thy vengeance will be sure,
While sorrowing parents childless mourn,
Thy secret be secure.”

The voice was still, the warrior stood,
His proud head bowed with woe,
When suddenly he started there,
As though a traitor’s blow

Had struck him unawares,—the child
Was clinging to his knee,
While through his beard in scorn the words,
“It cannot, shall not be,”

Rang through the silent hall. He crossed
His breast with holy sign,
“Unworthy deeds shall ne’er defame
The last of Ronald’s line.”

And he prayed as ne'er he prayed before,
 " This sin from my conscience keep,"
And wept the great repentant tears
 That only the strong can weep.

One glance above, and then he kissed
 The foundling he caressed ;
With fond regrets his tender charge
 He folded to his breast.

Then all was still ; the child had played
 Its frail tired limbs to sleep,
And the daughter of his youth's false love
 Lay there in his watchful keep.

Next morn the child in princely robes
 Was set on a gentle steed,
And Ronald's attendants beside it rode,
 For the warrior had decreed

That whoso honoured the child that morn,
 Honoured their master too,
And soon the morning sunlight glanced
 On a lordly retinue.

But as he took his fond farewell
 With presents costly and rare,
A blessing on her brow he breathed
 With many a secret prayer.

Then slowly the cavalcade moved on
Through Teviot's winding vale,
And the child sate like some fair princess
Enthroned in a fairy tale.

But the warrior stood by his lonely hall,
One hand upraised to his brow,
And one outstretched, as if he called
On God to a solemn vow.

For he felt the flow of that nobler life
Which gushed when his heart was young,
And heard the strains of the soul's sweet song
That had lived so long unsung.

For his heart rejoiced, with the secret joy
Of a purpose undefiled,
And the guiltless soul of a God-like man
To his fellows reconciled.

"O FOR THE JOY."

O FOR the joy to press
My lips to thine,
One look of tenderness
Answering mine !
O for the hopes that give
Promise of bliss,
Ever a life to live
Like unto this !

Could I unburden now
All that I feel,
Love would in worship bow,
Pride meekly kneel ;
Glad memories wake again—
Hopes of the past
Weave for my heart a chain,
Welcome at last.

Then would my folded life
Break into song,
Love from its secret strife
Rise true and strong,

Hopes that drooped slenderly
 Burst into bloom,
Thoughts that stole tenderly
 Banish their gloom.

All that I deem most dear,
 What most I prize,
Speaks in thy voice so clear,
 Looks from thine eyes ;
Thou hast the soul that wakes
 What I would give,
Thine is the life that makes
 Mine worth to live.

And when I hear thy voice
 Why do I start ?
Why do I then rejoice ?
 Answer, my heart ;
Say why a restless soul,
 Eager to rove,
Bows thus in meek control—
 Say, is this love ?

Then am I captive bound,
 Loved one, to thee ;
Hope has a refuge found—
 Come unto me ;
Come to my breast and still
 This aching heart,
Come to my life and fill
 Its every part.

As flowers to the sun
Turn I to thee,
And as the rivers run
Down to the sea,
So would my wounded soul,
Crushed in its flight,
Welcome thy sweet control ;
Be thou its light.

Star of mysterious power,
Guide me thy way ;
Shine through my darkest hour
With clearer ray,
Making each pathway bright
Where thou hast shone ;
Daystar of love and light,
Shine on my own.

EVENSONG.

WHEN the shadows of eve are declining,
And we sit in the firelight's glow,
How the sad heart in silence repining
Goes back to the years long ago,
Endeared with some love-given token,
And still where the tired heart clings,
Till the soul on the stillness unbroken
Goes out in that hour and sings,
 "Come back to me, years that have perished,
 And banish the shadows of pain ;
 Love, hope, all that childhood most cherished,
 Come back to my heart once again."

'Tis sweet in the travail of sadness,
Through dreamlands of fancy and song,
To awake from the slumbers of gladness,
Where memory still lingers among,
And hear a known chorus of voices
Down Time's mystic avenues ring,
Till the soul through its vision rejoices,
Goes out in that hour to sing,

“Come back to me, streamlet and river,
Grove, hillock, and meadow-land green ;
Come back to me now and for ever
The pleasures—the joys that have been.”

When twilight's pale shadows come stealing,
And beauties of eventide throng,
How Nature's sweet harmony pealing
Breaks forth in a grand evensong,
Till the soul echoes back the sweet chorus,
And carols the lays of the spring ;
The spell of its grandeur steals o'er us
And hallows the words as we sing,
“O childhood, despoiler of sadness,
Say not that thy sweetness is o'er,
But lisp one refrain of the gladness
That is sung in the evermore.”

When the shadows of life are declining,
And we sit in the firelight's glow,
Shall the sad heart, in silence repining,
Go back to the years long ago ?
Or shall love, clasping hope's cherished token,
Repose beneath faith's sheltering wing,
And the heart, with a sweetness unspoken,
Go out in that hour and sing,
“Arise, my soul, rise up where sighing
And sorrow for ever shall sleep,
And the future, bright, beauteous, undying,
Is safe in the angels' keep !”

“GIVE BACK THY DEAD, O SEA !”

BESIDE the heaving waste
Of waters, boundless, free,
I sit and watch the ebb and flow
Of thy proud waves, O sea.
What wealth thou hast engulfed !
What riches thou dost keep !
What untold treasures thou dost hold
In thy unfathomed deep !

What courage thou hast mocked !
What mightiness o'erthrown !
What countless unrecorded lives
Thou claimest as thine own !
The love of loving hearts
A message asks of thee ;
The widow and the orphan cry,
“ Give back thy dead, O sea ! ”

A vessel rides the main—
Unfurl the white-winged sail ;
“ Adieu ! ” her pennons proudly wave—
Now speed before the gale.

Glad sunset gilds her path,
 The bark is plunging free,
 Yet still the winds unceasing moan,
 "Give back thy dead, O sea!"

* * * * *

A flash from sullen skies,
 A thunder storm-cloud riven,
 The unloosed waters burst their bounds,
 Upon the breakers driven ;
 A cry from out the deep,
 A murmur on the shore,
 A signal of distress, and then
 The cry is heard no more.

A hurrying to and fro
 Upon the crowded beach—
 Hurrah ! the lifeboat dares the storm,
 And bravely strives to reach
 The doomed, ill-fated wreck,
 That drifts with sail-less strands
 Toward the reefs where hidden lie
 St. Aubyn's fatal sands.

But hark ! from out the deep,
 Above the breakers' roar,
 A cry, "All well," is faintly heard,
 And answered from the shore,
 Where mothers, sisters, wives,
 With dauntless courage stand
 To reach the lifeboat as it reels
 Upon the shifting sand.

Thrice to the helpless ship
The lifeboat bravely toils,
And thrice her gallant crew returns
With freight of human spoils.
Age, youth, and beauty crowd
In one confusing heap ;
The weaklier fall, the stronger soothe
The fears of those who weep.

The dark ship has gone down
Into the darker sea,
Whose whelming waters proudly roll
In pride of victory.
'Tis done, the peril past,
And every danger braved ;
'Tis nobly done on land and sea,
And all—but one—are saved.

"But one?" the seamen ask,
While women whisper low,
"But one?"—the loud hurrah is hushed
And triumph melts in woe ;
"But one!" the sea replies,
With wild tempestuous glee,
And still the winds unceasing moan,
"Give back thy dead, O sea!"

At daybreak on the shore,
A fisherman espied
A remnant of the scattered wreck,
And stranded there beside

A wreath of matted hair,
A tiny jewelled hand,
A burthen that the tide had left
Half buried in the sand.

Her fair sweet face was turned
Toward the ebbing tide,
Her slender hands outstretched, as if
To turn the waves aside ;
Unsheltered by the strong,
Unfriended by the brave,
Her youth was powerless to help,
Her beauty could not save.

So young—her tender years
Had perished in their pride,
By angry waves wooed, courted, won,
Proud Ocean's peerless bride.
Smooth back the raven hair,
Unclose the claspèd hand,
Unloose the slender robe that folds
Her beauty in the sand.

Yestreen I heard her voice
In mirth and festive song,
At night, among the maze of feet,
I bore her through the throng
Of circling dancers fair,
All laughing, gay, and bright ;
But now that life from love's sweet morn
Has passed to silent night.

No more those pale cold lips
 Will part in welcome smiles,
No more those pallid cheeks will glow
 With beauty's winning wiles ;
Oh, never, nevermore,
 To hear that voice again,
To watch for one who never comes,
 To watch and wait in vain !

The waters lave my feet
 With tidal ebb and flow ;
Afar the good ships proudly come,
 And ever proudly go ;
But I am left alone,
 O cruel, cruel sea !
I asked thee to give back thy dead,
 And thou hast answered me.

'I SAW HER IN THE GLOAMING.'

I SAW her in the gloaming,
When the chastening storm had ceased,
The air was filled with vesper songs
Of joyous birds released ;
Cool and calm was the silent hour ;
The winds in the waving trees
Sighed to my soul the music sweet
Of wondrous melodies.

Only a village maiden,
In a rustic garment drest ;
A slender chain of springtide flowers
She wore upon her breast ;
Only a simple song she sang,
Yet it came on the evening calm
Like an angel's voice to a dying saint,
Or chant of holy psalm.

It came to my soul's repining
With a message sadly sweet,
As the after-glow of contending clouds
When storm and sunshine meet ;

It came to my heart's great longing,
At the close of a weary day,
And stilled the strife of rebellious thoughts
That would not pass away.

The night's dull shadows deepened,
Yet still I lingered there,
For the strains of that undying song
Hung round me everywhere ;
Till I felt the haunting sweetness
That wooing lovers prize,
As the merry glance of a maiden's glee
Looked from her laughing eyes.

Only a village maiden,
In a rustic garment drest ;
A slender chain of springtide flowers
She wore upon her breast ;
Only a simple song she sang,
Yet it came on the evening calm
Like an angel's voice to a dying saint,
Or chant of holy psalm.

But the maid has ceased from singing,
The voice is silent now,
And the night that came with joyous song
Now comes with lowering brow ;
But the thoughts that song awakened
Live on through good or ill,
And the flower she wore in the gloaming,
I'll guard and keep it still.

I'll keep and guard it fondly,
 Though I nevermore shall see
Her fair sweet face again, nor hear
 The song she sang to me ;
The years may come and linger
 And seasons hold their sway,
But the maiden and her simple song
 Shall never pass away.

NAPOLEON AND THE ABBOT.

THE languid lights burned pale and dim
 Within a hall of regal state,
Where, undisturbed by festive rites,
 An Emperor and an Abbot sate.

The night was dark, and through the gloom
 No radiant star illumed the sky ;
With angry dirge the tempest moaned,
 The lowering clouds rolled darkly by.

But gloomier than the gathering storm
 Are hearts by ceaseless doubt opprest,
And wilder than the tameless winds
 Rebels the storm-rent soul's unrest.

And on that night the Emperor's brow
 Was rife with unconcealed disdain ;
Ambition sought what Fame desired,
 And roused his restless heart again.

For in his youth's proud dreams he saw
A host of suppliant nations meet
To render homage to the might
And glory of his kingly seat.

And now his fame through many lands
Was borne by conquest, writ in blood ;
Proud nations now submissive lay,
Where once all free and fair they stood.

But one—unbowed by burdening fears—
A distant land of serfs and snows,
Defied his power, and disturbed
The sweets of victory's repose.

Thus goaded by unsated pride,
The Emperor, pregnant with success,
Had summoned Gaul to gather then
Her strength in all its mightiness.

But oft of late came anxious friends,
Perplexed with doubt, opprest with pain,
To wean him from his erring self
With sager counsels, but in vain.

And last of all an Abbot came,
One of his lowly kindred line,
A goodly priest, who spared no words
To guide him by the writ Divine.

And thus, with many a secret prayer,
 His hand upon the Holy Book,
 The good man oft reproved his liege
 With faltering voice and pleading look.

Yet still the Emperor's sullen brow
 Revealed the spirit unsubdued ;
 His rude, uncourteous answers shook
 The Abbot's grave disquietude.

Thus, far into the night they talked,
 The saintly priest, the man of blood,
 Until the Emperor strode between,
 And, standing where the Abbot stood,

He threw the window open wide,
 And said, in tones subdued but stern,
 "Sir Abbot, gaze upon the sky,
 And see if thou canst aught discern."

The priest looked out upon the night,
 Where all was dreary, dark, and still,
 And answered, "Naught I see, my lord,
 Except the clouds, foreboding ill."

The Emperor, silent, stood awhile,
 Then, pointing through the gloom afar,
 Replied, "Where thou canst naught discern,
 Undimmed through all, I see a star."

Then, turning to the priest, he said,
“ Good man, thou hast my answer now ;
Go, pray for those who need thy prayers—
Keep for the sick the Church’s vow.”

Thus did his faith unfaltering pierce
The secret future, dark and drear ;
Beyond the gloom he deemed he saw
His glory-star shine bright and clear.

And thus men ever must aspire
Whose labours called to greatness are ;
And they to whom Fame’s voices call
Shall see, through faith, a guiding star.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

WE had loved, but we had parted
In the old, old long ago,
When youth's first affections started,
When love's restless passions darted,
And their purest feelings flow.

Though we parted, still undying
Did affection changeless prove ;
Through regrets and secret sighing
Came a voice to mine replying,
And its echoes answered, " Love."

Long years after, as I chided
Sadly, by a rivulet,
Where its winding waters glided,
We—whose love had lived divided—
In the gloaming strangely met.

Time had brought a secret token
With its sacred, kindly touch ;
Only looks of love unspoken,
Thoughts unuttered, vows unbroken,
Only this—and yet how much.

Why that love had lived indebted
 To the old, old long ago ;
Why we parted, why we fretted,
Neither knew, yet both regretted
 In that sunset's afterglow.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

CHILD—the year's last hour is stealing,
 And the bells—merry bells—
Ring an echo sweetly pealing,
 And it tells—echo tells—
Of a morn' that now is breaking,
 Of a life that is to be,
Pleasures from the past awaking,
 Child—a New Year comes to thee.
Comes with carol, song, and blessing,
Comes with light and love caressing,
Comes with strains of mirth and gladness,
Comes to banish aught of sadness ;
Listen how their joyous ringing
Comes like angel voices singing,
 And it tells—echo tells—
 With the swinging of the bells,
Newer joys and sweeter pleasures,
Fairer hopes and richer treasures ;
From the hidden depths of learning
Clearer truths more clear discerning ;

And it bids thee, with the dawning
Of thy childhood into morning,
Take them, cherish, and enjoy them,
Time is watching to destroy them.

Like the grass
Fair and fresh around thee springing,
Child—the joys this year is bringing
Soon may pass.

Youth—the year's last hour is speeding,
And the bells—restless bells—
Ring an echo wildly pleading,
And it tells—echo tells—
Of a morn that now is breaking,
Of a life that is to be,
Knowledge from the past awaking,
Youth—a New Year comes to thee.
Comes by stealth with folly's fashions,
Comes with pride and stronger passions,
Comes with ease and hours of leisure,
Comes to fawn and lure to pleasure ;
Listen how their tones untiring
Fill the soul with fame's aspiring,
And it tells—echo tells—
With the swinging of the bells,
Larger hopes and fuller meanings,
Garnered in from patient gleanings
Of the harvest minds of sages,
Living on through broadening ages ;

And it bids thee, with the warning
Of thy youth's fair promise morning,
Take them, prove them, use, employ them,
Time is eager to destroy them.

Like the grass
Withered by the sun that woos it,
Time is passing ; do not lose it
Ere it pass.

Maid—the year's last hour is fleeting,
And the bells—joyous bells—
Ring an echo gaily greeting,
And it tells—echo tells—
Of a morn that now is breaking,
Of a life that is to be,
Beauties from the past awaking,
Maid—a New Year comes to thee.
Comes with childhood's visions vanished,
Comes with fairy dreamlands banished,
Comes with brighter truths' divining,
Faith and virtue intertwining ;
Listen how their sweet pursuing
Woos thee with a lover's wooing,
And it tells—echo tells—
With the swinging of the bells,
Newer hopes and sweeter graces
Than the fashions Time effaces ;
Holier love and sterner duties,
Nobler virtues, rarer beauties ;

And it bids thee with the scorning
Of a woman's false adorning,
Take them, let not pride alloy them,
Time is anxious to destroy them.

Like the grass,
Reapers come and it must perish ;
Maiden—beauties thou dost cherish
Change and pass.

Man—the year's last hour is waning,
And the bells—mocking bells—
Ring an echo, ring complaining,
And it tells—echo tells—
Of a morn that now is breaking,
Of a life that is to be,
Actions from the past awaking,
Man—a New Year comes to thee,
Comes with fickle youth's repenting,
Comes with folly's late lamenting,
Comes with promised harvests scattered,
Comes with gilded idols shattered ;
Listen how their mystic pleading
Comes with mercy interceding,
And it tells—echo tells—
With the swinging of the bells,
Of the reaping and the sowing,
And the tidal ebb and flowing
Of the gifts thy youth has wasted,
Of ambition's fruits untasted ;

And it bids thee, with the warning
Of thy manhood's mis-spent morning,
Take them, prize them, do not lose them,
Time is passing ; take them, use them.

Like the grass,
Strong to-day and strewn to-morrow,
Man—thy strength to age and sorrow
Soon will pass.

Age—the year's last hour is dying,
And the bells—solemn bells—
Ring an echo, ring replying,
And it tells—echo tells—
Of a morn that now is breaking,
Of a life that is to be,
Memories from the past awaking,
Age—a New Year comes to thee.
Comes with custom's harsh enchaining,
Comes with hoary Time's complaining,
Comes with chill reproachful kindness,
Comes with love to lead thy blindness ;
Listen how their distant blending
Comes like hope and fear contending,
And it tells—echo tells—
With the swinging of the bells,
Lengthening shadows loom behind thee ;
Time's avenger soon will find thee
All unarmoured, weapons bended ;
Strike, the fight is not yet ended ;

And it bids thee, with the dawning
Of thy life's eternal morning,
Gird thy armour, love commands thee,
Time is striving to disband thee.

Like the grass
From a keen-edged sickle falling,
Age—a "still small voice" is calling,
Thou must pass.

“THIS IS THE POET’S HOUR.”

THIS is the poet’s hour ; to this belong
Half the world’s mysteries ; this is the time
Of untaught metre and untutored rhyme,
That mould the grand sweet melody of song.

How still the night is, and how weird the scene !
The winds are hushed, the trees in whispers speak,
And where the church tower rears its ivied peak
The trembling stars unclouded glance between.

The moon proclaims her proud luxuriant reign ;
Myriads of stars reflect the encircling light ;
Like sentinels upon the queen of night,
With glittering robes they follow in her train.

O lovely night, how beautiful thou art,
Draped in the shroud of moonlight’s braided thrall ;
O’er silent waters angel voices call,
Whispering solace to the weary heart.

On such a night as this, theme waking theme,
My thoughts go back to other scenes and years,
Where love still lingers, and where memory rears
The broken hopes of youth's ambitious dream.

There is a beauty in the lambent light
Reflected where the winding river bends,
That saddens e'en the loveliness it lends
One fair sweet face that watches through the night.

For one this night will sorrow and will weep,
Weep with the tears unwelcome and in vain
For love that was, but will not come again—
Dull waking hopes and thoughts that will not sleep.

And for her sake let no rebellious mirth
Unloose its bridled tongue, and for her sake
Let no unhallowed revelry awake
The travail of that sad heart's wasted worth.

But my thoughts wander—the familiar spot
Through haunting memory fills my fancy still ;
The past, th' undying past, for good or ill,
Is ever present, nor will be forgot.

O aching heart, be still ; O passions, rest ;
For one brief hour let peace and beauty bear
A solace for the travail of despair,
That riots in the conflict of unrest.

Not in the perfumed breath of idle praise
Which fawns to flatter, seeking but to please
And lull the soul to that dull fatal ease,
Which stills its song, and dims its stirring lays.

Unwritten words ; thoughts, feelings unexpressed,
A language that the poet only knows,
A glory that the pen cannot disclose—
These are the poet's joys, and these are best.

ONE MISSING.

Roll call, after a skirmish, “ — killed, — wounded, *one missing.*”

THE war-notes have sounded,
Afar o'er the hills
Their echoes have bounded ;
The battle-cry fills
The plain with its rally,
The land with its breath,
And darkens the valley
With shadows of death.

The sun brightly beaming
Glanced down on the fight,
Where weapons were gleaming
Like stars in the night ;
The valiant victorious
Came back o'er the plain,
But one of the glorious
Returned not again.

The turf was his pillow,
The winds were his sheet,
And weirdly the willow
Waved over his feet ;
No priestly confessing,
No rest for his head,
No comrades caressing,
No tears for the dead.

The cold night dews kissed him,
The stars in their course
Grew pale as they missed him ;
A sigh of remorse
Arose from the river,
Careering along,
But it shall be ever
His death-glory song.

His hair in dark tresses
Encircled his brow ;
Unwarmed by caresses,
His pallid head now
Upon its rude pillow,
Lay bared to the breeze
That sighed with the willow
And moaned in the trees.

And there, where uncounted
The waters swept by,
His war-steed, unmounted,
Stood riderless nigh,

Impatiently prancing
And neighing afar,
Where comrades advancing
Sang truces of war.

The tents are all scattered,
The bugles unblown,
The war-hosts are shattered,
Their triumphs o'erthrown ;
The weapons which blasted
With myrtle are wreathed,
And swords that have wasted
Are silently sheathed.

But far o'er the hissing
Wild waves of the sea,
A footfall is missing,
A home by the lea
Is dark with the sorrow
And travail of pain,
For one that the morrow
Restores not again.

"TOI ET MOI, MON AMI."

WHAT shall I wish thee, friend, this Christmas morn
Of carol, song, and season of good cheer?
How may I sing the wealth of joys newborn,
To crown with gladness all the coming year.

There is a beauty in the thought which lends
To Christmas morning bells a sweet refrain,
Wherein we hear the voices of our friends,
Like old love-songs, come back to us again.

We may not meet to tell the overflow
Of kindly feelings at this festive time,
We may not clasp each other's hand, and so
I send this greeting writ in simple rhyme.

May health be yours, and every season give
Its rarest fruits with Plenty's willing hand;
May each new joy that makes life worth to live
Attend thy years, and wait on thy command.

Around thee may an angel-presence keep
Its sleepless watch, when threatening dangers throng ;
May no dark storm arise, while thou dost reap
The hopes which hallow life with love's sweet song.

All this—yet more—the love of loving hearts
To share thy joys, and solace thee through ill ;
The kindly smiles that genial worth imparts,
And blessings rare remaining to thee still.

Thus do I greet thee, friend, with right goodwill,
And as I hold thy treasured friendship dear,
May every Christmas find thee happier still,
And joy and gladness crown each coming year.

A CHRISTMAS BALLAD.

WILD and dark was the wintry night, the old year faded
fast,
As high and bright the yule-log's fire its fitful shadows
cast,
While Christmas bells with merry chime rang out the
ages past.

Cold and pure as a spotless shroud the snow untrodden
lay,
Where keen north winds swept rudely on their bleak
and barren way,
And the storm-king reigned exultant with undisputed
sway.

It was the feast of Christmas-tide, and, full of life and
light,
From a thousand homes a thousand hearts beat high and
warm and bright,
While carol, song, and Christmas mirth rang out upon
the night.

But there, by a latticed window, out there in the cheerless
snow,
A child had wandered, and, shelterless, stood in the gas-
light's glow,
And, listening to the chimes, forgot his hunger and his
woe.

Only a little outcast—urchin, waif, stray—what you
will,
He is one of the race we boast of, one with us, one of
us still—
A child of the great unnumbered poor, with us for good
or for ill.

Who had sinned, this child or its parents?—if sin it be
to be poor,
While the godless thrive unpunished, and hoard their
worldly store ;
What wonder if the child had wept for the weight of woe
he bore !

The music ceased, the dance was done, the portal opened
wide,
The host looked out where the fitful storm had paused to
fret and chide,
And, crouching near the window seat, the outcast he
espied.

“Come in, my child,” the good man said; “come in
from the wind and sleet,
My gladsome hall shall guard thee from the tempest’s
pitiless beat;
It seemeth good at Christmas time that rich and poor
should meet.”

And seated, filled with wonder, by that fireside warm and
bright,
As merry guests moved to and fro in that room of dazzling
light,
It seemed as if the angels came and sang to the child
that night.

So sweetly the hallowed music arose from that happy
throng,
Like a beauteous anthem filling the dreamland of wonder
and song,
For which through childhood’s visions he had watched
and waited so long.

The feast is o’er, the guests are gone, the lights burn pale
and dim,
And drearily dawns the morrow, but that child in the
darkness grim
Rejoiced, for he knew on that Christmas Eve Christ had
spoken to him.

Somewhere in the crowded city, out there in the busy
street,
Cold, sunless lives are borne along by shoeless, willing
feet,
Yet brave, warm, generous hearts beneath their tattered
garments beat.

In the great wide world of sorrow, who'll heed their
Lord's command?
Who'll speak a word for the children? who'll take them
by the hand?
More sinned against than sinning are the waifs of this
Christian land.

Go, think of it, ponder it, stranger, friend, hope of the
fallen, and ye
Of the purple robes, go, succour them, and thy reward
shall be—
“Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these, ye did it unto
Me.”

LINES TO —.

THIS is thy wedding-day, and from this hour
My thoughts must ever cease to blend our names
Through hope's unspoken and mysterious pow'r,
Which faith supplies and lingering love proclaims.

It may be that I did thy heart some wrong
To ever dare to hope with thee to wed ;
It may be that I erred to list so long
To what my restless spirit inly said.

Yet if my fault to aught of guilt belongs,
It is some solace to have erred for thee ;
And if upon the scroll of human wrongs
To err is sin, this shall my solace be.

Thou hast with no regrets for me to cope,
Since thou knowest not, nor ever now shall know,
All my unbridled fancy dared to hope—
All that I felt, but never deigned to show.

Ah! it is woe to hear the sad heart speak,
When no responsive echo in return
Comes back to answer what we vainly seek,
Nor soothe the hopes that now must darkly burn.

And must it ever be, what most we prize
Is taken from us, and what most we hate
Is ever in the path before our eyes,
A Lazarus unwelcomed at our gate.

Yet I'll repine not ; if I seem to chide,
I'll chide in solitude ; if it must be
That I still feel the throes of wounded pride,
I'll mourn in secret, thinking still of thee.

For I scorn pity, as the fallen scorn
The pompous offerings charity would give ;
My bruised heart would bless the unplucked thorn,
'Twere sweeter far to die than—pitied—live.

But now 'tis o'er, and love's fair-promise past
Must be for ever as a mocking dream,
Wherein the heart's great hopes were doomed at last
To fade into the nothingness they seem.

And thou, by whom my life is strangely bowed,
Shall come and shed the smiles I cannot share,
And gaze on me among the passing crowd,
Nor see the ruin that lies hidden there.

Well, thou art happy—why should I regret
And count the ills that I have borne for thee?
Each fond remembrance I must now forget,
And sever all that bound thee unto me.

OLD KEPLER.

AMONG the rural toilers grouped
Upon the village green,
Who nightly talked of harvest themes,
And politics between,

None held a worthier place, or ruled
The peasants of St. Main's,
Than Kepler, who had lost an arm
On Crimea's battle-plains.

And though his deeds of valour were
But known to rustic fame,
He held a village hero's place,
And justified his claim.

For oft, when twilight's shadows waned,
And day's rude work was done,
The old man, musing, loved to sit
And watch the setting sun.

He knew his country's martial themes,
And many tales told he
Of knights renowned for love and war
In days of chivalry.

And children, tired of their play,
Grouped near his seat, and when
The old man came, they raised a shout
And gathered round him then.

They loved to hear of Crimea's fields,
The dangers which befell,
And what the children loved to hear
He never tired to tell.

He praised the 9th, a gallant corps
From colonel to cadet ;
Told how they broke a Russian line
Or scaled a parapet.

And thus he oft beguiled the hours
With tales of duty done,
But most of all they loved to hear
How Alma's heights were won.

For then the old man's withered cheeks
With ready fervour glow,
And as they cheer with childlike glee
He marches to and fro ;

Till once again with measured tread,
Erect with martial mien,
He sees the hated foe advance
Across the village green ;

And with his trusty oaken staff
He wildly cleaves the air,
As if, in sooth, before his eyes
The Russian foe was there.

But, though he talks of war and wounds,
From such rude scenes of strife
He draws a moral, points his tales
With useful rules of life.

On rugged ground his words may fall,
But shall not fall in vain ;
The lessons that rude teacher tells
Shall spring to life again.

And still when twilight's hour declines,
And day's rude work is done,
He tells the tale, oft told before,
How Alma's heights were won.

LOVE AND DUTY.

“O LASSIE, ere the bugle-call
Shall summon us to part,
Accept a soldier's love, and cheer
A Highland laddie's heart ;
For I have brought from sunny climes,
Across the distant sea,
This costly scarf of Indian silk
To pledge my love to thee.”

“I cannot seal our plighted troth,”
The maiden coyly said ;
“Till I have proved thy love to-night,
I may not with thee wed.
To-morrow is St. Andrew's Day,
And where thy banners wave
My sire was slain, and I must plant
A flower upon his grave.”

The church bell chimed the midnight hour
As, through the falling snow,
A soldier kept his lonely watch
With measured steps and slow ;

But 'mid the gloom, a maiden sped,
In secret, hurried flight ;
She waved her lover's scarf, and passed
Unchallenged through the night.

At daybreak in the snow were traced
Strange footprints where she stept,
And through the camp a murmur ran,
"Some traitor guard has slept."
At night another soldier's grave
Was measured in the snow :
For love's sweet sake his duty failed,
Yet love would have it so.

A VISION OF NIGHT.

THE dreamy night o'ershadowed where
The crowded city slept,
And countless stars of trembling light
Their silent vigils kept,
As on the cool unbroken calm,
From meadow, stream, and tree,
The voice of night arose with strange
Mysterious melody.

But as I stood and gazed upon
That solemn, tranquil scene,
The gloomy clouds unfolded, and
An angel passed between—
A beauteous form, O wondrous fair,
Of love, and life, and light,
That watched above the city's sleep
And guarded through the night.

Beside her flowing garb, she held
The harp whose wondrous strains
Awoke the shepherds as they watched
By Judah's lonely plains ;

And as her robes through clouds of space
Were trailed in circling flight,
Her voice stole on the stilly air
And hymned the praise of night.

The hours rolled by—afar and near,
With sweet, unbroken swell,
The music of unearthly notes
Like wavelets rose and fell ;
But as the sullen night-clouds fled
The echoes fainter grew,
Until their sweetness left the air
As on the angel flew.

I watched the cloudlet's radiant guest
In robes of pureness clad,
I gazed upon the angel's face,
But it was nobly sad ;
The morn's awakening glories glanced
Upon her streaming hair,
Yet now she sang not, and the harp
Hung strainless in the air.

The mystic melody had ceased,
The noblest and the best
Of heavenly songs was heard no more,
And, as the angel guest,
With lingering look and pensive brow,
Paused in her upward flight,
I took a scroll whereon to trace
That vision of the night.

But as I wrote, the angel came
And gazed with pleading look ;
The harp was silent, in her hand
She held an open book
Wherein were writ mysterious words,
The language of the dead,
And ere she turned to pass away
I touched her harp, and said—

“ If language to immortals may
By mortals here be given,
If man may hold communion
With messengers from heaven,
I pray thee, tell why thou didst come
In holy garments clad ;
Oh say, why hast thou ceased to sing,
And wherefore art thou sad ? ”

The angel turned her beaming eyes
All radiant on me then ;
“ I came to sing of Christ,” she said,
“ Goodwill and peace to men ;
A thousand years from heaven to earth
My harp hath borne the strain,
A thousand years the angel hosts
Have sung to men in vain.

“ Unheard I sing of human themes
In human language writ,
To teach the many how to rise—
The fallen, how submit ;

Unheeded have I sought to strike
At bondage—turn the free
Towards the Truth, that was, and is,
And ever is to be.

“ And high above the city’s din
I watch and weep and pray,
Awaiting at the heavenly gate
The dawning of that day
When love shall lead, and right shall rule,
The bugle’s war-blast cease,
And nations meet to consecrate
The universal peace.

“ Then heaven and earth shall nearer seem,
And Christ shall be their King ;
Through faith the wounded soul shall hear
The anthems angels sing ;
Rejoicing, as they sing of man
More noble, true, and good,
And woman striving ever toward
More perfect womanhood.”

THE BYRON CENTENARY, 1788—1888.

As some wild bird of song in tameless flight
With soaring pinion cleaves the morning light,
Until the fowler with alluring snare
Arrests its flight, and makes it captive there—
Caught in the net from whence it seeks to rise,
The stricken songster flutters, falls, and dies ;
So his proud soul, exulting in the might
Of daring genius poised to sunward flight,
Though baffled oft, despising every pain,
Soared from control, then drooped to earth again ;
Enslaved by passions, prone to darkly brood
O'er fancied wrongs in sullen solitude,
Till from each effort, bruised, faint, and low,
He probed the wounds that let his life's blood flow.

Let others chant his praise, or rudely chide
The faults that to his virtues were allied,
He gave us of his best ; and shall the wrong
Survive the right, and mar his sweeter song ?
His gifts are ours, his follies were his own,
And for each error let his worth atone,
Until the sun of his immortal fame
Dispels the clouds which gather round his name.

THE RAVEN WINGS OF NIGHT.

THE raven wings of night
Are darkly drooping fast,
The weary round of toil has brought
A welcome rest at last ;
And I am left alone,
While memories, one by one,
Adown the past unbidden stray,
As I sit dreaming on.

I cannot read to-night
The old historic lore,
Nor muse upon the poet's themes
I loved so well of yore ;
I cannot tell to-night
The stories children love,
Nor mingle in their mirth, which fills
My chamber-loft above.

But from an oaken shelf
Beside the creaking door,
A volume old and worn I take,
And scan its pages o'er ;

Only a faded book
Of old familiar songs,
A relic of remembered joys
That to the past belongs.

The words, the words are there,
As they were there of old,
But through the mist of sorrow-clouds
The darklier memories fold
Their shadows round the book,
And dim each unread page,
Until the music seems to chant
A monody of age.

O'er each recorded leaf
Sad memory, musing, lingers,
Till through the dimming mist of years,
A child's unwearied fingers
Stray o'er the violin,
That hangs all strainless there—
The poet's words with sweet refrain
Come back on the still night air.

Was it the poet's art
With sadness strangely blent?
Or the plaintive melody which broke
From that old instrument?
Was it the far-off years
That came and lingered long?
Or the music of a voice which gave
A sweetness to the song?

Was it a child's fair face?
Nay, nay, I cannot tell;
The open book reveals unchanged
The song I loved so well,
But words cannot restore
The beauty of my choice,
Since Time removed the player's hands
And stilled the singer's voice.

And I am left alone,
While memories, one by one,
A down the past unbidden stray,
As I sit dreaming on;
The raven wings of night
Are darkly drooping fast,
But joy shall banish sorrow's cloud
When morning breaks at last.

A LAST ADIEU.

“O SAY good night, but not good-bye,”

The maiden sweetly said,

And from her lips escaped the sigh

Of love uncomforted ;

The lover bowed his martial frame

Beside that lady fair,

While trysting words unchallenged came

Upon the still night air.

“ Good night, good night, my love ! ” he cried ;

“ Good night, but not good-bye ! ” she sighed ;

Again, “ Good night ! ” though neither knew

That “ Good night ” was their last adieu.

At break of day, along the shore

Was heard the distant drum,

Whose warning war-notes sounded o'er,

“ The foe, they come, they come ! ”

And when the lowering clouds o'erspread

The battle's waning night,

Amongst the dying and the dead,

A voice stole through the night.

“Good night, good night, my love !” he cried ;
“Good night, but not good-bye !” she sighed ;
Again, “Good night, my love ; be true !”
But echo answered, “Love, adieu !”

Cold on the chill unguarded plain

A wounded soldier lay,

Who heard in dreams that voice again

Reply, and sweetly say,

“O say good night, but not good-bye,

For I will near thee stay ;”

But ere the soldier could reply,

The vision passed away.

“Good night, good night, my love !” he cried ;

“Good night !” the winds alone replied ;

“Good night, good-bye !”—for now he knew

That “Good night” was their last adieu.

*“FAIR LADY, WHEN I LEFT THESE
HILLS.”*

FAIR lady, when I left these hills
And bade my native land adieu,
I did not think to leave behind
A heart so constant or so true ;

And when we parted on the shore
With words unbittered by regret,
I knew not that our friendship held
One tie thou wouldst not soon forget.

When others wept and thou wert gay,
I thought thee callous, insincere ;
Nor did I deem those laughing eyes
Would e'er be dimmed with pity's tear.

I saw no anguish on thy brow ;
Thy voice betrayed no parting sigh ;
I felt no pressure through the hand
That mine held in that last “good-bye.”

'Twas love, you say, that taught you thus
To hide regret, your feelings veil,
And told you to withhold the kiss
That might have told a lover's tale.

Then 'tis well written, "Love is blind,"
And my heart echoes, "Cruel too ;"
The strength deceives that is so strong—
Love is not kind that is so true.

When Fortune's handmaid darkly frowned,
When foes assailed and friends were few,
It would have solaced my sad heart
To have remembered one so true.

I have oft sorrowed, when thy words
More prone to censure than to bless,
Rebuked me coldly, and I thought
Pride lurked beneath thy loveliness.

Yet thou didst weep, thou, whom my heart
In secret sorrow learned to hate,
And darkly nurse the hopeless hope
Of love, ambition, desolate.

And I have wronged thee, while thy heart
For my unworthy love was riven ;
Yet, deeply as I wronged thee, now
I deeply plead to be forgiven.

For me thou hast repined, for me
Thy life was bowed with anxious fears ;
Henceforth my love shall live to thee,
And strive to recompense thy tears.

“ YOU ASK A SONG.”

You ask a song, of lighter theme
Than ever I was wont to sing,
The offspring of some brighter dream,
As if it were a little thing
To change the current of a life,
And bid its feelings backward flow,
Or chant amid the din of strife
The peace that I have ceased to know.

Friend, I'll not murmur, nor complain
Of thy upbraidings, kindly meant ;
I'll not rebuke thee, for in vain
Thou chidest, though with good intent ;
But ask the seasons, as they come,
Why summer fills the fruitful tree—
Why are the woods in winter dumb ?
And say, how will they answer thee ?

Who strikes the zither, and then lists
To hear it sound a clarion blast ?
Who walks among the morning mists,
And marvels at the sun o'er cast ?

The oak tree cannot yield a rose ;
A fig tree planted in the sand
Will droop, ere summer's blossom shows,
As flowers wither in the hand.

Go, ask the rugged mountain's peak
Why verdure takes no rootage there ;
Ascend its barren heights, and seek
A flower among the snowdrifts bare.
Upon some rockbound islet stand,
Bid ocean stay its ceaseless tide ;
The cliffs will echo thy command,
The waters laugh, the seas deride.

Ask of the birds whose summer song
With sweetness fills the woodland way,
Why shelter they the leaves among ?
Why is their plumage not more gay ?
Go, quench the fountain at its source,
Seek to control the running stream,
Entreat the river change its course,
But ask me not to change my theme.

My friend, if thou couldst read my heart
And fathom what is written there,
Thou wouldst not marvel long, nor start
In wonderment at my despair.
As pines the flower for the plant
When torn from whence its beauties spring,
So in my sorrows I must chant
My heart's own song, or cease to sing.

Perchance in some remoter years,
When passions rule with gentler sway,
Unclouded by their darker fears,
My themes may brighten and be gay ;
But till that time's full tide shall flow,
Though every gentler tie be riven,
My heart shall seal its secret woe,
Forgiving, e'en though unforgiven.

A SONNET.

VENICE!—the world's cathedral, and the shrine
Where pilgrim bands from many nations meet
In praise and worship at thy queenly seat—
Linger at thy threshold, to resign
A spray of poesy in faltering line,
Historic heroes, martyrs, kings, to greet
That pass before me with unwearied feet,
Bred at thy breast, children of thee and thine.

Thy marble palaces adorned with deathless art ;
Thy watery aisles, the oft-disputed way ;
Each frescoed niche where beauty's eyes would dart
With love or hate to view some deadly fray ;—
These are the themes which stir the pulseless heart,
The spoils which Time has ransomed from decay.

VENICE, 1887.

AFTER WAR—PEACE.

BENEATH a drooping willow tree
That skirts the village brook,
An old man sate, and at his side
An open, unread book
Lay fluttering on the rustic bench,
Stirred by the loitering breeze
That fanned his white locks as it paused
To whisper in the trees.

And listening, worn and weary, to
The brooklet's murmuring tones,
As here it smoothly ran, and there
It rippled o'er the stones,
He saw not down the garden path,
Returning from their play,
A group of eager rustics, till
They stole his book away.

To fight the luckless Stuart cause
He left the vales of Kent,
When England was divided for
The King and Parliament ;

And now he fought his foes again
Beneath the willow tree,
Until the children's merry laugh
Disturbed his reverie.

They clutched the old man's martial cloak
That still he loved to wear,
And made him captive, as they thronged
Around his rustic chair,
Entreating him with eager words
And looks of sweet intent,
To be their prisoner, till they won
The aged man's consent.

Girt by their arms like slender chains
In kindly bondage spread,
With faltering steps and feeble gait
He followed where they led,
Until they reached a leafy nook
On Naseby's battle-ground,
Where, 'mid the ivy, lay concealed
The treasure they had found—

A cannon, lying where it fell,
Beside a broken tree,
Half-hidden by the sheltering leaves
In friendly canopy.
While from its iron mouth, a bird
Escaped with fluttering flight,
The joyous rustics thronging near
With undisguised delight.

They thrust the clustering boughs aside,
And, peering through the breach,
Espied a robin's nest, concealed,
Within the children's reach ;
And one, a merry, wayward lad,
With mischief-lurking eyes,
Outstretched his eager hand, and sought
To seize the tempting prize.

“Nay, nay, my child,” the good man said ;
“’Twould be a grievous wrong,
Hark how the bird on yonder bough
Appeals with plaintive song
To stay the ruthless hand, that would
In wanton sport or jest,
Destroy the parent-love that binds
The bird-mates to their nest.”

Then from this simple theme he led
Their thoughts to higher things,
And showed them, where man's jealous hate
On War's avenging wings
Had issued from the cannon's mouth,
With Death's destroying strife,
The birds had sung their morning song
And sunned the wings of life.

Next morn, and each returning day,
A down the woodland height
The children wandered, till the birds
Had ta'en their timorous flight ;

And though the old man came no more
 Along the leafy way,
His words shall linger with them still,
 For ever and for aye.

JUBILEE COMMEMORATION ODE, 1887

VICTORIA ! Empress Queen, beloved !
Our hearts rebound to thee
In loyal praise and loving song,
To sing thy Jubilee ;
From rural heath and city throng
Proud Albion wakes to sing,
From Scotland's heights and Erin's homes
One chorus sweet shall ring—
“Hail ! hail ! Victoria !
Britannia's song has been
On land and sea, and still shall be,
‘ Our country and our Queen ! ’”

O'er pathless seas, afar, yet near,
Canadian voices blend
With Australasian hearts, so true
To succour and defend ;
From India's loyal countless hosts
And Afric's dusky kings,
From boundless Oceana's isles,
The swelling pæan rings—

“Hail! hail! Victoria!
 Britannia’s song has been
On land and sea, and still shall be,
 ‘Our country and our Queen!’”

From children’s voices lisping sweet,
 And loving hearts of youth ;
From manhood’s sterner tones, the song
 Of freedom, love, and truth
Awakes a nation’s patriot pride,
 Victoria’s praise to sing ;
From every creed, and every clime
 One grand refrain shall ring—
 “Hail! hail! Victoria!
 Britannia’s song has been
On land and sea, and still shall be,
 ‘Our country and our Queen!’”

A RIVER-SIDE REVERIE.

By the river-side I wander,
Where in childhood oft I stood,
As the laughing sunlit wavelets
Woo the shadows from the wood ;
Stately elm and leafy beeches
Spreading to the river's brink,
Autumn's sunset interlacing
Every branch with crimson link.

Where the pasture skirts the woodland
Bleat the lowing cattle near,
And the yellow fields are laden
With the harvest in the ear ;
From its nest among the clover
Leaps the lark with soaring song,
And the village church bells chiming
Call to prayer the rustic throng.

But my thoughts flow with the river
Down the tideless waste of years,
Where each idol that I worshipped
From its ruin reappears ;

Childhood's faith and youth's ambitions,
Manhood's hopes, where are they now?
Just a memory Time's rude fingers
Have engraven on my brow.

As the streamlets through the valley
Down their sunny courses glide,
Flow the happy hours of childhood
On their unreturning tide ;
Nurtured with the heart's affections,
Lispens with unbridled tongue,
Love and faith are sweetest, purest,
When the years of life are young.

But the waste of broken waters
Rudely battling at my feet,
Are the shattered hopes of manhood
Struggling on against defeat ;
Met—resisted—baffled—beaten,
Still the weary onward throng
Where the many fall, forgotten,
And the few are scarcely strong.

Further down the winding river,
Where the waters feebly flow,
Pass the footsteps of the aged
With unsteady gait and slow ;
Comes a voice upon the surface,
Burdened with a sighing tone,
Of the many passed for ever
To the distant and unknown.

And I muse on God's great purpose
Wrought in His mysterious way,
Of the few who guide and govern,
Of the many who obey ;
Silent hopes and subtle sorrows,
Some discovered, some are not—
Fleeting joys and futile longings
That make up our common lot !

And a solemn sadness fills me
As the ceaseless waters glide,
Ever coming, ever going,
As the stream of human-tide ;
And the restless sighs and longings
Of that surging human mass,
Are the eddies on the surface
Which they fashion as they pass.

THE MINSTER BELL.

SOMEWHERE hid in the ivied tower,
The old cathedral bell
O'er Father Time, with measured beat,
Keeps waking sentinel ;
For rich and poor, for young and old,
Unceasing day or night,
It counts the moments as they fly,
And tells their ceaseless flight.
Ding-dong merrily, ding-dong cheerily,
Tolling the hours as they steal along,
Marking old Time with unwearied chime,
Tracking its steps with a loud ding-dong,
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.

The keen north winds may whistle shrill
Around the beetling eaves,
The summer sun may hide its warmth
Among the ivy leaves ;

Yet still, through tempest, storm, and calm,
While ages come and go,
Above the old cathedral porch
The bell swings to and fro.
Ding-dong merrily, etc.

Adown the worn uneven aisles
It calls to praise and prayer,
And benedictions sweet it tells
To all who enter there ;
While high above the city's throng,
Where climbing tendrils cling,
Enthroned within its ivied court,
The minster bell is king.
Ding-dong merrily, etc.

IN MEMORIAM

LATE PRINCE LEOPOLD, DUKE OF ALBANY, TO WHOM
THE AUTHOR'S FIRST WORK WAS, BY PERMISSION,
DEDICATED.

Push the loud revel ; cease the bitter strife ;
For one brief hour let friend and foe unite
To mourn a loved and loving soul, whose life
No cloud could darken and no sorrow blight.

Thrice through the conflict of surviving pain
He journeyed—broken—to the verge of death,
And thrice redeemed, his strength returned again ;—
But now men speak his name with whispered breath.

It seems but yesterday we did rejoice
That he was with us ; vanquished were our fears ;
And now a nation seeks, with sorrowing voice,
To soothe a mother's grief, a widow's tears.

A little while, we saw his virtues flow,
And heard how much of honour he had won ;
A little while, his glory ceased to glow—
His life seems incomplete, and yet 'tis done.

Moved and ennobled by that grand unrest
Which ever labours and aspires to give
An impulse t'ward the noblest and the best,
Nor ever tires to teach men how to live,

He strove for victory. Alas! the strife
For him has now for ever passed away ;
The morning of his fair great-promise life
Has broadened to the Light of Perfect Day.

Of princely birth, of high and lofty aim,
Yet with us in our daily life he trod ;
His country's glory, this shall be his fame—
He loved its people and revered its God.

IN MEMORIAM.

TO A CHILD VERY DEAR TO THE AUTHOR.

SLEEP, dearest one ; in pure, sweet slumbers sleep !
The world's great sorrows were not meant for thee ;
Thy life was tuned to gladness, not to weep—
To sing in heavenly choirs, and wait for me.

*LINES WRITTEN IN A LADY'S
WRITING ALBUM.*

WITHIN this volume let the curious gaze,
And critics coldly censure, blame, or praise,
Yet each may something learn—the learnèd find
Food for reflection, matter for the mind ;
And since whate'er within its leaves is traced
As living words shall never be effaced,
Write here the echoes of that sweet unrest
Which ever seeks the noblest and the best,
Uprising through each thought which upward springs,
As living ivy ever climbs and clings.

MUSIC AND SORROW.

How sad is the sadness when music mocks,
And the heart unmanned, forsaken, rocks
Helplessly, hopelessly, wildly free,
As a helmless ship on a stormy sea !
And where is the beauty of love's sweet song
If it helps not the sorrowing soul along ?

LINES TO —.

TIME was when love was erring, blind,
And as the winds inconstant, free ;
But now in after-years I find
My life, my love, complete in thee.

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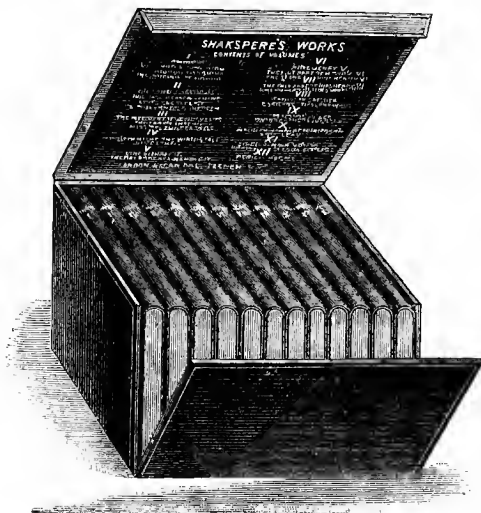
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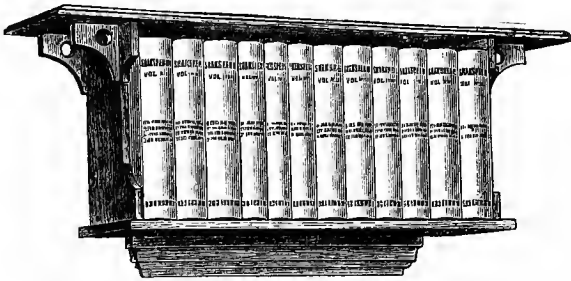
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Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew, dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you
are sad,
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed
Janus,
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other of such vinegar aspect

DT
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