LEISURE INTERVALS

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BY

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TO FAUNUS

What honour to my dear friend's son were here,
If all men were like merchants, who must get
Value for value? But, lo! I appear
With your sweet sanction to my labour set;
And you still live unconscious of my debt.
For you're heir to an intellect, which lifts
These numbers to a rank with equal gifts;
And on yet untried ground we thus have met!
Some to the altar finer incense bring,
Some coarser. Faunus, this is all my store.
My Muse hath not learn'd many strains to sing:
Say that these please, and she will higher soar.
A newer brood may prove, perchance, more sturdy on the wing,
And make amends to him, whose name my first-fruits bore.

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EARLY POEMS

THE SEQUEL OF VENUS AND ADONIS

ONCE Venus lay in her fair land
  Of Paphos in a bow'r,
A-twisting in her fragrant hand
  A purple-fringèd flow'r.

"O flower," quoth the moodish queen,
  "What, prythee, canst thou be?
What do the fair-hair'd Naiads mean,
  Who say that thou art He?

"O me, I lov'd a dainty youth—
  'Twas once upon a time;
But he (poor boy), in art uncouth,
  Imagin'd love a crime.

"For rude and shapeless beasts of prey
  Were his untutor'd joy:
My presence chas'd the smile away,
  And made him dull and coy.

"He fled my touch, and thought to kiss
  But vain and idle toying,
Nor would he stay to see, if bliss
  Died always of enjoying.

"One morn, the sky was dark and dreary,
  And the wind was hushed;
And I felt of life a-weary,
  As I fondly rushed

"Far from my bow'r, heart-sick, to look,
  Where this dear youth might be,
Until at last I spied a brook
  With velvet drapery.

"I am a goddess born, O flow'r,
  And Venus is my name.
But unto Love is granted pow'r
  The gods themselves to tame.

"My squeamish heart was all a-fret
  At what time might disclose:
No scent seem'd in the violet,
  No bloom upon the rose.

"He broke from me the eve before,
  Vowing he was asham'd
To stay there dallying any more,
  And my sharp wooing blam'd.

"He said that he would greet the day
With hound, and spear, and horn;
Since I was not to be his prey,
I wish'd myself unborn.

"'Think me,' quoth I, 'a bristled hog
Or some swift-footed deer,
And hunt me, sweet one, with thy dog,
And make me prisoner.

"'Belov'd boy, I will fly from thee,
Should that have greater charms,
And only pray my lot may be
A pitfall in thine arms.

"'I'll run as fleetly as a roe,
To furnish thee delight,
Or feign myself a stricken doe,
And fall down in thy sight.'

"But he turn'd moodily away,
As I had done him wrong,
And said, with women so to play
To men did not belong.

"Since then my eyes have begg'd for food,
And I had none to give;
For they all other meat eschew'd,
On his fair form to live."

The flow'r repos'd itself quite flat
  In Aphrodite's palm,
And seem'd to owe new life to that
  Distillery of balm.

But, ah! she nipp'd it hard again,
  Scarce heeding what she did,
And when she saw the flower's pain
  Her own unkindness chid.

Now hasted she the more to knit
  Up her half-finish'd tale:
"At last," said she, resuming it,
  "I found my lov'd one's trail.

"Upon the glist'ning turf, a-heap,
  My poor Adonis lay:
Methought the elfin creature Sleep
  Might have made him his prey.

"But Death, a greater tyrant still,
  Who owed me no despite,
This innocent sweet imp to kill
  A monster did incite.

"I had propitiated him
  With votive sacrifice:
For I make many a bright eye dim,
  And many a brave heart ice.

"To think, when I paid him all hearts,
  Which Cupid rave in twain,
That he should launch one of his darts,
  And slay my own dear swain!"

With that this lady paramount
  O'er all loves but her own
Chang'd either eye into a fount,
  Which had a river grown:

But Cupid chanc'd then to trip in,
  His locks with roses bound,
And did to plant a kiss begin,
  Where he a tear had found.

"Why weepest thou so, mother mine?
  Is every shepherd dead?
O, do not for Adonis pine!
  Another take instead.

Though swains many, whom thou knewest,
  To Pluto's court be gone,
How canst thou hope, who mortals wooest,
  To woo for ever one?"

"O, Time holds Beauty as his thrall,
  And has done from the first;
And all my lovers to him fall,
  As bubbles swell and burst."

"All Paphos," then the boy did say,
"Shall my wing'd shadow see,
Till I have hither brought away
One full as fair as he."

But as the early tears were slak'd,
Fresh up began to well;
And ere her nymphs could be awak'd,
Into a swoon she fell.

One blot on beauty is unkindness
To that it most regards:
One property of love is blindness
Its dearest ends towards.

So Venus clipp'd her fair Transform'd,
E'en while she lay as dead,
Till its whole fairness grew deform'd,
And verdure witherèd.

And when she woke again, she wept
To see the cruel case,
And blam'd herself that she had slept,
And chid her nymphs apace.

She said: "What, prythee, hast thou been?"
The little weakling sigh'd,
Then curl'd its petals slowly in,
And droop'd, and died.

"O cruel fortune!" was her cry,
When she won back her breath:
"Which suffers not the gods to die,
Nor yet to conquer Death."

But to the King of gods and men
She pray'd, that He once more
To his first likeness her lost swain
For her sake would restore.

And now in Jove's star-pavèd court
He serveth her as page,
Yet there he seldom findeth aught
But gentle vassalage.

ENDYMION'S METAMORPHOSIS

Lo! how the Moon bath'd yesternight
Her tender beauty in the Sea,
And then, like sovereign lady dight,
Rose in effulgent majesty,
To meet her starry Court. But sorrow now
Has set his throne up on her queenly brow.

From her swift feet she shook the dew
In radiant flakes, last eventide,
Where thirsty summer breezes blew,
And starvèd sweets for moisture sigh'd
In Flora's treasury. But sorrow now
Has set his throne up on her queenly brow.

I saw her stoop, about the dawn,
To Latmos shyly, when the light
Still kept the fringes of my lawn,
And ere the Hours with blushes bright
Had pale Aurora's purple eyelids touch'd,
Where she on old Tithonus' breast lay couch'd.

I saw her hold her onward way,
Like one whose suit has poorly sped,
And her orb droop, as who would say,
"Why do I live, since he is dead?
Beauty's worth dwells in the beholder's eyes,
And youth is nought without his properties.

"Eternal youth, eternal sleep!
Take back, great Jove, the empty boon;
And then the thriftless winds, which sweep
The world, my dear Endymion soon
Will carry, where he shall no longer be
A taunt to Time, and a sweet woe to me.

"Or if there's pow'r to make stone breathe,
May my belov'd one's likeness yet
Survive, where I his brow can wreathe
With a fair silver coronet
On Latmos nightly; and so he can keep
His state of lasting youth and lasting sleep.

"But let, O, let me once again
Recall the bloom to his young cheek,
And see those eyes which wrought my pain,
And hear him just a little speak."
Up to Jove's Court his own child's prayer went;
And he returned a motion of assent.

His unheard presence Latmos owns,
In beauty likest some carv'd Faun;
And his chill temples each night crowns
With azure glory: or at dawn,
Or at more early startide, when at first
The sun in ocean slakes his mighty thirst.

II.

But lo! for the young shepherd she lov'd best
Arcadia has donn'd her funeral weed,
And goes in green and gold no longer dress'd;
Nor doth Pan care to play upon his reed.
And all good nymphs in memory of him
With sprigs of cypress set their tresses trim.

Let favour'd Latmos her gay gown of green
Embroider with all dainty flowers, which
On meadows or in shaded vales are seen,
Or that the margins of swift brooks enrich.
Let maids for him eternal chaplets make,
And each spring grow more fruitful for his sake.

Ye nymphs, whose frail life from the acorn-cup
To you is slowly, thread by thread, unspun,
Go, hang your bows and fallow quivers up,
And make fresh posies for Endymion
Who, save what to the outward view was fair,
Tenants some unseen mansion of the air.

Fetch jasmine, whence the bee much wealth distils:
The primrose pale and modest virgin-bower:
The oxlip, borderer on laughing rills:
The pied carnation and the cuckoo-flower.
Gather all these, I pray you, where ye may,
And on his changeless brow in garlands lay.

Sometimes, ye Dryads, when the sun declines
From his hot prime, cup the encrystall'd dew,
Which has just lately rain'd on alley'd vines
And on the marybuds which peep at you,
Each from his leafy hermitage. Then trip it
To his cold home, and in his honour sip it.

And each new moon, elves, climb the tall hill's side,
Your dimpled arms with tangled perfumes charg'd;
And when you have his comely form espied,
Your fragrant loads are straight to be enlarg'd;
For it is meet to serve with this sweet rite
Your lady, the chaste empress of the night.

HERO AND LEANDER

A FRAGMENT

GREAT son of Venus, time-devouring god!
Ah! thou who wouldst drown all eternity
In one short hour, and with a frown or nod
Bid each transcendent moment last for aye!
Thy fame is founded, Cupid, on a rock—
'Twas thou, that nerv'dst the arm, which stemm'd the tide
Of Bosphorus, and sought the Sestian bow'r,
Where Hero dwelt, who stood, his course to guide,
Holding a torch o'er the embattled tow'r—
Till, one dark night, the tempest howl'd: the sea
Danc'd madly to the sound, and seem'd to mock
Her ears and sight. It was the hour; and he
Came not. "O Gods!" she cried, "some cruel rock

Or ruthless wave has torn him from my breast!
Leander, love, thy Hero waits thee here"—
Just then a cry, borne o'er the foaming crest:
"Adieu, I sink: adieu, my mistress dear!"
She shriek'd, then listen'd—one more feeble moan—
"'Tis o'er, and I"——the wind bore off the rest.
The maiden sank, and felt herself alone
In life, and thought to die with him was best.
She gave one look below and one above:
One parting glance at dreary, darken'd life,
And then beneath she thought she heard her love,
Who said: "Come, sweet one, be the sea-god's wife!"
With desperate resolve she plung'd headlong
Into the huge abyss.

MORNING

A FRAGMENT

Lo! now the perfume-freighted Morn
Comes forth from th' orient gate of heaven,
Borne on a crimson cloud. Before
Her chariot goes Lucifer
Her son—the Star-god, and behind
Lags Day, the wonder-child of Dawn

Who, while the black-wing'd Night held sway,
Hath slumber'd in some distant, fern-fring'd cave
Upon the margent of the restless sea.

Hail! golden-tress'd Aurora, hail!
The Hours attend thee on thy fragrant path,
And gentle spirits of the sweet, crisp air,
Which come to pay court to new-risen day,
Diffuse around thee odours, which
The Breezes, Nature's censers, waft
To all the corners of the jewell'd earth.

TO SYLVIA

I saw thee, when thy day first broke
So gently to unconscious men,
And, link by link, thy cruel yoke
Thou first begann'st to rivet then.
I saw from out thy cradle-folds
Thy fists in mutiny uprise;
But, Sylvia, the world now holds
Thy arms less dangerous than thine eyes!
What was a bud, a flower grew,
So fair, so pure, and, O, so dear!
And many a gard'ner tended you,
That canker-worm might not come near.

Now, as a ship launch'd on the sea,
Thou steer'st thy way, and all seems fair.
Around thee few the perils be;
But, ah! of sunken rocks beware!
Spurn not the counsel I thee give,
Now thy youth sheds its brightest rays:
With honour happiness must live,
And seldom beauty knows long days.
When men write sonnets to thy brow,
Painting it than all brows more white,
Whiter than ivory or snow:
Think this is but as poets write.
When they thy lips begin to praise,
Shewing how they the cherry outshine,
O, then take heed, that none essays
His poorer hue to blend with thine.
They'll vow thy step as elf's is light,
Excelling Nature's choir thy voice,
And that thy song, a summer's night,
Maketh the nightingale rejoice.
Perhaps they may call thy form divine,
And blest the ground, where thou dost go,
And swear, that stars above that shine
Borrow their lustre here below.
But when this incense comes to you,
When at your feet this tribute's laid—
Why, if the tale be something true,
'Twill be enough, my queenly maid.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN SYLVIA AND HER HEART

"O, WHAT is Love, I prythee say?"
Quoth Sylvia to her heart one day.
"Is it a god, as some do deem,
Or is it but a sickly dream?
Is it a pure and holy flame,
Or is it but an empty name?
Is it a gross and soulless creature,
Or element divine of Nature?
What is it?" little Sylvia cried;
"Love what it is," her heart replied,
"I straight will tell thee, lady fair,
That so thou mayst of Love beware.
O, Love is nothing, Love is all;
O, Love is honey, Love is gall.
Love is a very pretty thing;
Love is a very cruel sting.
Love doth inhabit here and there;
Love doth inhabit everywhere.
Love may be deepest unexpress'd;
But it is sweetest, when confess'd.
It is a spark, it is a fire:
A sacred flame, a loose desire:
A will-o'-wisp, a maiden's toy,
A shadow dim, a chubby boy.

Both Hatred's sire and Beauty's son,
(Proteus-like) Love can put on
All the airy shapes, which be
Embodied in our fantasy.
Such, then, is Love," the maid's heart said.
"Alack for Love, then!" cried the maid.
"But, O, it cannot be, O, no;
Love is not always changeful so;
And thou, O heart, didst never find
Thy swain and mine to thee unkind.
So why shouldst thou and I not be
Believers in Love's constancy?"

Her Wish.

Behold! O deity of Love,
A maiden kneeling at thy feet,
Whose prayer is, that Love may prove
To her a passion soft and sweet.
Soft as the wind, which Juneward blows,
Too soft to please our miller's will;
Sweet as the parasite, which grows
Up round my bowery window-sill.

AMORET

Of all maidens that I knew,
Whether they be many or few,
One was always kind and true;
And it is Amoret.

Fresh as is the breaking day:
Fragrant as a hawthorn spray:
Gentle, innocent, and gay
Is fair young Amoret.

She lends Cupid all the light,
With which he sees in the night;
And yet her eyes are as bright.
How haps it, Amoret?

I watch the breeze, as it sips
The dew from her sever'd lips,
For I'm jealous of those lips—
The lips of Amoret.

I will consecrate sweet hours
To gathering heart-speaking flow'rs,
To make garlands for the bow'rs,
Where dwells my Amoret.

For she's fair, and very fair:
She treads the earth, as 'twere air;
And she's true as she is fair,
Is my young Amoret.

Nor is Amoret less kind
Than true; yet pure is her mind,
As are the lilies, that do bind
The brows of Amoret.

Then I'll sing of Amoret,
That ne'er such a jewel yet
In a monarch's crown was set
As peerless Amoret.

'I PRYTHEE, WHAT CAN FANCY DO?'

I.

I PRYTHEE, what can Fancy do?
O, ask not me,
Who from my English home
Had never call to roam,
Or to change old for new.
But him who over the billowy sea
Barters the sweets of life for hard-got gains:
The wistful squatter on the vast Australian plains.

II.

His hut upon the prairie looks;
And, his work done,
He hugs his elbow-chair,
Though his heart be not there.
And as his shelf of travell'd books
He takes down fondly one by one,
His tatter'd primer he scarce bears to see,
For he thinks how he learnt it at his mother's knee.

III.

What, prythee, more can Fancy do?
When day declines,
And I from toil retreat
Into my wonted seat,
I from my study casement view
The matted creeper, as it twines,
Making my feather'd pensioners a bow'r;
And with half-curtain'd eyes I think I see Glendwr.

IV.

The man, whose inexhaustive brain
Delights to paint
On paper or on board
His fancies long up-stor'd,
Doth ill his joy contain,
When what pass'd but for something quaint,
The slow-grown fruit of one laborious mind,
A transfer from true life he happeneth to find.

V.

She who (a rose-cheek'd country girl)
Was woo'd and won
By one out of a town,
When she is smitten down
Amid a city's whirl:
Her fleeting thoughts fast backward run;
And her last hours are shar'd between
Her home, her youth, her courtship, and the village green.

VI.

So one time the poor Huguenot,
When to our shore
He came in peace to live,
A welcom'd fugitive,
Pac'd his small garden-plot,
And stood in Perigord once more;
And so the inmate of the old Bastille
Dream'd of the freedom which he never was to feel.

THE STUDENTS' SONG

HERE'S to the dark blue eye,
Which stars in northern sky
Transcends in brightness:
And here's to th' virgin brow,
To which all lilies bow,
Sham'd by its whiteness!

CHORUS.

Come, fill your glasses, fill your glasses!
And let us toast all bonny lasses;
O mighty Bacchus, at whose shrine
We freely pour the purple wine,
Drive, drive all care and thought away;
For 'tis the students' holiday:
Away! all carking griefs, away!
For 'tis the students' holiday!

Here's to the cherry lip,
Where gods a draught might sip,
Than nectar purer:
And here's to the snowy breast,
Where ringdoves seek a nest,
No nest securer!

CHORUS.

Come, fill your glasses, &c.

Here's to the nature kind,
Which does affection bind
By its own kindness:
And here's to the noble heart,
Which to a friend's weak part
Pretendeth blindness!

CHORUS.

Come, fill your glasses, &c.

TO THE OLD YEAR

Go, and with you all my sorrow
Take away;
A new year will break to-morrow
With the day.

And yet I pray you give it me
Back again;
For pleasure would not pleasure be
Without pain.

But still why not unto the old
Bid adieu,
Whenas the young year will unfold
Store of new?

O, time with his mellowing strength
Yields relief;
And memory of griefs at length
Is not grief.

Then if old troubles, as time runs,
Grow less great,
I must try any coming ones
To tolerate.

And since my life is pois'd between
Two extremes,
All is not good or ill, I ween,
Which so seems.

TO THE NEW YEAR

I.

O MIGHTY wonder that art yet unborn!
Before I see thee, I already know
The age and stature to which thou must grow;
For he, who views the first blush of the morn,
Knows that each day has its allotted hours,
Just as of certain buds come certain flow'rs.

But what thy shape and fortune are to be,
If thou wilt be propitious or unkind,
Remains, O year, as dark and undivin'd,
As rites of old Eleusis are to me.

II.

Wilt thou come, leading Plenty by the hand,
With Peace and Pleasure on thy steps attending?
Or wilt thou come, the air with discord rending,
And with a fearful message to our land?
Think that thou hast this mission and this power:
To bring down human science twelve moons lower.
For thou art heir to all the years gone by
And treasurer; and it is in thy charge
The store thou carriest with thee to enlarge;
And, as the twelfth moon wastes, thou art to die.

III.

Come, then; in thy prescriptive glory come,
Thy youth contracted to the wealth of ages!
Lo! what a noble work thy life engages,
All men thy courtiers, all worlds thy home!
If each may have what he shall ask from thee,
Some of the spurn'd loves of gay hearts to me

With sweet content and honest mirth bring hither.
But all my cares and sorrows take away;
All thoughts, which on a too fine fancy prey,
And all the hopes which only grow to wither.

IV.

As, at a children's feast, some special guest
Enters, his arms like a rich galleon laden
With gifts for every lad and every maiden,
So thou, from thy yet unclasp'd treasure-chest,
Wilt draw enchantments for all states of men,
Not to be sung by unprophetic pen.
Art thou new riches for the rich preparing,
New sermons to the poor, to teach them what
Their duty is, and that it is their lot
To be poor—and industrious—and forbearing?

V.

Or is the lofty task reserv'd for thee
A lighter and more modern line of tracing
Between the orders, and of so effacing
The marks of vassalage among the free?
Wilt thou put forth a hand to spread true light
And aid brain-power in its upward flight?

But in thine honour thou shalt have one writer,
If thou wilt prove more generous towards
Those studies, which the world too ill rewards,
And make the English scholar's household brighter.

VI.

Wilt thou wake with a soul and tongue of fire,
And shape forth utterances brave and burning,
Some more corrupt traditions overturning,
And fetich-worship, in thy righteous ire?
Or wilt thou whisper to the weary-hearted
The soft persuasions of the year departed?
O, leave not to thine heirs too much to pay;
For our inburn'd desires are usurers;
And we shall ask far more from future years,
Than we should take with thankfulness to-day.

A DIALOGUE

The woman pleads.

He. DEAR, we must part. *She.* But, O, the pain!
He. I would the whole on me might fall.
She. But may we never meet again?
He. No, no, forget we met at all.
She. Are vows like footprints by the shore,
Whose span is but a single tide?

He. One kiss, and then we meet no more.
She. I die, if I must quit thy side.
He. Men lose a hand, an arm, an eye;
And still do live—and cannot you?
She. But do not men and women die,
If once the heart be cleft in two?
He. What force so soon us can have knit?
She. A force, that has done stranger things.
He. I see love in thy blushes writ.
She. Unto the elm the ivy clings.
He. Well, then, farewell; for I must go:
The sun is shortening his rays.
She. Ah, didst thou reckon time up so,
When months seemed melting into days?
He. The world is wide. But look around.
She. I look, and see no form but thine;
Where thou art not, is desert ground—
He. O, cease! thou must and shalt be mine.

A SECOND DIALOGUE

The man pleads.

He. I'LL turn, both heart and soul, to thee,
And cease henceforth to roam;
And I will make, where'er thou be,
My country and my home.

She. Ah yes, ah yes; but I've heard say,
When youth and freshness fade,
That men turn cold, and fling away
The vows which they once made.

He. Bad men have grown so scarce, we deem
Such as are left the worse.
Report it boots not to esteem,
Nor poet's angry verse.

She. Too rapid streams soon spend their force:
Too fierce a flame dies down.
Passion should run an even course:
The end the entrance crown.

He. Like eager brooks young lovers are,
Hasting to meet the river.
Our hearts grow soberer with care;
But true love's true for ever.

She. Were hearts as true, as tongues do feign,
If lips ne'er utter'd guile,
'Twould be the golden age again,
And ev'ry land would smile.

He. New crops of lovers each spring grows:
If, in a thousand, one
Turn false, straightway the rumour goes,
All maidens are undone!

She. To ev'ry life there comes the day,
When leaves no more are green;
And then thine eye to one might stray,
Who was, what I had been.

He. O, spare, O, spare our luckless sex,
Thou naughty unbeliever!
Did Laura ne'er her lord's soul vex,
Or Alice prove deceiver?
She. Fair tales are whisper'd in maids' ears,
And some to yield are fain;
But many an one hath begg'd with tears
Her freedom back again.
He. If this is lady's justice, lo!
To it I here demur.
Would you discredit all men so,
Because a few may err?
She. But perhaps thou mightst come to forget
The morn, which saw us wed;
Then I should wish we ne'er had met,
And pray that I were dead.
He. Resist no more.
She. Forbear your suit.
He. Consent. *She.* Consent? what then?
He. Say Yes. *She.* Say Yes. *He.* Joy makes me mute.
She. God make you *true.* *He.* Amen!

'IT WAS A MAIDEN, AND SHE WAS FAIR'

I.

It was a maiden, and she was fair,
Ah me! ah me!
And there was poetry in her face,
And every motion breath'd with grace;
And the glory of morning was in her hair.
Ah me! ah me!

II.

It was a maiden, and she was fair,
Ah me! ah me!
But she was as false as false can be,
And I fled away over the sea;
For the thought of home I could not bear.
Ah me! ah me!

III.

'Tis pity, and it is sorrow too,
Ah me! ah me!
That beauty should thus with falsehood dwell,
And why it is, O, I cannot tell;
But it e'er has done, and e'er will do.
Ah me! ah me!

'IF I TO ROSES SHOULD THY CHEEKS COMPARE'

I.

If I to roses should thy cheeks compare,
And say thy lips more pure than coral are,
How poor a due it were!
Or should I feign thy hair
In threaded gold adown thy neck did fall,
And that thy features were angelical;
My song
Would do thee wrong,
Who art thyself, and therein more than all.

II.

If I to nightingales thy notes preferr'd,
To liken thee unto a lonesome bird,
That mourns her hapless fate,
Were ill to celebrate
Thy voice; and then thine eyes if I should call
Two stars, which from their spheres were seen to fall,
My Muse
Would thee abuse,
Who art thyself, and therein more than all.

III.

If I should thee a second Helen paint,
And vow that art to limn thee was too faint,
I should praise thee too much,
But yet the truth not touch.
Or if thy form of heavenly mould I swore,
And that thy mind was rich in learning's store,
My pen
Would err again;
For thou'rt thyself—thyself, and nothing more.

LOVE AND FATE

I.

Hence, hence,
Vain influence!
Away!
Thy sway
I do disown:
My heart has grown
More hard than stone.

II.

Hence, hence!
With frankincense
And odours new
I will bestrew

Thy shrine no more,
Nor honey pour
Thy porch before.

III.

O Fate!
Too late
I know
That thou
Hast laws, which I
May vainly try
To modify.

From CATULLUS

THERE is no man, my mistress doth aver,
E'en Jove himself, to me she would prefer.
She says; but what girls say to lovers smitten,
In wind and running water may be written.

TO CŒLIA

O CŒLIA, may I be bold
  To ask thee, if't be true,
That (as I have of late been told)
  Thou hast a lover new?

Yet that thy favour I have lost,
  Why wonder or complain?
When every day adds to the host
  Of hearts that thou hast slain!

Ah! would that I had known, alas,
  The oaths, that thou dost swear,
Thou lov'st to change, as often as
  The fashion of thy hair!

For then I might have let my heart
  Follow its own sweet way,
And with the mistress gaily part,
  Who pleas'd but yesterday.

Why, Cœlia, if all thy kind
  Match'd thee in cruelty,
No lovers would be left behind,
  And Love itself would die.

LINES SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF MY MOTHER

I HAVE thee with me (mother) still, portray'd
  In the rich bloom of maidenhood;
But poetry too much has there o'erlaid
  What better by itself had stood.
I have thee in a manner with me still,
  Limn'd by a gross mechanic hand,

That wanted half the master's art: true skill
  Is pow'r to feel as well as understand.
Then thou hadst entered something into years;
  And (though no tell-tale brow was thine)
The sun at sunset from us disappears,
  And stars not after startide shine.
I treasure glimpses of thy prime of life,
  Collected in my child's mind's eye,
When all the days I knew thou'dst been a wife,
  And time seem'd to have pass'd thee by.
What stintless benisons I could have pour'd
  On him, who might inspir'd have been
To trace with learned pencil on the board
  A breathing image of thy girlish sheen!
Yet perhaps the pleasure at the sight of thee
  Would have been cross'd another way:
The thought so often must have haunted me,
  Why are such forms not shielded from decay?

JULIA (1867)

OBIIT AN. ÆT. 13

LOVINGLY she would sit on my knee,
  And whisper to me:
Asking me why,
Telling me why,
It ever so pleas'd her there to be,
  Dear little Julia!

And when she saw my brow overcast,
Then her words fell fast:
Comforting me,
And coaxing me,
Until she thought that the cloud had pass'd,
Good little Julia!

"Give not too much of your love to me,
Although it may be
A childish one,
A sister's one.
Another shall come, and speak with thee,
Fair little Julia!"

Another one came indeed one day;
But he did not say
A word to her,
A word to us;
And he bore her to some land far away,
Lost little Julia!

LINES WRITTEN IN MISS NORTHWOOD'S ALBUM, 1869

When you ask'd me to write (lady) in your new book,
I was bound to obey you by hook or by crook.
And I turn'd the thing over and over again
In a place, where is room and to spare too—my brain;
And I made up my mind that in some nook I must
Have a trifle or so, which would suit the case just.
Let me see, said I, musing, there's this and there's that;
But, ah! this is too long, and ah! that is too flat.
In my youth I have penn'd, though, a matter or two,
Which I could remember, p'rhaps, if they would do.
For ballads I've written on classical stories,
And novels, in which I assure you there store is
Of capital passages; but the dilemma is,
I can make no one else see it, to which rhyme Emma is.
Of ancient Philemon and Baucis his mate
I told once the tale, but I know not its fate.
My great Parrot Epic—with that you'd be smitten,
But alas! who can read what an author's not written?
The epistle which Lycidas sent to Iule
Is pretty, but puerile—I tell you truly.
I did it about eighteen hundred and fifty,
When my Muse of invention was barren and thrifty.

If I'd now the time, I would do better things,
For my wit has grown riper, my Muse has got wings;
And O, could I grudge just a few stolen hours,
Where the Honour is mine, and the Pleasure is yours?
Long since, when I wrote it, there seem'd something smart
In "A Dialogue held 'twixt a Maid and her Heart."
The maid I call'd Sylvia; for at the time
Methought that that name sounded well in a rhyme.
And the myth of Adonis—a strange one, if true;
But I scarce believe it—no more perhaps will you!
Endymion, on whom the Moon doated, they feign,
Although how she made love to him isn't so plain;
Again, the complaint of fair Hero for young
Leander her love, I, that sing this, have sung.
You remember you told me you did not care much
For copied-out matter, more valuing such
As I might out of my own fancy create,
And (too slight a tribute!) to you dedicate.
So commanded to write, and forbidden to steal,
At first I confess I was pos'd a good deal.
Then a happy thought struck me. What! do I forget
The lines I wrote formerly on Amoret?
But no; 'twas a fancy, a humour, a whim;
And the moral to you might seem just the least dim.
The song which I made of the Bellman was deem'd
Rather good, and to me so it certainly seem'd!

But a bellman's too vulgar to have ought to do
With such pages as these and with such *belles* as you.
A mad-merry thing I contrived of yore,
Where students join chorus, while bumpers brim o'er;
But the vein might too free be accounted, I ween,
The album to grace of a maid of eighteen.
So now, as I fear you will think my design is
To fill the whole book, I will finish with Finis.

THE MAIDEN'S NAY

I.

A YOUNG man came to a fair maid's door,
He was not rich, nor he was not poor:
To woo her, to woo her;
And said he unto her:
"O, will you, O, will you be sped?"
But then she said:
"O, no, no, no;
Pray, from me go.
I am too young to wed."

II.

He came again to his dear love's door:
Three long, long years had pass'd, and more:
To woo her, to woo her;
And he said unto her:

"O, will you, O, will you be sped?"
But then she said:
"O, no, no, no;
Pray, from me go.
I am too sick to wed."

III.

Again (good heart) he came to her door;
He was not richer, nor yet more poor:
To woo her, to woo her;
And he said unto her:
"O, will you, O, will you be sped?"
But still she said:
"O, no, no, no;
Pray, from me go.
I do not care to wed."

IV.

But another came to the lady's door,
And he in his hand broad writings bore:
To woo her, to woo her;
And he said unto her:
"O, will you, O, will you be sped?"
"No, no," she said—
She said: "Nay, nay;"
She meant, "Ay, ay;"
And he and she were wed.

V.

A letter was brought to the young wife's door;
She took it, and broke it, and read it o'er.
Scarce her heart seem'd to beat,
As she sank on her seat;
And bowing her beautiful head,
She murmured:
"Ere to his land
I pawn'd my hand,
Better I had been dead!

VI.

"But the awe of the world its shadow threw
On my heart, like a chill autumnal dew;
And it seem'd so unlike true life
To become a poor man's wife,
That I married," said she, "an heir,
Who thought me fair;
And now the past
Returns so fast,
It is too much to bear!"

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN 1875

I.

The simple schoolgirl, who was once to me
  As dear as I can think or say,
  To one out of the North to-day
Leases her worth and beauty; he and she
Have drawn for prizes in Love's lottery.

II.

Why should I feel that I am more alone,
  Now she has at a husband's feet
  Laid all she had of good and sweet,
Or think myself so much the poorer grown,
Because she is no longer all her own?

III.

Within the summery circuit of her eyes
  My youth pass'd in a dream sublime,
  A rebel both to toil and time.
But now my happiness with lost things lies,
As to the waking brain some fancy dies.

IV.

I court the open, unobstructed air,
  And summon back the old time, when
  A pen to me was but a pen;
And she seem'd so superlatively fair:
A gem to study, but too rich to wear.

V.

I knew her first a merry round-cheek'd thing,
  With eyes that look'd you through and through,
  And a voice that you to her drew;
And each year some new virtue seem'd to bring,
And vary without stint the offering.

VI.

But that delightful season pass'd away:
  An Arctic summer was its life;
  And now she writes herself a Wife!
His eyes are not my eyes, thank God, and they
May see perfection, where I see decay!

VII.

The chosen partner of my walks is gone;
  The voice, which once was music-clear,
  Is no more mistress of my ear.
A rich clown her ambitious fancy won,
And I with hoping have for ever done.

VIII.

To me, yet not to others, chang'd she seems;
For only they, who saw the morn,
Know with what glory it was born.
But what she was across my memory gleams,
Like the short vivid light of early dreams.

IX.

The world warps what is of the world; and she,
Like golden daybreaks, which our eyes
See disappear in neutral skies,
Fell from the promise of her youth to be
A lodestar to one different from me.

X.

For, O, the hopes I had nurs'd in my mind
Of what she might, and what she would
Be, when she came to womanhood,
Like some phantasma of the brain, I find
Shatter'd, scarce leaving any trace behind.

XI.

The graciousness, which in those early days
Through all her being seem'd to shine,
Lending a radiance to mine,
Has vanish'd like some revel of the Fays,
When midnight the unwist convention stays.

XII.

Dissolv'd for ever is my vision glad,
  While she was but a fair-hair'd child,
  Bred amid fields and woodlands wild,
That she was some bright essence in flesh clad,
And of my own gross nature nothing had.

XIII.

What I so lov'd in her exists no more.
  Like daffodils, which Nature dooms
  To death, before the summer comes,
She gave to her superb spring her whole store,
And leaves me but a shadow to adore.

XIV.

There was no bond betwixt us to be knit,
  Closer than that which fortune made:
  No wanton tide my pulses sway'd,
A sister's love was all I look'd to get,
Thinking how rich I was to grow with it.

XV.

Had we but parted, while she yet was young,
  And I have borne away with me
  Only that early memory,
I should have been inspir'd to tune my tongue,
And on her praises all ears must have hung.

XVI.

I could have drawn her, in my fancy's eye,
Unfolding beauties, one by one,
As she had in my sight begun,
Till it might have become a question why
Men for a perfect woman still should sigh.

OLD BROMPTON

MDCCCXL

I LOVE the spot, which fancy keeps
Still green for me, while nature weeps
O'er charms departed;
Though, as it groweth day by day
More throng'd and cold, I turn away
Vex'd and low-hearted.

The builder there his crude art plieth:
There now no more the woodcock crieth:
And beauties perish.
But I have yet, where my heart dwelleth,
And with fond memories oft swelleth,
Enough to cherish.

When it was different, I knew it,
And my unvalued youth gave to it:
Strange, mix'd reflexion!
Yet I live there an older man,
And own no thought more tender than
That recollection.

Amid the world of stone and bricks,
Athwart house-eaves, I scan the ricks
Of our sweet village:
For me, beneath these pavements, sleep
Fields, where the herd-boy watch'd his sheep,
And widths of tillage.

Upon the site of our gaunt square,
With its trim hedge and formal air,
And gay gilt railings,
My uncle's garden lay; and we
Trac'd lately, where were wont to be
His orchard palings.

It seems to me but yesterday—
I know I must be, any way
I *feel* no older—
Where John's house stands, a hawthorn hay,
From which I have pluck'd many a spray,
Grew to my shoulder.

Where smoke the bloom and herbage stains,
I see in mind the deep green lanes,
With bits of wild wood;
I see the cowslip-dotted croft,
And that dear Vale, where I so oft
Have stray'd in childhood.

While palaces erect their heads
O'er silenc'd brooks and ruined meads,
My thought reposes
On scenes and names of other days:
Kirke's vines, the shrubberies at Gray's,
And Rigby's roses.

I recollect, it was a place,
On which the livers shed some grace—
Men wise and witty;
They were the hamlet's genii,
And vanish'd with its bluer sky
And shepherd's ditty.

O, I will stay no longer where
There's all the tumult and the glare
Of human centres!
The sun may rise, and it may set,
Behind those chimney-stacks, and yet
It never enters.

Far hence, on some new soil, I'll dream
Of Brompton as it used to seem
In my young knowledge;
Where our small homestead stood, I'll make
The place into fresh life awake,
And touch the foliage.

Brompton, I leave to thee in trust
A mother's and a brother's dust,
Whene'er I quit thee!
My brain their images shall hold,
Till to some near or neighbour mould
My own commit me.

I do not value thee the less,
Though thou hast witness'd, I confess,
Much early sorrow;
Though almost all that I lov'd best
Is gone, and (it may be) the rest
Will go to-morrow.

With thee was cast my early lot,
And thou wast what no other spot
Can seem to me;
I spent my school-days in thy sight,
And now, when I have learn'd to write,
I think of thee.

MY NEIGHBOUR

THOUGH what he is, I scarce can tell,
I love my next-door neighbour well;
And so I ought—a.
He has a dog which seems a pet:
One son just come home from Thibet,
And one plain daughter.

My housemaid says she hears he made
A fortune in the blacking trade—
The postman told her.
I laugh'd at the idea somehow,
And then I could not knit my brow,
Poor girl, and scold her!

He has no turn for those few things
Which I affect. His daughter sings:
He plays the fiddle.
He does not care for coins or sticks,
Books, china, prints, or politics—
He's quite a riddle.

He is a good man in his way,
He goes to Church three times a-day—
I mean, on Sunday.

But, O that fiddle! O my woes!
I feel so sorry that he goes
There only one day!

A warmer Royalist than me
This gent'man is; and, dear soul! he
Views with dismay
My doctrine, when I put it thus—
That governments exist for us,
Not t'other way.

This theory, I freely own,
Was common; but it long has grown
Absurd and hateful.
No doubt, to have kings ne'er so bad,
We ought to feel not only glad,
But even grateful!

Of Cleopatra's Needle once
He spoke, and said, "A horrid dunce
I fear you'll call me.
But, looking at her needle's size,
The lady—this is my surprise—
Would rather tall be!"

I fear I shook his faith a bit—
At least, he did not see the wit:
For which I'm sorry—

When I said Balaam and the Ass
In my sincere opinion was
An Ass's story.

That Holy Writ was written by
God's holy fingers, to deny,
Were worse than libel;
He counts, I think, to go some day,
Where people are so good, that they
Don't want the Bible.

The Gospels he calls glorious reading,
Though such as I judge them misleading
Just here and there;
But—Matthew, Mark, or John, or Luke,
Which of them, quoth he, wrote the Book
Of Common Prayer?

He cares not for geology,
Nor for the thing call'd Social Science—
Mere crude suggestions.
He thinks the best theology
Is on God to have full reliance,
And ask no questions.

Last Christmas it was plaguy hot,—
"Aha!" quoth he, "for the good o' the town
I know 'twas done.

For God keeps watch on the poor man's pot,
And loves to bring the butchers down,
All rogues, bar none."

He takes the "Times," you may conceive,
And I have seen the news-boy leave
The "Advertizer."
He seems far happier than me;
I'm sure he has more friends to tea—
And am I wiser?

TO L. A. D.

[LAURA ANNE DAVIS]

Dear LAD!
Dear Lass!
O, thou art not to blame,
That under one sweet name
Two natures thou dost carry.
But I feel sad
That thou must pass
Away, and never marry.
For how shall Lad with Lad
Be join'd in wedding glad—
To give the world its due,
And thy proud youth renew?

It seemeth hard that thou alone
Shouldst be two sexes met in one.
But stay!
I see a way.
Be no more sad:
Thou art not LAD,
But an unquestion'd She,
A very pretty young LA D.

POEMS WRITTEN BETWEEN

1866 AND 1876

PANDORA

A RHAPSODY

I.

Tell me not, that I do myself a wrong
  To love, where loving is so vain:
  I love for love and not for gain.
My passion now has liv'd with me so long,
'T hath grown too proud to yield, to die too strong.

Forbid me not, dear, still to call thee mine
  (Though mine thou canst not ever be),
  If it lend some content to me:
Must he, that once had all, now all resign,
Nor keep one place in that cold heart of thine?

We miss not, what we know not; and had you
  Refus'd my suit in early days,
  Before to you I shap'd my ways,
My fancy, while it yet was young and new,
I might have learn'd by little to subdue.

Content and riches march not hand in hand:
  Think'st thou thy heart's-ease, cast away,
  May be recall'd some other day?
Too late wilt thou begin to understand,
What 'tis to marry but a house and land.

No, no; complain not, should thy new choice seem,
  Though rich in purse, yet poor in heart:
  The baser warps the better part.
It may be that my life has been a dream;
But life is as each liver doth esteem.

A lesson, set to six, six kinds shall see
  Of handling, as the scholar goes.
  What fits his bent each haply knows:
Yet are there men who choose to flout at me,
Saying: "Heigho! at what end aimeth he?"

Or, look, Pandora! some may argue so—
  "He was a poet who did this;
  And poesy gross fiction is.
Perchance, we yet but half the story know;
What, if the lady had a cause to shew?"

Fools' questions let fools answer. My career
  Like an unfinish'd column stands,
  Since it must want thy crowning hands.
My hopes as jetsam on the rocks appear;
What ship can prosper, where there's none to steer?

To minister to him, his board to grace:
  If he were dull, to him to sing:
  When he would rise, his staff to bring:
What foolish damsel with a comely face
Might not, as well as you, have fill'd the place?

I give great thanks, that it was my rare lot
  To view your splendid youth so near,
  And see the height of spring appear;
And now on this inhospitable spot
I dream of what might have been, and was not.

Ask thy dear lord, what store he would lay down
  To have the witness of my eyes,
  With all the wealth that in them lies—
But, no! be wary: move him not to frown:
His anger might bar thy next trip to town.

"Their ages are not equal: he is old,"
  To me of late one whispered;
  "And when her lord is dead,
Ere the fix'd sum of moons has been well told,
She will lay at thy feet the greybeard's gold."

But life is love, and love is poetry,
  And love's the poetry of life;
  And what were it to take a wife,
From whose name, voice, shape, features I
Should draw nought but a broken melody?

The woman, who remarries, seems to me
  But parcel-wed to two in turn :
  Slackly the flame in her should burn,
For if the first incomer wastes his fee,
The next a lean remainder-man must be.

What makes me shun those scenes I once most sought ?
  To leave the world it seems full soon,
  While still my hour-glass marks but noon.
But you had me to that religion brought :
You were my world, and all the rest was nought.

Why do I these harsh-tun'd regrets express ?
  Why do I mourn o'er riches lost ?
  Too much my driftless love has cost :
Yet I prefer, and lo ! it here confess,
To think of you, than any else possess.

But she who links all beauty to all grace,
  Will ne'er bestow a serious thought
  Upon a tale so weakly wrought,
And even those who listen to my case,
Will shew me pity, when they see her face.

If such your virtues be that, to excel,
  A woman need have only one,
  Bestow your bounty, like the sun,
Upon your bankrupt sex, ere they rebel,
Seeing now Love with you alone doth dwell.

Who else but you could stock the world with good,
  And still have greater goodness left
  Than that of which you were bereft?
Be poorer, and yet richer?—like a wood
Clear'd, where before the trees too thickly stood.

Nay, as its starry riches serve to shroud
  The world's vast ceiling from our gaze,
  Dazzling our organs with their blaze:
So, if you were less lavishly endow'd,
You might more human seem, less wrapp'd in cloud.

What but the chaster loveliness of Night
  Makes us enamour'd of the Day?
  To what but winter owe we May?
And other eyes might seem less void of light,
Were thine not so inexorably bright.

Thou shouldst a generous allowance yield
  To such as Nature hath endow'd
  With qualities which fit the crowd.
Thy higher form of beauty is reveal'd,
Like golden bars upon a sable field.

There is no other planet where salt tears
  Are sacrifices to despair:
  What we deem fair, may not be fair.
And what we call thy charms, to other spheres
May be no more than our poor days and years.

O, once my own and only lov'd, forgive
  The raptures of a mind distraught:
  None who has in the battle fought,
Knows the eternal foes, with whom I strive,
But comes back home at last in peace to live.

Pardon, O great Pandora, my rash speech!
  My anger shrewdly serves my wit,
  And sorrow little chastens it.
But your example must be used to teach
The world what height the Rural Mind may reach.

Thou art so interwoven with my brain,
  Thou seemest more than any wife,
  To be a parcel of my life:
And little worth the housing would remain,
If thou shouldst take back all thy own again.

My fancy is no pensioner of time:
  It is a palace, where thy praise
  Is sung for ever, and thy days
Pass in a strange and everlasting prime,
And foolish love is not esteem'd a crime.

Sometimes our love seems to be young and fair,
  As if we had just lately met,
  And thou hadst not forsworn me yet:
And I wait on thy beauty everywhere,
Courting thine eyes, and studying thy hair.

Methought I made a crown for thee one day
  Of flowers fairer than fine gold,
  In which a tale of love was told.
But I lack'd heart the words of price to say,
And like June garlands kept till Yule it lay.

Thou snatchest from oblivion little things:
  The faces of the clowns we met,
  When we once walk'd home through the wet,
Thy sorcery to my remembrance brings,
And thy blue rain-bedabbl'd bonnet-strings.

I else should have forgotten long ere now
  The stanzas made by rhymer Fred
  Upon his grandmamma in lead,
Which by a dainty pucker of thy brow
Thou didst with immortality endow.

An army of old phantoms tracks me still,
  As I sit maund'ring on the gate,
  Where I for thee was wont to wait;
How fares the master of the haunted mill?
Where are the tales of Johnny Bobadil?

Like turns to like, where likeness may not shew:
  My instinct was too proud for my desert;
  But love my heart with courage girt.
I dream'd not to what height I had to go,
So well that form and face I seem'd to know.

Art thou, as when we parted, yet as fair?
  My eyes so long have wanted thee,
  And whose but mine could judge for me?
Hast thou, too, had thy reckoning with care?
Did youth engross the lustre of thy hair?

Ah! to be so admir'd, ere thou hadst learn'd
  The art of judging life at all,
  Was too unkind an ordeal.
And when thy years some common truths discern'd,
Thou hadst with me from heaven to earth return'd.

Yes, yes, the world some toll of thee hath taken;
  And thou art much as others are:
  Only more good, only more fair;
But my religion and my creed are shaken,
And as from some long reverie I waken.

I write to one grown mortal. Wast thou so?
  When thy first smile uprais'd my lot
  Skyward, I know I felt it not:
Beyond Pandora's Paradise below
I could not see—my feet refus'd to go.

We are ordain'd to suffer final waste,
  And only see our types renew'd:
  O, that the ages could have view'd

Some faint reflection of a form, which grac'd
This planet once, and then itself effac'd!

We quit not when we will, but when we must,
  And to ourselves new times to bind,
  We leave what part we may behind.
Some ever-living gifts hand down in trust:
Some an unechoing heritage of dust.

The alchemists, who labour to renew
  Our globe, and turn us to fresh use,
  Shall thee to their hard law reduce:
Thy pale cheeks shall not feel the vernal dew,
Nor thy veil'd eyes obscure the sun from view.

The earth hath a gross, boundless appetite,
  And feeds on all that air downpours,
  And all that nature back restores,
Nor knows the children of unending night
From their own era's honour and delight.

II.

Ah! I am poorer and yet richer, too!
  Poorer in this my publish'd wrong;
  Richer in such a theme for song;
And e'en my verse you make your pleasure do,
And give you back the life it had from you.

For I am not at least as one of those,
  Whose grosser spirits share with me
  The bounty of the earth and sea.
The briar takes his honour from the rose,
And mine from my poor pen, Pandora, flows.

Ask me not, why I still refuse to smother
  A love, which should by right have died:
  My love is dead and deified.
He has but what you hold from your fair mother:
The nobler share pertaineth to another.

Wide is the gulf, that severs me from you:
  Your lord elects the country life:
  To be retir'd becomes a wife!
There you must fade, and your unkindness rue,
Yet year by year for me your youth renew!

It seems as if your features in my heart
  Were burnt, to live and die with me,
  Like Hamadryad with her tree.
Your being of my being makes a part:
I ween, if you were stricken, I should smart.

Your image is impress'd upon my brain,
  Imperishably bright and deep:
  There I shall it for ever keep.
Your girlish beauty cannot long remain;
The copy I possess will never wane.

So I, who once beneath a southern sky
  View'd the rich glory of the spring,
  To that fine recollection cling.
And daintiness so rules me, that my eye
Disdains all scenes cloth'd in a poorer dye.

True passion is like the immortal Ones.
  Whatever space lies us between,
  The flame you kindled burns as keen;
And beauty's heat doth differ from the sun's,
Since it most scorcheth him, who from it runs.

And e'en now, when thy heart in a strange breast
  Nestles itself, and thou to thee
  Tak'st his in sweet security,
I think how oft a certain one profess'd
My heart her lodger, and her heart my guest.

I call thee wayward; but what then am I,
  When I straight pass from chiding thee,
  To say how dear thou art to me?
But my mind thus will waver, till I die,
And with my quenchless flame forgotten lie.

As boundless as thy beauty is my love:
  As boundless as the ocean is thy beauty:
  And how do I transgress my duty,
When who so long and valorously strove
To break the fetters, in which I still move?

I picture thee some strange new Sun below,
  A daughter of the Sun above:
  Too glorious for human love.
For thou attendest me, where'er I go,
And neither time nor distance seem'st to know.

There are degrees of spirits, we are taught;
  The next life with our own accords,
  And angels have their angel-lords.
There, too, sway intellect and force of thought,
And by strong gifts the mastery is wrought.

Thou shalt come to fresh honours. Thou who here
  Art mistress, wilt be ill-content
  Without some taste of government.
Where'er in subtler guise thou shalt appear,
Thou canst not prove less powerful or less dear.

Yet hadst thou been a deity indeed,
  And I but what I am, should I
  Have been so fond as thus to sigh
For riches, on which I could scantly feed,
Or gifts, which a sublimer nature need?

Yea, thou art such as those of yore thee viewing,
  And doubting what their gods should be,
  Would have kneel'd down, and pray'd to thee:
Thy glory in carv'd images renewing,
And on thy altars holy incense strewing.

Our fathers, in the gloaming of the day,
  Conceiv'd their makers scarce to be
  So fair as thou didst seem to me;
And all their beautiful and mighty they
Grav'd upon brass, or moulded in the clay.

These fantasies awaited not our rise;
  And where the waves for ever swell,
  Now Aphrodite loves to dwell:
On British ground, beneath less clement skies,
And men, not gods, are fetter'd to her eyes.

Had I had something of the limner's touch,
  To paint one in a world, and not of it,
  Or something of a poet's wit:
I might have shown, how I was such and such;
How little I owed myself, to thee how much!

Ah! it is not so long, since I outgrew
  My innocence, how each year ran:
  Where winter ceas'd and spring began.
My world within a world its changes knew;
But they were only to Pandora due.

How precious art thou to me still! And now
  The light of love has set in night,
  Making thee (star-wise) seem more bright,
I muse if thinking on thy unkept vow
Doth ever call a shadow to thy brow.

My heart shall be a casket to enshrine
  The likeness which I treasure of your features,
  When you seem'd fairest of God's creatures;
And when I thought, so soon as you were mine,
I should be one half human, one divine.

For then the year was one life-lengthen'd spring;
  O, it seem'd one long April day!
  Yet have I known thee sometimes sway
For me the seasons, as may some great king
His lieges, and in June December bring.

Once and again my thoughts took higher aim,
  Till I had crown'd in my mind's eye
  The summit of felicity:
To hear you bless the bearer of my name,
And see the son eclipse his father's fame.

Yet what do I not owe to One, who led
  Me in the youth of life away,
  A nobler summons to obey:
To thoughts and fancies, which my being wed
To a new creed of Liberty and Bread?

O, lead me, where the sun may heal my eyes:
  O, take me from the parching wind:
  O, let me go, and leave behind
The anger, on dull ears which wastes its cries,
And the dead hope of making folly wise!

Guard me from all of mean and narrow ken:
  Keep far away the godless throng:
  For I must work till evensong,
And then to die, but reappear again,
The honorary guest of coming men!

Let me not dwell with those, whose only care
  Is how to make a richer morrow,
  Let fall where'er it may the sorrow!
Sometimes I might our differing aims compare:
More oft the touch would prove too coarse to bear.

I ask'd too wide a homage for book-learning;
  I su'd a country maid, and thought
  I had a fairy conquest wrought;
I pictur'd her coy heart in secret yearning,
And what seem'd ice with hidden passion burning.

Too coldly looks the world on such as choose
  Rashly their partners in the wedded state:
  Beauty for poverty is no fit mate.
Nay, more—she might her perfidy excuse,
Saying: "That man was married to his Muse!"

So now the glory, which my young heart fed,
  Seems no more worth than any weed,
  For I am from thy service freed.
In bondage all my happiest hours I led,
And o'er my liberty hot tears I shed.

Lo! I am as the man who, after he
  Had in the Fairy Land sojourn'd,
  To this gross upper soil return'd;
And my life so impoverish'd I see,
That what remains seems little worth to me.

Farewell for ever! dreams of bygone days,
  Which shap'd a heaven in my thought,
  More glorious than priest has wrought!
Farewell! my early faith in women's ways!
Farewell! my early faith in foolish lays!

I pray to God that we may never meet;
  For I can still in fancy trace
  The outline of that child-like face,
And that frail form, which us'd to be the seat
Of something that for me was proud to beat.

I pray to God that He may love me so,
  That He will call me hence some day,
  When I from thee am far away,
And through the darkness I shall groping go,
Till Life and Death into one current flow.

Let me live something longer than my care:
  Let my late toil be rul'd by me,
  And be from other masters free:
To my first home let my last thought repair:
Let my last breath inhale the autumn air.

As lief would I sleep by the vast sea-strand,
  Making some quiet cave my home,
  As lie in oak or marble tomb,
Till a new age might please to till the land,
Or yield it up to savage builder's hand.

As lief would I men did my body burn,
  And let my spirit go forth free
  To what may be its destiny.
If ashes ashes dear to them discern,
Would mine with thine were mingled in one urn!

The sunlight, in which I rejoic'd so long:
  The womanhood on which these eyes
  Have look'd, as on some sovereign prize:
The tie, which prov'd so frail, and seem'd so strong:
Are more to me than any gods of song.

I bear to a new century with me
  The memory of my golden age,
  Like some fine old initial page,
Which in the antique written books we see,
When all the rest is mean obscurity.

Who loves, and prospers poorly in his suit,
  More than his time and labour earns,
  If, as year buries year, he learns,
How oft the stalk breaks promise with the root,
How oft the bloom bespeaks a wealthier fruit.

I lov'd not vainly, if I lov'd too well;
  For time the alchemist distils
  Wisdom and sweetness from our ills;
And I see, stretch'd beneath my feet, the hell,
Where once I fear'd I might for ever dwell.

Ah! he who loves too well, ne'er loves in vain,
  When he can turn base ore to gold,
  And sorrow to a new shape mould.
I have begotten of my early pain
A realm of light and gladness in my brain.

If I had loved thee less, no verse of mine
  Would have aspir'd to celebrate
  A common man's uncar'd-for fate;
And she might have been judg'd too near divine,
Who all her sex in all things did outshine.

I might have lost (if I had lov'd thee less)
  The influence of my good Lar,
  Whose genius urges me so far
As of thee my unripe thoughts to express,
And charge perfection with imperfectness.

Now into strange new worship I shall grow
  With many a maiden of this land,
  When they can rightly understand,
How large a gratitude to me they owe,
In humbling, e'er so little, their great foe.

"Lo! it is something," I shall hear them say,
"To think that her too praisèd name
Will not fill the whole roll of fame,
And that her dream of universal sway
Begins, as all dreams do, to melt away."

Yet I were then like that man of the sea,
Who had his treasure carried down
To glorify King Neptune's crown,
And wrapp'd his passion in an elegy,
As if a life's worth in a verse might be.

Or as one who a moving tale invented
Of some lost gem unparallel'd,
And half a nation wondering held:
Till he, with his fair fortune not contented,
In what was faultless one great fault lamented.

III.

Of blended souls speak now to me no more;
But let me still my passion cherish,
Not in yours see it melt and perish:
As do the sea-waves, when they clasp the shore,
Or as rash brooks each into other pour.

May-be I'll seek a marriage of two minds,
Such as a man forms with a man;
Where be at liberty I can
To study thought in all its several kinds,
And break my yoke, if it too strictly binds.

Restore my youth, and take away those eyes,
  Which tried to penetrate the gloom,
  And give me Benson's in their room;
Then I, too, may to undream'd greatness rise,
And in like manner all the world surprise.

Let none his vagrant fancy nourish more;
  Let none the Muses' call obey;
  Let none desert the beaten way;
Let none seek beauty in the rock-bound shore;
Let none his passion to the woods outpour.

Let all be well content to understand
  Only as much as they shall find
  In any coarse provincial mind;
Let all unite together, hand in hand,
To scorn what's great, and hate whatever's grand.

May honour wait upon the brimming purse;
  May hunger and contempt attend
  The fool, who does his hours misspend,
Whether in writing prose or writing verse;
May all books fall beneath the papal curse!

Well, art thou happy, then, in thy new state?
  Hast thou a taste, has he a care,
  Which he enjoys, which thou canst share?
Dost thou upon his wants, as bounden, wait?
Does he thy merrier humours tolerate?

I know not how to name thee in my thought,
  Seemeth to me so strange thy lot,
  That thou art married, yet art not.
Thy lord of thee no sureties hath sought:
Marriage on thee no lovely change hath wrought.

Beauty, like some estate in tail, should be
  Pass'd from one tenant to another;
  And thou dost wrong unto thy mother,
Who left our age her portraiture in thee,
Not doubting that the next thine own would see.

To take so much, without bequeathing aught,
  Is to misuse the trust, which Nature
  Reposed in so fair a creature.
The world would soon to beggary be brought,
If women were by thy example taught.

Or is thy charity to it so great
  That thou leav'st nought behind to vex
  Yet more the pride of thy poor sex,
And suffer men, who knew the world too late,
To envy mine, and mourn their own worse fate?

All things have their set office and deep use;
  Each star pays his fix'd sum of light,
  As feudatory of the Night.
So life is a mix'd privilege: we lose
In honour what to duty we refuse.

Unkindness, like a worm, sweet beauty blights:
  For that with love must be a liver;
  And either sex will scarce forgive her,
Who quenches, whilst she lives, all lesser lights,
And when she vanishes, the earth benights.

The roses of this summer left their heirs
  To answer to the call of spring;
  And all the coming years will bring
New life. Nature replaces and repairs;
But not beyond their season any spares.

Doth not compunction ever lodge with thee,
  When thou regardest thy foreshorten'd years,
  And life its term by little nears?
For thou wilt be the first and last lessee,
And, if thou livest, thou must live through me.

Ah! let not this memorial of you writ
  Be your sole witness by-and-by!
  Uncoin'd and sunless it may lie,
Or else please only some love-blighted wit,
Who reads a fortune like his own in it.

Who lends first borrow'd what he lends. The sun
  Collects the light, which it diffuses,
  And what it gains, the giver loses;
And so each helps to shape the other's ends,
And each on each throughout our scheme depends.

But as from fair things fairer oft evolve,
  Did you to yourself picture one
  Outshining you, as you outshone
The rest of women, and so did resolve
To close the mint, and the grand spell dissolve?

Yet think, what glory to your name had grown,
  If it had kept age after age
  In a continued vassalage:
Where now your empire is to you alone,
And then the world will some new mistress own!

Thy influence reveals a power new,
  By which thou drawest to thy sphere
  Objects remote as well as near;
And as the sun from far draws up the dew,
So thou from far dost draw my heart to you.

O, do not lean too strongly on the power,
  Which married youth and beauty lend:
  An honeymoon and then an end!
The fairer 'tis, the sooner fades the flower;
The lightning smiteth first the topmost tower.

Thy charms, though now they seem so infinite,
  Thou canst not carry with thee far.
  Time will not pity thee; 'twill mar
That beauty, which was once my soul's delight,
And pale those orbs, to day which turn the night.

Spurn all those treacherous delights, which eat
  Into the sinews of our life:
  Teach what men prize most in a wife.
Promote those arts, that for thy state are meet,
And prove thy pow'r of turning all to sweet.

Lay up thy beauty, as it were some treasure
  Too rare to meet the common view:
  Use frugally God's gifts to you.
Harder toil none than they who toil for pleasure,
And that toil slays, which never knoweth leisure.

Be not like to those spendthrift heirs, who throw
  Their life into a summer's day;
  All things one common god obey;
Time's plough will drive, where now is pathless snow:
'Twill come, where now the rose and cherry grow.

Go not abroad the thriftless sort among,
  Hoard up thy youth, as men do gold;
  And when thou growest old,
'Twill be a thing on every maiden's tongue,
To say: "How fair was she, when she was young?"

Eschew those garish lights, which soon will kill
  The tender bloom upon thy cheek—
  Or hast even thou grown vain and weak?—
Too frail to shun the sweets, which work us ill:
Too prone thy froward fancies to fulfil?

Is it that those incomparable eyes,
  Which, while the day his journey runs,
  Enrich the world with two more suns,
Will make so many advocates arise,
That what I write shall seem but calumnies?

Is it the crowning fortune of thy lot
  To dazzle so our purblind race,
  Till men see nothing but thy grace?
Till we thy fickleness have quite forgot,
Or for thy sake hold fickleness no blot?

Perhaps I might once have wish'd to see thee have
  A higher trust in things, in which
  None of thy sex can be more rich:
Faith in those virtues, which outlast the grave,
And for thyself a nobler name to save.

Still, when thou canst no longer with us stay,
  The loss of thee alone will be
  A system of philosophy.
If death hath leave to summon thee away,
'Tis vain to question the whole world's decay.

How many a flow'r, now bedded in the stone,
  Had once, as any flow'r we see,
  Its vigour and its liberty;
Till Time, which maketh all our world his own,
Turn'd it to rock, and rock where it had grown!

So vanish finest natures, and nowhere,
Save on a wall or in some page,
Paint to the eye of the next age
The regal minds and shapes divine which dare
To bid all others wonder and despair.

'DO YOU ASK ME, WHENCE I DREW'

I.

Do you ask me, whence I drew
The likeness which I sent to you,
And if, or no, I ever knew
One so divine?

II.

Was the colouring too rich?
Did I strike too high a pitch,
When I sang the rare parts, which
In her do shine?

III.

Thus, then, it was first begun:
Through the sex I had to run;
Of their charms each lent me one
To make Pandora.

IV.

When a man gives fancy reins,
Great the labour, small the gains:
Who would credit the vast pains
I took o'er her?

V.

To paint a moonbeam, ere it flits:
To draw our kitten, while she sits:
In some brains to find the wits:
Were as simple.

VI.

Skin not too white nor too brown:
Breath as sweet as rose new-blown:
Here a smile, there a frown:
Here a dimple.

VII.

I took light from Dora's eyes,
The sunshine, that in Mildred's lies,
And the red with coral vies
'Twixt Ida's lips.

VIII.

Lillian ceded me her nose:
Muriel's azure veins I chose:
Gertrude gave the pearly rows,
Where Cupid sips.

IX.

Still, to make a perfect fair
I begg'd dear Lucy's hair,
And Maud had her form to spare
Angelical.

X.

But I found, when I had done,
And had to sweet Ferrers gone,
I could paint from her alone
These beauties all.

THE BARON'S DAUGHTER

SPEAK no more of the Baron's Daughter! speak of her, my friend, to me no more!
Ah! well enough we lov'd each other—thou hast heard me tell the tale before?
That meeting on the swollen river, and those last words on the lone sea-shore.

Ere my foot was uplifted from English ground, the glory had gone from the tree.
'Twas a sweetly importunate friendship, which then launch'd me upon the sea,
A scholar uncouth and companionless, save the thoughts which travell'd with me.

Although I may place betwixt me and England a viewless expanse of foam,
And beyond the cold watch of the white bear it may happen to me to roam,
My fancy obeys my bidding, and spreads its wings, to carry me home.

I lay at the Golden Pelican in Tours, in the eye of the Mairie,
And parcell'd my days out among the pleasures which crowded to wait on me:
An husbandman, storing unwinnow'd grain for labours that were to be.

The peaches I bought upon the quay have pow'r to cloy my palate still;
And I recollect the old Rouge's discourses on Providence and Will;
And, withal, the affair which went so far my measure of sorrow to fill.

I can speak of it now quite calmly; for the passion
went down long ago.
Tens of thousands, and tens of ten, since then have
pass'd above and pass'd below:
But the spirit has left the waters, and they like all
other waters flow.

By the river or on the bridge I lov'd to wander o'
nights from my inn;
For the breeze and the current nurs'd the young and
succulent fancies within;
And the grass, sky, and water to those I had left
behind seem'd much akin.

Once I stray'd, as my use was, riverward, and the
bridge was surging with men;
And as I press'd, where the tumult was loudest, the
old city clock struck ten:
When I list, in spots and in times far distant, it strikes
for me over again!

All voices were singing a common burden, like some
hoarse unearthly quire;
And the torches of tow were hissing like the heather
in a prairie fire;
And the billowing northern wind wreak'd on the rain-
glutted river its ire.

"Who will save an old man's only daughter, let him ask from me what he will,"
Resounded a voice, and an English voice, which seem'd my ears to thrill;
"O Death, let the old life redeem the young, if thou must one of us kill!"

The foreigners stood, and the foreigners shouted; but ne'er an one leapt in;
And her strength wax'd weak, as the tide wax'd strong, till the stream was over her chin.
Betwixt life and death the struggle began, and death appear'd liker to win.

I sprang, by a kind of wizard impulse, to a place by the speaker's side:
"Launch a boat from the shore! to the rescue!" with a voice like a bell I cried.
'An Englishman ought to disdain to shrink back, and what can be done must be tried!"

A weird new impression possess'd me, of having ascended an height,
Where below me I saw, in a turbid pool, by the moon's unsteadfast light,
A lily, as it were crush'd and rent by a passionate breeze in the night.

For a moment, on the low parapet, like one irresolute
I stood :
In a moment more from the parapet I had plung'd
into the flood :
The winter, which lay about me, was thaw'd by the
midsummer in my blood.

There was one red moon in the water, and another
red moon in the air ;
And between them there glimmer'd and quiver'd, I
thought, a white moon thrice as fair ;
And I snatch'd up the white moon under my arm,
and I left the red moon there.

For it was the Baron's Daughter ; and it was a sadness
enough to see
Her soft bloom nipp'd, like a maiden rose sorely
wounded by a bee.
But I had replied to a challenge, and might ask to
have the winner's fee.

All the rooms of the Pelican appear'd wrought into
one by sorcery,
When I woke in my lord's Touraine château with a
start and with a sigh :
"Are you better?" ask'd he ; "my daughter will see
you"——"Who might she be?" quoth I.

Quoth I: "O, you have a daughter? 'Tis good.
Look, sir, I dream'd last night,
That I sav'd some old man's only child, when she
was drowning in his sight;
And now I bethink me, the old man, sir, was much of
your hair and height!"

I saw certain wrinkles muster, and his tremulous lips
contract as with pain;
And I felt on the sudden, as if a film were uplifted
from my brain;
And my thoughts seem'd to reunite once more, like
the links of a broken chain.

My honourers were of the Dear Ones of Britain, whose
lot the gods forecast;
And my life on the Loire my visions of dreamy
Phæacia surpass'd;
Till my happiness, like some Eastern's fairness, seem'd
too exquisite to last.

Our friendship appear'd in its early youth almost on
ancient lines to run;
So strange and romantic, they said, was the way in
which it had first begun;
And her beauty rose up like a flow'r, which unjewels
itself in the sun.

I might have prolong'd my content, and made the journey with them in the spring;
But I pleaded a pressure upon me, or some other such wayward thing;
For I thought of the Lotos-eaters, and desir'd to be my own Wise King!

They bade me farewell with the warmest expressions and with the tenderest grace;
And something was said of my coming about the autumn to Marmion Place:
But her lips spoke to me a language weaker than the language of her face.

She question'd if time could have strength to chasten a remembrance now so dear,
In accents so low, that she seem'd far away, though her breath embalm'd my ear;
And the fringe of an eyelid was gemm'd with something which glitter'd like a tear.

My exploit had travell'd, prospering, as it went, like a nurse's tale;
And ere I came home to sing it myself, I found the song was growing stale.
Then who but a lover wore brows so wintry and a cheek so starv'd and pale?

The current of common experience flow'd as yet in a shallow course,
And it asked not a seer's eye to trace my new alliance to its source;
But there was the influence, which gave to it a precocious age and force.

She was in a manner free to choose, though her father's heir was she
Of all the broad tract which lay in the sun, and was neighbour to the sea.
O, she might have been wedded to whom she listed; she might have been wedded to me!

Her father was aged, and crav'd sea-change, in the lady's own hand came word;
And he wonder'd why of their young knight (this was I) no tidings had been heard;
And nothing would serve but I must go down to the South, and make the third.

I heard a voice saying: "Grasp the occasion, which waiteth on no man twice;
For shall not the heiress of Marmion thy unschool'd ambition suffice?
Every one in this world has his time; everything in this world has its price."

But a second rose, answering the first, like some shrill bugle on a wold:
"Shun the greatness that cannot enrich thee, the height where thy foot cannot hold,
So long as the land must marry the land, and the gold must marry the gold."

She call'd me her noble preserver: said from me that she took back her life;
In a sweet still voice she said that she might have been some river-god's wife;
Her words to my ear were fairy music; her words cut my heart like a knife.

I urg'd her to look beyond honours, whose fountain was only in the brain;
But her thoughts gave me rank, she said, which none of the honours of blood could gain;
And her eyelashes grew like silken curtains, besprent with the summer rain.

Then she chid my too doubting temper, asking, who knew so well how to dare?
Asking, if I had doubted upon the Loire bridge, could she have met me there?
And she laid her hot eyes on my shoulder and the affluence of her hair.

I felt the tears gushing from both my eyelids, like
globules of scalding brine.
I said: "On the bridge, in the river, that night, my
life should have ransom'd thine;
But, O, ere I saw thee and sav'd thee, would some
other had taken mine!

"O, would I had been such an one as a purseful of
thanks could have paid,
Or would (for thy sake) that I could on thy temples
a coronet have laid!
But let the debt be its own quittance, or let it an
heirloom be made!

"Even if in my own mind's vision the ends of the
earth upgather'd were:
And I could the palm from all collegians and from
all professors bear:
I might have seem'd more heroic in some academic
chair.

"Could I have had pow'r to summon down the ages
which time doth owe:
And to make the mute future before us both with life
and beauty glow:
It would have been better, if I had been such another
as many I know.

"Although I were crown'd King of science, and all wisdom were my free-hold:
Had the labours of my poor life surpass'd those of others an hundredfold:
It would have been better, if I could have had a city's ransom in gold.

"Though I were as steadfast and true, as is the golden-eyed sun to the sea,
That all lovers in all the time to come might draw an example from me,
It would have avail'd me far more, had I had a volume of pedigree.

"I had striven with my whole gallantry for the prizes, which ought to fall
To the stronger in brain and thought, to the freer from fear and thrall.
But wherever I look'd, the publican throve, and I found nor favour nor call.

"For he, that desires more knowledge than others, must at his life's price be taught;
And he that would have more wit than his fellow, it comes to him dearly bought;
And he that all wit and knowledge has conquer'd, what is his guerdon but nought?

"Cease to weep, Edith Marmion," I cried, "O, cease, if only for his sake,
Who fortun'd once from too early a slumber thy listless heart to awake;
I am what I am, Edith Marmion; I cannot my nature unmake.

"Thou wilt marry one, who has a master-key to open the hearts of men:
Who holds horses more precious than scholars, and a whip more worth than a pen.
But though our paths lie far apart, at first I shall rule thy thoughts now and then.

"Thou wilt marry within thine order—such a man as I think that I know;
He will warp all thy nobler nature, though his influence be slow;
And my name and my voice will wax fainter and fainter, as the seasons come and go.

"I foresee the confiding humour; some of thy earlier story he will seek.
I hear thee tell all our adventure to him far better than I could speak,
Thy tones somewhat shaken by feelings, and the purple mantling thy cheek.

"Though I acted a common part, I picture thee paying me a sweet rite,
When a sound like an ice-burthen'd torrent takes thine ear in a winter night,
Till thy husband has ask'd to be pardon'd, and his lip begins to bite."

"Ah! you lords of letters are prouder," she said, "than any lords of the land;
And I feel that the culture you worship must be something sweet and grand.
But will you not leave poor titled folk just room enough to stand?

"My father, and his, and all our line, as over the lengthening past I look,
Were soldiers who loyally answered their call, as you do yours to the book:
And never a Marmion yet," quoth she, "his honour or duty forsook."

I saw a shy pensive expression come, as she turn'd her face half away,
As if more than kindness warranted she had suffer'd herself to say.
But the light broke soon through the passing cloud, like the sun on an August day.

I call'd all the years behind me, and they came like a
Masque of Sleep:
And when I look'd back upon it, the path I had
trodden seem'd long and steep.
Some much of the corn I had sown was rotten; but
some little was to reap.

I said: "I might draw near to thee, Edith, and thou
mightest draw near to me,
If the world as the stars and the tide was from all
lowering passions free;"
And I led her eyes up with mine to the heaven, and
led them back to the sea.

"Yester even with our orb's dusk shadow the moon
shrouded her flushing face,
Till her beauty reveal'd itself only as a bride's through
the bridal lace,
And the earth and its freight, and thou and I too,
were dwarf'd to a cubit's space.

"There is stillness, so far as my eye can range; there
is stillness on the shore;
And the discord is only within my own breast and
round my own heart's core.
But the swallows draw narrower circles now, and the
curlew calls no more.

"I have sat on the rocks in the sunshine, by a pool like a mermaid's glass,
When the vast liquid volume before me lay lifeless as summer grass,
Till my heart turn'd against the thrilling silence, and I pray'd that it might pass.

"I have crouch'd, while the gale was angriest, in the bowery brow of a clift,
And seen the vex'd ocean itself, like a giant, in paroxysms lift;
Till the sands lost their yellow lustre, and grew swarth with the wreckage and drift.

"Look now, where the storm-cloud cometh, and where the wind maketh ready to blow!
If I were alone, it might lighten my bosom to watch the tempest grow;
But thou hast been tenderly nurtur'd;—look! it neareth, and we must go."

She smil'd, and said: "Marmion Place will please you. In the autumn the mellow rind
May bring with it mellower counsels and a something cooler mind."
But the strengthening swirl of the sea-wind quench'd her speech, and our throats enbrin'd.

I call'd all the years from the future, and they came
like a pageant-play;
My fancy was throng'd with figures, and my unspent
life in my mind's eye lay.
I scorn'd all the witcheries of the world, I thought,
and kept my own fix'd way.

I felt that my life, like a wheel on the lathe, was
shap'd to a certain end;
And it seem'd like a jest of fate, even in an angel's
garb, to send
One whom birth made too great for a wife, and who
had grown too dear for a friend.

We parted at last in the saddest of moods beneath
the brightest of skies;
I knew that for me my action was foolish, although
for her it might be wise;
But I borrow'd the glow of her cheek and the light of
her glorious eyes.

I re-enter'd the world, as one who hath with a wealthy
new fancy slept—
O, the grief that we pay with tears dies sooner than
the grief which lives unwept!
O, the memories, costliest to keep, are e'er the longest
to be kept!

I regarded all those about me, and they seem'd so strange and so cold,
As if I had slumber'd, and in my slumber grown some lifetime old.
But my tranquiller brain recall'd me, and the too true story told.

Let the wind and the sun use me gently; let me have, while I live, bread to eat;
My eyes cannot see through the vapour the world where she and I are to meet.
What seem'd to be glory proves weariness: what seem'd to be bitter proves sweet.

God forbid I should ever be tempted by lands or the value of lands,
To dwell where the master the servants, and the mistress the master, commands;
Where the wife overshadows the husband, and the reins change the sex of her hands!

My sorrow belongs to the winter-time, as methinks that all sorrow should,
When the days are short, and the nights are long, and the bud is enwomb'd in the wood.
If such a thing must be, the mirthless season best answers the mirthless mood.

For, lo! in the spring the pulse beats quicker, and
the heart of a man grows young,
While the new year is yet of tender age, and the old
year's knell hath been rung;
And, besides the love of a woman, there are things
to be ponder'd and sung.

I seem to hear something, which calls me away from
fostering vain regrets,
When the wayward wind of March uncanopies the
Lenten violets,
Saying: "Whoso too long houseth trouble, his mission
and manhood forgets."

When the life of the night is shortest, and men tire
of the sating days:
In the summery time, when it comes, with its burthen
of blossom and praise,
My Muse claps her wings in the sunshine, and builds
me serener lays.

But my trouble returns in the winter, when the air is
hungry and clear,
As it was on the night, when I cross'd the bridge,
and her sharp cry smote my ear;
And I think, how it might have been for us both,
had I not then been near.

I think of the scruples, which so many judg'd to be too generous then;
And I feel that they grew out of a too narrow communion with men;
For of my whole youth and my manhood chief comrades had been my thoughts and my pen.

Yet what was I but a student, without even a yeoman's fee,
In a country where every merchant seem'd to rattle his purse at me;
And again and again comes the feeling that it was as it was to be.

It brings the dead past back to me, when I look at my trophy of toil,
And read in the mirror'd lines of my brow the story of tillage and spoil;
And I poise the dominion of the mind with the dominion of the soil.

When I muse on my humble fortune and a laborious life misspent,
And think of the château on the Loire and a statelier dwelling in Kent,
I laugh, as men laugh at the follies, which they learn too late to repent.

Still hath sorrow its own enchantment, which none
but the sorrower knows,
As to me across dim ice-girt tracts the pulseless
March wind blows,
To rifle the odours of southern springs, and dwell
with the youth of the rose.

Or as the sweet spice asks the bruiser's hand to make
its privy sweetness known,
So I think out of grief how to many ere now strange
happiness has grown;
And sooner than any false, narrowing tie, let me live
darkly alone.

I met her first upon the river, and I met her last
upon the shore.
O, enough! O, enough! the garland I won a still
unworthier wore:
Speak no more of the Baron's Daughter, speak of her
no more, no more!

A stranger snatch'd from me a conquest as noble
as many an one of the sword;
I rail'd at my moody pride, saying, "Well, a fool has
a fool's reward!"
I lov'd her too well to meet her again, or to be a
guest at her board.

I could not have sat at her board, unless it had been in the master's place.

But I wish her happy, God knows, and often call back her young and happy face—

Well, there is the story, my throat is parch'd; pray you, go a gentler pace.

LATER POEMS

1875–1891

HYLAS; OR, A VISION OF SEA-FOLK

A MASQUE.

THE PROLOGUE.

Delivered by Pan.

The scene, a wood.

I PRAY you all of your sweet courtesy
To understand that I, renown'd god Pan,
Whose home is in the broad Arcadian woods,
Am honour'd by the duty of demanding
Your pardon and your favour for the tale,
Which certain dwellers in the watery deep
Present to-night to you, sway'd by the hope
Of drawing their requital from your smiles.
The story is in part of a sweet youth,
Whom once the tenants of these pleasant glades
Woo'd, striving which should win him for her own,
For he was of a most mark'd comeliness.
And while the Nymphs were in a sharp debate,
Which should possess young Hylas all alone,

A strange thing chanc'd, which you are soon to hear.
But 'tis not in my charge to tell you more;
I must away, and so for now farewell.

[*He descends.*

The scene opens, and discloses a grotto of pearl, supposed to be at the bottom of the sea. Several NYMPHS *are seated by it. One of them rises and sings.*

THE SONG.

As there are spirits of the air,
So there, too, of the water be:
ALL. *And such are we.*
NYM. *O, we cannot live anywhere,*
Only beneath the deep blue sea.
From morn till eve
We sit and weave
Grass, rush, and leaf
From rock and reef;
Which for our lovers garlands be:
Here and here,
Far and near,
About and beneath the deep blue sea.

[*She retires.*

A second rises and sings.

THE SONG.

Of coral are our houses made;
With amber combs we dress our hair
ALL. *So green and fair.*
NYM. *We sit all day in the sweet cool shade,*
And certain to us from earth repair.
ALL. *They lead a life*
Free from all strife;
NYM. *And p'rhaps a wife,*
Who thought that she had paid Death his fee,
Finds a new home,
Through the salt foam,
Down in the heart of the deep blue sea.
[*She retires.*

A third rises and sings.

THE SONG.

On speckled dolphins' backs we ride
Bravely through the twilight dim,
ALL. *Nimble and trim.*
NYM. *Or through the azure waters wide*
We joyously and deftly swim.
Sometimes we sport
In merry sort:
Sometimes we bring
Gifts to our king,
And for him sing.

And for our love the mermen bold
Search without fee
Under the sea
For shipwreck'd treasure and sunken gold.
[*She retires.*

A fourth rises and sings.

THE SONG.

These liquid realms one king obey;
And all rivers, which court the sea,
ALL. *His vassals be.*
NYM. *No lords of earth possess such sway,*
Nor have such large domains, as he.
When skies be foul,
And the winds howl:
When waters roar,
And clouds down-pour,
He loves the shore;
For 'tis blanch'd with the earthmen's bones.
And many a ship
His minions strip
Of gums, perfumes, and precious stones.
[*They all retire.*

The grotto descends, and behind it the scene opens, discovering the court of the SEA-KING, *in a chamber walled with agate, and floored with variegated marbles. Around him* TRITONS, NEREIDS, *&c., all suitably arrayed. The* KING *is dressed in a*

rich green vesture, fastened with emeralds and sapphires, over which is a robe of cloth-of-gold. He wears a crown of coral set with gems. In his hand a golden trident. A chain of amber and gold round his neck.

He rises and speaks.

King. I am the King of the vast and fruitful ocean,
And every mortal man, who these realms enters,
Forfeits his breath, and into some form groweth
Of strange sea-property: yet are there earthmen,
Between whose natures and our own a kinship
Reveals itself, and we have art and power
Such to convert into new shapes of beauty.
My kingdom is of years with Space and Time,
And all throughout its large and varied area
I have my royal seats; but these do chiefly
Neighbour upon the hungry-hearted English,
Whom I love foremost: for above all other
Their keels go laden from the fairy Orient
With gather'd spoils of Western enterprising,
Of which they pay rich tribute to my treasury.
And when the tidings come of wealthy ventures
Carving the surface of this watery volume,
I straight enlarge the winds, and move the billows
To a strange fury; and (above the tempest)
My spirits utter shrill and horrid noises:
Till all the life there has been quench'd and drownéd,

And Death and I have prov'd the greatest merchants.
We have store of such things of fear and pity,
Which certain learned mermen, for their pleasure,
Knit into tales of mix'd delight and wonder,
To whisper in the ears of our sea-maidens.
So it was in the flow'ry days of Sidon,
Carthage, Phœnicia, and the Hellenes;
And 'tis of our sea-government the policy,
Which from our first beginning hath descended.

As he concludes, twelve TRITONS *and twelve* NEREIDS, *suitably apparelled, enter, and dance together. The dance ended, one of each advances, and they sing alternately.*

THE SONG.

Come unto this watery home,
All dwellers on the dull old earth:
To this watery mansion come,
And lengthen out your days with mirth.

Only we, that live below,
Are from pain and sorrow free.
Come to us, and you shall know
The precious mysteries of the sea.

We have grottoes and recesses,
Where the fern and sea-thorn grow:
We make fillets for our tresses
Of the pinks, that there do blow.

Nature is no prude to us:
Her whole beauty we enjoy.
Mortals do not give her thus
Her full scope, and she turns coy.

NER. *Mortal lady once was I,*
Though my name be out of mind,
I was all too young to die,
When Fate prov'd unkindly kind.

TRI. *She whom you a Nereid see,*
Wore not always that blest guise:
Her love was the life of me,
And her beauty chain'd all eyes.
She was Hero——

NER. *Yes, and you!—*
Were Leander call'd tofore.
Us the sea-god to him drew——
TRI. *And we are to part no more.*

ECHO through the caves. *Part no more!*

The KING *rises again, and speaks.*

King. Tritons, enough. Time out of mind, my lieges,
I now have rul'd o'er you your kingly father.
I was, ere you had Being. The beginnings
Of these vast tracts, which belt the earth, I know not,

But I refer myself and my sea-empire
To workings of the Universal Nature,
Which wrought us of some texture more than
human:
Not perishable particles, begetting
Others as perishable down the centuries,
But one continuous individual Being:
Exempt from all terrestrial ordinances,
And from the laws, which other systems govern.
Call me my Hylas. He was of those creatures,
Which in the confines of the Moon more nearly
Than us live and inhabit, till his moment
Of happiness arriv'd, and of this region
Of cloudless joys he was confirm'd a freeman.
Hark! from the nearness where good Hylas comes,
His tuneful throat the herald of himself!

The Song of Hylas.

(*As from within*)

Under the earth, under the sea,
Merrily, merrily,
We do the tasks,
Which our life asks:
We dig for gems,
Which some of us do wear
In diadems,
And some about their hair.

And we gather mosses and all choice shells
Which we
Can see,
When the phosphorus kindles glens and dells.

When as the wind is hush'd and still,
Then sounds the Triton's conch more shrill,
Through all the caves,
Up to the waves,
And the answer comes from the sea-bird's throat
In air
Somewhere;
For he knows, where he is, the merman's note.

Under the sea, under the earth,
There is more pleasure and mirth,
Than mortals know,
Who come below,
Only to be
Chang'd into something new,
Save two or three,
Whom Death does but endue
With gifts not dreamt of in their native sphere,
And such a lot was mine, when I came here.

When so the wind is loud and wroth,
And whips the waters into froth,
Scarce any breath
Is heard beneath;

For the elements may not penetrate
With brawl
Or squall
The place, where the sea-god keeps his state.
[*He appears.*

Hail to my ever-gracious prince and master!

King. Thanks, trusty Hylas, for the swift obedience,
That honours our commands. Our clemency
And the benign complexion of our reign
Do worship to the yielding love of them,
Whose eyes are bred in serving to see fitness,
And only mutual bondage in all lordship.
Now earward bend thy wit. These passed few seasons
Those who work under ocean for our profit
Have tax'd the patient earth more than seems honest,
For come to me new rumours from the mines,
Which through uncounted ages we have tilled,
Of something like a growing neighbourhood,
In depths that lie beyond our present ken,
To that vast region of perpetual fire,
Which thou didst once deliver in a council
To be in thine opinion the complexion
Of the most inward entrails of the earth.

Hyl. Those, O my king, who worship your desires,
And change your thoughts into responding works,
Where all around the sea's unstinted labours
Have so prevailed upon the sterile rocks,
That their first nature in a sort is varied,

Come freighted with such tidings, as I hope
May shew their fancy wealthier than their wit.
King. You said it was a wondrous new emotion,
Giving a sudden pulse and vital faculty
To that immeasurable and monstrous world,
Which makes the bound of our antique domain.
Hyl. It may be warrantable, sir, to think
That there is, bordering on our utmost confines,
A country and a people, to whom fire
Is what these waters are to us: their life,
Their breath, the fabric of their souls.
There seethes, perchance, a molten burning volume
Beneath us, as I speak, which will dissolve,
Like errant glaciers in a tropic sea,
This pebbled barrier, this rock-built bed,
And so two worlds—of water this, and that
Of flame, shall each the other ruin—
King. Foreshadow nought so terrible. But, Hylas,
Thou traffickest in visions, as do most
In pearls and shells and usual commodities.
Often and often, as I recollect,
Thy king's ear has been taken no loth captive
By stories of some mint, when thou and thine
Were shepherds there in Mysia, sire and son,
Which took the mother gold, and gave it back
With some terrestrial similitude,
Deeply and lively cut upon its face:
May-be a lamb or ox, or e'en an archer;

And thou hadst seen, thou saidest (O, most strange!)
A piece which shewed a nymph upon a dolphin—
Well, such is thy poor brain: for ever frothing
With some fresh-wean'd conceit—

Hyl. Ah! dearest master,
Forgive me, if I chide you yet once more
For letting your affections run too much
In a strait sea-girt circle. Prythee think
The earth and sea more interchangeable;
For such as are not drawn toward the plough,
Among those, whose frail nature I once shar'd,
Or to the business of a shepherd's life,
Till this vast plain of water at their will;
And there is no such fruitful husbandry.
These merchants must be gamesters or no merchants,
And they who play at fortune with the sea,
Find it a kinder servant than a master,
And staking his whole treasure on one cast,
Often the poor adventurer descends
Unpiloted to this broad-bosom'd haven,
And leaves your highness his unschedul'd heir.

King. They covet the whole vantage; but we claim
To be coparceners. Is it not just?
They tender us no freedom of their lands!

Hyl. My king's words are like truth exactly painted—

King. But our thoughts journey, as the sea-fowl flies,
And whence they started, thither they return.
I like not this discourse of novel sounds,

This talk of motions fretful and unquiet,
On the imagin'd verge of life and space;
As though the ancient fixity were gone,
And the broad floor, whereon our kingdom rests,
Were but the ceiling of some blazing world,
Whose thirst, if once the flame should pierce an inlet,
The ocean twenty-fold might fail to slake.
Then, Hylas, think, this dear time-honoured fabric
Would crumble into chaos! O, 'tis horrible!
Wherefore I charge you, as you rate our friendship,
To wing throughout the realm our wish and edict,
That all henceforth forbear to search for treasure,
Or fashion to their use the clouded jasper,
Till our swift messengers more surely learn,
What truth resides in this perplexing tale.

Hyl. It asks but your good will to make our duties
Wear both the name and quality of pleasures;
And so our pleasures, by a kindred sorcery,
Are chang'd into the likeness of our duties.
Ah, dear my lord, this enjoin'd term of pastime
Will be the sweetest and the fruitfullest fallow.
For we have mermen, who can coin the onyx
Into fair standing cups for our high feast-days,
And make all things which (or in hills or valleys)
Have their peculiar seat beneath the waters,
Each in its turn, serve and fulfil our uses.
Sometimes we'll penetrate the ice o' winters,
And force the Arctic bears to do our bidding,

Making them carry us whole leagues unbridled
Upon the bosom of the Frozen Ocean.
And otherwhiles we'll track the fearful walrus
To his cold dwelling in some icy fastness;
Or, marking where the seal has left his footprint,
Get vestments for our monarch and his nobles,
And gallant trappings for our pageant-players.
Or, borrowing the shape of a tall Polack
Or brawny Zeelander, we'll shoot like lightning
Along the horny crust of silent Volga
Or of more southern Scheldt, to the amazement
Of many a worldling.
Nor will our Tritons fear to offer battle
In middle stream to the weird octopus,
And drag him down to untried depths their captive.
Now we shall snare the sturgeon, as he slumbers
Upon some tract of slimy, unctuous herbage,
By a tall mountain's side, about the summer.
Then the rich-freighted whale, inertly floating
Upon the tide, like a new-risen island,
Shall fall to our fleet spears; and Indian fishers,
Diving for pearls, what time the Dog-star ruleth,
We'll seize at unawares, and take their gettings
To hang them at the ears of our sweet sea-nymphs.
Hey for this frolic life! Cloy with long use
Much ease and little care: but for the nonce
They daintily unite.

King. 'Tis now, good Hylas,

Full twenty centuries since first your beauty
Robb'd of their heart's-ease certain water-ladies
Who, as their chief-rent for the running season,
Brought you to us by sundry secret channels,
For which they stand discharg'd from farther tribute.
Then, as your years came, harvested with virtues,
Of which the buds lay couch'd beneath your nonage,
You grew to be our treasurer and steward.

Hyl. Methinks I can yet in some deeper study
Discern the limpid voices of the Naiads,
As I emerg'd from my sharp drowning ecstasy:
"O, speak to us, if it be but a little,
Young Hylas, gentle Hylas, mystic creature,
Too like ourselves not to quit your humanity,
And be a liver in a less gross region."
O my most gracious prince, my loving labour
Has been a partner with my wit by piecemeal
To make me less a debtor to your highness;
And I have heard that, jealous of my traffic,
The gnomes, who guard the Earth's untravell'd centre,
Have mark'd me of all other for their quarry.
For by my chemistry I first discover'd
In subteraqueous rocks unnoted properties:
The homes of precious oils, volcanic fluids;
Salts, ductile ores, and earths of divers service.
But, far above them all, the noble mystery
Of fire, which men hold erringly we have not.
These benefits have brought me place and honour

Beyond the merchandise in sheep and oxen,
Which my old shepherd father did in Mysia.
O, to have been a man, and grow immortal,
Is something rapturous: our life abstracted
From hopes and fears, and all corrupt emotions:
And our delighted souls left at their liberty
To dwell in viewless depths of unstain'd azure,
Beyond the scope and empire of the wind-god.
Yet, even as I am, I know of seasons,
When I return to earth, as in a day-dream,
Clothing myself again with flesh and passions,
And in my foregone being see a sweetness,
A warmth, a motive pow'r, a form and colour,
Which seem to seek in this sea-bound divinity.
Ah me! just here a rose my nostril punctur'd,
Ere I learnt how all sweets are match'd to dangers;
And still I keep the taste of the wrath master's sapling,
When I went, one of four, to rob a neighbour orchard.
I know the Mysian blood's, too, in a sort within me;
For to my palm for ever and for ever
Cleaves something which for me has a strange dearness,
Since last my fingers furr'd themselves in groping
Through our ewes' fleeces in the second winter.
Nor have I lost the beauty of the water-lilies,
Which fring'd our forest pools: when so I wander'd,
My charge safe-folded, through the pathless thickets,
In mid-year twilight, when the leaves are longest.

King. Ah! Hylas, wilt thou still be so disloyal,
As 'twixt the earth and sea to halve thy fealty,
And to thy prince be but a moiety bounden—
Thy prince, who sav'd thee from a meaner fortune:
The fickle passion of the river-spirits,
And then the common crown of every mortal—
To be (like us) unchang'd, unchangeable!
O, it is time that thy unschool'd affections
Should turn, as doth the needle, to one centre.
Not like some swain, new-parted from his lady,
Be ever casting backward love-sick glances.
Yet it goes so with all the sons of women;
For of thy humour is our fair young poet
Who, if return were not denied, would ransom
The sedges of the Cam e'en with his godhead.
He has a thirsty heart, not sweetly languid,
Like the true sea-born. I can well remember,
Though ages have since seen their circles rounded,
How, on an inky night in middle winter,
I found him, panting and three-quarters senseless,
In the black furrows of the Irish Ocean;
And singling him by my divine foreknowledge
From out his shipmates, bore him to my palace,
Where I caus'd nymphs, sprung of no mortal mothers,
To minister to him; and there his manhood
Suffer'd conversion, and he woke a Triton.
The name which he had worn on earth was blotted
Out from his brain, and in our crystal chamber

The style of Lycidas he took upon him,
And to be our chief poet and musician—
But since your thoughts so love to act the truants,
Tell me, dear Hylas, if across your fancy
Steals not at times some lay you us'd to homeward—
Some tale of shepherds' life, their loves and fortunes?
May-be, it might be pleasant for its strangeness,
Which in things unaccustom'd ranks a virtue.

Hyl. My lord, your grace can best of all remember
What my years were, when first the tricksy Naiads
Snatch'd me from I know not what different future,
And quite exempted me from all probation.
Believe I only sorted with the younger striplings,
And life to me was like a schoolboy's lesson.
But since you put your high command upon me,
We had in my old home such things as these are—

THE FIRST SONG.

When violets draw to their prime,
And meadows wear their saffron coats,
O, then it is the sweet spring-time,
And nestlings warble prentice notes.

When dainty almond-buds appear,
And new green glitters on the boughs,
The youth has come of another year,
And lovers think of Christmas vows.

When cowslips stoop to sip the dew,
And daisies pie the shelter'd croft,
*Then comes once more the arch cuckoo,**
And chants the lark his hymn aloft.

When dust-stain'd March must go his way,
False April enters as his heir:
Then country lasses choose for May,
And country lads the young birds snare.

Or thus sometimes it pleas'd a lordlier gallant
To build a trophy to his round year's wooing:—

THE SECOND SONG.

When winter winds blow strong and shrill:
When mantling snow drifts up the hill:
And when the redbreast haunts my sill—
I think of a lady I love—
Ah! a lady that loves not me!

When spring reclothes the shivering trees:
When th' young grass shoots along the leas:
When busy housewives tell their bees:
I think of a lady I love—
Ah! a lady that loves not me!

---

* "Somer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu."
—*Earliest English Song.*

When summer suns shine hot and clear:
When the corn 'gins ripen in the ear:
When the sward hath grown both parch'd and sear:
I think of a lady I love—
Ah! a lady that loves not me!

When autumn leaves are shed aground:
When harvest-lads drink glasses round:
When hunter dreams of horse and hound:
I think of a lady I love—
O, a lady that loveth me!

Then here is one more strain, and I have finish'd;
I had not thought my memory half so fruitful;
And I must end, lest it outlive your patience:—

THE THIRD SONG.

A fair girl sat by a leafless tree:
Her cheek on her hand was pillowèd;
And all that I heard was, "Woe is me!
My love is dead!"

She sat there all the sweet summer day,
And many and many a tear she shed,
But she seem'd to me only to say:
"My love is dead!"

There was music of birds not far away;
But little, I wot, of it she knew.
"My lover is dead," I heard her say.
"Would I were too!"

King. Those songs content me rarely; for I find them
Not thin and sapless, like our own sea-music,
But th' have a substance, Hylas, and a purpose,
Which make me own myself the too late father
Of a desire to see this thing reformed—
For melody, more earnest and more solid
Than that of shells and rushes, well-applied
To our sea-story, might a spirit awake,
Unwitness'd by my earlier years of kingship,
And prove a strange new spur to lofty exploits.
Hyl. Sir, there were other ditties meet for battle:
For we made music wait on all occasions.
King. Ah! those that we have heard were pitch'd too low.
I would have such as should upon the ear
Burst like a trumpet, and give sudden wings
E'en to a dullard's courage. Think on this, now.
Hyl. Thou recollectest, O my lord, the time,
When I deliver'd hardly from the grip
Of some sea-faring wretch a hollow cane,
Pierc'd half along with oilets, which he hither
Had borne unanswerably?—

King. I remember.

Hyl. He was, I think, a player, who had ventur'd
On our too unkind element, and perish'd
With a last dream of music gone to sleep,
And on his fast-lock'd lips a seal of foam—

King. Well, what of that? Such chances are but common—

Hyl. I hold that cane. Hark! now my tale grows pointed.
We have, as well your highness knoweth, tracts
Of coral fineless, wheresoe'er the ocean
Your royal treasures keeps from mortals secret—
Tracts yet to no use bent; and rocky shelves,
Where amber is most usual. Dearest master,
Forgive me, if this one and only time
I have a little lost the line of duty,
And put myself too boldly in your room—

King. Hylas, thy known discretion buys thy pardon.

Hyl. Lo! then, I have, as leisure suffer'd, wrought
With such art as a Mysian boy could compass,
Out of these twin growths of our own dominion,
Twelve cylinders in fashion like to mine,
Six amber, coral six; and twice six Tritons,
Whose genius seem'd tractable and kind,
Our Lycidas, on my demand, has school'd,
Till, at the next high court your grace shall summon,
They are prepar'd to shew you new delights.

King. This is thy last reform and noblest; and thy plot

Has been, methinks, kept private to a wonder.
But then, alas! our ancient poetry,
The music of our caves, our vocal shells,
Will be despis'd and lost, when a new era
Of light and science doth begin to dawn.
For change, my Hylas, is a two-edg'd blade,
Cutting before and after, and the hand
That plucks should have a nice and learnèd touch,
Lest with the weeds go flowers. For all that
Thy Mysian blood stands sponsor: yet thou studiest
In it our dignity and good—

Hyl. Great thanks.
The sight and scent of e'en the humblest flower
Are not what one would choose to lose for ever,
When one thinks well upon it— [*Aside.*

King. Hark! his mind
Is earthward once again? It is a fault;
But 'tis a sweet one—

Hyl. Did your highness speak?

King. Yes; but 'twas nought—I was, as we say, musing.
Haste now to make our new desires familiar.

Hyl. It shall be done to point, my royal master,
And they'll as soon grow into love as knowledge.

[*Exit* KING *with his attendants.*

Lo! there goes one, whom, if some earthly king
Should, in a king's true likeness, seek his mirror,
I could to him most soberly commend.

For he has drawn us into such compliance
With his most holy mandates and his wealth
Of immemorial wisdom, that compulsion
And sacrificial honours paid to justice
Were still unknown, both name and thing, to these,
Till I reported, how the newer princes
Of my first country—that impassion'd world,
The home of my yet untransfigur'd being—
Had, just before my happy passage hither,
Enforc'd themselves to lay a weighty hand
On certain young corruptions in the State.
Which tale of mine with our sea-folks' experience
So little sorted, that it might have been
A new-found sense, of which I broke the tidings,
Or some strange history of Tritons found
With human faces. Such impure persuasions
Are not demanded of my gentle king.
Our only books of statutes are our hearts,
Wherein we have, as in a volume, written
In characters for fairness far exceeding
The boasted ordinances of the Mysians,
His highness's most fatherly decrees,
Which are without a side-look fram'd for all,
And put the law on its best use and worth:

The Song of Hylas.

When I kept my good father's kine in Mysia lately,
I had a shepherd's life before me in my fancy.
I knew nought of the sea : I knew nought of its riches.
The earth seem'd as one wide extent of fat green pasture,
And all beyond I judg'd were others such as we were :
Taller perchance, and richer in estate, but shepherds.
So pass'd my earliest youth in a soft pastoral dimness,
Among the flocks I lov'd, among the swains my equals :
Equals in all things but in an unkinder fortune.
For while those with whom I once vied in making music
To keep the birds in fuller throat till after sundown,
Descended, one by one, to fathomless Avernus,
Alone I kept unchang'd the essence of my being,
And clos'd my lips against the waters of oblivion.
For that chanc'd to me, which can chance but once to mortal ;
Ere my acts had to any of the gods stood cause of umbrage,
I was transpher'd ; and, while my birth was merely human,
My soul ne'er went a pilgrim to the court of Pluto,
But suffer'd in its time a different migration.
I had not years to see Death darkling in my future,
When a strange theft, in which both gods and men were partners,
Carried me in the newly-budded spring of boyhood
Across the gulf, to mortal sense not palpable,

Which parts the known and unknown life a world
asunder.
So I, who first at foot of Jove-belov'd Olympus,
Fed my small herd, and only knew remote Propontis
By a dull rumour that it did exceed in volume
Our country rivers, as these do a wayside swan's pool,
Have grown to be the friend and foremost minister
Of him who reigns king of the universal ocean;
And of his higher nature I am a partaker. [*Exit.*

The scene changes to a wood.

PAN *reascends.*

The EPILOGUE, *delivered by him.*

Kind friends, adieu. Our pageant is perform'd,
And here back to the old Arcadia
I am return'd from witnessing the sport,
Seeing, unseen, as I have privilege.
I do protest, this only once have I
Quitted the scenes, which I love all too well,
To view the revelry of other spheres,
For woods and waters have their several charms.
These, then, all counterfeit presentments are:
This a device in which, as in a glass,
You may behold, to our best skill portray'd,
The life and humours of a merrier world.

[*Descends.*

ELEGIAC POEMS

THE POET'S GRAVE

I.

His cold heart rests by the willow-tree,
And I call, but he cannot answer me;
And whether I pay my orisons there,
When the tree is bare,
Or when its leaves play with the lush summer air,
I hear no sound
Come from the ground.
But the feather'd creatures his lodging know,
And their notes, as they pass, are soft and low.

II.

For he was a singer once like them,
And they give him a loving requiem.
O, the voice of my friend is quench'd and dead,
And here his bed;

And the winds make music over his head,
In this very spot;
But he hears it not.
For his spirit is spent, and the battle is o'er,
And the seasons for him can vary no more.

III.

Let not marble make light of his name,
Which is writ in the volume of Fame.
All that made him so dear to us lingers behind
In many a mind,
And the least part of him has to earth been consign'd.
For his song will live,
And its echoes give;
And the pilgrim will stand at his honour'd shrine,
When the lot that is his shall long have been mine.

IV.

Let not moles build their homes with his dust,
Lest the churl's heel and the wintry gust
Scatter the particles through the air,
Some here, some there:
To grow into food for the harrow and share.
But let it rest,
By foot unpress'd,
Till the masterless sweep of the distant sea
From their bondage shall set his still ashes free.

V.

He studied no arts, which riches bring,
For he held his calling a sacred thing;
And he was content with the praise of a few,
Who his worth knew,
And whose worship by little and little grew.
But he valued not,
Nor heeded one jot,
Those who their opinions from others took.
Now he has his glory, and we have his book.

VI.

Once, at eve, I came to the willow-tree,
And my friend rose up to welcome me:
Rose up from the stool, which he used to bring
On a day of spring,
When I sat there beside him, to hear him sing.
But now he sang
Some words, which rang
In my ear like a dirge, so sad, so sad;
Yet his voice was clear, and his eye was glad.

VII.

I had not marked the set of the sun,
And night drew on, ere his song was done.
The light of the moon was pale and weak,
But paler his cheek;

And he seem'd like one with whom Death would speak.
Then from my sight
He faded quite.
But my brain with the trouble was faint and hot,
And my lips form'd his name, though I spake it not.

VIII.

O, earth's bondsman for ever and ever is he;
But his shape and his features linger with me:
And whenever I visit his resting-place,
I see his face,
And I fondly think of his culture and grace.
And such memories
My humour please
Far beyond all problems and blessings to be,
Which appear less real and human to me.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND DROWNED AT SEA

THE purple moor was cross'd, and he and I
Stood on the margin of the rippling main.
I took his hand, and, "shall we part again?
And must you winter under an Italian sky?"

I saw the moisture gather, as he turn'd
Shamefastly from me, and a film of dew
Suffus'd his eye. Quoth he: "Of seeing you
The privilege how dearly have I earn'd!

"Earn'd it with six months' exile from the land,
Which seems to me most human and most kin;
Where I child, boy, and man have been,"
Freeing, as thus he spoke, his prison'd hand.

"Time is a snail beneath the southern sun;
Time is a bird when I regain this shore,
With new strength bursting out at every pore:
There six months seem as twelve, here six as one.

"Yet how can I be ask'd too great a price
For those hours which I thus snatch back from death?
In other latitudes I draw a freer breath;
But every tongue is mute, and every heart is ice.

"The languid, soft, and fruitless life men lead,
Where nature her best gifts loves to bestow,
And air, sky, water, can no further go,
In English eyes seems manhood run to seed."

I watch'd his figure lessening, as the boat
Was swiftly row'd into the deep, still tide:
"A last farewell, a long farewell," he cried;
"See, where she lies so sleepily afloat!"

I heard no more; no more he spake to me;
The air seem'd charm'd, the night he went away;
But some unpitying wind close-ambush'd lay,
And his voice comes up murmuring from the sea.

Not unto him but me was death unkind,
In leaving our sweet converse incomplete:
I scarce should feel that we had ceas'd to meet,
If he had made me heir to all his mind.

Think of the myriads, man-fashion made,
Whose bones the sea turns to its unknown uses!
And could not this disciple of the Muses
Among the scenes and men he knew be laid?

We learn'd our book together, and his frame,
As even then methought, was something frail:
His cheek too brilliant, and his brow too pale,
And his fond craze for study I would blame.

My labour was his sport; he us'd to play
With abstruse subjects, and with his low laugh
Cut at a word some knotty point in half,
Which he call'd whiling idle hours away.

He had his graver and his gayer moods;
The scholar and the schoolboy both were there;
And I have seen him wildly pull his hair,
When we once miss'd a snipe among the woods.

Death came to him, dear youth, before the world
Had warp'd his soul to its own narrow stature,
Or spoil'd what was sublimer in his nature,
And at him lovingly his weapon hurl'd.

The ocean has seem'd calmer, since he died,
And every fragile craft can ride the bay:
Like some huge monster gorg'd with living prey,
It sleeps, with its full banquet satisfied.

The thoughts of him my past and future bind,
And, as years come and go, gain added force;
And with them there is something like remorse,
That I too lightly valued his rare mind.

For he topp'd all his fellows, as the pine
Doth proudly overpeer the foresters;
Most gifts he had, save that of years:
But too much he endeavour'd to combine.

Yet, while he stay'd with us, he seem'd of stuff
Not so much different from other men:
What I so well feel now, had I felt then,
I could not have consider'd him enough.

Other companions, other friends, I know;
But not amongst them all shall I e'er find
The riches of that many-sided mind,
Which seem'd to take in all this star can shew.

I have none now to tell me why the gorse
Renews itself more oft than other things,
And give a name to every flow'r that springs,
Or say what makes the raven's throat so hoarse.

No more shall we upon the hillside sit,
Untwisting some entangled mesh of thought;
When he his own great parts would set at nought,
And vex me by o'erpraising my thin wit.

No more shall we commune, our studies done,
Upon the changes which the world has borne,
Or roam together on a fragrant morn,
Holding good talk and skirmishes of fun.

No more shall we midway 'twixt houses meet,
And ramble on a versifying task.
The germ was seldom mine; but he might ask
My help sometimes to make it run on feet.

No more shall we kneel on the cliff's green verge,
And see the sunset gild a distant reach,
Or, stretch'd luxuriously upon the beach,
Watch all the varying prisms in the surge.

For me the sea has lost its old delights,
Unless I might be free to choose my grave,
And lie by him in some crystalline cave,
Where he lives, may-be, with the water-sprites.

Lives, may-be, in a kind of reverie,
His head crown'd with a coral diadem :
Loving the nymphs, but more belov'd of them ;
And dreams sometimes of earth, and home, and me.

I love, yet shun, those scenes, which were so dear,
When we all times and weathers journeying went ;
For his mysterious tact and knowledge lent
New beauties to each quarter of the year.

The moor would sometimes be a trysting spot,
And every pool be ransack'd for its trout ;
And if a hare rose, when we two were out,
To Wat's Elysium he his passport got.

But he was soft of heart, and lov'd far more
To view the lay'rs of clouds for ever changing,
And watch the sea-birds at their freedom ranging ;
Or loiter pensively along the shore.

Rich as old Tagus were our haunts to him,
Whose eye found form and colour everywhere ;
And what was beautiful, and what was rare,
He has oft seen, when all to me was dim.

But once I found myself upon the shore,
Looking for something which I could not see,
And there was none to speak a word to me,
For all was dumb except the billows' roar.

The fields, the moor, the sea, and e'en the sky,
Borrow'd some charm from him, I scarce know how:
For they appear to me so different now—
Or do I view them with a different eye?

I stood, as we had stood, when he was there;
But he in his sea-bed deep-slumbering lay;
And when I turn'd again upon my way,
The loneliness seem'd more than I could bear.

THE FATHER'S ELEGY

[*A son loses his father, who has been the companion of all his later years, and has shared every pleasure and every sorrow.*]

I.

THE new rain glitters on our garden wall,
And in the sludge the blackbird dips his bill;
But here, indifferent to the seasons, still
A winter lives, which nothing can recall.

The loud autumnal billows have long laid
The leaves in ruins on the wooded hill;
Yet comes anon another spring, to fill
With youthful fervour every holt and glade.

But not for me renews its buds the thorn:
I shrink from thought of the returning leaf:
The mirth of nature adds a sting to grief;
And I shall scarce know where to go and mourn.

The sear, dank, trodden herbage is more meet
Than all the ripening glory of the wood
To wait on me in my unjoyous mood,
When sweetest things seem only sadly sweet.

The vernal dews and shadows still are mine,
And gild for me the livery of the field;
But this deep wound they find and leave unheal'd:
The sick man loathes the odour of the brine.

Laden with perfumes borne from softer skies,
April returns to England and to me:
The young grass shoots once more along the lea,
And all the meads once more the daisy pies.

But moons must waste, and grow, and waste again,
And print their fickle shadows on the sea,
Ere I shall cease to ponder upon thee,
Or think how long thou hast in exile lain.

The summer cloys with sweets the languid wind,
And makes the bird forget its leafless home;
But let the seasons go, and let them come,
An unfilled void I shall not cease to find.

Thou restest somewhere sacred from all eyes :
Seated upon two thrones, thou and another :
My two Elected Ones, thou and my mother !
Pray God all worships be as true and wise !

Thou hast into the dark, still country cross'd,
And shaken off this life-long dream of pain ;
And since thy most lov'd attributes remain,
Let us reflect how little we have lost.

The wind and sun yet use their ancient right,
And do their office on thy changing form ;
I muse on thee, when comes the wizard storm,
And trespasses upon the peace of night.

We use in common thy sequester'd breath ;
The breeze which fans my brow, took toll of thee ;
Yet my pen traces what thou ne'er canst see ;
I cannot shake the witchery of Death.

But I lie under his transforming spell,
Which turns to holy relics common things ;
The grave its mournful privileges brings,
And sends a houseless spirit with me to dwell.

How many a word and gesture, which to-day
Come back to me with cruel tenderness,
Seem'd only such a lesson to express,
As anything which I might do or say ?

The posy which I fasten'd near thy heart,
Will soon convert thy bosom to an urn:
Its early beauty thou couldst not discern;
Its ashes of thy own shall make a part.

Thy untun'd ear is bent upon the ground,
Incurious of glory and report,
And soldier-like, the manful battle fought,
Thou slumberest, insensible to sound.

Farewell, O spirit buoyant as a feather!
Farewell thy pleasant songs and sprightly jests!
When thou cam'st hitherward, the guest of guests,
And thou and John, and I, were all together.

Thy lips are silent, and thy brow is cold:
Thou hast withdrawn thyself from common gaze;
But I can see thee through a sort of haze,
And in my hand thy hand I think I hold.

I, that without thee had been nought, am grown
Two substances, two beings, and two shapes:
Within my mind a certain power drapes
Thee all exact, as thou to me wast known.

Our unperfected nature cannot soar
To that port of sublime repose, where thou
Dwellest, transfus'd into some essence now:
We realize thee as thou wast before.

Yet thou hast laid thy earthy vesture down,
As though it were the garment of a season,
And it lies far outside our narrow reason
To judge of what weird presence thou hast grown.

For what are spirits but such forms, as we
Ourselves command, to wait upon our wills?
My labouring fancy with its offspring fills
The gloom, in which thou hast envelop'd me.

Of thee all that I saw snatch'd from my view
Is added to the volume of our sphere:
It profits little, though from year to year
Thy bones may slowly grow to something new.

It nought avails thee, though in time to come
Those virtues which we priz'd may seem more rare;
To all that once was thine the world is heir:
Thy part is played, and the performer dumb.

What is it, if in yet unstoried days
Our planet is to hold some nobler race?
To hear thy voice, again to see thy face,
Far more than unknown good my weak heart prays.

O, thou art gone beyond the range of sound,
Where time is not, and where no planet shines:
To darkness longer than Siberian mines:
In shadowless seclusion thou art bound.

II.

The garland, which I lay upon thy grave,
Should have been woven by some master's hand.
But scorn and pity for thy sake I brave,
Although I be as one, who writes in sand.

The world grows daintier in those rhym'd schemes,
And doles the architects a lean renown,
And many an one it frowns or murmurs down,
And many an one worse than it says it deems.

Yet what is there should stir the sluggard wit,
And make the veins wax pregnant with new heat,
If this occasion does not urge my feet
Toward the hill, whereon the Muses sit?

I left thy side so newly, yet how long,
Since thy life ebb'd upon my lips, it seems?—
Thy life which is the riches of my dreams,
And may be all the riches of my song.

Forgetful of the garner'd fruits of years,
Forgetful of the monuments of time,
I have become a dotard ere my prime,
A dotard through too great a thrift of tears.

My sorrow pastures inly, like some worm
Within the frost-bound earth: it keeps
Its vigils, while all other sorrow sleeps,
And it is void of gross and outward form.

I lov'd thee loyally: yet day by day
A coinage of new thoughts adds to thy store
Of titles to my worship more and more:
And now what profits all that I can pay?

I lov'd thee, as no other did, or shall;
And though I may not be discern'd by thee,
Where thou hast gone new mysteries to see,
I live prepar'd to answer to thy call.

I lov'd thee, as no other did, save one,
Who bad us both a so unripe farewell:
Her wedded story she was wont to tell:
The trials, and the strength at last foredone.

My mother was thy handmaid and thy friend,
After the antique fashion now grown stale:
She seem'd beyond a mortal measure pale,
When lately over me I saw her bend.

Just as the liquid south wind bears to me,
Across deep gardens and embroider'd fields,
All fragrant odours, which the summer yields,
Leaving rank tares and bitter herbs toll-free:

So holds the tide of thought its backward course,
Renouncing some crude fancies of the past,
To that sad moment, when we parted last,
But carrying with it a profound remorse

That I should have let the occasion pass
Of suing for thy pardon on my knees;
And now how vain it were to bring my pleas,
And bury my wet eyes beneath the grass?

I scarce can bear to feel that thou'rt remov'd
So far from him whom thy affection rear'd;
How many have to their own themselves endear'd,
And still not have been lov'd, as thou wast lov'd!

My grief foreruns the daybreak of new thought,
Teaching me lessons from our change of state,
And certain sweeter uses of our fate,
When life and death beneath one roof are brought.

For if thou couldst have dwell'd with me for ever,
And the pale light had linger'd in thine eyes,
I should not be so sorrowfully wise,
In knowing what it cost the bond to sever.

Sorrow is heir to pleasure's empty throne,
And parting gladness frets at its glad birth;
Should I so mourn thy passage from the earth,
Hadst thou not made thy life so much my own?

Didst thou not open me the gates of light,
And lead my tremulous steps toward the day,
Helping me strongly on my chosen way?
The life thou gavest me thou madest bright.

My fond election was debated long,
And thou was oft a prophet on the craze:
I liv'd to see my labours win thy praise,
And thy high sanction honour my poor song.

III.

I do thee life-long homage for my birth,
And lest time re-unite not thee and thine,
My love hath built an altar and a shrine,
To raise thee from the harsh and heartless earth.

Thou wast the witness of those years, when I
View'd all thy words as passing daily speech,
And when thy gracious lessons seem'd to teach
Me more than I should ever fructify.

All other loves seem modern to me now;
None my most inward feelings understands;
Thou couldst make past and present join their hands;
Thou sawest the young bloom upon my brow.

For all the sweet warm life, which thou on me
Didst erst bestow in thy impetuous prime,
What recompense is this unpolish'd rhyme?
Thy gift requited with a beggar's fee.

The giver may not take his gift again;
I cannot guard thy whitening bones from rust,
Nor reillumine thy imprison'd dust;
My heart is willing; but the hope is vain.

O, dost thou hear me? listen, while I speak!
Thy seed upon a thankful soil was thrown,
And I am as one of the faithful grown:
My soul is steadfast, though my hand be weak.

Yet I will use such prowess as I may
To keep thee to thy friends' remembrance dear,
And make thee seem a part of each new year,
As if thou only hadst gone far away.

For while thou wast yet a sojourner here,
My love to thee remain'd for shame part-told:
Now all the passionate story I unfold,
As one that knows no more whom he should fear.

We like to think of thee as of one sped
Upon a distant journey, which shall end
In some undream'd-of life; or as a friend,
Whom duty from our shores has banished.

Yet cometh, through the grossness of our hearts,
A certain discontentment with the fate,
Which calls thee to a new but unknown state,
And thee and thy compeers for ever parts.

It seems to us so undeserv'd and strange,
That thou'rt like an abstraction in our eyes,
And we may only, e'en for thee, surmise
A happy, though inaugurable, change.

The god wars with the creature in our blood,
And of ourselves we are but parcel-seis'd.
Conceptions, which our finer fancy pleas'd,
A base-born impulse kills, or wayward mood.

I held not in thy heart the lowest place,
And sweeter than all speech my home in it:
Thou thought'st that there were some of humbler wit:
Thou thought'st me capable of nothing base.

Thou shew'dst in me a mother's touching trust:
Child, boy, and man, I seem'd to thee the same;
Thy fair opinion I preferr'd to fame.
It was enough: thou saidest I was just.

Thou wast my Sire, my Fountain, and my God;
Thou gavest me all that I am and have:
Thou gavest me all that thy father gave;
And now thy manhood fades beneath the sod.

Thy sentient existence was too brief;
But we are not like creatures of the air,
Which leave no chronicle of what they were,
Or like the tree, where leaf replaces leaf.

No man can turn his pale face to the East,
Whence he first watch'd the sun emerge in glory,
Without bequeathing to the world some story,
Unless he be no more than bird or beast.

Death is no sorrow to the dead. We weep
For those that have no tears to add to ours:
Thou giv'st no thought to thy relinquished pow'rs,
Nor viewest me in thy unpeopled sleep.

The living rose mourns not the dead. The grass
Thinks not of what is in the grazer's mouth:
Unpitied falls the lily to the drouth,
And dirgeless to their rest the sweet birds pass.

But we are natur'd differently. Tears
Forestall our accidence—a common tongue,
Which old men use to them that die too young,
And which I speak e'en to thy fuller years.

IV.

Yet since thy life was happy, let us rather
Rejoice that thou couldst tarry here so long:
My elegy grows a triumphal song:
Thou art not dead; thou livest still, my father!

Why should we think thee dead? does yonder star,
That pays its glorious light for our mean praise,
Suffer our touch? and when our eyes we raise,
It seems than thee a million times more far.

Thou art not dead. So long as honest fame
Is judg'd a lustre and a rank to lend,
Thou shalt not die, my best and oldest friend,
Nor perish the good odour of thy name.

Thy ashes hold communion with the ground;
But all that we had leave and grace to save
From the unseal'd enchantment of the grave,
Hovers, like a chaste influence, around.

Thou minglest with our daily life and thought;
The children ask me when thou wilt return,
As if it were a lesson hard to learn:
Thou art into their beings so close-wrought.

This new-found fellowship outbids all price:
We haunt together still our favourite nooks;
And when I ruminate among my books,
Thy gifts are there, thy taste, and thy advice.

Our life is much what thou might'st recollect,
Hadst thou not ceas'd to study human things;
The fragrance of thy memory yet clings
To our boy's mellower wit and intellect.

The little maid, who had not tun'd her throat
Quite to the compass of thy name and style,
If thou hadst waited only for a while,
Would by some prettinesses gain thy vote.

Where lay a parcel of mute lumpish earth
But yesterday, a precious temple stands,
At which we reverently lift our hands:
Which from its new dear tenant holds its worth.

For thy dissolv'd existence, like some flower,
That leaves its germs of sweetness in our hands,
Above the cold and pulseless level stands,
Nor parts with its benign and solid power.

To me thou art more than the moon or sun,
Or than the stars, which vex my questioning brain;
For on thy sheltering bosom I have lain;
And these for all alike their courses run.

Ask me not where my father's memory lives,
Or where his earth-bound ashes lie:
I can no whit more through the gloom descry:
My challeng'd heart dim utterances gives.

My wishes are the measure of my power:
One stern scheme of succession governs all:
I know not, if thou hast another call,
Where ampler is of life and thought the dower.

I play two parts: the questioner and his foil:
I call, and try to feign what thou would'st say,
As if thy shadow in our orbit lay,
And was not lost in death's ungenerous spoil.

Our voices hold a colloquy; and thine,
Like the bird's song in mid-air after day,
Seems to be stolen by the breeze away,
Or can it be the echoing tones of mine?

Thou hast departed. On my eyelids weigh
What, if the grief were lighter, might prove tears:
My voice was once a gladness to thine ears,
But it had not the pow'r to make thee stay.

For death has borne thee in his arms beyond
Those weak and vain desires, which we yet keep:
O, is not life itself a sort of sleep,
When ends we judg'd so great are prov'd so fond?

Thy mission was fulfill'd. Thy days were long.
But we know not what fortune hath in store:
We may be lost, ere we can reach the shore,
Where thou consortest with the Just and Strong.

V.

Thou wast a modern worthy; let us use
To thee the language, then, of modern days:
Thy ways of thought were as our ways;
One of ourselves 't has been our lot to lose.

Of late I saw one standing by a door,
And ask'd him leave to enter. It was where
Thou cam'st to seek the freer Brompton air:
Thou and my mother, happy, young, and poor.

I said to him: "'Tis now some fifty years,
Since my good parents dwell'd here, and here I
Part-spent my youth, and saw a brother die"—
His eyes were stoic; mine were stills of tears.

New-married folk were doing what you did:
Building at a like venture their first nest:
Cast is the bell shall ring them to their rest;
And so from age to age the world has slid.

But thou rememberest the old retreat
And its melodious boscage, ere his hand
The unkind builder laid upon the land,
Leaving no space for nature's pulse to beat.

O, come away with me from those dense hives.
Where nought is left but groundlings of the age!
What value they the singer's thriftless rage?
What value they the epos of our lives?

'Tis but our common property I have,
That raises up in vapour thinner far,
Than is the argent glory of a star,
Thee in thy old proportions from the grave.

Thou lodgest in the chambers of my brain;
I see thee, as thou sittest in thy chair;
Thy voice is lower, and thy face more spare;
And to collect thy words my ear I strain.

I fashion this slight trophy to thy worth,
Because I prize thy benefits above
The world's dear-bought and unheroic love:
Thou'rt more than all the Great Ones of the earth.

Thy influence its shadow shall prolong
O'er days to come and yet unfolded scenes,
When time from its old home my memory weans,
And my frail nature does thy bounty wrong.

Forgive me, if thy figure and thy voice
Withdraw by little into middle space:
I shall not cease to idolize thy face,
Or in our old companionship rejoice.

If I stay'd not sometimes to look aside,
Where other soft endearments round me grow,
Consider, I could scarcely love thee so!
And who but thine with thee my love divide?

For Duty is two-handed, and has eyes
Both after and before. Ah! prythee think,
The chain of ages lengthens link by link,
And half our love in death's chill shadow lies.

This loss is ours. The echoes of thy feet
Have pass'd away, like thunder on the hills:
Thy unforgotten form our fancy fills;
But in our home thy steps no longer beat.

This loss is mine. Though some of ampler gifts
Should call me friend, and hold me by the hand,
In thy vacated room they cannot stand:
My staunch love thee beyond all honours lifts.

This loss is common. Nought that we can do,
Will make a world without thee seem the same:
Thou also held'st in trust a father's name,
And didst thy part his memory to renew.

This loss is mine. My love hath thee endow'd
With such a votive crown as I might knit,
And I have plac'd thee, where thou mayest sit
Above the undistinguishable crowd.

This loss is ours. Thy intimates partake
With me in my privation and regret:
How great the void is, we are learning yet;
Distance a wider chasm seems to make.

This loss is mine. In thy sublimer moods
Thy talk o'ertopp'd by far the common reach;
'Twould make me lose the treasures of the beach;
'Twould blunt my ear to the harmonious woods.

This loss is common. Yet no eyes but mine
Kept vigil with thee through the anxious night;
The rest beheld thee only at thy height;
Nor knew how late thy star began to shine.

For She, who for the dawn had looked out long,
Growing full weary of the watcher's place,
To the unpitying heaven turn'd her face,
And shut her ear to hope's deluding song.

VI.

Although thou wast familiar to mine eyes,
Till thou hadst to a wondrous dearness grown,
Whose is the consolation but my own?
Thy sense of earth with unsolv'd problems lies.

With us thy name for thee stands substitute;
But if, may-be, thou'rt parcel of some sphere,
Where from this one my voice may reach thine ear,
Thy life's wise dedication has its fruit.

Too soon we miss'd thee. O, thou should'st have stay'd
With me a little longer in the world,
To see the pennon of revolt unfurl'd
Against the errors which our life degrade.

Against the vices which our statecraft stain:
Against the hateful lordship of the fool:
Against the Levites' dark and selfish rule:
Against the falsehood which corrodes the brain.

Against the law of Millions made for Few:
Against the warping mastership of gold:
Against the enemies of all that's Old:
Against the enemies of all that's New.

Some things, which saw thy coming, wait behind;
For they from ours a varying law obey:
The grass, the lark's song, and the hawthorn spray:
The monuments of man's eternal mind:

The grand accomplishments of human thought:
The broad-leav'd painting of the autumn sun:
The brook which runs, where it has ever run;
And all the marvels that free hands have wrought.

I grew beneath two shadows. She was one,
Whom I saw guard her youth so long from time,
That I surmis'd for her a godlike prime.
But death awoke me, and my dream was done.

Thou wast the other. Now I fold my wings
Over the aëry which thou saw'st me build:
The cup of grief must be no further fill'd:
So farewell, till we meet hence some few springs.

For in time's increase, what make one man's years,
An atom comprehends thy life and mine.
The pedigree of some ancestral line
Think that perhaps this vase of jasper bears.

THE BROTHER'S ELEGY

[*A beloved brother meets with a disappointment in early life. Circumstances preclude his mistress and him from marrying. They resolve to remain single.*]

I.

A GRIEF so true,
So long, so keen,
I ne'er had seen,
Till this I knew.

'Twas not my own:
'Twas his, who scorn'd
To weep, and mourn'd
Nobly alone.

Alone, although
We all were near,
And held him dear,
As kin could do.

One early loss
Our love o'erbore,
And evermore
He clasps his cross.

Alas! how young
For such a care!
The warp and wear
His bloom have stung.

II.

Ah! his heart is like another's;
  But the trouble it hath to keep—
His trouble, my friend's, my brother's,
  Is a thousand fathoms deep.

It maketh my eyes wax weak,
  When I see him, as he is now:
The ruin'd pride of the cheek
  And the tilth of the seamless brow.

I knew him in other days, or I think
  I should not have borne to hear
The tale of his life and its wanting link
  Retold me from year to year.

I knew him, when he and she were young,
  When the old long summers were;
And my fancy sometimes heard the church-bell rung
  In the spring, in the crisp, new air.

I knew him in days, when his mind was free,
  As the wind or the masterless bird;
And he had no thought but he gave it to me;
  And grief was an empty word.

So I play the good listener there for the sake
  Of a thousand old stor'd-up things;
And to the consoling pretences I make
  With the faith of a schoolboy he clings.

I have seen him in all his moods; I have stood
  At his side, when on love he rav'd,
And call'd it a thing too great and too good
  For a heart by the world deprav'd.

I have sat with him, when he has tilted at life,
  Its follies, its errors, its woes,
And has pitied the man, who devotes to a wife
  The thought that he elsewhere owes.

For, quoth he, if one has but a grasp and a reach,
  And a mind that can mould and lead,
The world is one's home, and one's pen and one's speech
  To a million firesides plead.

O, he comes in the lee of the daylight, to tell
  What the flow'r-girl said yestere'en,
When he met her by chance, and she wanted to sell
  Him a posy so trim and green:

How he turn'd half away, and "Never, never more
  Can such toys touch my fancy," quoth he;
"When I came so light-heartedly to thee before,
  There was one, who would take them from me.

"But now she has gone, and I am alone,
  Though some call me friend," he said,
"Even yet; O my God, I would give all I own—
  I lov'd her so well—to know she was dead!

"She was young, and they fear'd that the lessons of life
  Might ask too large tribute from such tender years;
And they moralized on the demands of a wife,
  And vividly painted the young mother's tears.

"We were poor, and she pin'd at the too long delay—
  I have told thee this, pah! half a million times—
And her friends (as you know) judg'd her foolish to stay
  For a man, whose brain seem'd to run riot on rhymes.

"Then we parted for ever—it seems but to-day—
  My grief has liv'd long, yet it never grows old.
Other faces and shapes have since cross'd me; but they
  Rise and vanish like shadows, as dim and as cold."

He gave her, he said, for old times' sake,
  A trifle, just adding: "How gladly I would,
To have the pass'd years blotted out, thee make
  As rich, my good girl, as a poor man could."

The narrow provincialism, you see,
  Against which it boots no mortal to fight,
Peep'd out, and made wreck of my courtship and me,
  And cozen'd my eyes of their first young light."

III.

"Her people were true-blue Rurals, who view'd a devotion to Art,
To Books, and such other things, among the faults of my London breeding;
They follow'd one rule in judging a horse, or a man, or a cart,
And jested at time misspent by a blockhead in idle reading.

"Unless, by your leave, it happen'd to be some Work of the Day,
Prepar'd by the Author to make grist for the dealers in waste.
And who knows it was not as well the affair fell out in that way,
When my raw town-born notions lagg'd so far behind the country taste?

"For a man finds it hard, e'en for a wife, to give up
early views;
And I might perhaps have had feelings, against which
her friends would have jarr'd.
So now and again I fancy it was no great matter
to lose,
When one sees so many a good man's days by his
wife's shrewd people marr'd.

"For the honest folks, who were hers by birthright,
were proud, forsooth,
As persons are apt to be, who have a stocking some-
where, thank God!
Though they had not follow'd learning so hard, as I
did in my youth,
And studied Walker *On Spelling* mainly, and
Bradshaw, and Dod.

"One may toil, like any beast of burthen, all the pride
of one's years,
For blood and bone, till the honour of youth deserts
one's brow and one's eyes;
But what, without the oil and the myrrh, were this
life of bondage and tears?
And unkindness is unkindest, where the heart of a
true man lies.

"But I see her sometimes, and she turns her eyes,
As the horses bear her and her friends along,
With a look breathing sorrowful, shy surprise,
Turns them from me and the rest of the throng.

"I see her sometimes at the play, when I
Go thither, and sit unmark'd apart:
Her party is merry; the light jests fly;
And I hurry away with a bursting heart.

"Once we met in the tall arcades of pine,
Where the wind comes up from the sea to moan,
And to mingle its stronger sighs with mine,
Not willing that I should sorrow alone.

"It was when the fingers of autumn had play'd
With the July leaves, and had stain'd them to gold,
Save only there, where the swarthy shade
Of the colder blood of the fir-tree told.

"We met, and the feelings of long-spent years
Revisited me, like some lost sense;
And a voice of the past thrill'd in my ears,
And the silence about me seem'd intense.

"Then drew she nigher and nigher to me;
And I think I shall ne'er forget her words:
'And so you love solitude still, I see,
And pay your old court to the woods and the birds?'

"'Alice,' I said, 'I have kept my vow.
I go much abroad, but not to woo.
What you remember me, I am now:
A lover of Nature, honour, and you.

"'Alice, I once had a heart and a life,
To give or to keep; both might have been thine;
But now have I neither mistress nor wife,
Save the woods and birds, and the sea divine.

"'I saw a strong tree, which a gale had riven,
And left upon the ploughless wold to bleach:
It had, like us, too soon its youth up-given;
It seem'd, dear, a lesson like our own to teach.

"'Those two scorch'd arms met once in wedlock true,
And tender'd yearly tribute to the spring—
I turn'd away, and wept, and thought of you:
Ah! in their leafage would the throstle sing!

"'I saw a portent of our sever'd hearts:
  Fie on mistrusting friends! fie on false life!
Fie on a world which troth-knit spirits parts!
  Fie on the once so precious name of wife!'

"She caught my shoulder, and drench'd it like rain:
  'Arthur,' she stammer'd, 'say, O, say no more!
Would to heaven we never had met again,
  Since we might not meet, as we met before.'

"Then she rose up, and she staunch'd her tears,
  As she said: 'I am something calmer now.
But the thoughts and the hopes of brighter years
  Came crowding in here'—and she touch'd her brow.

"'Some ask'd for me, and call'd me fair,
  And mus'd why I so loth should be
With the bridal wreath to wreathe my hair.
  But they had not the tale from me.

"'In the way of love some came and sued;
  But they had not the tale from me.
For I answer'd then: Marriage is good
  For such as in it good may see.'

"Pressing her arm: 'The die,' I said, 'is cast;
It was not our act—but the hour grows late'—
And I kept her side, till the wood was pass'd,
Within a stone's range of her father's gate."

IV.

He wooes my companionship in the spring,
When the trees begin coining new gold,
And the woods with their choristers merrily ring,
And he grieves that the year must grow old.

The young flow'rs probe his soul to the core,
And he cries: "What blessings we have!
How gracious to let me behold them once more,
When they might have grown over my grave!"

Anon he will mutter: "Sir, marriage is nought,
Since it ceas'd its old true self to be;
O, commend me, my friend, to your bachelor sort:
It is best to be merry and free."

I know for how short a space
A happier humour lingers,
Ere the cloud repossesses the face,
And the twitch comes back to the fingers.

But when he smiles, I am saddest;
  For I feel that his thoughts have stray'd
To the time, when his life was gladdest,
  Before visions began to fade.

I take him apart, and I reason thus:
  "My brother, my friend, thou hast full breadth of scope
In the future. Consider thyself: think of us!
  Thou hast youth! O, renew thy old treaty with hope!"

V.

But he whispers me back, as time upon time he will do:
"She was fair, she was good—ah! goodness than beauty is better!
I have learn'd with a different eye and a different feeling to view
Mere beauty in woman, since first (to my sorrow) I met her.

"I break from my sleep sometimes with a cry, like a child unwholesomely dreaming;
For I think she is mine, and they tear her away, and my feet lie under a spell;

And my overwrought muscles grow rigid as stone,
  though the sweat from my pores is streaming,
Till I wake with a shudder, as if I had seen the
  gaping portals of Hell.

"Is it righteous, that my blood or thine from our
  hearts should be wrung,
Because some doll of a girl has eyes, and a mouth,
  and a skin?
I thought, as most others do, I dare say, when I was
  young,
And every winsome woman seems a goddess, when
  we begin.

"Now I look on the mutable forms around me with-
  out concern,
As the fancies of youth grow stale, and the world is a
  burden to me;
But an endless succession of men will arise, and
  yearn,
As I once did, for the things I here commit to the
  sea."

Yet sometimes, like one that hath dream'd, and wakes
  In his former world again,
On a sudden into his old humour he breaks,
  And his favourite bantering vein.

"I have heard," quoth he, "that Mistress
Madge Owl,
That mopes and winks in yon tree,
A long time ago was as blithe a fowl,
As you might in the greenwood see.

"O, what does she say? O, what does she say?
'To-whit, to-whoo! to-whit, to-whoo!
Until I was cross'd in love one day,
I could sing as sweetly as you!'

Then he question'd of one, "When we men err,
Who to make us are inducers?
Women, who cast on us the slur,—
Women are our abusers."—

"To watch the sun's retiring light
Some few may turn their heads;
But to see the sunrise after night,
Brutes only leave their beds.—

"The day and night are our coparceners,
And share our years, as we hold best;
To him too short's the life, the wise man fears,
Too short the life, too long the rest.—

"What seems to be stands proxy for what is:
  Ah me! the world is full of guile!
But let us wait a little while,
  And Holy Church will mend all this!'"—

These and a parcel of other conceits,
  Some guilty of wit, he nurs'd;
For he was, beyond most men that one meets,
  In a kind of learning vers'd.

I could, if I dar'd, shed tears to see
  A joyous spirit so quell'd;
For I think how jocund he us'd to be,
  And the talk that we have held!

His art in a tale, his eye for a jest,
  Who among us can forget?
And the hand, which our own so gaily press'd,
  When in the old time we met?

But winter came, too early a guest,
  And touch'd his lips with frost;
And the smile and voice, which us caress'd,
  To our riper days is lost.

VI.

What shall I do
To save my friend
From some sad end?
O, that I knew!

O, that I knew
How to recall
His youth, and all
That charm'd and drew!

And that good time,
When I was first,
Who prais'd and nurs'd
His turn for rhyme!

I plead in vain
Our rights, his years;
He sighs, and wears
A look of pain.

Precious as now
To me and all,
Whate'er befall,
I see him grow.

But I must lose
Much that above
Its worth I love
From ancient use.

For he with me
Was wont to share
One father's care,
One mother's knee —

And then to think,
That with the past
He is my last
And only link!

No other ear
My old tales would
Invite, nor hold
Them half so dear.

For who but he
Can tell to-day:
Viewing the faded eye and frost-girt chin,
What I have felt and I have been;
Or through these tresses scant and grey
A little school-boy see!

TWO MODERN ECLOGUES

I.—PERIGOT'S DEPARTURE

PHILOS. PERIGOT. THYRA.

Ph. The news has gone abroad; and we all grieve
To hear that we shall miss you from our fold.
Come, tell me, Perigot, what makes you leave
The home, where we had thought you would grow old?
Per. Philos, I have well meditated this;
Within my time—it is not very long—
Our City has increas'd to what it is;
And I am weary of the bustling throng.
Away from that great centre, where mine eye
Sees scarce a leaf unsullied by the smoke,
I go a pilgrim; and my heart will lie
Far from where it first timidly awoke.
Ph. Will you forsake the sharers of long years,
Whose homage slowly widening I see?
To one, whose mind such a complexion wears,
The country must a sort of exile be.

Th. His eye longs, Philos, for the forest-side ;
He prattles in his sleep of fields and brooks,
And Clytus, who, you know, is his chief pride,
Can study what he lists there—saving Books.

Per. Books were my lotos tree. I pluck'd and ate—
They gave me, Philos—why, a sort of fame!
But I would give all back—ah! think of that—
Not to have tarnish'd so my hands and name.

Ph. Dear Perigot, you jest ; your books rank high ;
And I hear them adjudg'd among the best.
What certain men may censure, set nought by ;
Nor let a cyclops censor spoil your rest.
You hatch these monsters in your seething brain,
And then pull out your pen to smite them down ;
And while you're in this comfortable vein,
You ban your books, their critics, and the town.

Per. Well, there's a tale best left half-told. But stay—
"The valued friends," quoth you, "we leave behind?"
To meet each other we must find a way :
I know I cannot spare one kindred mind.
Our married summers, Thyra, have been ear'd
Thinly with friendships. Look around and see!
Is it that we or others once appear'd
So different? A friend's a friend to me.
But he should be one who can fill a part :
A man, who loves to teach and to be taught,
And uses his endeavour and his art
To set back the too narrow lines of thought.

I thirst to taste at length, if fate permits,
And when my labours for the nonce have ceas'd,
The converse of wise hearts and mellow wits,
Of whom it would be something to be least.
Succour me, Philos, in this final quest—
I could unbosom volumes, if I durst—
But you know how with us bad are the best,
And that it were small honour to be first.
O, if thine ear my secretary were,
I might spell thereinto the names of men,
Who for your books and mine as greatly care,
As does the goose to handle her own pen.

Ph. Well, let me live to see my learned friend
Safe-anchor'd in the haven of his desires,
And watch him a far-stretching leisure spend
Among the noble studies he admires.
To highest usury thou putt'st thy name,
And makest it a tenancy for lives;
And it shall thy authority proclaim,
When nought of me or such as me survives.
Ours is the present, and the past grows so
Through the enlarging ministry of books.
But only he, whose thoughts like rivers flow,
Into the darkness of unspent years looks.
What are our Money'd Greatnesses to thee?
Think of them as of bubbles on the tide.
They cannot buy the eyes, with which you see,
Nor wit enough a student's quill to guide.

Thy voice will ring, and men will guard thy bones,
When much that waits its prime is ripe and rotten,
When I have wax'd more dim than sculptur'd stones,
And Huth and all his goodness are forgotten.
The day has come, when every well-born fool
Is not by patent of the chosen seed:
The day grows nearer, when your books will rule,
And even country squires will learn to read.

Per. Alas! oblivion is our common shroud,
And wraps the noblest gifts, the costliest tomb;
Our place is taken by one in the crowd,
And Balbus stands to-morrow in our room.

Th. Is there no resurrection of a name?

Per. Ah yes, years, decades, centuries hence,
One here and there obtains a recompense,
And is recalled to earth; this, sir, is Fame—
Such honour as some offer is less due
To me than to the studies which I love:
A life's devotion yields but little new
The mystery of being to remove.
We worship tangible embodiments,
And symbols which make wooers of our eyes,
But half our thought by other minds is lent,
And half our riches in communion lies.
One takes from this man's speech, or that man's book:
From many a word deliver'd without aim:

From many a jest and many a fleeting look,
The slow foundations of a living name.
Th. Ah! then be tenderer to my poor kin,
Who in the present have their whole estate!
Though they o'er thee their little triumphs win,
Forgive them for my sake, and thine hour wait.
Per. Thyra, I know how strange I must have seem'd,
How wayward and how cruel, nay, how mad;
But I have suffer'd what some have but dream'd:
My heart is heavy, and my life is sad.
With what regret I view my forepass'd years!—
One long dull tale of misdirected powers:
Had I not been held back by foolish fears,
How far a different lot might have been ours!
But I was poor, and had not strength to rise;
The force was wanting, which wealth lends to men;
And I was fain high hopes to sacrifice,
And work ignoble schemes out with my pen.
I was ambitious, sensitive, and proud;
Nor have I breath'd into a mortal ear
The thoughts, which thy lord's head have bleach'd and bow'd,
And which have cost me many a stolen tear.
Th. Beloved Perigot, despise not me,
Although among our people there be some,
Whose humour it remains not yet to see
Thy merit. I am grateful for my home,

And love our household gods. Think, to begin,
Of Clytus: see, how his young mind expands!
For thy good name he will new laurels win:
Men may be rich and happy without lands.
Our home, our blended beings, and our boy
Are, perhaps, a mean estate; yet why repine?
Great treasure-holders should not thee annoy;
They are their heirs' trustees; but thine is thine.

Ph. A tale frets nicer ears, too oft retold;
But it is sweet, where competence and health
Marry, and men the middle way can hold,
Like you, 'twixt wealthless wit and witless wealth.

Per. This black and hungry humour that I own
Is but a sorry lodger with a man;
It were a merrier thing to live alone!—
I'll be your scholar, Philos, if I can.
I've pass'd the mean, my friend; and not for me
Is that broad public path, which I long held
Fondly in my mind's eye: this reverie
Fortune's extreme unkindness has dispell'd—
Well, Thyra, hie thee home: we'll come anon.
The sun hastes from us to his other realms;
Philos and I must meet young Thenot yon,
And we'll work back round by the Seven Elms.

Philos, the splendid day-dream of my youth,
When I saw men and things with other eyes,
I find to have been but a dream in truth,
And now it lives with the Nonentities.

Fresh-come from study of the antique life,
I fram'd then in my mind what Love should be,
And mus'd what virtues join'd to make the wife,
Whom I should wish to be a wife to me.
Alack the day, which saw me no more young!
With adolescence ceas'd your poor friend's prime:
Since then away by little I have flung
Much that was pure, and all that was sublime.
The place, where I my distant boyhood led,
I care not much, if I ne'er see again,
And scenes of younger days revisited
Beget a tenderness, which turns to pain.
Who carries with him far the child's frank mind,
On which, as on a tablet, all may write?
Ill brooks your schoolboy to be thought-confin'd,
And all soon learn to walk by their own light.
I was a child once, Philos, prythee think:
Much such another as this Clytus here.
But I can see 'twixt then and now no link;
The world seems harder, and the air less clear.
I felt once as if I could bear the bell
For fleetness from the supple antelope;
My heart knew nought its young desires to quell:
Behind came Pleasure, and before went Hope.
My pulse was like the passionate sea-tide,
Impetuously smiting the steep shore,
And in my blood there was a flame, allied
To that Prometheus from Olympos bore—

Of all the elements the holiest fire;
And of its lucid parcels is compounded
That unseen force, which makes a man aspire
Beyond the scope by which his horse is bounded.
The essences, of which souls are compact,
Is formless as the anger of the wind;
I ween they may from sphere to sphere refract
The light of an imperishable mind—
Now through a grosser medium I survey
The world and its concerns, and see no more
In this man's love of art and his of sway
The noble instincts which I saw before.
Harmonious sounds the chord of SELF affords,
And more and more the players on it grow;
But rest, untun'd, untouch'd, ye other chords:
There's none shall wake you into music now.
What does it augur, pray you, in a man?
Does it shew that the brain is waxing slack?
When Nature over Mind so lord it can,
And we to scenes of other days turn back?
It seems as if the time was drawing near,
When books will have their mystic charm no more,
And when I shall begin to halve the year
Between my garden and the rich sea-shore.
Yet it is in my mind, when once mine eye
Has leave to graze on fields and foliage,
To take the early work, which lies me by,
And polish the uncastigated page—

Polish at my good leisure, Philos, mark!
For in the country there will be affairs:
I must give daily audience to the lark,
And watch the yellow deep'ning on my pears.
I shall explore the woods, the journal read.
To study there the heavenly freemen's notes,
And hear the blackbird's whistle o'er my head—
Music more sweet to me than human throats.

Ph. Fie, Perigot, these humours do you wrong.
I've heard sea-journeys prais'd, where such as you
For ever, like the cuckoo, sing one song:
Go, seek new life in scenes and faces new.
Or if you choose not to go forth alone,
Let us take ship for some selected spot;
Travel may lend your mind a lither tone,
And absence cause these sores to be forgot.

Per. Ingenious physician, does a man,
Hard-labouring beneath some inward grief,
Ask for a lotion, thinking that he can
That way give his vex'd heart and brain relief?
'Tis not this scene, that scene—that air, this air—
Which can heal my distemper, dear old friend;
It haunts my walks, my work, sits in my chair;
And will be my companion to the end.
But I have other fellow-voyagers:
The flowers of my homestead; here and there
A friend, who solitude to state prefers;
And thoughts, whose dwelling is 'twixt earth and air—

If lovers should turn seers, were it well?
The jealous god makes his disciples blind.
My thought was but of one: how should I tell,
That to that one all goodness was confin'd?
The rest had certain culture and some wit—
You know how country wit and culture go?—
But they may smile, who in the sunshine sit,
Nor care to look which way the wind doth blow.
Thyra, the only glory of her house,
Stripp'd it of its chief strength, when she was wed;
Nor could such an example others rouse
Above dull rustic forms to lift the head.
So you may see upon some thorn a rose,
In bloom and perfume wronging all the rest,
As if dear lady Nature were of those
Who love to add wealth to the wealthiest.

Ph. If Thyra's folk think good to hold thee cheap,
My Perigot, is thine the loss, or theirs?
The world will still its old opinion keep,
And thy fair name desires not such weak heirs.
But since the woods so few charms can possess,
Why hast thou on thee this fresh trial laid,
Unless for thee we learn new arts, unless
From thee town-wits are taught to love the shade?

Per. The scholar's only baggage is his book:
With that he's least, when he is most, alone;
And who but he hears voices in the brook,
And sees a vein of beauty in each stone?

None knows so well how to awake the woods,
And to the birds to make responsive strains:
To find a music in dumb solitudes,
And build new fancies in the mazy lanes.
My scheme of life was scarce an one to see
Accomplish'd fully in this Paradise
Of Landlords, where for a man not to be
Thought poor, is in a sort to be thought wise.
If Clytus learn aright himself to know,
Nor lets his mind too much on pinions soar,
It may be that through him our name may grow,
And with it that which his dear mother bore—
Bore, ere she yet had wife of mine become:
When both our lives ran on a single thread;
And she was happy in her early home—
And now I've liv'd to wish myself unwed——

Ph. How, Perigot? Unwed!——

Per. And yet again
There come to me at times serener moods,
When I think better of my fellow-men,
And to the world can turn from fields and woods——

Ph. Foster such resolutions——

Per. And again—
But hark! I hear our dogs: we draw to home;
The westering sun makes gold of all our lane.
I have much more to tell thee, Philos. Come!

II.—PERIGOT'S RETURN

PHILOS. THENOT.

Th. Philos, thou art so blithe and debonnair,
And with so deep a joy thy face is lit,
I fain would know what is the cause of it,
What breeds in thee a merriment so rare?
Art thou just found to be the next in blood
To some late lord of acres? Or does Fate
Threaten to rob a niece of her estate?
Whate'er it be, thou'rt worthy of all good.

Ph. I know thy love; but thou wast never meant
To earn thy ease by guess-craft, I see well;—
I have far greater tidings thee to tell:
Far different is the source of my content.
Thenot, this day is holy and select;
For yestereven came up from the sea
A message, O, the gladdest that could be!
To-morrow truant Perigot expect.

Th. What, Perigot return'd? And hast thou seen
The features of our friend, and heard his voice?
No marvel, then, that thou dost so rejoice!
I love thee at his side for having been.

Ph. Nay, nay, not so; he is not here as yet;
And when he cometh, nor to me, nor you

Are the first-fruits of his affection due:
Thyra and Clytus we must not forget.
Th. I envy the first meeting of the hands:
The privilege of welcoming our chief,
But not the heart-salve and supreme relief,
Which Thyra's drooping bravery demands.
Ph. Across the sea, dear soul, these many weeks
Her eye has waited on this wandering star:
If he was near surmising, or was far;
And now at last he his true orbit seeks.
Good lady! she, e'er since her wedding hour,
Cast much of her home-nurturing behind,
And set herself to school with her whole pow'r
To learn the bearings of that chartless mind.
His will was masterful; but well he knew
Her wise and noble faith in his high aim;
All saw to whom his heart-grief had been due,
And bless'd the wife, who priz'd her husband's fame.
Th. Perchance, e'en while we speak, his house has grown
Refulgent with the light the master gives,
And Perigot no more in dreamland lives,
But from him his long discontent hath thrown.
Ph. It was the wish'd conversion. He had done
Too much too well; no ardour is slow-pac'd;
And his fine understanding was unbrac'd,
And, like a lute o'er-studied, lost its tone.

Ne'er was a lother pilgrim. But at length
We saw his scruples conquer'd; and he went,
And, like a bow too prodigally bent,
There was mere wreckage of the olden strength.
Th. His place seem'd natural to him. To be
First by allowance—O, it is to reign!
Time brings us no successor, until he
The void which he has left shall fill again.
Ph. Thenot, he comes! See through the casement, see,
Where he now turns the angle of the wood!
All heads pass him uncover'd. Ah! how good
To pay such early thoughts to thee and me!
More welcome than weak words, dear chief, can say!
Per. Comrades, the hope of our reunion shar'd
My voyage, but prolong'd, ah me! the way:
The sea denied me those for whom I car'd.
But now once more my feet press English ground,
And joyfully I put my wallet by;
O Philos, O dear Thenot, I have found
It hard from friends and work so far to lie!
But, like some vesture too long over-worn,
The visions and the moods, which kept me thrall,
I have unhous'd; and as a young June morn
My brain now seems light and ethereal.
Ph. Your thoughts were islanders no more. They turn'd,
Where vast unbroken tracts the sun engross,

And in the stillest night are not discern'd
The distant sea's reverberating throes.
Per. Thou talk'st full learnedly; but, hark! my mind
Was form'd and train'd in Britain; various scenes,
Like various books, I view and leave behind:
My understanding on my birthland leans.
Ph. You visited Italian, German, Swiss:
The many-languag'd Slav, the crafty Greek——
Per. My eye hath grown accustom'd not to miss,
Where'er I go, those objects which I seek.
But to regenerate oneself, and grow
Once more in harmony with all around,
And by exact comparison to know,
How bless'd the livers are on British ground—
These are the ends of travel. Not to graze
With artless unschool'd vision on the sights,
Which every dull wayfarer loves to praise,
As though his prentice eye had scann'd the lights,
Which only science opens. O'er the sea
I carried the chief treasures of my heart:
The memories which have sojourn'd with me
From youth, and make of me a very part.
I saw the fairest cities of the earth:
Some with a pulse, some beautiful in sleep;
Spots resonant with business and with mirth,
Where potent princes us'd their state to keep.

And now a motley throng is in the streets.
And chapmen buy and sell, and trade is rife;
But the great heart of pow'r no longer beats
Amid a brimming and tempestuous life.

Ph. Fair Venice, learned Padua, holy Rome:
The land of Tell, the Frenchman's broad domain:
The glory of the Moorish sway in Spain:
The Netherlander's low and watery home:
Upon all these fell an observant eye,
And stor'd conclusions looking t'ward this isle——

Per. Ah! this discourse is in a better style—
But, Philos, pilgrims are but passers-by;
Their study is too fugitive and slight
To let such few as hang on their return
A stranger country inwardly discern:
They carry back the gleanings of first sight.
The bookworm stands in London, and surveys
In his mind's vision the long march of time,
And ponders over tales of ancient days,
Shap'd in some poet's half-remember'd rhyme.
The courtier-like perspective lends an hue
To distant scenes and legends of the past,
And helps o'er thought a lurid tinge to cast,
Which dazzles many more than me and you.
I cross'd the ocean in a reverie
Of lofty minds, whose odour fill'd my brain;
And a lost sense of joy reviv'd in me:
The zest of school-time came to me again.

A vein of childish wonder took me prize,
As we drew near the lands, which I had known
From common record and report alone;
And should I now behold them with my eyes?
I gaz'd from shipboard on the wharves and quays
Of ANTWERP—O, forgive me, if I wept!
The rude hand of reform had newly swept
From view the heirlooms of long centuries.

The steep, strait, tortuous alleys, which wound down
To meet the river half my life ago,
Had melted into vapour, and the town
As twenty other towns began to grow.
The antique costume and the time-worn face:
The mellowness and dignity of age,
Which have surviv'd the storms of party-rage,
Vanish beneath the axe without a trace.
The men of GHENT are busy, rich, and strong;
And life vibrates in street and water-way;
But all the Artevelde soul has ebb'd out long,
And clerks do sums, where Gerard's Castle lay.
I stood before the tomb of Burgundy
In BRUGES, mute, brooding and unbonneted,
Where Charles and his imperial daughter lie
Since her divorce from Maximilian's bed.
The walls of DIJON speak a tongue unknown
To many an one, whose eye upon them falls;
They tell the story of a ducal throne
And pageantry and pomp in crowded halls.

I pictur'd BRUSSELS rul'd in turn by all:
The Fleming, Spaniard and Austrian,
And greater and more stately under thrall
Than parcel regal and republican.
The grass and wood reclaim old scenes of feud,
Of turbulent contention and dark deeds:
It ask'd a guide to shew athwart the meads
The spot where MAELE'S dread fortress once had stood.

Ph. Has Flemish glory wither'd at the touch
Of modern thought? The chronicles abound
With acts great and heroic; and how much
To captivate, and like too, I have found!

Per. The population, which has serv'd its call,
Softens its manners, and refines its dress,
And sees the part, which it once acted, fall,
Where others to the van their forces press.
So Greece and Rome, and Italy, declin'd;
So languishes to-day the Celtic race,
And yields the vantage to the Saxon mind:—
And who will rise to take the Saxon's place?

Ph. May not the East resume its ancient sway,
And shake off this despotic trance of ages?—

P. That is the question, Philos, which to-day
The minds of foremost thinkers most engages.
The Orient was our nursery and school,
Where we learn'd our first accidence, and grew
Proficient in those arts, which gave us rule,
And westward the world's trade and learning drew.

Those Easterns by comparison were great,
While we remain'd so barbarous and poor.
But climate, soil, and food have chang'd our state,
And Egypt, Bagdad, India, rise no more.
The Slav, the Jap, the Mongol, may compete
With us for power in the time to come——

Ph. But our race has acquired so broad a seat,
And made in either hemisphere a home——

P. At this historic severance from the main
Alone I look. Two thousand years our sires
Have kept the land—O, will their power wane?
For if this lordship ceases, all expires.

Th. These are too lofty problems for my youth;
Let Philos and yourself take them anon;
I look to be a seeker after truth,
When some more summers' suns on me have shone——

Per. A pretty figure, boy. Thought, like a flow'r
Too quickly forc'd, attains a sickly prime:
Wanting the virtuous alchemy of time,
Which lends us, and steals back from us, our pow'r——
I view'd the site of PARIS overlaid
With geometric lines of cold, hard stone
And shallow masonry. Alas! I said,
The city of my bookish dreams is gone!
Gone are its ramparts, gates, and grim Bastille:
Its gabled tenements, its classic lanes;
And all that to my fancy would appeal;—
What, save the river and the name, remains?

Ph. Cluny, the Louvre, Nôtre Dame, are there,
And other links with the Capetian race!——

Per. Sad monuments of men and things that were:
The Latin blood expends its force apace.
The mausoleum of the Bourbon line,
SOUVIGNY, had its priors, men of might—
The last had left too soon to bid me dine:
The worms, I trow, had wish'd them all good-night.
Think, how the impress of the Roman mind
Is stamp'd on NISMES, and wheresoe'er that folk
Carried its firm assimilating yoke,
The world in one harmonious whole to bind.
But every system ripens and decays,
And sheds its fruit-seeds broadcast, where it fell;
And in the newer types of later days
Something of us will peradventure dwell.
I lay at towns, which in their foregone prime
Were seats of empire, arts and gaiety;
And now they only seem'd to me to be
Repositories of the drift of time.
I studied the Italian in his home,
And all the dwellers in the broad Levant;
Three types arrest the eye, where'er you roam:
Showman, restaurateur, and mendicant.
VERONA holds the Scaligers no more;
Their tombs are nigh her only living things;
But fancy to the Roman Theatre clings,
And ancient brick and marble work a store.

Descend in MILAN, and seek out a trace
Of generations of Visconti there!
It is a noble city; but the air
Sustains a newer and a weaker race.
In dark and impure records Naples shone;
But the majestic lust of rule was there.
Now sloth and sin the sovereignty share:
The grandeur and the dignity have gone.
And look how many others in that land,
Which prosper'd in the iron grip of might,
Languish beneath the liberator's hand,
Like flowers under unaccustom'd light!
O Philos, we have not so fallen yet;
But we are growing old and hard of heart,
With more to feed and less for each to get:
Too little love: too many at the mart!
Ah! let us both commend to those we know
A wiser fellowship, a broader scope:
And a strong fight for freedom from the foe,
Who saps our strength, and palters with our hope.
The Churchman dies, as eels do, joint by joint,
And makes way for the Layman's nobler rule;
But Legion is the number of the Fool;
And it asks time to conquer half a point.
War, plague, and famine can be lightly borne,
When we have manumission from the lie,
With which a fetich priesthood sees us die,
And which forecasts a new and brighter morn.

The spirit of false prophecy is there:
The gross evangel of a Second Birth,
Which places a feign'd hell beneath the earth,
And a feign'd heaven places in the air.
It has grown from a calling to a creed;
Some seek the power, and some crave the bread:
The world is full, and each one must be fed:
And we are burthen'd by the Levites' seed.

Ph. Is not the aim and end of life content?
These tenets soothe our latest consciousness.
Is it not wise for us to acquiesce,
And let the world pursue its fatuous bent?

Per. O, speak not of a faith built on deceit,
On counterfeit authority and crime!
A falsehood cannot be assoil'd by time;
Years do not change the nature of a cheat.
We must throw down our idols, and commence
Another law, a New Philosophy;
Soothsayers will grow rarer by-and-by
Under the reign of ethic influence.
We are too avaricious and too vain.
Because we are, may not we cease to be?
Nature alone enjoys eternity:
Her offspring perishes; but types remain.
The fairest of us are no whit more fair
Than other things, which turn to mould and rust:
The dust of Jesus was as other dust:
Our common mother is our last repair.

Ph. O, this is retrogression. Do not brood
Too much upon the speculative side.
No rivers to their falls more swiftly glide
Than our years do——
Per. That varies with the mood
And with the tone and bias of our minds.
The borderland of myth and fact have been
My lifelong home, and science often finds
It hard to fix the boundary between.
As I mapp'd in my fancy day by day
The scenes and forms, which rose before my view,
I felt the growth of insight in a way,
And substances from names and shadows grew.
It was a moving contrast, as I went:
The brain was spellbound by the ceaseless change,
And over infinite space thought seem'd to range,
Where more than she could borrow Nature lent.
Yet everywhere the traces met my eye
Of shifted centres and of pow'r dethron'd:
New types and names new seats of empire own'd;
And many a boyish link was history—
The costume and the colour were so new,
That they stirr'd up within a kind of awe:
A differing cult, a differing garb I saw,
As I from frontier on to frontier drew.
Thenot, we reach mid-life, ere we can look
Before and after. We have crown'd the hill,
And see how much is left to traverse still,
And what remains of the long-studied book——

Th. The Book of Life?

Per. Just so. Experience throws
Its lights and shadows, as suns rise and set;
And I reserve some moot opinions yet—
But I must make my story touch its close—
There are three cities on Italian soil,
Which overtow'r the rest, as certain cones
Of Alps outsoar the eagles' starriest thrones,
And have in their tall satellites their foil:
Rome, Venice, Florence: Venice of them all
The most engaging and inviolate;
For Roman on that ground ne'er laid his weight:
The sea her spouse, her highway, and her wall.
A colony along the low sea-shore,
Where us'd the fisher once his net to dry:
Giving laws, arts, and fame to Italy,
As only Rome had given them before.
This was the home of soldiers, painters, wits:
Of commerce, greatness, and the sciences:
Now Venice bows to alien decrees,
And silence in her council-chambers sits.
The Roman mason plies his craft to-day,
And raises structures, which suffice the age;
But he must draw, must he, his weekly wage,
And seeks in politics a part to play:
While those who labour'd once their lives' whole length
For masters of a differing type and creed,
Received their food and lodgment for all meed,
And, sire and son, gave priceless time and strength.

This made the Roman architecture live,
When much of newer growth has shrunk to nought,
As images in our sublime youth caught,
Experiences of riper years survive.
Fair Florence is a show-room of the Arts,
A dwelling-place of opulence and ease.
But what a poor inheritance are these,
When all that bred and nourished them departs!
O Philos, the too much home-staying man
Begins to love too well his native land,
And does not see the blots, which others can,
Who pass the sea, and in perspective stand.
I took the hoards of a too thoughtful youth
To vouch my faiths and notions against facts:
No student but some fond conceits retracts,
Yet by how little I had miss'd the truth!
I mix'd in scenes, which are a daily use
To millions in shape like you and me,
Who differently think, and feel, and see,
As their conditions and demands induce.
A people's culture hedges round its creeds;
But higher forms with lower go to school,
And there is no determinable rule
For judging whence brain-mastery proceeds.
I mark'd the grand division, where I went,
Between the love of gain and love of ease:
Here the tempestuous passion for increase,
And there the fatal dowry of content.

I looked with rapture on the strangers' lands,
On scenes with which our Britain cannot vie;
But visions rose before my vagrant eye,
Which every son of freedom understands.
My heart with soft emotion learn'd to swell,
And I dream'd tenderly of you—and you.

Th. You left us, then, to win a truer view?

Per. I knew it not. I know it now full well.
Our nomad instinct lingers yet, and breeds
That drift to change, e'en though the change be ill;
But all the calls of modern life to fill,
One steadfast centre of repose it needs.
My thoughts are wistful hoverers between
My gladness at this meeting and the pain,
Which steals like some suffusion o'er my brain,
That ONE should have gone down to earth unseen.

Ph. You knew Palæmon, ere he topp'd his prime?

Per. Ah, we were sworn companions twice ten years:
My eyelids labour with the unspent tears,
As I look back on the exhausted time.
He was of the old noble brood. I lay
Within his gates, as in a second home,
Nor knew I how to him too oft to come.
Death gave me much; but death took much away.
I live less with the age, in which I am,
Than with the future ages which I see,
Which will have commonage of thought with me,
And all our dull fanaticism damn.

But let me keep my foot upon some spot
Of this fair world, so long as in my veins
The blood its tidal property retains:
I feel no haste to seek an unknown lot.
The clerical mythologists appear
To hang up in the air a port of rest,
Where Death is not the last unwished-for guest;
But falsehood is weak flattery to the ear.
Old friend, it is to thee that I commit
The sacrificial office, when I go:
The priestly task, for which no priest so fit
As him whom I best love and I best know.
The uncouth rites, which wait on death, forbear;
I shudder, when I view the gaunt carv'd stone,
Inscrib'd with some trite mortuary ware,
And promising more than I e'er shall own.
I feel the tread of centuries of feet
Upon the earth which overlies my dust;
I see the everlasting toilers meet,
And yield my bones to lichen and to rust!
Invoke the sacred genius of fire,
I charge thee on thy oath so dearly sworn,
And let no journeyman attend for hire,
When my pale smoke away from you is borne.
What of me does not mingle with the wind,
The flame shall rarefy and shall refine;
And I foresee my bloodless ashes in'd,
And tenanting some jar of celandine.

Ph. Pursue no longer this depressing vein ;
Thy wishes are our laws ; the times change fast ;
And what some held just now scarce wholly sane,
Will soon have into common usage pass'd.
You have return'd to fortune and to peace ;
The day of freedom, which you long so crav'd,
Has dawn'd. The tidings follow'd you to Greece,
That not in vain you had your sorrows brav'd.

Then. The trial, which false kindred, than false foes
A thousand-fold more cruel and more base,
Laid on you, Sir, is crown'd with a repose,
Which ought to exile sadness from your face.

Per. O, pardon this unthankfulness ! My bent
Is perhaps more pensive, Thenot, than is well ;
But since so much of my short time is spent,
My mind begins on other things to dwell.
We are not voters for our advent here,
Nor can refuse the summons to depart.
But I turn from my neighbour's pall-rob'd bier
To some new uses of the potter's art—
Ah well, a plumper purse, a freer hand,
Where one has laid a little broader line,
Is a three-corner'd boon, you understand,
Bringing three fairy gifts to me and mine.
We shall have pow'r to hold at distance some,
With whom I counsell'd dalliance, while need press'd ;
And we shall see a few more often come,
Whose names by you can be securely guess'd.

While I, the vassal of the world no more,
Shall study the award of future men,
And prune with unpaternal hand the store,
Which buds and blooms from every idle pen—
But here comes Thyra——

Then. And young Clytus, too!

Cly. The congress is complete; old times return:

Th. The master is among us with his cue,
New trains of thought assisting us to learn.

Per. Much that life teaches is so less than vain,
That it were hard if, using well his eyes,
A student, such as I, once and again
Could not present the world with some surmise—
Ah! dearest one, through good and ill report
Thou hast upheld thy husband; if he err'd,
Thou err'dst with him——

Th. So every true wife ought.

Per. Our recompense is full, though too deferr'd.
Think how we toil'd together through the days,
When hope was mute, and sympathy seem'd dead,
And fortune frown'd alike on all our ways.

Cly. My noble father! blessings on his head!

Thyr. We lean'd upon thy strength, my husband sweet,
Nor question'd thy designs or thy intent,
Knowing thee on our common mission bent.

Per. Uncounted thanks! Your faith was not unmeet.

Our life, our thought, our purse, have been as one;
The name of heiress ne'er deform'd thy speech,
My labour learn'd our measur'd needs to reach;
And all thy store grows for this boy our son.
Yet, Thyra, of thy sex are not a few,
Who much their corporal estate misuse,
And this or that man's scheme of life undo——

Thyr. It were some gain so shrewd a wife to lose.

Per. Well, let it pass. Palæmon broke our chains,
And laid on us a great and weighty trust;
Our good works, not our bones, are our remains;
Yet we shall consecrate his honour'd dust.
Now all too late my fetters drop from me:
Now have the labourers their portion found;
And I can lay my foot upon the ground,
And say: *God of my Fathers, we are free!*

EPISTLES

I

TO FAUNUS

[*The writer narrates his recollections of his old friend, the father of Faunus. He had arrived at the house too late to see him before his death. He promises a second visit, when he will be welcomed by Faunus.*]

FAUNUS, where tors their summits bathe in mist,
And to the brook's edge dips the verdure down ;
To that weird land, on three sides ocean-kiss'd,
And envied heir to Arthur's long renown :
I came to lie upon the ground, and dream :
Building up dim poetic worlds, which were
Like circles within circles in a stream,
Or as the lines which intersect a sphere.
A weary-hearted Londoner, I fled
From books, brown herbage, and the stamp of feet,
To spots where I could, like some hermit, tread,
And fellow-voices, ere they rose, grew sweet.

Where around me and beneath I saw forgotten
beauties spread,
And to unwonted melody my pulse soon learn'd
to beat.

How crisp and buoyant was the air that morn
I made across the gold and purple moor,
And so by wavy tracts of tall, ripe corn,
To where afar I saw belov'd Glendwr!—
Glendwr by early sunshine gaily lit,
And in its wooded glory towering
Above the valley, where we us'd to sit,
To talk in peace, and hear the throstle sing.
Yet still between me and the house there lay
A certain distance and your nestling town;
But then we were to meet soon; and the way
Was mostly through the lanes and o'er the down.
My heart was full of all we both should have to say;
And I was gladder than I car'd to you to own.

I recollect—it seems but yesterday—
I reach'd the village, and fil'd through the throng,
Which both sides of the straggling fore street lay,
And, till my hand grasp'd yours, I thought it long.
'Twas market morn. I hung about the hall,
And watch'd the folk heart-deep in loud discourse,
How veal was scarce, and wheat crops shew'd a fall,
And Simon's bull had gor'd young Robin's horse.

And there was one who had, a whisper went,
Attended market there all fourscore years.
Dim was his eye, and on a staff he leant;
But he lov'd still to mingle with his pheers.
And as he look'd back on the checker'd time forespent
I saw a hand steal up to screen the trickling tears.

While I expected you, had Time been made
To wait on my desires, it should have flown,
Bringing you on its wings. How long I stay'd,
I know not; but the day, I think, had grown
Older by certain hours, when poor Mark Yates
(Who died last summer) lightly touch'd my dress,
As I stood dreamily against the gates,
And said the carriage was in readiness.
I started, question'd for you all; but he
Turn'd strangely from me, and his lips were white.
A huge loss had befallen you and me.
And as he told the rest, he wept outright.
There's something which still haunts my eyes, like vapour from the sea;
Nor have I yet outliv'd your look, when we met on that night.

For ever I shall in my memory keep
The tidings of that messenger of woe,
And his face, as I gaz'd on it asleep,
And lack'd the heart to stay there, or to go.

And from a distant city, where he liv'd
In greener years, came elders, who had known
Him much as you are. It was there he wiv'd;
But he went from it, as he came—alone!
She was his fellow-labourer and First Friend,
And you were but a half-unfolded bloom,
Too young his teaching well to comprehend:
Too young to fill much of the lost one's room.
But a new value to the set of life it seem'd to lend,
When an affinity of mind in you began to loom.

We laid him in the ground beyond the foss
Without unseemly pomp, as he us bad,
Within the old church hay; and for his loss
Not we alone our minds in sorrow clad.
The village windows mourn'd, and humble men
Gave up their toil to keep the day apart;
And on the slant church tower once again
The lower'd flag saluted a cold heart.
He brought a costly sacrifice to Death
In that ennobled nature, which scarce seem'd,
As if it ought to hang upon a breath,
Or be from common fortune unredeem'd.
But he asks not an elegy or monumental wreath;
For 'twas a different sort of fame of which your father dream'd.

All that of him was earthly, we repaid
To earth; but what we lov'd best still survives.
The life, which we saw lately from us fade,
Has now diffus'd itself through all our lives.
George Swainson is enrich'd with a small part:
A part makes up the power of Dick Orme;
I see him in this man's new taste for art,
And in that other's strange zeal for reform.
It is because his counsels I enshrin'd,
That I have that which me to you endears:
I owe to him all that is most refin'd,
All that too good for me in me appears.
And part of him has been renew'd in your aspiring mind,
And part has been reserv'd by time to grace your mellower years.

He left us rich memorials of his mind,
And what in him was highest and most pure,
At present for some visions too refin'd,
Till this world is unthron'd, will still endure.
He seem'd his unchang'd self, when last we met,
And as of old roam'd on the lulling shore;
He talk'd with cheerfulness and ease, and yet
He was less voluble, and listen'd more.
Once, I can recollect, he left my side,
To go and by the water-line to stand,
And the fast-narrowing beach with glee he ey'd
As the swift flood lapp'd up the champion sand.

He said, "See, see, is not the fretted border of the tide
Like some fair roll of lace unfolded in a lady's hand?"

The days I was a listless wanderer
With you about the place and neighbour parts!
It was the gracious childhood of the year,
And spring smil'd everywhere but in our hearts.
Though he had gone, yet much remain'd behind,
Like sweets we see, but cannot hope to reach:
We heard his accents somewhere in the wind,
And still his footstep tenanted the beach.
For us the early music of the woods
Was sad, because it spake to us of him
In his unbroken strength and blither moods,
When health appear'd to overflow the brim,
And stories of a variable current in our bloods
Seem'd foreign to him and to us, and (like old legends) dim.

Yet since he us'd so well his strength for good,
It were vain and inglorious to repine:
He left us, as 'twas fittest perhaps he should,
Without a warning and with scarce a sign.
The severance seem'd cruel; but the close
Was only like our parting with those Lights,

Which strangely visit us, and which we lose
As strangely, in the breathless summer nights.
He touch'd the summit of his soul's content,
Since his last conscious look could rest on you.
But certain thoughts another way were bent,
When he perceiv'd how fast the dimness grew.
And I had it from your own lips, how your good folk were sent
To spur me on, if I was sighted in the distant view.

Brave hearts are fountains of brave words. O me!
I've heard him speak whole eclogues in wing'd prose
Upon the reasons which took him and thee
From London to the West, and why he chose
A life which seem'd so wide in all its scope
From his town-nurtur'd youth. "My friend," said he;
"I love the country well enough to cope
With every drawback, and adore the sea.
We come as well prepar'd to like as learn,
And, good or bad, new insights must be gains.
For freer breath we both began to yearn,
And Faunus now his dearest wish obtains.
For learning there were tell-tale symptoms of too strong a turn,
And better have the horsehair than the cobwebs in his brains!"

Let us look on his well-remember'd face,
As though the framer of our weak estate
Had not dissolv'd him into unseen space,
And left him somewhere in the mist to wait
A fortune far remov'd beyond our ken;
Where all is dim, and new, and strange,
And he hears not the hum and tread of men,
Nor knows that he has suffer'd any change.
Or is he in some other peopled sphere,
Which hath its own indwellers like to this,
Unconscious what he has been, and he is—
Unconscious that he was a tarrier here?
He is exempt perchance alike from hope and fear,
And wars no longer with his first-born impulses.

Some day I shall revisit old Glendwr,
And shake its second master by the hand,
And once more the sweet scenery devour,
And once more side by side with Faunus stand.
I still shall hear the peewit's plaintive call
Along that little cove, which meets the sea;
And we can watch the water rise and fall;
But two will press the ground in place of three!
I shall miss his familiar form and speech,
Which robb'd of so much weariness the walk,
And feel the want of one like him to teach
Me the deep art of knowing how to talk.

But as before the sandflies will be pattering on the beach,
And we shall pluck the sea-thorn by its unresisting stalk.

We've sat upon the heights, and seen the sun
Set in mid-ocean, pillow'd on a bank;
And it seem'd then as if we might have run,
And touch'd the eddying circles, where it sank.
We've lain out on a headland, side by side,
Where ages of sea-pinks unsung had blown,
And watch'd with rapture the exulting tide,
As it sped up to repossess its own.
And oft he would invite me, on an eve,
Before the moon had found her robe of blue,
My studies for a while behind to leave,
And saunter on the shore with him and you:
To see the ocean its broad emerald bosom heave,
And the enamouring freedom taste of the unmeasur'd view.

None more rejoic'd at the incoming flood;
For he saw there a symbol of a time,
When it was high tide always in his blood,
And he dreamt of a never-fading prime.

But I have known him wear a look of pain,
When we were walking seaward at the ebb—
A look, which might seem but three-quarters sane
To minds wrought of less delicate a web.
His drift was clear, nor was the moral new:
He saw the water rise, and saw it fall;
And fall and rise again, at seasons due:
There was a constant power of recall.
The sea grew and decreas'd, for ever it decreas'd and grew;
But our short tide of life ebb'd once, and then ebb'd once for all.

We were two town-bred wits, your sire and I,
And had but loosely studied country forms;
Nor always, Faunus, were we high and dry,
For we knew what it was to brave life's storms.
But he so much accomplish'd for you both,
That you may pass through life without a thought,
So that you shun, like death, ignoble sloth,
And ne'er forget how he his battle fought.
He was a man of much and varied pow'r,
Unsuited in some ways to bear the weight,
Which fate impos'd on him: yet in the hour
Of trial he reveal'd a nerve as great,
As many men who had of strength receiv'd a larger dow'r,
But lack'd the wish a home like his around them to create.

He was profuse by instinct; but his hand
Was stay'd by that one governing desire,
Which some had found it hard to understand,
That you might never set your brains to hire.
He said: "I had to live, and hence the bond!
But I shall leave what will raise him above
Such mislik'd merchandise; ay, and beyond
Your wishers and the world's too thrifty love"——
Well, he was what he was, and needeth not
The panegyric of a common pen;
And your enchanting Blissland holds a spot,
Which must go mirror'd in the minds of men.
And Glendwr and all around it long shar'd the widow's lot,
And long the dogs watch'd for a voice they cannot hear again.

There are those not a few, whose wingless souls
Are one flesh with the earth beneath their feet
Who to themselves propose no higher goals,
Than such as yield them present clothes and meat.
The vulgar poor pursues his low'ring toil,
And thinks but how to make his weekly rent;
And if he burns o'ermuch the midnight oil,
'Tis not his mind that gets more nutriment.

The vulgar rich piles up his splendid heap
From mills, or stocks, or silk, or calico,
And trusts that, when death hath laid him to sleep,
In his heir's hands it still will grow and grow.
Yet if he might but once into the future peep,
He would see it melt, as does in the humid West the snow.

Had he alike from both not differ'd far,
The name, which he made a perpetual fief,
Would not now go before you like a star,
Nor would the world have ask'd to share your grief.
But he work'd long unvalued and obscure,
Enlarging slowly in his own domain
The boundaries of knowledge; and the lure
Held out to him of less laborious gain
He heeded not. And he would say to me:
"My life's work is abroad in all men's sight.
If shadows we pursue down here, and we
Conceive them substances, is't wrong or right?
But are not pleasures what to us seem so to be,
And, look, how often one man scorns another man's delight!"

'Tis something now that he consum'd his youth,
And paid out years he never might retrieve,
In the pursuit of honour and of truth,
And in his thirst for you a name to leave.

He was reserv'd to us, and often cold;
Ah, yes, his moods were sometimes hard to bear.
But did we not mark how, as he grew old,
He seem'd to breathe in a serener air.
Affairs were brighter, and the world no more
Chaf'd his proud spirit. He could move at ease,
And keep at comfortable distance those,
With whom he either fail'd, or did not please
To sympathise: he hated naked prose.
His life was fortunate; but yet by many degrees
The happiest years, I think, were just toward the close.

He threw out large conceptions; but his mind
Seem'd apt to grow impatient of a scheme,
Ere it came ripe. He dearly lov'd to dream,
And, as we thought, was to himself least kind.
I never shall reflect without moist eyes
On his fine nature and his width of view,
Nor think unmov'd, how narrow and unwise
That lukewarmth was, which to a coldness grew.
We know who were the losers by that course;
But what is pass'd can never be undone,
And his heart rests amid the pleasant gorse,
Where by his side you have so often run.
His undervaluers have now their long day of remorse;
And I have liv'd to see his due conferr'd on a young son.

Now I recall that once, as he and I
March'd lustily across a marish tract,
To save our credits at our homes hard by
(For we all din'd an hour past noon exact),
He murmur'd, in the still notes of the wind,
Something about your mother and her set—
The old grief which had colour'd so his mind—
He said: "My marriage owes my hopes much yet."
He said: "*She* was all I divin'd; but *they*,
As though one had cost Nature her whole skill,
Were of a harder and a coarser clay.
Ah me! my marriage owes my hopes much still."
He look'd as if, had I but urg'd, he had far more to say;
But this was all his lips deliver'd—all they ever will.

In the debating art he shew'd least skill:
Not but that he could grasp with ease the sense,
And had full insight into things; yet still
Never had man a weaker hand at fence.
Ideas in his brain too thickly throng'd,
Like masquers pack'd together in some hall,
And by his very riches he was wrong'd,
For he scarce dar'd his own his own to call.
And, as time flow'd, it grew a warm regret
That he had never disciplin'd his mind,
Like many an one whom he and I had met,
And humbler parts more wisely had combin'd.

And hence before you his advice he ever lov'd
to set,
That you should try betimes in life your true-born
bent to find.

Mere forms of faith and dogmas of the schools,
Which he call'd unkind spendthrifts of men's time,
He calmly left to priestcraft and its tools,
Judging such use of brain-power a crime.
But he commended warmly to us all
A mission, which had lodging by his heart:
The gospel of Life's Honour, and the call
Of strong ones everywhere to do their part
In raising thought above the humble flight,
Which bounds its mean endeavours in our day.
"I wait to see," he cried, "more love, more light;
And England rich in a more noble way;
And union in aid of public good and common right,
With courage on all tyrants' necks the foot to lay.

"Deliver this great nation from the curse
Of buckram politicians and lack-wits,
Who us in credit and in wealth amerce,
For on ourselves the chief dishonour sits.
'The cares of empire—give them me—they're sweet,'
Quoth one of late; and straightway it was so:
As if the birds in parliament should meet,
And in the Eagle's room elect the Crow.

A Queen of England is but England Crown'd,
And our disgraces are our own, not hers.
Let us her throne with better men surround,
And tilt against the Landlords' Barriers.
Not long erewhile from sea to sea the country will resound
With a deep cry for new reforms and truer ministers."

It puzzled him to understand, why we
Neglect the untold treasury we own
In the past ages of the world, and see
What now is, and what is to be, alone.
He speculated fondly on the cause
Of that sublime intensity of thought
In our young aspirations, and the pause,
Which follows afterward, when we are brought
More face to face with life. Too little ease
He granted to himself, and kept his course,
Nor did years seem his ardour to appease,
In quest of that originating Force,
Which breathes upon the face of all the lands and all the seas,
And refuses to disclose to us its nature and its source.

About the past he saw a sacredness,
Which certain only in religion see:
It was, as he the notion would express,
Unreachable, finite, and passion-free.

A man of boy-like sensibility,
He often sacrificed some votive tears
To his spent youth, his parents' memory,
And the companions of departed years.
His fine endowments and unerring wit:
All that he ever was, or had, or knew,
None ever found him willing to admit,
Were to himself more than a little due.
And much he mus'd, when he was call'd this star-roof'd world to quit,
If he would, what his father was to him, become to you.

A talk of boyhood always lit his eye,
The pleasures of that time were slight, beside
Those of maturer life, yet, measur'd by
The growth of pow'r, the difference seem'd less wide.
But he would not have wish'd to serve again
His 'prenticeship to knowledge, or to let
His youth more than a memory remain,
With its inburnt impressions of regret.
'Twas not like some men's qualifying days:
A dalliance with fortune and with time;
Not many love to tarry, till the bays
Come, powder'd with the winter's argent rime.
O school, on which his fame already sheds some of its rays,
Yield him his true rank on thy walls, and be for once sublime!

Yet those who follow'd a less studious life
He scarcely censur'd, as the world now goes;
Where each year witnesses a thicker strife,
And it is, what one has, not what one knows.
The race was now for wealth more than for wit,
And learning was like other merchandise.
"In early time each man his own lamp lit;
But now who lists," said he, "his knowledge buys.
Letters have lost their dignity, and arts
Their honour, since Philosophy forsook
Its ancient lines, and on all common marts
The coinage of men's brains was sold. Go, look.
And he is thought, good Lord! a man of more than middle parts,
Who smatters in a tongue or so, and can discourse by book."

Much that offended men who knew him not,
As those few knew him, that had all his heart,
Came of a discontentment with his lot
And with the ill-appreciated part
He took in letters; and a nervous pride,
To which I never heard him give a name,
Even such parts as those had force to hide,
And made more steep for him the climb to fame.
Our homes his knowledge and his fancy lit;
But many deem'd his aims too undefin'd:

To us he left some things detached from it;
But Death inherited his boundless mind.
For his pen never ran, as oft befalls, before his wit,
And he was wiser even than the books he left behind.

He gave the world more than it could have ask'd,
And threw into a life too short for us
Work, which far stronger frames would have o'er-
task'd,
Thinking to merit some indulgence thus.
But there were men, who look'd to him to gain
At one great stride what they knew it must cost
Successive generations to attain;
And so the thanks of such small wits he lost.
His intellectual temper partly brought
This censure on him. His books in their kind
Were excellent, yet incompactly wrought:
He did not carry out, as he design'd.
To him the greatest pleasure lay within the uncoin'd
thought,
And seldom to its fullest height would he draw up
his mind.

Who shall now hold us all a winter's night
With new points given to familiar things,
And turn to our instruction and delight
Sorrows, from which time had drawn out the stings?

His unprejudging mind was the resort
Of thoughts, which circled nature in their range:
He studied books, art, men; the laws, the Court,
Science, and all the principles of change.
What trophies were unwoven from that brain,
While it remain'd an agent for our good!
Much that is yours the world keeps still. Your gain
Must grow, as he grows to be understood.
And then who less than Faunus will have cause to entertain
A jealousy of those who mix with him in brotherhood?

Lean on those chosen friendships you inherit,
Nor of one texture look to see all minds.
Most profit comes of difference in merit,
And often 'tis this difference which binds.
Consider but the pebbles on our beach!
No two are twins, yet all fair ne'ertheless;
And things, which do not to your liking reach,
Are to another a dear happiness.
Were all men witty, wit would meet with scorn;
Or scholars all—then learning would be cheap!
But few are forth into the sunlight borne,
Whose mem'ry it concerns the world to keep.
It asks some force to raise a ripple on the stream of thought,
And many count it time misspent, and better love to sleep.

Men mostly come and go, unmark'd, unwept;
The world has paid them toll and taken none;
And is as wealthy when their wake is kept,
As when lov'd Gilbert his short race has run.
Picture a world the home of none but such!
Beings with human forms and brutish hearts!
Still it may be a fault to ask too much,
And look on all sides for egregious parts.
For genius must be rare, or must be nought:
A giant among giants is but one.
By majesty of sinew or of thought
The great ones of all centuries have shone.
And an heroic purpose few, if any, ever wrought
With singler aim than him, who has from us just
newly gone.

From his own pleasures he spar'd much and more
To aid the steady tilth of your young mind,
And bravely from some cherish'd plans forbore,
That your sweet nurture might be unconfin'd.
His heart round yours revolv'd; and he forsook
His own æsthetic tastes, to cultivate
The common arts of life, and that way shook
His strength; for Love was present to dictate.
But then there ever is for such an one
A soul of beauty in things most obscure;
And when the tide to turn had well begun,
And he felt that his fortune grew secure,

As an Art-lover a new fame half-doubtingly he
won;
And in great cities, where I go, who knoweth not
Glendwr?

We have a partnership in the regret,
That by one thing at least, which such as I
Prize in our human way, he used to set
Small store or none; and our posterity
May ask, why he was not more closely urg'd
To leave his endear'd lineaments behind,
Ere he from our substantial world emerg'd
Into that other, where we are all Mind.
But he thought that we valued him too high,
And made too much of books and bookish lore:
"There's things besides," he said: "the earth, the
sky;
The study of the sea and of the shore.
And what is it that I have done which can presume
to vie
With workers who all science seek to open and
explore?"

I well remember how, a winter's night,
He talk'd of books and bookmen by the fire,
And even the kaleidoscopic light
Serv'd certain new-wean'd notions to inspire.

A couchant pard, a sphynx, a mountain-chain:
A castle on a hill, a bristled hog:
These, and how many more, his fictive brain
As with a die stamp'd on the simmering log.
The transfers from this or that author's mind
Were coin'd by him into meet form and phrase;
"But the full secret of one's art to find,
One has," quoth he, "to labour all one's days,
Of thought and nature for our use the forces to unbind;
And that is all my gift," he said, "and all my praise.

"If 'better is the evil that we know
Than that we know not,' why may not the good,
Which we possess and see, be rated so,
Where we now judge by mere loose likelihood?
Our faiths but pages to our wishes are,
Such substances as people troubled sleep;
Still most men love themselves enough to care
A little, if they can, from death to keep.
I must lay down this vesture: but my mind
Shall pass beyond our sentient faculty,
Somewhere outside the waters and the wind,
To a scene of inviolate harmony.
And what," said he, "if I retravel Britainward to find
My name a placeman on the roll of that isle's memory!"

Faunus, I more impeach my wit than yours,
When I own that, in your more boyish years,
I was acquainted with some anxious hours,
And harbour'd something of a father's fears
(For our love had grown up as rich as blood),
Thinking how far your intellect and heart,
Then dimly germinant, hereafter would
Fill up the void, when he might hence depart.
Now your name, too, grows freehold. Yet men learn
First from myself that whether you would bend
Your steps his way, we did not all discern:
So hard it is a lovelorn youth to spend.
Keep your house as it came to you; but think that fictile urn
And painted jar owed more to him than they to him could lend.

II

TO HENRY HUTH

RELENT, my friend. How can the world afford
To let such as you are his virtues hoard?
O, ere it is too late, awake, and haste
To make more known your culture and your taste!
Is it good so to trust the age to come
With framing for you your elogium?

Lavish of all that fortune to you lends,
To help the poor, and to oblige your friends,
O, deign, if but a little, to impart
The unmapp'd treasures of your head and heart.
Shake off that too great shyness, which doth make
You niggard only, where your fame's at stake!
Ill could I bear to hear men name in doubt
All your great parts—the greatest, perhaps, left out;
Or see some uninitiated pen
Speak of you, as it might of other men.
While you around you many see who strive
With moderate gifts to make themselves survive,
Why should it please you to let us be blind
To more than half the riches of your mind?
It seems like burying treasure in the deep,
Or dedicating our whole life to sleep,
If you must die, and leave so few aware,
How good not only, but how great you are.
Your intellect and knowledge are, I know,
Your own; but to posterity we owe
Something—you your example, that the way
Of living well may last beyond our day.
Of all those who direct the helm of State,
And by their friends are now accounted great,
How many we've both seen from nothing rise,
And by success us and themselves surprise?
Such men may thank your too strong love of rest;
But are we always thus with second-best

To be content? O, come from your repose;
And all your loftier aptitudes disclose!
What is the rank you have to that which ought
To be yours, if the world were rightly taught,
Should you consent to draw the veil aside,
With which you have thought fit yourself to hide?
Then we should see, what we ought to have seen,
Before your years had overstepp'd the mean—
In the full Senate see you take your seat,
And at the Council board your equals meet.
Come, leave the country and your books awhile—
Those may your leisure intervals beguile—
Communicate to us some of that store
Which, as you took from it, would seem the more;
Sometimes among the Muses you may sit,
But give the nation, what was meant for it!
I see you gravely smile, and shake your head,
And say again, what you so oft have said—
That politics are not for you. Such things
You leave to those, who pay their court to kings,
And in the Forum let their tongues run loose—
To Göschen, Cardwell, and your own friend Bruce.
This half in earnest, half in jest; for none
Has more respect than you for fame well-won,
For services perform'd, our glory guarded:
Or loves more dearly to see worth rewarded.
But all that to our public life belongs,
All those arts, which draw the applause of throngs,

Offend your taste; for you have train'd your mind
To aims more pure and studies more refin'd.
Not you the honours of the State would please
E'en half so well as freedom and your ease;
Not you the proffer of a garter'd knee
Could draw from your illustrious privacy.
Your chief ambition is to live in peace,
And miseries of others to decrease.
You scatter thousands to assuage distress,
Unbless'd from pulpit, and unthank'd by press;
Not any is so humble or so poor,
But with the highest may approach your door;
You shun the public gaze, nor would you stoop
With hunters after place yourself to group.
Yet who that knows you cannot witness bear,
How true a type of your own time you are!
Fearless, impartial, polite, just, kind:
Quick to see good, to faults a little blind;
And that fine tact in you is perfectest,
Which can instruct, and seem but to suggest.
No friendships are so slowly form'd as yours;
But none, when form'd, more steadily endures.
Spare are your commendations, and for few;
But he's prais'd doubly who is prais'd by you!

III

TO A YOUNG LADY

I've thought so often on the walk we had,
When you said, half in jest, you held me mad
To print my verses—those which I had made
At such times as my work aside was laid.
"Why print them?" quoth you. O, those words were hard,
And crush'd the spirit of a rising bard.
If it amus'd a man to write such things,
As thus—that Poetry, like birds, had wings;
That girls were goddesses—*you* had not heard
Of any such, you vow'd upon your word—
And that nine spinsters on a hillock sit,
And with Apollo form the Court of Wit—
So far you saw no harm—but then to print!—
This puzzled you. Next came a civil hint
At something haply wrong. May-be, I had
Of late walk'd much by moonlight, which was bad.
To think, when for your sake so much was writ—
Ah, there was the great cruelty of it!—
And now, when my coy Muse had imp'd her wing,
Abroad to men her little songs to sing,
Which she had learn'd to please a private ear,
And be rewarded with a smile or tear,

That you should be the first my lines to spurn,
Saying, "Why print them?" whisp'ring, "Why not burn?"
We rang'd the lanes together arm in arm:
We pass'd some whitewash'd cottage, then a farm,
Which your good father, too well loving bricks,
Had rear'd of yore; and next a group of ricks.
Now a scar'd covey rose out of the wheat;
And then a rabbit started at our feet.
You pluck'd a dog-rose from the hedge, and said:
"What would you give to have been country-bred?
We girls who live here by the mountain-side,
What don't we do?—we hunt, we drive, we ride:
We course the otter brass-shod in a rout;
Fish with our brothers' rods, or tickle trout.
We have our champion scenery and our hills:
Our farms, our flocks, our wind and water mills:
Our verdure, foliage, brooks, and, O, our air!
What with all these can you in towns compare?"
"On yonder stile," said I, "let us make two;
And we will see what I can say to you.
The town and country I should like to see
Brought something nearer than they are; for we
Think your pursuits mechanical, while you
Despise our quiet culture. So we two
Go on, each ever undervaluing each.
We of the town profess a higher reach

In sciences, and larger sympathies
With human progress, and what in us lies"——
You broke in then: "Don't make such mouths and eyes!
You talk so fast, you'll presently forget
It is no easy-chair on which you sit."
I smil'd, and you continued: "Well, we try
Our hand a little at philosophy;
Stealing from farm and field what time we may
To put our rustic minds in the right way.
It seems to me we perfect wonders do—
Why, have we not our libraries, like you,
And institutes, where men from far and near
Come to us in the dead time of the year,
Who country audiences know how to hold,
By telling news not more than six moons old?
And 'tis our fault, and not their lack of pains,
If they don't brush some cobwebs from our brains."
"Ah, yes, you help yourselves—the common way—
And leave the poor to manage as they may!
Your Radical improvers cast the die,
And let the toiling million in"—— Quoth I:
"Better not give them power, than omit
The knowledge wanted in well using it."
So we went on word-fencing, till the light
Turn'd something greyer, as we near'd the night.
"The day grows old," you said; "come, help me down"—

And we retraced our way toward the town.
You pleaded for the country all along,
And thought I did the rural sort a wrong,
To paint them so one-sided—"And," quoth you,
"You town-folk have your peccadilloes, too!"
Then we compared, your arm again in mine,
Of town and country life the varying line.
You hit me hard, as ladies can and will,
And sang the praises of the country still.
We quizz'd each other's hobbies: I laugh'd well
At that big squire you know, that scarce can spell.
A great landowner he, a grandee quite—
Only somehow he never learn'd to write!
Next you to me:—"And you—and you can't tell
A tomtit from a golden oriole!"
"An oriole?"—"Yes"—and you (saucy puss!)
Pointed where one was perch'd not far from us
On a split rail. You then with girlish glee
Pursued unpitying your victory.
A village prodigy you said you knew
Who had some author you forgot read through.
Some Latin fellow—Virgil could it be?—
You were not sure. Then of a holy clerk
You had to tell, who had in hand a work
Shewing that cock-fights were to Moses known,
And tracing them so from the Patriarchs down:
Another, truer to his calling, stood
Sponsor to forty volumes on the Flood.

Then there were Readings at the Rooms at times:
And had not our friend Corbet written rhymes?
The country had its learning, like the city,
And at a pinch e'en Rurals could be witty.
This talk took from the distance, and anon
Your good lord's chateau through the foliage shone;
A tract of corn (sun-gilded) lay between,
And lent a mellow richness to the scene.
We made a treaty, ere we reach'd the gate,
That you the town should swear to tolerate,
Till you had dipp'd a little into what
It had just of those things which you had not,
While I contracted, of my part, to come
More often Wales-ward, where in your new home
(The master willing) I should range, while you
The honours of a country-house could do—
Your country-house, by which the storied Dee
Flows silently and swiftly to the sea.
I fell into the snare (poor hodman-blind!)
Pack'd up my things—came down to you: to find
The town had joined the country, for your sake
Of their best gifts a Paradise to make—
Culture with freedom, plenty without waste:
The books I lov'd, the sports which were your taste.

IV

TO CLYTUS

When I depart from England, boy, one day,
Not like the birds, but never to return,
I bid you not for me too much to mourn.
My life its shadows has both known and felt;
But I have seen them into vapour melt,
And over grief I hold a conqueror's sway.

If you and I part somewhere in the spring,
I shall have liv'd to see another year,
And Earth some of her new embroidery wear.
The primrose will have peep'd above the snow,
And birds will make me music, as I go.
But cause no sauncing-bell for me to ring.

Or if about the ripe age of the leaves
It is that my frail brain shall cease to throb,
Weep not, as if Death had done wrong to rob
Clytus of me: my work will perhaps be done;
And he in this poor world his crown has won,
Who something of himself from Fate retrieves.

Lay me not, Clytus, in the base red earth,
Which men dig for their houses, that I may,
As I grow to be parcel of the clay,
Go with my fellow-bricks to piece a wall,
Or form the angle of some great thane's hall,
Helping to echo back the unheard mirth.

Lay me not where above my unarm'd head
Regardless wayfarers may plant their heel:
I might or I might not the pressure feel:
(For darker is the grave than mapless lands)
Tend me in my last hours with thine own hands,
And put me softly down into my bed.

Leave me not in a rude and distant land,
Where all the life of me would be unknown,
But bring me back to sleep among my own.
Not where the gale swings spices to and fro:
Not in dark regions of unmolten snow:
Is it that I should wish my tomb to stand.

But let my bones repose beneath the turf
In some still upland spot, where we have walk'd,
May-be, together formerly, and talk'd

Of past and present, and what was to be:
Just near enough to the resounding sea,
To catch the murmur of the distant surf.

Think not of me, as I seem'd, when I died,
A slender salvage of what I had been:
But try to recollect the frequent scene
(If memory of me so long endures),
When in mad-merry glee my years with yours
At marbles, ball, or blindman hotly vied.

Did I not for your sake grow young again,
And often let my serious labours wait
To make one in your sports, early and late?
I, who bore the reproach of being told
That I to all alike was something cold,
To be a child with you did not disdain.

My learning was not costly; but I strove,
By using a new kind of alchemy,
Not to dishonour those, who now low lie.
But I have not done more (believe) for you,
Than my sweet parents would have wish'd to do,
Had but their fortune answer'd to their love.

My life, like some wide-open'd book, has lain
Before you, since you were a tender thing,
Innocent of the name of suffering.
Judge me by what you of your own self know,
Not by reports, which to your ear may flow
From lips, which wrought me (living) untold pain.

THE END

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