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MAYNARD'S  
ENGLISH · CLASSIC · SERIES

WITH · EXPLANATORY · NOTES

**SELECTED POEMS**

MATTHEW ARNOLD

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# ENGLISH CLASSIC SERIES,

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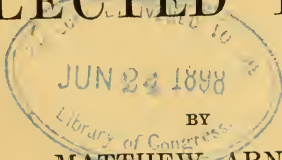
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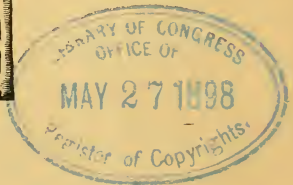
# SELECTED POEMS



BY  
MATTHEW ARNOLD

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*

BY  
E. H. TURPIN



NEW YORK  
MAYNARD, MERRILL, & CO.

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## INTRODUCTION.

MATTHEW ARNOLD was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the celebrated head-master of Rugby School. He was born December 24, 1822, at Laleham, near Staines. In 1836 he entered Winchester School, but was removed the following year to Rugby, where he completed his preparation for the university. He maintained a high position in the school, presenting in 1840 a prize poem, and winning the same year a scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford. During his first year at the university he obtained the Hertford Scholarship, for proficiency in Latin, and later won the Newdigate Prize for English Poetry, with a poem entitled "Cromwell." He graduated with honors, and in 1845 was elected Fellow of Oriel College, just thirty years after the election of his father to the same honor. Among his colleagues here were R. W. Church, Dean of St. Paul's, John Earle, the present Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, and the poet A. H. Clough. His intimacy with Clough grew into the closest friendship, which received its final seal in the tender and noble lines of "Thyrsis," an elegy that for exalted beauty must be placed with Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais."

Of his life at Oxford one who knew him in those days says : "His perfect self-possession, the sallies of his ready wit, the humorous turn which he could give to any subject that he handled, his gayety, exuberance, versatility, audacity, and unfailing command of words, made him one of the most popular and successful undergraduates that Oxford has ever known." Oxford, as the home of his intellectual life, was always dear to him, that "beautiful city, so venerable, so lovely!" who, "by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us near to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection."

During his residence the university was still under the influence of the famous Tractarian Movement, which did so much to purify English religious thought. The leaders of the movement were Fellows of Oriel, and the year in which Mr. Arnold became Fellow of this college was the year in which Dr. Newman seceded to Rome. The influence of these events may be traced in all his writing and thinking; in apparent contradiction of his radical and analytical habit of thought, he maintained through life a conservative admiration for the Established Church.

From 1847 to 1851 Mr. Arnold acted as private secretary to the late Lord Lansdowne. He married in 1851, and the same year was appointed Lay Inspector of Schools, a position which he held with honor for nearly thirty-five years. Twice he was sent abroad by the government to study the school-systems of the Continent, and his various reports are among the most valuable contributions to educational literature. He labored zealously until the end of his life for the reform of the English public schools, aiming especially at the elevation of middle-class education, to the defects of which he traced the greater part of the moral, social, and political faults of English civilization. To organize middle-class education as well as it is organized in France and Germany was, to his mind, the "one thing necessary" for expelling the "Philistines" and regenerating English society.

Mr. Arnold's first appearance in literature was as a poet, with the now famous little volume of 1848, entitled "The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems, by A." In 1853 "Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems" appeared, and soon after he published in his own name a volume of selections from the two preceding volumes, including a few new poems. The impression produced by his poetry was such that in 1857 he was elected to the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, a position which he held for two terms, a period of ten years, at the end of which there was general regret that the limitation of the statutes did not permit a third term. During this period "Merope," a tragedy after the Greek manner, was published, followed by the celebrated "Lectures on Translating Homer,"

and, in 1865, by the epoch-making volume of "Essays in Criticism." This book was a revelation in literature. By it criticism was endowed with a new function; it was elevated to the dignity of a creative art; even poetry was made a "criticism of life." The author defined the new criticism to be "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world," and his whole literary work was an illustration of the definition. Such a form of criticism was far removed from the militant omniscience of the Edinburgh critics, as also from the tea-table civility of the Lamb and Leigh Hunt school. The lesson of this volume was that criticism must be broadened and humanized, that it must be sympathetic, tempered with "sweet reasonableness," and, above all, truthful, endeavoring with sincerity to "see things as in themselves they are." With these essays a new era in critical writing began. England now had her own Sainte-Beuve.

With this view of the true function of criticism it is not strange, perhaps, that Mr. Arnold's attention was often withdrawn from literature and devoted to social and religious questions. In 1870 appeared "Culture and Anarchy," an essay in political and social criticism, presenting a good illustration of the logical force of that peculiar literary style which in his hands was always an instrument of marvelous delicacy and power. His theological criticism is contained in "St. Paul and Protestantism," published in 1871; "Literature and Dogma," 1873; "God and the Bible," 1875; and "Last Essays on Church and Religion," 1877. These books aroused bitter controversy. His earnest effort to rescue the essential elements of the Christian religion from the destruction threatened by dogmatic theology in the one direction and materialistic science in the other was regarded by many as an attack upon Christianity itself.

Mr. Arnold's other published works are: "The Study of Celtic Literature," 1868; "Friendship's Garland," 1871; "Mixed Essays" and "Irish Essays," 1882; "Discourses in America," 1885; "Complete Poems," 1876; a volume of "Selected Poems" in the Golden Treasury Series, and a posthumous

volume, "Essays in Criticism, Second Series." A mere enumeration of his books shows the breadth and versatility of his mind. He was poet, essayist, theologian, critic, philosopher; yet a remarkable singleness of purpose runs through all his work. Whatever the topic, the real theme is culture, in its highest sense,—the refinement and harmonious development of the intellect and the soul. His writing is a constant appeal to the ideal in human nature, an insistence upon the moral and spiritual aspects of life in contrast with the vulgar material aspects. As a prose stylist he is one of the great masters. As a poet only two, or three at most, of his contemporaries should be named before him. His poetry is a splendid embodiment of the profoundest thought and feeling of the period, especially of the struggle through which all sensitive souls are passing in the recoil before the "hopeless tangle of this age."

The death of Matthew Arnold occurred suddenly, April 15, 1888, bringing a painful shock to the thousands who had long been accustomed to regard him as a leader and teacher. "Not only the world of literature, but the infinitely larger world of unexpressed thought and feeling and unembodied imagination, is sensibly the poorer for his loss." His special mission was, as Mr. Stedman expresses it, "that of spiritualizing what he deemed an era of unparalleled materialism." His most earnest desire was to warn all, as he warned his "Scholar-Gypsy," to fly from

" This strange disease of modern life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts."

And although his words of warning have often been "on men's impious uproar hurled," they have left a deep and permanent impress upon the finer consciousness of the age.



## ARNOLD AS A POET.

“He is a maker of such exquisite and thoughtful verse that it is hard sometimes to question his title to be considered a genuine poet. On the other hand, it is likely that the very grace and culture and thoughtfulness of his style inspire in many the first doubt of his claim to the name of poet. Where the art is evident and elaborate, we are all too apt to assume that it is all art and not genius. Mr. Arnold is a sort of miniature Goethe; we do not know that his most ardent admirers could demand a higher praise for him, while it is probable that the description will suggest exactly the intellectual peculiarities which lead so many to deny him a place with the really inspired singers of his day.”—McCARTHY'S *History of Our Own Times*.

“Mr. Arnold belongs to the classical school of poetry, regarding the Greeks, with their strength and simplicity of phrase and their perfect sense of form, as his masters. To the imaginative power of a true poet he adds a delicacy and refinement of taste and a purity and severity of phrase which uncultivated readers often mistake for boldness. Nowhere in his poems do we find those hackneyed commonplaces, decked out with gaudy and ungraceful ornament, which pass for poetry with many people. His fault rather is that he is too exclusively the poet of culture. Many of his verses will always seem flat and insipid to those who have not received a classical education; while, on the other hand, students of Greek literature will be disposed to praise certain of his pieces more highly than their intrinsic merit demands. Yet it may be doubted whether some of his work as a poet will not stand the ordeal of time better than that of any contemporary poet, Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning excepted. There are few poems which show such a refined sense of beauty, such dignity and self-

restraint, such admirable adaptation of the form to the subject, as Mr. Arnold's 'Sohrab and Rustum,' 'Tristram and Iseult,' and the 'Forsaken Merman.'"—NICOLL'S *Landmarks of English Literature*.

"His shorter meters, used as the framework of songs and lyrics, rarely are successful; but through youthful familiarity with the Greek choruses he has caught something of their irregular beauty. 'The Strayed Reveler' has much of this unfettered charm. Arnold is restricted in the range of his affections; but that he is one of those who can love very loyally the few with whom they do enter into sympathy, through consonance of traits or experiences, is shown in the emotional poems entitled 'Faded Leaves' and 'Indifference,' and in later pieces, which display more fluency, 'Calais Sands' and 'Dover Beach.' A prosaic manner injures many of his lyrics; at least he does not seem clearly to distinguish between the functions of poetry and of prose. He is more at ease in long, stately, swelling measures, whose graver movement accords with a serious and elevated purpose. Judged as works of art, 'Sohrab and Rustum' and 'Balder Dead' really are majestic poems. Their blank verse, while independent of Tennyson's, is the result, like that of the 'Mort d'Arthur,' of its author's Homeric studies; is somewhat too slow in 'Balder Dead,' and fails of the antique simplicity, but is terse, elegant, and always in 'the grand manner.' Upon the whole this is a remarkable production; it stands at the front of all experiments in a field remote as the northern heavens and almost as glacial and clear. . . . 'Sohrab and Rustum' is a still finer poem, because more human and more complete in itself. The verse is not so devoid of epic swiftness. The powerful conception of the relations between the two chieftains and the slaying of the son by the father are tragical and heroic."—STEDMAN'S *Victorian Poets*.

# SELECTED POEMS

---

## Shakespeare

OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free.  
We ask and ask. Thou smilest, and art still,  
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,  
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,  
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,  
Spare but the cloudy border of his base  
To the foiled searching of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,  
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,  
Didst tread on earth unguessed at.—Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,  
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow.  
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

## Written in Emerson's Essays

“O MONSTROUS, dead, unprofitable world,  
That thou canst hear, and hearing hold thy way!  
A voice oracular hath pealed to-day,  
To-day a hero's banner is unfurled;

“Hast thou no lip for welcome?”—So I said.  
 Man after man, the world smiled and passed by;  
 A smile of wistful incredulity,  
 As though one spake of life unto the dead,—  
 Scornful and strange, and sorrowful, and full  
 Of bitter knowledge. Yet the will is free;  
 Strong is the soul, and wise, and beautiful;  
 The seeds of godlike power are in us still;  
 Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will!—  
 Dumb judges, answer, truth or mockery?

### Requiescat <sup>1</sup>

STREW on her roses, roses,  
 And never a spray of yew:  
 In quiet she reposes;  
 Ah! would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;  
 She bathed it in smiles of glee.  
 But her heart was tired, tired,  
 And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,  
 In mazes of heat and sound;  
 But for peace her soul was yearning,  
 And now peace laps <sup>2</sup> her round.

Her cabined,<sup>3</sup> ample spirit,  
 It fluttered and failed for breath;  
 To-night it doth inherit  
 The vasty <sup>4</sup> hall of death.

---

1. *Requiescat*: The first word of the Latin petition for the rest of a departed soul—*requiescat in pace*.

2. *Laps*: Wraps.

3. *Cabined*: Hampered; confined in narrow limits.

4. *Vasty* (Poetical): Vast.

Stagirius <sup>1</sup>

THOU, who dost dwell alone;  
 Thou, who dost know thine own;  
 Thou, to whom all are known  
 From the cradle to the grave,—  
     Save, oh! save.  
 From the world's temptations,  
 From tribulations,  
 From that fierce anguish  
 Wherein we languish,  
 From that torpor deep  
 Wherein we lie asleep,  
 Heavy as death, cold as the grave,  
     Save, oh! save.

When the soul, growing clearer,  
     Sees God no nearer;  
 When the soul, mounting higher,  
     To God comes no nigher;  
 But the arch-fiend Pride  
 Mounts at her side,  
 Foiling her high emprise,<sup>2</sup>  
 Sealing<sup>3</sup> her eagle eyes,  
 And, when she fain would soar,  
 Makes idols to adore,

---

1. **Stagirius** : This poem has more passionate aspiration than Arnold elsewhere expresses. It was reprinted in some American papers under the amusing title of *Matthew Arnold's Litany*. Stagirus was a young monk to whom St. Chrysostom dedicated three books.

2. **Emprise** (Archaic) : An enterprise, especially an adventurous or chivalric one.

3. **Sealing** or **seeling** (L. *cilium*, eyelid) : Blinding; closing the eyes by means of threads drawn through the lids. This was a part of the process of taming hawks and other birds used in the sport of falconry. Cf. *Othello* i. 3, 297.

Changing the pure emotion  
 Of her high devotion,  
 To a skin-deep sense  
 Of her own eloquence;  
 Strong to deceive, strong to enslave,—  
 Save, oh! save.

From the ingrained fashion  
 Of this earthly nature  
 That mars thy creature;  
 From grief that is but passion,  
 From mirth that is but feigning,  
 From tears that bring no healing,  
 From wild and weak complaining.  
 Thine old strength revealing,  
 Save, oh! save.

From doubt, where all is double;  
 Where wise men are not strong,  
 Where comfort turns to trouble,  
 Where just men suffer wrong;  
 Where sorrow treads on joy,  
 Where sweet things soonest cloy,  
 Where faiths are built on dust,  
 Where love 's half mistrust,  
 Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea,—  
 Oh! set us free.  
 Oh, let the false dream fly,  
 Where our sick souls do lie  
 Tossing continually!  
 Oh, where thy voice doth come,  
 Let all doubts be dumb,  
 Let all words be mild,  
 All strifes be reconciled,  
 All pains beguiled!  
 Light bring no blindness,

Love no unkindness,  
 Knowledge no ruin,  
 Fear no undoing!  
 From the cradle to the grave,  
 Save, oh! save.

### Human Life

WHAT mortal, when he saw,  
 Life's voyage done, his heavenly Friend,  
 Could ever yet dare tell him fearlessly,—  
 "I have kept unfringed my nature's law;  
 The inly-written chart thou gavest me,  
 To guide me, I have steered by to the end"?

Ah! let us make no claim,  
 On life's incognizable sea,  
 To too exact a steering of our way;  
 Let us not fret and fear to miss our aim,  
 If some fair coast has lured us to make stay,  
 Or some friend hailed us to keep company.

Ay! we would each fain drive  
 At random, and not steer by rule.  
 Weakness! and worse, weakness bestowed in vain!  
 Winds from our side the unsuiting consort rive;<sup>1</sup>  
 We rush by coasts where we had lief remain:  
 Man cannot, though he would, live chance's fool.

No! as the foaming swath<sup>2</sup>  
 Of torn-up water, on the main,  
 Falls heavily away with long-drawn roar  
 On either side the black deep-furrowed path  
 Cut by an onward-laboring vessel's prore,<sup>3</sup>  
 And never touches the ship-side again;

---

1. Rive: Tear asunder by force.

2. Swath: A row of cut grass or grain—here used figuratively.

3. Prore (Poetical and rare): The prow of a ship; prora.

Even so we leave behind,  
 As, chartered by some unknown Powers,  
 We stem across the sea of life by night,  
 The joys which were not for our use designed,—  
 The friends to whom we had no natural right,  
 The homes that were not destined to be ours.

### The Second Best <sup>1</sup>

MODERATE tasks and moderate leisure,  
 Quiet living, strict-kept measure  
 Both in suffering and in pleasure,—  
     'Tis for this thy nature yearns.

But so many books thou readest,  
 But so many schemes thou breedest,  
 But so many wishes feedest,  
     That thy poor head almost turns.

And (the world's so madly jangled,  
 Human things so fast entangled)  
 Nature's wish must now be strangled  
     For that best which she discerns.

So it *must* be! yet, while leading  
 A strained life, while over-feeding,  
 Like the rest, his wit with reading,  
     No small profit that man earns,—

Who through all he meets can steer him,  
 Can reject what cannot clear him,  
 Cling to what can truly cheer him;  
     Who each day more surely learns

---

1. **The Second Best**: The ideal of existence, Arnold affirms, is moderation in all things, "that general balance of body and soul which makes a man his own master"; the next best thing is constancy to the watchwords, "Hope, Light, Persistence."



That an impulse, from the distance  
Of his deepest, best existence,  
To the words, "Hope, Light, Persistence,"  
Strongly sets and truly burns.

### The Forsaken Merman<sup>1</sup>

COME, dear children, let us away;  
Down and away below!  
Now my brothers call from the bay,  
Now the great winds shoreward blow,  
Now the salt tides seaward flow;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.  
Children dear, let us away!  
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go,—  
Call once yet!  
In a voice that she will know,—  
"Margaret! Margaret!"  
Children's voices should be dear  
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;  
Children's voices, wild with pain,—  
Surely she will come again!  
Call her once, and come away;  
This way, this way!  
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!  
The wild white horses foam and fret."  
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down:  
Call no more!

---

1. *The Forsaken Merman*: This beautiful romance of Northern seas is deservedly one of the most popular of Arnold's poems. "Its rhythm suggests the wild music of the Baltic fretted by the restless wind."

One last look at the white-walled town,  
 And the little gray church on the windy shore;  
 Then come down!  
 She will not come, though you call all day;  
 Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday  
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay,—  
 In the caverns where we lay,  
 Through the surf and through the swell,  
 The far-off sound of a silver bell?  
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,  
 Where the winds are all asleep;  
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,  
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,  
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,  
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;  
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,  
 Dry their mail and bask in the brine;  
 Where great whales come sailing by,  
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,  
 Round the world for ever and aye?  
 When did music come this way?  
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday  
 (Call yet once) that she went away?  
 Once she sate with you and me,  
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,  
 And the youngest sate on her knee.  
 She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,  
 When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.  
 She sighed, she looked up through the clear green  
 sea;  
 She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray  
 In the little gray church on the shore to-day.

'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!  
And I lose my poor soul, merman! here with thee.”  
I said, “Go up, dear heart, through the waves;  
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-  
caves!”

She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?

“The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;  
Long prayers,” I said, “in the world they say;  
Come!” I said; and we rose through the surf in the  
bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down  
Where the sea-stocks<sup>1</sup> bloom, to the white-walled  
town;

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was  
still,

To the little gray church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their  
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with  
rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded  
panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:

“Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!

Dear heart,” I said, “we are long alone;

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.”

But, ah! she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were sealed<sup>2</sup> to the Holy Book.

Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Sea-stocks : Sea-gillyflowers.

2. Sealed : Fastened.

3. Shut stands the door : According to the northern superstition there are creatures of the sea and forest against whom heaven's gate is shut forever.

Come away, children, call no more!  
 Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!  
 Down to the depths of the sea!  
 She sits at her wheel in the humming town,  
 Singing most joyfully.  
 Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,  
 For the humming street, and the child with its toy!  
 For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;  
 For the wheel where I spun,  
 And the blessed light of the sun!"  
 And so she sings her fill,  
 Singing most joyfully,  
 Till the spindle drops from her hand,  
 And the whizzing wheel stands still.  
 She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,  
 And over the sand at the sea;  
 And her eyes are set in a stare;  
 And anon<sup>1</sup> there breaks a sigh,  
 And anon there drops a tear,  
 From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
 And a heart, sorrow-laden,  
 A long, long sigh,  
 For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaid,  
 And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;  
 Come, children, come down!  
 The hoarse wind blows colder;  
 Lights shine in the town.  
 She will start from her slumber  
 When gusts shake the door:  
 She will hear the winds howling,  
 Will hear the waves roar.

---

1. Anon (AS. *on an*, in one) : Soon; presently; its original meaning was, at once.

We shall see, while above us  
The waves roar and whirl,  
A ceiling of amber,  
A pavement of pearl.  
Singing, "Here came a mortal,  
But faithless was she!  
And alone dwell forever  
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,  
When soft the winds blow,  
When clear falls the moonlight,  
When spring-tides are low;  
When sweet airs come seaward  
From heaths starred with broom,  
And high rocks throw mildly  
On the blanched sands a gloom;  
Up the still, glistening beaches,  
Up the creeks we will hie,<sup>1</sup>  
Over banks of bright seaweed  
The ebb-tide leaves dry.  
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,  
At the white sleeping town;  
At the church on the hill-side,  
And then come back down,  
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,  
But cruel is she!  
She left lonely forever  
The kings of the sea.'

---

5. Hie (AS. *higian*): Hasten.

### Worldly Place<sup>1</sup>

*Even in a palace, life may be led well!*  
 So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,  
 Marcus Aurelius.<sup>1</sup> But the stifling den  
 Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,

Our freedom for a little bread we sell,  
 And drudge under some foolish master's ken  
 Who rates us if we peer outside our pen,—  
 Matched with a palace, is not this a hell?

*Even in a palace!* On his truth sincere,  
 Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came;  
 And when my ill-schooled spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,  
 I'll stop, and say, "There were no succor here!  
 The aids to noble life are all within."

### East London

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead  
 Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,<sup>2</sup>  
 And the pale weaver, through his windows seen  
 In Spitalfields,<sup>2</sup> looked thrice dispirited.

---

1. Arnold, himself the characteristic poet of modern stoicism, found a kindred spirit in Marcus Aurelius (A. D. 138-161), a stoic philosopher, the best of the Roman emperors. In the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, a collection of thoughts and maxims breathing the purest piety and benevolence, occurs this passage:

"Such as are thy habitual thoughts; such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts. Dye it then with a continuous series of such thoughts as these: for instance, that where a man can live, there he can also live well. But he must live in a palace;—well, then he can also live well in a palace."—*Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, V. 16 (*Long's translation*).

2. Bethnal Green and Spitalfields are districts of East London which are inhabited by silk weavers and other poor people.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said,—  
“Ill and o’erworked, how fare you in this scene?”  
“Bravely!” said he; “for I of late have been  
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, *the living  
bread.*”

O human soul! as long as thou canst so  
Set up a mark of everlasting light,  
Above the howling senses’ ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam,—  
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!  
Thou mak’st the heaven thou hop’st indeed thy  
home.

### Immortality

FOILED by our fellow-men, depressed, outworn,  
We leave the brutal world to take its way,  
And, *Patience! in another life*, we say,  
*The world shall be thrust down, and we upborne.*

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn  
The world’s poor, routed leavings? or will they  
Who failed under the heat of this life’s day  
Support the fervors of the heavenly morn?

No, no! the energy of life may be  
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;  
And he who flagged not in the earthly strife,

From strength to strength advancing,—only he,  
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,  
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

To Marguerite<sup>1</sup>

YES! in the sea of life enisled,<sup>2</sup>  
 With echoing straits between us thrown,  
 Dotting the shoreless watery wild,  
 We mortal millions live *alone*.  
 The islands feel the enclasping flow,  
 And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,  
 And they are swept by balms of spring,  
 And in their glens, on starry nights,  
 The nightingales divinely sing;  
 And lovely notes, from shore to shore,  
 Across the sounds and channels pour,—

Oh! then a longing like despair  
 Is to their farthest caverns sent;  
 For surely once, they feel, we were  
 Parts of a single continent!  
 Now round us spreads the watery plain:  
 Oh, might our marges meet again!

Who ordered that their longing's fire  
 Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?  
 Who renders vain their deep desire?—  
 A God, a God their severance ruled!  
 And bade betwixt their shores to be  
 The unplumbed,<sup>3</sup> salt, estranging sea.

1. To Marguerite : These lines express a thought frequent to us all, but never before worded with such clearness and beauty.

2. Enisled (poetical and rare) : Literally, placed on an island; hence, isolated.

3. The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea : This is one of Arnold's most impressive and felicitous lines. "Without any false emphasis or prolix dwelling on the matter, it shadows out to you the plunging



## Absence

In this fair stranger's eyes of gray,  
Thine eyes, my love! I see.  
I shiver; for the passing day  
Had borne me far from thee.

This is the curse of life! that not  
A nobler, calmer train  
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot  
Our passions from our brain;

But each day brings its petty dust,  
Our soon-choked souls to fill;  
And we forget because we must,  
And not because we will.

I struggle towards the light; and ye,  
Once-longed-for storms of love!  
If with the light ye cannot be,  
I bear that ye remove.

I struggle towards the light; but oh,  
While yet the night is chill,  
Upon time's barren, stormy flow,  
Stay with me, Marguerite, still!

---

deep-sea lead and the eerie cry of 'no soundings'; it recalls that salt-ness of the sea which takes from water every refreshing association, every quality that helps to slake thirst or supply sap, and then it concentrates all these dividing attributes, which strike a sort of lonely terror into the soul, into the one word 'estranging.' It is a line full of intensity, simplicity, and grandeur—a line to possess and haunt the imagination. And the same exceptional force of expression comes out not unfrequently under the shadow of similar emotion."—*R. II. Hutton.*

The Strayed Reveler<sup>1</sup>THE PORTICO OF CIRCE'S<sup>2</sup> PALACE. EVENING

A YOUTH. CIRCE

THE YOUTH

FASTER, faster,  
 O Circe, goddess,  
 Let the wild, thronging train,  
 The bright procession  
 Of eddying forms,  
 Sweep through my soul!

Thou standest, smiling  
 Down on me! thy right arm,  
 Leaned up against the column there,  
 Props thy soft cheek;  
 Thy left holds, hanging loosely,  
 The deep cup, ivy-cinctured,<sup>3</sup>  
 I held but now.

Is it then evening  
 So soon? I see, the night-dews,

---

1. *The Strayed Reveler*: Arnold says that the two great world-forces are Hebraism and Hellenism. Carlyle may be taken for the exponent of the one in the nineteenth century, and Arnold himself as the representative of the other. Arnold's especial contribution to English literature is an embodiment of the thought and sentiment of Greek poetry which it never before possessed. His, however, was a "sad lucidity of soul," while that of the Greeks was joyous. *The Strayed Reveler* is a vivid reproduction of Greek style and spirit. As Stedman has remarked, in this poem Arnold caught much of the irregular beauty of the Greek choruses with which he was early familiar.

2. *Circe*: A famous sorceress, the daughter of Helios and Perse. The Greek hero, Ulysses, in his ten years' wandering after the fall of Troy, was cast upon the shores of her island, *Ææa*, and there abode a year.

3. *Cinctured* (L. *cingo*, gird): Figuratively, encircled, encompassed.

Clustered in thick beads, dim  
 The agate brooch-stones  
 On thy white shoulder;  
 The cool night-wind, too,  
 Blows through the portico,  
 Stirs thy hair, goddess,  
 Waves thy white robe!

## CIRCE

Whence art thou, sleeper?

## THE YOUTH

When the white dawn first  
 Through the rough fir-planks  
 Of my hut, by the chestnuts,  
 Up at the valley-head,  
 Came breaking, goddess!  
 I sprang up, I threw round me  
 My dappled fawn-skin;  
 Passing out, from the wet turf,  
 Where they lay, by the hut door,  
 I snatched up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,<sup>1</sup>  
 All drenched in dew,—  
 Came swift down to join  
 The rout early gathered  
 In the town, round the temple,  
 Iacchus'<sup>2</sup> white fane  
 On yonder hill.

Quick I passed, following  
 The woodcutters' cart-track

---

1. Vine-crown, fir-staff: The wreath of vine-leaves and the thyrsus, a staff entwined with ivy and surmounted by a pine-cone, were Bacchic symbols.

2. Iacchus, or Bacchus (Gr. Dionysus): The god of wine, also of animal life and vegetation. He was represented as having his forehead crowned with vine-leaves or ivy; he was worshiped by Bacchanals or Bacchantes, and attended by satyrs, Sileni, and mænads.

Down the dark valley. I saw  
 On my left, through the beeches,  
 Thy palace, goddess,  
 Smokeless, empty!  
 Trembling, I entered; beheld  
 The court all silent,  
 The lions sleeping,  
 On the altar this bowl.  
 I drank, goddess!  
 And sank down here, sleeping,  
 On the steps of thy portico.

## CIRCE

Foolish boy! Why tremblest thou?  
 Thou lovest it, then, my wine?  
 Wouldst more of it? See how glows,  
 Through the delicate, flushed marble,  
 The red creaming liquor,  
 Strewn with dark seeds!  
 Drink, then! I chide thee not,  
 Deny thee not my bowl.  
 Come, stretch forth thy hand, then—so!  
 Drink—drink again!

## THE YOUTH

Thanks, gracious one!  
 Ah, the sweet fumes again!  
 More soft, ah me!  
 More subtle-winding,  
 Than Pan's flute-music!  
 Faint—faint! Ah me,  
 Again the sweet sleep!

## CIRCE

Hist! Thou—within there!  
 Come forth, Ulysses!

Art tired with hunting?  
 While we range the woodland,  
 See what the day brings.

## ULYSSES

Ever new magic!  
 Hast thou then lured hither,  
 Wonderful goddess, by thy art,  
 The young, languid-eyed Ampelus,<sup>1</sup>  
 Iacchus' darling,  
 Or some youth beloved of Pan,  
 Of Pan and the nymphs;  
 That he sits, bending downward  
 His white, delicate neck  
 To the ivy-wreathed marge  
 Of thy cup; the bright, glancing vine-leaves  
 That crown his hair,  
 Falling forward, mingling  
 With the dark ivy-plants;  
 His fawn-skin, half untied,  
 Smear'd with red wine-stains? Who is he,  
 That he sits, overweighed  
 By fumes of wine and sleep,  
 So late, in thy portico?  
 What youth, goddess,—what guest  
 Of gods or mortals?

## CIRCE

Hist! he wakes!  
 I lured him not hither, Ulysses.  
 Nay, ask him!

## THE YOUTH

Who speaks? Ah! who comes forth  
 To thy side, goddess, from within?  
 How shall I name him,—

---

1. Ampelus: The personification of the vine—a beautiful youth, son of a satyr and a nymph, beloved by Bacchus.

This spare, dark-featured,  
 Quick-eyed stranger?  
 Ah! and I see too  
 His sailor's bonnet,  
 His short coat, travel-tarnished,  
 With one arm bare!—  
 Art thou not he, whom fame  
 This long time rumors  
 The favored guest of Circe, brought by the waves?  
 Art thou he, stranger,—  
 The wise Ulysses,  
 Laertes' son?

ULYSSES

I am Ulysses.  
 And thou too, sleeper?  
 Thy voice is sweet.  
 It may be thou hast followed  
 Through the islands some divine bard,  
 By age taught many things,—  
 Age, and the Muses;  
 And heard him delighting  
 The chiefs and people  
 In the banquet, and learned his songs,  
 Of gods and heroes,  
 Of war and arts,  
 And peopled cities,  
 Inland, or built  
 By the gray sea. If so, then hail!  
 I honor and welcome thee.

THE YOUTH

The gods are happy.  
 They turn on all sides  
 Their shining eyes,  
 And see below them  
 The earth and men.

They see Tiresias<sup>1</sup>  
 Sitting, staff in hand,  
 On the warm, grassy  
 Asopus<sup>2</sup> bank,  
 His robe drawn over  
 His old sightless head,  
 Revolving inly  
 The doom of Thebes.

They see the centaurs<sup>3</sup>  
 In the upper glens  
 Of Pelion,<sup>4</sup> in the streams  
 Where red-berried ashes fringe  
 The clear-brown shallow pools,  
 With streaming flanks, and heads  
 Reared proudly, snuffing  
 The mountain wind.

They see the Indian  
 Drifting, knife in hand,  
 His frail boat moored to  
 A floating isle thick-matted  
 With large-leaved, low-creeping melon-plants,  
 And the dark cucumber.  
 He reaps and stows them,  
 Drifting—drifting; round him,  
 Round his green harvest-plot,  
 Flow the cool lake-waves,  
 The mountains ring them.

They see the Scythian  
 On the wide steppe, unharnessing

---

1. Tiresias : The blind prophet of Thebes, who perished in the flight from the city when it was razed by the Epigoni. Cf. Tennyson's *Tiresias*.

2. Asopus : A river of Greece.

3. Centaurs : Fabulous monsters of antiquity, half men, half horses.

4. Pelion : A lofty mountain of Thessaly, near whose summit was the cave of Cheiron, the wisest and best of the centaurs.

His wheeled house at noon.  
 He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal,—  
 Mares' milk, and bread  
 Baked on the embers. All around,  
 The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch, thick-  
     starred  
 With saffron and the yellow hollyhock  
 And flag-leaved iris-flowers.  
 Sitting in his cart  
 He makes his meal; before him, for long miles,  
 Alive with bright green lizards,  
 And the springing bustard-fowl,  
 The track, a straight black line,  
 Furrows the rich soil; here and there  
 Clusters of lonely mounds  
 Topped with rough-hewn,  
 Gray, rain-bleared statues, overpeer  
 The sunny waste.

They see the ferry  
 On the broad, clay-laden  
 Lone Chorasmian stream; <sup>1</sup> thereon,  
 With snort and strain,  
 Two horses, strongly swimming, tow  
 The ferry-boat, with woven ropes  
 To either bow  
 Firm-harnessed by the mane; a chief,  
 With shout and shaken spear,  
 Stands at the prow, and guides them; but astern  
 The cowering merchants in long robes  
 Sit pale beside their wealth  
 Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,  
 Of gold and ivory,  
 Of turquoise-earth, and amethyst,

---

1. **Chorasmian stream:** The Oxus, so called from the Chorasmians, a people who inhabited the banks and islands of the lower course of the river. *Cf.* note below on Oxus.



Jasper and chalcedony,  
And milk-barred onyx-stones.  
The loaded boat swings groaning  
In the yellow eddies;  
The gods behold them.

They see the heroes  
Sitting in the dark ship  
On the foamless, long-heaving,  
Violet sea,  
At sunset nearing  
The Happy Islands.<sup>1</sup>

These things, Ulysses,  
The wise bards also  
Behold, and sing.  
But oh, what labor!  
O prince, what pain!

They too can see  
Tiresias; but the gods,  
Who gave them vision,  
Added this law:  
That they should bear too  
His groping blindness,  
His dark foreboding,  
He scorned white hairs;  
Bear Hera's anger  
Through a life lengthened  
To seven ages.

They see the centaurs  
On Pelion: then they feel,  
They too, the maddening wine  
Swell their large veins to bursting; in wild pain

---

1. The Happy Islands, or the Islands of the Blest, were imaginary islands far in the west, to which the favorites of the Gods were conveyed after death.

They feel the biting spears  
 Of the grim Lapithæ,<sup>1</sup> and Theseus,<sup>2</sup> drive,  
 Drive crashing through their bones; they feel,  
 High on a jutting rock in the red stream,  
 Alcmena's<sup>3</sup> dreadful son  
 Ply his bow. Such a price  
 The gods exact for song:  
 To become what we sing.

They see the Indian  
 On his mountain lake; but squalls  
 Make their skiff reel, and worms  
 In the unkind spring have gnawn  
 Their melon-harvest to the heart. They see  
 The Scythian; but long frosts  
 Parch them in winter-time on the bare steppe,  
 Till they too fade like grass; they crawl  
 Like shadows forth in spring.

They see the merchants  
 On the Oxus-stream;<sup>4</sup> but care  
 Must visit first them too, and make them pale:  
 Whether, through whirling sand,  
 A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst

---

1. The centaurs were guests at the marriage-feast of Pirithoüs, king of the Lapithæ, and Hippodamia. Being intoxicated, they were guilty of unseemly conduct; this was resented by Pirithoüs and his friends, and there followed a fierce conflict in which several centaurs were killed. This battle of the Lapithæ and centaurs was a favorite subject with the poets and sculptors of antiquity.

2. Theseus: The great national hero of Greek legend, was a friend of Pirithoüs, and aided him in the fight with the centaurs.

3. Alcmena's dreadful son: Heracles, the hero famous for his "twelve labors," was the son of Jupiter and Alcmena. In his pursuit of the Erymanthian boar he became embroiled with some of the centaurs, and accidentally killed his centaur friend Pholus with one of the arrows anointed with the deadly poison of the Lernean hydra.

4. Oxus: A great river of central Asia, supposed to be the Araxes of Herodotus; its modern name is Jihoun or Amon. It was the boundary between the great monarchies of southwestern Asia and the hordes which roamed the central steppes.

Upon their caravan; or greedy kings,  
 In the walled cities the way passes through,  
 Crushed them with tolls; or fever-airs,  
 On some great river's marge,  
 Mown them down, far from home.

They see the heroes  
 Near harbor; but they share  
 Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes,—  
 Seven-gated Thebes,<sup>1</sup> or Troy; <sup>1</sup>  
 Or where the echoing oars  
 Of Argo<sup>2</sup> first  
 Startled the unknown sea.

The old Silenus<sup>3</sup>  
 Came, lolling in the sunshine,  
 From the dewy forest-coverts,  
 This way, at noon.  
 Sitting by me, while his fauns  
 Down at the water-side  
 Sprinkled and smoothed  
 His drooping garland,  
 He told these things.

But I, Ulysses,  
 Sitting on the warm steps,  
 Looking over the valley,  
 All day long, have seen,  
 Without pain, without labor,

---

1. Each of the seven heroes who fought to restore Polynices to power in Thebes attacked one of the seven gates of the city; Thebes was finally destroyed by their sons, the Epigoni. After a ten years' siege Troy was taken and razed by the Greek heroes in revenge for the abduction of Helen by Paris, prince of Troy. These sieges were favorite themes with the Greek poets—one being the subject of the *Thebaid*, the other of the *Iliad*.

2. *Argo*: This was the fifty-oared vessel built by Argus for Jason and his fellow-heroes to go in search of the Golden Fleece.

3. *Silenus*: The son of Pan and a nymph, was the oldest of the satyrs, and the guardian and tutor of young Bacchus.

Sometimes a wild-haired mænad,<sup>1</sup>  
 Sometimes a faun with torches,  
 And sometimes, for a moment,  
 Passing through the dark stems  
 Flowing-robed, the beloved,  
 The desired, the divine,  
 Beloved Iacchus.

Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!  
 Ah, glimmering water,  
 Fitful earth-murmur,  
 Dreaming woods!  
 Ah, golden-haired, strangely smiling goddess  
 And thou, proved, much-enduring,  
 Wave-tossed wanderer!  
 Who can stand still?  
 Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me—  
 The cup again!

Faster, faster,  
 O Circe, goddess,  
 Let the wild, thronging train,  
 The bright procession  
 Of eddying forms,  
 Sweep through my soul!

### Philomela<sup>1</sup>

HARK! ah, the nightingale—  
 The tawny-throated!  
 Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!  
 What triumph! hark! what pain!

---

1. Mænad: A woman attendant of Bacchus.

2. Philomela: According to Greek mythology, Pandion, king of Athens, gave his daughter Progne in marriage to his ally, Tereus, king of Thrace. Desiring her sister Philomela for his wife, Tereus pretended that Progne was dead, and, to keep her from revealing the truth, he tore out her tongue and confined her in a cage. She embroidered

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,  
 Still, after many years, in distant lands,  
 Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain  
 That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain—  
 Say, will it never heal?  
 And can this fragrant lawn  
 With its cool trees, and night,  
 And the sweet, tranquil Thames,  
 And moonshine, and the dew,  
 To thy racked heart and brain  
 Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,  
 Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,  
 'The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?  
 Dost thou again peruse  
 With hot cheeks and seared eyes  
 The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?  
 Dost thou once more assay  
 Thy flight, and feel come over thee,  
 Poor fugitive, the feathery change  
 Once more, and once more seem to make resound  
 With love and hate, triumph and agony,  
 Lone Daulis,<sup>1</sup> and the high Cephissian<sup>2</sup> vale?  
 Listen, Eugenia,—  
 How thick the bursts come crowding through the  
     leaves!  
 Again—thou hearest?  
 Eternal passion!  
 Eternal pain!

---

the story of her wrings on a piece of tapestry which she contrived to send Philomela. As the two sisters fled from the "unfriendly palace" they were pursued by Tereus, but at their prayer the gods changed them into birds—Philomela into a nightingale, Progne a swallow, and Tereus a lapwing. In order to account for the silence of the nightingale except in spring, the Latin poets changed the story, saying that it was Philomela whose tongue was cut out. *Cf.* Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

1. Daulis : A Phocian town, the residence of Tereus.

2. Cephissian vale : The Cephissus is a river of Greece, which flows through Phocis.

## Dover Beach

THE sea is calm to-night.  
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
 Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light  
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
 Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
 Only, from the long line of spray  
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanchèd sand,  
 Listen! you hear the grating roar  
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
 At their return, up the high strand,  
 Begin and cease, and then again begin,  
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles<sup>1</sup> long ago  
 Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought  
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
 Of human misery: we  
 Find also in the sound a thought,  
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith  
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

---

1. Sophocles (B. C. 496-406): One of the three great Greek tragic poets, the other two being Æschylus and Euripides.

*Cf.* Sophocles' *Maidens of Trachis*:

“ For as one sees, when north or south wind blows  
 In strength invincible,  
 Full many a wave upon the ocean wide,  
 Sweeping and rushing on,  
 So like a Cretan sea,  
 The stormy grief of life  
 Now bringeth low the son of Cadmus old,  
 Now lifts him up again.”

There is a similar figure in *Ædipus at Colonus*.

But now I only hear  
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
 Retreating, to the breath  
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
 And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
 To one another! for the world, which seems  
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
 So various, so beautiful, so new,  
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
 And we are here as on a darkling plain  
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

### Self-Dependence <sup>1</sup>

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking  
 What I am, and what I ought to be,  
 At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me  
 Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire  
 O'er the sea and to the stars I send:  
 "Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,  
 Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,  
 On my heart your mighty charm renew;  
 Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
 Feel my soul becoming vast like you! "

---

1. Self-dependence: Cf. *Quiet Work* and *A Summer Night*. It was not so much the wild beauty, grandeur, and activity of Nature which appealed to Arnold as her order, stability, and submission to law; hence he drew life-lessons of peace for restlessness, strength for weakness.

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,  
 Over the lit sea's unquiet way,  
 In the rustling night-air came the answer,—  
 "Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,  
 Undistracted by the sights they see,  
 These demand not that the things without them  
 Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,  
 And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;  
 For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting  
 All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful  
 In what state God's other works may be,  
 In their own tasks all their powers pouring,  
 These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,  
 A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear,—  
 "Resolve to be thyself; and know, that he  
 Who finds himself loses his misery!"

### Morality <sup>1</sup>

WE cannot kindle when we will  
 The fire which in the heart resides;  
 The spirit bloweth and is still,  
 In mystery our soul abides.  
 But tasks in hours of insight willed  
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

---

1. **Morality**: This poem strikingly expresses the truth that man's moral life is superior to nature's power; as Sir Thomas Browne says, "there is surely a piece of divinity in us—something that was before the elements and owes no homage to the sun."



With aching hands and bleeding feet  
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;  
We bear the burden and the heat  
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.

Not till the hours of light return,  
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,  
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,  
Ask how *she* viewed thy self-control,  
Thy struggling, tasked morality,—  
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,  
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,  
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,  
See, on her face a glow is spread,  
A strong emotion on her cheek!  
“Ah, child!” she cries, “that strife divine,  
Whence was it, for it is not mine?”

“There is no effort on *my* brow;  
I do not strive, I do not weep:  
I rush with the swift spheres, and glow  
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.  
Yet that severe, that earnest air,  
I saw, I felt it once—but where?”

“I knew not yet the gauge of time,  
Nor wore the manacles of space;  
I felt it in some other clime,  
I saw it in some other place.  
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,  
And lay upon the breast of God.”

A Summer Night <sup>1</sup>

IN the deserted, moon-blanced street,  
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!  
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,  
Silent and white, unopening down,  
Repellent as the world; but see,  
A break between the housetops shows  
The moon! and lost behind her, fading dim  
Into the dewy dark obscurity  
Down at the far horizon's rim,  
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought  
Is on a sudden brought  
Of a past night, and a far different scene.  
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep  
As clearly as at noon;  
The spring-tide's brimming flow  
Heaved dazzlingly between;  
Houses, with long white sweep,  
Girdled the glistening bay;  
Behind, through the soft air,  
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.  
That night was far more fair—  
But the same restless pacings to and fro,  
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,  
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say,—

“Hast thou, then, still the old unquiet breast,  
Which neither deadens into rest,  
Nor ever feels the fiery glow

---

1. A Summer Night: “After depicting the exhausting duties assigned by the world to the world's laborers, and the disastrous wreck which falls upon them who break away from the world's fetters, he concludes in a strain somewhat more explicit than usual, by affirm-

That whirls the spirit from itself away,  
But fluctuates to and fro,  
Never by passion quite possessed,  
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway? ”  
And I, I know not if to pray  
Still to be what I am, or yield, and be  
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,  
Where, in the sun's hot eye,  
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly  
Their lives to some unmeaning task-work give,  
Dreaming of naught beyond their prison-wall.  
And as, year after year,  
Fresh products of their barren labor fall  
From their tired hands, and rest  
Never yet comes more near,  
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.  
And while they try to stem  
The waves of mournful thought by which they are  
    prest,  
Death in their prison reaches them,  
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,  
Escape their prison, and depart  
On the wide ocean of life anew.  
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart  
Listeth, will sail;  
Nor doth he know how there prevail,  
Despotic on that sea,  
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.  
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd

---

ing that in the great world of nature there is something which, though it cannot indeed satisfy the heart, still can teach us fortitude and instill into the soul a few drops of stoic grandeur.”—*R. H. Hutton.*

By thwarting signs, and braves  
The freshening wind and blackening waves.  
And then the tempest strikes him; and between  
The lightning-bursts is seen  
Only a driving wreck,  
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck  
With anguished face and flying hair,  
Grasping the rudder hard,  
Still bent to make some port, he knows not where,  
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.  
And sterner comes the roar  
Of sea and wind; and through the deepening gloom  
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,  
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?  
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!  
Clearness divine!  
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign  
Of languor, though so calm, and though so great  
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;  
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,  
And, though so tasked, keep free from dust and soil!  
I will not say that your mild deeps retain  
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain  
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain;  
But I will rather say that you remain  
A world above man's head, to let him see  
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,  
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!  
How it were good to live there, and breathe free;  
How fair a lot to fill  
Is left to each man still!

Lines Written in Kensington Gardens<sup>1</sup>

IN this lone, open glade I lie,  
 Screened by deep boughs on either hand;  
 And at its end, to stay the eye,  
 Those black-crowned, red-bolled pine-trees stand.

Birds here make song, each bird has his,  
 Across the girdling city's hum.  
 How green under the boughs it is!  
 How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade  
 To take his nurse his broken toy;  
 Sometimes a thrush flit overhead  
 Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass!  
 What endless, active life is here!  
 What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!  
 An air-stirred forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain sod  
 Where the tired angler lies, stretched out,  
 And, eased of basket and of rod,  
 Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world which roars hard by,  
 Be others happy if they can!  
 But in my helpless cradle I  
 Was breathed on by the rural Pan.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Kensington Gardens are the grounds around Kensington Palace, in a western suburb of London.

2. Pan : The Greek god of fields and woods.

I, on men's impious uproar hurled,  
 Think often, as I hear them rave,  
 That peace has left the upper world,  
 And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace forever new!  
 When I who watch them am away,  
 Still all things in this glade go through  
 The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass;  
 The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,  
 The night comes down upon the grass,  
 The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine  
 To feel, amid the city's jar,  
 That there abides a peace of thine,  
 Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,  
 The power to feel with others, give!  
 Calm, calm me more! nor let me die  
 Before I have begun to live.

### Austerity of Poetry

THAT son of Italy<sup>1</sup> who tried to blow,  
 Ere Dante<sup>2</sup> came, the trump of sacred song,  
 In his light youth amid a festal throng  
 Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow  
 Youth like a star; and what to youth belong,—  
 Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.  
 A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! Lo,

---

1. Giacomone di Toti, an Italian poet.

2. Dante degli Alighieri (1265-1321), the greatest Italian poet, author of the *Divina Commedia*.

Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!  
 Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found  
 A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,  
 Radiant, adorned outside; a hidden ground  
 Of thought and of austerity within.

### The Last Word

CREEP into thy narrow bed,—  
 Creep, and let no more be said.  
 Vain thy onset! all stands fast.  
 Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!  
 Geese are swans, and swans are geese.  
 Let them have it how they will!  
 Thou art tired: best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?  
 Better men fared thus before thee;  
 Fired their ringing shot, and passed,  
 Hotly charged—and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!  
 Let the victors, when they come,  
 When the forts of folly fall,  
 Find thy body by the wall!

### Thyrsis<sup>1</sup>

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!  
 In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;  
 The village street its haunted mansion lacks,

---

1. **Thyrsis**, one of the noblest of English elegies, is the complement of *The Scholar Gypsy*, to which frequent reference is made throughout. The title indicates the classical character of the poem. Thyrsus is the name of a herdsman in one of Theocritus' *Idyls*; also, of a shepherd

And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,  
 And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks.—  
 Are ye too changed, ye hills?  
 See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men  
 To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!  
 Here came I often, often, in old days,—  
 Thyrsis and I: we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,  
 Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns  
 The hill beyond whose ridge the sunset flames?  
 The single-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,  
 The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful  
 Thames?

This winter-eve is warm;  
 Humid the air; leafless, yet soft as spring,  
 The tender purple spray on copse and briars;  
 And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,  
 She needs not June for beauty's heightening.

---

in Vergil's seventh *Eclogue*, who has a poetical contest with Corydon, another shepherd—hence the name is used to indicate any shepherd or rustic. This poem is “one of the best of the successful English imitations of Bion and Moschus; among which *Lycidas* is most famous, though some question whether Swinburne in his *Ave atque Vale* has not surpassed them all. . . . As a threnode, nothing comparable to it had then appeared since the *Adonais* of Shelley.”—*Stedman*. “It is the lament of a loyal soul over one who had shared his own deep intimacy with nature in the dearest of all the quiet places of England to a scholarly mind; of a baffled inquirer bereft of the partner of his researches; of a steadfast soldier over the comrade who has fallen by his side in a doubtful battle; of a man over his heart's friend. No wonder it appeals to many minds in many ways. Yet sincere as are the tones of personal sorrow in *Thyrsis* and exquisitely modulated, they merge in that cry of the sufferer from the *mal du siècle* which is the true theme of other elegies as well.”—*H. W. Preston*.

This monody was written in commemoration of Arthur Hugh Clough, who died in Florence in 1861. He was an English poet, Arnold's friend at Rugby and Oxford, and like him a disciple of Wordsworth and influenced by the religious movement of the times. Lowell says of him: “We have a foreboding that Clough, imperfect as he was in many respects and dying before he had subdued his sensitive temperament to the requirements of his art, will be thought a hundred years



Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—  
 Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power  
 Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.  
 Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;  
 Now seldom come I, since I came with him.  
 That single elm-tree bright  
 Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?  
 We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,  
 Our friend the Gypsy-Scholar was not dead;  
 While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,  
 But once I knew each field, each flower, each  
 stick;  
 And with the country-folk acquaintance made  
 By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.  
 Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assayed.  
 Ah me! this many a year  
 My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday!  
 Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart  
 Into the world and wave of men depart,  
 But Thyrasis of his own will went away.

---

hence to have been the truest expression in verse of the moral and intellectual tendencies, the doubt and struggle toward settled convictions of the period in which he lived."

In Joseph Glanvil's (1636-80) *Vanity of Dogmatizing* occurs this passage: "There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gypsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtlety of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gypsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company and give the world an account of what he had learned."

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.

He loved each simple joy the country yields,  
 He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,  
 For that a shadow lowered on the fields,  
 Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.  
 Some life of men unblest  
 He knew, which made him droop, and filled his  
 head.

He went; his piping took a troubled sound  
 Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;  
 He could not wait their passing; he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,  
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,  
 Before the roses and the longest day,—  
 When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,  
 With blossoms red and white of fallen May,  
 And chestnut-flowers, are strewn,—  
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,  
 From the wet field, through the vexed garden-  
 trees,  
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:  
*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!*

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?  
 Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on,  
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,  
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,  
 Sweet-william with his homely cottage-smell,  
 And stocks in fragrant blow;  
 Roses that down the alleys shine afar,  
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,  
 And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,  
 And the full moon, and the white evening-star.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Of the pictures given in these two stanzas of wet and stormy English spring and soft deep English summer, Hutton says: "It would

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!  
 What matters it? next year he will return,  
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,  
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,  
 And bluebells trembling by the forest-ways,  
 And scent of hay new-mown.  
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see,—  
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,  
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed;  
 For Time, not Corydon,<sup>1</sup> hath conquered thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—  
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,  
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,  
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's<sup>2</sup> fate;  
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,  
 And relax Pluto's<sup>3</sup> brow,  
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head  
 Of Proserpine,<sup>3</sup> among whose crownèd hair  
 Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,  
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus,<sup>4</sup> from the dead.

---

be impossible to give with greater ease as well as delicacy a true picture of these scenes, and with it a subtle flavor of a real rest of spirit in them. . . . Nor is this passage in any sense a peculiar instance of Mr. Arnold's flowing, lucid, and tender mode of painting nature. In all his descriptive passages—and they are many and beautiful—it is the same. He is never sanguine and bright, indeed, but the scene is always drawn with a subtle ease and grace, suggesting that it sprung up in the poet's imagination with as rapid and natural a growth as the strokes which delineate it before your eyes."

1. *Cf.* note on *Thyrsis*.

2. Bion: A Greek bucolic poet of the second century B. C., who is said to have died in Sicily by poison.

3. According to Greek mythology, Pluto and Proserpine rule over the realm of shades. It was said that as Proserpine, the beautiful young daughter of Ceres, was gathering flowers in a meadow near Enna, her home in Sicily, she was seized by Pluto and borne to his dismal kingdom, there to reign with him.

4. *Cf.* note on *Memorial Verses*.

Oh, easy access to the hearer's grace  
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!  
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,  
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,  
 She knew each lily white which Enna yields,  
 Each rose with blushing face;  
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.  
 But ah! of our poor Thames she never heard;  
 Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirred;  
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be;  
 Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour  
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!  
 Who, if not I, for questing<sup>1</sup> here hath power?  
 I know the wood which hides the daffodil;  
 I know the Fyfield tree;  
 I know what white, what purple fritillaries<sup>2</sup>  
 The grassy harvest of the river-fields,  
 Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields;  
 And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes: who knows them if not I?  
 But many a dingle on the loved hillside,  
 With thorns once studded, old white-blossomed  
 trees,  
 Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried  
 High towered the spikes of purple orchises,  
 Hath since our day put by  
 The coronals of that forgotten time;  
 Down each green bank hath gone the plowboy's  
 team,  
 And only in the hidden brookside gleam  
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

---

1. **Questing** (*L. quæsitus*): Searching ; examining.

2. **Fritillaries** ; Common British plants of the genus *Fritillaria*.

Where is the girl who by the boatman's door,  
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,  
 Unmoored our skiff when through the Wytham  
 flats,  
 Red loosestrife <sup>1</sup> and blond meadow-sweet among,  
 And darting swallows and light water-gnats,  
 We tracked the shy Thames shore?  
 Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell  
 Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,  
 Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—  
 They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou, art gone! and round me too the night  
 In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.  
 I see her veil draw soft across the day,  
 I feel her slowly chilling breath invade  
 The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent  
 with gray;  
 I feel her finger light  
 Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train,—  
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,  
 The heart less bounding at emotion new,  
 And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed so short  
 To the less-practiced eye of sanguine youth;  
 And high the mountain tops, in cloudy air,—  
 The mountain tops where is the throne of Truth,  
 Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!  
 Unbreachable the fort  
 Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;  
 And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,  
 And near and real the charm of thy repose,  
 And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

---

1. Loosestrife : A British plant sparingly naturalized in the United States.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss  
 Of quiet! Look, adown<sup>1</sup> the dusk hillside,  
 A troop of Oxford hunters going home,  
 As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!  
 From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they  
 come.

Quick! let me fly, and cross  
 Into yon farther field! 'Tis done; and see,  
 Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify  
 The orange and pale violet evening-sky,  
 Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,  
 The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,  
 The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,  
 And in the scattered farms the lights come out.

I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,  
 Yet, happy omen, hail!

Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale<sup>2</sup>  
 (For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep  
 The morningless and unawakening sleep  
 Under the flowery oleanders pale);

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—  
 Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,  
 These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,  
 That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him:  
 To a boon<sup>3</sup> southern country he is fled,  
 And now in happier air,  
 Wandering with the great Mother's train divine  
 (And purer or more subtle soul than thee,  
 I trow, the mighty mother doth not see)  
 Within a folding of the Apennine,—

---

1. *Adown* : An archaic word, of which *down* is a shortened form.

2. *Arno* : A celebrated river of Tuscany.

3. *Boon* (*L. bonus*) : Used in its archaic sense of benign.

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!  
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain  
 In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian <sup>1</sup> king,  
 For thee the Lityerses-song again  
 Young Daphnis <sup>2</sup> with his silver voice doth sing;  
 Sings his Sicilian fold,  
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes;  
 And how a call celestial round him rang,  
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink he  
 sprang,  
 And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here  
 Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.  
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry  
 'Neath the soft canopy of English air  
 That lonely tree against the western sky.  
 Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,  
 Our Gypsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!  
 Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,  
 Woods with anemones in flower till May,  
 Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,  
 Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.  
 This does not come with houses or with gold,

---

1. **The Phrygian king**: Lityerses, a son of Midas, said to have lived in Phrygia, who forced all strangers passing his fields to work at his harvest. If he surpassed them, he killed them and bound their bodies in the sheaves, over which a reaping-song was sung. As Daphnis was being put to the test Hercules arrived, overcame Lityerses in the contest, and killed him. The king's memory was preserved in a harvest-song called Lityerses.

2. **Daphnis**: A Sicilian shepherd, son of Mercury by a nymph, who was taught by Pan to play on the flute. A nymph to whom Daphnis was faithless punished him with blindness, whereupon Mercury raised him to the skies and caused a fountain to spring up in the place from which he ascended.

With place, with honor, and a flattering crew;  
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold:  
 But the smooth-slipping weeks  
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;  
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,  
 He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;  
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound!  
 Thou wanderest with me for a little hour.  
 Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,  
 If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,  
 If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.  
 And this rude Cumner ground,  
 Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,  
 Here can'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,  
 Here was thine height of strength, thy golden  
 prime!  
 And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute  
 Kept not for long its happy, country tone;  
 Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note  
 Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,  
 Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy  
 throat—  
 It failed, and thou wast mute!  
 Yet hadst thou always visions of our light,  
 And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,  
 And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,  
 Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!  
 'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,  
 Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.  
 —Then through the great town's harsh, heart-  
 wearying roar,



Let in thy voice a whisper often come,  
 To chase fatigue and fear:  
 "Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.  
 Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.  
 Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the  
 hill;  
 Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside."

### Memorial Verses <sup>1</sup>

APRIL, 1850

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps; and Greece,  
 Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.  
 But one such death remained to come:  
 The last poetic voice is dumb,—  
 We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,  
 We bowed our head, and held our breath.  
 He taught us little, but our soul  
 Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.  
 With shivering heart the strife we saw  
 Of passion with eternal law;  
 And yet with reverential awe  
 We watched the fount of fiery life  
 Which served for that Titanic strife.

---

1. These *Memorial Verses* bring out salient points of three poets who had recently died—Byron, the pessimist poet, in 1824; Goethe, the greatest of German poets, in 1832, and Wordsworth, the nature-poet, in 1850. The characteristics of Byron's and Goethe's genius are brought out with an insight and comprehensiveness unsurpassed in Arnold's best prose criticism. He praises Wordsworth for the power of exciting free, happy emotion which, indeed, he had; but the essential characteristic of Wordsworth's genius is higher and nobler—a recognition in nature of a mysterious kinship with man, investing her beauty and grandeur with spiritual meaning.

When Goethe's death was told, we said,—  
 Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.  
 Physician of the iron age,  
 Goethe has done his pilgrimage.  
 He took the suffering human race,  
 He read each wound, each weakness clear;  
 And struck his finger on the place,  
 And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*  
 He looked on Europe's dying hour  
 Of fitful dream and feverish power;  
 His eye plunged down the weltering strife,  
 The turmoil of expiring life:  
 He said: *The end is everywhere,*  
*Art still has truth, take refuge there!*  
 And he was happy, if to know  
 Causes of things, and far below  
 His feet to see the lurid flow  
 Of terror, and insane distress,  
 And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!  
 For never has such soothing voice  
 Been to your shadowy world conveyed,  
 Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade  
 Heard the clear song of Orpheus<sup>1</sup> come  
 Through Hades and the mournful gloom.  
 Wordsworth has gone from us; and ye,  
 Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!  
 He too upon a wintry clime  
 Had fallen,—on this iron time

---

1. The clear song of Orpheus, etc.: Greek mythology tells us that Orpheus, having lost his wife, Eurydice, descended to Hades with the lute given him by Apollo, and his music so moved Pluto and Proserpine that they consented to his wife's return to the upper world on condition that he would not look back at her until they had passed beyond the realm of shades. He disregarded the injunction, and so lost her forever.

Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.  
He found us when the age had bound  
Our souls in its benumbing round;  
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.  
He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth:  
Smiles broke from us, and we had ease;  
The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o'er the sunlit fields again;  
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.  
Our youth returned; for there was shed  
On spirits that had long been dead,  
Spirits dried up and closely furled,  
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light  
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,  
Time may restore us in his course  
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;  
But where will Europe's latter hour  
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?  
Others will teach us how to dare,  
And against fear our breast to steel:  
Others will strengthen us to bear—  
But who, ah! who will make us feel?  
The cloud of mortal destiny,  
Others will front it fearlessly;  
But who, like him, will put it by?  
Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,  
O Rotha,<sup>1</sup> with thy living wave!  
Sing him thy best! for few or none  
Hear thy voice right, now he is gone.

---

1. Rotha or Rothay : A stream which empties into Lake Windermere near Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's home.

Rugby Chapel<sup>1</sup>

NOVEMBER, 1857.

COLDLY, sadly descends  
 The autumn evening. The field  
 Strewn with its dank yellow drifts  
 Of withered leaves, and the elms,  
 Fade into dimness apace,  
 Silent; hardly a shout  
 From a few boys late at their play!  
 The lights come out in the street,  
 In the schoolroom windows; but cold,  
 Solemn, unlighted, austere,  
 Through the gathering darkness, arise  
 The chapel-walls, in whose bound  
 Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom  
 Of the autumn evening. But ah!  
 That word *gloom* to my mind  
 Brings thee back in the light  
 Of thy radiant vigor again.

---

1. Rugby chapel: The short, unrhymed iambs and anapests unfamiliar to English poetry, which Arnold used so effectively in *The Strayed Reveler*, are endowed with pathos in this beautiful tribute to the memory of his father. Thomas Arnold (1745-1842), during his fifteen years' headship of Rugby school, regenerated public-school education in England, mainly by force of his own noble personality. He communicated to his pupils his own sense of the value of knowledge and the sacredness of duty. Cf. *Tom Brown at Rugby*. One who knew Dr. Arnold says that it was from his familiar customs on mountain walks, in which he would comfort the little ones in their falls, help the tired, and prove the guide and very life of the party—that his son draws imagery to sum up the lesson of his life as “a strong, hopeful, helpful soul, cheering and supporting his weaker comrades on their upward and onward way.”

In the gloom of November we passed  
Days not dark at thy side;  
Seasons impaired not the ray  
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.  
Such thou wast! and I stand  
In the autumn evening, and think  
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round  
Since thou arosest to tread,  
In the summer-morning, the road  
Of death, at a call unforeseen,  
Sudden.<sup>1</sup> For fifteen years,  
We who till then in thy shade  
Rested as under the boughs  
Of a mighty oak, have endured  
Sunshine and rain as we might,  
Bare, unshaded, alone,  
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore  
Tarriest thou now? For that force,  
Surely, has not been left vain!  
Somewhere, surely, afar,  
In the sounding labor-house vast  
Of being, is practiced that strength,  
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,  
Conscious or not of the past,  
Still thou performest the word  
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,  
Prompt, unwearied, as here.

---

1. Unforeseen, sudden : Dr. Arnold died suddenly June 12, 1842, of angina pectoris.

Still thou upraisest with zeal  
 The humble good from the ground,  
 Sternly represses the bad;  
 Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse  
 Those who with half-open eyes  
 Tread the border-land dim  
 'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,  
 Succorest. This was thy work,  
 This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life  
 Of mortal men on the earth?  
 Most men eddy about  
 Here and there, eat and drink,  
 Chatter and love and hate,  
 Gather and squander, are raised  
 Aloft, are hurled in the dust,  
 Striving blindly, achieving  
 Nothing; and then they die,—  
 Perish; and no one asks  
 Who or what they have been,  
 More than he asks what waves,  
 In the moonlit solitudes mild  
 Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,  
 Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some whom a thirst  
 Ardent, unquenchable, fires,  
 Not with the crowd to be spent,  
 Not without aim to go round  
 In an eddy of purposeless dust,  
 Effort unmeaning and vain.  
 Ah yes! some of us strive  
 Not without action to die  
 Fruitless, but something to snatch  
 From dull oblivion, nor all  
 Glut the devouring grave.

We, we have chosen our path,—  
 Path to a clear-purposed goal,  
 Path of advance; but it leads  
 A long, steep journey, through sunk  
 Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.  
 Cheerful, with friends, we set forth:  
 Then, on the height, comes the storm.  
 Thunder crashes from rock  
 To rock; the cataracts reply;  
 Lightnings dazzle our eyes;  
 Roaring torrents have breached  
 The track; the stream-bed descends  
 In the place where the wayfarer once  
 Planted his footstep; the spray  
 Boils o'er its borders; aloft,  
 The unseen snow-beds dislodge  
 Their hanging ruin. Alas!  
 Havoc is made in our train!  
 Friends who set forth at our side  
 Falter, are lost in the storm.

We, we only are left!  
 With frowning foreheads, with lips  
 Sternly compressed, we strain on,  
 On; and at nightfall at last  
 Come to the end of our way,  
 To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;  
 Where the gaunt and taciturn host  
 Stands on the threshold, the wind  
 Shaking his thin white hairs,  
 Holds his lantern to scan  
 Our storm-beat figures, and asks,—  
 Whom in our party we bring?  
 Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer, We bring  
 Only ourselves! we lost

Sight of the rest in the storm.  
Hardly ourselves we fought through,  
Stripped, without friends, as we are.  
Friends, companions, and train,  
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*  
Be saved, my father! *alone*  
Conquer and come to thy goal,  
Leaving the rest in the wild.  
We were weary, and we  
Fearful, and we in our march  
Fain to drop down and to die.  
Still thou turnedst, and still  
Beckonedst the trembler, and still  
Gavest the weary thy hand.  
If, in the paths of the world,  
Stones might have wounded thy feet,  
Toil or dejection have tried  
Thy spirit, of that we saw  
Nothing: to us thou wast still  
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!  
Therefore to thee it was given  
Many to save with thyself;  
And, at the end of thy day,  
O faithful shepherd! to come,  
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe  
In the noble and great who are gone;  
Pure souls honored and blest  
By former ages, who else—  
Such, so soulless, so poor,  
Is the race of men whom I see—  
Seemed but a dream of the heart,  
Seemed but a cry of desire.



Yes! I believe that there lived  
Others like thee in the past,  
Not like the men of the crowd  
Who all round me to-day  
Bluster or cringe, and make life  
Hideous and arid and vile;  
But souls tempered with fire,  
Fervent, heroic, and good,  
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! <sup>1</sup>—or sons  
Shall I not call you? because  
Not as servants ye knew  
Your Father's innermost mind,  
His who unwillingly sees  
One of his little ones lost,—  
Yours is the praise, if mankind  
Hath not as yet in its march  
Fainted and fallen and died.

See! In the rocks of the world  
Marches the host of mankind,  
A feeble, wavering line.  
Where are they tending? A God  
Marshaled them, gave them their goal.  
Ah, but the way is so long!

Years they have been in the wild:  
Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,  
Rising all round, overawe;  
Factions divide them; their host  
Threatens to break, to dissolve.  
Ah! keep, keep them combined!  
Else, of the myriads who fill

---

1. Servants of God : *Cf.* John xv. 15.

That army, not one shall arrive;  
Sole they shall stray; on the rocks  
Batter forever in vain,  
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need  
Of your fainting, dispirited race,  
Ye like angels appear,  
Radiant with ardor divine.  
Beacons of hope, ye appear!  
Languor is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not on your brow.  
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,  
Panic, despair, flee away,  
Ye move through the ranks, recall  
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,  
Praise, re-inspire the brave.  
Order, courage, return;  
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,  
Follow your steps as ye go.  
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,  
Strengthen the wavering line,  
Stablish,<sup>1</sup> continue our march,  
On, to the bound of the waste,  
On, to the City of God.

---

1. Stablish (Archaic) : Make stable ; establish.

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