

Justice

THE
STORY OF JUSTIN MARTYR:

AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY
RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH.



FIFTH EDITION.

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THE
STORY OF JUSTIN MARTYR.

SEE JUSTIN MARTYR'S FIRST DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO.

IT seems to me like yesterday,
The morning when I took my way
Upon the shore—in solitude ;
For in that miserable mood
It was relief to quit the ken
And the inquiring looks of men—
The looks of love and gentleness,
And pity, that would fain express
Its only purpose was to know,
That, knowing, it might soothe my woe :
But when I felt that I was free
From searching gaze, it was to me
Like ending of a dreary task,
Or putting off a cumbrous mask.

I wandered forth upon the shore,
Wishing this lie of life was o'er ;

What was beyond I could not guess,
I thought it might be quietness,
And now I had no dream of bliss,
No thought, no other hope but this—
To be at rest ;—for all that fed
The dream of my proud youth had fled,
My dream of youth that I would be
Happy and glorious, wise and free,
In mine own right, and keep my state,
And would repel the heavy weight,
The load that crushed unto the ground
The servile multitude around ;
The purpose of my life had failed,
The heavenly heights I would have scaled
Teemed more than ever out of sight,
Further beyond my feeble flight.
The beauty of the universe
Was lying on me like a curse ;
Only the lone surge at my feet
Uttered a soothing murmur sweet,
As every broken weary wave
Sank gently to a quiet grave,
Dying on the bosom of the sea :
And death grew beautiful to me,
Until it seemed a mother mild,
And I like some too happy child—
A happy child, that tired with play,
Thro' a long summer holiday,

Runs to his mother's arms to weep
His little weariness asleep.
Rest—rest—all passion that once stirred
My heart, had ended in one word—
My one desire to be at rest,
To lay my head on any breast,
Where there was hope that I might keep
A dreamless and unbroken sleep ;
And the lulled Ocean seemed to say,
“ With me is quiet—come away.”
There was a tale which oft had stirred
My bosom deeply : you have heard
How that the treacherous sea-maid's art
With song inveigles the lost heart
Of some lone fisher, that has stood
For days beside the glimmering flood ;
And when has grown upon him there
The mystery of earth and air,
He cannot find with whom to part
The burden lying at his heart ;
So when the mermaid bids him come,
And summons to her peaceful home,
He hears—he leaps into the wave,
To find a home, and not a grave.
It stirred me now—and sweet seemed death ;
The ceasing of this painful breath,
The laying down this life of care,
The breathing of a purer air—

Sweet seemed they all—a richer thing
Death, than whatever life could bring.

Anon I said I would not die ;
I loathed to live—I feared to die—
So I went forward, till I stood
Amid a marble solitude,
A ruined town of ancient day.
I rested where some steps away
From other work of human hand
Two solitary pillars stand,
Two pillars on a mild hill-side,
Like sea-marks of a shrunken tide :
Their shafts were by the sea-breeze worn,
Beneath them waved the verdant corn ;
But a few paces from the crown
Of that green summit, farther down,
A fallen pillar on the plain,
Slow sinking in the earth again,
Bedding itself in dark black mould,
Lay moveless, where it first had rolled.
It once had been a pillar high,
And pointing to the starry sky ;
But now lay prostrate, its own weight
Now serving but to fix its state,
To sink it in its earthly bed.
I gazed, and to myself I said,
“ This pillar lying on the plain
The hand of man might raise again,

And set it as in former days ;
But the fall'n spirit who shall raise,
What power on earth ? what power in heaven ?”
How quickly was an answer given
Unto this voice of my despair !
But now I sat in silence there,
I thought upon the vanished time,
And my irrevocable prime,
My baffled purpose, wasted years,
My sin, my misery—and my tears
Fell thick and fast upon the sands ;
I hid my face within my hands,
For tears are strange that find their way
Under the open eye of day,
Under the broad and glorious sun,
Full in the heavens, as mine have done,
And as upon that day they did,
Unnoticed, unrestrained, unhid.
How long I might have felt them flow
Without a check, I do not know,
But presently, while yet I kept
That attitude of woe, and wept,
A mild voice sounded in mine ears—
“ You cannot wash your heart with tears !”
I quickly turned—and vexed to be
Seen in my spirit's agony,
In anger had almost replied—
An aged man was at my side ;

I think that since my life began,
I never saw an older man
Than he who stood beside me then,
And with mild accents said again :
“ You cannot cleanse your heart with tears,
Though you should weep as many years
As our great Father, when he sat
Uncomforted on Ararat—
This would not help you, and the tear
Which does not heal, will scald and sear.
What is your sorrow ?”

Until now

I never had unveiled my woe—
Not that I shunned sweet sympathies,
Man’s words, or woman’s pitying eyes ;
But that I felt they were in vain,
And could not help me ; for the pain,
The wound which I was doomed to feel,
Man gave not, and he could not heal.
But in this old man’s speech and tone
Was something that allured me on ;
I told him all—I did not hide
My sin, my sorrow, or my pride :
I told him how, when I began
First to verge upward to a man,
These thoughts were mine—to dwell alone,
My spirit on its lordly throne,

Hating the vain stir, fierce and loud,
The din of the tumultuous crowd ;
And how I thought to arm my soul,
And stablish it in self-control ;
And said I would obey the right,
And would be strong in wisdom's might,
And bow unto my own heart's law,
And keep my heart from speck or flaw,
That in its mirror I might find
A reflex of the Eternal mind,
A glass to give me back the truth—
And how before me from my youth
A phantom ever on the wing,
Appearing now, now vanishing,
Had flitted, looking out from shrine,
From painting, or from work divine
Of poet's, or of sculptor's art ;
And how I feared it might depart,
That beauty which alone could shed
Light on my life—and then I said,
I would beneath its shadow dwell,
And would all lovely things compel,
All that was beautiful or fair
In art or nature, earth or air,
To be as ministers to me,
To keep me pure, to keep me free
From worldly service, from the chain
Of custom, and from earthly stain ;

And how they kept me for awhile,
And did my foolish heart beguile ;
Yet all at last did faithless prove,
And, late or soon, betrayed my love ;
How they had failed me one by one,
Till now, my youth yet scarcely done,
The heart, which I had thought to steep
In hues of beauty, and to keep
Its consecrated home and fane,
That heart was soiled with many a stain,
Which from without and from within
Had gathered there, till all was sin,
Till now I only drew my breath,
I lived but in the hope of death.

While my last words were giving place
To my heart's anguish, o'er his face,
A shadow of displeasure past,
But vanished then again as fast
As the breeze-shadow from the brook ;
And with mild words and pitying look
He gently said—

“ Ah me, my son,
A weary course your life has run ;
And yet it need not be in vain,
That you have suffered all this pain ;
And if my years might make me bold
To speak, methinks I could unfold

Why in such efforts you could meet
But only misery and defeat.
Yet deem not of us as at strife,
Because you set before your life
A purpose and a loftier aim,
Than the blind lives of men may claim
For the most part—or that you sought,
By fixed resolve and solemn thought,
To lift your being's calm estate
Out of the range of time and fate.
Glad am I that a thing unseen,
A spiritual Presence, this has been
Your worship, this your young heart stirred.
But yet herein you proudly erred,
Here may the source of woe be found,
You thought to fling, yourself around,
The atmosphere of light and love
In which it was your joy to move ;
You thought by efforts of your own
To take at last each jarring tone
Out of your life, till all should meet
In one majestic music sweet ;
And deemed that in our own heart's ground
The root of good was to be found,
And that by careful watering
And earnest tendance we might bring
The bud, the blossom, and the fruit
To grow and flourish from that root—

You deemed we needed nothing more
Than skill and courage to explore
Deep down enough in our own heart,
To where the well-head lay apart,
Which must the springs of being feed,
And that these fountains did but need
The soil that choked them moved away,
To bubble in the open day.
But, thanks to heaven, it is not so,
That root a richer soil doth know
Than our poor hearts could e'er supply,
That stream is from a source more high;
From God it came, to God returns,
Not nourished from our scanty urns,
But fed from his unfailing river,
Which runs and will run on for ever."

When now he came to heavenly things,
And spake of them, his spirit had wings,
His words seemed not his own, but given—
I could have deemed one spake from heaven
Of hope and joy, of life and death,
And immortality thro' faith,
Of that great change commenced within,
The blood that cleanses from all sin,
That can wash out the inward stain,
And consecrate the heart again,
The voice that clearer and more clear
Doth speak unto the purgèd ear,

The gracious influences given
In a continued stream from heaven,
The balm that can the soul's hurt heal,
The Spirit's witness and its seal.

I listened, for unto mine ear
The word which I had longed to hear,
Was come at last, the lifeful word
Which I had often almost heard
In some deep silence of my breast—
For with a sense of dim unrest
That word unborn had often wrought,
And struggled in the womb of thought,
As from beneath the smothering earth
The seed strives upward to a birth :
And lo ! it now was born indeed—
Here was the answer to my need.

But now we parted, never more
To meet upon that lone sea-shore.
We have not met on earth again,
And scarcely shall ; there doth remain
A time, a place where we shall meet,
And have the stars beneath our feet.
Since then I many times have sought
Who this might be, and sometimes thought
It must have been an angel sent
To be a special instrument

And minister of grace to me ;
Or deemed again it might be he,
Of whom some say he shall not die,
Till he have seen with mortal eye
The glory of his Lord again :
But this is a weak thought and vain.

We parted, each upon our way—
I homeward, where my glad course lay
Beside those ruins where I sate
On the same morning—desolate,—
With scarcely strength enough to grieve :
And now it was a marvellous eye,
The waters at my feet were bright,
And breaking into isles of light :
The misty sunset did enfold
A thousand floating motes of gold ;
The red light seemed to penetrate
Thro' the worn stone, and re-create
The old, to glorify anew ;
And steeping all things thro' and thro'
A rich dissolving splendour poured
Thro' rent and fissure, and restored
The fall'n, the falling, and decayed,
Filling the rifts which time had made,
Till the rent masses seemed to meet,
The pillar stand upon its feet,
And tower and cornice, roof and stair
Hung self-upheld in the magic air.

Transfigured thus those temples stood
Upon the margin of the flood,
All glorious as they rose of yore,
There standing, as not ever more
They could be harmed by touch of time,
But still, as in that perfect prime,
Must flourish unremoved and free,
Or as they then appeared to me,
A newer and more glorious birth,
A city of that other earth,
That Earth which is to be.



THE MONK AND BIRD.

I.

AS he who finds one flower sharp thorns among,
 Plucks it, and highly prizes, though before
 Careless regard on thousands he has flung,
 As fair as this or more ;

II.

Not otherwise perhaps this argument
 Won from me, where I found it, such regard,
 That I esteemed no labour thereon spent
 As wearisome or hard.

III.

In huge and antique volume did it lie,
 That by two solemn clasps was duly bound,
 As neither to be opened nor laid by
 But with due thought profound.

IV.

There fix'd thought to questions did I lend,
 Which hover on the bounds of mortal ken,
 And have perplexed, and will unto the end
 Perplex the brains of men ;

V.

Of what is time, and what eternity,
Of all that seems and is not—forms of things—
Till my tired spirit followed painfully
On flagging weary wings ;

VI.

So that I welcomed this one resting-place,
Pleased as a bird, that, when its forces fail,
Lights panting in the ocean's middle space
Upon a sunny sail.

VII.

And now the grace of fiction, which has power
To render things impossible believed,
And win them with the credence of an hour
To be for truths received—

VIII.

That grace must help me, as it only can,
Winning such transient credence, while I tell
What to a cloistered solitary man
In distant times befell.

IX.

His little might our earthly grandeur feed,
Who to the uttermost was vowed to be
A follower of his Master's barest need
In holy poverty.

X.

Nor might he know the gentle mutual strife
Of home-affections, which can more or less
Temper with sweet the bitter of our life,
And lighten its distress.

XI.

Yet we should err to deem that he was left
To bear alone our being's lonely weight,
Or that his soul was vacant and bereft
Of pomp and inward state :

XII.

Morn, when before the sun his orb unshrouds,
Swift as a beacon torch the light has sped,
Kindling the dusky summits of the clouds
Each to a fiery red—

XIII.

The slanted columns of the noon-day light,
Let down into the bosom of the hills,
Or sunset, that with golden vapour bright
The purple mountains fills—

XIV.

These made him say, —If God has so arrayed
A fading world that quickly passes by,
Such rich provision of delight has made
For every human eye,

XV.

What shall the eyes that wait for him survey,
Where his own presence gloriously appears
In worlds that were not founded for a day,
But for eternal years?

XVI.

And if at seasons this world's undelight
Oppressed him, or the hollow at its heart,
One glance at those enduring mansions bright
Made gloomier thoughts depart;

XVII.

Till many times the sweetness of the thought
Of an eternal country—where it lies
Removed from care and mortal anguish, brought
Sweet tears into his eyes.

XVIII.

Thus, not unsolaced, he longwhile abode,
Filling all dreary melancholy time,
And empty spaces of the heart with God,
And with this hope sublime:

XIX.

Even thus he lived, with little joy or pain
Drawn thro' the channels by which men receive—
Most men receive the things which for the main
Make them rejoice or grieve.

XX.

· But for delight, on spiritual gladness fed,
And obvious to temptations of like kind ;
One such, from out his very gladness bred,
It was his lot to find.

XXI.

When first it came, he lightly put it by,
But it returned again to him ere long,
And ever having got some new ally,
And every time more strong—

XXII.

A little worm that gnawed the life away
Of a tall plant, the canker of its root,
Or like as when, from some small speck, decay
Spreads o'er a beauteous fruit.

XXIII.

For still the doubt came back,—Can God provide
For the large heart of man what shall not pall,
Nor thro' eternal ages' endless tide
On tired spirits fall ?

XXIV.

Here but one look tow'rd heaven will oft repress
The crushing weight of undelightful care ;
But what were there beyond, if weariness
Should ever enter there ?

XXV.

Yet do not sweetest things here soonest cloy?
Satiety the life of joy would kill,
If sweet with bitter, pleasure with annoy
Were not attempered still.

XXVI.

This mood endured, till every act of love,
Vigils of praise and prayer, and midnight choir,
All shadows of the service done above,
And which, while his desire,

XXVII.

And while his hope was heavenward, he had loved,
As helps to disengage him from the chain
That fastens unto earth—all these now proved
Most burdensome and vain.

XXVIII.

What must have been the issue of that mood
It were a thing to fear—but that one day,
Upon the limits of an ancient wood,
His thoughts him led astray.

XXIX.

Darkling he went, nor once applied his ear,
(On a loud sea of agitations thrown,)
Nature's low tones and harmonies to hear,
Heard by the calm alone.

XXX.

The merry chirrup of the grasshopper,
Sporting among the roots of withered grass,
The dry leaf rustling to the wind's light stir,
Did each unnoted pass :

XXXI.

He, walking in a trance of selfish care,
Not once observed the beauty shed around,
The blue above, the music in the air,
The flowers upon the ground :

XXXII.

Till from the centre of that forest dim
Came to him such sweet singing of a bird,
As, sweet in very truth, then seemed to him
The sweetest ever heard.

XXXIII.

That lodestar drew him onward inward still,
Deeper than where the village children stray,
Deeper than where the woodman's glittering bill
Lops the large boughs away—

XXXIV.

Into a central space of glimmering shade,
Where hardly might the struggling sunbeams pass,
Which a faint lattice-work of light had made
Upon the long lank grass.

XXXV.

He did not sit, but stood and listened there,
And to him listening the time seemed not long,
While that sweet bird above him filled the air
With its melodious song.

XXXVI.

He heard not, saw not, felt not aught beside,
Thro' the wide worlds of pleasure and of pain,
Save the full flowing and the ample tide
Of that celestial strain.

XXXVII.

As though a bird of Paradise should light
A moment on a twig of this bleak earth,
And singing songs of Paradise invite
All hearts to holy mirth,

XXXVIII.

And then take wing to Paradise again,
Leaving all listening spirits raised above
The toil of earth, the trouble, and the pain,
And melted all in love :

XXXIX.

Such hidden might, such power was in the sound ;
But when it ceased sweet music to unlock,
The spell that held him sense and spirit-bound
Dissolved with a slight shock.

XL.

All things around were as they were before—
The trees and the blue sky, and sunshine bright,
Painting the pale and leafstrewn forest-floor
With patches of faint light.

XLI.

But as when music doth no longer thrill,
Light shudderings yet along the chords will run,
Or the heart vibrates tremulously still,
After its prayer be done,

XLII.

So his heart fluttered all the way he went,
Listening each moment for the vesper bell ;
For a long hour he deemed he must have spent
In that untrodden dell.

XLIII.

And once it seemed that something new or strange
Had past upon the flowers, the trees, the ground ;
Some slight but unintelligible change
On everything around :

XLIV.

Such change, where all things undisturbed remain,
As only to the eye of him appears,
Who absent long, at length returns again—
The silent work of years.

XLV.

And ever grew upon him more and more
Fresh marvel—for, unrecognized of all,
He stood a stranger at the convent door:
New faces filled the hall.

XLVI.

Yet was it long ere he received the whole
Of that strange wonder—how, while he had stood
Lost in deep gladness of his inmost soul,
Far hidden in that wood,

XLVII.

Three generations had gone down unseen
Under the thin partition that is spread—
The thin partition of thin earth—between
The living and the dead.

XLVIII.

Nor did he many days to earth belong,
For like a pent-up stream, released again,
The years arrested by the strength of song
Came down on him amain ;

XLIX.

Sudden as a dissolving thaw in spring ;
Gentle as when upon the first warm day,
Which sunny April in its train may bring,
The snow melts all away.

L.

They placed him in his former cell, and there
Watched him departing ; what few words he said
Were of calm peace and gladness, with one care
Mingled—one only dread—

LI.

Lest an eternity should not suffice
To take the measure and the breadth and height
Of what there is reserved in Paradise—
Its ever-new delight.



TO A CHILD PLAYING.

DEAR boy, thy momentary laughter rings
 Sincerely out, and that spontaneous glee,
 Seeming to need no hint from outward things,
 Breaks forth in sudden shoutings, loud and free.

From what hid fountains doth thy joyance flow,
 That borrows nothing from the world around?
 Its springs must deeper lie than we can know,
 A well whose springs lie safely underground.

So be it ever—and, thou happy boy,
 When time, that takes these wild delights away,
 Gives thee a measure of sedater joy,
 Which, unlike this, shall ever with thee stay;

Then may that joy, like this, to outward things
 Owe nothing, but lie safe beneath the sod,
 A hidden fountain fed from unseu springs,
 From the glad-making river of our God.

A WALK IN A CHURCHYARD.

WE walked within the Churchyard bounds,
 My little boy and I—
 He laughing, running happy rounds,
 I pacing mournfully.

“Nay, child! it is not well,” I said,
 “Among the graves to shout,
 To laugh and play among the dead,
 And make this noisy rout.”

A moment to my side he clung,
 Leaving his merry play,
 A moment stilled his joyous tongue,
 Almost as hushed as they;

Then, quite forgetting the command
 In life's exulting burst
 Of early glee, let go my hand,
 Joyous as at the first.

And now I did not check him more,
For, taught by Nature's face,
I had grown wiser than before
Even in that moment's space :

She spread no funeral pall above
That patch of churchyard ground,
But the same azure vault of love
As hung o'er all around.

And white clouds o'er that spot would pass,
As freely as elsewhere ;
The sunshine on no other grass
A richer hue might wear.

And formed from out that very mould
In which the dead did lie,
The daisy with its eye of gold
Looked up into the sky.

The rook was wheeling overhead,
Nor hastened to be gone—
The small bird did its glad notes shed,
Perched on a grey head-stone.

And God, I said, would never give
This light upon the earth,
Nor bid in childhood's heart to live
These springs of gushing mirth,

If our one wisdom were to mourn,
And linger with the dead,
To nurse, as wisest, thoughts forlorn
Of worm and earthy bed.

Oh no, the glory earth puts on,
The child's unchecked delight,
Both witness to a triumph won—
(If we but read aright,)

A triumph won o'er sin and death,
From these the Saviour saves ;
And, like a happy infant, Faith
Can play among the graves.



TO ———

ON THE DAY OF HER BAPTISM.

THIS will we name thy better birth-day, child,
 Oh born already to a sin-worn world,
 But now unto a kingdom undefiled,
 Where over thee love's banner is unfurled.

Lo! on the morning of this holy day
 I lay aside the weight of human fears,
 Which I had for thee, and without dismay
 Look thro' the avenue of coming years:

I see thee passing without mortal harm
 Thro' ranks of foes against thy safety met;
 I see thee passing;—thy defence and charm,
 The seal of God upon thy forehead set.

From this time forth thou often shalt hear say
 Of what immortal City thou wert given
 The rights and full immunities to-day,
 And of the hope laid up for thee in heaven:

From this time forward thou shalt not believe
That thou art earthly, or that aught of earth
Or aught that hell can threaten, shall receive
Power on the children of the second birth.

Oh risen out of death into the day
Of an immortal life, we bid thee hail,
And will not kiss the waterdrops away,
The dew that rests upon thy forehead pale.

And if the seed of better life lie long,
As in a wintry hiddenness and death,
Then calling back this day, we will be strong
To wait in hope for heaven's reviving breath ;

To water, if there should be such sad need,
The undiscern'd germ with sorrowing tears,
To wait until from that undying seed
Out of the earth a heavenly plant appears ;

The growth and produce of a fairer land,
And thence transplanted to a barren soil,
It needs the tendance of a careful hand,
Of love, that is not weary with long toil :

And thou, dear child, whose very helplessness
Is as a bond upon us and a claim,
Mayest thou have this of us, as we no less
Have daily from our Father known the same.

TO MY GODCHILD.

ON THE DAY OF HIS BAPTISM.

NO harsh transitions Nature knows,
 No dreary spaces intervene ;
 Her work in silence forward goes,
 And rather felt than seen :

For where the watcher, that with eye
 Turned eastward, yet could ever say
 When the faint glooming in the sky
 First lightened into day ?

Or maiden, by an opening flower
 That many a summer morn has stood,
 Could fix upon the very hour
 It ceased to be a bud ?

The rainbow colours mix and blend
 Each with the other, until none
 Can tell where fainter hues had end,
 And deeper tints begun.

But only doth this much appear—
That the pale hues are deeper grown ;
The day has broken bright and clear ;
The bud is fully blown.

Dear child, and happy shalt thou be,
If from this hour with just increase
All good things shall grow up in thee,
By such unmarked degrees :

If there shall be no dreary space
Between thy present self and past,
No dreary miserable place
With spectral shapes aghast ;

But the full graces of thy prime
Shall, in their weak beginnings, be
Lost in an unremembered time
Of holy infancy.

This blessing is the first and best ;
Yet has not prayer been made in vain
For them, though not so amply blest,
The lost and found again.

And shouldest thou, alas ! forbear
To choose the better, nobler lot,
Yet may we not esteem our prayer
Unheard or heeded not ;

If after many a wandering,
And many a devious pathway trod,
If having known that bitter thing,
To leave the Lord thy God ;

It yet shall be, that thou at last,
Although thy noon be lost, return
To bind life's eve in union fast
With this, its bless'd morn.



TO AN INFANT SLEEPING.

I.

OH drinking deep of slumber's holy wine,
 Whence may the smile that lights thy countenance
 be?

We seek in vain the mystery to divine ;
 For in thy dim unconscious infancy
 No games as yet, no playfellows are thine,
 To stir in waking hours such thoughts of glee,
 As, recollected in thine innocent dream,
 Might shed across thy face this happy gleam.

II.

It may be, though small notice thou canst take,
 Thou feelest that an atmosphere of love
 Is ever round thee, sleeping or awake :
 Thou wakest, and kind faces from above
 Bend o'er thee ; when thou sleepest, for thy sake
 All sounds are hushed, and each doth gently move :
 And this dim consciousness of tender care
 Has caused thy cheek this light of joy to wear.

III.

Or it may be, thoughts deeper than we deem
Visit an infant's slumbers : God is near,
Angels are talking to them in their dream,
Angelic voices whispering sweet and clear :
And round them lies that region's holy gleam,
But newly left, and light which is not here ;
And thus has come that smile upon thy face,
At tidings brought thee from thy native place.

IV.

But whatso'er the causes which beguiled
That dimple on thy countenance, it is gone ;
Fair is the lake disturbed by ripple mild,
But not less fair when ripple it has none :
And now what deep repose is thine, dear child,
What smoothness thy nuruffled cheek has won !
Oh ! who that gazed upon thee could forbear
The silent breathing of an heart-felt prayer !



ON THE BAPTISM OF ———.

I.

ON Easter eve how beautiful a sight,
 On that day's vigil, which the Lord had made,
 To have beholden in their vestments white
 The happy troop of neophytes arrayed,
 New washed, and waiting now with joyful cheer
 To hail that morn, the gladdest of the year!

II.

Or on that other not less solemn day,
 Day when the Lord his promised Spirit gave,
 It must have been fair prospect to survey
 His snowy flock ascending from the wave,
 Thenceforward under their true Shepherd's care
 To living streams and pastures to repair.

III.

But if there be not now such ample rite,
 Yet we will lack not our solemnity,

Done not in vacant aisle, nor out of sight—
But all the whole assembly standing by,
In hope and trust that many faithful hearts
Will in those earnest pleadings bear their parts.

IV.

And may the honey and the milk be thine,
Known to thy spiritual taste, the firstfruits sweet
Of that rich promised country, land divine,
Whither thou travellest now with pilgrim feet—
As babes by milk, so nourished by the word,
Its honey sweetness to all else preferred.

V.

As though the lighted tapers in thy hand
Had been placed duly, so henceforward live;
By the true light illumined take thy stand;
Thyself a light, bright light about thee give,
Issuing with furnished lamp and ready feet,
The bridegroom in the middle night to greet.

VI.

Thou too must tow'rd the Orient turn thy face,
Since that way lieth Paradise, whose gates
Have been to thee re-opened by this grace;
And turning him that way the watcher waits
The rising sun to cheer him and to bless,
Emblem of Him, our Sun of righteousness.

VII.

And faith beholds thee in white robes arrayed,
The mystic garment of pure innocence ;
Oh might their primal glory never fade !
That thou might'st keep them still without offence !
Pledge of yet brighter robes one day to be,
The glistening robes of immortality.

VIII.

Thine too the anointing with the holy oil,
That thou may'st struggle thro' the contest hard,
Not shrinking from the burden and the toil,
A Christian athlete—and at his award,
The Master of the games, in time to wear
The victor's wreath, the amaranth garland fair.

IX.

And thou shalt early learn what right is thine,
Upon thy lips to take the dearest name
Of Father, kneeling at the inner shrine,
And all chief blessings of God's house to claim,
“ Our Father,” with all confidence to say,
And boldly use the children's prayer away.

TO E——.

MUCH have we to support us in our strife
With things which else would crush us, nor alone
Secret refreshings of the inward life,
But many a flower of sweetest scent is strown
Upon our outward and our open way ;
None sweeter than are at some seasons known
To them who dwell for many a prosperous day
Under one roof, and have, as they would hope,
One purpose for their lives, one aim, one scope—
To labour upward on the path to heaven.
Full of refreshment these occasions are,
Like seasonable resting-places given
To pilgrim feet ; for though, alas ! too rare,
Yet the sweet memories they supply, will give
The food on which affection's heart may live
In after times ; since it were sad indeed
If all more intimate knowledge did not breed
More trust in one another and more love,
More faith that each is seeking to attain
With humble earnest effort, not in vain,

The happy rest of God. And so they part
On their divided ways with cheerful heart,
Knowing that in all places they will call
On the same God and Father over all ;
And part not wholly, since they meet whose prayer
Meets at the throne of heaven ; one life divine
Thro' all the branches of the mystical vine
Flows ever, even as the same breath of air
Lifts every leaflet of a mighty grove.
And from our meeting we shall reap a share
Of a yet higher good, if we have won
Hereby the strengthening of one weak desire,
The fanning of one faint spark to a fire,
The stirring of one prayer, that we may prove
Steadfast and faithful till our work be done,
Until the course appointed us be run.

We know not whither our frail barks are borne,
To quiet haven, or on stormy shore ;
Nor need we seek to know it, while above
The tempest and the waters' angriest roar
Are heard the voices of almighty love—
So we shall find none dreary nor forlorn.
Whither we go we know not, but we know
That if we keep our faces surely set
Toward new Zion, we shall reach at last,
When every danger, every woe is past,
The city where the seal'd tribes are met,

Whither the nations of the savēd flow,
The city with its heaven-descended halls,
The city builded round with diamond walls.

Then how should we feel sorrow or dim fear
At any parting now, if there to meet ;
How should our hearts with sadder pulses beat,
When thou art going where kind hearts will greet
And welcome thy return, and there as here
Thou still wilt find thine own appointed sphere,
To fill the measure up of gentle deeds,
Even as we have learnēd that in these,
That in the holy Christian charities,
And the suppliance of the lowliest needs
Of the most lowly, our true greatness is.

Therefore we will not seek to win thy stay,
Nor ask but this—that thou shouldst bear away
Kind memories of us, and only claim
What of thyself thou wilt be prompt to give,
That in thy heart's affections he may live,
To whom thou bearest that most holy name
Of spiritual mother. O beloved friend,
It is a cheering thought, if I should be
Where I can no more watch for him nor tend
His infant years—there where I cannot see
What good, what evil wait upon his way,
That yet thy love, thy counsel, and thy cares
He will not lack, a child of faithful prayers.

TO A FRIEND,

ENTERING THE MINISTRY.

I.

HIGH thoughts at first, and visions high
 Are ours of easy victory ;
 The word we bear seems so divine,
 So framed for Adam's guilty line,
 That none, unto ourselves we say,
 Of all his sinning suffering race
 Will hear that word, so full of grace,
 And coldly turn away.

II.

But soon a sadder mood comes round ;
 High hopes have fallen to the ground,
 And the ambassadors of peace
 Go weeping, that men will not cease
 To strive with heaven—they inly mourn,
 That suffering men will not be blest,
 That weary men refuse to rest,
 And wanderers to return.

III.

Well is it, if has not ensued
Another, yet unworthier, mood,
When all unfaithful thoughts have way,
When we hang down our hands, and say,
 “ Alas ! it is a weary pain
To seek with toil and fruitless strife
To chafe the numbed limbs into life,
 That will not live again.”

IV.

Then if Spring-odours on the wind
Float by, they bring into our mind
That it were wiser done, to give
Our hearts to Nature, and to live
 For her ; or in the student's bower
To search into her hidden things,
And seek in books the wondrous springs
 Of knowledge and of power.

V.

Or if we dare not thus draw back,
Yet oh ! to shun the crowded track
And the rude throng of men ! to dwell
In hermitage or lonely cell,
 Feeding all longings that aspire
Like incense heavenward, and with care
And lonely vigil nursing there
 Faith's solitary pyre.

VI.

Oh! let not us this thought allow—
The heat, the dust upon our brow,
Signs of the contest, we may wear ;
Yet thus we shall appear more fair
 In our Almighty Master's eye,
Than if in fear to lose the bloom,
Or ruffle the soul's lightest plume,
 We from the strife should fly.

VII.

And for the rest, in weariness,
In disappointment, or distress,
When strength decays, or hope grows dim,
We ever may recur to Him,
 Who has the golden oil divine,
Wherewith to feed our failing urns,
Who watches every lamp that burns
 Before his sacred shrine.



ANTI-GNOSTICUS.

WH^O, loving leisure and his studious ease,
 And books, and what of noblest lore they bring,
 Will not confess that sometimes, called aside
 To humbler work and less delightful tasks,
 He has been tempted to exclaim in heart—
 “How pleasant were it might we only dwell,
 And ever hold sweet converse undisturbed
 Thus with the choicest spirits of the world
 In council, and in letters, and in arms.
 Easy to live with, always at command,
 They come at bidding, at our word depart,
 Friends whose society not ever cloys.
 Glorious it were by intercourse with these
 To learn whatever men have thought or done,
 And travel the great orb of knowledge round.
 But oh! how most unwelcome the constraint,
 How harsh the summons bidding us to pause,
 And for a season turn from our high toils,
 From that serener atmosphere come down,
 And grow perforce acquainted with the woe,

The strife, the discord of the actual world,
And all the ignoble work beneath the sun.”

These were my thoughts and words the other day,
And such they oftentimes have been before,
When I have turned reluctantly, and left
The pleasant labours I had found at home,
For ruder and less grateful tasks abroad,
Which duty would not suffer to put by.
But other feelings occupied my heart,
And other words found utterance from my lips,
When that day's work was finished, and my feet
Again turned homeward—alteration strange
Of feeling, with a better, humbler, mind.
For I was thankful now, and not alone
That I had been brought under the blue sky,
With winds of heaven to blow upon my cheeks,
And flowers of earth to smile about my feet,
And birds of air to sing within my ears—
Though that were something, something to exchange
Continuous study in a lonely room
For the sweet face of nature, sights and sounds
Of earth and air, restoring influences
Of power to cheer ;—yet not for this alone,
Nor for this chiefly, but that thus I was
Compelled, as by a gentle violence,
Not in the pages of dead books alone,
Nor merely in the fair page nature shows,

But in the living page of human life
To look and learn—not merely left to spin
Fine webs and woofs around me like the worm,
Till in mine own coil I had hid myself,
And quite shut out the light of common day,
And common air by which men breathe and live—
That being in a world of sin and woe,
Of woe that might in some part be assuaged,
Of sin that might be lessened in some part,
Heaven in its mercy did not suffer me
To live and dwell wholly apart from these ;
Knowing no more of them than men who live
At home in ease, by hearsay know of lands
Which the bold pilgrim has with his own eyes
Seen, with his own feet trod : and now I felt,
It was brought home unto my heart of hearts,
That doom is none more pitiable than his,
Who has created a heart-solitude,
Raised a partition wall to separate
Between himself and any of his kind ;
There was no doom more pitiable than his,
Who at safe distance hears life's stormy waves,
Which break for ever on a rugged shore,
In which are shipwrecked mariners, for their lives
Contending some, some momentarily sucked up,
But as a gentle murmur afar off
To soothe his sleep, and lull him in his dreams :
Who, while he boasts he has been building up

A palace for himself, in sooth has reared
What shall be first his prison, then his tomb.

And now how different my request and prayer:
Give me, I said, give me a heart that beats
In all its pulses with the common heart
Of humankind, which the same things make glad,
The same make sorry; give me grace enough
Even in their first beginnings to detect
Endeavours which the proud heart still is making
To cut itself from off the common root,
To set itself upon a private base,
To have wherein to glory of its own,
Beside the common glory of the kind;
Each such attempt in all its hateful pride
And meanness, give me to detect and loathe,—
A man, and claiming fellowship with men.

I said—Oh! lead me oftentimes to huts
“Where poor men lie,” that I may learn the stuff
Which life is made of, its true joys and griefs,
What things are daily bringing grief or joy
Unto the hearts of millions of my race.
Oh! lead me oft to huts where poor men lie,
Not in the hope fantastical to find
That Innocence, from palaces exiled,
Has taken refuge under sordid roofs;
But knowing what of evil, what of good

Is to be looked for there, and with firm faith,
That for the eye made wise by charity,
Much good will there as everywhere be found—
Patience by lengthened suffering not outworn,
Promptness to aid in one another's needs,
With self-denial, yea, heroic acts,
The more heroic, as not knowing themselves
For such at all,—and there not seldom too
Such thankfulness for small things, such content
Under the absence of most earthly good,
As might rebuke the pining discontent
That haunts too often rich men's palaces.
These schools of wisdom make me to frequent,
That I may learn what is not learned elsewhere ;
What is not to be learned by haunting long
The shady spaces of philosophy ;
Lore which even he will fail of, who beside
The streams of *heavenly* wisdom evermore
Is lingering, if he have no purpose there,
Except to gather for his own delight
The bright and beauteous flowers which there are
found.



LOVE.

SEEMETH not Love at times so occupied
 For thee, as though it cared for none beside?

To great and small things Love alike can reach,
 And cares for each as all, and all as each.

Love of my bonds partook, that I might be
 In turn partaker of its liberty.

Love found me in the wilderness, at cost
 Of painful quests, when I myself had lost.

Love on its shoulders joyfully did lay
 Me, weary with the greatness of my way.

Love lit the lamp, and swept the house all round,
 Till the lost money in the end was found.

Love the King's image there would stamp again,
 Effaced in part, and soiled with rust and stain.

'Twas Love, whose quick and ever-watchful eye
The wanderer's first step homeward did espy.

From its own wardrobe Love gave word to bring
What things I needed—shoes, and robe, and ring.

Love threatens that it may not strike, and still
Unheeded, strikes, that so it may not kill.

Love set me up on high ; when I grew vain
Of that my height, Love brought me down again.

Love often draws good for us from our ill,
Skilful to bless us even against our will.

The bond-servant of Love alone is free ;
All other freedom is but slavery.

How far above all price Love's costly wine,
Which can the meanest chalice make divine !

Fear this effects, that I do not the ill,
Love more—that I thereunto have no will.

Seeds burst not their dark cells without a throe ;
All birth is effort ; shall not Love's be so ?

Love weeps, but from its eyes these two things win
The largest tears—its own, its brother's sin.

The sweetness of the trodden camomile
Is Love's, which, injured, yields more sweets the while.

The heart of Love is with a thousand woes
Pierced, which secure indifference never knows.

The rose aye wears the silent thorn at heart,
And never yet might pain for Love depart.

Once o'er this painful earth a man did move,
The Man of griefs, because the Man of Love.

Hope, Faith, and Love, at God's high altar shine,
Lamp triple-branched, and fed with oil divine.

Two of these triple-lights shall once grow pale,
They burn without, but Love within the veil.

Nothing is true but Love, nor aught of worth ;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth.

O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware,
Love is the only coin which passes there.

The wine of Love can be obtained of none,
Save Him who trod the winepress all alone.

“REJOICE EVERMORE.”

I.

BUT how shall we be glad?
 We that are journeying through a vale of tears,
 Encompassed with a thousand woes and fears,
 How should we not be sad?

II.

Angels, that ever stand
 Within the presence-chamber, and there raise
 The never-interrupted hymn of praise,
 May welcome this command:

III.

Or they whose strife is o'er,
 Who all their weary length of life have trod,
 As pillars now within the temple of God,
 That shall go out no more.

IV.

But we who wander here,
 We that are exiled in this gloomy place,
 Still doomed to water earth's unthankful face
 With many a bitter tear—

V.

Bid us lament and mourn,
 Bid us that we go mourning all the day,
 And we will find it easy to obey,
 Of our best things forlorn ;

VI.

But not that we be glad ;
 If it be true the mourners are the blest,
 Oh leave us in a world of sin, unrest,
 And trouble, to be sad.

VII.

I spake, and thought to weep,—
 For sin and sorrow, suffering and crime,
 That fill the world, all mine appointed time
 A settled grief to keep.

VIII.

When lo ! as day from night,
 As day from out the womb of night forlorn,
 So from that sorrow was that gladness born,
 Even in mine own despite.

IX.

Yet was not that by this
 Excluded, at the coming of that joy
 Fled not that grief, nor did that grief destroy
 The newly-risen bliss :

X.

But side by side they flow,
Two fountains flowing from one smitten heart,
And ofttimes scarcely to be known apart—
That gladness and that woe ;

XI.

Two fountains from one source,
Or which from two such neighbouring sources run,
That aye for him who shall unseal the one,
The other flows perforce.

XII.

And both are sweet and calm,
Fair flowers upon the banks of either blow,
Both fertilize the soil, and where they flow
Shed round them holy balm.



SONNET.

OUR course is onward, onward into light :
What though the darkness gathereth amain,
Yet to return or tarry both are vain.
How tarry, when around us is thick night ?
Whither return ? what flower yet ever might,
In days of gloom and cold and stormy rain,
Enclose itself in its green bud again,
Hiding from wrath of tempest out of sight ?
Courage—we travel through a darksome cave ;
But still as nearer to the light we draw,
Fresh gales will reach us from the upper air,
And wholesome dews of heaven our foreheads lave,
The darkness lighten more, till full of awe
We stand in the open sunshine unaware.

SONNET.

THOU cam'st not to thy place by accident,
It is the very place God meant for thee ;
And shouldst thou there small scope for action see,
Do not for this give room to discontent ;
Nor let the time thou owest to God be spent
In idly dreaming how thou mightest be,
In what concerns thy spiritual life, more free
From outward hindrance or impediment.
For presently this hindrance thou shalt find
That without which all goodness were a task
So slight, that Virtue never could grow strong :
And wouldst thou do one duty to His mind,
The Imposer's—over-burdened thou shalt ask,
And own thy need of grace to help, ere long.

SONNET.

WHAT good soever in thy heart or mind
Doth yet no higher source nor fountain own
Than thine own self, nor bow to other throne,
Suspect and fear; although therein thou find
High purpose to go forth and bless thy kind,
Or in the awful temple of thy soul
To worship what is loveliest, and control
The ill within, and by strong laws to bind.
Good is of God—and none is therefore sure,
Which has dared wander from its source away:
Laws without sanction will not long endure,
Love will grow faint and fainter day by day,
And Beauty from the straight path will allure,
And weakening first, will afterwards betray.

SONNET.

A WRETCHED thing it were, to have our heart
Like a broad highway or a populous street,
Where every idle thought has leave to meet,
Pause, or pass on as in an open mart :
Or like some road-side pool, which no nice art
Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,
Till of the heavens it can give back no part.
But keep thou thine a holy solitude,
For He who would walk there, would walk alone ;
He who would drink there, must be first endued
With single right to call that stream his own ;
Keep thou thine heart, close-fastened, unrevealed,
A fenced garden and a fountain sealed.

SONNET.

WHAT is the greatness of a fallen king?
This—that his fall avails not to abate
His spirit to a level with his fate,
Or inward fall along with it to bring;
That he disdains to stoop his former wing,
But keeps in exile and in want the law
Of kingship yet, and counts it scorn to draw
Comfort indign from any meaner thing.
Soul, that art fallen from thine ancient place,
Mayest thou in this mean world find nothing great,
Nor aught that shall the memories efface
Of that true greatness which was once thine own,
As knowing thou must keep thy kingly state,
If thou wouldst reascend thy kingly throne.

SONNET.

TO feel that we are homeless exiles here,
To listen to the world's discordant tone,
As to a private discord of our own,
To know that we are fallen from a sphere
Of higher being, pure, serene, and clear,
Into the darkness of this dim estate—
This thought may sometimes make us desolate,
For this we may shed many a secret tear.
But to mistake our dungeon for a throne,
Our place of exile for our native land,
To hear no discords in the universe,
To find no matter over which to groan,
This (oh ! that men would rightly understand !)
This seeming better, were indeed far worse.

THE HERRING-FISHERS OF LOCHFYNE.

DEEM not these fishers idle, though by day
You hear the snatches of their lazy song,
And see them listlessly the sunlight long
Strew the curved beach of this indented bay :
So deemed I, till I viewed their trim array
Of boats last night,—a busy armament,
With sails as dark as ever Theseus bent
Upon his fatal rigging, take their way.
Rising betimes, I could not choose but look
For their return, and when along the lake
The morning mists were curling, saw them make
Homeward, returning toward their quiet nook,
With draggled nets down hanging to the tide,
Weary, and leaning o'er their vessels' side.

IN THE ISLE OF MULL.

THE clouds are gathering in their western dome,
Deep-drenched with sunlight, as a fleece with dew,
While I with baffled effort still pursue
And track these waters toward their mountain home,
In vain—though cataract, and mimic foam,
And island-spots, round which the streamlet threw
Its sister arms, which joyed to meet anew,
Have lured me on, and won me still to roam;
Till now, coy nymph, unseen thy waters pass,
Or faintly struggle thro' the twinkling grass—
And I, thy founts unvisited, return.
Is it that thou art revelling with thy peers?
Or dost thou feed a solitary urn,
Else unreplenished, with thine own sad tears?

THE SAME.

SWEET Water-nymph, more shy than Arethuse,
Why wilt thou hide from me thy green retreat,
Where duly thou with silver-sandalled feet,
And every Naiad, her green locks profuse,
Welcome with dance sad evening, or unloose,
To share your revel, an oak-cinctured throng,
Oread and Dryad, who the daylight long
By rock, or cave, or antique forest, use
To shun the Wood-god and his rabble bold?
Such comes not now, or who with impious strife
Would seek to untenant meadow, stream, and plain
Of that indwelling power, which is the life
And which sustaineth each, which poets old
As god and goddess thus have loved to feign.

AT SEA.

THE sea is like a mirror far and near,
And ours a prosperous voyage, safe from harms ;
Yet may the thought that everlasting arms
Are round us and about us, be as dear
Now when no sight of danger doth appear,
As though our vessel did its blind way urge
'Mid the long weltering of the dreariest surge,
Thro' which a perishing bark did ever steer.
Lord of the calm and tempest, be it ours,
Poor mariners ! to pay due vows to Thee,
Though not a cloud on all the horizon lowers
Of all our life ; for even this way shall we
Have greater boldness toward Thee, when indeed
The storm is up, and there is earnest need.

AN EVENING IN FRANCE.

ONE star is shining in the crimson eve,
 And the thin texture of the faint blue sky
 Above is like a veil intensely drawn ;
 Upon the spirit with a solemn weight
 The marvel and the mystery of eve
 Is lying, as all holy thoughts and calm,
 By the vain stir and tumult of the day
 Chased far away, come back on tranquil wing,
 Like doves returning to their noted haunts.
 It is the solemn even-tide—the hour
 Of holy musings, and to us no less
 Of sweet refreshment for the bodily frame
 Than for the spirit, harassed both and worn
 With a long day of travel ; and methinks
 It must have been an evening such as this,
 After a day of toilsome journeyings o'er,
 When looking out on Tiber, as we now
 Look out on this fair river flowing by,
 Together sat the saintly Monica,*

* See Augustine's *Confessions*, b. 9. c. 10.

And with her, given unto her prayers, that son,
The turbid stream of whose tumultuous youth
Now first was running clear and bright and smooth ;
And solitary sitting in the niche
Of a deep window held delightful talk—
Such as they never could have known before,
While a deep chasm, deeper than natural love
Could e'er bridge over, lay betwixt their souls—
Of what must be the glorious life in heaven.
And looking forth on meadow, stream, and sky,
And on the golden west, that richest glow
Of sunset to the uncreated light,
Which must invest for ever those bright worlds,
Seemed darkness, and the best that earth can give,
Its noblest pleasures, they with one consent
Counted as vile, nor once to be compared—
Oh! rather say not worthy to be named
With what is to be looked for there ; and thus
Leaving behind them all things which are seen,
By many a stately stair they did ascend
Above the earth and all created things,
The sun and starry heavens—yea, and above
The mind of man, until they did attain
Where light no shadow has, and life no death,
Where past or future are not, nor can be,
But an eternal present, and the Lamb
His people feeds from indeficient streams.
Then pausing for a moment, to drink in

That river of delights, at length they cried,—
 Oh! to be thus for ever, and to hear
 Thus in the silence of the lower world,
 And in the silence of all thoughts that keep
 Vain stir within, unutterable words,
 And with the splendour of his majesty,
 Whose seat is in the middle of the throne,
 Thus to be fed for ever—this must be
 The beatific vision, the third heaven.
 What we have for these passing moments known,
 To know the same for ever—this would be
 That life whereof even now we held debate:
 When will it be? oh! when?

These things they said,
 And for a season breathed immortal air,
 But then perforce returned to earth again,
 To this inferior region, while the air
 Upon those highest summits is too fine
 For our long breathing, while we yet have on
 Our gross investiture of mortal weeds.
 Yet not for nothing had their spirits flown
 To those high regions, bringing back at once
 A reconcilment with the mean things here,
 And a more earnest longing for what there
 Of nobler was by partial glimpses thus
 Seen thro' the crannies of the prison house.
 And she, that mother—such entire content

Possessed her bosom, and her Lord had filled
The orb of her desires so round and full,
Had answered all her prayers for her lost son
With such an overmeasure of his grace,
She had no more to ask, and did not know
Why she should tarry any longer here,
Nor what she did on earth. Thus then she felt,
And to these thoughts which overflowed her heart
Gave thankful utterance meet; nor many days
After this vision and foretaste of joy,
Inherited the substance of the things
Which she had seen, and entered into peace.



SONNET.

TO MY CHILD—A FELLOW-TRAVELLER.

HOW of a sudden Sleep has laid on thee
His heavy hand—on thee, for ever blest,
Sleeping or waking, stirring or at rest :
But now thou wert exulting merrily,
And in the very middle of thy glee
Thy head thou layedst on thy father's breast,
There seeming to have found a calmer nest
Than one would think might in this loud world be.
There were no need to fear thy wayward mood,
Striving in years to come against the good
He would impart, if thou couldst call to mind
How many times, the while with anxious care
He sought to screen thee from the chilling air,
Thus on his bosom thou hast slept reclined.

THE DESCENT OF THE RHONE.

OFTEN when my thought has been
 Pondering on what sight once seen,
 Which of all the glorious shows
 Nature can at will disclose,
 Once beholden would supply
 To the spirit's inward eye,
 Most unfailing treasures, which
 Would the memory most enrich
 With its spectacles of power—
 It has seen no ampler dower
 Of her sights and solemn shows
 She to any to disclose
 Than to them, who night and day—
 An illimitable way—
 Should sail down some mighty river,
 Sailing as to sail for ever.

Lo! my wish is almost won,
 Broadly flows the stately Rhone,
 And we loosen from the shore
 Our light piunace, long before

The young East in gorgeous state
Has unlocked his ruby gate,
And our voyage is not done
At the sinking of the sun ;
But for us the azure Night
Feeds her golden flocks with light :
All the changeful hues of heaven,
Sights and sounds of morn and even,
All unto our eyes are given.
In our view the day is born ;
First the stars of lustre shorn,
Until Hesper, he who last
Kept his splendour, now fades fast ;
O'er the heaven faint bloom is spread,
And the clouds blush deeper red,
Till from them the stream below
Catches the same roseate glow ;
Lightens the pale east to gold,
And the west is with the fold
Of the mantle of dim night
Scarcely darkened or less bright—
Till, his way prepared, at length
Rising up in golden strength,
Tramples the victorious sun
The dying stars out, one by one.

Fairer scene the opening eye
Of the day can scarce descry,

Fairer sight he looks not on
Than the pleasant banks of Rhone ;
Where in terraces and ranks,
On those undulating banks,
Rise by many a hilly stair
Sloping tiers of vines, where'er
From the steep and stony soil
Has been won by careful toil,
And with long laborious pains
Fenced against the washing rains,
Fenced and anxiously walled round,
Some small patch of garden ground.
Higher still some place of power,
Or a solitary tower,
Ruined now, is looking down
On the quiet little town
In a sheltered glen beneath,
Where the smoke's unbroken wreath,
Mounting in the windless air,
Rests, dissolving slowly there,
O'er the housetops like a cloud,
Or a thinnest vaporous shroud.

Morn has been, and lo ! how soon
Has arrived the middle noon,
And the broad sun's rays do rest
On some naked mountain's breast,

Where alone relieve the eye
Massive shadows, as they lie
In the hollows motionless ;
Still our boat doth onward press :
Now a peaceful current wide
Bears it on an ample tide,
Now the hills retire, and then
Their broad fronts advance again,
Till the rocks have closed us round,
And would seem our course to bound,
But anon a path appears,
And our vessel onward steers,
Darting rapidly between
Narrow walls of a ravine.

Morn has been and noon—and now
Evening falls about our prow :
'Mid the clouds that kindling won
Light and fire from him, the Sun
For a moment's space was lying,
Phoenix in his own flames dying !
And a sunken splendour still
Burns behind the western hill ;
Lo ! the starry troop again
Gather on the ethereal plain ;
Even now and there were none,
And a moment since but one ;

And anon we lift our head,
And all heaven is overspread
With a still assembling crowd,
With a silent multitude—
Venus, first and brightest set
In the night's pale coronet,
Armed Orion's belted pride,
And the Seven that by the side
Of the Titan nightly weave
Dances in the mystic eve,
Sisters linked in love and light.
'Twere in truth a solemn sight,
Were we sailing now as they,
Who upon their western way
To the isles of spice and gold,
Nightly watching, might behold
These our constellations dip,
And the great sign of the Ship
Rise upon the other hand,
With the Cross, still seen to stand
In the vault of heaven upright,
At the middle hour of night—
Or with them whose keels first prest
The huge rivers of the west,
Who the first with bold intent
Down the Orellana went,*

* See Garcilasso's Conquest of Peru.

Or a dangerous progress won
On the mighty Amazon,
By whose ocean streams they told
Of the warrior-maidens bold.

But the Fancy may not roam ;
Thou wilt keep it nearer home,
Friend, of earthly friends the best,
Who on this fair river's breast
Saiest with me fleet and fast,
As the unremitting blast
With a steady breath and strong
Urges our light boat along.
We this day have found delight
In each pleasant sound and sight
Of this river bright and fair,
And in things which flowing are
Like a stream, yet without blame
These my passing song may claim,
Or thy hearing may beguile,
If we not forget the while,
That we are from childhood's morn
On a mightier river borne,
Which is rolling evermore
To a sea without a shore,
Life the river, and the sea
That we seek—eternity.

We may sometimes sport and play,
And in thought keep holiday,
So we may ever own a law,
Living in habitual awe,
And beneath the constant stress
Of a solemn thoughtfulness,
Weighing whither this life tends,
For what high and holy ends
It was lent us, whence it flows,
And its current whither goes.

There is ample matter here
For as much of thought and fear
As will solemnize our souls—
Thought of how this river rolls
Over millions wrecked before
They could reach that happy shore,
Where we have not anchored yet;
Of the dangers which beset
Our own way, of hidden shoal,
Waters smoothest where they roll
Over point of sunken rock,
Treachorous calm, and sudden shock
Of the storm, which can assail
No boat than ours more weak or frail—
Matter not alone of sadness,
But no less of thankful gladness,

That, whichever way we turn,
There are steady lights that burn
On the shore, and lamps of love
In the gloomiest sky above,
Which will guide our bark aright
Thro' the darkness of our night—
Many a fixed unblinking star
Unto them that wandering are
Thro' this blindly-weltering sea—
Themes of high and thoughtful glee,
When we think we are not left,
Of all solaces bereft,
Each to hold, companionless,
Thro' a watery wilderness,
Unaccompanied our way,
As we can; this I may say,
Whatsoever else betide,
With thee sitting at my side,
And this happy cherub sweet,
Playing, laughing at my feet.



ON THE PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

OF BENVENUTO CELLINI, AT FLORENCE.

I N what fierce spasms upgathered, on the plain
Medusa's headless corpse has quivering sunk,
While all the limbs of that undying trunk
To their extremest joint with torture strain ;
But the calm visage has resumed again
Its beauty,—the orb'd eyelids are let down,
As though a living sleep might once more crown
Their placid circlets, guiltless of all pain.
And thou—is thine the spirit's swift recoil,
Which follows every deed of acted wrath,
That holding in thine hand this lovely spoil,
Thou dost not triumph, feeling that the breath
Of life is sacred, whether it in form,
Loathly or beauteous, man or beast or worm ?

LINES

WRITTEN AT THE VILLAGE OF PASSIGNANO, ON THE LAKE OF
THRASYMENE.

THE mountains stand about the quiet lake,
 That not a breath its azure calm may break ;
 No leaf of these sere olive-trees is stirred,
 In the near silence far-off' sounds are heard ;
 The tiny bat is flitting overhead,
 The hawthorn doth its richest odours shed
 Into the dewy air ; and over all
 Veil after veil the evening shadows fall,
 Withdrawing one by one each glimmering height,
 The far, and then the nearer, from our sight—
 No sign surviving in this tranquil scene,
 That strife and savage tumult here have been.

But if the pilgrim to the latest plain
 Of carnage, where the blood like summer rain
 Fell but the other day—if in his mind
 He marvels much and oftentimes to find
 With what success has Nature each sad trace
 Of man's red footmarks laboured to efface—

What wonder, if this spot we tread appears
Guiltless of strife, when now two thousand years
Of daily reparation have gone by,
Since it resumed its own tranquillity.
This calm has nothing strange, yet not the less
This holy evening's solemn quietness,
The perfect beauty of this windless lake,
This stillness which no harsher murmurs break
Than the frogs croaking from the distant sedge,
These vineyards drest unto the water's edge,
This hind that homeward driving the slow steer
Tells how man's daily work goes forward here,
Have each a power upon me, while I drink
The influence of the placid time, and think
How gladly that sweet Mother once again
Resumes her sceptre and benignant reign,
But for a few short instants scared away
By the mad game, the cruel impious fray
Of her distempered children—how comes back,
And leads them in the customary track
Of blessing once again; to order brings
Anew the dislocated frame of things,
And covers up, and out of sight conceals
What they have wrought of ill, or gently heals.

TO ENGLAND.

WRITTEN AFTER A VISIT TO SORRENTO.

THEY are but selfish visions at the best,
Which tempt us to desire that we were free
From the dear ties that bind us unto thee,
That so we might take up our lasting rest,
Where some delightful spot, some hidden nest
In brighter lands has pleased our phantasy :
And might such vows at once accomplished be,
We should not in the accomplishment be blest,
But oh! most miserable, if it be true
Peace only waits upon us, while we do
Heaven's work and will : for what is it we ask,
When we would fain have leave to linger here,
But to abandon our appointed task,
Our place of duty and our natural sphere ?

SORRENTO.

A FRAGMENT.

FAIR fountains of man's art were there,
 Streams trickling down from stair to stair,
 And as, with lapse just audible,
 From font to font the waters fell,
 Around the lighted bubbles flew,
 Starring the leaves with points like dew :
 For tender myrtles near were set,
 That in this happy clime had met,
 Unhoused the winter's deadliest air ;
 And the pale lemon-flower was there,
 And the dark glittering leaves behind
 The fruit with its discoloured rind :
 While the long groves of orange made
 A screen sun-proof, an ample shade,
 With spacious avenues below,
 Where one might wander to and fro,
 Watching the little runnels creep
 Round every root, and duly steep
 With freshness all the thirsty soil ;
 Or lift an hand for easiest spoil,
 And of the golden fruitage share,
 Cool-hanging in the morning air.

VESUVIUS.

(AS SEEN FROM CAPRI.)

A WREATH of light blue vapour, pure and rare,
Mounts, scarcely seen against the bluer sky,
In quiet adoration, silently—
Till the faint currents of the upper air
Dislimn it, and it forms, dissolving there,
The dome, as of a palace, hung on high
Over the mountain; underneath it lie
Vineyards and bays and cities white and fair.
Might we not think this beauty would engage
All living things unto one pure delight?
Oh vain belief!—for here, our records tell,
Rome's understanding tyrant from men's sight
Hid, as within a guilty citadel,
The shame of his dishonourable age.

VESUVIUS.

AS when unto a mother, having chid
Her child in anger, there have straight ensued
Repentings for her quick and angry mood,
Till she would fain see all its traces hid
Quite out of sight—even so has Nature bid
Fair flowers, that on the scarred earth she has strewed,
To blossom, and called up the taller wood
To cover what she ruined and undid.
Oh! and her mood of anger did not last
More than an instant, but her work of peace,
Restoring and repairing, comforting
The earth, her stricken child, will never cease;
For that was her strange work, and quickly past,
To this her genial toil no end the years shall bring.

THE SAME.

CONTINUED.

THAT her destroying fury was with noise
And sudden uproar ; but far otherwise,
With silent and with secret ministries,
Her skill of renovation she employs :
For Nature, only loud when she destroys,
Is silent when she fashions : she will crowd
The work of her destruction, transient, loud,
Into an hour, and then long peace enjoys.
Yea, every power that fashions and upholds
Works silently ; all things whose life is sure,
Their life is calm ; silent the light that moulds
And colours all things ; and without debate
The stars, which are for ever to endure,
Assume their thrones and their unquestioned state.

LINES

WRITTEN AFTER HEARING SOME BEAUTIFUL SINGING IN A
CONVENT CHURCH AT ROME.

SWEET voices ! seldom mortal ear
 Strains of such potency might hear ;
 My soul that listened seemed quite gone,
 Dissolved in sweetness, and anon
 I was borne upward, till I trod
 Among the hierarchy of God.
 And when they ceased, as time must bring
 An end to every sweetest thing,
 With what reluctancy came back
 My spirits to their wonted track,
 And how I loathed the common life,
 The daily and recurring strife
 With petty sins, the lowly road,
 And being's ordinary load.
 — Why, after such a solemn mood
 Should any meaner thought intrude ?
 Why will not heaven hereafter give,
 That we for evermore may live

Thus at our spirit's topmost bent ?
So asked I in my discontent.

But give me, Lord, a wiser heart ;
These seasons come, and they depart,
These seasons, and those higher still,
When we are given to have our fill
Of strength and life and joy with Thee,
And brightness of thy face to see.
They come, or we could never guess
Of heaven's sublimer blessedness ;
They come, to be our strength and cheer
In other times, in doubt or fear,
Or should our solitary way
Lie thro' the desert many a day.
They go, they leave us blank and dead,
That we may learn, when they are fled,
We are but vapours which have won
A moment's brightness from the sun,
And which it may at pleasure fill
With splendour, or unclothe at will.
Well for us they do not abide,
Or we should lose ourselves in pride,
And be as angels—but as they
Who on the battlements of day
Walked, gazing on their power and might,
Till they grew giddy in their height.

Then welcome every nobler time,
When out of reach of earth's dull chime
'Tis ours to drink with purg'd ears
The music of the solemn spheres,
Or in the desert to have sight
Of those enchanted cities bright,
Which sensual eye can never see :
Thrice welcome may such seasons be .
But welcome too the common way,
The lowly duties of the day,
And all which makes and keeps us low,
Which teaches us ourselves to know,
That we who do our lineage high
Draw from beyond the starry sky,
Are yet upon the other side
To earth and to its dust allied.



A VISIT TO TUSCULUM.

A SOLEMN thing it is, and full of awe,
 Wandering long time among the lonely hills,
 To issue on a sudden 'mid the wrecks
 Of some fall'n city, as might seem a coast
 From which the tide of life has ebb'd away,
 Leaving bare sea-marks only :—such there lie
 Among the Alban mountains—Tusculum,
 Or Palestrina with Cyclopean walls
 Enormous : and this solemn awe we felt
 And knew this morning, when we stood among
 What of the first-named city yet survives.

For we had wandered long among those hills,
 Watching the white goats on precipitous heights,
 Half-hid among the bushes, or their young
 Tending new-yeaned : and we had paused to hear
 The deep-toned music of the convent bells,
 And wound thro' many a verdant forest path,
 Gathering the crocus and anemone,
 With that fresh gladness, which when flowers are new

In the first spring, they bring us, till at last
We issued out upon an eminence,
Commanding prospect large on every side,—
But largest where the world's great city lay,
Whose features, undistinguishable now,
Allowed no recognition, save where the eye
Could mark the white front of the Lateran
Facing this way, or rested on the dome,
The broad stupendous dome, high over all.
And as a sea around an island's roots
Spreads, so the level campaign every way
Stretched round the city, level all, and green
With the new vegetation of the spring;
Nor by the summer ardours scorched as yet,
Which shot from southern suns, too soon dry up
The beauty and the freshness of the plains;
While to the right the ridge of Apennine,
Its higher farther summits all snow-crowned,
Rose, with white clouds above them, as might seem
Another range of more aërial hills.

These things were at a distance, but more near
And at our feet signs of the tide of life,
That once was here, and now had ebbed away—
Pavements entire, without one stone displaced,
Where yet there had not rolled a chariot wheel
For many hundred years; rich cornices,
Elaborate friezes of rare workmanship,

And broken shafts of columns, that along
This highway side lay prone ; vaults that were rooms,
And hollowed from the turf, and cased in stone,
Seats and gradations of a theatre,
Which emptied of its population now
Shall never be refilled : and all these things,
Memorials of the busy life of man,
Or of his ample means for pomp and pride,
Scattered among the solitary hills,
And lying open to the sun and showers,
And only visited at intervals
By wandering herds, or pilgrims like ourselves
From distant lands ; with now no signs of life,
Save where the goldfinch built his shallow nest
'Mid the low bushes, or where timidly
The rapid lizard glanced between the stones—
All saying that the fashion of this world
Passes away : that not Philosophy
Nor Eloquence can guard their dearest haunts
From the rude touch of desecrating time.
What marvel, when the very fanes of God,
The outward temples of the Holy One,
Claim no exemption from the general doom,
But lie in ruinous heaps ; when nothing stands,
Nor may endure to the end, except alone
The spiritual temple built with living stones ?

ON A PICTURE OF THE ASSUMPTION,

BY MURILLO.

WITH what calm power thou risest on the wind—
 Mak'st thou a pinion of those locks unshorn?
 Or of that dark blue robe which floats behind
 In ample folds? or art thou cloud-upborne?

A crescent moon is bent beneath thy feet,
 Above the heavens expand, and tier o'er tier
 With heavenly garlands thy advance to greet,
 The cloudy throng of cherubim appear.

There is a glory round thee, and mine eyes
 Are dazzled, for I know not whence it came,
 Since never in the light of western skies
 The island-clouds burned with so pure a flame:

Nor were those flowers of our dull common mould,
 But nurtured on some amaranthine bed,
 Nearer the sun, remote from storms and cold,
 By purer dews and warmer breezes fed.

Well may we be perplexed and sadly wrought,
That we can guess so ill what dreams were thine,
Ere from the chambers of thy silent thought
That face looked out on thee, Painter divine.

What innocence, what love, what loveliness.
What purity must have familiar been
Unto thy soul, before it could express
The holy beauty in that visage seen.

And so, if we would understand thee right,
And the diviner portion of thine art,
We must exalt our spirits to thine height,
Nor wilt thou else the mystery impart.



A LEGEND OF ALHAMBRA.

O HYMNED in many a poet's strain,
 Alhambra, by enchanter's hand
 Exalted on this throne of Spain,
 A marvel of the land.

The last of thy imperial race,
 Alhambra, when he overstept
 Thy portal's threshold, turned his face—
 He turned his face and wept.

In sooth it was a thing to weep,
 If then, as now, the level plain
 Beneath was spreading like the deep,
 The broad unruffled main :

If, like a watch-tower of the sun,
 Above the Alpujarras rose,
 Streaked, when the dying day was done,
 With evening's roseate snows.

Thy founts yet make a pleasant sound,
And the twelve lions couchant yet,
Sustain their ponderous burthen, round
The marble basin set.

But never, when the moon is bright
O'er hill and golden-sanded stream,
And thy square turrets in the light
And taper columns gleam,

Will village maiden dare to fill
Her pitcher from that basin wide,
But rather seeks a niggard rill
Far down the steep hill-side !

It was an Andalusian maid,
With rose and pink-enwoven hair,
Who told me what the fear that stayed
Their footsteps from that stair :

How, rising from that watery floor,
A Moorish maiden, in the gleam
Of the wan moonlight, stands before
The stirrer of the stream :

And mournfully she begs the grace,
That they would speak the words divine,
And sprinkling water in her face,
Would make the sacred sign.

And whosoe'er will grant this boon,
Returning with the morrow's light,
Shall find the fountain-pavement strewn
With gold and jewels bright :

A regal gift ! for once, they say,
Her father ruled this broad domain,
The last who kept beneath his sway
This pleasant place of Spain.

It surely is a fearful doom,
That one so beautiful should have
No present quiet in her tomb,
No hope beyond the grave.

It must be that some amulet
Doth make all human pity vain,
Or that upon her brow is set
The silent seal of pain,

Which none can meet—else long ago,
Since many gentle hearts are there,
Some spirit, touched by joy or woe,
Had answered to her prayer.

But so it is, that till this hour
That mournful child beneath the moon
Still rises from her watery bower,
To urge this simple boon—

To beg, as all have need of grace,
That they would speak the words divine,
And, sprinkling water in her face,
Would make the sacred sign.



RECOLLECTIONS OF BURGOS.

MOST like some agèd king it seemed to me,
 Who had survived his old regality,
 Poor and deposed, but keeping still his state
 In all he had before of truly great ;
 With no vain wishes and no vain regret,
 But his enforcèd leisure soothing yet
 With meditation calm and books and prayer.
 For all was sober and majestic there—
 The old Castilian, with close finger tips
 Pressing his folded mantle to his lips ;
 The dim cathedral's cross-surmounted pile,
 With carved recess, and cool and shadowy aisle,
 The walks of poplar by the river's side,
 That wound by many a straggling channel wide ;
 And seats of stone, where one might sit and weave
 Visions, till well-nigh tempted to believe
 That life had few things better to be done,
 And many worse, than sitting in the sun
 To lose the hours, and wilfully to dim
 Our half-shut eyes, and veil them till might swim

The pageant by us, smoothly as the stream
And unremembered pageant of a dream.

A castle crowned a neighbouring hillock's crest,
But now the moat was level with the rest ;
And all was fallen of this place of power,
All heaped with formless stone, save one round tower,
And here and there a gateway low and old,
Figured with antique shape of warrior bold.
And then behind this eminence the sun
Would drop serenely, long ere day was done ;
And one who climbed that height, might see again
A second setting o'er the fertile plain
Beyond the town, and glittering in his beam,
Wind far away that poplar-skirted stream.



A LEGEND OF TOLEDO.

FAR down below the Christian captives pine
 In dungeon depths, and whoso dares to bring
 Assuagements for their wounds, or food, or wine,
 Must brave the fiercest vengeance of the king.

Richly is spread above the royal board,
 The palace windows blaze with festal light,
 And many a lady, many a Moorish lord,
 The morning's triumph celebrate at night.

But could they all without remorse or fear
 Feast, as although on earth were to be found
 No hunger to appease, no want to cheer,
 No dark and hopeless places underground?

Neither of knight or captain is it told
 That he was shamed in heart to do this thing;
 One only was there, pitiful and bold—
 A Lady, daughter of this impious king.

Three times the beauteous messenger of grace,
She passing to the dungeon from the hall,
Shone like an angel in that gloomy place,
And brought relief to some, and hope to all.

But envious eyes were on her, and her sire,
Upon her way encountering unawares
Her passing thither the fourth time, in ire
Bid shew what hidden in her lap she bears.

Thus, willing to condemn her in the sight
Of all, he spake : she tremblingly obeyed,
When, if old legends speak the truth aright,
Flowers filled her lap,—these only it displayed :

Roses and pinks and lilies there were found,
Marvel to her and them who saw the same ;
All sweetest flowers that grow from earthly ground,
But nothing that might bring rebuke or blame.



Whate'er is sown in love—the lowliest deed—
Shall bloom and be a flower in Paradise ;
Yet springs not often from that precious seed
Harvest so prompt as this before our eyes,

But afterward how rescued from the court,
And from a faith which cannot save or bless,
To far-off hermitage she made resort,
A saintly dweller in the wilderness,

Her story, pictured on a cloister wall
In old Toledo, gives us not to know :
This only there appears, and this is all
We need to ask, whether of weal or woe—

That unto her who was in mercy bold,
Was given the knowledge of a faith divine :
For there in death we see her, and her hold
Is on the Cross, salvation's bless'd sign.



GIBRALTAR.

ENGLAND, we love thee better than we know—
And this I learned, when after wanderings long
'Mid people of another stock and tongue,
I heard again thy martial music blow,
And saw thy gallant children to and fro
Pace, keeping ward at one of those huge gates,
Which like twin giants watch the Herculean straits :
When first I came in sight of that brave show,
It made my very heart within me dance,
To think that thou thy proud foot shouldst advance
Forward so far into the mighty sea ;
Joy was it and exultation to behold
Thine ancient standard's rich emblazonry,
A glorious picture by the wind unrolled.

AN INCIDENT VERSIFIED.

FAR in the south there is a jutting ledge
 Of rocks, scarce peering o'er the water's edge,
 Where earliest come the fresh Atlantic gales,
 That in their course have filled a thousand sails,
 And brushed for leagues and leagues the Atlantic deep,
 Till now they make the nimble spirit leap
 Beneath their lifeful and renewing breath,
 And stir it like the ocean depths beneath.

Two that were strangers to that sunny land,
 And to each other, met upon this strand ;
 One seemed to keep so slight a hold of life,
 That when he willed, without the spirit's strife,
 He might let go—a flower upon a ledge
 Of verdant meadow by a river's edge,
 Which ever loosens with its treacherous flow
 In gradual lapse the moistened soil below ;
 While to the last in beauty and in bloom
 That flower is scattering incense o'er its tomb,
 And with the dews upon it, and the breath
 Of the fresh morning round it, sinks to death.

They met the following day, and many more
They paced together this low ridge of shore,
Till one fair eve, the other with intent
To lure him out, unto his chamber went ;
But straight retired again with noiseless pace,
For with a subtle gauze flung o'er his face
Upon his bed he lay, serene and still
And quiet, even as one who takes his fill
Of a delight he does not fear to lose.
So blest he seemed, the other could not choose
To wake him, but went down the narrow stair ;
And when he met an aged attendant there,
She ceased her work to tell him, when he said,
Her patient then on happy slumber fed,
But that anon he would return once more,—
Her inmate had expired an hour before.

I know not by what chance he thus was thrown
On a far shore, untended and alone,
To live or die ; for as I after learned,
There were in England many hearts that yearned
To know his safety, and such tears were shed
For him as grace the living and the dead.

ON LEAVING ROME.

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND RESIDING IN THAT CITY.

O LATELY written in the roll of friends,
 O written late, not last—three pleasant months
 Under the shadow of the Capitol,
 A pleasant time, made pleasanter by thee,
 It has been mine to pass—three months of spring,
 Which pleasant in themselves and for thy sake,
 Had yet this higher, that they stirred in the heart
 The motions of continual thankfulness
 To me, considering by what gracious paths
 I had been guided, by what paths of love,
 Since I was last a dweller in these gates.
 That meditation could not prove to me
 But as a spring that ever bubbles up,
 Sparkling in the face of heaven, while every day
 Reminded me how little gladness then
 I gathered from these things, but now how much.

For though not then indifferent to me
 Nature or Art, yea rather though from these
 I drew whatever lightened for a while

Life's burden and intolerable load ;
Yet seldom could I gather heart enough,
With all their marvels round me, to go forth
In quest of any. But some lonely spot,
Some ridge of ruin fringed with cypresses,
Such as have everywhere loved well to make
Their chosen home above all other trees,
'Mid the fall'n structures of Imperial Rome,
Me did such haunt please better, or I loved,
With others whom a like disquietude,
At the like crisis of their lives, now kept
Restless, with them to question to and fro
And to debate the evil of the world,
As though we bore no portion of that ill,
As though with subtle phrases we could spin
A woof to screen us from its undelight :
Sometimes prolonging far into the night
Such talk, as loth to separate, and find
Each in its solitude how vain are words,
When that they have opposed to them is more.

I would not live that time again for worlds,
Full as it was of long and weary days,
Full of rebellious askings, for what end,
And by what power, without our own consent,
Caught in this snare of life we know not how,
We were placed here, to suffer and to sin,
To be in misery and know not why.

Yet so it was with me, a sojourner,
Five years ago, beneath these mouldering walls,
As I am now ; and, trusted friend, to thee
I have not doubted to reveal my soul,
For thou hast known, if I may read aright
The pages of thy past existence, thou
Hast known the dreary sickness of the soul,
That falls upon us in our lonely youth,
The fear of all bright visions leaving us,
The sense of emptiness, without the sense
Of an abiding fulness anywhere ;
When all the generations of mankind,
With all their purposes, their hopes and fears,
Seem nothing truer than those wandering shapes
Cast by a trick of light upon a wall,
And nothing different from these, except
In their capacity for suffering ;—
That fearful moment of our youth, when first
We have the sense of sin, and none as yet
Of expiation. Our own life seemed then
But as an arrow flying in the dark
Without an aim, a most unwelcome gift,
Which we might not put by. But now, what God
Intended as a blessing and a boon
We have received as such, and we can say
A solemn yet a joyful thing is life,
Which, being full of duties, is for this
Of gladness full, and full of lofty hopes.

And He has taught us what reply to make
Or secretly in spirit, or in words,
If there be need, when sorrowing men complain
The fair illusions of their youth depart,
All things are going from them, and to-day
Is emptier of delights than yesterday,
Even as to-morrow will be barer yet ;
We have been taught to feel this need not be,
This is not life's inevitable law,—
But that the gladness we are called to know,
Is an increasing gladness, that the soil
Of the human heart, tilled rightly, will become
Richer and deeper, fitter to bear fruit
Of an immortal growth, from day to day,
Fruit of love, life, and indeficient joy.

Oh! not for baneful self-complacency,
Not for the setting up our present selves
To triumph o'er our past (worst pride of all),
May we compare this present with that past ;
But to provoke renewed acknowledgments,
But to incite unto an earnest hope
For all our brethren. And how should I fear
To own to thee that this is in my heart,
This longing—that it leads me home to-day,
Glad even while I turn my back on Rome,
Yet half unseen—its arts, its memories,
Its glorious fellowship of living men ;

Glad in the hope to tread the soil again
Of England, where our place of duty lies :
Not as although we thought we could do much,
Or claimed large sphere of action for ourselves ;
Not in this thought—since rather be it ours,
Both thine and mine, to ask for that calm frame
Of spirit, in which we know and deeply feel
How little we can do, and yet do that.



LINES.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE ADORATION OF THE MAGIANS.

LITTLE pomp or earthly state
 On his lowly steps might wait ;
 Few the homages and small,
 That the guilty earth at all
 Was permitted to accord
 To her King, and hidden Lord :
 Therefore do we set more store
 On these few, and prize them more :
 Dear to us for this account
 Is the glory of the Mount,
 When bright beams of light did spring
 Thro' the sackcloth covering,
 Rays of glory forced their way
 Thro' the garment of decay,
 With which, as with a cloak, He had
 His divinest splendour clad :
 Dear the lavish ointment shed
 On his feet and sacred head ;

And the high-raised hopes sublime,
And the triumph of the time,
When thro' Zion's streets the way
Of her peaceful conqueror lay,
Who, fulfilling ancient fame,
Meek and with salvation came.

But of all this scanty state
That upon his steps might wait,
Dearest are those Magian kings,
With their far-brought offerings.
From what region of the morn
Are ye come, thus travel-worn,
With those boxes pearl-embost,
Caskets rare and gifts of cost?
While your swart attendants wait
At the stable's outer gate,
And the camels lift their head
High above the lowly shed;
Or are seen a long-drawn train,
Winding down into the plain,
From beyond the light-blue line
Of the hills in distance fine.
Dear for your own sake, whence are ye?
Dearer for the mystery
That is round you?—on what skies
Gazing, saw you first arise

Thro' the darkness that clear star
Which has marshalled you so far,
Even unto this strawy tent—
“Dancing up the Orient”?*
Shall we name you kings indeed,
Or is this our idle creed?—
Kings of Seba, with the gold
And the incense long foretold?
Would the Gentile world by you
First-fruits pay of tribute due;
Or have Israel's scattered race,
From their unknown hiding-place,
Sent to claim their part and right
In the child new-born to-night?

But although we may not guess
Of your lineage, not the less
We the self-same gifts would bring,
For a spiritual offering.
May the frankincense, in air
As it climbs, instruct our prayer,
That it ever upward tend,
Ever struggle to ascend,
Leaving earth, yet ere it go
Fragrance rich diffuse below.

* A star comes dancing up the Orient,
That springs for joy over the strawy tent.

As the myrrh is bitter-sweet,
So in us may such things meet,
As unto the mortal taste
Bitter seeming, yet at last
Shall to them who try be known
To have sweetness of their own—
Tears for sin, which sweeter far
Than the world's mad laughters are :
Desires, that in their dying give
Pain, but die that we may live.
And the gold from Araby—
Fitter symbol who could see
Of the love, which, thrice refined,
Love to God and to our kind,
Duly tendered, He will call,
Choicest sacrifice of all ?

Thus so soon as far apart
From the proud world, in our heart,
As in stable dark defiled,
There is born the Eternal Child,
May to Him the spirit's kings
Yield their choicest offerings,
May the Affections, Reason, Will,
Wait upon Him to fulfil
His behests, and early pay
Homage to his natal day.

TO SILVIO PELLICO,

ON READING THE ACCOUNT OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

AH! who may guess who yet was never tried,
How fearful the temptation to reply
With wrong for wrong, yea fiercely to defy
In spirit, even when action is denied?
Therefore praise waits on thee, not drawn aside
By this strong lure of hell—on thee, whose eye
Being formed by love, could everywhere descry
Love, or some workings unto love allied.
And benediction on the grace that dealt
So with thy soul—and prayer, more earnest prayer,
Intenser longing than before we felt
For all that in dark places lying are,
For captives in strange lands, for them who pine
In depth of dungeon, or in sunless mine.

TO THE SAME.

SONGS of deliverance compassed thee about,
Long ere thy prison doors were backward flung :
When first thy heart to gentle thoughts was strung.
A song arose in heaven, an angel shout
For one delivered from the hideous rout,
Who with defiance and fierce mutual hate
Do each the other's griefs exasperate.
Thou, loving, from thy grief hadst taken out
Its worst—for who is captive or a slave
But he, who from that dungeon and foul grave,
His own dark soul, refuses to come forth
Into the light and liberty above ?
Or whom may we call wretched on this earth
Save only him who has left off to love ?

TASSO'S DUNGEON, FERRARA.

HOW might the goaded sufferer in this cell,
With nothing upon which his eyes might fall,
Except this vacant court, that dreary wall,
How might he live? I asked. Here doomed to dwell,
I marvel how at all he could repel
Thoughts which to madness and despair would call.
Enter this vault—the bare sight will appal
Thy spirit, even as mine within me fell,—
Until I learned that wall not always there
Had stood—'twas something that this iron grate
Had once looked out upon a garden fair.
There must have been then here, to calm his brain,
Green leaves, and flowers, and sunshine;—and a weight
Fell from me, and my heart revived again.

SONNET.

IT may be that our homeward longings made
That other lands were judged with partial eyes ;
But fairer in my sight the mottled skies,
With pleasant interchange of sun and shade,
And more desired the meadow and deep glade
Of sylvan England, green with frequent showers,
Than all the beauty which the vaunted bowers
Of the parched South have in mine eyes displayed ;
Fairer and more desired !—this well might be,
For let the South have beauty's utmost dower,
And yet my heart might well have turned to thee,
My home, my country, when a delicate flower
Within thy pleasant borders was for me
Tended, and growing up thro' sun and shower.

TO ENGLAND. IN THE TYROL.

NO village here so lowly, but hard by
With its green cupola or tapering spire,
Which sunset touches with innocuous fire,
The little church appears, to sanctify
The precincts duly where men live and die—
A middle point, a link connecting well
The earthly habitations where men dwell
With ever-during mansions in the sky.
Why must this fair sight aught but gladness breed?
Why must we ask, the while well satisfied
Both eye and heart upon this prospect feed,—
When shall we see arise on every side
In our great cities populous and wide,
Temples among us, answering our new need?

AT BRUNECKEN, IN THE TYROL.

THE men who for this earthly life would claim
Well nigh the whole, and if the work of heaven
Be relegated to one day in seven,
Account the other six may without blame,
Unsanctified by one diviner aim,
To self, to mammon, and the world be given,
They with their scanty worship might be driven,
Were they but here, to profitable shame.
This eve, the closing of no festal day,
This common work-day eve, in the open street
Seen have I groups of happy people meet,
Putting for this their toil and tasks away,
Men, women, boys, at one rude shrine to pray,
And there their fervent litanies repeat.

TO THE TYROLESE.

NOT merely that in you was proved the might
Of men, who standing on their native soil,
Are fixed it shall not be an easy spoil,
Do I with triumph and with heart's delight
Recall your deeds here done in hardy fight—
Nor that ye caught the hunter in the toil,
A miserable prey! and made recoil
The hosts of France with loss and hideous flight:
But that ye teach a holier lesson still,
But that in you and in your foe were showed
The strength, the courage, the enduring will,
The glory of the men who lean on God;
The blindness, the defeat, the panic fear
Of them whose only trust is in their sword and spear.

A RECOLLECTION OF THE TYROL

TO —.

A LITTLE chapel by a dusty way,
An holy precinct yielding silently
Due admonition to each passer by,
That in all times and places men should pray,
And hallow like a Sabbath every day—
Even such an one now haunts my memory,
One of the many that once pleased our eye,
When those Tyrolian mountains round us lay.
Companion of that journey and of life,
If I forgot to make it then my prayer,
I make it now, that many such a shrine,
Not far withdrawn, yet separate from the strife,
The turmoil of the world, the haste, the care,
Upon life's longer journey may be thine.

SONNET.

IN A PASS OF BAVARIA BETWEEN THE WALCHEN AND THE
WALDENSEE.

“His voice was as the sound of many waters.”

A SOUND of many waters!—now I know
To what was likened the large utterance sent
By Him who 'mid the golden lampads went:
Innumerable streams, above, below,
Some seen, some heard alone, with headlong flow
Come rushing; some with smooth and sheer descent,
Some dashed to foam and whiteness, but all blent
Into one mighty music. As I go,
The tumult of a boundless gladness fills
My bosom, and my spirit leaps and sings:
Sounds and sights are there of the ancient hills,
The eagle's cry, the mountain when it flings
Mists from its brow, but none of all these things
Like the one voice of multitudinous rills.

SONNET.

THE commonest spot we cannot without pain
Turn from, where we have tarried but a day,
And struck no roots, when to our hearts we say,
We ne'er shall look upon this spot again ;
What wonder then if I cannot restrain
Some sadness, turning from these haunts away,
Where we have many a month been free to stray
By verdant stream, o'er hill or pleasant plain—
A momentary sadness, yet which brings
Thanksgiving with it, gratitude for this,
That where we live, we cannot choose but love ;
We make a friend of nature, until bliss
(Few guess how much) we daily, hourly prove,
From the known aspect of inanimate things.

SONNET.

RETURNING HOME.

TO leave unseen so many a glorious sight,
To leave so many lands unvisited,
To leave so many worthiest books unread,
Unrealized so many visions bright ;—
Oh! wretched yet inevitable spite
Of our short span, and we must yield our breath,
And wrap us in the lazy coil of death,
So much remaining of unproved delight.
But hush, my soul, and vain regrets, be stilled ;
Find rest in Him who is the complement
Of whatsoe'er transcends your mortal doom,
Of broken hope and frustrated intent ;
In the clear vision and aspèct of whom
All wishes and all longings are fulfilled.

LINES.

WRITTEN IN AN INN.

A DREARY lot is his who roams
 "Homeless among a thousand homes;"
 A dreary thing it is to stray,
 As I have sometimes heard men say,
 And of myself have partly known,
 A passing stranger and alone
 In some great city: harder there,
 With life about us everywhere,
 Than in the desert to restrain
 A sense of solitary pain.
 We wander thro' the busy street,
 And think how every one we meet
 Has parents, sister, friend, or wife,
 With whom to share the load of life;
 We wander on, for little care
 Have we to turn our footsteps there,
 Where we are but a nameless guest,
 One who may claim no interest

In any heart—a passing face,
That comes and goes, and leaves no trace ;
Where service waits us, prompt but cold,
A loveless service, bought and sold.

Yet hard it is not to sustain
A time like this, if there remain
True greetings for us, hand and heart,
Wherein we claim the chiefest part,
Although divided now they be
By many a tract of land and sea.
If we can fly to thoughts like these,
Fall back on such sure sympathies,
This were sufficient to repress
That transient sense of loneliness.

Yet better, if where'er we roam,
Another country, truer home,
Is in our hearts ; if there we find
The word of power, that from the mind,
All sad and drear thoughts shall repel,
All solitary broodings quell ;
If in the joy of heaven we live,
Nor only on what earth can give,
Though pure and high—so we may learn
Unto the soul's great good to turn
What things soever best engage
Our thoughts toward our pilgrimage,

Which teach us this is not our rest,
That here we are but as a guest ;
As doubtless 'twas no other thought
That in his holy bosom wrought,
Who not alone content to win
In life the shelter of an inn,
Was fain to finish the last stage
There of his mortal pilgrimage.*

We too, if we are wise, may be
Pleased for a season to be free
From the encumbrances which love—
Affection hallowed from above,
But earthly yet, has power to fling
About the spirit's heavenward wing ;
Pleased if we feel that God is nigh,
Both where we live and where we die,
Whether among true kindred thrown,
Or seeming outwardly alone,
That whether this or that befall,
He watches and has care of all.

* "He [Archbishop Leighton] used often to say, that if he were to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn, it looks like a pilgrim's going home, to whom this world was all as an inn, and who was weary of the noise and confusion in it. He added that the officious care and tenderness of friends was an entanglement to a dying man, and that the unconcerned attendance of those that could be procured in such a place would give less disturbance ; and he obtained what he desired."—*Burnet's History of his own Time.*

TO A LADY SINGING.

I.

HOW like a swan, cleaving the azure sky,
 The voice upsoars of thy triumphant song,
 That whirled awhile resistlessly along
 By the great sweep of threatening harmony,
 Seemed, overmatched, to struggle helplessly
 With that impetuous music; yet ere long
 Escaping from the current fierce and strong,
 Pierces the clear crystalline vault on high.
 And I too am upborne with thee together
 In circles ever narrowing, round and round,
 Over the clouds and sunshine—who erewhile,
 Like a blest bird of charmèd summer weather
 In the blue shadow of some foamless isle,
 Was floating on the billows of sweet sound.

II.

When the mute voice returns from whence it came,
 The silence of a momentary awe,
 A brief submission to the eternal law
 Of beauty doth to every heart proclaim

A Spirit has been summoned ; yea, the same
Whose dwelling is the inmost human heart,
Which will not from that home and haunt depart,
Which nothing can quite vanquish or make tame.
It is the noblest gift beneath the moon,
The power this awful presence to compel
Out of the lurking places where it lies
Deep-hidden and removed from human eyes :
Oh ! reverence thou in fear and cherish well
This privilege of few, this rarest boon.

III.

Look ! for a season (ah, too brief a space),
While yet the spell is strong upon the rout,
With something of still fear all move about,
As though a breath or motion might displace
The Spirit, which had come of heavenly grace
Among them, for a moment to redeem
Their thoughts and passions from the selfish dream
Of earthly life, and its inglorious race.
If we might keep this awe upon us still,
If we might walk for ever in the power
And in the shadow of the mystery,
Which has been spread around us at this hour,
This might suffice to guard us from much ill,
This might go far to keep us pure and free.

IV.

But the spell fails—and of the many here,
Who have been won to brief forgetfulness
Of all that would degrade them and oppress,
Who have been carried out of their dim sphere
Of being, to realms brighter and more clear,
How few to-morrow will retain a trace,
Which the world's business shall not soon efface,
Of this high mood, this time of reverent fear.
In these high raptures there is nothing sure,
Nothing that we can rest on, to sustain
The spirit long, or arm it to endure
Against temptation, weariness, or pain ;
And if they promise to preserve it pure
From earthly taint, the promise is in vain.

V.

Yet proof is here of men's unquenched desire
That the procession of their life might be
More equable, majestic, pure, and free ;
That there are times when all would fain aspire,
And gladly use the helps, to lift them higher,
Which music, poesy, or nature brings,
And think to mount upon these waxen wings,
Not deeming that their strength shall ever tire.
But who indeed shall his high flights sustain,
Who soar aloft and sink not ? He alone

Who has laid hold upon that golden chain,
Of love, fast linked to God's eternal throne,—
The golden chain from heaven to earth let down,
That we might rise by it, nor fear to sink again.

LINES.

NOT Thou from us, O Lord, but we
Withdraw ourselves from Thee.

When we are dark and dead,
And Thou art covered with a cloud,
Hanging before Thee, like a shroud,
So that our prayer can find no way,
Oh! teach us that we do not say,
“Where is *thy* brightness fled?”

But that we search and try
What in ourselves has wrought this blame;
For Thou remainest still the same,
But earth's own vapours earth may fill
With darkness and thick clouds, while still
The sun is in the sky.

SONNET.

WHAT is thy worship but a vain pretence,
Spirit of beauty, and a servile trade,
A poor and an unworthy traffic made
With the most sacred gifts of soul and sense ;
If they who tend thine altars, gathering thence
No strength, no purity, may still remain
Selfish and dark, and from life's sordid stain
Find in their ministrations no defence ?
—Thus many times I ask, when aught of mean
Or sensual has been brought unto mine ear,
Of them whose calling high is to insphere
Eternal Beauty in forms of human art—
Vexed that my soul should ever moved have been
By that which has such feigning at the heart.

SONNET.

A COUNSELLOR well fitted to advise
In daily life, and at whose lips no less
Men may inquire or nations, when distress
Of sudden doubtful danger may arise,
Who, though his head be hidden in the skies,
Plants his firm foot upon our common earth,
Dealing with thoughts which everywhere have birth,—
This is the poet, true of heart and wise :
No dweller in a baseless world of dream,
Which is not earth nor heaven : his words have past
Into man's common thought and week-day phrase ;
This is the poet, and his verse will last.
Such was our Shakspeare once, and such doth seem
One who redeems our later gloomier days.

SONNET.

ME rather may to tears unbidden move
The meanest print that on a cottage wall
Some ancient deed heroic doth recall,
Or loving act of His, whose life was love,
Than that my heart should be too proud to prove
Emotions and sweet sympathies, until
The magic of some mighty master's skill
Called hues and shapes of wonder from above :
Since if we do no idle homage pay
To what in art most beautiful is found,
We shall have learned to feel in that same hour
With man's most rude and most unskilled essay
To win the beauty that is floating round
Into abiding forms of grace and power.

SONNET,

CONNECTED WITH THE FOREGOING.

YES, and not otherwise, if we in deed
And with pure hearts are seeking what is fair
In Nature, then, believe, we shall not need
Long anxious quests, exploring earth and air,
Ere we shall find wherewith our hearts to feed:
The beauty which is scattered everywhere
Will in our souls such deep contentment breed,
We shall not pine for aught remote or rare.
We shall not ask from some transcendent height
To gaze on such rare scenes, as may surpass
Earth's common shows, ere we will own delight:
We shall not need in quest of these to roam,
While sunshine lies upon our English grass,
And dewdrops glitter on green fields at home.

ENGLAND.

PEACE, Freedom, Happiness, have loved to wait
On the fair islands, fenced by circling seas ;
And ever of such favoured spots as these
Have the wise dreamers dreamed, who would create
That perfect model of a happy state,
Which the world never saw. Oceana,
Utopia such, and Plato's isle that lay
Westward of Gades and the Great Sea's gate.
Dreams are they all, which yet have helped to make
That underneath fair polities we dwell,
Though marred in part by envy, faction, hate—
Dreams which are dear, dear England, for thy sake,
Who art indeed that sea-girt citadel,
And nearest image of that perfect state.

THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA.

THOUGH never axe until a later day
Assailed thy forests' huge antiquity,
Yet elder Fame had many tales of thee—
Whether Phœnician shipman, far astray,
Had brought uncertain notices away
Of islands dreaming in the middle sea ;
Or that man's heart, which struggles to be free
From the old worn-out world, had never stay
Till, for a place to rest on, it had found
A region out of ken, that happier isle,
Which the mild ocean breezes blow around,
Where they who thrice upon this mortal stage
Had kept their hands from wrong, their hearts from
Should come at length, and live a tearless age. [guile,

ENGLAND.

WE look for, and have promise to behold
A better country, such as earth has none ;
Yet, England, am I still thy duteous son,
And never will this heart be dead or cold
At the relation of thy glories old,
Or of what newer triumphs thou hast won,
Where thou as with a mighty arm hast done
The work of God, quelling the tyrants bold.
Elect of nations, for the whole world's good
Thou wert exalted to a doom so high—
To out-brave Rome's "triple tyrant," to confound
Every oppressor, that with impious flood
Would drown the landmarks of humanity,
The limits God hath set to nations and their bound.

POLAND, 1831.

THE nations may not be trod out, and quite
Obliterated from the world's great page—
The nations, that have filled from age to age
Their place in story. They who in despite
Of this, a people's first and holiest right,
In lust of unchecked power, or brutal rage,
Against a people's life such warfare wage,
With man no more, but with the Eternal fight.
They who break down the barriers He hath set,
Break down what would another time defend
And shelter their own selves; they who forget
(For the indulgence of the present will)
The lasting ordinances, in the end
Will rue their work, when ill shall sanction ill.

TO NICHOLAS, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

ON HIS REPORTED CONDUCT TOWARDS THE POLES.

WHAT would it help to call thee what thou art?
When all is spoken, thou remainest still
With the same power and the same evil will
To crush a nation's life out, to dispart
All holiest ties, to turn awry and thwart
All courses that kind nature keeps, to spill
The blood of noblest veins, to maim, or kill
With torture of slow pain the aching heart.
When our weak hands hang useless, and we feel
Deeds cannot be, who then would ease his breast
With the impotence of words? But our appeal
Is unto Him, who counts a nation's tears,
With whom are the oppressor and opprest,
And vengeance, and the recompensing years.

FRANCE, 1834.

HOW long shall weary nations toil in blood,
How often roll the still returning stone
Up the sharp painful height, ere they will own
That on the base of individual good,
Of virtue, manners, and pure homes endued
With household graces—that on this alone
Shall social freedom stand—where these are gone,
There is a nation doomed to servitude?
O suffering, toiling France, thy toil is vain!
The irreversible decree stands sure,
Where men are selfish, covetous of gain,
Heady and fierce, unholy and impure,
Their toil is lost, and fruitless all their pain;
They cannot build a work which shall endure.

ODE TO SLEEP.*

I.

I CANNOT veil mine eyelids from the light;
 I cannot turn away
 From this insulting and importunate day
 That momentarily grows fiercer and more bright,
 And wakes the hideous hum of monstrous flies
 In my vexed ear, and beats
 On the broad panes, and like a furnace heats
 The chamber of my rest, and bids me rise.

II.

I cannot follow thy departing track,
 Nor tell in what far meadows, gentle Sleep,
 Thou art delaying. I would win thee back,

* The poems which follow, from this page to p. 169 inclusive, as also some scattered in other parts of the volume, were written many years ago. I mention this here, and indeed only mention it at all, because in some of those that follow are expressions occasionally of states of mind, in which I would not now ask others to sympathize, and from which I am thankful myself to have been delivered.—*Note to the first Edition of "The Story of Justin Martyr."*

Were mine some drowsy potion, or dull spell,
 Or charm'd girdle, mighty to compel
 Thy heavy grace ; for I have heard it said,
 Thou art no flatterer, that dost only keep
 In kingly haunts, leaving unvisited
 The poor man's lowlier shed ;
 And when the day is joyless, and its task
 Unprofitable, I were fain to ask,
 Why thou wilt give it such an ample space,
 Why thou wilt leave us such a weary scope
 For memory, and for that which men call hope.
 Nor wind in one embrace
 Sad eve and night forlorn
 And undelightful morn.

III.

If with the joyous were thine only home,
 I would not so far wrong thee, as to ask
 This boon, or summon thee from happier task.
 But no,—for then thou wouldst too often roam,
 And find no rest ; for me, I cannot tell
 What tearless lids there are, where thou mightst dwell :
 I know not any, unenthralled of sorrow,
 I know not one, to whom this joyous morrow,
 So full of living motion new and bright,
 Will be a summons to secure delight.
 And thus I shall not harm thee, though I claim
 Awhile thy presence.—O mysterious Sleep,

Some call thee shadow of a mightier Name,
 And whisper how that nightly thou dost keep
 A roll and count for him.—
 Then be thou on my spirit like his presence dim.

IV.

Yet if my limbs were heavy with sweet toil,
 I had not needed to have wooed thy might,
 But till thy timely flight
 Had lain securely in thy peaceful coil;
 Or if my heart were lighter, long ago
 Had crushed the dewy morn upon the sod,
 Darkening where I trod,
 As was my pleasure once, but now it is not so.

V.

And therefore am I seeking to entwine
 A coronal of poppies for my head,
 Or wreathe it with a wreath engarlanded
 By Lethe's slumberous waters. Oh! that mine
 Were some dim chamber turning to the north,
 With latticed casement, bedded deep in leaves,
 That opening with sweet murmur might look forth
 On quiet fields from broad o'erhanging eaves,
 And ever when the Spring her garland weaves,
 Were darkened with encroaching ivy-trail
 And jagged vine leaves' shade;
 And all its pavement starred with blossoms pale

Of jasmine, when the wind's least stir was made ;
Where the sunbeam were verdurous-cool, before
It wound into that quiet nook, to paint
With interspace of light and colour faint
That tessellated floor.

VI.

How pleasant were it there in dim recess,
In some close-curtained haunt of quietness,
To hear no tones of human pain and care,
Our own or others', little heeding there,
If morn or noon or night
Pursued their weary flight,
But musing what an easy thing it were
To mix our opiates in a larger cup,
And drink, and not perceive
Sleep deepening lead his truer kinsman up,
Like undistinguished Night, darkening the skirts of Eve.



FALLEN LEAVES.

I.

WERE I a leaf that had danced out my time,
 And welcomed with a fresh and musical glee
 Spring, Summer, and the Autumn's earliest prime,
 I would not choose to be
 As this pale host, yellow and red, that sound
 About my feet;—for on the horizon's bound,
 And on its mountainous uneven line,
 Are heaped the autumnal rains;
 And every leaf, o'erwrought with traceries fine,
 As is a silver foot with branching veins
 Of clear enamel, must be downward trodden
 To a promiscuous heap, and with the mire be sodden.

II.

I would not linger, as that lonely one,
 Which wove the network of a common shade
 With many a fellow, but now spins alone,
 Where its sweet tones it made:—

For now the lightest breath, that would not curl
The surface of the lake below, may whirl
That single leaf away; oh, wretched fate!
To have survived the storm,
The sharp hail and the tempest, and to wait,
A triumph and an easy trophy given
Unto the earliest wind, the faintest breath of heaven.

III.

But might I droop as yon leaf on this lake,
Gently descending on its azure sleep,
So that it may not with one circle break
That slumber soft and deep,
And for a while a pinnace or frail boat
For sylph or fairy on its surface float;
Then downward sink unto the common grave,
Where many a year has shed
Its summer offspring.—I beheld them pave
The untrampled floor, nor there perchance unfed
With such pure joy as to the fall'n may spring,
At sight of other buds and newer blossoming.

NOTE.—I must renounce for these lines any claim to originality. Some years after they were written, some much better verses on the same subject by Mr. J. Montgomery, were pointed out to me. When or where I had seen them, I cannot remember; but I must have had them, though unconsciously, in my memory, when composing these.

ATLANTIS.

I.

I COULD lose my boat,
 And could bid it float
 Where the idlest wind should pilot,
 So its glad course lay
 From this earth away,
 Toward any untrodden islet.

II.

For this earth is old,
 And its heart is cold,
 And the palsy of age has bound it ;
 And my spirit frets
 For the viewless nets
 Which are hourly clinging round it.

III.

And with joyful glee
 We have heard of thee,
 Thou Isle in mid-ocean sleeping ;
 And thy records old,
 Which the Sage has told
 How the Memphian tombs are keeping.

IV.

But we know not where,
'Neath the desert air,
To look for the pleasant places
Of the youth of Time,
Whose austerer prime
The haunts of his childhood effaces.

V.

Like the golden flowers
Of the western bowers,
Have waned their immortal shadows ;
And no harp may tell
Where the asphodel
Clad in light those Elysian meadows.

VI.

And thou, fairest Isle
In the daylight's smile,
Hast thou sunk in the boiling ocean,
While beyond thy strand
Rose a mightier land
From the wave in alternate motion ?

VII.

Are the isles that stud
The Atlantic flood,
But the peaks of thy tallest mountains,
While repose below
The great waters' flow
Thy towns and thy towers and fountains ?

VIII.

Have the Ocean powers
 Made their quiet bowers
 In thy faues and thy dim recesses ?
 Or in haunts of thine
 Do the sea-maids twine
 Coral wreaths for their dewy tresses ?

IX.

Or does foot not fall
 In deserted hall,
 Choked with wrecks that ne'er won their haven,
 By the ebb trailed o'er
 Thy untrampled floor,
 Which their sunken wealth has paven ?

X.

Oh, appear! appear!
 Not as when thy spear
 Ruled as far as the broad Egean,
 But in Love's own might,
 And in Freedom's right,
 Till the nations uplift their Pæan,

XI.

Who now watch and weep,
 And their vigil keep,
 Till they faint for expectation ;
 Till their dim eyes shape
 Temple, tower, and cape,
 From the cloud and the exhalation.

SAIS.

A N awful statue, by a veil half-hid,
At Sais stands. One came, to whom was known
All lore committed to Etruscan stone,
And all sweet voices, that dull time has chid
To silence now, by antique Pyramid,
Skirting the desert, heard ; and what the deep
May in its dimly-lighted chambers keep,
Where Genii groan beneath the seal-bound lid.
He dared to raise that yet unlifted veil
With hands not pure, but never might unfold
What there he saw ; madness, the shadow, fell
On his few days, ere yet he went to dwell
With night's eternal people, and his tale
Has thus remained, and will remain, untold.

SONNET.

I STOOD beside a pool, from whence ascended,
Mounting the cloudy platforms of the wind,
A stately hern—its soaring I attended,
Till it grew dim, and I with watching blind—
When, lo! a shaft of arrowy light descended
Upon its darkness and its dim attire :
It straightway kindled then, and was afire,
And with the unconsuming radiance blended.
And bird, a cloud, flecking the sunny air,
It had its golden dwelling 'mid the lightning
Of those empyreal domes, and it might there
Have dwelt for ever, glorified and bright'ning,
But that its wings were weak—so it became
A dusky speck again, that *was* a winged flame.

TO A FRIEND.

THOU that hast travelled far away,
In lands beyond the sea,
Wilt understand me, when I say
What there has come to me.

In chambers dim thou wilt have wrought,
With no one by, to cheer,
And trod the downward paths of thought,
In solitude and fear ;

Nor till the weary day was o'er,
Into the air have fled
From thought which could delight no more,
From books whose power was dead ;

What time perchance the drooping day
With burning vapour fills
The deep recesses far away
Of all the golden hills :

Or later, when the twilight blends
All hues, or when the moon
Into the ocean depths descends,
A wavering column, down.

Then hast not thou in spirit leapt,
Emerging from thy gloom,
Like one who unaware o'erstept
The barriers of a tomb :

And in thine exultation cried—
Of gladness having fill,
And in it being glorified—
“The world is beauteous still !”



THE CONSTITUTIONAL EXILES OF 1823.

[WRITTEN IN 1829.]

W I S E are ye in a wisdom vainly sought
Thro' all the records of the historic page ;
It is not to be learned by lengthened age,
Scarce by deep musings of unaided thought :
By suffering and endurance ye have bought
A knowledge of the thousand links that bind
The highest with the lowest of our kind,
And how the indissoluble chain is wrought.
Ye fell by your own mercy once :—beware,
When your lots leap again from fortune's urn,
An heavier error—to be pardoned less :
Yours be it to the nations to declare
That years of pain and disappointment turn
Weak hearts to gall, but wise to gentleness.

TO THE SAME.

L IKE nightly watchers from a palace tower,
In hope and faith and patience strong to wait
The beacons on the hills, which should relate
How some fenced city of deceit and power
Had fallen—ye have stood for many an hour,
Till your first hope's high movements must be dead,
And if with new ye have not cheered and fed
Your bosoms, dim despair may be your dower.
Yet not for all—though yet no fire may crest
The mountains, or light up their beacons sere—
Your eminent commission so far wrong,
Or so much flatter the oppressor's rest,
As to give o'er your watching, for so long
As ye shall hope, 'tis reason they must fear.

SONNET.

THE moments which we rescue and redeem
From the bare desert and the waste of years,
To fertilize, it may be with our tears,
Yet so that for time after they shall teem
With better than rank weeds, and wear a gleam
Of visionary light, and on the wind
Fling odours from the fields long left behind,
These and their fruit to us can never seem
Indifferent things ; and therefore do I look
Not without gentle sadness upon thee,
And liken thy outgoing, O my book,
To the impatience of a little brook,
Which might with flowers have lingered pleasantly,
Yet toils to perish in the mighty sea.

DESPONDENCY.

I.

IT is a weary hill
 Of moving sand that still
 Shifts, struggle as we will,
 Beneath our tread :
 Of those who went before,
 And tracked the desert o'er,
 The footmarks are no more,
 But gone and fled.

II.

We stray to either side,
 We wander far and wide,
 We fall to sleep and slide
 Far down again :
 As thro' the sand we wade,
 We do not seek to aid
 Our fellows, but upbraid
 Each other's pain.

III.

I gaze on that bright band,
Who on the summit stand,
To order and command,
 Like stars on high :
Yet with despairing pace
My way I could retrace,
Or on this desert place
 Sink down and die.

IV.

As we who toil and weep,
And with our weeping steep
The path o'er which we creep,
 They had not striven ;
They must have taken flight
To that serenest height,
And won it by the might
 Of wings from heaven.

V.

Alack ! I have no wing,
My spirit lacks that spring,
And Nature will not bring
 Her help to me.
From her I have no aid,
But light-enwoven shade,
And stream and star upbraid
 Our misery.

THE HEALING OF THE WATERS.

2 KINGS II. 19-22.

A BITTER barren-making stream,
 The tears that flowed for sin,
 Till the great Prophet came, and cast
 Salt from the new cruise in.

Yet stanch'd he not the waters so—
 That they should flow no more :
 He healed their springs, then bid them run
 As freely as before :

He healed their source, and well has proved
 His word not given in vain,
 That now they never should bring death
 Nor barrenness again.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I SAY to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above ;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain
And anguish, all are shadows vain,
That death itself shall not remain ;

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Thro' dark ways underground be led ;

Yet, if we will one Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day ;

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this,
Yet one word more—they only miss
The winning of that final bliss,

Who will not count it true, that Love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing further make him know,
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all which seems at strife
With blessing, all with curses rife,
That this *is* blessing, this *is* life.



I.

SOME murmur, when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy gild
The darkness of their night.

II.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied.
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How love has in their aid
(Love that not ever seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.

ON AN EARLY DEATH.

I.

AH me! of them from whom the good have hope,
 Of them whom virtue for her liegemen claims,
 How many the world tames,
 That with its evil they quite cease to cope,
 And their first fealty sworn to beauty and truth
 Break early; and amid their sinful youth
 Make shipwreck of all high and glorious aims.
 How few the fierce and fiery trial stand,
 To be as weapons tempered and approved
 For an Almighty hand.
 How few of all the streamlets that were moved,
 Do ever unto clearness run again.
 And therefore is it marvellous to us,
 When of these weapons one is broken thus,
 When of these fountains one would seem in vain
 Renewed in clearness, and is stanch'd before
 It has had leave to spread fresh streams the desert o'er.

II.

Ah me! that by so frail and feeble thread
 Our life is holden—that not life alone,

But all that life has won
May in an hour be gathered to the dead ;
The slow additions that build up the mind,
The skill that by temptation we have bought
And suffering, and whatever has been taught
By lengthened years and converse with our kind,
That all may cease together—and the tree
Reared to its height by many a slow degree,
And by the dews, the sunshine, and the showers
Of many springs, an instant may lay low,
With all its living towers,
And all the fruit mature of growth and slow,
Which on the trees of wisdom leisurely must grow.

III.

Alas ! it is another thing to wail,
That when the foremost runners sink and fail,
They cannot pass their torch or forward place
To them that are behind them in the race ;
But their extinguished torches must be laid
Together with them in the dust of death :
That when the wise and the true-hearted fade,
So little of themselves they can bequeath
To us, who yet are in the race of life,
For labour and for toil, for weariness and strife.

IV.

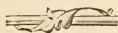
—But from behind the veil,
Where they are entered who have gone before,

A solemn voice arrests my feeble wail—
“ And has thy life such worthier aims, O man,
That thou shouldst grudge to give its little span
To truth and knowledge, and faith’s holy lore,
Because the places for the exercise
Of these may be withdrawn from mortal eyes?
Win truth, win goodness—for which man was made,
And fear not thou of these to be bereft,
Fear not that these shall in the dust be laid,
Or in corruption left,
Or be the grave-worm’s food.
Nothing is left or lost, nothing of good,
Or lovely; but whatever its first springs
Has drawn from God, returns to Him again;
That only which ’twere misery to retain
Is taken from you, which to keep were loss;
Only the scum, the refuse, and the dross
Are borne away unto the grave of things;
Meanwhile whatever gifts from heaven descend,
Thither again have flowed,
To the receptacle of all things good,
From whom they come and unto whom they tend,
Who is the First and Last, the Author and the End.

v.

And fear to sorrow with increase of grief,
When they who go before
Go furnished—or because their span was brief,

When in the acquist of what is life's true gage,
Truth, knowledge, and that other worthiest lore,
They had fulfilled already a long age.
For doubt not but that in the worlds above
There must be other offices of love,
That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is promised that his servants, there
Shall serve Him still. Therefore be strong, be strong,
Ye that remain, nor fruitlessly revolve,
Darkling, the riddles which ye cannot solve,
But do the works that unto you belong ;
Believing that for every mystery,
For all the death, the darkness, and the curse
Of this dim universe,
Needs a solution full of love must be :
And that the way whereby ye may attain
Nearest to this, is not thro' broodings vain,
And half-rebellious questionings of God,
But by a patient seeking to fulfil
The purpose of his everlasting will,
Treading the path which lowly men have trod.
Since it is ever they who are too proud
For this, that are the foremost and most loud
To judge his hidden judgments, these are still
The most perplexed and lost at his mysterious will."



SABBATION.

A JEWISH LEGEND.

BY the dark mountains guarded well,
And on the other side
Of Havila, for gold renowned,
A land lies broad and wide.
Four-square it lies—a man at speed
Might travel every way,
And would not pass from end to end
Until the ninetieth day.
The mountains with their barriers dark
Upon three sides enclose
This goodly land, but on the fourth
A wondrous river flows ;
Between whose banks no water rolls,
But rush and roar along
Rocks, stones, and sand, together mixed,
With tumult loud and strong ;
And higher than the houses' tops
Huge fragments leap and fly—
But on the holy seventh day
It sleepeth quietly.

Sabbation is it therefore named,
For on the Sabbath day
From eve till eve again comes back,
That river sleeps alway ;
Without a sound or slightest stir
That day it doth remain,
But then, the Sabbath done, returns
Unto its strength again—
So fierce that if in middle stream
Were set an adamant rock,
It would be shattered presently
Before the furious shock.
By night a two days' journey off
Its rushing heard may be,
Like thunder, like a mighty wind,
Or like the roaring sea.

Behind this river dwells secure
The children of the race,
Which had on Israel's mountains once
Their quiet resting-place ;
Till to the Assyrian for their sins
Delivered for a prey,
Who from their soil uprooted them,
And planted far away.
But they, when in that foreign land
Awhile they had remained,
Said,—“ Let us rise and seek some place
By idols unprofaned,

Where we, by sore affliction taught,
At length may understand,
And keep the law we never kept
While in our former land.”*
This counsel taking with themselves,
And caring not for foes,
And caring not for length of way,
Nor danger, they arose—
They rose together, and dryshod
The great Euphrates passed,
And ever journeying northward, reached
This goodly land at last—
A goodly land, with all good things
Their old land knew, supplied,
And all the plagues that vexed them there,
For ever turned aside :
A land of streams that fear no drought,
Nor ever fail to flow,
Of wells not fed by scanty rains,
But springing from below ;
Where never upon sounding wing
Advance the locust swarm,
To hide the noon-day sun, and bring
To every green thing harm ;
Where never from the desert blows
The dry and scorching wind,
That breathes o’er fields of flowers, and leaves
A wilderness behind :

* See the apocryphal 2 Esdras iii. 13, 40-47.

The early and the latter rain
Their heavens ne'er refuse,
And what the day burns up, the night
Repairs with copious dews.
With their own hands they till the ground,
And have of nothing lack ;
The grain upon their furrows cast
An hundredfold gives back,
And twice the cattle on their hills
Yield increase every year,
And trees that in no other land
Bear fruit, are laden here.
Not readier on Engeddi's steeps
The wounded balsam sheds
Its life's blood, and the Indian nard
Lifts here its spiky heads.
And gardens of delight are theirs ;
And what is strange elsewhere
Of costly gum or fragrant spice,
Is counted common there :
Nor snake or scorpion, fox or dog,
Nor any beast unclean,
Nor aught that can bring harm to man,
Through all the land is seen.
A little child will feed the flocks
In forests far away,
Not fearing man, nor evil beast,
Nor demon of noon-day.

And theirs the ancient Hebrew tongue
The speech which Angels love ;
And their true prayers in that are made,
And always heard above—
Heard too in doleful worlds below,
Where at their hours of prayer,
The anguish intermits awhile,
The hopeless misery there.
And often when a man goes forth
In lonely wilds to pray,
An Angel then will meet him there,
And—Grace be with thee !—say ;
No child before his parents' eyes
Is laid on funeral bier,
And none departs that has not reached
His happy hundredth year ;
That has not at the least beheld
His children's children rise
About his knees, to glad his heart
And cheer his failing eyes.
Nor is the life then torn away
By rude and painful death,
But Gabriel with a gentle kiss
Draws out the flitting breath :
And when the soul arrives at last
In Paradise, there wait
A crowd of ministering spirits there
Around its ruby gate ;

They put the sordid grave-clothes off,
 In raiment pure and white
They clothe him, glistening garments spun
 From glorious clouds of light ;
They set two crowns upon his head,
 Of purest gold is one,
The other diadem is wrought
 Of pearl and precious stone :
And giving myrtle in his hand,
 They praise him, and they say,
“ Go in and eat thy bread henceforth
 With gladness every day.”

The day before a child is born,
 The Angel, that is given
To be his guide and guard through life,
 And lead him safe to heaven,
In spirit takes him where the Blest
 With light divine are fed,
Each sitting on his golden throne,
 His crown upon his head ;
“ And these,” he says, “ are they who loved
 The law of the Most High,
And such by his eternal grace
 Come hither when they die :
Live thou and be an heir at length
 Through mercy of this grace,
Since thou must for thy warning know
 There is another place.”

The Angel carries then that soul
At eventide to hell,
Where the ungodly evermore
In painful prison dwell.
“ These wretched once, as thou wilt soon,
The breath of life did draw,
And therefore be thou wise betimes,
And keep and love the law.”

And if one see his brother sin,
Or hear him speaking vain
Or evil words, he leaves him not
Unhidden to remain,
But in just anger says to him,
“ My brother, wilt thou know
That sin upon our fathers brought
God’s wrath and all their woe ?”
And thus doth each one each exhort,
In righteousness and fear
And with true hearts the righteous Lord
To honour and revere.

And them, a people honouring Him,
He honours in the sight
Of all their foes, exalting them
To power and glorious might.
While they fear none, the fear of them
On every land is spread,

That none of all the neighbouring folks
Dare stir them up for dread—
Well pleased if only they by them
May unassailed remain,
And princes far and near send gifts
For their goodwill to gain ;
And five-and-twenty kings to them
Appointed tribute pay,
And hands of strength upon the necks
Of all their foes they lay.
And when their Patriarch rideth forth
For pleasure or for state,
A hundred thousand men or more
On his outgoing wait ;
A hundred thousand horsemen, all
In glittering steel arrayed,
Whose trappings all are scarlet dyed,
Whose banners wide displayed.

At break of morning every day,
The noblest of the land
In pomp and solemn state ride forth,
A high exulting band,
As though to welcome and to greet
And lead in triumph home
Some royal Stranger, looked-for long,
Who now at length should come.

With some dejection on their brows
At evening they return—
“Why comes he not? why tarries he
Until another morn?”
But soon the shadow from their brows,
The gloom has passed away.
And that rejoicing troop goes forth
Upon the following day—
As high of hope, in all their state,
They issue forth again,
Sure that their high-raised hope will not
Prove evermore in vain;
That He will one day come indeed,
And with a mighty hand
Will lead them back to repossess
Their old, their glorious land.



HONOR NEALE.

A GRIEVOUS wrong it were, and treason done
 Unto the common heart of human kind,
 By which all live and love, to yield this thought
 Place for an instant, that because the griefs
 We tell of, are not high and stately woes,
 But simple sorrows, pangs of every day,—
 Or that because the hearts that owned those griefs
 Beat not beneath high roofs of palaces,
 But underneath the lowliest cottage sheds,—
 Therefore we shall not win a listening ear,
 Therefore we shall but make a vain appeal,
 And vainly seek to unlock the source of tears :
 A wrong indeed to what our human heart
 Yet keeps of good and kind ; and in the faith,
 The better faith that any earnest grief,
 Though finding utterance in the lowliest phrase,
 Will so in its reality and strength
 Exalt the humble, glorify the mean,
 That being recorded truly, it will stir
 The deep and hidden waters of all hearts,

And thus have gracious influence, bringing each
To feel what he in common has with all,
And for the while "making the whole world kin"—
In this faith am I confident to give
The lowly history of a common grief,
A sorrow in which high and low alike
Have equal share, a mother's grief—and this
In words as nearly as may be her own;
For while Invention barren proves and old,
Nature is rich and manifold and new.

But this much needful preface to her tale
Must first find place. A little cottage girl
Was Honor Neale; and in the further west
Of Ireland stood her parents' lowly hut.
For some brief while this child was brought within
The holy influence of a better faith
Than that her parents held, the faith of Rome—
Attending for a season at a school
Where the pure doctrine and the lore of Christ
Were truly taught; and there this little child,
Though slow to learn, yet rendered earnest heed
To all she heard; but after some short time,
Before it could be known if that good seed
Sown in her heart would put forth blade and ear,
Her parents, whether of their own accord,
Or urged by some suggestion from without,
Withdrew her, and she laboured in the fields

Beside her father. 'Twas a late wet spring,
And she, of weakly frame, could ill endure
To carry heavy burdens on her back,
As she was tasked to do, till many times
She left her labour, and returning home
Sat down and cried for weariness and pain ;
But still her mother, thinking that she made
More of her pains than need was, in the hope
She might be suffered to return to school,
A wish she failed not often to express,
Would sometimes ask her, had she then no mind
To lend her father what small help she could,
On whom the burden of a family
Of many daughters with one only boy
Pressed heavily—and then without a word
She would return unto her work again.
But soon she evidently grew too weak
For toil, and soon too weak to leave the house,
And illness that was doubtless to be traced
To that hard toil, had settled in her joints,
And on her breast, long illness, full of pain.
Three years in all it lasted ; in which while,
In a dark corner of the cottage sitting,
Much in her reading she improved herself,
And of her own accord she learnt by heart
Some hymns, with which she solaced lonely hours ;
But chiefly was delighted when they came
To visit her, as now they often did,

Who with a lively interest kept in mind
This child, sometime a pupil in their care.
But if through gracious teaching from on high,
And through that lengthened discipline of pain,
In spirit she grew fitter for her change,
In body she grew weaker day by day ;
And by degrees her pains had so increased
That when it was announced that she was gone,
What could they do, who knew what she endured,
But render hearty thanks for her release ?

Willing to speak some comfort if they might
Unto the sorrowing, willing too to learn
How at the last it was with this poor child,
The friends of whom I speak, not many days
After the tidings reached them of her death,
Knocked at the cottage door yet once again.
Much was the mother at their entrance moved ;
For all the past, associated with them,
Came to her mind ; but presently she spoke,
And seemed to find much comfort and relief
In talking freely of her child, and all
Her sorrow into sympathizing ears
Outpouring, and abruptly thus began—
“ For months before she died she slept with me,
For I had pains and troubles of my own,
Which would have kept me waking anyhow,
And I was glad the others in the house,

Who had been toiling hard the whole day long,
And could enjoy sound sleep, should have their rest
Unbroken. Often in the dark dark night,
When all the house was quiet, she would say,
If I had risen to move her in the bed
More times than common, or to give her drink,
'Oh, mother, when you used to bid me do
Things which I did not like, how many times
I disobeyed you—I am much afraid
I often vexed and grieved you at the heart.'
'No, Honor, you were always a good child,'
I answered, and 'twas nothing more than truth.
Ah, Sir, if she were sitting by my side,
I should not now be praising her this way;
And it is rather I should grieve to think
I did not show more tenderness to her.
For, Honor, had I thought that you and I
Would have to part so soon, I would have been
Much kinder to you. She has lain awake
For hours together, then as if a thought
Suddenly struck her,—'This is not the way
I should be praying. Mother, lift me up,
And set the pillow under my sore knee.'
And then she has continued so, until
Her head grew heavy, and she asked again
To be set down. How often in the night,
When all is quiet in the lonesome house,
I now stretch out my hands and feel about,

Betwixt awake and sleeping, round the bed—
For this now comes of course, and when my hands
Find nothing, feeling round in emptiness,
Oh then it is, or when the dreary light
Of morning comes, my grief sits heaviest on me,
As though my loss were but of yesterday,
So that I scarce have strength to lift my hand,
Or go about the needful work o' the house.
But as the day gets forward, what with tasks
That must be done, and neighbours coming in,
And pleasant light of the sun, and cheerful sounds,
My heart grows somewhat lighter, till the weight
Of all comes back at evening again.

The very day before she died, she said,
'Dear mother, would you lift me in your arms,
And carry me this once over the door,
That I might look on the green fields again?'
The day was cold and raw—and I refused,
Till seeing that her mind was set on this,
I wrapped the blanket round her safe and warm ;
But when I took her in my arms, it went
Unto my heart—I raised her with such ease !
She had so pined and wasted, that her weight
Was even as nothing ; but I bore her out
Into the air, and carried her all round
The clover field, and shewed her everything ;
And as I brought her back she only said,

Supposing I was wearied with her weight,
'I never shall be asking this again.'

And the last day, the morning that she died,
She was as usual reading in the book
Which had been given her when she quitted school:
Ah! Sir, I have forgotten most of what
Was in that book; but when I call to mind
Its beautiful words, it makes me sad to think
That there was no such learning in my time,
For so I might be reading now myself
The very words that I have heard her read,
And maybe might find comfort for my grief;
I know at least that she found comfort there,
'Twas that which made her happy at the last.
For at the first, when first her pains began,
She could not bear to think that she was dying,
And would grow angry if a neighbour spoke
As though her end was near: and the first time
She was persuaded she could not recover,
'Oh mother,' she cried out in agony,
'Where am I going? Am I going where
I never can come back to you again,
And shall I not talk to you any more,
And never sit beside you and look up
Into your face, when you are suffering pain,
And ask what ails you?' Then she would at first
Be at some times impatient in her pains,

And then I could do nothing to her mind.
But for the last months of her life she seemed
To think that each thing was too good for her,
And any little service done by any,
And every little present which was brought
By a kind neighbour, was enough to make
The thankful tears to come into her eyes.
In all your life you never could have seen
One young or old so willing to depart,
Nor yet so ready: 'tis not I alone
Say this, but one who had more right to know.

For 'twas about three weeks before the last,
We saw that there was something on her mind,
And questioning her, she answered that she wished
To see the Priest, and to confess herself
Once more before she died. He came at once,
And was alone with her for near an hour:
And when he just was standing at the door
Ready to mount his horse, I heard him say
Unto some neighbours that were standing by—
'I never saw a happier holier child
Than that is, ready to depart this world.'
But then as he was taking his last leave,
She fixed her eyes upon him with a look
As though she had left something still unsaid.
He asked her,—'Is there anything, dear child,
You have forgotten which you wish to tell?

You need not fear to speak before them all.’
‘Well, Sir,’ she answered, ‘I was thinking then,
’Tis now about three years ago there lived
A little orphan here, and she and I
Were often sent into the fields together
To tend the cows; and when ’twas cold and wet
I many times would run into the house,
That I might ask my mother for some food,
Or warm myself awhile, and did not care
To leave her out alone in all the cold:
I hoped I might have seen her before this,
And have her pardon asked before she died,
For that has ever since been on my mind,
And during all my illness troubling me;
For had she had a mother of her own,
She would have gone to her as stout and bold
As I to mine, and boldly asked of her
All that she wanted.’ ‘You are a happy child,
Dying this way, and grieving so your heart
For such a little sin;’ and then he said,
The Priest in all our hearing said, ‘I wish
That I had died when I was of your age,
So not to have more sin on me than yours
To answer for:’—these were his very words.

But I was saying that the day she died
She had been reading for some little time,
And then complained her eyes were growing dim,

And bade me wipe them. I was just then sweeping
The hearth, and had made up our little fire ;
But when I heard her speak this way, I knew
What now was coming ; but I wiped her eyes
As she desired—I knew it was no use,
And presently she gave me back the book ;
' For, mother dear,' she said, ' I cannot see
To read a single word ;' and just as though
She felt she would not want it any more,
Bade me to place it carefully aside,
And putting on the cover, set it by
In the hand-basket. There was no one else
In all the house, excepting she and me—
The others all were gone unto their work.
And now I knew the time was close at hand,
Which had been drawing on for near three years.
And presently I spoke to her again,
And now she made no answer—only stretched
Her hand out to me. I took hold of it,
But in a moment let it go again,
And lighting the twelve tapers held them there—
It was a custom that my mother had,
When one was dying—so I lighted them,
And being lighted, held them all myself,
For there were none beside me in the house.
But when I saw the breath was leaving her,
I dropped them all, and by her side fell down,
But soon recovering picked them up again,

And held them there till they were all burned down,
And as the last of them was going out
She breathed at the same moment her last breath.

And she is gone, Sir,—but what matter now,
What matter? She was but a little child,
Yet Nature cannot choose but sometimes grieve,
And must have way: why had it only been
A stranger's child I had been rearing thus,
And tending for now nearly fourteen years,
My heart would needs be sad to let her go.
But my own child, my darling Honoreen—
Though when I think on all things, I believe
That I am glad He took her to Himself;
It may be I shall follow before long,
For I am a poor weak creature that have seen
Much toil and trouble. Blessed be His Name
That took her first: if I had gone the first,
And left her a poor cripple in the world,
No doubt they would have all been kind to her;
But who is like a mother?—even if they
Had wished it most, they never could have done
What I have done for her; and then at last
She might have wearied all their patience out.
Then blessings be upon His holy Name,
Who called her out of this poor sinful world,
And took her to Himself.

They buried her
Down in the valley in the old churchyard,
Beside the ruined church. I wished to go
And see her laid within her little grave ;
'Twould have been better for me, I believe,
If they had suffered me to go with them ;
But they were all against it, and that time
They might have had their way in anything.
But when I saw the little funeral
Wind down the field, I turned and shut the door,
And sitting on a stool I hid my face ;
I know not what it was came over me,
But I grew giddy, and fell down, and struck
My head against the corner of a chair,
And there has been a noise there ever since.

And now I thank you. Many a journey long
You took through wet and cold to see my child,
And she found much of comfort in your words ;
And at the last I think was better pleased
To go than stay. Then why should I so grieve ?
And why should I not rather feel and say,
'Twas the best nursing that I ever did,
To nurse her and to bring her up for Him,
Who called her to the knowledge of Himself,
Then took her out of this poor sinful world ?”

A CENTURY OF COUPLETS.

TO halls of heavenly truth admission wouldst thou
win ?

Oft Knowledge stands without, while Love may enter
in.

Who praises God the most, what says he more than he
Who silent is ? yet who would therefore silent be ?

Thy treasures lodged so low, earth's damps will soon
consume :

While time is, lift them up into a higher room.

Lovingly to each other sun and moon give place,
Else were the mighty heaven for them too narrow space.

Lodged in a ruinous hut, thou loathest to depart :
Were thine a richer house, 'twould prove a bitterer
smart.

Only the waters which in perfect stillness lie,
Give back an undistorted image of the sky.

Despise not little sins ; for mountain-high may stand
The pil'd heap made up of smallest grains of sand.

Despise not little sins ; the gallant ship may sink,
Though only drop by drop the watery tide it drink.

Thy soul is that fair bride which hell and heaven woo,
And one perforce must win, to make or to undo.

Merely thyself, oh man, thou canst not long abide,
But presently for less or greater must decide.

God many a spiritual house has reared, but never one
Where lowliness was not laid first, the corner stone.

Owe no man aught save love, but that esteem a debt
Which thou must ever pay, well pleased to owe it yet.

Rear highly as thou wilt thy branches in the air,
But that thy roots descend as deep in earth have care.

Sin, not till it is left, will duly sinful seem ;
A man must waken first, ere he can tell his dream.

Glad news were it to hear that thou shouldst never die?
Glad news that pain and sin should last eternally !

When thou art fain to trace a map of thine own heart,
As undiscovered land set down the largest part.

Wouldst thou do harm, and still unharmed thyself
abide ?

None struck another yet, except through his own side.

God's dealings still are love ; his chastenings are alone
Love now compelled to take an altered louder tone.

From our ill-ordered hearts we oft are fain to roam,
As men go forth who find unquietness at home.

Oh misery ! that man will not man's words receive,
Nor, that the serpent stings, till stung himself, believe.

Why furnish' with such care thy lodging of a night,
And leave thy lasting home in such a naked plight ?

Loved wilt thou be? then love by thee must first be
given,
No purchase-money else avails beneath the heaven.

When thou hast thanked thy God for every blessing
sent,
What time will then remain for murmurs or lament ?

Envy detects the spots in the clear orb of light,
And Love the little stars in the gloomiest saddest night.

Thou canst not choose but serve, man's lot is servitude ;
But this much choice is thine, a bad lord or a good.

As from mine own sin more and farther I depart,
Ah me ! my brother's sin will grow a bitterer smart.

One foe we have, who, cherished, rages with worse ire,
Whom to give place to is but oil upon the fire.

Before the eyes of men let duly shine thy light,
But ever let thy life's best part be out of sight.

My proud foe at my hands to take no boon will choose—
—Thy prayers are that one grace which he cannot
refuse.

Plead guilty at *man's* bar, thou goest to judgment
straight;
At God's, no other way remains to shun that fate.

As fish with poisoned baits, so pleasures soon are
caught;

'Tis pity both should prove, so taken, good for nought.

We children are from earth weaned hardly, so Heaven
strews

Some wormwood on earth's breasts, as tenderest
mothers use.

Wouldst thou go forth to bless, be sure of thine own
ground,

Fix well thy centre first, then draw thy circles round.

Sin may be clasped so close we cannot see its face,
Nor seen nor loathed until held from us a small space.

Win lowliness of heart, and having won beware,
And that thou grow not proud of lowliness have care.

Man is a star of heaven cast down upon the earth,
A prince in beggar's weeds, half conscious of his birth.

The sun is in the heavens, on earth the sunshine bright,
And we may close our eyes, but not put out the light.

Who plays a part, from shame shall not keep always
clear ;
Hard is it to *be* good, but harder to appear.

Their windows and their doors some close, and mur-
muring say,
The light of heaven ne'er sought into my house a way.

How fearful is his case whom now God does not chide
When sinning worst ; to whom even chastening is
denied !

Man's soul against the powers above it dared rebel :
Then its own subjects learned the rebel's art as well.

God often would enrich, but finds not where to place
His treasure, nor in hand nor heart a vacant space.

The man is happy, Lord, who love like this doth owe,
Loves Thee, his friend in Thee, and for thy sake his foe.

If thou wouldst know sin's strength, thy lusts how
hard to tame,
Against them take up arms, and earnest war proclaim.

A dreamer do not wake, if, when his dream is fled,
Thou canst not give him aught of truer in its stead.

The oyster sickens while the pearl doth substance win:
Thank God for pains that prove a noble growth within.

Resigned are some to go: might we such grace attain,
That we should need our resignation to remain.

God's loudest threatenings speak of love and tenderest
care,
For who, that wished his blow to light, would say,
Beware?

What is our work when God a blessing would impart?
To bring the empty vessel of a needy heart.

Can ever the true prayer of faith unheard remain?
Must not what came from God return to him again?

Oh leave to God at sight of sin *incensed* to be;
Sinner, if thou art *grieved*, that is enough for thee.

Till life is coming back, our death we do not feel,
Light must be entering in, our darkness to reveal.

Use thou, but love not things, given only with intent
To be alleviations of thy banishment.

To lay thy soul's worst sins before thy Lord endure:
Who will not show his hurts, can he expect a cure?

Ill fares the child of heaven, who will not entertain
On earth the stranger's grief, the exile's sense of pain.

Mark how there still has run, enwoven from above,
Thro' thy life's darkest woof the golden thread of love.

Sin, like a serpent, where its head an entrance finds,
Easily its whole length of body after winds.

What is thy fear, oh soul? the fear of that dark place,
Or fear to lose the light of thy Creator's face?

Call not this goodly world a place of harsh restraint:
Such prisonhouse it were not, but for thy complaint.

Captain and King thou art, and canst command and
fight;
Yet summon first the Chancellor, and learn the right.

The jailer of himself, he keeps the keys of hell
In his own hands, who yet must there for ever dwell.

Acknowledge present good, or thou wilt need to learn,
And by its loss, thy good, thy mercies to discern.

Some say man has no hurts, some seek them to reveal
And to exasperate more, and some to hide and heal.

Ashes and dust thou art—confess it so to be,
And from that moment forth it is not true for thee.

Whence is it if the Lord, the mighty God, is high,
That, lifting up myself, I find Him not more nigh?

Truth, knowledge, wisdom, love, oh lay up these in
store,
True wealth which we may share, and yet ourselves
have more.

Things earthly we must know ere love them: 'tis alone
Things heavenly that must be first loved and after
known.

To see the face of God, this makes the joy of heaven;
The purer then the eye, the more joy will be given.

Who claims thy praise, because the visions of his youth
He now has learned to mock, deserves thy saddest ruth.

The sinews of Love's arm use makes more firm and
strong,
Which, being left unused, will fade and fail ere long.

When God afflicts thee, think He hews a rugged stone,
Which must be shaped, or else aside as useless thrown.

'Tis ill with man when this is all he cares to know
Of his own self, to wit, his vileness and his woe.

With patience to endure our griefs we learn not soon,
But how much later still to take them as a boon?

I heard a man proclaim, all men were wholly base :
One such at once I knew there stood before my face.

God loves to work in wax, not marble—let Him find,
When He would mould thine heart, material to his
mind.

The same rains rain from heaven on all the forest trees,
Yet those bring forth sweet fruits, and poisoned berries
these.

A thousand blessings, Lord, to us thou dost impart :
We ask one blessing more, O Lord—a thankful heart.

Wouldst thou abolish quite strongholds of self and sin ?
Fear can but make the breach for Love to enter in.

To cure thee of thy pride, that deepest-seated ill,
God humbled his own self—wilt thou thy pride keep
still ?

God humble and man proud ! do angels, when they
range
This earth, see any sight at once so sad and strange ?

Each dark unloving thought the mirror helps to stain,
Which should God's image true give back to us again.

What thing thou lovest most, thou mak'st its nature
thine,
Earthly, if that be earth—if that be God, divine.

Who shewed me that my wound was deadly, made me
note,
And at the self-same time, the healing antidote.

Earth waits for sunshine, dew, and rain from heaven
above ;
So man should wait from God for pity, grace, and love.

Evil, like a rolling stone upon a mountain top,
A child may first impel, a giant cannot stop.

He knew who healed our wounds, we quickly should
be fain
Our old hurts to forget—so let the scars remain.

All noblest things are still the commonest ; every place
Has water, light, and air, and God's abounding grace.

He is not wholly lost, who yet keeps love for aught,
Large fire from smallest spark has many times been
brought.

God asks not *what* but *whence* thy work is : from the
fruit
He turns his eye away, to prove the inmost root.

Oh work thy works in God ; He can rejoice in nought
Save only in Himself, and what his self has wrought.

When will the din of earth grate harshly on our ears ?
When we have once heard plain the music of the
spheres.

All nature has a voice, and this the sunflower's word,
I look unto the light—look thou unto the Lord.

The magnet cries, We both must to our pole incline,
Restless, till that is found—and God, oh man, is thine.

Why win we not at once what we in prayer require?
That we may learn great things as greatly to desire.

To schools of wisdom men with such small profit go,
Because they can but learn what they already know.

One furnace many times the good and bad will hold:
Yet what consumes the chaff will only cleanse the gold.

God, being great, great gifts most willingly imparts,
But we continue poor, that have such narrow hearts.

The tasks, the joys of earth, the same in heaven will be;
Only the little brook has widened to a sea.

Who hunt this world's delight too late their hunting rue,
When it a lion proves, the hunter to pursue.

Oh wherefore in such haste in men's sight to appear?
The cedar yields no fruit until its fiftieth year.



A BALLAD.

FROM THE SPANISH.

WHO ever such adventure yet,
 Or a like delight has known,
 To that which Count Arnaldo met,
 On the morning of St. John ?

The knight was riding by the sea,
 With his falcon in his hand,
 And saw a pinnace fast and free,
 That was making to the land.

And he that by the rudder stood
 As he went was singing still,
 " My galley, O my galley good,
 Heaven protect thee from all ill ;

" From all the dangers and the woe
 That on ocean's waters wait,
 Almeria's reefs and shallows low,
 And Gibraltar's stormy strait ;

“From Venice and its shallow way,
From the shoals of Flanders’ coast,
And from the gulf of broad Biscay,
Where the dangers are the most.”

Then Count Arnaldo spoke aloud,
You might hear his accents well—
“Those words, thou mariner, I would
Unto me that thou wouldst tell.”

To him that mariner replied
In a courteous tone, but free—
“I never sing that song,” he cried,
“Save to one who sails with me.”



FROM THE PERSIAN.

I.

HAPPY name I you, my brethren, who not ever
doomed to roam,
In the eternal Father's mansion from the first have
dwelt at home.

II.

Round the Father's throne for ever standing, in his
countenance
Sunning you, you see the seven circling heavens around
you dance.

III.

Me he has cast out to exile, in a distant land to learn
How I should love Him, the Father, how for that true
country yearn.

IV.

I lie here, a star of heaven, fall'n upon this gloomy
place,
Scarce remembering what bright courses I was once
allowed to trace.

V.

Still in dreams it comes upon me, that I once on wings
did soar ;
But or ere my flight commences, this my dream must
all be o'er.

VI.

When the lark is climbing upward on the sunbeam,
then I feel
Even as though my spirit also hidden pinions could reveal.

VII.

I a Rose-bush to this lower soil of earth am fastly bound,
And with heavenly dew besprinkled, still am rooted to
the ground.

VIII.

Yet the life is struggling upward, and are striving with
their might
Yearning buds their cups to open to the warmth and
heavenly light.

IX.

From its stalk released, my flower scars not yet—a
butterfly ;
But meanwhile my fragrant incense evermore I breathe
on high.

X.

From this gloomy land of vapours, where the hurri-
cane surprise,
Lightning scorches, and hail lashes, and the thunder
terrifies,

XI.

By my Gardener to his garden I shall once transplanted
 be,
 There where I have been already written from eternity.

XII.

O my brothers blooming yonder, unto Him, the
 Ancient, pray,
 That the hour of my transplanting He will not for
 long delay.

 FROM THE PERSIAN.

DEATH ends well Life's undelight,
 Yet Life shudders at Death's sight.

Life the dark hand sees, but not
 What it brings, the clear cup bright.

So at sight of Love an heart
 Fears that it must perish quite.

Only Self, the tyrant dark,
 He must perish in Love's might—

That the heart may truly live,
 Breathing free in Love's pure light.

XERXES AT THE HELLESPONT.

[SUGGESTED BY A POEM IN KNAPP'S GEDICHTE.]

“CALM is now that stormy water—it has learned
 to fear my wrath :
 Lashed and fettered now it yields me for my hosts an
 easy path :”
 Seven long days did Persia’s monarch on the Helles-
 pontine shore,
 Throned in state, behold his armies without pause de-
 filing o’er ;
 Only on the eighth the rearward to the other side were
 past,
 Then one haughty glance of triumph far as eye could
 reach he cast :
 Far as eye could reach he saw them, multitudes
 equipped for war,
 Medians with their bows and quivers, linkèd armour
 and tiar :
 From beneath the sun of Afric, from the snowy hills
 of Thrace,
 And from India’s utmost borders, nations gathered in
 one place :

At a single mortal's bidding all this pomp of war unfurled,
All in league against the freedom and the one hope of
the world.

“What though once some petty trophies from my
captains thou hast won,
Think not, Greece, to see another such a day as Marathon :

Wilt thou dare await the conflict, or in battle hope to
stand,

When the Lord of sixty nations takes himself his cause
in hand ?

Lo ! they come, and mighty rivers, which they drink of
once, are dried,

And the wealthiest cities beggared, that for them one
meal provide.

Powers of number by their numbers infinite are over-
borne,

So I measure men by measure, as an husbandman his
corn.

Mine are all—this sceptre sways them, mine is all in
every part :”

And he named himself most happy, and he blessed
himself in heart—

Blessed himself, but on that blessing tears abundant
followed straight,

For that moment thoughts came o'er him of man's
painful brief estate :

Ere an hundred years were finished, where would all
those myriads be ?
Hellespont would still be rolling his blue waters to the
sea ;
But of all those countless numbers not one living would
be found,
A dead host with their dead monarch, silent in the
silent ground.



LIFE AND DEATH.

A PARABLE FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT.

THERE went a man through Syrian land,
 Leading a Camel by the hand ;
 The beast, made wild by some alarm,
 Began to threaten sudden harm,
 So fiercely snorting, that the man
 With all his speed escaping ran—
 He ran, and saw a well that lay,
 As chance would have it, by the way :
 He heard the Camel snort so near,
 As almost maddened him with fear,
 And crawled into the well, yet there
 Fell not, but dangled in mid air ;
 For from a fissure in the stone,
 Which lined its sides, a bush had grown ;
 To this he clung with all his might,
 From thence lamenting his sad plight :
 He saw, what time he looked on high,
 The beast's head perilously nigh,

Ready to drag him back again ;
He looked into the bottom then,
And there a Dragon he espied,
Whose horrid jaws were yawning wide,
Agape to swallow him alive,
So soon as he should there arrive.
But as he hung two fears between,
A third by that poor wretch was seen ;
For where the bush by which he clung
Had from the broken wall outsprung,
He saw two mice precisely there,
One black, one white, a stealthy pair—
He saw the black one and the white,
How at the root by turns they bite,
They gnaw, they pull, they dig, and still
The earth that held its fibres spill,
Which as it rustling downward ran,
The Dragon to look up began,
Watching how soon the shrub and all
Its burden would together fall.

The man in anguish, fear, despair,
Beleaguered, threatened everywhere,
In state of miserable doubt,
In vain for safety gazed about.
But as he looked around him so,
A twig he spied, and on it grow
Ripe berries from their laden stalk ;
Then his desire he could not balk,

When these did once his eye engage,
He saw no more the Camel's rage,
Nor Dragon in the underground,
Nor game the busy mice had found.
The beast above might snort and blow,
The Dragon watch his prey below,
The mice gnaw near him as they pleased—
The berries eagerly he seized ;
They seemed to him right good to eat ;
A dainty mouthful, welcome treat,
They brought him such a keen delight,
His danger was forgotten quite.

But who, you ask, is this vain man,
Who thus forget his terror can ?
Then learn, O friend, that man art thou !
Listen, and I will tell thee hew.
The Dragon in the well beneath,
That is the yawning gulf of death.
The Camel threatening overhead,
Is life's perplexity and dread.
'Tis thou who, life and death between,
Hangest on this world's sapling green ;
And they who gnaw the root, the twain
Who thee and thy support would fain
Deliver unto death a prey,—
These names the mice have, Night and Day.
From morn to evening gnaws the white,
And would the root unfasten quite :

From evening till the morn comes back,
In deepest stillness gnaws the black ;
And yet, in midst of these alarms,
The berry, Pleasure, has such charms,
That thou—the Camel of life's woe,
That thou—the Dragon death below,
That thou, the two mice, Night and Day,
And all forgettest, save the way
To get most berries in thy power,
And on the grave's cleft side devour.



A PASSAGE FROM ST. AUGUSTINE.

WERT thou a wanderer on a foreign strand,
 Who yet couldst only in thy native land
 Find peace or joy or any blessed thing—
 And thy sore travail to an end to bring,
 Shouldst thither now determine to return,
 Since in all other places doomed to mourn—
 But having need of carriages for this,
 To bring thee to thy country and true bliss,
 What if the pleasant motion which they made,
 With the fair prospects on each side displayed,
 Should so attract thee, thou at last wert fain
 The things for use lent only, to retain ;
 Entangled so with their perverse delight,
 That from thy country alienated quite,
 And its true joys whereto thou first didst tend,
 And loathing to approach thy journey's end,
 Thou shouldst be now a pilgrim with the fear
 Lest thy long pilgrimage's close were near—
 If this way it fared with thee, we might say,
 Thou didst man's life unto the life portray.

THE TALENTS.

IMITATED FROM THE PERSIAN.

I.

THOU that in life's crowded city art arrived thou
 know'st not how,
 By what path or on what errand—list and learn thine
 errand now.

II.

From the palace to the city on the business of thy King
 Thou wert sent at early morning, to return at evening.

III.

Dreamer waken, loiterer hasten—what thy task is, un-
 derstand—
 Thou art here to purchase substance, and the price is
 in thy hand.

IV.

Has the tumult of the market all thy sense confused
 and drowned?
 Do its glistening wares entice thee? or its shouts and
 cries confound?

V.

Oh! beware lest thy Lord's business be forgotten, while
thy gaze
Is on every show and pageant which the giddy square
displays.

VI.

Barter not his gold for pebbles—do not trade in vani-
ties—
Pearls there are of price and jewels for the purchase of
the wise.

VII.

And know this, at thy returning thou wilt surely find
the King
With an open book before him, waiting to make reckon-
ing.

VIII.

Then large honours will the faithful earnest service of
one day
Reap of him, but one day's folly largest penalties will
pay.



BEFORE THE CONVENT OF YUSTE, 1556.

FROM THE GERMAN OF COUNT PLATEN.

'THIS night, and storms continually roar,
Ye monks of Spain, now open me the door,

Here in unbroken quiet let me fare,
Save when the loud bell startles you to prayer.

Make ready for me what your house has meet,
A friar's habit and a winding-sheet.

A little cell unto my use assign :
More than the half of all this world was mine.

The head that stoops unto the scissors now,
Under the weight of many crowns did bow.

The shoulders on which now the cowl is flung—
On them the ermine of the Cæsars hung.

I living now as dead myself behold,
And fall in ruins like this kingdom old.

ON A YEW-TREE

IN HOUND CHURCH-YARD, HANTS.

I.

POLLED from this ancient yew-tree may have been
 The branch, with which some English archer sped
 His arrow, when the bravest stooped their head,
 The boldest chivalry of France were seen
 A moment's while beneath that tempest keen
 To stoop their mailèd fronts at Azincour.*
 Such age is thine, who yet dost still endure,
 Unto thy topmost branches fresh and green.

II.

I said—it was a moment in my thought—
 In thy continuance thou must see in scorn
 Man's feeble generations, that are born
 And die, and then unto thy feet are brought.
 But no—for they who are of Nature taught,
 And Nature's self, are evermore too wise
 For barren scorn—her truer sympathies
 Grieve with us o'er the ruin death has wrought.

* This circumstance is narrated by one of the contemporary chroniclers, evidently from the account of an eye-witness.

III.

Thou too, thy many hundred summers past,
Thy many hundred winters, that have seen
Thee in thy dark robe of unfailing green,
Once and for all must lay it off at last :
While that which at thy feet was sown, and cast
To darkness and dishonour, that weak thing
Shall live again, and in continual spring
Hold ever its immortal beauty fast.



HARMOSAN.

[SEE GIBBON'S "DECLINE AND FALL," C. 51.]

I.

NOW the third and fatal conflict for the Persian throne was done,
And the Moslem's fiery valour had the crowning victory won.

II.

Harmosan, the last and boldest the invader to defy,
Captive overborne by numbers, they were bringing forth to die.

III.

Then exclaimed that noble captive—"Lo! I perish in my thirst,
Give me but one drink of water, and let then arrive the worst."

IV.

In his hand he took the goblet, but awhile the draught forbore,
Seeming doubtfully the purpose of the foemen to explore.

V.

Well might then have paused the bravest—for around
him angry foes
With a hedge of naked weapons did that lonely man
enclose.

VI.

“But what fear'st thou?” cried the Caliph;—“is it,
friend, a secret blow?
Fear it not; our gallant Moslem no such treacherous
dealing know.”

VII.

Thou mayst quench thy thirst securely, for thou shalt
not die before
Thou hast drunk that cup of water—this reprieve is
thine—no more.”

VIII.

Quick the Satrap dashed the goblet down to earth with
ready hand,
And the liquid sank for ever, lost amid the burning
sand.

IX.

“Thou hast said that mine my life is, till the water of
that cup
I have drained—then bid thy servants that spilled
water gather up.”

X.

For a moment stood the Caliph as by doubtful passions
stirred,
Then exclaimed,—“For ever sacred must remain a
monarch’s word.

XI.

Bring another cup, and straightway to the noble Persian
give :
Drink, I said before, and perish—now I bid thee drink,
and live.”



TO A ROBIN RED-BREAST,

SINGING IN WINTER.

I.

OH light of heart and wing,
 Light-hearted and light-winged, that dost cheer
 With song of sprightliest note the waning year,
 Thou canst so blithely sing,
 That we must only chide our own dull heart,
 If in thy music we can bear no part.

II.

Thy haunts are winter-bare,
 The leaves in which thou didst so lately keep
 Are being trodden to a miry heap ;
 But thou art void of care,
 And singest not the less, or rather thou
 Hast kept thy best and boldest notes till now.

III.

Thou art so bold to sing
 Thy sweetest music in the saddest hour,
 Because thy trust is in the love and power,
 Which can bring back the spring,

Which can array the naked groves again,
And paint with seasonable flowers the plain.

IV.

But we are merely sad,
Whenas for us this earthly life has shed
The leaves that once arrayed it; and instead
Of rich boughs, foliage-clad,
A few bare sticks and twigs stand nakedly,
Fronting against the cold and angry sky.

V.

Yet would we only see
That hope and joy, the growth of lower earth,
Fall from us, that another truer birth
Of the same things may be;—
That the new buds are travelling up behind,
Though hid as yet beneath the naked rind.

VI.

We should not then resign
All gladness, when spring promises depart,
But 'mid our wintriest bareness should find heart
To join our songs with thine,
Strong to fulfil, in spirit and in voice,
That hardest of all precepts—to rejoice.

GERTRUDE OF SAXONY.

I.

A CLOUDY pillar before Israel went,
 An Angel kept Tobias in the way,
 A star led up the Magians to the tent,
 Wherein new-born the Child of Glory lay :
 Therefore the wayfarers will always say,
 Praise be to him who guides his servants' feet,
 Who keeps them that no evil may assay
 To do them harm—when storm or hot rays beat,
 A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.

II.

On Saxon soil her journey had begun,
 A gentle pilgrim on an holy quest,
 Nor will she that long journey's end have won
 Until Alsatian soil her feet have prest ;
 This maiden there would be a convent's guest,
 Whereof the glory far and wide is told,
 And there she would take up her lasting rest,
 For there, while love of many has grown cold,
 The earnest discipline of ancient times they hold.

III.

And others in her company there were,
An aged kinsman—and, intent on gain,
Some merchants with them the same way did fare ;
Till once when night o’ertook them in the plain,
No shelter won, the merchants then were fain
Re-seek their lodging lately left behind :
The holy pilgrims might not so restrain
Their eager steps, but trusted well to find,
Ere night was fully come, some shelter to their mind.

IV.

But sooner than they looked for, thickest night
Fell—and they gazed around them, if perchance
The lowliest cottage might appear in sight,
For now return they could not, nor advance :
When of a sudden, on that plain’s expanse,
A palace of surpassing beauty rare
Seemed to stand up before them at a glance.
Then gladly did they thitherward repair,
Hoping to find due rest and needful succour there.

V.

And being there arrived, they marvelled much,
For doors and windows open wide they found,
And all without doors and within was such,
With such perfection of fresh beauty crowned.

As though in that day's space from out the ground
New-risen.—Entering in, they wondering saw
How all things for life's use did there abound,
But inmate none appearing, they for awe
And secret fear wellnigh were tempted to withdraw.

VI.

But when they for a season waited had,
Behold! a Matron of majestic air,
Of regal port, in regal garments clad,
Entered alone—who, when they would declare,
With reverence meet, what need had brought them
there
At such untimely hour, smiling replied,
That she already was of all aware;
And added, she was pleased and satisfied
That they to be her guests that night had turned aside.

VII.

And ere the meal she spread for them was done,
Upon a sudden One there entered there,
Whose countenance with marvellous beauty shone,
More than the sons of men divinely fair,
And all whose presence did the likeness wear
Of Angel more than man:—he too, with bland
Mild words saluted them and gracious air;
Sweet comfort, solemn awe, went hand in hand,
While in his presence did those wondering pilgrims
stand.

VIII.

Then turning to that Matron, as a son
Might to a mother speak familiarly,
He spake to her—they only heard the tone.
Not listening, out of reverent courtesy:
And then with smile of large benignity
Saluting them again he left the place,
And was not more seen by them—only she,
That Matron, stayed and talked with them a space,
Whose words were full of sweetness and of heavenly
grace.

IX.

And then she showed them chambers for their rest,
And did not that tired maiden then forget
To take, and lead apart, her weary guest;
And pointing where a ready couch was set,
She with her own hands spread the coverlet
Above her, bidding her till morning rose
That she should render unto sleep his debt,
And suffer him her heavy lids to close;
Then, with a blessing given, she left them to repose.

X.

The morning come, she bade them rise anon,
For now their fellow-travellers were in sight,
Journeying that way, and would be quickly gone—
The merchants whom they quitted yesternight;

Refreshed they rose to meet the early light,
And to rejoin their company prepared :
But first due thanks they tendered, as was right,
To her who had for them so amply cared :
And with those thankful hearts forth on their way
they fared.

XI.

So they set forward from that stately hall,
And now had journeyed for a little space,
When musing much and wondering much at all
Which had befall'n them there, they turned their face
Its fair proportions once again to trace—
When lo! with newer awe their hearts were filled,
For it had wholly vanished from its place,
Like some cloud-palace that the strong winds build,
Which to unmake again they presently have willed.

XII.

While this new admiration them did seize,
They saw some nobles of the land that way
Come riding ; straightway they inquired of these,
If they had never seen, nor yet heard say
Of some great dome that in that quarter lay ;
But these to them made answer constantly,
How they had ridden past by night and day,
But that such stately hall might nowhere be,
Only the level plain, such as they now might see.

XIII.

Thereat from them did thankful utterance break,
And with one voice they praised His tender care
Who had upreared a palace for their sake,
And of that pomp and cost did nothing spare,
Though but to guard them from one night's cold air—
And had no ministries of love disdained ;
And 'twas their thought, if some have unaware
Angels for guests received with love unfeigned,
That they had been by more than Angels entertained.

RETRIBUTION.

OH righteous doom, that they who make
Pleasure their only end,
Ordering the whole life for its sake,
Miss that whereto they tend.

While they who bid stern duty lead,
Content to follow, they,
Of duty only taking heed,
Find pleasure by the way.

EVENING HYMN.

TO the sound of evening bells
All that lives to rest repairs,
Birds unto their leafy dells,
Beasts unto their forest lairs.

All things wear an home-bound look,
From the weary hind that plods
Through the corn-fields, to the rook
Sailing tow'rd the glimmering woods.

'Tis the time with power to bring
Tearful memories of home
To the sailor wandering
On the far-off barren foam.

What a still and holy time!
Yonder glowing sunset seems
Like the pathway to a clime
Only seen till now in dreams.

Pilgrim, here compelled to roam,
Nor allowed that path to tread;
Now when sweetest sense of home
On all living hearts is shed,

Doth not yearning sad, sublime,
At this season stir thy breast,
That thou canst not at this time
Seek thy home and happy rest ?



TO —.

LOOK, dearest, what a glory from the sun
Has fringed that cloud with silver edges bright,
And how it seems to drink the golden light
Of evening—you would think that it had won
A splendour of its own: but lo! anon
You shall behold a dark mass float away,
Emptied of light and radiance, from the day,
Its glory faded utterly and gone.
And doubt not we should suffer the same loss
As this weak vapour, which awhile did seem
Translucent and made pure of all its dross,
If, having shared the light, we should misdeem
That light our own, or count we hold in fee
That which we must receive continually.

TO THE SAME.

WE live not in our moments or our years :
The present we fling from us like the rind
Of some sweet Future, which we after find
Bitter to taste, or bind *that* in with fears,
And water it beforehand with our tears—
Vain tears for that which never may arrive :
Meanwhile the joy whereby we ought to live,
Neglected or unheeded, disappears.
Wiser it were to welcome and make ours
Whate'er of good, though small, the present brings—
Kind greetings, sunshine, song of birds, and flowers,
With a child's pure delight in little things ;
And of the griefs unborn to rest secure,
Knowing that mercy ever will endure.

TO THE SAME.

IF sorrow came not near us, and the lore
Which wisdom-working sorrow best imparts,
Found never time of entrance to our hearts,
If we had won already a safe shore,
Or if our changes were already o'er,
Our pilgrim being we might quite forget,
Our hearts but faintly on those mansions set,
Where there shall be no sorrow any more.
Therefore we will not be unwise to ask
This, nor secure exemption from our share
Of mortal suffering, and life's drearier task—
Not this, but grace our portion so to bear,
That we may rest, when grief and pain are over,
“With the meek Son of our Almighty Lover.”

TO THE SAME.

O DOWERED with a searching glance to see
Quite through the hollow masks, wherewith the bare
And worthless shows of greatness vizored are,
This lore thou hast, because all things to thee
Are proven by the absolute decree
Of duty, and whatever will not square
With that "prime wisdom," though of seeming fair
Or stately, thou rejectest faithfully:
Till chidden in thy strength, each random aim
Of good, whose aspect heavenward does not turn,
Shrinks self-rebuked—thou looking kindest blame
From the calm region of thine eyes, that burn
With tempered but continuous flashes bright,
Like the mild lightnings of a tropic night.

TO THE SAME.

HOW thick the wild-flowers blow about our feet,
Thick-strewn and unregarded, which, if rare,
We should take note how beautiful they were,
How delicately wrought, of scent how sweet.
And mercies which do everywhere us meet,
Whose very commonness should win more praise,
Do for that very cause less wonder raise,
And these with slighter thankfulness we greet.
Yet pause *thou* often on life's onward way,
Pause time enough to stoop and gather one
Of these sweet wild-flowers—time enough to tell
Its beauty over—this when thou hast done,
And marked it duly, then if thou canst lay
It wet with thankful tears into thy bosom, well!

TO MY CHILD.

THY gladness makes me thankful every way,
To look upon thy gladness makes me glad;
While yet in part it well might render sad
Us thinking that we too might sport and play,
And keep like thee continual holiday,
If we retained the things which once we had,
If we like happy neophytes were clad
Still in baptismal stoles of white array.
And yet the gladness of the innocent child
Has not more matter for our thankful glee
Than the dim sorrows of the man defiled;
Since both in sealing one blest truth agree—
Joy is of God, but heaviness and care
Of our own hearts and what has harboured there.

SONNET.

A N open wound that has been healed anew ;
A stream dried up, that once again is fed
With waters making green its grassy bed ;
A tree that withered was, but to the dew
Puts forth young leaves and blossoms fresh of hue,
Even from the branches which had seemed most dead ;
A sea which having been disquieted,
Now stretches like a mirror calm and blue,—
Our hearts to each of these were likened well.
But Thou wert the physician and the balm ;
Thou, Lord, the fountain, whence anew was filled
Their parched channel ; Thou the dew that fell
On their dead branches ; 'twas Thy voice that stilled
The storm within—Thou didst command the calm.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

THE strong in spiritual action need not look
Upon the new-found year as on a scroll,
The which their hands lack cunning to unroll,
But in it read, as in an open book,
All they are seeking—high resolve unshook
By circumstance's unforeseen control,
Successful striving, and whate'er the soul
Has recognised for duty, not forsook.
But they whom many failures have made tame,
Question the future with that reverent fear,
Which best their need of heavenly aid may shew.
Will it have purer thought, and loftier aim
Pursued more loftily? That a man might know
What thou wilt bring him, thou advancing year!

TO THE EVENING STAR.

SOLE star that glitterest in the crimson west,
“ Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of Love,
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,”
With what unblinking eye and jocund crest.
Yet grief from thee has passed into my breast,
For all surpassing glory needs must be
Full unto us of sad perplexity,
Seen from this place of sin and sin’s unrest.
Yea, all things which such perfect beauty own
As this of thine is, tempt us unto tears ;
For whether thou sole-sittest on thy throne,
Or ledest choral dances of thy peers,
Thou and all nature, saving man alone,
Fulfil with music sweet your Maker’s ears.

SONNET.

ALL beautiful things bring sadness, nor alone
A Music, whereof that wisest Poet spake,*
Because in us keen longings they awake
After the good for which we pine and groan,
From which exiled we make continual moan,
Till once again we may our spirits slake
At those clear streams, which man did first forsake,
When he would dig for fountains of his own.
All beauty makes us sad, yet not in vain,—
For who would be ungracious to refuse,
Or not to use, this sadness without pain,
Whether it flows upon us from the hues
Of sunset, from the time of stars and dews,
From the clear sky, or waters pure of stain?

* I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON THE CONSECRATION OF A NEW
CHURCH-YARD.

THAT we may here securely lay our dead,
In peace to rest till that great trumpet call,
This spot henceforth we hedge around from all
Offence of careless or injurious tread ;
And from henceforth this mould is hallow'd,
That so not merely by an outward law,
But through a secret and invisible awe
They may be guarded in their narrow bed.
Ye reverential fears, lest aught offend
The unfeeling trunk, or outrage the dry dust,
Fears by this work attested, hail ! all hail !
Sure pledge and proof that this is not the end ;
Till faith, and piety, and Christian trust,
Fail from among us, ye shall never fail.

L ORD, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power.
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us in prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

ONCE if I felt no heart nor strength to pray,
If of a sudden vanished quite I found
The goods wherein I dreamed I did abound,
And this blank mood continued many a day,
I was quite swallowed up in dim dismay :
My heart, I said, by deadly frost is bound,
And never will warm days again come round :
But now more hopefully I learn to say—
It is some sin that, lurking in my breast,
Troubles the host,* which being once confest,
He will his presence and his light restore ;
Or thus one needful lesson he is fain
To teach—that in ourselves we are always poor,
Which learned, he soon will make me rich again.

* See Josh. vii. 25.

A GARDEN so well watered before morn
Is hotly up, that not the swart sun's blaze,
Down beating with unmitigated rays,
Nor arid winds from scorching places borne,
Shall quite prevail to make it bare and shorn
Of its green beauty, shall not quite prevail
That all its morning freshness shall exhale,
Till evening and the evening dews return—
A blessing such as this our hearts might reap,
The freshness of the garden they might share,
Through the long day an heavenly freshness keep,
If knowing how the day and the day's glare
Must beat upon them, we would largely steep
And water them betimes with dews of prayer.



WHEN hearts are full of yearning tenderness
For the loved absent, whom we cannot reach—
By deed or token, gesture or kind speech
The spirit's true affection to express ;
When hearts are full of innermost distress,
And we are doomed to stand inactive by,
Watching the soul's or body's agony,
Which human effort helps not to make less—
Then like a cup capacious to contain
The overflowings of the heart, is prayer ;
The longing of the soul is satisfied,
The keenest darts of anguish blunted are ;
And though we cannot cease to yearn or grieve,
Yet we have learned in patience to abide.

IF we with earnest effort could succeed
To make our life one long connected prayer,
As lives of some perhaps have been and are,
If never leaving Thee, we had no need
Our wandering spirits back again to lead
Into thy presence, but continued there,
Like Angels standing on the highest stair
Of the sapphire throne, this were to pray indeed.
But if distractions manifold prevail,
And if in this we must confess we fail,
Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for prayer and praise,
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze.

THE TEMPTATION.

WHEN man was foiled in Paradise, he fell
From that fair spot, thenceforward to confess
The barren and the thorny wilderness
Was the one place where he had right to dwell:
And therefore in the wilderness as well
The second Adam did that strife decide,
And those closed gates again set open wide,
Victorious o'er the wiles and strength of hell.
Thou wentest to the proof, O fearless Lord,
Even to the desert, as thy battle field,
A champion going of his free accord:
We had no fears, for unlike him of old
Who lost that battle for us, thou didst wield
Arms of unearthly temper, heavenly mould.

WHEN we have failed to chasten and restrain
Our wandering thoughts, and in return they cheat
And mock us with some poor yet proud conceit,
And idlest fancies in procession vain
(Ourselves their centre) flock through heart and brain,
Each tendering amplest homage at our feet,
Till loathing of each humbler task we meet,
Has grown upon us, scorn and sick disdain—
What then will make our hideous pride to sink,
Or what the spirit's temper will restore,—
Where in the world of healing is there spell
So mighty, as at times like these to think
Of Jesus sitting by Samaritan well,
Or teaching some poor fishers on the shore?

HE might have built a palace at a word,
Who sometimes had not where to lay his head :
Time was, and he who nourished crowds with bread,
Would not one meal unto himself afford :
Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
Were at his beck, the scorned and buffeted :
He healed another's scratch, his own side bled,
Side, feet, and hands, with cruel piercings gored.
Oh wonderful the wonders left undone !
And scarce less wonderful than those he wrought ;
Oh self-restraint, passing all human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none ;
Oh self-denying Love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own.

WHEN God is to be served, the cost we weigh
In anxious balance, grudging the expense :
The world may use profuse magnificence ;
A thousand lamps from gilded roof may sway,
Where its poor votaries turn the night to day,
And who will blame ? but if two tapers shine
Apart before some solitary shrine,
“ Why was this waste ? ” indignantly men say.
Oh hearts unlike to his who would not bring
To God, releasing him from dismal fears,
What cost him nothing for an offering !
Unlike to hers, commended while she shed
Of that true nard which grows in spiky ears,
A rich libation on her Saviour’s head !

Into whatever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy ; and there abide till ye go thence.—*MATT. x. 11.*

I.

LORD, weary of a painful way,
 All night our heads we would not lay
 Under the naked sky ;
 But ask who worthiest ? who will best
 Entreat a tired and lowly guest
 With promptest courtesy ?

II.

And Thou art worthiest ; there will not
 One loving usage be forgot
 By Thee ; thy kiss will greet
 Us entering ; Thou wilt not disdain
 To wash away each guilty stain
 From off our soil'd feet ?

III.

We enter, from this time to prove
 Thy hospitality and love
 Shown tow'rd thy meanest guest :
 From house to house we would not stray ;
 For whither should we go away ?
 With Thee is perfect rest.

I.

ONE time I was allowed to steer
Through realms of azure light ;—
Henceforth, I said, I need not fear
A lower, meaner flight :
But here shall evermore abide,
In light and splendour glorified.

II.

My heart one time the rivers fed,
Large dews upon it lay ;
A freshness it has won, I said,
Which shall not pass away,
But what it is, it shall remain,
Its freshness to the end retain.

III.

But when I lay upon the shore,
Like some poor wounded thing,
I deemed I should not ever more
Refit my shattered wing—
Nailed to the ground and fastened there :
This was the thought of my despair.

IV.

And when my very heart seemed dried,
And parched as summer dust,
Such still I deemed it must abide ;
No hope had I, no trust
That any power again could bless
With fountains that waste wilderness.

V.

But if both hope and fear were vain,
And came alike to nought,
Two lessons we from this may gain,
If aught *can* teach us aught—
One lesson rather—to divide
Between our fearfulness and pride.



I.

THIS did not once so trouble me,
That better I could not love Thee ;
But now I feel and know
That only when we love, we find
How far our hearts remain behind
The love they should bestow.

II.

While we had little care to call
On Thee, and scarcely prayed at all,
We seemed enough to pray :
But now we only think with shame,
How seldom to thy glorious Name
Our lips their offerings pay.

III.

And when we gave yet slighter heed
Unto our brother's suffering need,
Our hearts reproached us then
Not half so much as now, that we
With such a careless eye can see
The woes and wants of men.

IV.

In doing is this knowledge won,
 To see what yet remains undone ;
 With this our pride repress,
 And give us grace, a growing store,
 That day by day we may do more,
 And may esteem it less.

LORD, many times I am awear̄y quite
 Of mine own self, my sin, my vanity—
 Yet be not Thou, or I am lost outright,
 Weary of me.

And hate against myself I often bear,
 And enter with myself in fierce debate :
 Take Thou my part against myself, nor share
 In that just hate.

Best friends might loathe us, if what things perverse
 We know of our own selves, they also knew :
 Lord, Holy One ! if Thou who knowest worse
 Shouldst loathe us too !

THE DAY OF DEATH.

THOU inevitable day,
 When a voice to me shall say—
 “Thou must rise and come away ;

All thine other journeys past,
 Gird thee, and make ready fast
 For thy longest and thy last”—

Day deep-hidden from our sight
 In impenetrable night,
 Who may guess of thee aright ?

Art thou distant, art thou near ?
 Wilt thou seem more dark or clear ?
 Day with more of hope or fear ?

Wilt thou come, not seen before
 Thou art standing at the door,
 Saying, light and life are o'er ?

Or with such a gradual pace,
As shall leave me largest space
To regard thee face to face ?

Shall I lay my drooping head
On some loved lap, round my bed
Prayer be made and tears be shed ?

Or at distance from mine own,
Name and kin alike unknown,
Make my solitary moan ?

Will there yet be things to leave,
Hearts to which this heart must cleave,
From which parting it must grieve ?

Or shall life's best ties be o'er,
And all loved ones gone before
To that other happier shore ?

Shall I gently fall on sleep,
Death, like slumber, o'er me creep,
Like a slumber sweet and deep ?

Or the soul long strive in vain
To get free, with toil and pain
From its half-divided chain ?

Little skills it where or how,
 If thou comest then or now,
 With a smooth or angry brow ;

Come thou must, and we must die—
 Jesus, Saviour, stand Thou by,
 When that last sleep seals our eye.



And Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.

EXOD. XXXIV. 29.

IF that in sight of God is great
 Which counts itself for small,
 We by that law humility
 The chiefest grace must call ;
 Which being such, not knows itself
 To be a grace at all.

How glorious was that meekest man
 In all eyes save his own,
 When from his splendid countenance
 On all the people shone
 A glory insupportable,
 Unto himself unknown.

THE LAW OF LOVE.

SEE 2 KINGS IV. 1-6.

POUR forth the oil, pour boldly forth,
 It will not fail until
 Thou failest vessels to provide,
 Which it may largely fill.


But then, when such are found no more,
 Though flowing broad and free
 Till then, and nourished from on high,
 It straightway stauched will be.

Dig channels for the streams of Love,
 Where they may broadly run ;
 And Love has overflowing streams
 To fill them every one.

But if at any time thou cease
 Such channels to provide,
 The very founts of Love for thee
 Will soon be parched and dried.

For we must share, if we would keep,
That good thing from above ;
Ceasing to give, we cease to have—
Such is the law of Love.

BY Grecian annals it remained untold,
But may be read in eastern legend old,
How when great Alexander died, he bade
That his two hands uncovered might be laid
Outside the bier—for men therewith to see,
(Men who had seen him in his majesty,
That he had gone the common way of all,
And nothing now his own in death might call ;
Nor of the treasures of two empires aught
Within those empty hands unto the grave had brought.



A GENIAL moment oft has given
What years of toil and pain,
Of long industrious toil, have striven
To win, and all in vain.

Yet count not, when thine end is won,
That labour merely lost ;
Nor say it had been wiser done
To spare the painful cost.

When heaped upon the altar lie
All things to feed the fire—
One spark alighting from on high—
The flames at once aspire.

But those sweet gums and fragrant woods,
Its rich materials rare,
By tedious quest o'er lands and floods
Had first been gathered there.

DUST TO DUST.

O H blessing wearing semblance of a curse,
We fear thee, thou stern sentence—yet to be
Linked to immortal bodies were far worse
Than thus to be set free.

For mingling with the life-blood through each vein
The venom of the serpent's bite has run,
And only thus might be expelled again—
Thus only health be won.

Shall we not then a gracious sentence own,
Now since the leprosy has fretted through
The entire house, that Thou wilt take it down,
And build it all anew ?

Build it this time (since Thou wilt build again)
An holy house, where righteousness may dwell ;
And we, though in the unbuilding there be pain,
Will still affirm,—'tis well.

IF there had anywhere appeared in space
Another place of refuge, where to flee,
Our hearts had taken refuge in that place,
And not with Thee.

For we against creation's bars had beat
Likeprisoned eagles, through great worlds had sought
Though but a foot of ground to plant our feet,
Where Thou wert not.

And only when we found in earth and air,
In heaven or hell that such might nowhere be—
That we could not flee from Thee anywhere,
We fled to Thee.

TO A FRIEND.

THE courses of our lives, that side by side
Ran for some little while, are sundered now ;
We meet not now, as once, day after day,
In pleasant intercourse to change our thoughts :
Yet I remember often all that time,
And all the thoughts that filled it—for just then
We were as merchants seeking goodly pearls,
Seeking one pearl of price ; and when we read
In books of some, or met on life's highway,
Who had returned as from a fruitless quest,
Bringing these tidings only, that all lands
They had gone through, had searched the furthest coasts,
Wherever Fame reported that such pearl
Was to be won, but still had nothing found,
And now believed not there was aught to find,
Our hearts would die within us, loath to leave
Their hope, which yet grew weaker day by day,
That somewhere was a key which should unlock
The many chambers of this human life,
A law harmoniously to reconcile

All the perplexed appearances of things,
A treasure which should make the finder rich
For ever: for slight profit then to us,
And little comfort might we draw from things
Wherein some found, or thought at least they found,
The immortal longings of their spirits slaked,
And all life's mystery lightened. What at best
The beautiful creations of man's art,
If resting not on some diviner ground
Than man's own mind that formed them, at the best
What but the singing of a mournful dirge,
What but the scattering flowers upon the grave
Of man's abandoned hopes and buried joys?
Oh miserable comfort! Loss is loss,
And death is death, and after all is done,
After the flowers are scattered on the tomb,
After the singing of the sweetest dirge,
The mourner with his heart un comforted,
Returning to his solitary home,
Thinks with himself, if any one had aught
Of stronger consolation, he should speak;
If not, 't were best for ever to hold peace,
And not to mock him with vain words like these.
Such, and no more, to us contemplating
The life of man, such, and no truer, seemed
The alleviations to be won from these,
Poor withering garlands flung upon a grave,
The mournful beauty of a couchant Sphinx,

Watching by some half-buried pyramid,
Or fallen column in the wilderness.

And Nature's self, our foster-mother dear,
What could she do for us? what help impart?
Or when we felt that we were orphans here,
Or when our orphan hearts within us mourned,
And fled unto her bosom, there to find
Pity and love, there were no beatings there,
There were no pulses in her cold cold heart;
She had no happy family of love,
In which to adopt us. Beauty without love,
How should it cherish or make less forlorn
The forlorn heart of man? what comfort yield?
Yea, rather must it be a tearful thing,
And such we felt it; such it was to us,
Who gazed upon the incense-breathing flowers,
Trees and rejoicing rivers—sun and stars,
Keeping their courses in untroubled joy,
By sin unstained, by longings undisturbed,
While we, the first-fruits of creation, we
For whose dear sake all other things were made,
Were as we were:—but they appeared to us
Like the hired servants whom the Prodigal
Bethought him of, as satisfied with bread,
While we, the children of our Father's house,
Were perishing with hunger far away.
What lounging had we then to be as these,

To be as flowers or trees, as rocks or stones,
Glad might we have relinquished and put by
The burden of our immortality,
And all the drear prerogatives of man.

Or sometimes finding little nearer home,
That we should love to dwell with our own hearts,
We looked abroad, and spake of some bright dawn
Of happiness and freedom, peace and love,
Day long desired, and now about to break
On all the nations—yet the while we felt
That we were speaking false and hollow words,—
For how should man, despairing of himself,
Have hope for others? where no centre is,
Centre established sure of life and joy,
What is it but an idle thing to draw
The widest circle of imagined good
At distance round us? where 'tis ill with each,
How vain to hope it should be well with all!

But now, though not to outward change we look
For the fulfilling of that glorious hope,
Have we renounced that hope—? or is it grown
A less substantial vision, because now
No fabled world, imagined isles beyond
The liminary ocean, such as never
Have been but in the longing of man's heart,
Not these now occupy our hearts and hopes;

But Eden and the New Jerusalem,
The garden and the city of our God,
The things which have been and shall be again,
Fill up the prospect upon either side,
Before us and behind? or have we left
Our love for Nature, now to love her less,
Since we have learned that all we so admire
Is yet but as her soiled and weekday dress,
And nothing to the glory she shall wear,
When for the coming sabbath of the world
She shall put on her festival attire—
Or closed our hearts to what of beautiful
Man by strong spell and earnest toil has won
To take intelligible forms of art,
Now that all these are recognised to be
Desires and yearnings, feeling after him
And by him only to be satisfied,
Who is himself the eternal Loveliness?

Has it been so with us, that men should say,
That they should say with reason we have now
Narrowed our hearts, forsaken our old joy
In Nature, or renounced the glorious hope
That once we cherished for the race of man?
That hope, that joy, that longing, still are ours,
And shall continue with us to the end,
Else better not to be. True is it, we walk
Under the shadow of such mysteries,

That how should they not darken us sometimes ?
And how, in such a mournful world as this,
Should Love be other than a sorrowing thing,
A call to grieve ? for though its golden key
Sets open to us a new world of joys,
Yet has it griefs and sorrows of its own,
Making things grievous that we once could bear
To look at with a careless tearless eye.

WEEP not for broad lands lost ;
Weep not for fair hopes crost ;
Weep not when limbs wax old ;
Weep not when friends grow cold ;
Weep not that Death must part
Thine and the best-loved heart ;
Yet weep, weep all thou can—
Weep, weep, because thou art
A sin-defilèd man.

TO POETRY.

I.

IN my life's youth, while yet the deeper needs
 Of the inmost spirit unawakened were,
 Thou couldst recount of high heroic deeds,
 Couldst add a glory unto earth and air,—
 A crowning glory, making fair more fair :
 So that my soul was pleased and satisfied,
 Which had as yet no higher deeper care,
 And said that thou shouldst evermore abide
 With me, and make my bliss, and be my spirit's bride.

II.

But years went on, and thoughts which slept before,
 Over the horizon of my soul arose—
 Thoughts which perplexed me ever more and more ;
 As though a Sphinx should meet one, and propose
 Enigmas hard, and which whoso not knows
 To interpret, must her prey and victim be ;
 And I, round whom thick darkness seemed to close,
 Knew only this one thing, that misery
 Remained, if none could solve this riddle unto me.

III.

Then I remembered how from thy lips fell
Large words of promise, how thou couldst succeed
All darkest mysteries of life to spell ;
Therefore I pleaded with thee now to read
The riddle that was baffling me, with speed,
To yield some answer to the questioning.
Something thou spak'st, but nothing to my need,
So that I counted thee an idle thing,
Who, having promised much, couldst no true succour
bring.

IV.

And I turned from thee, and I left thee quite,
And of thy name to hear had little care :
For I was only seeking if by flight
I might shun *her*, who else would rend and tear
Me, who could not her riddle dark declare :—
This toil, the anguish of this flight was mine,
Until at last, inquiring everywhere,
I won an answer from another shrine,
A holier oracle, a temple more divine.

V.

But when no longer without hope I mourned,
When peace and joy revived in me anew,
Even from that moment my old love returned,
My former love, yet wiser and more true,

As seeing what for us thy power can do,
And what thy skill can make us understand
And know—and where that skill attained not to
How far thou canst sustain us by thy hand,
And what things shall in us a holier care demand—

VI.

My love of thee and thine ; for earth and air,
And every common sight of sea and plain,
Then put new robes of glory on, and wear
The same till now, and things which dead had lain
Revived, as flowers that smell the dew and rain :
I was a man again of hopes and fears,
The fountains of my heart flowed forth again,
Whose sources had seemed dry for many years,
And there was given me back the sacred gift of tears.

VII.

And that old hope, which never quite had perished,
A longing which had stirred me from a boy,
And which in darkest seasons I had cherished,
Which nothing could quite vanquish or destroy,
This with all other things of life and joy
Revived within me—and I too would seek
The power, that moved my own heart, to employ
On others, who perchance would hear me speak,
If but the tones were true, although the voice were weak.

VIII.

Though now there seems one only worthy aim
 For poet,—that my strength were as my will!—
 And which renounce he cannot without blame—
 To make men feel the presence by his skill
 Of an eternal loveliness, until
 All souls are faint with longing for their home,
 Yet the same while are strengthened to fulfil
 Their work on earth, that they may surely come
 Unto the land of Life, who here as exiles roam.

IX.

And what though loftiest fancies are not mine,
 Nor words of chiefest power, yet unto me
 Some voices reach out of the inner shrine,
 Heard in mine heart of hearts, and I can see
 At times some glimpses of the majesty,
 Some prints and footsteps of the glory trace,
 Which have been left on earth, that we might be
 By them led forward to the secret place,
 Where we perchance might see that glory face to face.

X.

If in this quest, O power of sacred song,
 Thou canst assist,—oh, never take thy flight!
 If thou canst make us gladder or more strong,
 If thou canst fling glimpses of glorious light

Upon life's deepest depth and highest height,
Or pour upon its low and level plain
A gleam of mellow gladness, if this might
Thou hast—(and it is thine)—then not in vain
Are we henceforth prepared to follow in thy train.



SONNET

ON THE REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEERS IN HYDE PARK BY
THE QUEEN, 1860.

NO pause, no stay—a glorious hour or more,
And that loud-clashing music is not dumb ;
For still the thick battalions come and come,
As though all England the long pent-up store
Of her deliberate valour would outpour,
Not flaunting in war liveries rich and gay,
But all in sober green and working gray,
O Lady of the land, thy feet before.
High beats thine heart, the Lady of a land
That breeds such men ; and theirs beats proud and high,
Who only with step statelier and more grand
Would move beneath thy recompensing eye,
Girt, if that day should call them, to reply
On some dread field to duty's last demand.

POEMS WRITTEN DURING THE RUSSIAN
WAR, 1854, 1855.



I.

WHAT though yet the spirit slumbers
That should clothe great acts in song,
Stirring but in feeble numbers,
Loosening but a stammering tongue ;

Still, as well my soul presages,
Mightier voices soon will sound,
Which shall ring through all the ages,
While the nations listen round.

For even now the thoughts are waking,
And the deeds are being done,
Deeds and thoughts, the poet's making,
Whence his solemn heart is won.

If Thermopylæ's three hundred,
They who kept the pass so well,—
If at them all time has wondered,
As they fought, and as they fell,

With their deed of duty cast they
Our six hundred in the shade,
When at that same bidding past they
To their closing death-parade?

Let them their due praise inherit,
Those of weaker woman-kind,
Who in times past owned a spirit,
Which has left man's strength behind;

Yet our hearts and hearts' devotion
Wait upon that noble train,
Who have crossed the distant ocean
For a fellowship with pain;

Seeking, as men seek for riches,
Painful vigils by the bed
Where the maimed and dying stretches
Aching limbs beside the dead:

And for this great suffering nation
Sealed those fountains shall not prove,
Those old springs of inspiration,
Mighty death, and mightier love.

But meanwhile, the pauses filling,
Till that deeper soul be stirred,
Mother-land, thou wilt be willing
That some fainter notes be heard.

What if thou in bitter mourning
Dost beside the graves recline
Of thy lost and unreturning,
Yet no Rachel's grief is thine.

Stately grief, not wild and tameless,
Thine, the privileged to see
Gentle, simple, named and nameless,
Willing all to die for thee ;

Foremost names in thine old story,
Foremost in these death-rolls shown,
Heirs no more of others' glory,
But the makers of their own.

Thy great mother-heart is bleeding,
Torn and pierc'd through and through,
Post on heavy post succeeding,
Bearing each some anguish new.

Yet the right thy bosom strengthens,
Nought in thee of courage dies,
Though the long sad death-list lengthens,
Ever lengthens in thine eyes.

These are gone ; thou nursest others
Of the same heroic breed,
Good as they, their spirits' brothers,
To their hazards to succeed.

Then, while this thy grief's great fashion,
From all weakness far removed,
This thy steadfast solemn passion
By the graves of thy beloved,

Thou wilt let him pass unchidden,
Wilt perchance vouchsafe an ear,
Who too weakly and unbidden
Dares to sound their praises here ;

This slight tribute of his bringing
Thou wilt not in scorn put by ;
And wilt pardon one for singing,
While so many do and die.



II.

ALMA.

THOUGH till now ungraced in story, scant al-
 though thy waters be,
 Alma, roll those waters proudly, proudly roll them to
 the sea.

Yesterday unnamed, unhonoured, but to wandering
 Tartar known,
 Now thou art a voice for ever, to the world's four
 corners blown.

In two nations' annals graven, thou art now a death-
 less name,
 And a star for ever shining in their firmament of
 fame.

Many a great and ancient river, crowned with city,
 tower, and shrine,
 Little streamlet, knows no magic, boasts no potency
 like thine;

Cannot shed the light thou sheddest around many a
living head,
Cannot lend the light thou lendest to the memories
of the dead.

Yea, nor all unsoothed their sorrow, who can, proudly
mourning, say—
When the first strong burst of anguish shall have
wept itself away—

“ He has passed from us, the loved one ; but he sleeps
with them that died
By the Alma, at the winning of that terrible hill-
side.”

Yes, and in the days far onward, when we all are calm
as those,
Who beneath thy vines and willows on their hero-beds
repose,

Thou on England's banners blazoned with the famous
fields of old,
Shalt, where other fields are winning, wave above the
brave and bold :

And our sons unborn shall nerve them for some great
deed to be done,
By that twentieth of September, when the Alma's
heights were won.

O thou river! dear for ever to the gallant, to the
free,
Alma, roll thy waters proudly, proudly roll them to
the sea.



III.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

WE crowned the hard-won heights at length,
 Baptized in flame and fire ;
We saw the foeman's sullen strength,
 That grimly made retire ;

Saw close at hand, then saw more far
 Beneath the battle smoke
The ridges of his shattered war,
 That broke and ever broke.

But one, an English household's pride,
 Dear many ways to me,
Who climbed that death-path by my side,
 I sought, but could not see.

Last seen, what time our foremost rank
 That iron tempest tore ;
He touched, he scaled the rampart bank,
 Seen then, and seen no more.

One friend to aid, I measured back
 With him that pathway dread ;
No fear to wander from our track,
 Its waymarks English dead.

Light thickened ; but our search was crowned,
 As we too well divined ;
And after briefest quest we found
 What we most feared to find.

His bosom with one death-shot riven,
 The warrior boy lay low ;
His face was turned unto the heaven,
 His feet unto the foe.

As he had fall'n upon the plain,
 Inviolate he lay ;
No ruffian spoiler's hand profane
 Had touched that noble clay.

And precious things he still retained,
 Which by one distant hearth,
Loved tokens of the loved, had gained
 A worth beyond all worth.

I treasured these for them who yet
 Knew not their mighty woe ;
I softly sealed his eyes, and set
 One kiss upon his brow.

A decent grave we scooped him, where
 Less thickly lay the dead,
And decently composed him there
 Within that narrow bed.

O theme for manhood's bitter tears,
 The beauty and the bloom
Of less than twenty summer years
 Shut in that darksome tomb!

Of soldier sire the soldier son—
 Life's honoured eventide
One lives to close in England, one
 In maiden battle died;

And they that should have been the mourned,
 The mourners' parts obtain :
Such thoughts were ours, as we returned
 To earth its earth again.

Brief words we read of faith and prayer
 Beside that hasty grave ;
Then turned away, and left him there,
 The gentle and the brave ;

I calling back with thankful heart,
 With thoughts to peace allied,
Hours when we two had knelt apart
 Upon the lone hill-side :

And, comforted, I praised the grace,
Which him had led to be
An early seeker of that face,
Which he should early see.



IV.

BALAKLAVA.

MANY a deed of faithful daring may obtain no
 record here,

Wrought where none could see or note it, save the
 one Almighty Seer.

Many a deed, awhile remembered, out of memory
 needs must fall,

Covered, as the years roll onward, by oblivion's
 creeping pall:

But there are which never, never, to oblivion can
 give room,

Till in flame earth's records perish, till the thunder-
 peal of doom.

And of these through all the ages married to immor-
 tal fame,

One is linked, and linked for ever, Balaklava, with
 thy name;

With thine armies three that wond'ring stood at gaze
and held their breath,
With thy fatal lists of honour, and thy tournament of
death.

Oh our brothers that are sleeping, weary with your
great day's strife,
On that bleak Crimean headland, noble prodigals of
life,

Eyes which ne'er beheld you living, these have dearly
mourned you dead,
All your squandered wealth of valour, all the lavish
blood ye shed.

And in our eyes tears are springing ; but we bid them
back again ;
None shall say, to see us weeping, that we hold your
offering vain ;

That for nothing, in our sentence, did that holocaust
arise,
With a battle-field for altar, and with you for sacri-
fice.

Not for nought ; to more than warriors armed as you
for mortal fray,
Unto each that in life's battle waits his Captain's
word ye say—

“ What by duty’s voice is bidden, there where duty’s
star may guide,
Thither follow, that accomplish, whatsoever else be-
tide.”

This ye taught; and this your lesson solemnly in
blood ye sealed:

Heroes, martyrs, are the harvest Balaklava’s heights
shall yield.



V.

'H TAN, 'H 'EIII TAN.

“**T**HIS, or on this;”—“Bring home with thee this
shield,

Or be thou, dead, upon this shield brought home”—

So spake the Spartan mother to the son

Whom her own hands had armed. Oh strong of heart!

Yet know I of a fairer strength than this—

Strength linked with weakness, steeped in tears and
fears,

And tenderness of trembling womanhood;

But true as hers to duty's perfect law.

And such is theirs, who in our England now,

Wives, sisters, mothers, watch by day, by night,

In many a cottage, many a stately hall,

For those dread posts, too slow, too swift, that haste

O'er land and sea, the messengers of doom;

Theirs, who ten thousand times would rather hear

Of loved forms stretched upon the bloody sod,

All cold and stark, but with the debt they owed
To that dear land that bore them duly paid,
Than look to enfold them in fond arms again,
By aught in honour's or in peril's path
Unduly shunned, reserved for that embrace.



VI.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER THE FIFTH,
1854.

CHEERLY with us that great November morn
Rose, as I trace its features in my mind ;
A day that in the lap of winter born,
Yet told of autumn scarcely left behind.

And we by many a hearth in all the land,
Whom quiet sleep had lapped the calm night
through,
Changed greetings, lip with lip, and hand to hand,
Old greetings, but which love makes ever new.

Then, as the day brought with it sweet release
From this world's care, with timely feet we trod
The customary paths of blessed peace,
We worshipped in the temples of our God ;

And when the sun had travelled his brief arc,
 Drew round our hearths again in thankful ease ;
 With pleasant light we chased away the dark,
 We sat at eve with children round our knees.

So fared this day with us ;—but how with you ?
 What, gallant hosts of England, was your cheer,
 Who numbered hearts as gentle and as true
 As any kneeling at our altars here ?

From cheerless watches on the cold dank ground
 Startled, ye felt a foe on every side ;
 With mist and gloom and deaths encompassed round,
 With even to perish in the light denied.

And that same season of our genial ease,
 It was your very agony of strife ;
 While each of those our golden moments sees
 With you the ebbing of some noble life.

'Mid dark ravines, by precipices vast,
 Did there and here your dreadful conflict sway :
 No Sabbath day's light work to quell at last
 The fearful odds of that unequal fray.

Oh "hope" of England, only not "forlorn,"
 Because ye never your own hope resigned,
 But in worst case, beleaguered, overborne,
 Did help in God and in your own selves find ;

We greet you o'er the waves, as from this time
Men, to the meanest and the least of whom,
In reverence of fortitude sublime,

We would rise up, and yield respectful room :

We greet you o'er the waves, nor fear to say,
Our Sabbath setting side by side with yours,
Yours was the better and far nobler day,
And days like it have made that ours endures.



VII.

THE UNFORGOTTEN.

WHOM for thy race of heroes wilt thou own,
 And, England, who shall be thy joy, thy pride ?
 As thou art just, oh then not those alone
 Who nobly conquering lived, or conquering died.

Them also in thy roll of heroes write,
 For well they earned what best thou canst bestow,
 Who being girt and arm'd for the fight,
 Yielded their arms, but to no mortal foe.

Far off they pined on fever-stricken coast,
 Or sank in sudden arms of painful death,
 And faces which their eyes desired the most,
 They saw not, as they drew their parting breath.

Sad doom, to know a mighty work in hand,
 Which shall from all the ages honour win ;
 Upon the threshold of this work to stand,
 Arrested there, while others enter in.

And this was theirs ; they saw their fellows bound
To fields of fame, which they might never share ;
And all the while within their own hearts found
A strength that was not less, to do and dare ;

But knew that never never with their peers
They should salute some great day's glorious close,
The shout of triumph ringing in their ears,
The light of battle shining on their brows.

Sad doom ;—yet say not Heaven to them assigned
A lot from all of glory quite estranged ;
Albeit the laurel which they hoped to bind
About their brows for cypress wreath was changed.

Heaven gave to them a glory stern, austere,
A glory of all earthly glory shorn ;
With firm heart to accept fate's gift severe,
Bravely to bear the thing that must be borne ;

To see such visions fade and turn to nought,
And in this saddest issue to consent ;
If only the great work be duly wrought,
That others should accomplish it, content.

Then as thou wouldst thyself continue great,
Keep a true eye for what is great indeed ;
Nor know it only in its lofty state
And victor's robes, but in its lowliest weed.

And now, and when this dreadful work is done,
England, be these too thy delight and pride ;
Wear them as near thy heart as any one
Of all who conquering lived, or conquering died.



VIII.

JUNE, 1855.

HEART of England, faltering never in the good
time or the ill,
But thy great day's task of duty strong and patient to
fulfil ;

Men of England, constant ever, to your own plain
instincts true,
Praise the Giver of all good things for the gift He
gave to you ;

Praise the Giver of all good things, praise the Giver
of the best,
Of a firm heart firmly beating in a strong resolved
breast.

Praise Him that, when others faltered, ye continued
at one stay,
Praise Him that the hour of weakness has for ever
passed away.

To her cancelled scroll of greatness none shall now set
England's name ;
What She sowed in tears and anguish She shall never
reap in shame.

Lift your heads up, oh ye weepers ; from the dust
yourselves arouse ;
Chase away the double sadness that was gathering on
your brows.

Lift your heads up, oh ye weepers ; those that were
your joy and pride,
Those whom you must weep for ever, not for nothing
shall have died.

If the crown of all your gladness has been stricken
from your head,
If, discrowned, ye mourn in ashes for your unreturn-
ing dead,

Not to purchase shameful baffling at a higher dearer
rate
Than our fathers purchased honour, were your homes
made desolate.

For oh ! hearken *ye*, and hearken, all who still retain
delight
In the old land's fiery valour, in the victories of
right ;

List, oh! list, what tales of triumph flash the magic
wires along
Long delayed, now each on other in a swift succession
throng.

First-fruits of a mightier harvest, preludes of a loftier
strain,
Pledges of a part well-chosen, stir our hearts again,
again ;

Till in his good time He give us, who has proved and
purified,
Who has shamed our shallow boasting, who has tamed
our guilty pride,

Till He give us, when the giving shall not lift us up
nor spoil,
All we sought, the ample guerdon of a nation's truth
and toil.



IX.

THE RETURN OF THE GUARDS.

JULY, 1856.

TWO years—an age of glory and of pain!—
 Since we with blessings and with shouts and tears,
 And with high hopes pursued your parting train,
 With everything but fears.

Too lightly then, perchance, we let you go,—
 For war is sweet to them that never tried,
 And hearts are sullen which refuse to know
 Its splendour and its pride.

Forth from beside our hearths we saw you pass,
 And guessed that battle must be stern and strong;
 War's shapes we saw,—but dimly, in a glass,—
 Its shapes of wrath and wrong.

We saw not, Heaven in mercy did not show,
 The fiery squadrons rushing to their doom,
 An army in its winding-sheet of snow,
 Nor Varna's charnel tomb.

We saw not Scutari's piled-up agonies,
Nor those blest hands and hearts that brought relief;
Splendours and glooms were hidden from our eyes,—
 What glory and what grief!

One thing we saw, one only thing we knew,
Come what come might, ye would not bring to shame
The loved land, which had trusted thus to you
 Its wealth of ancient fame.

Therefore the old land greets you, whose renown
In face of friend and foe ye well upbore,
Handing the treasure of its glory down
 Bright, brighter than before.

And greets you first, as owing you the most,
The Lady, whose transcendent diadem,
Unless she ruled brave men, would cease to boast
 Its best and fairest gem.

But ah! if through her bosom there is sent,
Nor hers alone, a pang of piercing pain,
With tearful memories of the brave who went,
 And come not now again,

All who have made a holy land for aye,
(Such consecration is in glorious graves
Of that bleak barren headland far away,
 Foamed round by Euxine waves;

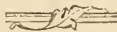
Yet shall this sadness presently depart,
Leaving undimmed the splendour of this hour ;
We rather thanking Heaven with grateful heart
For their high gift and dower,

Who, ending well, have passed beyond the range
Of our mutations ; whom no spot or stain
Can now touch ever ; for whom chance and change
Not any more remain.

Shout then, ye people ; let glad thoughts have way ;
Shout, and in these their absent fellows greet,—
Yea, all who shared with them, of that fierce day
The burden and the heat.

Nor yet forget that, when in coming time
By many an English hearth shall men recall
This two-years' chronicle of deeds sublime,
Then first, perchance, of all.

They, talking of dread Inkerman, shall tell,
When that wild storm of fight had passed away,
How thick by those low mounds they kept so well
The noble Bearskins lay.



X.

TOGETHER lay them in one common grave,
These noble sons of England and of France,
Who side by side did yesterday advance,
And to their foes a dear example gave
Of what a freeman's worth beyond a slave.
Theirs was a noble fellowship in life,
They breathed their lives out in one glorious strife ;
Then let them lie, the brave beside the brave.
And sleep with them, for evermore to cease,
Sleep with the sleep which no awaking knows,
The long contention of eight hundred years :
While from their ashes the fair tree of peace
Springs, under which two nations may repose
In love, which ancient discord more endears.

XI.

FROM what of passion and of earthly pride,
Presumptuous confidence and glory vain,
Will cleave to justest cause which men sustain,
Till Thou their cause and them hast purified,
From what too much of these Thou hast espied
In us, oh ! cleanse us from this dangerous leaven,
At any cost, oh ! purge us, righteous Heaven,
Though we herein be sorely searched and tried.
So, purified from these, may we fulfil,
Upon thy strength relying, not our own,
The dreadful sentence of thy righteous will ;
And this by us unto the nations shown,
May burn no incense to our drag, but still
All honour give to Thee, and Thee alone.

XII.

YES, let us own it in confession free,
That when we girt ourselves to quell the wrong,
We deemed it not so giant-like and strong,
But it with our slight effort thought to see
Pushed from its base ; yea, almost deemed that we,
Champions of right, might be excused the price
Of pain, and loss, and large self-sacrifice,
Set on great things by Heaven's unchanged decree.
What if this work's great hardness was concealed
From us, until so far upon our way
That no escape remained us, no retreat,—
Lest, being at an earlier hour revealed,
We might have shrunk too weakly from the heat,
And shunned the burden of this fiery day ?

XIII.

TO ———

IN huts and palaces are mourners found,
As on the far-off fields of death in turn
Leap the dread lots from fortune's fatal urn :
And those not yet in cords of sorrow bound,
But listening everywhere the doleful sound
Of others' griefs, still ask, Who next shall mourn,
Of brother, son, or dearer yet forlorn ?
To whom shall next the cup of pain go round ?
We know not ; if anon to thee and me,
Let not our hearts then chide us that we heard
Of pangs, which other souls did search and try,
To this their anguish yielding, it might be,
The trivial offering of a passing sigh,
While all our deeper heart remained unstirred.

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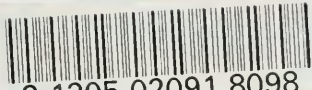


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