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LONDON :
E. MOXON, SON & CO., DOVER STREET.

1871.

PR4795
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1871

EDITED BY



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Hymn to the Sun.



EVER of glowing light !
Though but a god of other days.
The kings and sages
Of wiser ages
Still live and gladden in thy genial rays !

King of the tuneful lyre,
Still poets' hymns to thee belong
Though lips are cold
Whereon of old
Thy beams all turn'd to worshipping and song !

Lord of the dreadful bow,
None triumph now for Python's death ;
But thou dost save
From hungry grave
The life that hangs upon a summer breath.

Father of rosy day,
No more thy clouds of incense rise ;
 But waking flow'rs
 At morning hours,
Give out their sweets to meet thee in the skies.

God of the Delphic fane,
No more thou listenest to hymns sublime ;
 But they will leave
 On winds at eve,
A solemn echo to the end of time.









Sonnet.

ON RECEIVING A GIFT.



LOOK how the golden ocean shines above
Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their girth ;
So does the bright and blessed light of Love
Its own things glorify, and raise their worth.

As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,
And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,
Ev'n so our tokens shine ; nay, they outshine
Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed ;
For where be ocean waves but half so clear,
So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,
As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,
That hath no dregs to be upturn'd by storm ?
Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,
And more than gold to doting Avarice.





The Mary.

A SEA-SIDE SKETCH.



LOV'ST thou not, Alice, with the early tide
To see the hardy Fisher hoist his mast,
And stretch his sail towards the ocean wide,—
Like God's own beadsman going forth to cast
His net into the deep, which doth provide
Enormous bounties, hidden in its vast
Bosom like Charity's, for all who seek
And take its gracious boon thankful and meek?

The sea is bright with morning,—but the dark
Seems still to linger on his broad black sail,
For it is early hoisted, like a mark
For the low sun to shoot at with his pale
And level beams : All round the shadowy bark
The green wave glimmers, and the gentle gale
Swells in her canvas, till the waters show
The keel's new speed, and whiten at the bow.



Fish at Water

William

Then look abaft—(for thou canst understand
That phrase)—and there he sitteth at the stern,
Grasping the tiller in his broad brown hand,
The hardy Fisherman. Thou may'st discern
Ten fathoms off the wrinkles in the tann'd
And honest countenance that he will turn
To look upon us, with a quiet gaze—
As we are passing on our several ways.

So, some ten days ago, on such a morn,
The Mary, like a seamew, sought her spoil
Amongst the finny race: 'twas when the corn
Woo'd the sharp sickle, and the golden toil
Summon'd all rustic hands to fill the horn
Of Ceres to the brim, that brave turmoil
Was at the prime, and Woodgate went to reap
His harvest too, upon the broad blue deep.

His mast was up, his anchor heaved aboard,
His mainsail stretching in the first gray gleams
Of morning, for the wind. Ben's eye was stored
With fishes—fishes swam in all his dreams,
And all the goodly east seem'd but a hoard
Of silvery fishes, that in shoals and streams
Groped into the deep dusk that fill'd the sky,
For him to catch in meshes of his eye.

For Ben had the true sailor's sanguine heart,
And saw the future with a boy's brave thought,
No doubts, nor faint misgivings had a part
In his bright visions—ay, before he caught
His fish, he sold them in the scaly mart,
And summ'd the net proceeds. This should have brought
Despair upon him when his hopes were foil'd,
But though one crop was marr'd, again he toil'd

And sow'd his seed afresh.—Many foul blights
Perish'd his hardwon gains—yet he had plann'd
No schemes of too extravagant delights—
No goodly houses on the Goodwin sand—
But a small humble home, and loving nights,
Such as his honest heart and earnest hand
Might fairly purchase. Were these hopes too airy?
Such as they were, they rested on thee, Mary.

She was the prize of many a toilsome year,
And hardwon wages, on the perilous sea—
Of savings ever since the shipboy's tear
Was shed for home, that lay beyond the lee;—
She was purveyor for his other dear
Mary, and for the infant yet to be
Fruit of their married loves. These made him dote
Upon the homely beauties of his boat,

Whose pitch black hull roll'd darkly on the wave,
No gayer than one single stripe of blue
Could make her swarthy sides. She seem'd a slave
A negro among boats—that only knew
Hardship and rugged toil—no pennons brave
Flaunted upon the mast—but oft a few
Dark dripping jackets flutter'd to the air,
Ensigns of hardihood and toilsome care.

And when she ventured for the deep, she spread
A tawny sail against the sunbright sky,
Dark as a cloud that journeys overhead—
But then those tawny wings were stretch'd to fly
Across the wide sea desert for the bread
Of babes and mothers—many an anxious eye
Dwelt on her course, and many a fervent pray'r
Invoked the heavens to protect and spare.

Where is she now? The secrets of the deep
Are dark and hidden from the human ken;
Only the sea-bird saw the surges sweep
Over the bark of the devoted Ben,—
Meanwhile a widow sobs, and orphans weep,
And sighs are heard from weatherbeaten men,
Dark sunburnt men, uncouth and rude and hairy,
While loungers idly ask, "Where is the Mary?"



Bianca's Dream.

A VENETIAN STORY.

BIANCA!—fair Bianca!—who could dwell
With safety on her dark and hazel gaze,
Nor find there lurk'd in it a witching spell,
Fatal to balmy nights and blessed days?
The peaceful breath that made the bosom swell,
She turn'd to gas, and set it in a blaze;
Each eye of hers had Love's Eupyrion in it,
That he could light his link at in a minute.

So that, wherever in her charms she shone,
A thousand breasts were kindled into flame;
Maidens who cursed her looks forgot their own,
And beaux were turned to flambeaux where she came
All hearts indeed were conquered but her own,
Which none could ever temper down or tame:
In short, to take our haberdasher's hints,
She might have written over it,—“From Flints.”

She was, in truth, the wonder of her sex,
At least in Venice—where with eyes of brown
Tenderly languid, ladies seldom vex
An amorous gentle with a needless frown ;
Where gondolas convey guitars by pecks,
And Love at casements climbeth up and down,
Whom for his tricks and custom in that kind,
Some have considered a Venetian blind.

Howbeit, this difference was quickly taught,
Amongst more youths who had this cruel jailor,
To hapless Julio—all in vain he sought
With each new moon his hatter and his tailor ;
In vain the richest padusoy he bought,
And went in bran new beaver to assail her—
As if to show that Love had made him *smart*
All over—and not merely round his heart.

In vain he labour'd thro' the sylvan park
Bianca haunted in—that where she came,
Her learned eyes in wandering might mark
The twisted cypher of her maiden name,
Wholesomely going thro' a course of bark :
No one was touch'd or troubled by his flame,
Except the Dryads, those old maids that grow
In trees,—like wooden dolls in embryo.

In vain complaining elegies he writ,
And taught his tuneful instrument to grieve,
And sang in quavers how his heart was split,
Constant beneath her lattice with each eve ;
She mock'd his wooing with her wicked wit,
And slashed his suit so that it match'd his sleeve,
Till he grew silent at the vesper star,
And quite despairing hamstring'd his guitar.

Bianca's heart was coldly frosted o'er
With snows unmelting—an eternal sheet,
But his was red within him, like the core
Of old Vesuvius, with perpetual heat ;
And oft he long'd internally to pour
His flames and glowing lava at her feet,
But when his burnings he began to spout,
She stopp'd his mouth,—and put the *crater* out.

Meanwhile he wasted in the eyes of men,
So thin, he seem'd a sort of skeleton-key
Suspended at death's door—so pale—and then
He turn'd as nervous as an aspen tree ;
The life of man is three-score years and ten,
But he was perishing at twenty-three,
For people truly said, as grief grew stronger,
“ It could not shorten his poor life—much longer.”

For why, he neither slept, nor drank, nor fed,
Nor relish'd any kind of mirth below.
Fire in his heart, and frenzy in his head,
Love had become his universal foe,
Salt in his sugar—nightmare in his bed ;
At last, no wonder wretched Julio,
O sorrow-ridden thing, in utter dearth
Of hope,—made up his mind to cut her girth !

For hapless lovers always died of old,
Sooner than chew reflection's bitter cud ;
So Thisbe stuck herself, what time 'tis told,
The tender-hearted mulberries wept blood ;
And so poor Sappho, when her boy was cold,
Drown'd her salt tear-drops in a salter flood,
Their fame still breathing, tho' their death be past,
For those old *suitors* lived beyond their last.

So Julio went to drown,—when life was dull,
But took his corks, and merely had a bath ;
And once, he pull'd a trigger at his skull,
But merely broke a window in his wrath ;
And once, his hopeless being to annul,
He tied a pack-thread to a beam of lath—
A line so ample, 'twas a query whether
'Twas meant to be a halter or a tether.

Smile not in scorn, that Julio did not thrust
His sorrows through—'tis horrible to die !
And come down with our little all of dust,
That Dun of all the duns to satisfy ;
To leave life's pleasant city as we must,
In Death's most dreary spunging-house to lie,
Where even all our personals must go
To pay the debt of Nature that we owe !

So Julio lived :—'twas nothing but a pet
He took at life—a momentary spite ;
Besides, he hoped that Time would some day get
The better of Love's flame, however bright ;
A thing that Time has never compass'd yet,
For Love, we know, is an immortal light ;
Like that old fire, that, quite beyond a doubt,
Was always in,—for none have found it out.

Meanwhile, Bianca dream'd—'twas once when Night
Along the darken'd plain began to creep,
Like a young Hottentot, whose eyes are bright,
Altho' in skin as sooty as a sweep,
The flow'rs had shut their eyes—the zephyr light
Was gone, for it had rock'd the leaves to sleep,
And all the little birds had laid their heads
Under their wings—sleeping in feather beds.



Lone in her chamber sate the dark-eyed maid,
By easy stages jaunting through her prayers,
But list'ning side-long to a serenade,
That robb'd the saints a little of their shares ;
For Julio underneath the lattice play'd
His Deh Vieni, and such amorous airs,
Born only underneath Italian skies,
Where every fiddle has a Bridge of Sighs.

Sweet was the tune—the words were even sweeter—
Praising her eyes, her lips, her nose, her hair,
With all the common tropes wherewith in metre
The hackney poets “overcharge their fair.”
Her shape was like Diana's, but completer ;
Her brow with Grecian Helen's might compare :
Cupid, alas ! was cruel Sagittarius,
Julio—the weeping water-man Aquarius.

Now, after listing to such laudings rare,
'Twas very natural indeed to go—
What if she did postpone one little pray'r—
To ask her mirror “if it was not so ?”
'Twas a large mirror, none the worse for wear,
Reflecting her at once from top to toe :
And there she gazed upon that glossy track
That show'd her front face though it “gave her back.”

And long her lovely eyes were held in thrall,
By that dear page where first the woman reads :
That Julio was no flatt'rer, none at all,
She told herself—and then she told her beads ;
Meanwhile, the nerves insensibly let fall
Two curtains fairer than the lily breeds ;
For sleep had crept and kiss'd her unawares,
Just at the half-way milestone of her pray'rs.

Then like a drooping rose so bended she,
Till her bow'd head upon her hand reposed ;
But still she plainly saw, or seem'd to see,
That fair reflection, tho' her eyes were closed,
A beauty bright as it was wont to be,
A portrait Fancy painted while she dozed ;
'Tis very natural, some people say,
To dream of what we dwell on in the day.

Still shone her face—yet not, alas ! the same,
But 'gan some dreary touches to assume,
And sadder thoughts, with sadder changes came—
Her eyes resign'd their light, her lips their bloom,
Her teeth fell out, her tresses did the same,
Her cheeks were tinged with bile, her eyes with rheum :
There was a throbbing at her heart within,
For, oh ! there was a shooting in her chin.

And lo ! upon her sad desponding brow,
The cruel trenches of besieging age,
With seams, but most unseemly, 'gan to show
Her place was booking for the seventh stage ;
And where her raven tresses used to flow,
Some locks that Time had left her in his rage,
And some mock ringlets, made her forehead shady,
A compound (like our Psalms) of *Tête* and Braidy.

Then for her shape—alas ! how Saturn wrecks,
And bends, and corkscrews all the frame about,
Doubles the hams, and crooks the straightest necks,
Draws in the nape, and pushes forth the snout,
Makes backs and stomachs concave or convex :
Witness those pensioners call'd In and Out,
Who all day watching first and second rater,
Quaintly unbend themselves—but grow no straighter.

So Time with fair Bianca dealt, and made
Her shape a bow, that once was like an arrow ;
His iron hand upon her spine he laid,
And twisted all awry her “ winsome marrow.”
In truth it was a change !—she had obey'd
The holy Pope before her chest grew narrow,
But spectacles and palsy seem'd to make her
Something between a Glassite and a Quaker.

Her grief and gall meanwhile were quite extreme,
And she had ample reason for her trouble ;
For what sad maiden can endure to seem
Set in for singleness, through growing double ?
The fancy madden'd her ; but now the dream,
Grown thin by getting bigger, like a bubble,
Burst,—but still left some fragments of its size,
That like the soapsuds, smarted in her eyes.

And here—just here—as she began to heed
The real world, her clock chimed out its score ;
A clock it was of the Venetian breed,
That cried the hour from one to twenty-four ;
The works moreover standing in some need
Of workmanship, it struck some dozen more ;
A warning voice that clenched Bianca's fears,
Such strokes referring doubtless to her years.

At fifteen chimes she was but half a nun,
By twenty she had quite renounced the veil ;
She thought of Julio just at twenty-one,
And thirty made her very sad and pale,
To paint that ruin where her charms would run ;
At forty all the maid began to fail,
And thought no higher, as the late dream cross'd her,
Of single blessedness, than single Gloster.



And so Bianca changed ; the next sweet even,
With Julio in a black Venetian bark,
Row'd slow and stealthily—the hour, eleven,
Just sounding from the tower of old St. Mark ;
She sate with eyes turn'd quietly to heav'n,
Perchance rejoicing in the grateful dark
That veil'd her blushing cheek,—for Julio brought her,
Of course, to break the ice upon the water.

But what a puzzle is one's serious mind
To open ;—oysters, when the ice is thick,
Are not so difficult and disinclined ;
And Julio felt the declaration stick
About his throat in a most awful kind ;
However, he contrived by bits to pick
His trouble forth,—much like a rotten cork
Groped from a long-neck'd bottle with a fork.

But love is still the quickest of all readers ;
And Julio spent besides those signs profuse,
That English telegraphs and foreign pleaders,
In help of language are so apt to use :—
Arms, shoulders, fingers, all were interceders,
Nods, shrugs, and bends,—Bianca could not choose
But soften to his suit with more facility,
He told his story with so much agility.

“ Be thou my park, and I will be thy dear,”
 (So he began at last to speak or quote ;)
“ Be thou my bark, and I thy gondolier,”
 (For passion takes this figurative note ;)
“ Be thou my light, and I thy chandelier ;
 Be thou my dove, and I will be thy cote ;
My lily be, and I will be thy river ;
Be thou my life—and I will be thy liver.”

This, with more tender logic of the kind,
 He pour'd into her small and shell-like ear,
That timidly against his lips inclined ;
 Meanwhile her eyes glanced on the silver sphere
That even now began to steal behind
 A dewy vapour, which was lingering near,
Wherein the dull moon crept all dim and pale,
Just like a virgin putting on the veil :—

Bidding adieu to all her sparks—the stars,
 That erst had woo'd and worshipp'd in her train,
Saturn and Hesperus, and gallant Mars—
 Never to flirt with heavenly eyes again.
Meanwhile, remindful of the convent bars,
 Bianca did not watch these signs in vain,
But turn'd to Julio at the dark eclipse,
With words, like verbal kisses, on her lips.

He took the hint full speedily, and back'd
By love, and night, and the occasion's meetness,
Bestow'd a something on her cheek that smack'd
(Though quite in silence) of ambrosial sweetness ;
That made her think all other kisses lack'd
Till then, but what she knew not, of completeness :
Being used but sisterly salutes to feel,
Insipid things—like sandwiches of veal.

He took her hand, and soon she felt him wring
The pretty fingers all instead of one ;
Anon his stealthy arm began to cling
About her waist that had been clasp'd by none ;
Their dear confessions I forbear to sing,
Since cold description would but be outrun ;
For bliss and Irish watches have the power,
In twenty minutes, to lose half an hour !





Ode to Rae Wilson, Esq.



WANDERER, Wilson, from my native land,
Remote, O Rae, from godliness and thee,
Where rolls between us the eternal sea,
Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—
Beyond the broadest Scotch of London Wall ;
Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call ;
Across the wavy waste between us stretch'd,
A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,
Wherein my likeness you have darkly etch'd,
And though I have not seen the shadow sketch'd,
Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features :—in a line to paint
Their moral ugliness, I'm not a saint.
Not one of those self-constituted saints,
Quacks—not physicians—in the cure of souls,
Censors who sniff out mortal taints,
And call the devil over his own coals—

Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,
Who write down judgments with a pen hard-nibb'd
 Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,
Commending sinners, not to ice thick-ribb'd,
But endless flames, to scorch them up like flax—
Yet sure of heav'n themselves, as if they'd cribb'd
Th' impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace
Exists, I know, in my fictitious face ;
There wants a certain cast about the eye ;
A certain lifting of the nose's tip ;
A certain curling of the nether lip,
In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky.
In brief it is an aspect deleterious,
A face decidedly not serious,
A face profane, that would not do at all
To make a face at Exeter Hall,—
That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and pray,
And laud each other face to face,
Till ev'ry farthing-candle *ray*
Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace.

Well !—be the graceless lineaments confest !
I do enjoy this bounteous beauteous earth ;
 And dote upon a jest

“ Within the limits of becoming mirth ; ”—
No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,
Nor think I'm pious when I'm only bilious—
Nor study in my sanctum supercilious
To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.
I pray for grace—repent each sinful act—
Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible ;
And love my neighbour far too well, in fact,
To call and twit him with a godly tract
That's turn'd by application to a libel.
My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.

What else ? no part I take in party fray,
With tropes from Billingsgate's slang-whanging
tartars,
I fear no Pope—and let great Ernest play
At Fox and Goose with Fox's Martyrs !
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,
I own I shake my sides at ranters,
And treat sham-Abr'am saints with wicked banter,
I even own, that there are times—but then
It's when I've got my wine—I say d—— canters !

I've no ambition to enact the spy
On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry—
'Tis said that people ought to guard their noses,
Who thrust them into matters none of theirs ;
And tho' no delicacy discomposes
Your Saint, yet I consider faith and pray'rs
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,
No food was fit to eat till I had chew'd it.
On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk ;
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk,—
 For man may pious texts repeat,
And yet religion have no inward seat ;
'Tis not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,
A man has got his belly full of meat
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth !
Mere verbiage,—it is not worth a carrot !
Why, Socrates—or Plato—where's the odds ?—
Once taught a jay to supplicate the Gods,
And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot !

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is
 Not a whit better than a Mantis, —

An insect, of what clime I can't determine,
That lifts its paws most parson-like, and thence,
By simple savages—thro' sheer pretence—
Is reckon'd quite a saint amongst the vermin.

But where's the reverence, or where the *nous*,
To ride on one's religion thro' the lobby,
Whether a stalking-horse or hobby,
To show its pious paces to "the House?"

I honestly confess that I would hinder
The Scottish member's legislative rigs,
That spiritual Pinder,
Who looks on erring souls as straying pigs,
That must be lash'd by law, wherever found,
And driven to church, as to the parish pound.
I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,
I view that grovelling idea as one
Worthy some parish clerk's ambitious son,
A charity-boy, who longs to be a beadle.

On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd
How much a man can differ from his neighbour:
One wishes worship freely giv'n to God,
Another wants to make it statute-labour—

The broad distinction in a line to draw,
As means to lead us to the skies above,
You say—Sir Andrew and his love of law,
And I—the Saviour with his law of love.

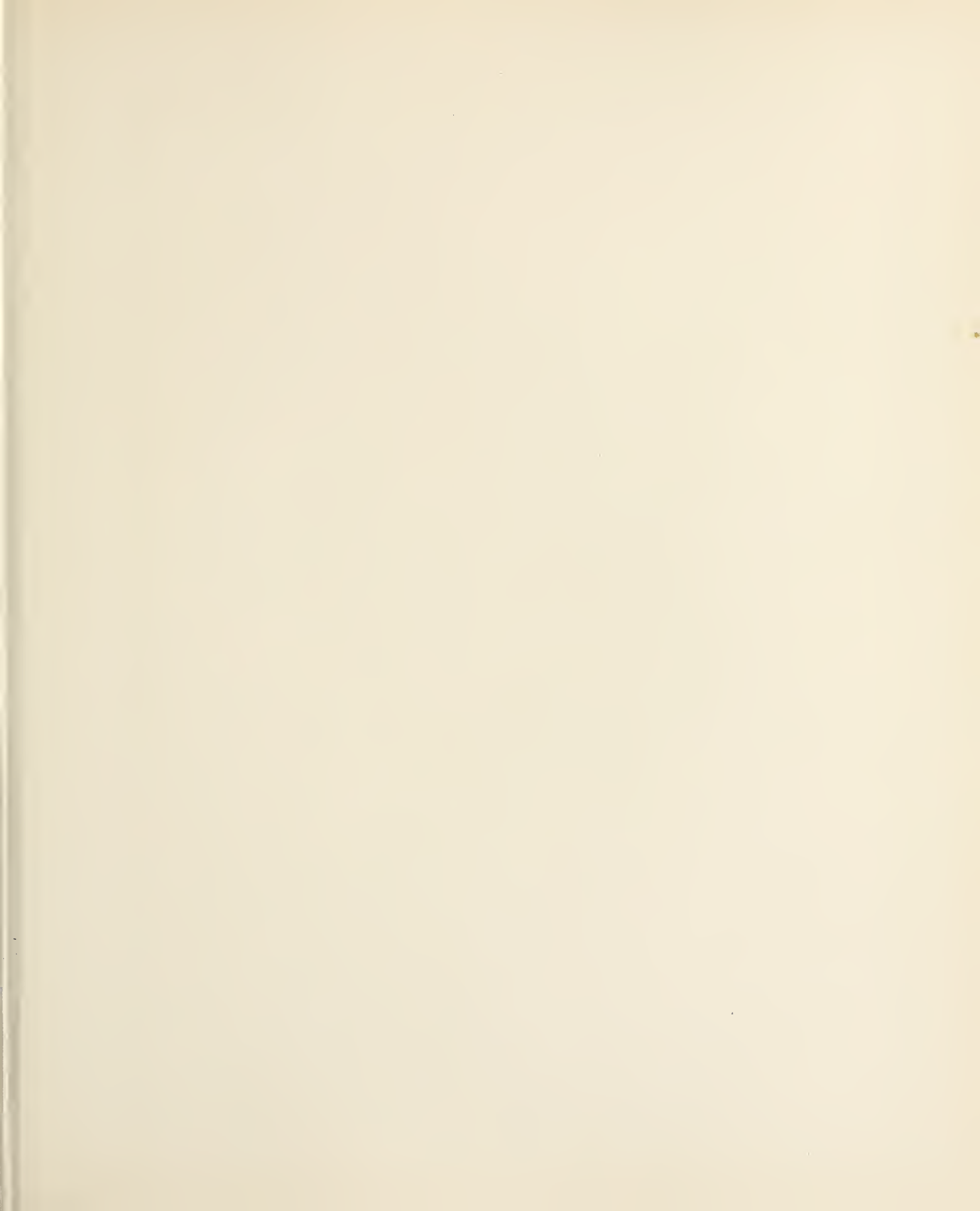
Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,
Like the magnetic needle to the Pole ;
But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,
Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than knowledge,
Fresh from St. Andrew's College,
Should nail the conscious needle to the north ?

I do confess that I abhor and shrink
From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,
That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink
The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly—
My soul revolts at such a bare hypocrisy,
And will not, dare not, fancy in accord
The Lord of Hosts with an Exclusive Lord
Of this world's aristocracy.
It will not own a notion so unholy,
As thinking that the rich by easy trips
May go to heav'n, whereas the poor and lowly
Must work their passage as they do in ships.

One place there is—beneath the burial sod
Where all mankind are equalised by death ;
Another place there is—the Fane of God,
Where all are equal, who draw living breath ;
Juggle who will *elsewhere* with his own soul,
Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—
He who can come beneath that awful cope,
In the dread presence of a Maker just,
Who metes to ev'ry pinch of human dust
One even measure of immortal hope—
He who can stand within that holy door,
With soul unbow'd by that pure spirit-level,
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor,—
Might sit for Hell and represent the Devil !

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,
In your last Journey-Work, perchance you ravage,
Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say
I'm but a heedless, creedless, godless savage ;
A very Guy, deserving fire and faggots,—
 A Scoffer, always on the grin,
And sadly given to the mortal sin
Of liking Mawworms less than merry maggots !

The humble records of my life to search,
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts ;





But sometimes I have "sat at good men's feasts,"
And I have been "where bells have knoll'd to
church."

Dear bells! how sweet the sounds of village
bells

When on the undulating air they swim!
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as farewells!
And trembling all about the breezy dells
As flutter'd by the wings of Cherubim.
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;
And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love,—
With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon;—
O Pagans, Heathens, Infidels and Doubters!
If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,
Will the harsh voices of church cads and touters?

A man may cry "Church! Church!" at ev'ry
word,

With no more piety than other people—
A daw's not reckon'd a religious bird
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.
The Temple is a good, a holy place,
But quacking only gives it an ill savour;
While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,
And bring religion's self into disfavour!

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon,
Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger,
 Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,
Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,
Against the wicked remnant of the week,
A saving bet against his sinful bias—
“Rogue that I am,” he whispers to himself,
“I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,
But who on earth can say I am not pious?”

In proof how over-righteousness re-acts,
Accept an anecdote well based on facts.
One Sunday morning—(at the day don't fret)—
In riding with a friend to Ponder's End
Outside the stage, we happen'd to commend
A certain mansion that we saw To Let.
“Ay,” cried our coachman, with our talk to grapple,
“You're right! no house along the road comes nigh
it.
'Twas built by the same man as built yon chapel,
 And master wanted once to buy it,—
But t'other driv the bargain much too hard—
 He ax'd sure-ly a sum purdigious!
But being so particular religious,
Why, *that*, you see, put master on his guard!”

Church is "a little heav'n below,
 I have been there and still would go,"—
 Yet I am none of those who think it odd
 A man can pray unbidden from the cassock,
 And, passing by the customary hassock,
 Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,
 And sue *in formâ pauperis* to God.

As for the rest, intolerant to none,
 Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,
 Ev'n the poor Pagan's homage to the Sun
 I would not harshly scorn, lest even there
 I spurn'd some elements of Christian pray'r—
 An aim, tho' erring, at a "world ayont"—

Acknowledgment of good—of man's futility,
 A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed
 That very thing so many Christians want—
 Humility.

Such, unto Papists, Jews, or turban'd Turks,
 Such is my spirit—(I don't mean my wraith!)
 Such, may it please you, is my humble faith;
 I know, full well, you do not like my *works*!
 I have not sought, 'tis true, the Holy Land,
 As full of texts as Cuddie Headrigg's mother,
 The Bible in one hand,

And my own common-place-book in the other—
But you have been to Palestine—alas !
Some minds improve by travel, others, rather,
 Resemble copper wire, or brass,
Which gets the narrower by going farther !
Worthless are all such pilgrimages—very !
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive
The human heats and rancour to revive
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury,
A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,
To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,
Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,
Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and smoke,
At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,
Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull
Hunts an old woman in a scarlet cloak !

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,
Scotland, renown'd for sanctity of old,
Far distant Catholics to rate and scold
For—doing as the Romans do at Rome ?
With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit
The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,
About the graceless images to flit,
And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,

Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch collops?—
People who hold such absolute opinions
Should stay at home, in Protestant dominions,
Not travel like male Mrs. Trollopes.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,
Yet weak at the same time,
Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,
That grasps the nearest stem with tendrils-rings ;
And as the climate and the soil may grant,
So is the sort of tree to which it clings.
Consider then, before, like Hurlothrumbo,
You aim your club at any creed on earth,
That, by the simple accident of birth,
You might have been High Priest to Mumbo Jumbo.

For me—thro' heathen ignorance perchance,
Nor having knelt in Palestine,—I feel
None of that griffinish excess of zeal,
Some travellers would blaze with here in France.
Dolls I can see in Virgin-like array,
Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker
Like crazy Quixote at the puppets' play.
If their "offence be rank," should mine be *rancour* ?
Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan

To cure the dark and erring mind ;
But who would rush at a benighted man,
And give him two black eyes for being blind ?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop
Around a canker'd stem should twine,
What Kentish boor would tear away the prop
So roughly as to wound, nay, kill the bine ?
The images, 'tis true, are strangely dress'd,
With gauds and toys extremely out of season ;
The carving nothing of the very best,
The whole repugnant to the eye of reason,
Shocking to taste, and to Fine Arts a treason—
Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect
One truly *Catholic*, one common form,
 At which uncheck'd
 All Christian hearts may kindle or keep warm.

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,
One bright and balmy morning, as I went
From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,
That made me breathe a pray'r upon the spot—
While Nature of herself, as if to trace
The emblem's use, had trail'd around its base
The blue significant Forget-me-not ?





Methought, the claims of Charity to urge
More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,
The pious choice had pitch'd upon the verge
Of a delicious slope,
Giving the eye much variegated scope ;—
“ Look round,” it whisper'd, “ on that prospect rare,
Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue ;
Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,
But ”—(how the simple legend pierced me thro' !)
“ PRIEZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX.”

With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd cells,
Religion lives, and feels herself at home ;
But only on a formal visit dwells
Where wasps instead of bees have formed the comb.
Shun pride, O Rae !—whatever sort beside
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride !
A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,
A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
A London pride—in short, there be on earth
A host of prides, some better and some worse ;
But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and hard,
Fancy a peacock in a poultry yard.

Behold him in conceited circles sail,
Strutting and dancing, and now planted stiff,
In all his pomp of pageantry, as if
He felt "the eyes of Europe" on his tail!
As for the humble breed retain'd by man,
 He scorns the whole domestic clan—
 He bows, he bridles,
 He wheels, he sidles,
At last, with stately dodgings in a corner
He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her
Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!
 "Look here," he cries (to give him words),
 "Thou feather'd clay—thou scum of birds!"
Flirting the rustling plumage in her eyes,—
"Look here, thou vile predestined sinner,
 Doom'd to be roasted for a dinner,
Behold these lovely variegated dyes!
These are the rainbow colours of the skies
That Heav'n has shed upon me *con amore*—
A Bird of Paradise?—a pretty story!
I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!
 Look at my crown of glory!
Thou dingy, dirty, drabbled, draggled jill!"
And off goes Partlet, wriggling from a kick,
With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!
That little simile exactly paints

How sinners are despised by saints,
By saints!—the Hypocrites that ope heav'n's door
Obsequious to the sinful man of riches—
But put the wicked, naked, barelegg'd poor,
 In parish stocks instead of breeches.

The Saints!—the Bigots that in public spout,
Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian,
And go like walking "Lucifers" about
 Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints!—the aping Fanatics that talk
All cant and rant, and rhapsodies highflown—
 That bid you baulk
 A Sunday walk,
And shun God's work as you should shun your own.

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra pious,
Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,
By trundling with a mere mechanic bias,
To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints!—the Pharisees, whose beadle stands
Beside a stern coercive kirk.
 A piece of human mason-work,

Calling all sermons contrabands,
 In that great Temple that's not made with hands.
 Thrice blessed, rather, is the man, with whom
 The gracious prodigality of nature,
 'The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,
 The bounteous providence in ev'ry feature,
 Recall the good Creator to his' creature,
 Making all earth a fane, all heav'n his dome !
 To *his* tuned spirit the wild heather-bells
 Ring Sabbath knells ;
 The jubilate of the soaring lark
 Is chant of clerk ;
 For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet ;
 The sod's a cushion for his pious want ;
 And, consecrated by the heav'n within it,
 The sky-blue pool, a font.
 Each cloup-capp'd mountain is a holy altar ;
 An organ breathes in every grove
 And the full heart's a Psalter,
 Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love !

Sufficiently by stern necessitarians
 Poor Nature, with her face begrimed by dust,
 Is stoked, coked, smoked, and almost choked ; but must
 Religion have its own Utilitarians,
 Labell'd with evangelical phylacteries,

To make the road to heav'n a railway trust,
And churches—that's the naked fact—mere factories ?

Oh ! simply open wide the Temple door,
And let the solemn, swelling, organ greet,
 With *Voluntaries* meet,
The willing advent of the rich and poor !
And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,
With rich vibrations from the vocal throng—
From quiet shades that to the woods belong,
 And brooks with music of their own,
Voices may come to swell the choral song
With notes of praise they learn'd in musings lone.

How strange it is while on all vital questions,
That occupy the House and public mind,
We always meet with some humane suggestions
Of gentle measures of a healing kind,
Instead of harsh severity and vigour,
The Saint alone his preference retains
 For bills of penalties and pains,
And marks his narrow code with legal rigour !
Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,
What men of all political persuasion
Extol—and even use upon occasion—
That Christian principle, Conciliation ?

But possibly the men who make such fuss
With Sunday pippins and old Trots infirm,
Attach some other meaning to the term,
As thus :

One market morning, in my usual rambles,
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,
Where meat was hung in many a joint and quarter,
I had to halt awhile, like other folks,
 To let a killing butcher coax
A score of lambs and fatted sheep to slaughter.

A sturdy man he look'd to fell an ox,
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak
Of well-greased hair down either cheek,
As if he dee-dash-dee'd some other flocks
Besides those woolly-headed stubborn blocks
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle—
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers group'd,
While, now and then, a thirsty creature stoop'd
And meekly snuff'd, but did not taste the puddle.

Fierce bark'd the dog, and many a blow was dealt,
That loin, and chump, and scrag and saddle felt,
Yet still, that fatal step they all declined it,—

And shunn'd the tainted door as if they smelt
Onions, mint sauce, and lemon juice behind it.
At last there came a pause of brutal force,
The cur was silent, for his jaws were full
Of tangled locks of tarry wool,
The man had whoop'd and holloed till dead hoarse.
The time was ripe for mild expostulation,
And thus it stammer'd from a stander-by—
“Zounds!—my good fellow,—it quite makes me—
why,
It really—my dear fellow—do just try
Conciliation!”

Stringing his nerves like flint,
The sturdy butcher seized upon the hint,—
At least he seized upon the foremost wether,—
And hugg'd and lugg'd and tugg'd him neck and crop
Just *volens volens* thro' the open shop—
If tails come off he didn't care a feather,—
Then walking to the door and smiling grim,
He rubb'd his forehead and his sleeve together—
“There!—I've *conciliated* him!”
Again—good humouredly to end our quarrel—
(Good humour should prevail!)—
I'll fit you with a tale,
Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass
Was seized with symptoms of such deep decline
Cough, hectic flushes, ev'ry evil sign,
That, as their wont is at such desperate pass,
The Doctors gave her over—to an ass.
Accordingly, the grisly Shade to bilk,
Each morn the patient quaff'd a frothy bowl
 Of asinine new milk,
Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal
Which got proportionably spare and skinny—
Meanwhile the neighbours cried “Poor Mary
 Ann !
She can't get over it ! she never can ! ”
When lo ! to prove each prophet was a ninny,
The one that died was the poor wetnurse Jenny.

 To aggravate the case,
There were but two grown donkeys in the place ;
And most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,
The other long-ear'd creature was a male,
Who never in his life had given a pail
 Of milk, or even chalk and water.
No matter : at the usual hour of eight
Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,
With Mister Simon Gubbins on its back,—
“ Your sarvant, Miss,—a werry spring-like day,—

Bad time for hasses tho ! good lack ! good lack !
Jenny be dead, Miss,—but I'ze brought ye Jack,
He doesn't give no milk—but he can bray."

So runs the story,
And, in vain self-glory,
Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for his blindness—
But what the better are their pious saws
To ailing souls, than dry hee-haws,
Without the milk of human kindness ?





Ode to the Moon.



OTHER of light ! how fairly dost thou go
Over those hoary crests, divinely led !—
Art thou that huntress of the silver bow,
Fabled of old ? Or rather dost thou tread
Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,
Like the wild Chamois from her Alpine snow,
Where hunter never climb'd,—secure from dread ?
How many antique fancies have I read
Of that mild presence ! and how many wrought !
 Wondrous and bright,
 Upon the silver light,
Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought !

What art thou like ?—Sometimes I see thee ride
A far-bound galley on its perilous way,
Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray ;—
 Sometimes behold thee glide,



Cluster'd by all thy family of stars,
Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide,
Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars ;—
Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,
Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,
Till in some Latmian cave I see thee creep,
To catch the young Endymion asleep,—
Leaving thy splendour at the jagged porch !—

Oh, thou art beautiful, howe'er it be !
Huntress, or Dian, or whatever named ;
And he, the veriest Pagan, that first framed
A silver idol, and ne'er worshipp'd thee !—
It is too late—or thou should'st have my knee—
Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,
And not divine the crescent on thy brows !—
Yet, call thee nothing but the mere mild Moon,
 Behind those chestnut boughs,
Casting their dappled shadows at my feet ;
I will be grateful for that simple boon,
In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,
And bless thy dainty face whene'er we meet.

In nights far gone,—ay, far away and dead,—
Before Care-fretted, with a lidless eye,—
I was thy wooer on my little bed,

Letting the early hours of rest go by,
To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,
And feed thy snow-white swans, before I slept ;
For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—
Thou wert the fairies' armourer, that kept
Their burnish'd helms, and crowns, and corslets bright,
 Their spears, and glittering mails ;
And ever thou didst spill in winding streams
 Sparkles and midnight gleams,
For fishes to new gloss their argent scales !—

Why sighs ?—why creeping tears ?—why clasped hands ?—
Is it to count the boy's expended dow'r ?
That fairies since have broke their gifted wands ?
That young Delight, like any o'erblown flow'r,
Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground ?—
Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,
Thou art a sadder dial to old Time
 Than ever I have found
On sunny garden-plot, or moss-grown tow'r,
Motto'd with stern and melancholy rhyme.

Why should I grieve for this ?—Oh I must yearn
Whilst Time, conspirator with Memory,
Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,
Richly emboss'd with childhood's revelry

With leaves and cluster'd fruits, and flow'rs eterne,—
(Eternal to the world, though not to me),
Aye there will those brave sports and blossoms be,
The deathless wreath, and undecay'd festoon.

When I am hearsed within,—
Less than the pallid primrose to the Moon,
That now she watches through a vapour thin.

So let it be :—Before I lived to sigh,
Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,
Beautiful Orb ! and so, where'er I lie
Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.
Blest be thy loving light, where'er it spills,
And blessed thy fair face, O mother mild !
Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,
Still lend thy lonely lamp to lovers fond,
And blend their plighted shadows into one :—
Still smile at even on the bedded child,
And close his eyelids with thy silver wand !





To * * * * *

WITH A FLASK OF RHINE WATER.



THE old Catholic City was still,
In the Minster the vespers were sung,
And, re-echoed in cadences shrill,
The last call of the trumpet had rung ;
While, across the broad stream of the Rhine,
The full Moon cast a silvery zone ;
And methought, as I gazed on its shine,
“ Surely that is the Eau de Cologne,”
I inquired not the place of its source,
If it ran to the east or the west ;
But my heart took a note of its course,
That it flow'd towards Her I love best—
That it flow'd towards Her I love best,
Like those wandering thoughts of my own,
And the fancy such sweetness possess'd,
That the Rhine seem'd all Eau de Cologne !





The Two Peacocks of Bedford.

ALAS! That breathing Vanity should go
Where Pride is buried,—like its very ghost,
Uprisen from the naked bones below,
In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast
Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,
Shedding its chilling superstition most
On young and ignorant natures—as it wont
To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bedford!

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,
Behold two maidens, up the quiet green
Shining far distant, in the summer air
That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between
Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they were
Two far-off ships,—until they brush between
The churchyard's humble walls, and watch and wait
On either side of the wide open'd gate.

And there they stand—with haughty necks before
God's holy house, that points towards the skies—
Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,
And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes :
And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,
Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,
With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face ;—

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,
May wear the happiness of rich attire ;
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,
May change the soul's warm glances for the fire
Of lifeless diamonds ;—and for health denied,—
With art, that blushes at itself, inspire
Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a glory
That has no life in life, nor after-story.

The aged priest goes shaking his grey hair
In meekest censuring, and turns his eye
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in pray'r,
And sighs, and clasps his hand, and passes by,
Good-hearted man ! what sullen soul would wear
Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly
Put on thy censure, that might win the praise
Of one so grey in goodness and in days ?

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame
Of this ungodly shine of human pride,
And sadly blends his reverence and blame
In one grave bow, and passes with a stride
Impatient :—many a red-hooded dame
Turns her pain'd head, but not her glance, aside
From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,
That heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

“ I have a lily in the bloom at home,”
Quoth one, “ and by the blessed Sabbath day
I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come
And read a lesson upon vain array ;—
And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some
Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say—
Making my reverence,—‘ Ladies, an you please
King Solomon's not half so fine as these.’ ”

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run
His earthly course,—“ Nay, Goody, let your text
Grow in the garden.—We have only one—
Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next ?
Summer will come again, and summer sun,
And lilies too,—but I were sorely vexed
To mar my garden, and cut short the blow
Of the last lily I may live to grow.”

“The last!” quoth she, “and though the last it were—
Lo! those two wantons, where they stand so proud
With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,
And painted cheeks, like Dagon to be bow’d
And curtsey’d to!—last Sabbath after pray’r,
I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud
If they were angels—but I made him know
God’s bright ones better, with a bitter blow!”

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk
That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng,
Hand-coupled urchins in restrained talk,
And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,
And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,
And gold-bedizen’d beadle flames along,
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene,

And blushing maiden—modestly array’d
In spotless white,—still conscious of the glass;
And she, the lonely widow, that hath made
A sable covenant with grief,—alas!
She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,
While the poor kindly-hearted, as they pass,
Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress
Her boy,—so rosy!—and so fatherless!

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near,
The fair white temple, to the timely call
Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—
Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl
Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
Of the low porch, and heav'n has won them all,
—Saving those two, that turn aside and pass,
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

Ah me ! to see their silken manors trail'd
In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—
Flaunting the grass where widowhood has wail'd
In blotted black,—over the heapy mould
Panting wave-wantonly ! They never quail'd
How the warm vanity abused the cold ;
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone :

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,
Shocking the awful presence of the dead ;
Where gracious natures would their eyes benight
Nor wear their being with a lip too red,
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright
Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their tread,
Meting it into steps, with inward breath,
In very pity to bereaved death.

Now in the church, time-sober'd minds resign
To solemn pray'r, and the loud chaunted hymn,—
With glowing picturings of joys divine
Painting the mist-light where the roof is dim
But youth looks upward to the window shine,
Warming with rose and purple and the swim
Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains
Of gorgeous light through many-colour'd panes ;

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath
Enrobed his angels,—and with absent eyes
Hearing of Heav'n, and its directed path,
Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious skies
Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's wrath
Consumes his pity, and he glows, and cries
With a deep voice that trembles in its might,
And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light :

“ Oh, that the vacant eye would learn to look
On very beauty, and the heart embrace
True loveliness, and from this holy book
Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace
Of love indeed ! Oh, that the young soul took
Its virgin passion from the glorious face
Of fair religion, and address'd its strife,
To win the riches of eternal life !

“ Doth the vain heart love glory that is none,
And the poor excellence of vain attire ?
Oh go, and drown your eyes against the sun,
The visible ruler of the starry quire,
Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,
Dazzling the brain with orbs of living fire ;
And the faint soul down-darkens into night,
And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

“ Oh go, and gaze,—when the low winds of ev’n
Breathe hymns, and Nature’s many forests nod
Their gold-crown’d heads ; and the rich blooms of heav’n
Sun-ripen’d give their blushes up to God ;
And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riv’n
By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod
Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense
May quench its longings of magnificence !

“ Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade away
Day into darkness—darkness into death—
Death into silence ; the warm light of day,
The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath
Of even—all shall wither and decay,
Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath
The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes
That break and vanish in the aching eyes.”

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant shed
Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and pour
Their sin to earth,—and with low drooping head
Receive the solemn blessing, and implore
Its grace—then soberly with chasten'd tread,
They meekly press towards the gusty door,
With humbled eyes that go to graze upon
The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

The lowly grass!—O water-constant mind!
Fast-ebbing holiness!—soon-fading grace
Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind
Through the low porch had wash'd it from the face
For ever!—How they lift their eyes to find
Old vanities!—Pride wins the very place
Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now
With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow!

And lo! with eager looks they seek the way
Of old temptation at the lowly gate;
To feast on feathers, and on vain array,
And painted cheeks, and the rich glistening state
Of jewel-sprinkled locks.—But where are they,
The graceless haughty ones that used to wait
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffen'd eye?—
None challenge the old homage bending by.



In vain they look for the ungracious bloom
Of rich apparel where it glow'd before,—
For Vanity has faded all to gloom,
And lofty Pride has stiffen'd to the core,
For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—
Set for a warning token evermore,
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring eyes.

The aged priest goes on each Sabbath morn,
But shakes not sorrow under his grey hair ;
The solemn clerk goes lavender'd and shorn
Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair ;—
And ancient lips that pucker'd up in scorn,
Go smoothly breathing to the house of pray'r ;
And in the garden-plot, from day to day,
The lily blooms its long white life away.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,
In pride of plume, where plummy Death had trod,
Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,
Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod ;—
There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see
Two sombre Peacocks.—Age, with sapient nod
Marking the spot, still tarries to declare
How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.



Ode to Melancholy.



COME, let us set our careful breasts,
Like Philomel, against the thorn,
To aggravate the inward grief,
That makes her accents so forlorn ;
The world has many cruel points,
Whereby our bosoms have been torn,
And there are dainty themes of grief,
In sadness to outlast the morn,—
True honour's dearth, affection's death,
Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,
With all the piteous tales that tears
Have water'd since the world was born.

The world !—it is a wilderness,
Where tears are hung on every tree ;
For thus my gloomy phantasy
Makes all things weak with me !



Come let us sit and watch the sky,
And fancy clouds, where no clouds be ;
Grief is enough to blot the eye,
And make heaven black with misery.

Why should birds sing such merry notes,
Unless they were more blest than we ?
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,
Except sweet nightingale ; for she
Was born to pain our hearts the more
With her sad melody.

Why shines the Sun, except that he
Makes gloomy nooks for Grief to hide,
And pensive shades for Melancholy,
When all the earth is bright beside ?
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass wave,
Mirth shall not win us back again,
Whilst man is made of his own grave,
And fairest clouds but gilded rain !

I saw my mother in her shroud,
Her cheek was cold and very pale ;
And ever since I've look'd on all
As creatures doom'd to fail !
Why do buds ope except to die ?

Ay, let us watch the roses wither,
And think of our loves' cheeks ;
And oh ! how quickly time doth fly
To bring death's winter hither !
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks,
Months, years, and ages, shrink to nought ;
An age past is but a thought !

Ay, let us think of him awhile
That, with a coffin for a boat,
Rows daily o'er the Stygian moat,
And for our table choose a tomb :
There's dark enough in any skull
To charge with black a raven plume ;
And for the saddest funeral thoughts
A winding-sheet hath ample room,
Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,
Hath writ the common doom.
How wide the yew-tree spreads its gloom,
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,
As if in tears it wept for them,
The many human families
That sleep around its stem !

How cold the dead have made these stones,
With natural drops kept ever wet !

Lo ! here the best—the worst—the world
Doth now remember or forget,
Are in one common ruin hurl'd,
And love and hate are calmly met ;
The loveliest eyes that ever shone,
The fairest hands, and locks of jet.
Is't not enough to vex our souls,
And fill our eyes, that we have set
Our love upon a rose's leaf,
Our hearts upon a violet ?
Blue eyes, red cheeks, are frailer yet ;
And sometimes at their swift decay
Beforehand we must fret.
The roses bud and bloom again ;
But Love may haunt the grave of Love,
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss ;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this :
Forgive, if somehow I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss ;
As frighted Proserpine let fall
Her flowers at the sight of Dis :
Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss—

The sunniest things throw sternest shade,
And there is ev'n a happiness
That makes the heart afraid !

Now let us with a spell invoke
The full-orb'd moon to grieve our eyes ;
Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud
Lapp'd all about her, let her rise
All pale and dim, as if from rest
The ghost of the late-buried sun
Had crept into the skies.
The Moon ! she is the source of sighs,
The very face to make us sad ;
If but to think in other times
The same calm quiet look she had,
As if the world held nothing base,
Of vile and mean, of fierce and bad ;
The same fair light that shone in streams,
The fairy lamp that charmed the lad ;
For so it is, with spent delights
She taunts men's brains, and makes them mad.

All things are touch'd with Melancholy,
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,
To feel her fair ethereal wings
Weigh'd down with vile degraded dust ;

Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O give her, then, her tribute just,
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy ;
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter solely ;
There's not a string attuned to mirth,
But has its chord in Melancholy.





The Compass, with Variations.



ONE close of day—'twas in the bay
Of Naples, bay of glory !
While light was hanging crowns of gold
On mountains high and hoary,
A gallant bark got under weigh,
And with her sails my story.

For Leghorn she was bound direct,
With wine and oil for cargo,
Her crew of men some nine or ten,
The captain's name was Iago ;
A good and gallant bark she was,
La Donna (called) del Lago.

Bronzed mariners were hers to view,
With brown cheeks, clear or muddy,
Dark, shining eyes, and coal-black hair,
Meet heads for painter's study ;



But 'midst their tan there stood one man,
Whose cheek was fair and ruddy ;

His brow was high, a loftier brow
Ne'er shone in song or sonnet,
His hair a little scant, and when
He doffed his cap or bonnet,
One saw that Grey had gone beyond
A premiership upon it !

His eye—a passenger was he,
The cabin he had hired it,—
His eye was grey, and when he look'd
Around the prospect fired it—
A fine poetic light, as if
The Appe-Nine inspired it.

His frame was stout, in height about
Six feet—well made and portly ;
Of dress and manner just to give
A sketch, but very shortly,
His order seemed a composite
Of rustic with the courtly.

He ate and quaff'd and joked and laughed,
And chatted with the seamen,

And often task'd their skill and ask'd
"What weather is't to be, man?"
No demonstration there appeared
That he was any demon.

No sort of sign there was that he
Could raise a stormy rumpus,
Like Prospero make breezes blow,
And rocks and billows thump us,—
But little we supposed what he
Could with the needle compass!

Soon came a storm—the sea at first
Seem'd lying almost fallow—
When lo! full crash, with billowy dash,
From clouds of black and yellow,
Came such a gale, as blows but once
A cent'ry, like the aloe!

Our stomachs we had just prepared
To vest a small amount in;
When, gush! a flood of brine came down
The skylight—quite a fountain,
And right on end the table rear'd,
Just like the Table Mountain.

Down rush'd the soup, down gush'd the wine,
Each roll, its role repeating,
Roll'd down—the round of beef declar'd
For parting—not for meating!
Off flew the fowls, and all the game
Was “too far gone for eating!”

Down knife and fork—down went the pork,
The lamb too broke its tether;
Down mustard went—each condiment—
Salt—pepper—all together!
Down everything, like craft that seek
The Downs in stormy weather.

Down plunged the Lady of the Lake,
Her timbers seemed to sever;
Down, down, a dreary derry down,
Such lurch she had gone never;
She almost seemed about to take
A bed of down for ever!

Down dropt the captain's nether jaw,
Thus robb'd of all its uses,
He thought he saw the Evil One
Beside Vesuvian sluices,

Playing at dice for soul and ship,
And throwing *Sink* and *Deuces*.

Down fell the steward on his face,
To all the Saints commend'ing ;
And candles to the Virgin vow'd
As save-alls 'gainst his ending.
Down fell the mate, he thought his fate,
Check-mate, was close impending.

Down fell the cook—the cabin boy
Their beads with fervour telling,
While alps of serge, with snowy verge,
Above the yards came yelling.
Down fell the crew, and on their knees
Shudder'd at each white swelling !

Down sunk the sun of bloody hue,
His crimson light a cleaver
To each red rover of a wave :
To eye of fancy weaver
Neptune, the God, seem'd tossing in
A raging scarlet fever !

Sore, sore afraid, each papist pray'd
To Saint and Virgin Mary ;

But one there was that stood composed
Amid the waves' vagary ;
As staunch as rock, a true game cock
'Mid chicks of Mother Cary ;

His ruddy cheek retain'd its streak,
No danger seem'd to shrink him :
His step still bold,—of mortal mould,
The crew could hardly think him :
The Lady of the Lake, he seem'd
To know, could never sink him.

Relax'd at last the furious gale
Quite out of breath with racing ;
The boiling flood in milder mood,
With gentler billows chasing ;
From stem to stern, with frequent turn,
The Stranger took to pacing.

And as he walk'd to self he talked,
Some ancient ditty thrumming,
In under tone, as not alone—
Now whistling, and now humming—
" You're welcome, Charlie," " Cowdenknowes,"
" Kenmure," or " Campbells' Coming."

Down went the wind, down went the wave,
Fear quitted the most finical ;
The Saints, I wot, were soon forgot,
And Hope was at the pinnacle :
When rose on high, a frightful cry—
“ The Devil’s in the binnacle ! ”

“ The Saints be near,” the helmsman cried,
His voice with quite a falter—
“ Steady’s my helm, but every look
The needle seems to alter ;
God only knows where China lies,
Jamaica, or Gibraltar ! ”

The captain stared aghast at mate,
The pilot at th’ apprentice ;
No fancy of the German Sea
Of Fiction the event is :
But when they at the compass look’d
It seem’d non compass mentis.

Now north, now south, now east, now west,
The wavering point was shaken,
’Twas past the whole philosophy
Of Newton, or of Bacon ;

Never by compass, till that hour
Such latitudes were taken !

With fearful speech, each after each
Took turns in the inspection ;
They found no gun—no iron—none
To vary its direction ;
It seem'd a new magnetic case
Of Poles in insurrection !

Farewell to wives, farewell their lives,
And all their household riches ;
Oh ! while they thought of girl or boy,
And dear domestic niches,
All down the side which holds the heart,
That needle gave them stitches.

With deep amaze, the Stranger gaz'd
To see them so white-liver'd :
And walk'd abaft the binnacle,
To know at what they shiver'd ;
But when he stood beside the card,
St. Josef ! how it quiver'd !

No fancy-motion, brain-begot,
In eye of timid dreamer—

The nervous finger of a sot
Ne'er show'd a plainer tremor ;
To every brain it seem'd too plain,
There stood th' Infernal Schemer !

Mix'd brown and blue each visage grew,
Just like a pullet's gizzard ;
Meanwhile the captain's wandering wit,
From tacking like an izzard,
Bore down in this plain course at last,
" It's Michael Scott—the Wizard ! "

A smile past o'er the ruddy face,
" To see the poles so falter
I'm puzzled, friends, as much as you,
For with no fiends I palter !
Michael I'm not—although a Scott—
My christian name is Walter."

Like oil it fell, that name, a spell
On all the fearful faction ;
The Captain's head (for he had read)
Confess'd the Needle's action,
And bow'd to HIM in whom the North
Has lodged its main attraction.



Stanzas to Tom Woodgate,
OF HASTINGS.

TOM ; are you still within this land
Of livers—still on Hastings' sand,
Or roaming on the waves ?
Or has some billow o'er you rolled.
Jealous that earth should lap so bold
A seaman in her graves ?

On land the rushlight lives of men
Go out but slowly ; nine in ten,
By tedious long decline—
Not so the jolly sailor sinks,
Who founders in the wave, and drinks
The apoplectic brine !

Ay, while I write, mayhap your head
Is sleeping on an oyster-bed—
I hope 'tis far from truth !—

With periwinkle eyes ;—your bone
Beset with mussels, not your own,
And corals at your tooth !

Still does the chance pursue the chance
The main affords, the Aidant dance
In safety on the tide ?
Still flies that sign of my good-will
A little *bunting* thing—but still
To thee a flag of pride ?

Does that hard, honest hand now clasp
The tiller in its careful grasp—
With every summer breeze
When ladies sail, in lady-fear—
Or, tug the oar, a gondolier
On smooth Macadam seas ?

Or are you where the flounders keep,
Some dozen briny fathoms deep,
Where sand and shells abound—
With some old Triton on your chest,
And twelve grave mermen for a 'quest,
To find that you are—drown'd ?

Swift is the wave and apt to bring
A sudden doom—perchance I sing
A mere funereal strain ;
You have endured the utter strife—
And are—the same in death or life—
A good man ' in the main ' !

Oh, no—I hope the old brown eye
Still watches ebb, and flood, and sky ;
That still the brown old shoes
Are sucking brine up—pumps indeed !—
Your tooth still full o' ocean weed,
Or Indian—which you choose.

I like you, Tom ! and in these lays
Give honest worth its honest praise,
No puff at honour's cost ;
For though you met these words of mine,
All letter-learning was a line
You, somehow, never cross'd !

Mayhap we ne'er shall meet again,
Except on that pacific main,
Beyond this planet's brink ;

Yet, as we erst have braved the weather,
Still may we float awhile together,
As comrades on this ink!

Many a scudding gale we've had
Together, and my gallant lad,
Some perils we have pass'd;
When huge and black the wave career'd,
And oft the giant surge appear'd
The master of our mast;—

'Twas thy example taught me how
To climb the billow's hoary brow,
Or cleave the raging heap—
To bound along the ocean wild,
With danger—only as a child
The waters rock'd to sleep.

Oh, who can tell that brave delight,
To see the hissing wave in might
Come rampant like a snake!
To leap his horrid crest, and feast
One's eyes upon the briny beast,
Left couchant in the wake!



The simple shepherd's love is still
To bask upon a sunny hill,
The herdsman roams the vale—
With both their fancies I agree ;
Be mine the swelling, scoping sea,
That is both hill and dale !

I yearn for that brisk spray—I yearn
To feel the wave from stem to stern
Uplift the plunging keel ;
That merry step we used to dance
On board the Aidant or the Chance,
The ocean “ toe and heel.”

I long to feel the steady gale
That fills the broad distended sail—
The seas on either hand !
My thought, like any hollow shell,
Keeps mocking at my ear the swell
Of waves against the land.

It is no fable—that old strain
Of syrens !—so the witching main
Is singing—and I sigh !

My heart is all at once inclined
To seaward—and I seem to find
The waters in my eye!

Methinks I see the shining beach;
The merry waves, each after each,
Rebounding o'er the flints;
I spy the grim preventive spy!
The jolly boatman standing nigh!
The maids in morning chintz!

And there they float—the sailing craft!
The sail is up—the wind abaft—
The ballast trim and neat.
Alas! 'tis all a dream—a lie!
A printer's imp is standing by,
To haul my mizen sheet!

My tiller dwindles to a pen—
My craft is that of bookish men—
My sail—let Longman tell!
Adieu, the wave, the wind, the spray!
Men—maidens—chintzes—fade away!
Tom Woodgate, fare thee well!



The Key.

A MOORISH ROMANCE.

THE Moor leans on his cushion,
With the pipe between his lips ;
And still at frequent intervals
The sweet sherbet he sips ;

But, spite of lulling vapour
And the sober cooling cup,
The spirit of the swarthy Moor
Is fiercely kindling up !

One hand is on his pistol,
On its ornamented stock,
While his finger feels the trigger
And is busy with the lock—
The other seeks his ataghan,
And clasps its jewell'd hilt—
Oh ! much of gore in days of yore
That crooked blade has spilt !

His brows are knit, his eyes of jet
In vivid blackness roll,
And gleam with fatal flashes
Like the fire-damp of the coal ;
His jaws are set, and through his teeth
He draws a savage breath,
As if about to raise the shout
Of Victory or Death !

For why ? the last Zebeck that came
And moor'd within the Mole,
Such tidings unto Tunis brought
As stir his very soul—
The cruel jar of civil war,
The sad and stormy reign,
That blackens like a thunder cloud
The sunny land of Spain !

No strife of glorious Chivalry,
For honour's gain or loss,
Nor yet that ancient rivalry,
The Crescent with the Cross.
No charge of gallant Paladins
On Moslems stern and stanch ;
But Christians shedding Christian blood
Beneath the olive's branch !



A war of horrid parricide,
And brother killing brother ;
Yea, like to " dogs and sons of dogs "
That worry one another.
But let them bite and tear and fight,
The more the Kaffers slay,
The sooner Hagar's swarming sons
Shall make the land a prey !

The sooner shall the Moor behold
Th' Alhambra's pile again ;
And those who pined in Barbary
Shall shout for joy in Spain—
The sooner shall the Crescent wave
On dear Granada's walls :
And proud Mohammed Ali sit
Within his father's halls !

" Alla-il-alla ! " tiger-like
Up springs the swarthy Moor,
And, with a wide and hasty stride,
Steps o'er the marble floor ;
Across the hall, till from the wall,
Where such quaint patterns be,
With eager hand he snatches down
An old and massive Key !

A massive Key of curious shape,
And dark with dirt and rust,
And well three weary centuries
The metal might encrust !
For since the King Boabdil fell
Before the native stock,
That ancient Key, so quaint to see,
Hath never been in lock.

Brought over by the Saracens
Who fled across the main,
A token of the secret hope,
Of going back again ;
From race to race, from hand to hand,
From house to house it pass'd ;
O will it ever, ever ope
The Palace gate at last ?

Three hundred years and fifty-two
On post and wall it hung—
Three hundred years and fifty-two
A dream to old and young ;
But now a brighter destiny
The Prophet's will accords :
The time is come to scour the rust,
And lubricate the wards.

For should the Moor with sword and lance
At Algeiras land,
Where is the bold Bernardo now
Their progress to withstand?
To Burgos should the Moslem come,
Where is the noble Cid
Five royal crowns to topple down
As gallant Diaz did?

Hath Xeres any Pounder now,
When other weapons fail,
With club to thrash invaders rash,
Like barley with a flail?
Hath Seville any Perez still,
To lay his clusters low,
And ride with seven turbans green
Around his saddle-bow?

No! never more shall Europe see
Such Heroes brave and bold
Such Valour, Faith, and Loyalty,
As used to shine of old!
No longer to one battle cry
United Spaniards run,
And with their thronging spears uphold
The Virgin and her Son!

From Cadiz Bay to rough Biscay
Internal discord dwells,
And Barcelona bears the scars
Of Spanish shot and shells.
The fleets decline, the merchants pine
For want of foreign trade ;
And gold is scant ; and Alicante
Is seal'd by strict blockade !

The loyal fly, and Valour falls,
Opposed by court intrigue ;
But treachery and traitors thrive,
Upheld by foreign league ;
While factions seeking private ends
By turns usurping reign—
Well may the dreaming, scheming Moor
Exulting point to Spain !

Well may he cleanse the rusty Key
With Afric sand and oil,
And hope an Andalusian home
Shall recompense the toil !
Well may he swear the Moorish spear
Through wild Castile shall sweep,
And where the Catalonian sowed
The Saracen shall reap !

Well may he vow to spurn the Cross
Beneath the Arab hoof,
And plant the Crescent yet again
Above th' Alhambra's roof—
When those from whom St. Jago's name
In chorus once arose,
Are shouting Faction's battle-cries,
And Spain forgets to "Close!"

Well may he swear his ataghan
Shall rout the traitor swarm,
And carve them into Arabesques
That show no human form—
The blame be theirs whose bloody feuds
Invite the savage Moor,
And tempt him with the ancient Key
To seek the ancient door!





To —,

COMPOSED AT ROTTERDAM.



GAZE upon a city,—
A city new and strange,—
Down many a watery vista
My fancy takes a range ;
From side to side I saunter,
And wonder where I am ;
And can *You* be in England,
And *I* at Rotterdam !

Before me lie dark waters
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams
Sleep, restless in their sleep ;
A sort of vulgar Venice
Reminds me where I am ;
Yes, yes, you are in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.



Tall houses with quaint gables,
Where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges,
And trees in formal line,
And masts of spicy vessels
From western Surinam,
All tell me you're in England,
But I'm in Rotterdam.

Those sailors, how outlandish
The face and form of each !
They deal in foreign gestures,
And use a foreign speech ;
A tongue not learn'd near Isis,
Or studied by the Cam,
Declares that you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

And now across a market
My doubtful way I trace,
Where stands a solemn statue,
The Genius of the place ;
And to the great Erasmus
I offer my salaam ;
Who tells me you're in England,
But I'm at Rotterdam.

The coffee-room is open—
I mingle in its crowd,—
The dominos are noisy—
The hookahs raise a cloud ;
The flavour, none of Fearon's,
That mingles with my dram,
Reminds me you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

Then here it goes, a bumper—
The toast it shall be mine,
In Schiedam, or in sherry,
Tokay, or hock of Rhine ;
It well deserves the brightest,
Where sunbeam ever swam—
“ The Girl I love in England ”
I drink at Rotterdam !





1842



The Knight and the Dragon.

IN the famous old times,
(Famed for chivalrous crimes)
As the legends of Rhineland deliver,
Once there flourished a Knight,
Who Sir Otto was hight,
On the banks of the rapid green river!

On the Drachenfels' crest
He had built a stone nest,
From which he pounced down like a vulture,
And with talons of steel
Out of every man's meal
Took a very extortionate multure.

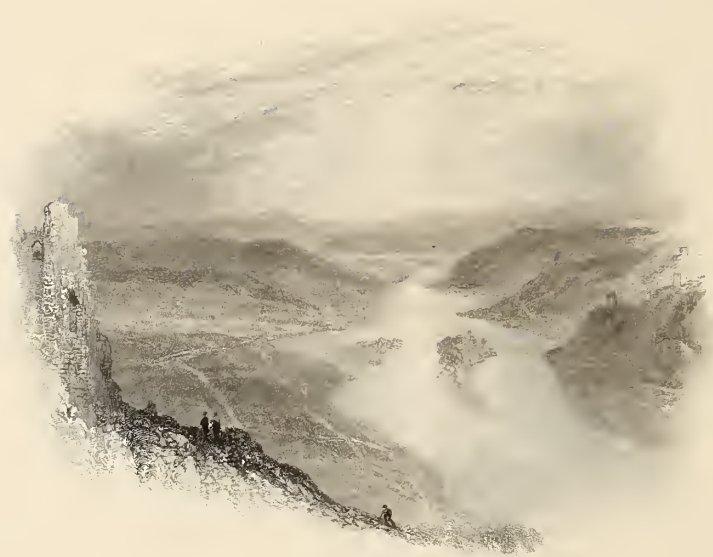
Yet he lived in good fame,
With a nobleman's name,
As "Your High-and-well-born" address'd daily—

Though Judge Park in his wig
Would have deem'd him a prig,
Or a cracksman, if tried at th' Old Bailey.

It is strange—very strange !
How opinions will change !—
How antiquity blazons and hallows
Both the man, and the crime,
That a less lapse of time
Would commend to the hulks or the gallows !

Thus enthrall'd by Romance,
In a mystified trance,
E'en a young, mild, and merciful woman
Will recal with delight
The wild keep, and its Knight,
Who was quite as much tiger as human !

Now it chanced on a day,
In the sweet month of May,
From his casement Sir Otto was gazing,
With his sword in the sheath,
At that prospect beneath,
Which our tourists declare so amazing !



Yes—he gazed on the Rhine,
And its banks, so divine ;
Yet with no admiration or wonder,
But the *gout* of a thief,
As a more modern chief
Looked on London, and cried “ What a plunder ! ”

From that river so fast,
From that champaign so vast,
He collected rare tribute and presents ;
Water-rates from ships’ loads,
Highway-rates on the roads,
And hard poor-rates from all the poor peasants !

When behold ! round the base
Of his strong dwelling-place,
Only gained by most toilsome progression,
He perceived a full score
Of the rustics, or more,
Winding up in a sort of procession !

“ Keep them out ! ” the Knight cried,
To the warders outside—
But the hound at his feet gave a grumble !

And in scrambled the knaves,
Like feudality's slaves,
With all forms that are servile and humble.

“ Now for boorish complaints !
Grant me patience, ye Saints ! ”
Cried the Knight, turning red as a mullet ;
When the baldest old man
Thus his story began,
With a guttural croak in his gullet !

“ Lord supreme of our lives,
Of our daughters, our wives,
Our she-cousins, our sons, and their spouses,
Of our sisters and aunts,
Of the babies God grants
Of the handmaids that dwell in our houses !

“ Mighty master of all
We possess, great or small,
Of our cattle, our sows, and their farrows ;
Of our mares and their colts,
Of our crofts, and our holts,
Of our ploughs, of our wains, and our harrows !

“ Noble Lord of the soil,
Of its corn and its oil,
Of its wine, only fit for such gentles !
Of our cream and sour-kraut,
Of our carp and our trout,
Our black bread, and black puddings, and lentils !

“ Sovran Lord of our cheese,
And whatever you please—
Of our bacon, our eggs, and our butter,
Of our backs and our polls,
Of our bodies and souls—
O give ear to the woes that we utter !

“ We are truly perplex'd,
We are frighted and vex'd,
Till the strings of our hearts are all twisted ;
We are ruined and curst
By the fiercest and worst
Of all robbers that ever existed !”

“ Now by Heav'n and this light ! ”
In a rage cried the Knight,
“ For this speech all your bodies shall stiffen !

What ! by Peasants miscall'd !"
Quoth the man that was bald,
" Not your Honour we mean, but a Griffin.

" For our herds and our flocks
He lays wait in the rocks,
And jumps forth without giving us warning ;
Two poor wethers, right fat,
And four lambs after that,
Did he swallow this very May morning !"

Then the High-and-well-born
Gave a laugh as in scorn,
" Is the Griffin indeed such a glutton ?
Let him eat up the rams,
And the lambs, and their dams—
If I hate any meat, it is mutton !"

" Nay, your Worship," said then
The most bald of old men,
" For a sheep we would hardly thus cavil,
If the merciless Beast
Did not oftentimes feast
On the Pilgrims, and people that travel."

“ Feast on what,” cried the Knight,
Whilst his eye glisten’d bright
With the most diabolical flashes—
“ Does the Beast dare to prey
On the road and highway?
With our proper diversion that clashes !”

“ Yea, ’tis so, and far worse,”
Said the Clown, “ to our curse ;
For by way of a snack or a tiffin,
Every week in the year
Sure as Sundays appear,
A young virgin is thrown to the Griffin !”

“ Ha ! Saint Peter ! Saint Mark !”
Roar’d the Knight, frowning dark,
With an oath that was awful and bitter :
“ A young maid to his dish !
Why, what more could he wish,
If the Beast were High-born, and a Ritter !

“ Now, by this our good brand,
And by this our right hand,
By the badge that is borne on our banners,

If we can but once meet
With the monster's retreat,
We will teach him to poach on our manors ! ”

Quite content with this vow,
With a scrape and a bow,
The glad peasants went home to their flagons,
Where they tippled so deep,
That each clown in his sleep
Dreamt of killing a legion of dragons !

Thus engaged, the bold Knight
Soon prepared for the fight
With the wily and scaly marauder ;
But, ere battle began,
Like a good Christian man,
First he put all his household in order.

“ Double bolted and barr'd
Let each gate have a guard ”—
(Thus his rugged Lieutenant was bidden)
“ And be sure, without fault,
No one enters the vault
Where the Church's gold vessels are hidden.

“ In the dark oubliette
Let yon merchant forget
That he e'er had a bark richly laden—
And that desperate youth,
Our own rival forsooth !
Just indulge with a kiss of the Maiden !

“ Crush the thumbs of the Jew
With the vice and the screw,
Till he tells where he buried his treasure ;
And deliver our word
To yon sullen caged bird,
That to-night she must sing for our pleasure !”

Thereupon, *cap-à-pie*
As a champion should be,
With the bald-headed peasant to guide him,
On his war-horse he bounds,
And then, whistling his hounds,
Prances off to what fate may betide him ;

Nor too long do they seek,
Ere a horrible reek,
Like the fumes from some villanous tavern,

Set the dogs on the snuff,
For they scent well enough
The foul monster coil'd up in his cavern !

Then alighting with speed
From his terrified steed,
Which he ties to a tree for the present,
With his sword ready drawn,
Strides the Ritter High-born,
And along with him drags the scared peasant !

“ O Sir Knight, good Sir Knight !
I am near enough quite—
I have shown you the beast and his grotto :”
But before he can reach
Any farther in speech,
He is stricken stone-dead by Sir Otto !

Who withdrawing himself
To a high rocky shelf,
Sees the monster his tale disentangle
From each tortuous coil,
With a sudden turmoil,
And rush forth the dead peasant to mangle.

With his terrible claws,
And his horrible jaws,
He soon moulds the warm corse to a jelly !
Which he quickly sucks in
To his own wicked skin
And then sinks at full stretch on his belly.

Then the Knight softly goes
On the tips of his toes
To the greedy and slumbering savage,
And with one hearty stroke
Of his sword, and a poke,
Kills the beast that had made such a ravage.

So, extended at length,
Without motion or strength,
That gorged serpent they call the constrictor,
After dinner, while deep
In lethargical sleep,
Falls a prey to his Hottentot victor.

“ ’Twas too easy by half ! ”
Said the Knight with a laugh ;
“ But as nobody witness’d the slaughter,

I will swear, knock and knock,
By Saint Winifred's clock,
We were at it three hours and a quarter ! ”

Then he chopped off the head
Of the monster so dread,
Which he tied to his horse as a trophy ;
And, with hounds, by the same
Ragged path that he came,
Home he jogg'd proud as Sultan or Sophi !

Blessed Saints ! what a rout
When the news flew about,
And the carcase was fetch'd in a waggon ;
What an outcry rose wild
From man, woman, and child—
“ Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon ! ”

All that night the thick walls
Of the Knight's feudal halls
Rang with shouts for the wine-cup and flagon ;
Whilst the vassals stood by,
And repeated the cry—
“ Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon ! ”

The next night and the next,
Still the fight was the text,
'Twas a theme for the minstrels to brag on !
And the vassals' hoarse throats
Still re-echoed the notes—
“ Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon ! ”

There was never such work
Since the days of King Stork,
When he lived with the Frogs at free quarters ;
Not to name the invites
That were sent down of nights,
'To the villagers' wives and their daughters !

It was feast upon feast,
For good cheer never ceased,
And a foray replenish'd the flagon ;
And the vassals stood by,
But more weak was the cry—
“ Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon ! ”

Down again sank the sun,
Nor were revels yet done—
But as if ev'ry mouth had a gag on,

Though the vassals stood round,
Deuce a word or a sound
Of " Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon ! "

There was feasting aloft,
But through pillage so oft
Down below there was wailing and hunger ;
And affection ran cold,
And the food of the old,
It was wolfishly snatched by the younger !

Mad with troubles so vast,
Where's the wonder at last
If the peasants quite alter'd their motto ?—
And with one loud accord
Cried out " Would to the Lord,
That the Dragon had vanquish'd Sir Otto ! "





I Remember, I Remember.



REMEMBER, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn ;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away !

I remember, I remember,
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily cups,
Those flowers made of light !
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birth-day,—
The tree is living yet !

I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing ;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow !

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high ;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky :
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heav'n
Than when I was a boy.







Poem.

FROM THE POLISH.



FROM seventy-two North latitude,
Dear Kitty, I indite ;
But first I'd have you understand
How hard it is to write.

Of thoughts that breathe and words that burn,
My Kitty, do not think,—
Before I wrote these very lines,
I had to melt my ink.

Of mutual flames and lover's warmth,
You must not be too nice ;
The sheet that I am writing on
Was once a sheet of ice !

The Polar cold is sharp enough
To freeze with icy gloss
The genial current of the soul,
E'en in a "Man of Ross."

Pope says that letters waft a sigh
From Indus to the Pole ;
But here I really wish the post
Would only "post the *coal*."

So chilly is the Northern blast,
It blows me through and through
A ton of Wallsend in a note
Would be a billet-doux !

In such a frigid latitude
It scarce can be a sin,
Should passion cool a little, where
A Fury was iced in.

I'm rather tired of endless snow,
And long for coals again ;
And would give up a Sea of Ice,
For some of Lambton's Main.

I'm sick of dazzling ice and snow,
The sun itself I hate ;
So very bright, so very cold,
Just like a summer grate.

For opodeldoc I would kneel,
My chilblains to anoint ;
O Kate, the needle of the North
Has got a freezing point.

Our food *is* solids,—ere we put
Our meat into our crops,
We take sledge-hammers to our steaks
And hatchets to our chops.

So very bitter is the blast,
So cutting is the air,
I never have been warm but once,
When hugging with a bear.

One thing I know you'll like to hear,
Th' effect of Polar snows,
I've left off snuff—one pinching day—
From leaving off my nose.

I have no ear for music now ;
My ears both left together ;
And as for dancing, I have cut
My toes—it's cutting weather.

I've said that you should have my hand,
Some happy day to come ;
But, Kate, you only now can wed
A finger and a thumb.

Don't fear that any Esquimaux
Can wean me from my own ;
The Girdle of the Queen of Love
Is not the Frozen Zone.

At wives with large estates of snow
My fancy does not bite ;
I like to see a Bride—but not
In such a deal of white.

Give me for home a house of brick,
The Kate I love at Kew !
A hand unchopped—a merry eye ;
And not a nose, of blue.





To think upon the Bridge of Kew,
To me a bridge of sighs ;
Oh, Kate, a pair of icicles
Are standing in my eyes !

God knows if I shall e'er return,
In comfort to be lull'd !
But if I do get back to port,
Pray let me have it mull'd.





Address.



USH! not a sound! no whisper! no demur!
No restless motion—no intrusive stir!
But with staid presence and a quiet breath,
One solemn moment dedicate to Death!

For now no fancied miseries bespeak
The panting bosom, and the wetted cheek;
No fabled Tempest, or dramatic wreck,
No Royal Sire wash'd from the mimic deck,
And dirged by Sea Nymphs to his briny grave!
Alas! deep, deep beneath the sullen wave,
His heart, once warm and throbbing as your own,
Now cold and senseless as the shingle stone;
His lips, so eloquent, choked up with sand;
The bright eye glazed,—and the impressive hand,
Idly entangled with the ocean weed—
Full fathom five, a FATHER lies indeed!



Yes ! where the foaming billows rave the while
Around the rocky Ferns and Holy Isle,
Deaf to their roar, as to the dear applause
That greets deserving in the Drama's cause,
Blind to the horrors that appal the bold,
To all he hoped, or feared, or loved, of old—
To love—and love's deep agony, a-cold ;
He, who could move the passions, moved by none,
Drifts an unconscious corse.—Poor ELTON's race is run !

Weep for the dead ! Yet do not merely weep
For him who slumbers in the oozy deep :
Mourn for the dead !—yet not alone for him
O'er whom the cormorant and gannet swim ;
But, like Grace Darling in her little boat,
Stretch out a saving hand to those that float—
The orphan Seven—so prematurely hurl'd
Upon the billows of this stormy world,
And struggling—save your pity take their part—
With breakers huge enough to break the heart !



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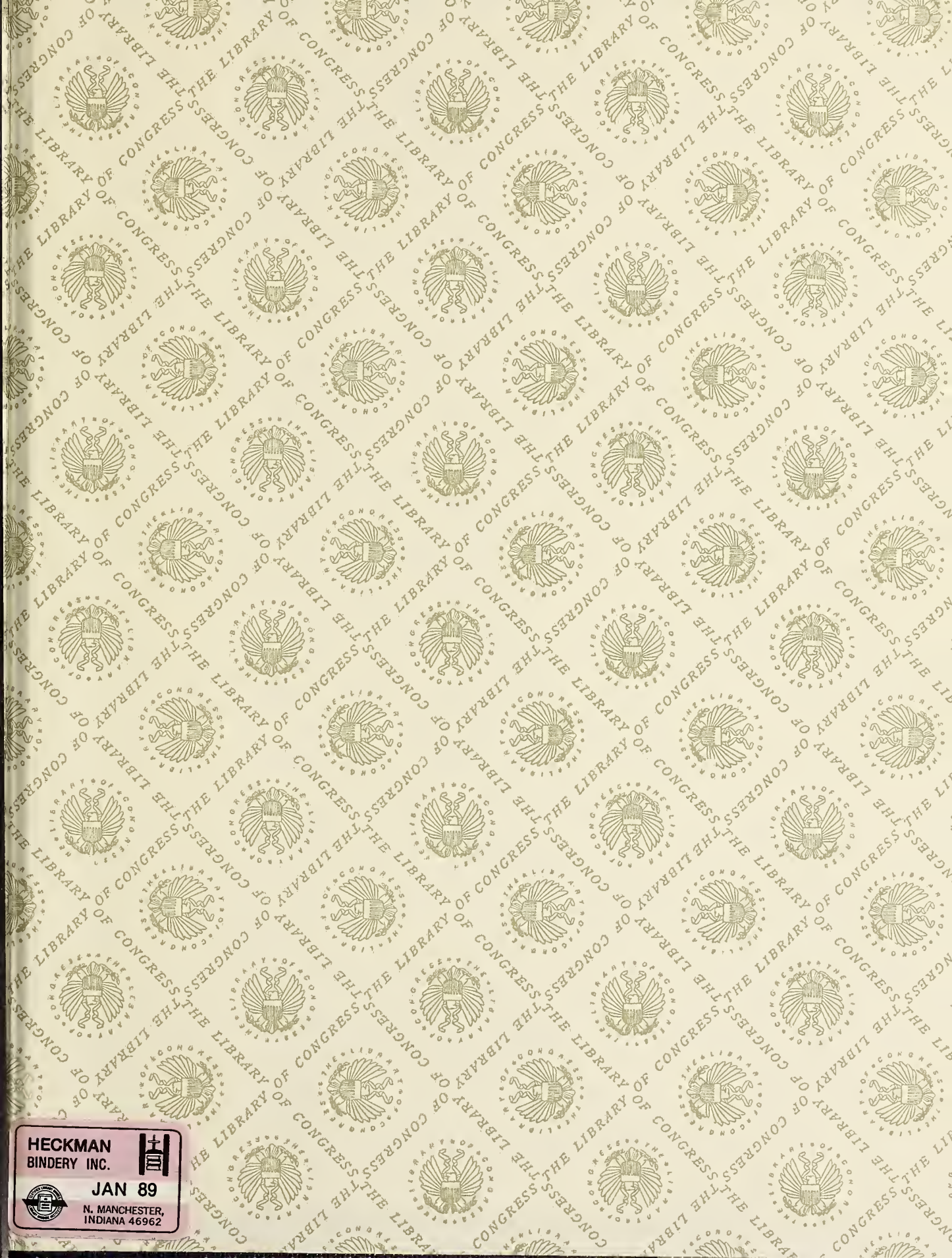
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