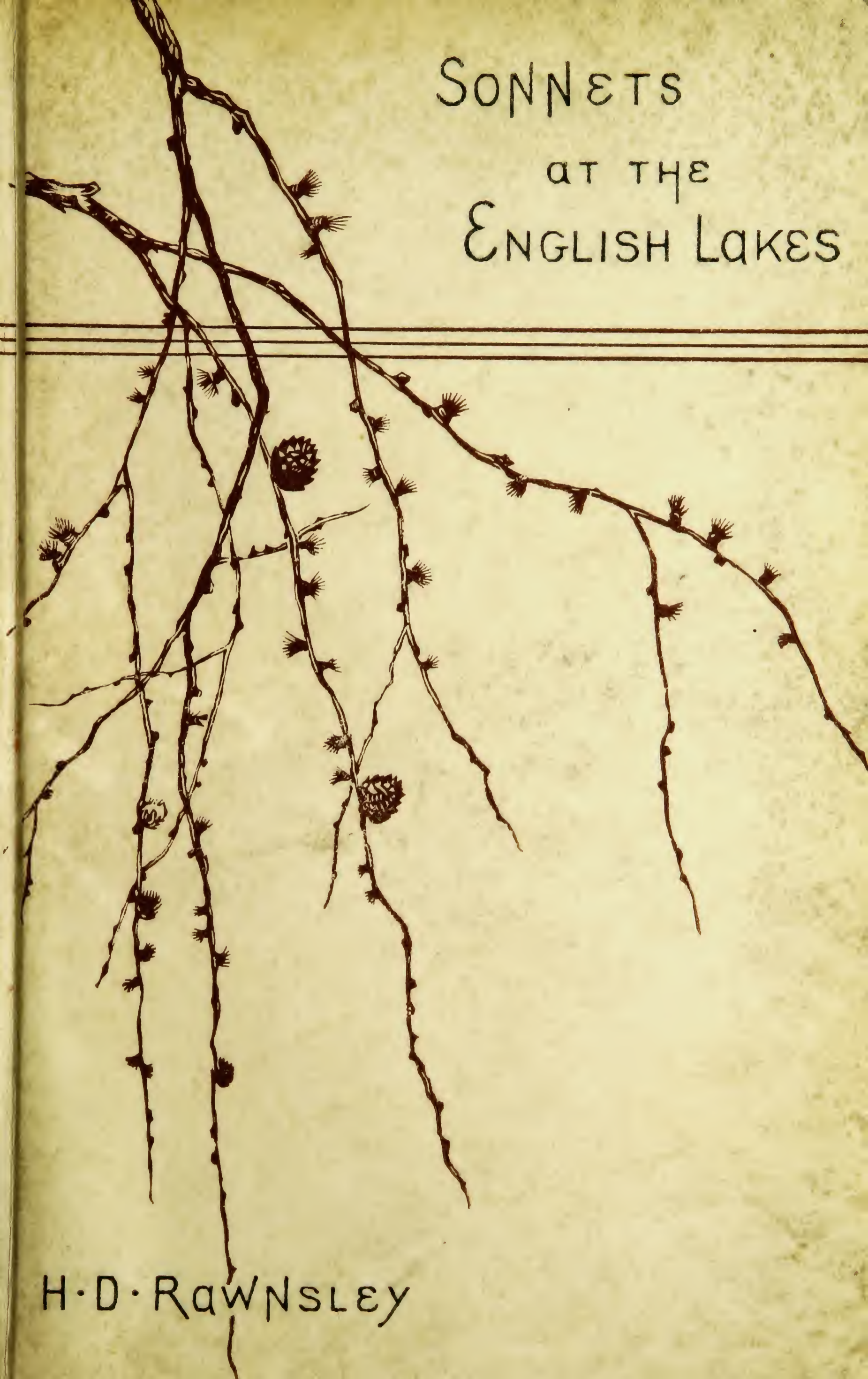


SONNETS
AT THE
ENGLISH LAKES



H·D·RAWNSLEY

Wordsworth

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SONNETS

AT THE

ENGLISH LAKES

BY

HARDWICKE D. RAWNSLEY

BALLIOL COLL., OXFORD

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO.

1881

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To the Memory of
CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER,
THESE SONNETS,
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PREFATORY NOTE.

JAMES SPEDDING has said, that “to appreciate a collection of Sonnets, they should be read one by one, with intervals between long enough to let the impression of each get out of the other’s way.” To claim appreciation, or any length of interval as necessary to effect this, for these Sonnets would be arrogance, and to suggest the chance of their being read through might incur the charge of presumption; but the Writer feels that SPEDDING’S caution is worthy of remembrance, and deprecates the reading, collectively, of Poems that ask the interruptions of a mountain walk.

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INTRODUCTORY.

*B*LOW foul or fair, the hand that fashioned thee
 Beat at a village forge each separate nail,
 Thrashed out at home the hemp to spin thy sail,
 From the near wood has borrowed every tree.
 Thy keel may only know an inland sea ;
 If captious Heaven blow an adverse gale
 Thou hast, frail bark, on board no single bale
 That thou canst give to hold the wind in fee :
 Yet haply on thy decks a child shall stand
 To veer thy sail, to hold the rudder band ;
 By verdurous shores thou may'st in Spring-time take
 Old limbs that need the sun, sad hearts that ache ;
 And they of thy rude fashioning who ask,
 May speed thy venture for its friendly task.

I.

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER.

SINGER of songs most simple and most sweet,
With artlessness that only art commands,
Thy notes are hushed, the lute has slipped thy hands,
And lies still echoing with thy heart's last beat,
Full tuned, and fit for service, at thy feet.
But whoso dares enlist its tender strands
Must know the touch a humble soul demands,
And eyes of love that lowliest things will greet.
In thee the dumb creation found a voice ;
Though much confined thy music's dainty sphere,
No wings that flashed but did thy song rejoice,
No hedge-row cry but found a listening ear.
Child-hearted thou, by nature as by choice,
True Christian Poet ! blameless Sonneteer !

II.

*THE ANNIVERSARY OF
CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER'S DEATH,
25th APRIL.*

THE Fells are wrapt in purple, murky gloom
Confuses sky with earth, and hill with plain ;
Grief-laden clouds go by, loud sobs the rain,
And distant lakes, pale-faced as sorrow, loom.
I think of thee, thy quiet earthy room
Opens its grassy door, I see again
The Man who with his music beat out pain,
And went down singing to a conqueror's tomb.
Dear friend ! the world is darker, yea, it seems
These pale Anemones that shuddering bow,
These Celandines that hide their suns away,
Have not forgot thy dying, nor the day ;
The woodland stars are quenched with tears, but thou
Art glad where God's eternal sunlight beams.

III.

*KENDAL CASTLE :**Or the Power of Tradition.*

STRENGTH for his task from hence the Roman
drew ;
Here Talbois kept the foe beyond the gate :
For thoughts of this, their native castle state,
The Kendal shafts at Flodden straighter flew ;
And here in strength the little Catherine grew,
Here conned her books, here learned to meditate,
Who, stoutly Protestant, would dare debate
With rough King Hal, and roused the Romish crew.
The bow and buckram, by the Fleming's skill,
To cloth-yard wand and woollen frieze gave way.
But hearts are helped by that old ruin still,
Though moat be dry and fortress keep decay ;
And such an awe is on the grassy hill
At courtier distance all the houses stay.

IV.

WINDERMERE — AUTUMN.

BLUE as the waves upon the Midland seas,
The frost has rimmed thy shaggy banks with gold,
And—messenger of coming change—the cold
From Troutbeck blown, and over Fairfield's knees,
Sweeps with a touch of winter ; and the trees—
Tall fires about the bluffs and headlands bold—
Burn up the woods in colours manifold,
To fall to ashes at the earliest breeze.
These are the gifts of Autumn—azure floods
And amber reeds, and gold among the woods :
But I would give this colour, all this store,
For one bird-voice along thy silent shore ;
Would welcome utter leaflessness, to hear
The cuckoo's voice come over Windermere.

v.

THE SYCAMORE TREE, AMBLESIDE.

STRAIGHT-SPRINGING fount of summer cool
and shade,

Have then thy life-streams somewhere up the hill
A ceaseless store, a swift-descending rill,
That thus to heaven, in beauty unafraid,
Thou leapest into green? Or, by the aid
Of thine own purpose and thy generous will,
Hast thou from waters of the neighb'ring ghyll
An high-built summer-house for song-birds made?
Tall Welcomer, by strangers first espied,
Reared o'er the milk-white walls and sunny eaves,
The traveller loves thee, entering Ambleside;
And thee he turns to gaze at as he leaves:
Long may the woodman's axe to wanderers spare
Thy monumental presence high in air

VI.

WRAY CASTLE.

WHO planned thy strength of towers was out
of date ;

No leaguers now can storm thee but the wind ;

Nor fiercer foe unbidden entrance find

'Than April shower beneath a crazy slate ;

And there thou sittest in thy solemn state,

Waiting for Time about thy brows to bind

'The grace that larger years than aid mankind,

And days forgetful of thy birth create.

Uplifted pale above thy circling groves,

Or moving with the traveller as he moves

In rushing boat or by the dusty shore,

'Thou still canst wake the gift that comes from Heaven,

Sweet Fancy, and from Brathay to the Leven

Breathe o'er the lake a quaint Romantic lore.

VII.

THE HAUNTED HALL AT CALGARTH.

CALGARTH, I never pass thy haunted plain
But I remember Heaven did well requite
Among his vines, the patriot Jezreelite,
Who would not sell his father's plot for gain :
Much water washed that car's avenging stain,
A little earth holds Jezebel, but to spite
The modern Ahab, and to claim their right,
These sculls, though brayed and burnt, return again.
"Now, guard thee ! guard thee well, Myles Philipson,"
—So rang the curse—" We still thy tenants stay !"
" Ours is the dearest acre thou hast won,
Its fruits misfortune, loss of friends, decay."
A ruined hall, a name wiped out, attests
How God avenged the murderer's yeoman-guests.

See Note I., Appendix.

VIII.

CLOUD-REST ON FAIRFIELD.

BOSOM of calm, while those ungoverned wills,
The April shadows, restless as the wind,
Fitfully pass, in hope some peace to find,
Lo ! as a heart's presentiment of ills
The human face with agitation fills,
This morn, methinks, Heaven's sorrow has combined
With Earth's dark fear to give the mountain-mind
Anguished expression on the troubled hills ;
But here the Clouds, by no rude wind distress,
Lean their white arms on Fairfield's circling rim ;
Or, led by Sunlight's soft enticing hand,
Move slow, majestic, up the hollow land,
And, lingering late upon the mountain's brim,
At night return, to sleep, and brood, and rest.

IX.

WORDSWORTH'S SEAT, RYDAL.

EIGHT steps there are beneath a poet's throne :
A lover's heart, a meditative will,
Ambitious perseverance, obstinate skill
That knows how painfully the jewel shone,
A prophet's sight, a soul's communion
With humblest wayside things by dale and hill,
An eye that tears can on a sudden fill,
And lips that smile before the tears are gone.
But, mounting up thy rocky poet's seat
With hesitation, as before a king's,
These other twain beneath thy throne I found :
Knowledge of peace that human goodness brings—
Of life most earnest, solemn, joyful, sweet ;
I cried, thy throne is sure, great Bard, thy kingdom
sound.

X.

FROM FOX HOW.

THIS home for rest, Who never rested planned,
Pure, faithful, zealous, unambitious, good.
Musing, I saw in Rydal's winter wood
The towering pine-clump take a full command
Of all the listening leafless brother band ;
So, in our school-day winter-time, he stood
For English school, and true schoolmasterhood ;
So seems he still pre-eminent to stand.
Thence, upward gazing—lo, on Fairfield's crown,
Above the storm, and first to see the sun,
A Titan's grave his giant memory keeps ;
Willing he was, God never called him down ;
High on his whole heart's rampire Arnold sleeps,
And round the pines the summer has begun.

See Note II., Appendix.

XI.

LOUGHRIGG TARN.

THOU blue-eyed daughter of the mountain streams,
Born with the rocks, and older than the rain,
Whose banks with purple loosestrife are ingrain,
Thy quick impressioned face is shot with gleams
Of distant splendours, and the marvellous dreams
Of mountains in thy mirror are made plain ;
Thy fresh young life a hundred founts sustain.
How like a wise man's heart thy being seems,
Content where God has set thy bounds to live,
All beauty got from Heaven content to give !
Yet, if a breeze with passion flaw thy face,
How blurred thy mirror, and how marred thy grace !
Noiseless at noon, and calm at evenfall,
For thee white lilies twine their virgin coronal.

XII.

WATER-LILIES IN PULLWYKE BAY.

SHUT close your ivory doors, the dews are near,
Your hundred golden tongues from this gold day
Have tasted all the beauty that they may,
And sucked enough of sweetness from the mere ;
For rest the perch their crimson rudders steer
Beneath your leafy isles, to whose soft sway
The dragon-fly, a length of rich inlay,
Trusts his blue jewel till the dawn appear.
Down the bright cords all day, to buds below,
Joy and the sun have gone to bid them blow ;
With purest aspiration, high commands,
Their leaves float up, each silvery bud expands ;
Night falls—to these dumb things for shelter glide ;
Pain comes—to what high helpers shall we dumb
confide ?

XIII.

*IL BEL AND HIGH STREET.**

WHETHER they knew their God as Il or El,
Almighty power, or dread Typhonic praised,
By yon high altar old-world ashes raised,
The painted Briton learned the name of Bel ;
In hopes of Heaven, he lit the fires of hell ;
The beasts shrank off, afar the eagle gazed,
Helvellyn answered, Scaw and Gavel blazed,
And Stinchcombe flared responses to Crossfell.
The Roman came, and back the eagles yelled,
Their brazen wings through those Phœnician fires
Swooped scathless, flinging ashes all abroad ;
Awhile the axes rang, the trees were felled,
And up the heights the jangling yoke and tires
Proclaimed the Gospel of the Latin road.

* The remains of the Roman military road over High Street are still visible. It passes immediately beneath the conical summit of Il Bel. The name of this remarkable hill on the High Street range seems not only to have preserved to us the local tradition of Baal or Belus worship, but to suggest the attribute under which he was known to the worshippers.

XIV.

THE LARCH.

L OVER of hills, and Lady of the lakes,
If still with thee the birch must empire share,
When rubies fruit along the beaded hair,
Thy grace the palm pre-eminently takes ;
For then, when first the burly bee awakes,
As if to take the landscape unaware,
With gradual change, and dreamy, phantom air,
Thine heart again to feathery greenness shakes :
Feigner of Death, but first to brave the cold,
Thou teachest how the multitude can live
In glad interdependence and be free ;
Thy voice, with murmurs of a summer sea,
Brings blessing o'er the hills, and thou dost give,
For scarce a footing, showers of Autumn gold.

XV.

FIRST FROST.

IT was the time when Jupiter alone
Burned in the south with undivided sway,
And dark against the primrose-dying day
Stood forth the cairn of ancient Coniston ;
No longer in the tarn reflected shone
The snowy fields on mountains far away ;
Dull were the larches, late so golden gay ;
The light from out the feathered reeds was gone :
Then up the dusky lane, with welcome sound
To milkmaid's ear, the lowing cattle past,
And mellowly they crushed the crisping ground,
Their breath in silver o'er their shoulders cast ;
The Herdsman, as he stumbled after, cried,
“ A bitter frost, God wot, this eventide.”

XVI.

GRASMERE.

C HILD of the tarn, the fountains, and the sun,
The hills that rear their beauty by thy shore,
Thy calm enisled water-plain once more
In tears I come to visit, e'en as one
Who, when his hoard of strength is well-nigh gone,
Comes in great pain for wasting of his store,
Treading the thirsty wilds he trod before,
In trust to find where cooling waters run.
For I am aged, but from these rocks I take
A conscious touch of their immortal youth ;
Feeble and worn, thy lake with freshness fills
My veins, invigorate of thy sinewy hills,
And wavering, lo, am wiser for the truth
That clothes thy mountains and that haunts thy lake.

XVII.

*STOCK GHYLL BARRED.***A Protest.*

THE gift of God—our earth more cool was grown,
In liquid drops the steamy vapour fell ;
Long ages after, by a Syrian well,
In those same words a deeper truth was known.
The water-bearer to the Arab town
Cries the same truth, and gives but will not sell.
Before this streamlet, in an English dell,
Dare I the free continuous gift disown ?
“ God’s gift to all ”—shall craven men allow
Desire of pelf and individual greed
To bar the gate and ask a sordid fee,
To tax the wondering eye that comes to see,
Take mean advantage of a brother’s need,
And claim a toll for Nature’s public show ?

* The street cry of the Cairene water-carriers is, “ The Gift of God.” Since this Sonnet was written the residents of Ambleside, with great public spirit, have purchased the ground adjoining the Fall, with the view of throwing it open to the public for ever.

XVIII.

*DUNMAIL RAISE.**

A CRUEL place to dout a mortal's eyes,
 So fair the scene, yet here the deed was done!
 Cast with a sigh the tributary stone
 For those two sons whose sire hereunder lies.
 That day when Edmund, with victorious cries,
 Stormed up the pass, and broke grey Cumbria's throne,
 He little thought those blinded boys had won
 The surer realm where Pity never dies.
 And those brave lads, whose only fault was this,
 They helped their father, for the British right,
 Hot on their eyes the brand might sear and hiss,
 And bring with pain of hell unending night,
 But better blindly grope the mountain ways
 Than see the Saxon over Dunmail Raise.

* At Dunmail Raise, the boundary of Westmoreland and Cumberland, the Saxon King, Edmund, A.D. 945, defeated and slew Dunmail, the last King of Cumberland, and put out the eyes of his two sons.

XIX.

*SONG AND LIFE.**Rydal.*

WHEN woods are full of Spring, you shall not
find

One song unsung, one note of future ill ;
Then comes a Frost, and all the boughs are chill,
The sad leaves sicken and the trees are pined :
But Man hath ever Summer in his mind,
His singing changes only when he will ;
In him the heart of life is stirring still,
Though winds blow change, and weather prove unkind.
Thou, Rydal, tho' thy Forest steep is bare,
And Autumn's blue is gathered in thy wood,
One note is clearer for the silent air,
Heard best by ear of Meditation's mood—
A song of Rest and Need of soft repair,
Till Swallows seek again their Summer food.

XX.

WINTER SUNRISE ON THE FELLS.

I HAD not thought that in our English cold
The sun could rise upon a sight so fair :
Clear cut against far depths of rosy air
The mountains stood, white marble, washed with gold,
And veined with shadowy sapphire ; fold on fold
Snow mantles fell most royal and most rare
Over their ample shoulders, milky hair
Streamed down from sunlit head and forehead old.
Such seeming fitness, such a proud estate,
So swift assumed, so suddenly beheld,
Such mute magnificence, such powers of eld,
Would make a courtier's heart to hesitate ;
And I, fresh come on Fancy's faltering wings,
Passed dumb before the Winter's mountain kings.

XXI.

THE MOURNER AND THE BRATHAY.

BORN of the far-off careless mountain throng,
What moved thee, Brathay, so to slacken pace?
Was it the soul of sympathetic grace
Which through all Nature's sorrowing is strong?
For slow, with hushing of thy rocky song,
Between the trees mellifluous interspace,
Thou passest on toward the holy place
Where tears are shed and memory is long.
How many a broken-hearted man at eve
Has seen in yon still water's golden reach
The Star of Love o'er Langdale brightlier burn,
And, homeward from that solace loath to turn,
Has felt thy passionate music with him grieve,
Hearing the pent-up silence break to speech!

XXII.

THE WILLOW-WARBLER.

WHEN Calgarth's Oaks are bronzing into leaf,
And April scatters Orrest Head with green,
When cuckoos cry, and cushats mourn between
My future sadness and my present grief,
Thy note's enchantment brings me comfort chief,
With quavering voice about the hazel screen,
Charming away what else of pain had been
Too deep i' the cup for that sleep-fanning thief
To steal, and turn to sweetness as he hums.
Though not for us the empassioned nightingale
Fires the dusk air with song and bids it shake,
'Thou, sombrest warbler of the Northern vale,
For hearts not inconsolable dost make
An anodyne for sorrow when it comes.

XXIII.

THE GEOLOGIST'S FUNERAL.

In Memoriam J. C. W., Buried at Keswick, April 20th, 1880.

BURY him here, and let his body's dust
Be ash to ash in this volcanic land,
Whose fiery secrets he could understand ;
Right well may we his dissolution trust
To that same Will that through the lava crust
Spouted the granite fountains. God ! whose hand
Of this earth's waste new continents hath planned,
Into thy potter's clay a gem we thrust.
No more his feet we follow up the cleft,
Or hear his questioning hammer tap and ring,
And learn which way the primal bergs were rolled ;
But, till the Greta ceases sorrowing,
We leave him here, contented to be left,
Schooled in a lore whose days are æons old.

NOTE.—The river Greta takes its name from the A.S. *grætan*, to weep ; old Eng., *greet*, to lament, probably in allusion to the sound of its waters wailing among the rocky boulders of its channel.

XXIV.

BLELHAM TARN.

I KNOW the dreamy quiet of the tomb,
Have sailed through æther's silences profound,
Wild rocks have climbed that listen for the sound
Of Echo and have never heard her come,
White wastes explored where words are frozen dumb,
And tropic plains ; yet have I never found
For peace and rest such consecrated ground
As lies, dear tarn, about thy mountain home :
Scent from the sunbrown hay-field thou dost gather,
Music from reeds, and humming breadths of heather,
Swift-changing colour from the blushing skies,
When to her larchen roost the ringdove flies ;
From imaged hills their secrets thou dost borrow
To blossom into lilies on the morrow.

XXV.

THE GRASMERE SPORTS.

BID by the day they wait for all the year,
Shepherd and swain their gayest colours don,
For race and sinewy wrestling meet upon
The tournay ground beside the shining mere.
For them no high-built seats their circles rear,
Heaven spreads above her pure pavilion,
Sun-tanned Stone-Arthur looks approval on,
And Sölva How reiterates the cheer.
No banner-fame they boast, no high emprize ;
A brother's praise is all the meed they ask ;
The fullest guerdon of the stubborn task
The love that lights a fluttering maiden's eyes ;
And they who fall turn smilingly away,
Resolved to win the next year's meeting day.

XXVI.

THE THRUSH IN SPRING.

THE mating Pie, from yonder cedarn bough
Less harshly shakes Love's answer from his
throat ;

The Robin whistles, gossamers upfloat ;
The ploughman's heart is gay beside his plough :
But one glad voice again I hear and know,
In this first morning concert, one dear note
That, like a dainty sonnet learned by rote,
Rings up, and threads long years of memory through :
Thine is the voice, triumphant, happy Thrush !
The nut-plumes scarce are rosy, birches pale
Not yet have donned their purples in the dale,
But thou, in yonder flowering hazel-bush
Shaking the tassels into gold, dost swing ;
Thy song is sure, for thou hast felt the Spring.

XXVII.

THE LAKE MIRROR: IN AUTUMN.

WE sailed from cape to cape, whose headlands
grey
Had blossomed branchy gold, and half in fear,
Through liquid mirrors of the Autumn mere,
We ventured in amongst the leafy sway
Of watery woodland, and the russet spray
Of fern and rosy brier, reflected clear,
Set dancing by the prow as we drew near,
To grow to stillness as we passed away.
That day the glory of two worlds was ours,
A depth and height of faint autumnal sky,
A double pageant of the painted wood :
Still as we stole upon a summer flood,
Marbled by snow the mountain tops close by
Spoke from warm depths of Winter's nearing hours.

XXVIII.

THE CRIER OF CLAIFE.

THE Priests who served at Sire de Courci's shrine
 Might ply the ghost with candle, book, and bell,
 But that old Crier of Claife on Furness Fell,
 As long as ivy evergreens shall twine,
 May sally forth at will from his ravine,
 And rouse the boatman with his human yell ;
 Winds are not laid by sacerdotal spell,
 And spirits own a Master more Divine.
 Oft when the storm goes scurrying up the height
 I hear the hollow moaning of the wind
 Like ghosts in sorrow, and a word of Christ's
 Linked with that monkish failure, fills the night :
 "Can Mortals track the free wind home, or bind
 The Spirit blowing ever as it lists ?"

See Note III., Appendix.

XXIX.

AT WRAY COTTAGE.

NEVER was Peace so absolute ; you may hear
The dews descending as the shadow moves ;
The toying butterflies tell forth their loves ;
For yonder heights, if some child-mountaineer
Cried, Echo's voice would ripple the still mere,
And fill with wonder silent forest-groves ;
Yea, our own heart would flutter like a dove's
If but in Heaven a cloudlet should appear.
The farms stand vacant, fields half-harvested,
Along the vale no herdsman's cry is sent ;
You could believe the shepherds all had fled
Beyond the hills for life and merriment ;
And down the gossamer's slow-sailing thread
Flashed out the thought in rainbow hues—Content !

XXX.

CLOUDS ON THE HILLS.

A LONG the embattled ramparts of the world
Each day the clouds, like sentries roused from
sleep,
Continual watch upon the large Sun keep,
To fence him in, their banners are unfurled ;
And lest his shafts be over-hotly hurled
Upon the panting heights, their shadows creep
From cleft to cleft, from steep to scarrèd steep,
Or over vale and mountain-head are curled.
But none the less the low sun's golden might
Flames through the barriers and lets fall the night ;
And men, mere shadowy sentries, guard their fate ;
“ For us,” say they, “ alone the sun doth shine : ”
But Life's great purpose flames beyond the gate,
And they are left in darkness to repine.

XXXI.

THE LION AND THE LAMB:

Or Helm Crag after a Storm.

WHEN shall the Lion with the Lamb lie down?
Not while the world's steep battle-fields are
black,

Not till ambition's thunder and the wrack
And mist of national selfishness have flown ;
Till those warm rains of flattery that drown
Have emptied all their clouds upon the back
Of adamantine worth ; and o'er the track
Of blind assailants grass of God has grown.
So thought I, when upon that craggy helm,
Dark with the sear and gloom of pitiless rain,
'Mid ashen rocks that hurtling storms o'erwhelm,
I saw the rusty fern's ensanguined stain,
And calmly grand the Lion did espy
Couched with the Lamb, beneath a silent sky.

XXXII.

THE HARVEST THANKSGIVING.

SHUT close the barn, and put the yokes away ;
Ho ! red-capped thresher, hang your shining
flail ;

Ho ! herdsman, leave the cattle in the vale.

Shepherds, your flocks shall on the mountain stray,
And share with you the general holiday.

The girl who skims the bowl, and froths the pail,
Whose harvest brings a daily festival,—

The tinkling bell invites her, too, to pray.

All in the flower-decked church may kneel and ask
Who saved the seed, Who gave the corn's increase ?

And each may consecrate the ended task

By resting there a little while in peace.

While bowed with work old men will wondering say,
Shall we be here the next Thanksgiving day ?

XXXIII.

EARLY SNOW.

SCARCE was the Cherry, earliest changeling, red,
The southing swallow scarce had taken flight,
When flecks of snow foamed over Fairfield's height,
And waves of Winter broke o'er Scandale Head :
But in the vales not yet was summer dead,
Her warm-breath'd hosts swarmed upward to the fight ;
Beat back by day, the snows advanced at night,
And now they gained, and now the invaders fled.
A loud recall the northern breezes blew,
The snow-white foe broke up its battle-line,
But still in stubborn companies the few
Made desperate stand in hollow and ravine ;
They felt how soon from out their northern home
Would Winter lead, and reinforcements come.

XXXIV.

THE LANGDALE PIKES.

GRIM guardians of silence, mighty pair !
All day, on your broad backs the strong sun lies,
Upon your scarry front he latest dies.
Beneath the stars ye couch, giant and bare ;
The morning comes, ye shrink not to your lair ;
And at the noon the large dew-shower flies
From off your manes, while round the falcon cries,
And the hoarse raven clamours in your hair.
Above a lovely land ye lie, and see
Age after age of little men go by ;
High overhead, ye feel the ageless sky,
And underneath, the slowly waning lea ;
But bold in mist, calm in the shock of storm,
Like a strong purpose, lo, ye keep your lion form !

XXXV.

*ON SEEING A TELEGRAPH WIRE AND PILLAR-
POST BELOW WORDSWORTH'S HOUSE.*

THE Poet he who strikes a Prophet's lyre,
And to his own day's ear will tune its chimes ;
For while this quick world jars there shall be Rhymes,
And while men love they will Love's Song require.
So thought I, as I spied the humming wire
Whose sound was as bee-music in the limes,
And that grim letter-post, that held betimes
The peasant's missive and the lord's desire.
Is it not well the Eolian harp should sing
Down the white road that gave the sage his thought ?
And well the post should back to memory bring
The man whose sympathy to concord wrought
The poet's passion and the postman's lot,—
Who lived, and loved, and sang in yonder humble cot ?

XXXVI.

THE SQUIRREL.

LIGHT-HEARTED dweller in the voiceless wood,
Pricking thy tasselled ears in hope to tell
Where, under, in thy haste, the acorn fell :
Now, for excess of summer in thy blood,
Running through all thy tricky change of mood,
Or vaulting upward to thy citadel
To seek the mossy nest, the miser-cell,
And chuckle o'er thy winter's hoard of food.
Miser ? I do thee wrong to call thee so,
For, from the swinging larch-plumes overhead,
In showers of whispering music thou dost shed
Gold, thick as dust, where'er thy light feet go :
Keep, busy Almoner, thy gifts of gold !
Be still ! mine eyes ask only to behold.

XXXVII.

LATTERBARROW.

THEY set old Lathar dead upon the height
That looks o'er Hiarn's spring * to Sölva's How ; †
Between his knees they placed the spear and bow,
Fresh strung for battle, in the land of Night.
In lusty song the warriors told his might ;
The little ones in whispers learned to know
How sometime from Valhalla's halls of snow
Would Lathar come to take again his right.
Strong in that faith the sorrowing clansmen went,
Hewed down the wood, set fences, sowed the seed,
Let light to Blelham's Tarn, would dare to bleed,
To that stern barrow's trust obedient.
O ! for such voice from Olivet to cry,
" God claims the land He lent—The Christ is by ! "

* Iron-Keld.

† Silver How.

XXXVIII.

NAB COTTAGE:

A Memory of Hartley Coleridge.

HE to whose dreams did rhythmic measures
throng,
Whose walks were tuneful (so the shepherds tell),
Was it not strange he lipped a polished shell,
And sang for scholar's ear the saddest song?
He spoke his native mountains' rugged tongue;
The brook for him leapt boisterous in the dell;
The stately hollows of yon scarry Fell
For him their wildest echoes did prolong.
Unchanged the scene, and still the sycamore
Flutters its seed-wings to the Poet's door,
But those gay flowers, whose garden home he planned,
Have strayed abroad to please a stroller's hand:
How like thyself, the Muse's delicate child,
Whose life was of the wind, rejoicing to be wild!

XXXIX.

STOCK GHYLL.

BEFORE thy echoing grot, thy cavern'd shrine,
Deep in the leafy hollow of the wood,
Whoe'er—a chance-come ministrant—has stood,
And watched thy waters part and re-combine
In anguished fall,—thy Rainbow twist and shine
In cloudy iridescence, lo ! his mood
Has leapt up hopeful as the bow ; the flood
Has filled his heart with oracle divine.
For, fresh from out the downward rush and strife
Of souls swept on in passion to their fall,
Of wavering hearts by currents overborne—
Himself so nigh to drowning—here his life,
Learns the stern lesson failure brings to all,
Feels for the Rainbow's promise less forlorn.

XL.

A RETURN TO THE LAKES.

WE left behind the clamour of the town,
And northwards through a silent land we sped:
Cots brownly thatched, old halls with gables red
Peeped through the elms and orchards newly blown.
Thence through a world where, ere the blade was grown,
'Neath sulphurous skies the corn was pale and dead,
Where grimy labour, clamorous for bread,
Cursed the black fields wherein its seed was sown.
Last to the hills we came,—the quiet steep
Of Froswick rose, the Langdale lions kept
The same still watch, and in the silent west
Those great twin mountain-brothers leaned at rest.*
Forth from the train invigorate I stept
New-made already, by the home of sleep.

* Coniston Old Man and Wetherlam.

XLI.

THE TARN IN AUTUMN.

SURE, Blelham Tarn was touched by generous
thought,
To make such Autumn joy twice given seem !
From phantom larches did the pied jay scream,
In amber depths his food the squirrel sought ;
Down easy slopes of air from distance brought,
And near almost to touching, as in dream,
Between the branches, hills of snow did gleam—
Pure amethyst with ivory inwrought.
So in the quiet, clear, reflecting mind,
Stand earliest hopes, still bright with leaf of gold ;
But 'twixt the shining tresses you may find
Far mountain barriers, white with storm and cold,
Brought over years of mellow interspace,
And set by calm of Autumn, glorious, face to face.

XLII.

LOW-WOOD

At Evening.

WHEN Bowfell fades, and Blisco's Pike grows
 dim,
 And thy twin sisters, Loughrigg, loom up large *
 To clasp the evening Lake in tender charge,
 The lovers' skiff, for all it lightly skim,
 Stirs the dusk edge of Wansfell's mirrored rim,
 And sets the Fir trees dancing ; then the barge
 Moves weary to its anchor at the marge,
 And all the waters tremble brim to brim.
 But ere the tiny breakers cease to beat,
 And woods and fields reflected turn to rest,
 I hear a lengthening sound of wheels and feet
 Break and pause, wave-like, bringing home the guest ;
 While, like a hull upon a seaward tide,
 The Low-wood Hostel twinkles, Argus-eyed.

* Loughrigg, Wansfell, and Iron-Keld, often seem at twilight to crowd up close to the shores of the Lake ; and, owing to the fact that the outlying ranges of hills are wrapped in mist, assume giant proportions.

XLIII.

DOVENEST.

THEY tell how southern nightingales most love
To haunt the leafy verges of the wood,
And there with throbbing harmony to flood
The drowsy pastures where the cattle rove.
Glad one, misnamed ! the border of this grove,
With its green Spruces where the pigeons brood,
Once bade thee, of thine own time's minstrelhood
The queen, to share thine empire with the dove :
Soft-voiced as they, thy notes to field and pen
Went up the pastures, wandered on the lake,
And, like the nightingales, thou still would'st hide :
But what of joy the coppice held inside
Thy song so plainly told, that for its sake
This wood was dear to simple labouring men.

“ ‘Dovenest’ gave shelter and repose to Felicia Hemans at a time when hard events seemed to be christening her ‘Infelicia.’ ”—*Extract.*

XLIV.

EAST WIND IN SPRING.

TILL noon the horses in the stable stayed,
They left the ploughs at evening to the frost ;
The farmers' early sowing time was lost ;
The fells were blanched, and not a new Spring blade
Came to the milkless mothers' grateful aid ;
The ivies from the barn for fodder tost
Did but prolong slow famine ; shepherds crost
From mead to mead to count their flocks afraid.
Keen was the wind from out the bitter East,
Which nipped the life that never could be fed ;
The Hazel dust before the flowers were red
Was blown to fruitless waste ; while man and beast,
And bird and grass, and sunless Winter air,
Held April false, and sickened in despair.

XLV.

DEATH THE BEFRIENDER.

TO wait and hear, as soft as feet in snow,
Ay, and as cold, Death coming down the way,—
To feel we have not very long to stay,
And then a journey where we cannot know :
Ah, this would wring the sweat-drops from the brow,
Would force our lips to falter and to pray.
But some there are, who, dying every day,
Have made Death friend and neighbour long ago.
Of such art thou, and here as thou dost lie
To wait thy first resolving into dust,
The creed of “Allah” passes with a cry ;
Nirvâna from its wide-world throne is thrust ;
Fresh from a tomb in sight of Calvary
Stands One to whom my death-hour I entrust.

XLVI.

*THE TWIN STREAMS FROM HARTER FELL,
SEATHWAITE.*

DRAWN from the veins of shaggy Harter Fell,
With one same hope to find the western sea,
How little do their infant lives agree !
What varied tales their growing voices tell !
The one a louder note may chance to swell,
But hides, deep-run, its grace from tree to tree ;
The other, foamy-white, goes dancing free,
Cool for the flocks that love its waters well :
Yet both shall reach ere night a single goal,
And either help ere morn the distant keel,
And both, in common wish to aid, may feel
The bond that binds them, soul to brother soul.
Turn, wanderer, here in Duddon valley turn,
True charity of these twin streamlets learn !

XLVII.

THE LAKE STEAMER IN AUTUMN.

WITH stealthy step, and rosy-jewelled eye,
The steamer glides at evening up the Lake,
And ere to-morrow's dewy morn awake,
Shall warm its heart another day to ply.
Far up the hills its clear familiar cry
May echo ; lengths of billowy smoke will break
White on the trees, while not a leaf shall shake
In all the yellowing woods it passes by.
Then, if the arrowy waves indignant race
To lap their protest on the careless shore,
Albeit, the liquid mirror's ruffled face
Its rainbow lustres cannot quite restore,
The keel shall leave a gleaming silvern trace
To bind us to its presence gone before.

XLVIII.

GRASMERE REVISITED.

WHO cleft this road's monotonous interspace
Was leagued with thine own fairness ; well he
knew

How deep in human hearts the longing grew—
Foretaste of heaven—for that soul-resting grace
That comes of beauty, sudden, face to face :
O ! how we held our breath again to view
That isle at anchor, with its dusky crew,
In undisturbed possession of the place !
Lord of dark Easedale's crescent wall, uprears
The Lion ; in repose Steel Fell doth lie ;
The same white cup above the northern pass
Is filled with blue Blencath'ra and the sky :
Time turns again our youth's fast-failing glass,
And Grasmere gives us back our stolen years.

XLIX.

BRATHAY CHURCHYARD.

TELL, Brathay, tell, by what sweet influence led,
Men to the God that made its fairness gave
This quiet hill-side, and in reverence drave
The wild wood-creatures hence that roamed and fed,—
Here raised an Altar, and here laid the dead.
Was it for heath to purple every grave,
For psalms of life they caught from Brathay's wave,
Or peace of soul that from its calm is bred?
Ay, and the hearts that come for solace, hear
The Brathay stream compassionately flow ;
Close at their side lost friends in fancy lean,
And gaze, how changed ! upon the changeless scene.
So, for their sakes, the place is doubly dear,
And they are quiet ash, six feet below.

L.

THE SABBATH BELL.

HAST thou not seen upon a lifted face
Thoughts that the halting lips have failed to tell,
Or heard a blackbird in an April dell
Shape into song the sweetness of the place?
So lost in that strange mood, when fancies chase
Back thro' the brain their loveliness to spell,
I heard the chime of some far church's bell
Send forth the glad day's message into space :
The high hills spake not, but a voice was there ;
The hollows hushed, but in the hush was prayer ;
The lake, that held the mountains to its breast,
Gave back the mountains' meaning half-exprest,
Till by unconscious hands that bell was rung,
And Lake, Hill, Hollow, found a Sabbath tongue.

LI.

*A TREE PLANTED BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
AT WRAY CASTLE.*

LIVE they, who love God well enough to own
That not unbidden falls a single leaf,
That every grain is counted in the sheaf,
And told each atom whirling in the stone,—
That no bird flies, no floweret blooms alone?
Strong in obedience to a high belief,
Their hearts help Heaven; to such is Nature chief;
On Earth to these God makes his angels known.
Grow slower old: the hand that planted thee,
The heart that knew thy secret well, is dust;
Unto thy veins he did his life entrust,
And thou wilt honour him, Immortal Tree!
These rocks shall give all tribute thou canst crave,
For unto them his song a lasting glory gave.

LII.

*PIGEON SHOOTING AT AMBLESIDE.**A Protest.*

ABOVE the shooters, at their coward play,
Beyond the leaden drifts of murderous hail,
On higher wing the homeward Rookery sail,
And clamour hoarse, loud protest and dismay ;
Indignant valleys echo far away,
“ Pity is dead, and prayer of no avail ! ”
The soft-winged prisoner dies before the pale,
Or dropped beyond, shall bleed another day.
Was it to sanction death and banish love
The Olive-bearer to the Ark returned ?
Did God descend in likeness of a Dove
That men, in sport, might take the life they spurned ?
So vainly, all the years in cote and grove,
Have these, unpitied, mourned, and mourned, and
mourned.

LIII.

UPPER FALLS, RYDAL.

ENCHANTER of the woodlands, thy delight—
Blessing the air with deep suggestive sound—
Is chiefest, when from Fairfield's hollow round
Thou dost to one collected voice unite
Their thousand plaudits, who upon the height
Saw Winter beat from off his vantage ground :
For then, scarce pausing 'twixt the double bound,
Thou tellest down the vale of Spring-time's might.
And, as the soul that fresh from prison takes
New sense of life, new power to wake and see,
Thou quickenest all in passing : song awakes ;
The Primrose peeps ; green sorrel hearts are free ;
In pools of emerald, translucent clear,
The ferny ledge beholds the budding year.

LIV.

NATURE'S EVENSONG.

AT such a time as alders break to flower,
Before the leaf with universal veil
Has spread green sameness over hill and dale,
And screened the nestlings from the April shower—
How pleasant at the love-star's saffron hour,
With lazy oar that helps the uncertain sail,
To creep from bay to bay, and hear the tale
The Blackbird flutes above his new-built bower.
The purple copse from dusk to darkness goes,
And those faint lamps that would the day prolong,
The Palm flowers, shine with fainter, fainter gold;
But Love, Hope, Triumph, labour-earned Repose
Chime in the mellow pauses of a song
No nightfall hushes and no years make old.

LV.

*THE WAGTAIL.**Or, The Dangers of Ritual.*

WITH tiniest voice about the garden walk,
With shuffling pace, and balancing of gait,
I watch thee chatter trifles to thy mate—
Thy face in domino of black and chalk ;
Then, quite transformed in mood, I see thee stalk
With solemn look pretentious in debate,
A white-haired doctor, college-cap on pate,
Thy face and manner chiming with thy talk.
With each new Spring, I need about my porch
Thy quite unconscious oft-recurrent aid ;
Thy change of manner, quick duplicity,
Fancied, not real, must still a warning be,
How, in her wish to please, a grave old Church
May don a dress, and end in masquerade.

LVI.

THE MISER'S FUNERAL.

CUPS full of fruit and green, the acorns fell,
The shallow-footed larches were uptorn ;
To furthest pastures on her funeral morn
The winds that blustered bore the toll of bell ;
No eye was red for weeping at the knell,
Black suits of ill-dissembled grief were worn,
By careless hands her aged corse was borne,
And only those she paid for said farewell.
But when, beside the open grave, we found
What tears therein the bitter rain had wept,
And heard how sadly from the dripping mound
By moan of gust the Gospel words were swept,
There seemed such sorrow in the rain and wind,
Our hearts were touched, our words were less unkind.

LVII.

TALK, NOT WORK.

THE whole world building-mad, one needs must think !

The Magpie shakes the mortar-sieve, the caw
Of Rook is but the hoarse stone-mason's claw
Smoothing his block ; and hark ! the constant chink—
The hammer upon anvil—of the Spink ;
The Titmouse filer sharpening up the saw,
While full of wise suggestion sounds the Daw,
And Partlett winds the windlass link on link.
Well might the air with builders' work resound,
For all the birds were housing, mate with mate ;
All but the Daws, who, on the new-sown ground,
Filling their crops, were idle in debate.
Methought, the birds build least who noisiest prate,
And greedy Daws among us men abound.

LVIII.

CHAR FISHERS.

HOME to the shore they row in circling line,
Then, forwards bent, the fishing brothers stand
With draw on draw and backward-swinging hand,
Their hopeful faces earnest to divine
The silver treasures of the liquid mine.
Hark to the thrum ! how bright against the land
The Rainbow leaps from off the tightening band ;
How full of pearl the dripping meshes shine :
Nor long delay, and lo, the darkened hold
Is quick with gasping coralline and gold,
And out afresh, in circles from the shore,
The grey boat plies in hungry search for more :
Enough of gain to urge it to the spoil,
Enough of loss to bid to further toil.

LIX.

CLEAR WEATHER IN MARCH.

SEASON of Winter lovelinesses heightened
By day that earlier lives and later dies—
Season of sapphire waters, steady skies,
And yellowing larch, and copses bronzed and brightened
By hazel buds, and woodland glooms enlightened
By ash-shoots glancing grey, with ivories
Of white birch stems, and wings of jays and pies
At woodman's step from out the hollows frightened!
For thine exceeding clearness at the noon
Men love thee, March; but at the time of even
Such blushing azures front the saffron West
Their eyes with choice of beauty are distress;
While, arbitress above in middle Heaven,
In mutest indecision stands the Moon.

LX.

THE WINTER STEAM-BOAT.

LET prejudice contemn thee, but I know
That they who live beside the Winter mere
Must greet thy frequent passage, feel the cheer
Of that swift eddying cloud of level snow,
Which ever melts but still doth shift and grow
Athwart the dreary headlands ; yea, must hear
Right glad thy sovran summons at each pier,
Those shrill farewells the steamy whistles blow.
And when I see thee issuing out of storm,
Thy fiery pantings by the following wind,
Built to a most majestic pillared form,
And moving straightly on, I call to mind
How still across the tide, 'twixt friends and foes,
God moves, to these a cloud, a fiery light to those.

LXI.

THE BOULDER ON LATTERBARROW.

BROUGHT by the hand of Winters, when the Ice
Filled the deep vales and climbed the moun-
tain's head,
This mighty stone, with dripping larch spines red,
Was purpled once with human sacrifice ;
And here in absolute solitude it lies,
Its priestly ministers the trees that shed
Incense of odorous leafage, and the dread
Of victims changed to Summer's woodland cries.
With answering fire to Belus' * distant cone,
While Druids sang, the ice-built altar blazed ;
Stern Romans smeared the sacrificial stone
With oil and wine, and loud their pæan raised :
Christ conquered—and the larches' monotone
Tells how by quiet growth in grace can God be praised.

* Il Bel.

LXII.

WORDSWORTH'S TOMB.

PLAIN is the stone that marks the Poet's rest,
Not marble worked beneath Italian skies—
A grey slate head-stone tells where Wordsworth lies,
Cleft from the native hills he loved the best.
No heavier thing upon his gentle breast
'Than turf starred o'er in Spring with daisy eyes,
Nor richer music makes him lullabies
Than Rotha fresh from yonder mountain crest.
His name, his date, the years he lived to sing,
Are deep incised and eloquently terse,
But Fancy hears the graver's hammer ring,
And sees, 'mid lines of much remembered verse,
These words in gold beneath his title wrought—
"Singer of Humble Themes and Noble Thought."

LXIII.

*MOONRISE MISTAKEN FOR THE NORTHERN
LIGHTS.*

FROM Saturn up to Cassiopeia's seat,
And northward to the sun that rules the Plough,
The stars are quenched, the Heavens are all aglow,
While Lake and Hill in ebon darkness meet ;
Sprung from the shore, and rippling to our feet,
A golden pillar lightens as we row,
And over Wansfell's ridge, majestic, slow,
The Moon walks on with snowy-sandalled feet.
Our gain of light was Wonder's loss ; the sky
No longer gleamed with streamers from the North ;
To Souls in fear no judgment call went forth
That earth should flame, and wither, and pass by.
Had yonder Moon but staid behind the hill,
Our hearts were full of awe and question still.

LXIV.

LENT-LILIES.

NOT yet the Daffodil's up-pointed spear
Is crooked and bent and beaten into gold,—
Scarce from the bud the silken swathes unrolled,
To give the bee his cup of amber cheer,—
When down the dusky thickets by the mere
The young boy-hunters come with questing bold,
While toddling babes their frocks for aprons hold,
And girls the flowery prize in baskets bear.
Thence to the village Church their spoil they take
With childish exultation, rival glee.
To-morrow Jesus did from death awake,—
Clear on the walls to-morrow men shall see
The star of hope behind the cup He drank,
In bright Lent-lilies gathered from the bank.

LXV.

THE DYING STRAGGLER.

Resignation.

WITH many a roadside nibble's brief delay
 The sheep went Fell-ward : far as eye could
 note,
 A jostling multitude of woolly coat
 And shy black faces filled the narrow way.
 They passed, but in the dust a straggler lay
 With jaundiced eye ; the pouch was at its throat.*
 Distempered so, no shepherd's antidote
 Can bid the slow consuming sickness stay.
 Left, and alone, and not to see again
 His old loved pasture, yet so meek resigned,—
 Ay, though his fellows bleat far up the slope.
 Heaven grant, when stricken, cheated of my hope,
 The Fell-side full before me, I may mind
 That dying straggler in the mountain lane !

* When the mountain sheep return in Spring to the Fells from the lowlands, it is no uncommon thing to see stragglers fall by the wayside. The jaundiced eye, and pouch beneath the throat, are sure signs of that incurable but slow wasting plague, the *Fluke*, which, in certain pastures, is the scourge of the flock who chance to feed there.

LXVI.

*NATURE'S MUSIC DISHONOURED.**Lake Trippers and the Steamer Band.*

THEY call it natural, innocent ; I feel
Indignant, hearing some cheap *buffet* song,
Or bursts of flashy music, borne along
Above the waters round the crowded keel.
Shame on the syren throats of brass that steal
The ears of that unthinking festal throng,
Who else might learn such music as among
Their songless city lives would work for weal !
Have we no debts to their unlovely homes,
To Nature's music owe we nothing more,
That we should take their freedom when it comes,
And send them back with such a sorry store,
When, if these barren trumpets ceased to bray,
Some eyes might weep, perchance a heart would pray?

LXVII.

THE TWIN SPRUCES AT RYDAL.

IF ye had grown when sickles cut the rye,
And Danish shepherds climbed the pastures'
height,*

Ye dark-haired foreigners that so unite
On earth your lot, in Heaven your majesty,
Your preacher's voice had been an empty cry ;
For then the dalesmen, sharing sup and bite,
Won from the soil their bread in equal right,
And hoped for common immortality.

But now, Twin Brothers, green unswerving towers,
From your high lips due warning we receive ;
Ye stand beside the Pastor's lowly cot,
Stern Protestants, whom brotherhood empowers
Against the lips of Mammon that deceive,
For happiness that comes of equal lot.

* Fairfield preserves to us in its name the shepherd life of the old Danish settlers. Fäär-Feldt, in Danish, signifies Sheep Pasture.

LXVIII.

RESURRECTION,

Or Lake Mists on a Winter Morn.

TO sleep in cold forgetfulness, and wake
Feeling while earth dissolves new impulse given,
And up into the warm bright heart of Heaven,
On wings full-fledged, a glorious way to take,—
God grant it, when that last of mornings break !
Lo, as I prayed, the gates of night were riven ;
Up purpling hills, by sweet attraction driven,
The lucent clouds curled ghostlike from the lake.
What birth to beauty at the full was there—
Inalienable glory won at prime—
These hosts of angels rising from the mere,
With all the honours of far sunset-time !
Yet, had their sleep been anything less cold,
They ne'er had mounted on such wings of gold.

LXIX.*THE CHILDREN GONE.**Balla-Wray.*

LIKE flowers the children fade from off the hill,
Back to their haunts the wild wood things return,
Again the rabbit rustles through the fern,
And undisturbed their barns the red mice fill.
I wander forth in discontented will,
Half jealous of these creatures' unconcern ;
I long to break the little peace they earn
By working for their food and being still.
Give back the Children's voices !—Then, with shame,
I hear the mosses whisper at my feet,
Would Asphodel or Sundew be as sweet
If all the year their gentle flowerets came ?
No—let the children with the swallows fly,—
So loved, so lost, so welcomed by-and-by !

LXX.

RAIN AFTER DROUGHT.

BEHIND Wansfell the dry North-Easter stayed,
The Firs stood silent, late in music bowed ;
From out the West there came a little cloud,
Soon for the flocks was pleasant moisture made :
But still the sower plied his rhythmic trade,
No dalliance now his precious task allowed,
The yellowing lines his dusty horse had ploughed
Breathed odorous breath, and took a darker shade.
I wandered out in that mysterious hour ;
Fragrance of praise from every bud had burst,
The moss was quick, the daffodil in flower,
And violets showed the bluest and the first ;
I felt the pity of the passing shower,
The hope in Nature's long-enduring thirst.

LXXI.*EARLY DEATH.*

THERE came upon the fields a hoary frost ;
Not such the shepherd calls an Autumn dew,
But such as gentlest lady's eye may view,
Late rising, when the morn her prime has lost.
With emerald paths the whitened meads were crost,
Where warm-breathed kine their feeding did renew,
And voiceless here and there a bird out-flew
From silvered leaves, that tinkled and were lost.
High o'er the fells uprose the unconquered sun,
Back to the North the night-invaders drove,
And, ere the noon, what Winter had begun
Was Summer's ending in the field and grove.
But, sad in ashes, tender flowers must mourn,
That not for them can summer-tide return.

LXXII.

THE CHURCHYARD.

SPOTS are there in the seasons of our mind
Of warm continual Summer ; thither fly—
Led by the soft sure hand of memory—
For genial sun, cold words and thoughts unkind.
And spots perpetual Winter you shall find,
Chill, barren, silent ; thither slower hie
Passionate thoughts, to feel the frost and die,
Or flutter back upon a cooler wind.
And such art thou by Brathay's rushing stream ;
Winter and Summer in thy holy ground
Walk hand in hand, nor sun nor snow-times cease :
And if at all the world too icy seem,
With love and warmth glad marriage-bells resound ;
If anger stir, dear dead ones beckon peace.

LXXIII.

THE GREAT TIT.

YOU of the jet-black head with parting grey,
Grey-feathered cheek, and unassuming coat,
Again I hear your quick continuous note
Of friendly invitation. Peck away!
My cones have store for food for many a day.
One after one let silken swathes down-float!
Let beak and eye be busy as your throat!
These staunch old Firs shall still their tribute pay.
Was shrill "cosi," "cosi," the only word
You brought from Italy last winter season?
So apt at consequence, so full of reason,
Have you forgot conclusions, happy bird?
Hark! as I ask, in Saxon from the tree
Swift answer falls, "Come see! come see! come see!"

LXXIV.

WAR NOTES IN RYDAL VALE.

IN gloomy phalanx, stubborn, back to back,
Beat from the field, their vantage ground they
crowd—

These gallant Firs, as if with sense endowed
Of sudden mischief, and of fierce attack.
Close at their side I hear the trigger's crack,
From rifle's lip leaps out the fiery cloud,
And quick the sullen targets answer proud
To marksman's aim and ball's unerring track.
Bitter it is that this dear vale of peace
By forced suggestion so should echo war,
That swift association cannot cease
To bring the noise of murder from afar.
When will the Firs their social message wave,
And those white Targets mark the Rifle's grave?

LXXV.

UP NAB SCAR, FROM RYDAL MOUNT.

Winter.

WE climbed above the yews upon the Scar,
 And all the way the Poet with us went,
 For still his voice sweet recollection sent,
 We trod his music's memory bar by bar.
 And here at purple even, seen afar,
 On mellowing skies the mountain stairway leant *
 For Spirit foot, and Fancy's free ascent ;
 And there he watched the "slowly-sinking star." †
 Each step we mounted seemed the music's gain,
 New opening vales fresh melody exprest,
 Of thee they sang, who so were sung by thee ;
 Fold after fold, as from a thinker's brain,
 The ash-grey ranges, crumpling to the West,
 Flashed thought, as out beyond them flamed the sea.

* See Wordsworth's ninth "Evening Voluntary," verse 3.
 A possible allusion to Crinkle Crag, seen from Nab Scar.

† See Sonnet, "I watch, and long have watched, with calm
 regret."

LXXVI.

THE WHITE CROSS ON WINDERMERE.

WHEN Winter's foam from off the shore is fled,
Pure as a Swan against the marge is spied
The little Cross, with warning far and wide
Of waves that closed above the drowning head.
Green summer through, and when the leaves are red
Its dolorous message haunts the level tide,
And like a voice that will not be denied,
It claims compassion for the dear ones dead.
So in our grief's deep winter, on the morrow
No tears are seen, nor is there show of grief ;
But when our comfort breaks to summer leaf,
It does but serve as background for the sorrow,
And o'er our life's dull levels, like the Cross,
From noon till night-time glimmers out our loss.

LXXVII.

*A BELFRY SERMON ON CHRISTMAS**MORN.*

IN no Church critic's high censorious mood,
I still rejoice to hear the glad bells ring
The Gospel tidings of the new-born King,
So well their voices mingle on the flood ;
For truth is such a many-sided thing,
I cannot deem that all the blest and good
Are gathered safe in one complacent brood
Beneath a narrow Evangelic wing.
And well I know the preacher there will date
The end of priesthood, pomegranate, and bells,
From that first Christmas—in the pulpit here,
With self-same text, his office elevate.
But High and Low the belfry sermon swells
In one sure voice along the silent mere.

LXXVIII.

HOLIDAY MAKERS ON GOOD FRIDAY.

WHEN bold Barabbas, loosed from bonds and
fate,
Pressed with the crowd around him out to see
Him done to death, whose dying set him free,
He beat his breast, his eye of murderous hate
Blenched, rough in heart he felt his freedom's weight,
And looking up to that accursed tree,
His life seemed purchased at so dear a fee,
He went back sad beneath Damascus Gate.
But we, released from double gaol to-day,
Prison of toil and fetters of self-will,
We pass the Cross, forgetting all its pain ;
As if Christ died to win us holiday,
With boisterous shout the saddened vale we fill,
And crucify the Crucified again.

LXXIX.

EASTER EVE.

S AVIOUR, Thou sleepest in Thy charnel cave,
Among the olives by the city wall,
The first still Sabbath free from human call
That Thou for twenty years hast willed to have !
The priests may scoff, the disputants may rave,
But in Thy scented dark sepulchral hall
Thou canst outsleep, yea, even the tears that fall
Of friend and mother doubting by Thy grave.
Dark Orrest-Head my Olivet must be ;
No Olives here, no Cedron deeply run
Betwixt the tomb and dark Gethsemane ;
But yonder waters, waiting for the sun,
Lie like the solemn weight of gathered tears,
Wept for this day through centuries of years.

LXXX.

THE SYCAMORE AT HIGH CLOSE.

NO wonder that thy shell-like buds should blush,
How canst thou blindly meet another dawn
Across the gleaming waters, when the fawn
Fades from the fern, and green the larches flush?
How dost thou not to fan-like fairness rush,
Seeing the snow's last secret is withdrawn
From Wetherlam's warm bosom, and the lawn
Feels the free-rooted daisy's tender push?
Thou know'st, though spring from gulfy Langdale call,
And Loughrigg bribe with golden daffodils,
These to the sheath no leaf can e'er restore;
Rash Fancy buds, forgetting frost that kills,
But thou beside this aery cottage hall
Can'st continently wait, wise Sycamore!

LXXXI.

THE SNOWDROPS BY ESTHWAITE LAKE.

WHEN Winter from the seaward range is gone,
By Esthwaite's shore is still a field of snow ;
Thousands upon ten thousand snowdrops blow
In virgin sweet community as one,—
Type of the peace that dwells with God alone,
Emblems of angel-brotherhood below :
Their beauty every village child may know
From Hawkshead vale to grey-built Coniston.
Pure presences ! the humblest truth's delight,
Even in springtide's natural innocence,
Must needs be sought, and plucked, and carried home
And here old men and little children come,
Glad with a common hope, to bear from hence
What else had never made the fell-side cottage bright.

LXXXII.

HAWKSHEAD CHURCH.

TO silent Sawrey, down the crescent vale,
The Brathay bells along by Hawkshead send
Their Sabbath summons, and from end to end
The snow-white farms can hear the throbbing tale ;
It seems the very houses in the dale
To that clear-ringing messenger attend,
And throng like sheep about their shepherd friend
In barren pastures, flocking to the pail.
And there she sits upon the grassy mound,—
The grave old Church uplifted ; at her feet
The breathing roof-trees gathered close around
In congregation, clamorous for meat ;
While distant chimes with soft entreaty sound,
“ Mother and shepherd, give ye them to eat.”

LXXXIII.

AN APRIL SNOWSTORM,

Seen from Furness Fells.

WHERE was your strength, three-buttressed
mountain wall?

Had Spring no outpost high on Kirkstone Raise,
That fierce on our confiding April days
The North should so precipitately fall?
Sudden the day went out, the snowy squall
Flung Tit and Chaffinch from the birchen sprays,
Shattered the stars about the woodland ways,
And quenched the Celandine's sun coronal:
So have I seen on that Egyptian coast
The locust darkness, as in days of old,
So did they whirl aslant, a rustling host.
By swept the blast, the air went deathly cold,
And when from cloud dark Wetherlam stood bold,
Far Coniston in blinding storm was lost.

LXXXIV.

YELLOW POPPIES AT WRAY CASTLE.

WHOSE thoughtful hand here bade the Poppies
grow,
Or set the feet of these reposeful towers
In the quick earth, whence teemed such golden flowers,
His heart the unity of things did know,
Clear unto him her face did Nature show ;
For though the rampart terrace fiercely glowers,
It doth but hear the war of lovers' bowers,
And calm and rest the yellow dreamers blow.
Did these for peace and joy's assurance creep
Forth from the wood to fringe the castle keep,
That with its frown some gentler thought might blend ?
Or is their fragile beauty so afraid,
They seek—a boon by their own grace repaid—
The shelter that its stately portals lend ?

LXXXV.

THE GRAVE OF "OLD ROSE."*

HALF-CREDULOUS we hear the stories told
 Of Apis or of Mnevis by the Nile,
 We seldom think in this our land the while
 The English Apis gets his calves of gold ;
 For one Europa half a world is sold,
 One British Bull will buy an Indian isle !
 Great painters paint, historians tell the style,
 And daily papers chronicle a cold.
 Here lies "Old Rose," the faultless, docile roan,
 Her death was felt wherever cattle feed ;
 She claimed no grey sarcophagus of stone,
 No pictured Hieratics tell her breed ;
 In sons and daughters still she lives, while we,
 Unlike our sires, forget our pedigree.

* "The Rev. T. Staniforth's Rose of Warlaby, crippled from rheumatism, was killed and decently buried at Storrs, Sept. 12, 1880. Few cows of modern days have been better known, more admired, or more prolific. . . . Few who saw her will ever forget Old Rose."—*Westmoreland Gazette*.

LXXXVI.

THE RED-START.

THE white-foot Winter late hath taken flight,
When lo, the patch of snow upon thine head!
Then from the hedge thou flutterest into red,
And Autumn leaps o'er Summer into sight.
Prophet of change! and wherefore hast thou spite
Against unhappy May by April led?
Why only joy when leaf and snow is shed,
That thus thou flickerest russet-red and white—
A vision uncongenial? Oh, forgive
The haste that has thy message so misread!
Between the future and the past we live,
Cold death behind, before us change and dread.
They help the Summer most who show in one
Ripe Autumn coming, drowsy Winter gone.

LXXXVII.

IN MEMORIAM F. A. R.

Obiit. Ambleside, December 20, 1879.

T IRED out, but calm, and leaning in her chair,
She waits for Death, whose feet are at the door,
She smiles to think her pain will soon be o'er,
And calls herself a burden and a care.
An anxious foot is heard upon the stair,
She takes some dainty trifle, loved of yore,
And whispers, "Keep it, would that it were more,
Of one as worthless it may hold you 'ware!"
Angels, who stand in wonder, and sustain,
Tell her these gifts may perish one and all,
But they who see her patience and her pain
Have won from Heaven the sure memorial,
That neither life nor death in her were vain,
Who, daily dying, proved Death's shade could not
appal.

LXXXVIII.

CROFT.

NATURE, with their own hearts, went hand in
hand,
Who raised the hanging gardens, where they hear
The loud congratulations all the year
Of these two happy rivers, and who planned
A palace on this flowery spit of land.
Theirs was the calm of yon white-watered mere,
For them the dark tree's mystery was clear,
The grey rock's silence did they understand.
They saw the streams contented were to take
Their mutual beauties down to yonder lake,
Haply with joy for cape, and distant keel,
To lose themselves in miles of liquid plain,
And felt, as souls ambitionless may feel,
Life lost in others is the true life's gain.

LXXXIX.

THE CRUSADER'S TOMB,

Furness Abbey.

HE lies among the gusty chancel leaves,
The storms have marred his scutcheon, bruised
his sword,
His arms are broke, his corslet folds are stored
With moss, and winds have eaten smooth his greaves ;
His eyes, deep sunk beneath their battered eaves,
Are filled with tears the heedless rains have poured—
But squire, or knight, or belted warrior-lord,
From passers-by due honour he receives.
His name is wiped from out the book of men,
But still, his lips of stone give high command—
In stern crusade against the wrong we stand,
Our hearts the battle ground, our sword the pen,
While he went forth to win the Holy Land,
To clash in onset with the Saracen.

XC.

STOCK GHYLL AFTER A THAW.

THE swollen stream's perplexity of sound
Roared from the woods, and bellowed like a
gale ;
They said the crashing water-flood would fail
Before the morrow broke from underground.
And shall these thunders die away in swound,
Pretentious noise, a single midnight tale !
Shall this vast army marching down the vale
Move on and perish at the torrent's bound !
Grudge not their swift descending, sooner free
These conquering hosts their headlong way shall take,
Win full possession of Wynander's lake,
And pass in triumph to the restful sea.
When warm life melts our nation's heart of snow,
May we, through night, as swift to peace and freedom
flow !

XCI.

HAWKSHEAD FROM FURNESS FELLS.

THE Poet was thy nurseling, here he drank
His first boy thoughts of Nature and her will :
How often, fresh from school, he clomb this hill,
And, stretched in sun upon the heathy bank,
Endowed with life the mountains, rank on rank ;
Or, in the time of earliest daffodil,
Watched April storm the open valley fill,
And drive the snow to Bow Fell's iron flank.
For him the walls that shut the Western sky,
From Walney Scar to Langdale's double horn,
Seemed but to nerve his music's growing wing :
The sun might dip beyond the hills, and die,
But, bright as day, was Fancy's deathless morn ;
The lark might hush, but still his heart would sing.

XCII.

MOON-RISE OVER WANSEFELL.

NOT yet Orion's stride we fully knew
When Eastward, lo! the stars were in retreat!
Imperious, summoning all eyes to greet,
Above Wansfell the Moon to beauty grew;
So near she swam, so bright, so close in view,
We almost saw her faint old heart-pulse beat,
As, making darkness darker at her feet,
In train to Heaven the obsequious hill she drew.
Shall she not lead the earth who draws the tide?
E'en as I spoke she reached a glittering hand
Across the waters, and from side to side
Was grown a raft, by mystic moonlight planned;
And o'er the tremulous bridge of gold supplied
Came trooping elves of Frost, with gifts from Fairyland.

XCIII.

SPRING DAYS.

THESE are the days before the Swallow dance
With twittering music skims the liquid floor,
When not as yet along the sombre shore
The daffodils in amber thousands glance,
When first the woods and uplands blush in trance,
And change comes in the mountain foreheads hoar
When life, bold life, victorious at the core,
Stirs in each bud, and owns the Spring's advance.
Autumn, with songless days and glassy lakes,
Is here, high-lifted on his ivory throne
Still Winter sits,—albeit his empire shakes—
And Spring doth now the royal purples don ;
With Summer looks the larger morning wakes,
And all the seasons soften into one.

XCIV.

THE LAURELS AT STORRS.

A POLLO left his isle of lute and song
To serve Admetus for a single year,
But when he leaves the tuneful island near,
For Daphne's sake he does his stay prolong :
And Orpheus roves these laurel shades among,
Witness yon towering spruce beside the mere,
This four-horned flock from Hades he led here,
The day his love for prudence proved too strong.
The Lyrist and his Master so have blessed
The laurel groves, the garden, and the farm,
That Squirrel lays aside his fear of harm,
And comes each day to be a mortal's guest ;
And Daphne still assures Apollo's charm,
For, long as leaves may shine, the Delian loves her
best.

XCV.

*THE RIVER MESSAGE**At White Moss.*

BACK into gold the larchen tresses swing,
From off the Scar the rust of fern is fled ;
But, virgin-white, the veil o'er Wansfell head
Waits for its lifting by the hand of Spring.
Hark ! how glad Rotha's trebles trip and sing
Of dust the vermeil Alder-tassels shed,
Of life renewed, which to its shallow bed
The springing blades in amber sedges bring.
But not alone will Rotha's sunny wave,
That links the triple sisterhood to one,
For me the joyous Spring-tide message have :
I know that somewhere on Wynander's lake
These self-same ripples to her feet may run,
The self-same tidings of the Spring to take.

XCVI.

*THE SYBIL'S GROTTO:**Or Rhododendrons at Croft.*

SHE willed for life, her beauty had no fears,
Her pride in youth's exuberance asked no more;
Haggard, and shrunk, and withered to the core,
She longs for death, put off a thousand years:
Inexorable still, the god she hears
With passionate sweet entreaty o'er and o'er;
Nor recks Apollo how she steals a store
Of warmth to blossom every time he nears.
Wooer, he cannot win.—The days of doom
Pass, and such steadfast maidenhood to dower,
About her rock-hewn sanctuary blows
The Rhododendron's multitude of flower;
And with her Sybil words in every bloom,
The miracle of blushes throbs and glows.

XCVII.

WILD FLOWERS ON LOUGHRIGG.

GRANT me a heart, O God, to live, and love
My fellows as I love this rocky moor—
To feel, when most disconsolately poor,
I have a daily largesse far above
The gold of conquest, or the treasure-trove
Of those who search Golconda ! Here the floor
With liquid Amber Stars is studded o'er,
And Garnets, silver-set, where'er I rove.
If Mountain-Pink or Butterwort should fail,
The Sundew lends me diamonds newly made
That mirror all their world, to break and die
And be new fashioned in an evening sky ;
And, while Parnassus yields me grasses pale,
I tread the flowers that haunt the classic shade.

XCVIII.

*SONGS IN SILENCE.**Rydal.*

THE purpling Birch up yonder mountain scar
Tells that the Cuckoo cannot long delay ;
Though distant Langdale's back is grizzled grey
With Winter storm, the Summer is not far ;
And here, where late opposed in mimic war
The jocund skaters flashed upon their way,
While sapphire wavelets rustle at their play,
The timid Ouzel dips his silvery star.
What if alone I hear the yeanlings bleat,
Or cry of raven through the silent air,
The music, Rydal, of the heart is sweet,
The song of hope, the dirge of life's despair ;
Great human chords thy rocks and groves repeat ;
Here Wordsworth sang, and Coleridge mourned forth
there.

XCIX.

YEWDALE CRAGS.

A GAIN above the Windy Pass * I stood,
I heard the Arabs cry, the camels groan,
Down the rock-avenue Jehovah's throne
Rose stark in all its barren loneliness ;
Here Moses spake, there hushed the multitude,
By yonder cleft the Lawgiver came down ;
Thick on this stream the idol's dust was strown,
While robed with cloud did One in pity brood.
Rise, Yewdale, rise, upon thy heights in thunder
With smoke and fire the clarion tempest wakes !
Bright as the sun, with sapphire pavement under,
God from thy steep His revelation makes—
"The earth is mine." Though all the people wonder,
Forth from thy crags the glorious Message breaks.

* The pass by which travellers approach Mount Sinai is known as Nagb Hawi, or the Pass of the Winds.

C.

AT YEWDALÉ FARM.

WE need no pillars built beneath the hill,*
 These close-trimmed Yew trees, each an altar
 heap
 Of green immortal offerings, shall keep
 Our hearts in fee, our memories grateful still.
 Plain of the Hand, † where sowers ply their skill,
 And plenteous rain gives pasture to the sheep ;
 Bid by no threat from off the mountain steep
 Of England's Sinai, flocks may feed at will.
 But if this miniature of Israel's shrine, ‡
 'Reft of its arid awful dignity,
 No more proclaims a God of Fear, but Love ;
 Still veiled in cloud He answers from above,
 And, lit from Heaven, their faces only shine
 Who through the deserts lead men forth from slavery.

* Exodus xxiv. 4.

† An allusion to Er Rahah, the Plain of the Hand, before Mount Sinai.

‡ The Eastern traveller will be at once struck by the resemblance of the Yewdale Crag to the Ras Süfsâfeh, or Willow Peak, of Mount Sinai.

CI.

*POPLARS AT THE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE,**Colthouse.*

HEAVEN helped a well-considered choice, and
blest

These sapling sisters with the growth of years ;
And, when the simple, silent worshippers
Are met, expectant of their Spirit-Guest,
A free wind floats unseen from out the West
In symbol of His coming ; each one hears
High message from the leafy whisperers,
By Poplar lips the meeting is addressed.
There, as they listen, they can call to mind
How once the rushing of a mighty Wind
Filled a poor room, and set a world on fire :
They wait the breath of Heaven ; then, free of tongue,
Soft as the gentle leaves so lightly hung,
Utter, as each is moved, their soul's desire.

CII.

BOWFELL.

BOWFELL, whene'er I see thee lifted sheer—
Thy castled height above the silver haze,
Again from Edom's rolling downs I gaze,
And, though a People's lamentation drear
Wails from abyssmal gorges, God is near :
Aside the dying priest his vesture lays.
"The Night has come, but also come the Days !"
So cries the watchman from the cliffs of Seir.
Hor, among English mountains, if the hope
That flickered down through faithless Ithamar
Glowed in the dust of Amram's eldest-born,
Lo, from the ashes of thy fiery morn,
Thyself a whole burnt-offering, springs the star
Of God with Man, and Shepherds climb thy slope.

CIII.

THE CAVE AT WHITE MOSS.

FROM no Cassotis' well the vapours rise
To fire the lips or drench the Pythian's brain,
No Sybil chides the wind that makes in vain
Her yet unread, leaf-written prophecies.
But they who for this grotto leave the skies,
See in its sculptured hall engraven plain
A truer oracle, and learn the strain
Wherewith the sea-floors into mountains rise.
In fancy they uprouse the wolf, the boar,*
Or that huge-antlered elk, † from Duddon strayed,
And, issuing from the cavern's mystic shade,
They find the world is fresher than before ;
The day they know seems but a moment made,
An older sunlight plays on Rydal's infant shore.

* The wild boar, Grise, or Greese (hence Grisedale, Grasmere) seemed to have remained in these parts till about the thirteenth century.

† The Segh, or Scofe-stag, a species of Irish elk, was a native of the Furness district, as is evidenced by the heads of these animals found in that neighbourhood. Three huge antlered heads were taken up in the Duddon sands in the year 1766.— Cf. West's *Antiquities of Furness*, page 41.

CIV.

STONE ARTHUR.

FATHER of English Heroes, Knight of knights,
Here Arthur sat, Pendragon newly made :
Not April, with its chase of sun and shade,
More swift of mood ; nor up the sunny heights,
More full of blossoming, happy, pure delights,
The white-heart May. Then to his Squire he said,
“ Break me a helmet-plume of Thorn, and braid
“ Its likeness in the banner of my fights ;
“ And when we meet for court at Mayburgh Mound,
“ Spite turned to Balm, this flower shall there be worn ;
“ Or when we joust at Penrith’s circle round,
“ High o’er the lists its emblem shall be borne.
“ Who wins the bloom of Knighthood dares the wound :
“ One greater bare, without the flower, the Thorn.”

CV.

HELVELLYN.

THEY climb Parnassus who these heights explore,
Whether they find, ascending from the West,
Where Sandal melts to Fairfield, deep recessed,
Stern Delphi's theatre and ruins hoar
Beneath the three-lipped tarn, whose waters pour
Libation to the sunrise—or, impressed
Almost to fear, pass upward to the crest,
Led by Castalia sounding on before :
For there, high-lifted, with perpetual frown,
Helvellyn rears his double-peakèd head,
And right in front of his embracing hands
A mountain altar to Apollo stands
As smoke with cloud, fire-black, and wondrous Dread
Sits with the god who sends the music down.

CVI.

*THE LEVEN, AND RHODODENDRONS
AT LAKE-SIDE.*

HOW fair, at first, by lawn and blossoming brake,
The Leven brims with liquid Amethyst !
How soon in headstrong youth it doth enlist
What natural haste the sloping meadows make,
And foams a lusty cataract ! Years o'ertake
Its folly ; now by bitter sea waves kissed,
Renouncing still, it still renews the tryst,
Then backward swirls in vain to seek the lake.
The Rhododendrons that adorned its birth,
And gave their beauty with a generous mind,
To celebrate its early innocent day,—
They wait the clouds that steal from Morecambe Bay,
And, after all the Leven's wandering, find
Its grateful spirit come again to earth.

CVII.

JULY AT THE LAKES.

CLAD in her ferny green from head to feet,
Queen for a single moontime, comes along
July,—half jealous, stills the thicket's song,
And bids the cuckoo's voice no more repeat
Its herald echo ; hushes every bleat
Where on the fells with milkier fleeces throng
The careless dams ; yet ties she not the tongue
Of brooks by dripping meads and drenchèd wheat.
And in her hand she bears the red new leaf
Of Oak and Beech, with those vermilion keys
The Sycamore hangs out, and from the leas
Foxglove and purple Betony ; but chief
Where the large scythe the northern mowers wield
Mounds its green waves, she haunts the daisied field.

CVIII.

AUGUST AT THE LAKES.

WITHOUT the Cuckoo, April comes again,
Fresh gleam the vales, ghylls whiten far away,
Where Roses danced now blooms the bramble spray,
And Rowan berries take a russet stain ;
Lanes long disused re-echo with the wain,
While, as if second youth had bade them play,
With dexterous hand the dalesmen toss the hay,
Or mound it close against the morrow's rain.
Now for belated lovers flutter white
Wild Raspberry leaves and pale Valerian
In dusky roads, where cool night breezes stir,
When hedgehogs cry and soft-winged fern-owls chirr :
Now lakes at morn are ruffled gold, and wan,
And blue hills move all day at most uncertain height.

CIX.

THE NORTHERN NIGHTINGALE.

On hearing a Ballad sung in the North Country dialect by A. M. W.

HAVE Sedgwick's woods reached out a tender
hand
And bid thee, southern-voiced one, hither fare,
That thus, when tarns are frozen, trees are bare,
Thou warm'st with song our wintry Westmorland?
Or, first, brave leader of the choral band,
Did'st thou across accustomed borders dare
The barren interspace of midland air,
To find blue hills by Attic skies o'erspanned?
Stay with us! honey-throated Philomel
With passionate tale of woe enchantment makes,
Albeit she sorrow in an alien tongue;
But thou, light-hearted haunter of the Lakes,
In native phrase fresh gathered from the fell
Sweetenest the songs our shepherd fathers sung.

CX.

SUNSET AND THE WESTMORLAND EMIGRANT.

ROUND and around, with anxious questioning
look,
The collie ran as if a loss were near,
From the lake meadow called the favourite steer,
The larches moaned, and loudly grieved the brook.
Then once again from out the chimney nook
Did Richard take the yokes he used to wear,
And strove to borrow momentary cheer
From handling of his flail and polished crook.
He left the farm, he passed the bleating fold,
He durst not think farewell, so closely pressed
The tear to drown his last long gaze, but bold
He strode from home, for over Langdale's crest,
Beyond his own grey hills, new worlds of gold
And lands of glory brightened in the West.

CXI.

FURNESS ABBEY.

WHEN Murder walks with Mockery hand in
hand,
Religion, sister to Reflection pale,
Steals from her haunt, deserts the cloistered vale,
And student Quietude is scared and banned.
Old Furness, though the gardener's cunning hand
May trim thy lawn, and bid thy roses trail,
The engine snorts along the noisy rail,
And mars the make-believe of Peace he planned.
Though still the close-leaved Sycamores enshrine
What else of silence these intruders leave,
Girls lightly laugh where sad Cistercians strolled,
And streams, too full of pity to deceive,
Tell out the tale of rapine, greed of gold,
And run ensanguined from the neighbouring mine.

CXII.

AT KING HENRY'S CHAPEL, MUNCASTER.*

Autumn.

WHERE Esk in curves and coils of moony light
 Gleams in the vale and passes to the sea,
 They tell how royal Henry once did flee,
 A crownless king, from Hexham's bloody fight,
 And how rude shepherds, on a Summer night,
 Found and conveyed him where on royal knee
 Stout Pennington did pledge his own roof-tree
 As safety, till the Red Rose had the right.
 If morn had brought to that unhappy king
 Vision of stately trees enleaved with gold,
 Or half the beauteous calm mine eyes behold,
 Sure it had been a sad awakening—
 Such reminiscence of his golden state,
 And he, discrowned, forsaken, desolate !

* It is said that Henry VI., after the Battle of Hexham, on 15th May, 1464, was met in his flight by some shepherds in Eskdale, near to the site of the present chapel, and conducted by them to the Castle, then the seat of Sir John Pennington. The celebrated cup called "The Luck of Muncaster," was on that occasion left by the king in acknowledgment of loyal hospitality.

CXIII.

*THE RUNIC CROSS IN GOSFORTH**CHURCHYARD.*

WHO first named Christ in these rude villages—
Northmen or Danes—had run their boats
ashore,
Had changed for huntsman's bow the bending oar,
Salt barren furrows for the fruitful leas.
But still their sailor-hearts were on the seas ;
And when they raised Faith's standard here of yore,
A ship-mast semblance well the symbol bore,
With tale of storm and rough sea messages.
Nor careless did those sailor-huntsmen grave
Their picture life in long-forgotten runes,
The Hart, the Hare, the Cable, and the Wave
That beat out west beyond the yellow dunes ;
And high upon the mast no storm could toss—
They set that sign of endless calm, the Cross.

CXIV.

*ESKMEALS.**The Love of Nature daily Food.*

O H, joy, where sea and river waters meet,
To watch how swift the wading Dottrels ply
Their rosy stilts in pools of bluest sky ;
To hear cool sprinklings from their dainty feet !
To lean and listen to the flutings sweet
Of Sandpiper, or sad-voiced Plover's cry,
While the grave Heron at his fishery
Gleams like a silver sickle through the heat !
Blest be the tide that bared these tawny shelves
For such a world of food and innocent play !
Man, weary man, with sorrow digs and delves,
But is not glad in winning bread, as they
Who wait on God, and, careless of themselves,
Take that which Nature else had thrown away.

CXV.

THE OLD WRECK AT SEASCALE.

WEIGHED down, in utter helplessness it lies,
Whose buoyant youth was lighter than the
wave,

Each tide the robber-storms unseal its grave,
And of its bones the sea makes merchandise.
Led by the Moon sea-waters sympathize ;
E'en hands that snatch, some sense of pity have,
Deeper in sand each day, the boon they crave—
Its sorrows sink from out the seaman's eyes.
So may it be when storms my life shall strand
On treacherous shoal or disappointment's reef,
May the same wind that drove my hull to land
Break up my being far beyond relief,
And waves that wrecked reach out a pitying hand
To gulf my sorrow, and to hide my grief.

CXVI.

*THE TOWER ON THE HOAD, ULVERSTON.**

LOOK from thy tower—strong wish we mortals
 have
 That deeds should be remembered after death—
 Look forth and tell the listening lands beneath,
 From torchy Furness to the charnel cave
 Of Heysham's cliff, that since the Leven's wave
 With confluent Craik at tide-time held its breath,
 And halted up the vale, no surer wreath
 Than duty honoured, can outlive the grave!
 If hence no rosy star at sunset gleam
 To guide the keel that beats from shoal to shoal,
 And cheer the sailor on his lonely road,
 White as thy tower, high-lifted still must beam
 The lamp that lit thee, Barrow, to thy goal,
 A Nation's Honour on thy native Hoad.

* The light-house-looking monument upon the Hoad Hill at Ulverston was erected to the memory of Sir John Barrow, a native of that town, for many years Secretary to the Admiralty.

CXVII.

THE COTTAGE WINDOW AT SUNSET.

WHEN I am weary-hearted, overthrown,
And feel my life's real insignificance,
I wonder how on any sudden chance
Through me God's purpose ever can be known.
Then, as the grey mist gathers o'er the town,
On Birkrigg Fell I see a window glance,
And, like a star new fallen from its dance,
It burns and brightens till the sun drops down—
Some miner's cot set careless on the hill,
That never dreamed its window so should burn,
Should flash such royal message back from Heaven :
Face thou the sun, faint heart, and stand thou still !
God's level light may strike on thee in turn,
And glorious help to distant eyes be given.

CXVIII.

*THE VALLEY OF THE LUNE.**From Lunefield.*

OF northern valleys in luxuriant June,
For English eyes no fairer vale I know
Than where the Oak and Ash together throw
Abundant shadow by the banks of Lune ;
There race the fillies, there at lazy noon
The lambs make sport, kine musically low,
And where the swallows skim, with southward flow
The yellow freshets chime their river-tune.
There, larger-limbed, the shepherd plies the games
At shearing time, and, as he drives the sheep
Back to the cloud-empurpled Yorkshire fells,
His rough hands full of Canterbury Bells,
He sees by stately lawn and towery steep
A silver vision of the royal Thames.

CXIX.

HOME.

IT was a lustrous morning, child of May,
The sparkling suns ran dancing down the oar,
The Blackbird's whistle called my boat ashore,
And croon of Dove came meeting me half-way.
The stammering Cuckoo bid me this side stay,
From that side still the Dove-voice did implore ;
But one sure welcome echoed more and more—
A mother laughing with her babe at play.
Close to the marge the gracious Spring had come
With Globe-flower sceptre, star-like Mary-bud
To bid me back ; the Bracken reached its hand
Fresh from the earth. By lane and hazel wood,
Through Bluebell mist, the Sweet Gale's breath was
fanned,
And those unbending Firs made whisper, "Welcome
home !"

VALEDICTORY.

*G*O, little book, God lend thy readers grace
 To wisely praise, with justice to contemn ;
 Who knows but some more unpretentious gem,
 Unfit to sparkle in my lady's lace,
 May clasp a plaid, or fill a humbler place :
 The rainbow fires from out the diadem,
 That glint along the actor's tinsel'd hem,
 Turn for their gifts to some diviner face :
 Thy face it was, dear land of lakes and rills,
 Chameleon waters, ever-changing sky,
 Of bright tarn lustres burning in the hills,
 And mountains hung with streamlet jewelry,
 That bid me hope thy kindly light would shine,
 And flash the life to these poor gems of mine.

NOTES.

SONNET VII.—“THE HAUNTED HALL AT CALGARTH.”

IN the window of the staircase which leads to the Oak room of old Calgarth Hall, tradition has localised the legend of the skulls of Calgarth. Report goes that all attempts to dispossess these skulls of their favourite niche failed. Buried, burnt, reduced to powder, sunk in the lake, they so constantly returned that, as a last resource, they were walled up in their favourite haunt. The story runs that Calgarth (in old Norse Kalgarde, a vegetable garden), belonged to a humble yeoman, Kraster Cook, and his wife Dorothy. Myles Philipson, a wealthy magistrate in the neighbourhood, coveted the garden plot, and wished to add it to his estate, but could not induce the possessors to part with their inheritance. He determined to obtain his ends by fair means or foul, and to that purpose either sent them as a Christmas present, or, as is also affirmed, bade them take home from a Christmas party to which they had been invited, a pie in which some family plate had been previously concealed. The articles being missed search was made, and sure enough the silver valuables were found in Kraster Cook's cottage. They were accused of theft. The offence was capital in those days ; besides, a magistrate had been robbed. The innocent couple were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. In the court-room Dorothy rose, as sentence was passed, and cried, “Guard thyself, Myles Philipson ; thou may'st think thou hast managed grandly, but that tiny plot of garden ground is the dearest a Philipson has ever bought ; neither you nor your breed will prosper, the side you take will lose, all your schemes will fail, the time shall come no Philipson-

shall own an acre of land ; and while the Calgarth walls stand we'll haunt it night and day."

Brought up for execution they bade the chaplain read the 109th Psalm. Its curses, so tradition says, have been in all literalness fulfilled. The Philipsons are no more ; and the skulls of Kraster and Dorothy now wait only the falling of the Old Calgarth roof-tree.

SONNET X.—“FROM FOX HOW.”

THE DEATH OF DR. ARNOLD.—“One more act, the last before he retired that night, remains to be recorded, the last entry in his diary, which was not known or seen till the next morning, when it was discovered by those to whom every word bore a weight of meaning, which he who wrote it had but little anticipated :—

““Saturday Evening, 11th June.—The day after to-morrow is my birthday ; if I am permitted to live to see it, my forty-seventh birthday since my birth. How large a portion of my life on earth is already passed. And then what is to follow this life ? How visibly my outward work seems contracting and softening away into the gentler employments of old age. In one sense how nearly can I now say, *Vixi*. And I thank God that, as far as ambition is concerned, it is, I trust, fully mortified ; I have no desire other than to step back from my present place in the world, and not to rise to a higher. Still there are works which, with God's permission, I would do before the night cometh ; especially that great work of improving the intellectual management of Rugby, if I might be permitted to take part in it. But, above all, let me mind my own personal work—to keep myself pure, and zealous, and believing—labouring to do God's will, yet not anxious that it should be done by me rather than by others, if God disapproves of my doing it.”—*Dean Stanley's Scripture Portraits*, p. 379.

SONNET XXVIII.—“THE CRIER OF CLAIFE.”

THE rocky islet on Windermere, called St. Mary's, or Ladye's Holme, and described in Wordsworth's Prelude as—

A third small island where survived
In solitude the ruins of a shrine ;
Once to our Lady dedicate, and served
Daily with chaunted rites,

from the copy of an inquisition, taken at Kendal, on the Monday after the Feast of the Annunciation, in the 28th year of Edward III., is shown to have appertained at that time to the house of Segden in Scotland, which said house was bound always to provide two resident chaplains for the service of our Ladye's Chapel in this island solitude. But the chapel, not improbably, was founded by the pious Ingelran de Guignes, Sieur de Courci, who married, in 1285, Christiana, the last heiress of the great Scotch family of Lyndsey. He became by this marriage Lord of the Fee in which St. Mary's Holme is situate. A feudal lord in Scotland and England, his haughty motto tells us he came of a race of French peers whose power and independence must have been as acknowledged as it was proverbial ; the motto—

Je ne suis Roy ni Prince aussi,
Je suis le Seigneur de Courci,

speaks for itself.

The curious name, Crier of Claife, is now given to a tract of wood and disused slate-quarry on the high ground of Furness Fell that overlooks Windermere, between Latterbarrow and the ferry. It is certain that with the wind in a particular direction, the wooded cliff is so resonant as to give back giant cries as of moaning and distress. Whether this be the origin or not of the legend, the story goes that the Crier of Claife, though once exorcised and laid, “as long as ivy should be green,” by the priests from the chapel on Lady Holme, has power, at times, to escape from his bonds, and issues from his prison on the heights, to cry for a boat

through the darkness, to the boatman at the Ferry Nab. So like a human cry is the voice of this demon, so piteous his entreaty, that on one bitter winter night the kindly ferryman put off from the further shore in response to the call. He was absent a longer time than usual, and on his return was pale, shook with apparent fear, and could give no account of himself. From that day he became gloomy in spirit, and died a madman. He had seen, it was said, the Crier of Claife.

It is reported that none of the country people will go near the slate-quarries after nightfall, and few care to chance meeting the Crier there even in daytime.



