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1857

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MDCCCLXIX.
If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content:—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from their zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire:
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.
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### POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

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Destined to war from very infancy.
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Lines composed at Grasmere, during a Walk one Evening, after a stormy Day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the Dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.
Invocation to the Earth. February, 1816.
Lines written on a Blank Leaf in a Copy of the Author's Poem "The Excursion," upon hearing of the Death of the late Vicar of Kendal.
Elegiac Musings in the Grounds of Caelorion Hall, the Seat of the late Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.
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POEMS

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Of the Poems in this class, "The Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches" were first published in 1783. They are reprinted with some alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication.

*  *  *  *  *  *

This notice, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, "Descriptive Sketches," as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of Juvenile Pieces.

1836.

1.

EXTRACT
FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL.

Dear native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And wheresoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light be fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

1785.

II.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARY YOUTH

Calm is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.

Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! I restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.
But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
When crowding cattle, checked by rails that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out for fleeting gales;
When school-boys stretched their length upon the green;
And round the broad spread oak, a glistening scene,
In the rough fern clad park, the herded deer
Shook the still twinkling tail and glancing ear;
When horses in the sunburnt intakes stood,
And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press—
Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water breaks the hollow ghyll;
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
While thick above the rill the branches close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-woods between;
And its own twilight softens the whole scene,
Save where about the sublunary beams shine
On withered briers that o'er the crags recline;
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small cascade,
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade;
Beyond, along the vias of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling course overlook,
The eye repos'd on a secret bridge;
Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its ridge;
There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.
—Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Blandusia's praise, wild stream, should yield to thine!

* The word intakes is local, and signifies a mountain inclosure.
† Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country: ghyll, and dingle, have the same meaning.
‡ The reader who has made the tour of this country, will readily recognize, in this description, the features which characterize the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

III.
AN EVENING WALK.
ADRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's regret of his youth which was passed amongst them—Short description of Noon—Cascade—Noon tide Retreat—Precipice and sloping Lights—Face of Nature as the Sun descends—Mountain farm, and the Cock—Slate quarry—Sunset—Superstition of the Country connected with that moment—Swans—Female Baggar—Twilight-sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—Moonlight—Hope—Night sounds—Conclusion.

Far from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listen to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore;
Where peace to Grassmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander sleeps
'Mid clustering isles, and holly sprinkled steepes;
Where twilight glows endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild:
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for falling gladness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,
Alas! when first the bitter's hollow hill
Was heard, or woodcocks† roam'd the moonlight hill.

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then, the inexperienced heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.

* These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.
† In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.
AN EVENING WALK.

Never shall ruthless minister of death
Mildly soft gleams the glittering steel unsheathed;
No galleys shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
No kid with pitious outcry thrill thy bowers;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve—
A mind, that, in a calm angelic mood
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Sedulous, of all from her high powers required,
Mach done, and much designed, and more desired,—
Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
Entire affection for all human kind.

Dear Brook, farewell! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, weeping long thy wildwood strain;
But now the sun has gained his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
Is many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Sant watery lights, from parting clouds, space
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
By Lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'ergrown;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard;
And restless steene-clast, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
The spacious landscape change in form and hue!
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light;
The skiffs, at anchor where with unbragge wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flashes of radiance on the tremulous stream:
Raised by you travelling flock, a dusty cloud
Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breeze sinks,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep:
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light;
There, waves that, hardly wetering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray:
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnish'd mirror glows,
Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious ear, the charcoal barge.

Their panned train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illumine
Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings," and brome;
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,
Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
And blasted quarry thunders, heard remote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain-farms.

Sweetly ferocious†, round his native walks,
Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.
Bright sparks his black and rolling eye-ball hurrs Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion throat,
Threatened by faintly-anwering farms remote:
Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his wings!

Where, mixed with graceful birch, the sombre pines
And yew-tree o'er the silver rocks recline,
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panned steeds, and men, and numerous wains:
How busy all the enormous hive within,
While Echo dawes with its various din!
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking sound?)

* "Vivid rings of green."—Greenwood's poem on smoothia.
† "De cemente ferocius."—Tasso.—In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in L'Agriculture, ou Les Géorgiques Francaises, of M. Rosnart.
Toil, small as pigeons in the gulf profound;
Some, dim between the lofty cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.

Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its segis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire;"
While coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green;
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illumine,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.

The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward way,
Till the last banner of the long array.

* From Thomson.
† See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied by vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

Has disappeared, and every trace is fled
Of splendor—save the beacon's spipy head
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning red.

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly-waving pinions, down the vale;
And, fronting the bright west, you oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines;
'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
Where, winding on along some secret bay,
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little-ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the weared to her side;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

Long may they float upon this flood serene;
Theirs be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Where leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,
And breathes in peace the lily of the vale!
Yon isle, which feels not even the milk-maid's feet,
Yet hears her song, "by distance made more sweet;"
Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-like bower;
Green water-rushes overspread the floor;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery walk;
Or, from the neigbouring water, hear at morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
Involve their serpent-necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between their slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave their cumbersome flight.

Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyes, and called thee blessed;
When with her infants, from some shady seat
By the lake's edge, she rose—to face the moon's ride heat;
Or taught their limbs along the dusty road
A few short steps to totter with their load.
I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon on high.

—When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And firesides are the vallies far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the public road
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Often has she taught them on her lap to lay
The shining glow-worm; or, in heedless play,
Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted;
While others, not unseen, are free to shed
Green unmolested light upon their mossy bed.

Oh! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And like a torrent roars her headstrong gale;
No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold;
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
With roe a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield!
Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly soars
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, confined in thine arms!

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles ’mid the rustling sedges,
And feeding pike start from the water’s edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
And hereon, as round them the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of night;
Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain’s brow,
And round the west’s proud lodge their shadows throw,
Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray;
Shuddering, through paly loop-holes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake’s still bosom fall;
Soft o’er the surface creep those lustres pale
Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.
With restless interchange at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favoured eye was e’er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in happy days;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chace,
Brushing with placid wands the water’s face;
While music, steaming round the glittering deeps,
Charm’d the tall circle of the enchant’d steeps.
—The lights are vanished from the watery plains:

No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheedful night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black frigate forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps appear.
—Now o’er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay!
Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away;
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains;
Still the cold check its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread
Silent the hedge or steanny rivulet’s bed,
From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she fronts the ground,
And pours a deeper blue to Ether’s bound;
Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

Above you eastern hill, where darkness broods
O’er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods;
Where last a mass of shade the sight can trace,
Even now she shows, half-veiled, her lovely face:
Across the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
And gives, where woods the chequered upland strew,
To the green corn of summer, autumn’s hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon’s own morn,
’Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near;
Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between)
Gilding that cottage with her fullest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way);
How fair are lawns and sheltering woods appear!
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!
Where we, my Friend, to happy days shall rise,
’Till our small share of hardly-painting sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breast)
Creep burst into the tranquil breast of death.
But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;
From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleaners below the azure tide;
Time softly treads; throughout the landscape
breathes
A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths
Of charcoal-smoke, that o'er the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listen, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
The echoed hoof near the distant shore,
The boat's first motion—made with dashing oar;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the timid hare through rustling corn;
The sportive outcry of the mocking owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's bawl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

IV.
LINES
WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream!
A little moment past so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers begging.

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—and let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow!

V.
REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS,
COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND.

Glided gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to meet me.
O glide, fair stream! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought!—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who murmuring here a later * dirty
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For him suspend the dashing oar;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—the evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

VI.
DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES
TAKEN
DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG THE ALPS.

TO
THE REV. ROBERT JONES,
FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Dear Sir,

However dearest I might have been of giving
you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I
should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by
this publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of
our having been companions among the Alps, seemed to
give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any
scruples which your modesty might otherwise have
suggested.

*Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.
In inserting this little work to you, I consult my heart,
You know well how great is the difference between two
companions loitering in a post-chaise, and two travellers
paddling slowly along the road, side by side, each with
his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How
much more of heart between the two latter!
I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one
reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages
with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding
you of moments to which you can hardly look back
without a pleasure not the least dear from a shade of me-
memory. You will meet with few images without recol-
lecting the spot where we observed them together;
consequently, whatever is foible in my design, or spiritless
in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own
memory.
With still greater propriety I might have inserted to
you a description of some of the features of your native
mountains, through which we have wandered together, in
the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sou-
venirs, which give such splendour to the vale of Clary,
shade, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgaer,
Monast and her Druids, the Alpine slopes of the Conway,
and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream
of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that
my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I
cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring
you with how much affection and esteem.
I am, dear Sir,
Most sincerely yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

London, 1793.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on earth) among
the charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian
Traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present
state of the Grande Chartreuse—Lake of Como—Time,
Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning;
its voluptuous Character; Old man and forest-cottage
music—River Tons—Via Mala and Grison Gipsy—
Schellenstad—Lake of Uri—Storny sunset—Chapel
of William Tell—Force of local emotion—Chamois-
chase—View of the higher Alps—scanner of life of a
Swiss mountaineer, interspersed with views of the higher
Alps—Golden age of the Alps—Life and views continued
—Kanz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air—Abbaye of Rimel-
den and its pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—
—Slavery of Savoy—influence of libertinage cottage-happi-
ness—France—With for the Extirpation of slavery—
Conclusion.

Were there, below, a spot of holy ground
Where from distress a refuge might be found,
And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain side;
Where with loud voice the power of water shakes
The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,
And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and
height,
Though seeking only holiday delight;
At least, not owing to himself an aim
To which the sage would give a prouder name.
No gains too cheaply earned his fancy eloy,
Though every passing zephyr whispers joy;
Brisk toil, alternating with ready case,
Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-award to his tread:
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye!
Upward he looks—* and calls it luxury!"
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend
In every babbling brook he finds a friend;
While chasting thoughts of sweetest use, bestow'd
By wisdom, moralise his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre *;
Blesses the moon that comes with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way.
Back from his sight no bashful children steal;
He sits a brother at the cottage-meal;
His humble looks nor shy restraint impart:
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While suspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with enquiring glance,
Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, bewildered, he came there.

A hope, that prudence could not then approve,
That clung to Nature with a transt's love,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps led;
Her files of road-clans, high above my head
In long-drawn vistas, rustling in the breeze;
Or where her pathways struggle as they please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo! the Alps ascending white in air,
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.

And now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn thy doom.
Whither is fled that Power whoserown severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in fear?
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round!

* The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted
 melancolickly or cheerful tones, as it was touched by
 the sun's evening or morning rays.
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

The voice of blasphey the sires alarms,
The cloister startled at the gleam of arms.
The thundering tub the aged anger hears,
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps away his tears.
Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their troubled heads,
Spire, rocks, and lawns a browner night overspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons mock
The Cross, by angels planted* on the aerial rock.
The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death†.
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Valombre, 2nd to her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, lake or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
—To towns, whose shades of no rude noise complain,
From ringing team apart and grating wain—
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling—
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines;
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller hence, at evening sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maidens
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror bread and blue,
And track the yellow lights from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly creep.
Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light; half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire;
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake below.

Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy ear;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blest, delicious scene! the eye that greeteth
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy vales;
Thy lowly oots that sprinkle all the shore,
Each with its household boat beside the door;
Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky;
Thy towns, that cleave, like swallow's nests, on high;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the car-forgotten floods;
—Thy lake, that, streaked or dappled, blue or grey,
'Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray
Slow-travelling down the western hills, to enfold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold;
Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
And quickens the blythe sound of ears that pass
Along the steaming lake, to early mass.
But now farewell to each and all—adieu
To every charm, and last and chief to you,
Ye lovely maidens, that in noontide shade
Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade;
To all that binds the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance;
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
—Alas! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And lutes from bay to bay the vocal barge.

Yet are thy softer arts with power induc'd
To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
By silent cottage-doors, the peasant's home
Left vacant for the day, I loved to roam.
But once I pierced the maze of a wood
In which a cabin undevoted stood;
There an old man an olden measure scanned
On a rude viol touched with withered hand.
As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie
Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,
Stretched at his feet, with stedfast upward eye;
His children’s children listened to the sound;
—A hermit with his family around!

But let us hence; for fair Locarno smiles
Enbowed in walnut slopes and citron isles:
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa’s stream,
Where, ‘mid dim towers and woods, her* waters gleam.

From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow;

Or, led where Via Mala’s chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Hang o’er the abyss, whose else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illumine.

The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O’er life’s long deserts with its charge of woe,
With and congratulation joins the train
Where beasts and men together o’er the plain
Move on—a mighty caravan of pain:
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering bring,
Freshening the wilderness with shades and springs.
—There be whose lot far otherwise is cast:
Sole human tenant of the piny waste,
By choice or doom a gipsy wanders here,
A nursling babe her only comforter.
Le, where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half hid in curling smoke.

When lightning among clouds and mountain snows
Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,
And the fierce torrent, at the flashes broad
Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring road—
She seeks a covert from the battering shower
In the roofed bridge†; the bridge, in that dread hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent’s power.

Nor is she more at ease on some still night,
When not a star supplies the comfort of its light;
Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain’s head,
Then sets. In total gloom the vagrant sighs,
Soothes her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes;

Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or, to the drowsy crow of midnight cock,
Listens, or quakes while from the forest’s gulf
Howl near and nearer yet the famished wolf.

From the green vale of Ursen smooth and wide
Descend we now, the maddened Reuss our guide;
By rocks that, shutting out the blessed day,
Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as they;
By cells* upon whose image, while he prays,
The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to gaze;
By many a votive death-cross† planted near,
And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye
Unmoved with each rude form of peril nigh;
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whitening snows, and roaring waves.

But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens—a little world of calm delight;
Where mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Spread rooflike o’er the deep secluded vale,
And beams of evening slipping in between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene—
Here, on the brown wood-cottages‡ they sleep,
There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapour: on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles—‘tis the dim bowers recede.
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pinches on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through glistening showers.

From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake!
To sterneter pleasure, where, by Uri’s lake
In Nature’s pristine majesty outspread,
Winds neither road nor path for foot to tread:
The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch,
Far o’er the water, hung with groves of beech;
Aerial pms from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.
Yet here and there, if mid the savage scene
Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,

* The Catholic religion prevails here: these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road side.
† Crosses, commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents, are very common along this dreadful road.
‡ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep
To reach a small wood—hut hung boldly on the steep.
—Before those thresholds (never can they know
The face of traveller passing to and fro.)
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell;
Their watch-dog ne’er his hungry bark foregoes,
Touched by the beggar’s moan of human woes;
The shady porch ne’er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer’s heat.
Yet dither the world’s business finds its way
At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And there are those sad thoughts which Solitude,
However stern, is powerless to exclude.
There doth the maiden watch her lover’s sail
Approaching, and uptook the tardy gale;
At midnight listens till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more.

And what if ospreys, cormorants, herons cry,
Amid tempestuous vapours driving by,
Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear;
Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer’s kindliest ray;
Contentment shares the desolate domain
With Independence, child of high disdain.
Exulting ’mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often eyes;
And sometimes, as from rock to rock she bounds
The Patriot nymph starts at imagined sounds,
And, wildly passing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked her haste
Or thrill of Spartan fire is caught between the blast.

Sworn with incessant rains from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour:
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight
Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light!
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle’s glorious form!
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
Those wood-crowned cliffs that o’er the lake recline;
Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold:
Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to shun
The seat, that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to melt.

But, lo! the boatman, overwield, before
The pictured face of Tell suspends his ear;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.
And who, that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse and agitate his labouring soul?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta hilled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen’s plain; or on that highland dell,
Through which rough Garry cleaves his way, can tell
What high resolves exalt the tenderest thought
Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,
Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe’s happiest sigh,
And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard’s eye;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dandie in “faint luzzas” expired!

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch the fearless chamois-hunter chase
His prey, through tracts abrupt of desolate space,
*Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmuru or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Thro’ worlds where Life, and Voice, and Motion sleep;
Where silent Hours their death-like sway extend,
Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to rend
Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow profound,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound.
—"Tis his, while wandering on from height to height,
To see a planet’s pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night;
While the pale moon moves near him, on the bound
Of ether, shining with diminished round,
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays;
To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue!
—At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes;
The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Soon with despair’s whole weight his spirits sink;

* For most of the images in the next sixteen verses, I am indebted to M. Raymond’s interesting observations annexed to his translation of Cius’s Tour in Switzerland.
Bread has he none, the snow must be his drink;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps overshades her prey.

Now couch thyself where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong Aar;
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Unterwalden’s pastoral heights.
—Is there who mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their enmurs reveal,
Soft music o’er the aerial summit steal!
While o’er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
—And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Naught but the chalets, flat and bare, on high
Suspended ’mid the quiet of the sky;
Or distant herds that pasturing upward creep,
And, not untended, climb the dangerous steep.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Houses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the Sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
And with that voice accords the soothing sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods’ steady suspi;
The solitary heifer’s deepened low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow.
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When, from the sunny breast of open seas,
And banks with myrtle fringed, the southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-clad height;
When shouts and bowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stum the noon-tide hill,
The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale;
And like the Patriarchs in their simple age
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage to stage;
High and more high in summer’s heat they go.

And hear the rattling thunder far below;
Or steal beneath the mountains, half-deterred,
Where huge rocks tumble to the howling herd.

One he behold who, ’cross the foaming flood,
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardihood;
Another high on that green ledge—’he gained
The tempting spot with every sinew strained;
And downward thence a knot of grass he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter snows.
—Far different life from what Tradition hears
Transmits of happier lot in times of yore!
Then Summer lingered long; and honey flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees’ safe abode:
Continual waters welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste:
Nor yet his frozen stores had pilled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled:
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pastures bare,
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty fare.
Then the milk-thistle flourished through the land,
And forced the full-swollen adder to demand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome hand.
Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too well.
Alas! that human guilt provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

’Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain
glows;
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose billows wide around
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound:
Pines, on the coast, through mist their tops uprear,
That like to leaning masts of stranded ships appear.
A single clasp, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea—and through
That dark mysterious gulf ascending, sound
Innumerable streams with roar profound.
Mount through the nearer vapours notes of birds,
And merry flageolet; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer’s tinkling bell,
Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-tower kneel:
Think not, the peasant from aloft has gazed
And heard with heart unmoved, with soul unravished:
Nor is his spirit less corrupt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness.
Then, when he lies, out-stretched, at even-tide
Upon the fragrant mountain’s purple side:
For as the pleasures of his simple day

* The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps; this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.
† This picture is from the middle region of the Alps. Chalets are summer huts for the Swiss herdersmen.
‡ Such, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precints can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind;
While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's urn,
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers her return.

Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blest as free—for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained:
Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As man in his primeval dower arrayed,
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by faithful Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval Man appear;
The simple dignity, no forms debase;
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace:
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword;
—Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this "the blessings he enjoys to guard."

And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms *, innumerable foes,
When to those famous fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead:
For images of other worlds are there;
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Fifty, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports roll;
His bosom heaves, his Spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

And oft, when that dread vision hath past by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
There where the peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills;
Or, when upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclin'd he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow;
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.

* Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and, in particular, to one fought at Nefeis near Glarum, where three hundred and thirty men are said to have defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1338, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians, attempting to make a stand, were repulsed anew.

And when a gathering weight of shadows brown
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear and storms *,
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red—
Awe in his breast with holiest love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own delights.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessen ing circle grows;
That hut which on the hills so oft employs
His thoughts, the central point of all his joys.
And a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,
So to the homestead, where the grandsire tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched pair;
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors round,
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not from the sound.

Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstained by envy, discontent, and pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell, a favourite heifer's neck;
Well pleased upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify the board.
—Alas! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way;
And here the unwilling mind may more trace
The general sorrows of the human race:
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of snow,
To them the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
Yet more;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That solitary man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting strife
With all the tender charities of life,
Full oft the father, when his sons have grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown;

* As Schrock-Horn, the pike of terror; Wetler-Horn, the pike of storms, &c. &c.
And from his nest amid the storms of heaven 
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven; 
With stern composure watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!

When long-familiar joys are all resigned, 
Why does their sad remembrance haunt the mind! 
Lo! where through flat Batavia’s willowy groves, 
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves; 
O’er the curled waters Alpine measures swell, 
And search the affections to their utmost cell; 
Sweet poison spreads along the listener’s veins, 
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains; 
Poesy, which not a frame of steel can brave, 
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.*

Gay lack of hope, thy silent song resume! 
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more the hills illume! 
Fresh gales and dews of life’s delicious morn, 
And then, lost fragrance of the heart, return! 
Aha! the little joy to man allowed, 
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud; 
Or like the beauty in a flower installed, 
Whose season was, and cannot be recalled. 
Yet, when oppressed by sickness, grief, or care, 
And taught that pain is pleasure’s natural heir, 
We still confide in more than we can know; 
Death would be else the favourite friend of woe.

*Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine, 
Between interminable tracts of pine, 
Within a temple stands an awful shrine, 
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls 
On the mute Image and the troubled walls. 
Oh! give not me that eye of hard disdain 
That views, undimmed, Ensiedden’s wretched fan. 
While gl adsly faces through the gloom appear, 
Abjunctive joy, and hope that works in fear; 
While prayer contends with silenced agony, 
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die. 
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear 
One flower of hope—oh, pass and leave it there! 

The tall sun, passing on an Alpine spire, 
Flings o’er the wilderness a stream of fire: 
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the day 
Close on the remnant of their weary way; 

While they are drawing toward the sacred floor 
Where, so they fondly think, the worm shall gnaw 
no more. 
How gaily murmur and how sweetly taste 
The fountains * reared for them amid the waste! 
Their thirst they slake—they wash their toil-worn feet, 
And some with tears of joy each other greet. 
Yes, I must see you when ye first behold 
Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold, 
In that glad moment will for you a sigh 
Be heaved, of charitable sympathy; 
In that glad moment when your hands are prest 
In mute devotion on the thankful breast!

Last, let us turn to Chamouny that shields 
With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile fields: 
Five streams of ice amid her cots descend, 
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend—
A scene more fair than what the Grecian seigns 
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains; 
Here all the seasons revel hand in hand: 
‘Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned, 
They sport beneath that mountain’s matchless height 
That holds no commerce with the summer night. 
From age to age, throughout his lonely bounds 
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds; 
Appalling havoc! but serene his brow, 
Where daylight lingers on perpetual snow; 
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

What marvel then if many a Wanderer sigh, 
While roars the sullen Arve in anger by, 
That not for thy reward, unrivalled Vale! 
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale; 
That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed to pine 
And droop, while no Italian arts are thine, 
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.

Hail Freedom! whether it was mine to stray, 
With shrill winds whistling round my lonely way, 
On the bleak sides of Cumbria’s heath-clad moors, 
Or where dank sea-wood laces Scotland’s shores; 
To scent the sweets of Piedmont’s breathing rose, 
And orange gale that o’er Lagno blows; 
Still have I found, where Tyranny prevails, 
That virtue languishes and pleasure fails, 
While the remotest hamlets blessings share 
In thy loved presence known, and only there.

* The well-known effect of the famous air, called in French Bain du Vaches, upon the Swiss troops.
† This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the Pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain.
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Heart-blessings—outward treasures too which the eye
Of the sun peeping through the clouds can spy,
And every passing breeze will testify.
There, to the porch, belike with jasmine bound
Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is wound;
The housewife there a brighter garden sees,
Where hum on busier wing her happy bees;
On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And grey-haired men look up with livelier brow,—
To greet the traveller needing food and rest;
Housed for the night, or but a half-hour's guest.

And oh, fair France! though now the traveller sees
Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze;
Though martial songs have banished songs of love,
And nightingales desert the village grove,
Scared by the fierce and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
That cease not till night falls, when far and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd * prolongs his mournful cry!
—Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her power
Beyond the cottage-hearth, the cottage-door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,
When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into white;
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowned with ear-piercing power till then unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams;
Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant mill
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
With more majestic course the water rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.
—But foes are gathering—Liberty must raise
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower!
—Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour!
Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire

Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire;
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth!
—All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;
She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.

Great God! by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide:
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of clay
Who cries presumptuous, "Here the flood shall stay,"
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand;
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more!

To-night, my Friend, within this humble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot
In timely sleep; and when, at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,
With a light heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew.

VII.

LINES

Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the lake of Routhwaite, on a deseolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect.

Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

—Who he was

That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember,—He was one who owned

* An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.
† The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriages, were obliged to transport their goods by land.
No common soul, In youth by science nursed,  
And led by nature into a wild scene  
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth  
A favoured Being, knowing no desire  
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint  
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,  
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,  
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,  
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once  
With indignation turned himself away,  
And with the food of pride sustained his soul  
In solitude.—Stranger! those gloomy boughs  
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,  
His only visitants a straggling sheep,  
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:  
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,  
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled over,  
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour  
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here  
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:  
And, lifting up his head, he would then gaze  
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis  
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became  
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain  
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor, that time,  
When nature had subdued him to itself,  
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds  
Warm from the labours of benevolence  
The world, and human life, appeared a scene  
of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,  
Igly disturbed, to think that others felt  
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!  
On visionary views would fancy feed,  
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale  
He died,—this seal his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms  
Of young imagination have kept pure,  
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that  
pride,  
How'er disguised in its own majesty,  
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt  
For any living thing, hath faculties  
Which he has never used; that thought with him  
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye  
Is ever on himself doth look on one,  
The least of Nature's works, one who might move  
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds  
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!  
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;  
True dignity abides with him alone.  
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,  
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,  
In lowness of heart.

VIII.  
GUILT AND SORROW;  
OR,  
INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN.  

ADVERTISEMENT,  
PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM, PUBLISHED  
IN 1842.

Nor less than one-third of the following poem, though it  
has from time to time been altered in the expression, was  
published so far back as the year 1796, under the title of  
"The Female Vagrant." The extract is of such length that  
an apology seems to be required for reprinting it here: but  
it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or  
the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was  
written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail,  
rather as matter of literary biography than for any other  
reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1794, having  
passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet  
which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the  
commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy  
forebodings. The American war was still fresh in  
memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which  
many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the  
irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of  
the allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long  
continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond  
all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon  
me by having been a witness, during a long residence in  
revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that  
country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two  
days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which,  
though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of  
it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance  
than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in  
abundance over that region, led me unavoidable to compare  
what we know or guess of those remote times with certain  
Aspects of modern society, and with calamities,  
principally those consequent upon war, to which, more  
than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those  
reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to  
my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds  
of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it  
may be proper to say, that of the features described as  
belonging to it, one or two are taken from other descriptive  
parts of England.

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's Plain  
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half bare;  
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain  
Help from the staff he bore; for men and air  
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with  
care  
Both of the time to come, and time long fled;
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Down fell in straggling locks his thin grey hair;
A coat he wore of military red
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a patch and shred.

While thus he journeyed, step by step he led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full sure
That welcome in such house for him was none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old and poor
And desolate, "Here you will find a friend!"
The pendent grapes glittered above the door;
On he must pace, perchance 'till night descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare white lines extend.

The gathering clouds grew red with stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting high;
That inn he long had passed; the distant spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the blank sky.
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed around,
And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching without bound;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere to be found.

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear;
Long files of corn-stacks here and there were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to cheer.
Some labourer, thought he, may perchance be near;
And so he sent a feeble shout—in vain;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the unfurrowed plain.

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he might turn
And rest; but now along heaven's darkening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's spreading thorn
Or hovel from the storm to shield his head,
But sought in vain; for now, all wild, forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him spread;
The wet cold ground, he feared, must be his only bed.

And be it so—for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath bared;
A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath told; for, landing after labour hard,
Full long endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armed fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had shared
Like fate; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in his heart, or theirs perhaps, said nay.

For years the work of carnage did not cease,
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister; then came his glad release,
And hope returned, and pleasure fondly made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to throw
Round his wife's neck; the prize of victory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she could know.

Vain hope! for fraud took all that he had earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart; but he, returned,
Bears not to those he loves their needful food.
His home approaching, but in such a mood
That from his sight his children might have run,
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood;
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate to shun.

From that day forth no place to him could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a pang
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high
A human body that in irons swung;
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by;
And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shoulder's pain;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused a train
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain;
He fell, and without sense or motion lay;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly pursued his way.
XI.
As one whose brain habitual phrensy fires
Ows to the fit in which his soul hath tossed
Profound quiet, when the fit retires,
Ever so the dire phantasma which had crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream.
Nor, if accosted now, in thought engrossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual theme.

XII.
Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness piled,
Goes is the raven timely rest to seek;
He seemed the only creature in the wild
On whom the elements their rage might wreak;
Save that the lustard, of those regions bleak
Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful shriek,
And half upon the ground, with strange affright,
 Forced hard against the wind a thick unwieldy flight.

XIII.
All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound;
The weary eye—where, wheresoe'er it strays,
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
Left by gigantic arms—at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading wide;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime: in shelter there to hide
He turned, while rain poured down smoking on
Every side.

XIV.
Pile of Stonehenge! so proud to hint yet keep
Thy secrets, thee that lov'st to stand and hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's sweep,
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless year;
Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did ever wretch appear,
Who in his heart had groaned with deadlier pain
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter now
Would gain.

XV.
Within that fabric of mysterious form,
Winds met in conflict, each by turns supreme;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged, through
storm
And rain he wildered on, no moon to stream
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly beam,
Nor any sound his footsteps led;
Once did the lightning's faint disastrous gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which tho' lost at once a gleam of pleasure shed.

XVI.
No swinging sign-board creaked from cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome;
'Twas dark and void as ocean's watery realm
Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom;
No gipsy cover'd o'er fire of furze or broom;
No labourer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick man's room;
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart
the night.

XVII.
At length, though hid in clouds, the moon arose;
The downs were visible—and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes enclose.
It was a spot, where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital, the belated swain
From the night terrors of that waste to shield:
But there no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the "Dead House" of the plain.

XVIII.
Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin showed,
How glad he was at length to find some trace
Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame embrace.
In a dry nook where fern the floor bestows
He lays his stiffened limbs,—his eyes begin to close.

XIX.
When hearing a deep sigh, that seemed to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he raised his head,
And saw a woman in the naked room
Outstretched, and turning on a restless bed:
The moon a wan dead light around her shed.
He waked her—spake in tone that would not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind; but ill he sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale
Which now with freezing thoughts did all her powers assail;

XX.
Had heard of one who, forced from storms to shroud,
Felt the loose walls of this decayed Retreat.
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with furious heat;
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled horse:
The man half raised the stone with pain and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose its force
Disclosing the grim head of a late murdered corpse.

Such tale of this lone mansion she had learned
And, when that shape, with eyes in sleep half drowned,
By the moon’s sullen lamp she first discerned,
Her he addressed in words of cheering sound;
Recovering heart, like answer did she make;
And well it was that, of the corpse there found,
In converse that ensued she nothing spoke;
She knew not what dire pangs in him such tale could wake.

But soon his voice and words of kind intent
Banished that dismal thought; and now the wind
In fainter howlings told its rage was spent:
Meanwhile discourse ensued of various kind,
Which by degrees a confidence of mind
And mutual interest failed not to create.
And, to a natural sympathy resigned,
In that forsaken building where they sate
The Woman thus retraced her own untoward fate.

"By Derwent’s side my father dwelt—a man
Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred;
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lip, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

A little croft we owned—a plot of corn,
A garden stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday morn
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest chime.
Can I forget our frits at shearing time!
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce esped;
The cowslip-gathering in June’s dewy prime;
The swans that with white chests upuarded in pride
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the water-sides?

The staff I well remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honied sycomore
Where the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked;
Our watchful house-dog, that would bese all and tire
The stranger till its barking-fit I checked;
The red-breast, known for years, which at my casement pecked.

The suns of twenty summers danced along.—
Too little marked how fast they rolled away;
But, through severe mischance and cruel wrong,
My father’s substance fell into decay:
We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
When Fortune might put on a kinder look;
But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part; the summons came;—our final leave
we took.

It was indeed a miserable hour
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made.
Till then, he hoped his bones might there be laid
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed;—
I could not pray;—through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say:
’Tmid the green mountains many a thoughtless song
We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other;
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply a gainful trade;
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown!
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned;—we had no other aid:
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept;
GUILT AND SORROW.

And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief; his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

XXX.
We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely babes had lain upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died,
When threatened war reduced the children's meal:
Twice happy! that for him the grave could hide
The empty boon, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience might
not heal.

XXXI.
Twas a hard change; an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain:
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round to clear the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we
drew.

XXXII.
There were we long neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weighed;
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a presidential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure; wished and wished—not knew,
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes delayed,
That happier days we never more must view.
The parting signal streamed—at last the land with-
drew.

XXXIII.
But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue:
We reached the western world, a poor devoted
crew.

XXXIV.
The pains and plagues that on our heads came
down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.
All perished—all in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

XXXV.
Here paused she of all present thought forlorn,
Nor voice, nor sound, that moment's pain expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'erborne,
From her full eyes their watery load released.
He too was mute; and, ere her weeping ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery east
With rays of promise, north and southward sent;
And soon with crimson fire kindled the firmament.

XXXVI.
"O come," he cried, "come, after weary night
Of such rough storm, this happy change to view."
So forth she came, and eastward looked; the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness threw;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful hue
Seemed to return, dried the last lingering tear,
And from her grateful heart a fresh one drew:
The whilst her comrade to her pensive cheer
Tempered fit words of hope; and the lark warbled
near.

XXXVII.
They looked and saw a lengthening road, and wain
That rang down a bare slope not far remote:
The barrows glistened bright with drops of rain,
Whistled the waggoner with merry note,
The cock far off sounded his clarion throat;
But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they viewed,
Only were told there stood a lonely cot
A long mile thence. While thither they pursued
Their way, the Woman thus her mournful tale
renewed.

XXXVIII.
"Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
Is now, by beams of dawning light imprist,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main;
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heaving of my breast.
How quiet 'round me ship and ocean were!
As quiet all within me. I was blest,
And looked, and fed upon the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair."
XXXIV.
Ah! how unlike those late terrific dreams,
And groans that rage of racking famine spoke;
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps,
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke,
The shriek that from the distant battle breaks,
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

XL.
Some mighty gulf of separation past,
I seemed transported to another world;
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatience of the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man
might come.

XLI.
And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found;
'Here will I dwell,' said I, 'my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here will I live, of all but heaven disowned,
And end my days upon the peaceful flood.'—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound;
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.

XLII.
No help I sought, in sorrow turned adrift
Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor raised my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross-timber of an out-house hung:
Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger severely ached,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit my tongue.

XLIII.
So passed a second day; and, when the third Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's resort.
—in deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort;
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
And, after many interruptions short
Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could crawl:
Unsought for was the help that did my life recall.

XLIV.
Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, and shattered memory;
I heard my neighbours in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me—
Of feet still bustling round with busy gleam,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might make a dead man start.

XLV.
These things just served to stir the slumbering sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return; and, thence Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food—and rest, more welcome, more desired.

XLVI.
Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,
And other joys my fancy to allure—
The bag-pipe dimming on the midnight hour
In barn uplighted; and companions bound,
Well met from far with revery secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

XLVII.
But all they suited me—those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the early house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tip-toe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill;
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

XLVIII.
What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I then for toil or service fit;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine;
In open air forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, with idle arms in mopeing sorrow
knit.

XLII.
The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Forsaken the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless
youth.

I.
Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world
descend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortiitude:
Three years a wanderer now my course I bend—
Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
Have I."—She ceased, and weeping turned away;
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

II.
True sympathy the Sailor’s looks expressed,
His looks—for pondering he was mute the while.
Of social Order’s care for wretchedness,
Of Time’s sure help to calm and reconcile,
Joy’s second spring and Hope’s long-treasured
smile,
’Twas not for him to speak—a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style
Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing side by
side.

III.
Ere long, from heaps of turf, before their sight,
Together smoking in the sun’s slant beam,
Rise various wreaths that into one unite
Which high and higher mounts with silver gleam:
Fair spectacle,—but instantly a scream
There a bursting shrill did all remark prevent;
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger vehement.

XLIII.
A woman stood with quivering lips and pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay
Stretched on the ground, began a piteous tale;
How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straightway,
As if each blow were deadlier than the last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with dismay
The Soldier’s Widow heard and stood aghast;
And stern looks on the man her grey-haired Com-
rade cast.

XLIV.
His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood’s name forbade;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad;
Asked him in scorn what business there he had;
What kind of plunder he was hunting now;
The gallows would one day of him be glad;—
Though inward anguish damped the Sailor’s brow,
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so poignant would
allow.

XLV.
Softly he stroked the child, who lay outstretched
With face to earth; and, as the boy turned round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor fetched
As if he saw—there and upon that ground—
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his brain
At once the grinding iron passage passed;
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed amain,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting tear restrain.

XLVI.
Within himself he said:—What hearts have we!
The blessing this a father gives his child;
Yet happy thou, poor boy! compared with me,
Suffering not doing ill—fate far more mild.
The stranger’s looks and tears of wrath beguiled
The father, and relenting thoughts awake;
He kissed his son—so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor then bespoke.

XLVII.
"Bad is the world, and hard is the world’s law
Even for the man who wears the warmest fleece;
Much need have ye that time more closely draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,
And that among so few there still be peace:
Else can ye hope but with such numerous foes
Your pains shall ever with your years increase!"—
While from his heart the appropriate lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o'er his woes.

LVIII.
Forthwith the pair passed on; and down they look
Into a narrow valley's pleasant scene
Where wreaths of vapour clung to winding brooks,
That babble'd on through groves and meadows green;
A low-roofed house peep'd out the trees between;
The dripping groves resound with cheerful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched by the sun's rays.

LIX.
They saw and heard, and, wending with the road
Down a thick wood, they drop into the vale;
Comfort by prouder mansions unbested
Their wearied frames, she hoped, would soon regale.
Erelong they reached that cottage in the dale:
It was a rustic inn — the board was spread,
The milk-maid followed with her brimming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in comfort fed.

LX.
Their breakfast done, the pair, though loth, must part;
Wanderers whose course no longer now agrees.
She rose and bade farewell! and, while her heart
Struggled with tears nor could its sorrow ease,
She left him there; for, clustering round his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children played;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung with trees
And banks of ragged earth; beneath the shade
Across the pebbly road a little runnel stray'd.

LXI.
A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood;
Chequering the canvas roof the sunbeams alone,
She saw the carman bend to scoop the flood
As the wain fronted her, — wherein lay one,
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.
The carman wet her lips as well behaved;
But under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she must had loved
She could not of herself those wasted limbs have moved.

LXII.
The Soldier's Widow learned with honest pain
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must there sustain
The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way; and following near
In pure compassion she her steps retraced
Far as the cottage. "A sad sight is here!"
She cried aloud; and forth ran out in haste
The friends whom she had left but a few minutes past.

LXIII.
While to the door with eager speed they ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half upraised
Her bony visage — gaunt and deadly wan;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed;
Then sunk upon her straw with feeble moan.
Fervently cried the housewife — "God be praised,
I have a house that I can call my own;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and alone!"

LXIV.
So in they bear her to the chimney-seat,
And busily though yet with fear, unite
Her garments, and, to warn her icy feet
And chase her temples, careful hands apply.
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to rear;
Then said — "I thank you all; if I must die,
The God in heaven my prayers for you will hear;
Till now I did not think my end had been so near.

"Barred every comfort labour could procure,
Suffering what no endurance could assuage,
I was compelled to seek my father's door,
Though loth to be a burthen on his age.
But sickness stopped me in an early stage
Of my sad journey; and within the wain
They placed me — there to end life's pilgrimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain:
For I shall never see my father's door again.

"My life, Heaven knows, hath long been burthen-some;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be! Soon will this voice be dumb:
Should child of mine e'er wander hither, speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my cheek.—
Torn from our hut, that stood beside the sea
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome creek,
My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death should set him free.
GUILT AND SORROW.

LXVIII.
"A sailor's wife I knew a widow's cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my bed;
Hope cheered my dreams, and to my daily prayers
Our heavenly Father granted each day's bread;
Till one was found by stroke of violence dead,
Whose body near our cottage chanced to lie;
A dire suspicion drove us from our shed;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,
Nor could we live together those poor boys and I;"

She slept in peace,—his pulses throbbed and stopped,
Breathless he gazed upon her face,—then took
Her hand in his, and raised it, but both dropped,
When on his own he cast a rueful look.
His ears were never silent; sleep forsook
His burning eyelids stretched and stiff as lead;
All night from time to time under him shook
The floor as he lay shuddering on his bed;
And oft he groaned aloud, "O God, that I were
dead!"

LXIX.
"For evil tongues made oath how on that day
My husband lurked about the neighbourhood;
Now he had fled, and whither none could say,
And he had done the deed in the dark wood—
Near his own home!—but he was mild and good;
Never on earth was gentler creature seen;
He'd not have robbed the raven of its food.
My husband's loving kindness stood between
Me and all worldly harms and wrongs however keen."

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot;
And, when he rose, she thanked her pious care
Through which his Wife, to that kind shelter brought,
Died in his arms; and with those thanks a prayer
He breathed for her, and for that merciful pair.
The corse interred, not one hour he remained
Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burthen, now with fortitude sustained,
He bore within a breast where dreadful quiet reigned.

LXX.
Alas! the thing she told with labouring breath
The Sailor knew too well. That wickedness
His hand had wrought; and when, in the hour of death,
He saw his Wife's lips move his name to bless
With her last words, unable to suppress
His anguish, with his heart he ceased to strive;
And, weeping loud in this extreme distress,
He cried—"O do pity me! That thou shouldst live
I neither ask nor wish—forgive me, but forgive!"

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared:
"And from your doom," he added, "now I wait,
Nor let it linger long, the murderer's fate."
Not ineffectual was that piteous claim:
"O welcome sentence which will end though late,
He said, "the pangs that to my conscience came
Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour! is in thy name!"

LXXI.
To tell the change that Voice within her wrought
Nainzre by sign or sound made no essay;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,
And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Barne gently to a bed, in death she lay;
Yet still while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to say,
"Be blest; by sight of thee from heaven was sent
Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of content."

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not:—no one on his form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storm the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance.
1793-4.
THE BORDERERS.

A Tragedy.

(Composed 1795-6.)

DRA{MATIS PERSONÆ.

MARMADUKEx.
OSWALD.

WALLACE.

LACY.
LENOX.
HERBERT.
WILFRED, Servant to MARMADUKEx.

Forester.
ELDER, & Peasant.
PEASANT, PILGRIMS, &C.

IDONIA.
FEMALE BEGGER.
ELEANOR, Wife to Elder.

Scene, Borders of England and Scotland.

Time, the Reign of Henry III.

Readers already acquainted with my Poems will recognise, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines, which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper however to add, that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 20, 1841.

ACT I.

Scene, road in a Wood.

WALLACE and LACy.

LACy. The Troop will be impatient; let us hie back to our post, and strip the Scottish Foray Of their rich Spoil, ere they recross the Border. —Pity that our young Chief will have no part In this good service.

WOL. Rather let us grieve That, in the undertaking which has caused His absence, he hath sought, what’er his aim, Companionship with One of crooked ways, From whose perverted soul can come no good To our confiding, open-hearted, Leader.

LACy. True; and, remembering how the Band have proved That Oswald finds small favour in our sight, Well may we wonder he has gained such power Over our much-loved Captain.

Wol. I have heard Of some dark deed to which in early life His passion drove him—then a Voyager Upon the midland Sea. You knew his bearing In Palestine.

LACy. Where he despised alike Mahommedan and Christian. But enough; Let us begone—the Band may else be failed.

[Exeunt.]
THE BORDERERS.

Will. Oh, Sir!
Mar. Peace, my good Wilfred; Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band I shall be with them in two days, at farthest. Wil. May He whose eye is over all protect you! [Exit.

Enter Oswald (a bunch of plants in his hand).
Osw. This wood is rich in plants and curious simples.
Mar. (looking at them). The wild rose, and the poppy, and the nightshade: Which is your favorite, Oswald?
Osw. That which, while it is strong to destroy, is also strong to heal—[Looking forward.
Not yet in sight!—We'll santee here awhile; They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.
Mar. (a letter in his hand). It is no common thing when one likes you performs these delicate services, and therefore I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald; To a strange letter this—You saw her write it? Osw. And saw the tears with which she blotted it.
Mar. And nothing less would satisfy him!
Osw. No less; For that another in his Child's affection Should hold a place, as if 'twere robery, He seemed to quarrel with the very thought. Besides, I know not what strange prejudice Is rooted in his mind; this Band of ours, Which you've collected for the noblest ends, Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed To guard the Innocent—he calls us "Outlaws!" And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts This garb was taken up that indolence Might want no cover, and rapacity Be better fed.
Mar. Ne'er may I own the heart That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.
Osw. Thou know'st me for a Man not easily moved.
Yet was I grievously provoked to think Of what I witnessed. Mar. This day will suffice To redress her wounds.
Osw. But if the blind Man's tale Should get the true? Mar. Would it were possible! Did not the Soldier tell thee that himself, And others who survived the wreck, behold The Baron Herbert perish in the waves Upon the coast of Cyprus?
Osw. Yes, even so,
And I had heard the like before: in sooth The tale of this his quondam Barony Is cunningly devised; and, on the back Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail To make the proud and vain his tributaries, And stir the pulse of lazy charity. The seignories of Herbert are in Devon; We, neighbours of the Esk and Tweed: 'tis much The Arch-impostor——
Mar. Treat him gently, Oswald!
Though I have never seen his face, methinks, There cannot come a day when I shall cease To love him. I remember, when a Boy Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm That casts its shade over our village school, 'Twas my delight to sit and hear Idonea Repeat her Father's terrible adventures, Till all the band of play-mates sat together; And that was the beginning of my love. And, through all converse of our later years, An image of this old Man still was present, When I had been most happy. Pardon me If this be silly spoken.
Osw. See, they come, Two Travellers!
Mar. (points). The woman is Idonea.
Osw. And leading Herbert.
Mar. We must let them pass——
This thicket will conceal us. [They step aside.

Enter Idonea, leading Herbert blind.
Idon. Dear Father, you sigh deeply; ever since We left the willow shade by the brook-side, Your natural breathing has been troubled.
Her. Nay, You are too fearful; yet must I confess, Our march of yesterday had better suited A firmer step than mine.
Idon. That dismal Moor—— In spite of all the larks that cheered our path, I never can forgive it: but how steadily You paced along, when the bewilderling moonlight Mocked me with many a strange fantastic shape!— I thought the Convent never would appear; It seemed to move away from us: and yet, That you are thus the fault is mine; for the air Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the grass, And midway on the waste ere night had fallen I spied a Covert walled and roofed with sods— A miniature; belike some Shepherd-boy, Who might have found a nothing-doing hour Heavier than work, raised it: within that butt We might have made a kindly bed of heath, And thankfully there rested side by side.
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with recruited strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But cheerily,
Father,—
That staff of yours, I could almost have heart
To fling 't away from you; you make no use
Of me, or of my strength;—come, let me feel
That you do press upon me. There—indeed
You are quite exhausted. Let us rest awhile
On this green bank. [He sits down.

Her. (after some time). Idones, you are silent,
And I divine the cause.

Idon. Do not reproach me:
I pondered patiently your wish and will
When I gave way to your request; and now,
When I behold the ruins of that face,
Those eyeballs dark—dark beyond hope of light,
And think that they were blasted for my sake,
The name of Marmaduke is blown away:
Father, I would not change that sacred feeling
For all this world can give.

Her. Nay, be composed:
Few minutes gone a faintness overspread
My frame, and I beheld me of two things
I ne'er had heart to separate—my grave,
And thee, my Child!

Idon. Believe me, honoured Sire!
'Tis weariness that breeds these gloomy fancies,
And you mistake the cause: you hear the woods
Resound with music, could you see the sun,
And look upon the pleasant face of Nature—

Her. I comprehend thee—I should be as cheerful
As if we two were twins; two songsters bred
In the same nest, my spring-time one with thine,
My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child! from a far deeper source
Than bodily weariness. While here we sit
I feel my strength returning.—The bequest
Of thy kind Patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice
To save thee from the extreme of penury;
But when thy Father must lie down and die,
How wilt thou stand alone?

Idon. Is he not strong!

Her. Am I then so soon
Forgotten! I have my warnings passed so quickly
Out of thy mind! My dear, my only, Child;
Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken reed—

This Marmaduke—

Idon. O could you hear his voice?
Alas! you do not know him. He is one
(I wot not what ill tongue has wrangled him with you)
All gentleness and love. His face bespeaks
A deep and simple meekness: and that Soul,
Which with the motion of a virtuous set
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger, stilled at once.

Her. Unhappy Woman!

Idon. Nay, it was my duty
Thus much to speak; but think not I forget—
Dear Father! how could I forget and live—
You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost towers,
You rushed into the murderous flames, returned
Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have told me,
Chasing your infant Daughter to your heart.

Her. Thy Mother too!—scarcely had I gained the
door, I caught her voice; she threw herself upon me,
I felt thy infant brother in her arms;
She saw my blasted face—a tide of soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I heard
Her last death-shriek, distinct among a thousand.

Idon. Nay, Father, stop not; let me hear it all.

Her. Dear Daughter! precious relic of that time—
For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast been told,
That when, on our return from Palestine,
I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began
Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland,—there,
Our melancholy story moved a Stranger
To take thee to her home—and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuthbert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and raiment,
And, as thou knowest, gave me that humble Cot
Where now we dwell.—For many years I bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infirmities
Exacted thy return, and our reunion.
I did not think that, during that long absence,
My Child, forgetful of the name of Herbert,
Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,
Doth prey alike on two distracted Countries,
Traitor to both.

Idon. Oh, could you hear his voice!
I will not call on Heaven to reach for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant.

Psa. Good morrow, Strangers! If you want a
Guide,
Let me have leave to serve you!

Idon. My Companion
Hath need of rest; the sight of Hut or Hostel
Would be most welcome.
THE BORDERERS.

PEAN. You white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there
Will see an ask from which a sign-board hangs;
The house is hidden by the shade. Old Man,
You seem worn out with travel—shall I support you?
HER. I thank you; but, a resting-place so near,
'Twere wrong to trouble you.

PEAN. God speed you both.

[Exit Peasant.
HER. Idenes, we must part. Be not alarmed—
'Tis but for a few days—a thought has struck me.
IDON. That I should leave you at this house, and
thence Proceed alone. It shall be so; for strength
Would fail you ere our journey’s end be reached.

[Exit Idenes supported by Idon.

Re-enter MARMADUKE and OSWALD.

MAR. This instant will we stop him—

OSW. Be not hasty, For, sometimes, in despite of my conviction,
He tempted me to think the Story true;
'Tis plain he loves the Maid, and what he said
That savoured of aversion to thy name
Appeared the genuine colour of his soul—
Anxiety lest mischief should befal her
After his death.

MAR. I have been much deceived.

OSW. But sure he loves the Maiden, and never love
Could find delight to nurse itself so strangely,
Thus to torment her with inventions—death—
There must be truth in this.

MAR. Truth in his story!
He must have felt it then, known what it was,
And in such wise to rack her gentle heart
Had been a tenfold cruelty.

OSW. Strange pleasures
Do we poor mortals enter for ourselves!
To see him thus provoke her tenderness
With tales of weakness and infirmity!
I’d wager on his life for twenty years.

MAR. We will not waste an hour in such a cause.

OSW. Why, this is noble! shake her off at once.

MAR. Her virtues are his instruments.—A Man
Who has so practised on the world’s cold scence,
May well deceive his Child—what! leave her thus,
A prey to a deceiver!—no—no—no—

'Tis but a word and then—

OSW. Something is here
More than we see, or whence this strong aversion!
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
Have reached his ear—you have had enemies.

MAR. Enemies!—of his own coinage.

OSW. That may be,
But wherefore slight protection such as you
Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere—
I am perplexed.

MAR. What hast thou heard or seen?

OSW. No—no—the thing stands clear of mystery;
(As you have said) he coins himself the slander
With which he taints her ear— for a plain reason;
He dreads the presence of a virtuous man
Like you; he knows your eye would search his
Your justice stamp upon his evil deeds
The punishment they merit. All is plain:
It cannot be—

MAR. What cannot be!

OSW. Yet that a Father
Should in his love admit no rivalship,
And torture thus the heart of his own Child—

MAR. Nay, you abuse my friendship!

OSW. Heaven forbid!—
There was a circumstance, trifling indeed—
It struck me at the time—but I believe
I never should have thought of it again
But for the scene which we by chance have wit-nessed.

MAR. What is your meaning?

OSW. Two days gone I saw,
Though at a distance and he was disguised,
Hovering round Herbert’s door, a man whose figure
Resembled much that cold voluptuary,
The villain, Clifford. He hates you, and he knows
Where he can stab you deepest.

MAR. Clifford never
Would stoop to skulk about a Cottage door—
It could not be.

OSW. And yet I now remember,
That, when your praise was warm upon my tongue,
And the blind Man was told how you had rescued
A maiden from the ruffian violence
Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
And would not hear me.

MAR. No—it cannot be—
I dare not trust myself with such a thought—
Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man
Not used to rash conjectures—

OSW. If you deem it
A thing worth further notices, we must act
With caution, sift the matter artfully.

[Exeunt Marmaduke and Oswald.

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SCENE, the door of the Hostel.

HERBERT, IDONES, and Host.

HER. (seated). As I am dear to you, remember,

Child!

This last request.
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Idon. You know me, Sire; farewell!

Her. And are you going then? Come, come, Idonea,

We must not part.—I have measured many a league
When these old limbs had need of rest,—and now
I will not play the sluggard.

Idon. Nay, sit down.

[Turning to Host.

Good Host, such tendance as you would expect
From your own Children, if yourself were sick,
Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader,

[Looking at the day.

We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect
This charge of thine, then ill befal thee!—Look,
The little fool is lost to stay behind.
Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
Take care of him, and feed the truant well.

Host. Fear not, I will obey you;—but One so young,

And One so fair, it goes against my heart
That you should travel unattended, Lady!—
I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad
Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
And for less fee than I would let him run
For any lady I have seen this twelvemonth.

Idon. You know, Sir, I have been too long your guard
Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
A look of mine would send him scurrying back,
Unless I differ from the thing I am
When you are by my side.

Her. Idonea, wolves
Are not the enemies that move my fears.

Idon. No more, I pray, of this. Three days at farthest
Will bring me back—protect him, Saints,—farewell!

[Exit Idonea.

Host. Tis never drought with us.—St. Cuthbert
And his Pilgrims,
Thanks to them, are to us a stream of comfort:
Fray the Maiden did not wait a while;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.

Her. Now she is gone, I fear would call her back.

Host (calling). Holla!

Her. No, no, the business must be done.—
What means this riotous noise?

Host. The villagers
Are flocking in—a wedding festival—
That's all—God save you, Sir.

[Enter Oswald.

Osw. Ha! as I live,

The Baron Herbert.

Host. Mercy, the Baron Herbert!

Osw. So far into your journey! on my life,
You are a lusty Traveller. But how fare you?

Her. Well as the wreck I am permits. And
you, Sir?

Osw. I do not see Idonea.

Her. Dutiful Girl,
She is gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?

Osw. A slight affair,
That will be soon despatched.

Her. Did Marmaduke
Receive that letter?

Osw. Be at peace.—The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of him.

Her. This is true comfort, thanks a thousand times!

That noise!—would I had gone with her as far
As the Lord Clifford's Castle: I have heard
That, in his milder moods, he has expressed
Compassion for me. His influence is great
With Henry, our good King;—the Baron might
Have heard my suit, and urged my plea at Court.
No matter—he's a dangerous Man.—That noise!—
'Tis too disorderly for sleep or rest.
Idonea would have fears for me,—the Convent
Will give me quiet lodging. You have a boy, good
Host,
And he must lead me back.

Osw. You are most lucky;
I have been waiting in the wood hard by
For a companion—here he comes; our journey

[Enter Marmaduke.

Lies on your way; accept us as your Guides.

Her. Alas! I creep so slowly.

Osw. Never fear;
We'll not complain of that.

Her. My limbs are stiff
And need reposè. Could you but wait an hour?

Osw. Most willingly!—Come, let me lead you in,
And, while you take your rest, think not of us;
We'll stroll into the wood; lean on my arm.

[Conducts Henners into the house. Exit Marmaduke.

[Enter Villagers.

Osw. (to himself coming out of the Hotel). I have
prepared a most apt Instrument—
The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering somewhere
About this ground; she hath a tongue well skilled,
By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught her,
To win belief, such as my plot requires.

[Exit Oswald.
Enter more Villagers, a Musician among them.

Host (to them). Into the court, my Friend, and perch yourself
Afoot upon the elm-tree. Pretty Maids, Garlands and flowers, and cakes and merry thoughts, Are here, to send the sun into the west More speedily than you belike would wish.

Scene changes to the Wood adjoining the Hostel—Manseadure and Oswald entering.

Mar. I would fear hope that we deceive ourselves: When first I saw him sitting there, alone, It struck upon my heart I know not how.

Ows. To-day will clear up all. — You marked a Cottage,
That rugged Dwelling, close beneath a rock By the brook-side; it is the abode of One, A Maiden innocent till ensnared by Clifford, Who soon grew weary of her; but, alas! What she had seen and suffered turned her brain.
Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone, Nor moves her hands to any needful work:
She eats her food which every day the peasants Bring to her tent; and so the Wretch has lived Ten years; and no one ever heard her voice;
But every night at the first stroke of twelve She quits her house, and, in the neighbouring Churchyard
Upon the self-same spot, in rain or storm, She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and one— She paces round and round an Infant's grave, And in the churchyard sod her feet have worn A hollow ring; they say it is knee-deep—
Ah! what is here!

[A female Beggar rises up, rubbing her eyes as if in sleep—a Child in her arms.]

Beg. Oh! Gentlemen, I thank you; I've had the saddest dream that ever troubled The heart of living creature. — My poor Babe Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread When I had none to give him; whereupon, I put a slip of foxglove in his hand, Which pleased him so, that he was hushed at once:
When, into one of those same spotted bells A bee came darting, which the Child with joy Imprisoned there, and held it to his ear, And suddenly grew black, as he would die.

Mar. We have no time for this, my babbling Gossip;
Here's what will comfort you. [Gives her money.]

Beg. The Saints reward you For this good deed! — Well, Sirs, this passed away;

And afterwards I fancied, a strange dog, Trotting alone along the beaten road, Came to my child as by my side he slept And, fondling, licked his face, then on a sudden Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his head: But here he is, [kissing the Child] it must have been a dream.

Ows. When next inclined to sleep, take my advice, And put your head, good Woman, under cover.

Beg. Oh, sire, you would not talk thus, if you knew What life is this of ours, how sleep will master The weary-worn. — You gentlefolk have got Warm chambers to your wish. I'd rather be A stone than what I am. — But two nights gone, The darkness overtook me—wind and rain Beat hard upon my head—and yet I saw A glow-worm, through the covert of the furze, Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky: At which I half accused the God in Heaven. — You must forgive me.

Ows. Ay, and if you think The Fairies are to blame, and you should chide Your favourite saint—no matter—this good day Has made amends.

Beg. Thanks to you both; but, O sir! How would you like to travel on whole hours As I have done, my eyes upon the ground, Expecting still, I knew not how, to find A piece of money glittering through the dust.

Mar. This woman is a prater. Pray, good Lady! Do you tell fortunes?

Beg. Oh, sir, you are like the rest. This Little-one—it cuts me to the heart— Well! they might turn a beggar from their doors, But are there Mothers who can see the Babe Here at my breast, and ask me where I bought it: This they can do, and look upon my face— But you, Sir, should be kinder.

Mar. Come hither, Fathers, And learn what nature is from this poor Wretch!

Beg. Ay, sir, there's nobody that feels for us. Why now—but yesterday I overtook A blind old Greybeard and accosted him, 'Tis name of all the Saints, and by the Mass He should have used me better! — Charity! If you can melt a rock, he is your man; But I'll be even with him—here again Have I been waiting for him.

Ows. Well, but softly, Who is it that hath wronged you?

Beg. Mark you me; I'll point him out,—a Maiden is his guide, Lovely as Spring's first rose; a little dog, Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before
With look as sad as he were dumb; the ear,  
I owe him no ill will, but in good sooth  
He does his Master credit.  

Mar. As I live,  
'Tis Herbert and no other!  

Beg. 'Tis a feast to see him,  
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders bent,  
And long beard white with age—yet evermore,  
As if he were the only Saint on earth,  
He turns his face to heaven.  

One. But why so violent  
Against this venerable Man!  

Beg. I'll tell you:  
He has the very hardest heart on earth;  
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school  
And knock for entrance, in mid holiday.  

Mar. But to your story.  

Beg. I was saying, Sir—  
Well!—he has often spurned me like a toad,  
But yesterday was worse than all;—at last  
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,  
And begged a little aid for charity:  
But he was snappish as a cottage cur.  
Well then, says I—I'll out with it; at which  
I cast a look upon the Girl, and made  
As if my heart would burst; and so I left him.  

One. I think, good Woman, you are the very person  
Whom, but some few days past, I saw in Eskdale,  
At Herbert's doorn.  

Beg. Ay; and if truth were known  
I have good business there.  

One. I met you at the threshold,  
And he seemed angry.  

Beg. Angry! well he might;  
And long as I can stir I'll dog him.—Yesterday,  
To serve me so, and knowing that he owes  
The best of all he has to me and mine.  
But 'tis all over now.—That good old Lady  
Has left a power of riches; and I say it,  
If there's a lawyer in the land, the knave  
Shall give me half.  

One. What's this!—I fear, good Woman,  
You have been insolent.  

Beg. And there's the Baron,  
I spied him skulking in his pauper's dress.  

One. How say you! in disguise!—  

Mar. But what's your business  
With Herbert or his Daughter?  

Beg. Daughter! truly—  
But how's the day!—I fear, my little Boy,  
We've overslept ourselves.—Sirs, have you seen  

Mar. I must have more of this;—you shall not  

An inch, till I am answered. Know you aught  
That doth concern this Herbert?  

Beg. You are provoked,  
And will misuse me, Sir!  

Mar. No trifling, Woman!—  
One. You are as safe as in a sanctuary;  

Speak.  

Mar. Speak!  

Beg. He is a most hard-hearted Man.  

Mar. Your life is at my mercy.  

Beg. Do not harm me,  
And I will tell you all!—You know not, Sir,  
What strong temptations press upon the Poor.  

One. Speak out.  

Beg. Oh Sir, I've been a wicked Woman.  

One. Nay, but speak out!  

Beg. He flattered me, and said  
What harvest it would bring us both; and so,  
I parted with the Child.  

Mar. With whom you parted!  

Beg. Idonea, as he calls her; but the Girl  
Is mine.  

Mar. Yours, Woman! are you Herbert's wife!  

Beg. Wife, Sir! his wife—not I; my Husband,  
Sir,  
Was of Kirkoswald—many a snowy winter  
We've weathered out together. My poor Gilfred!  
He has been two years in his grave.  

Mar. Enough.  

One. We've solved the riddle—Miscreant!  

Mar. Do you,  

Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and wait  
For my return; be sure you shall have justice.  

One. A lucky woman!—go, you have done good service.  

[Aside.  

Mar. (to himself.) Eternal praises on the power  
That saved her!—  

One. (gives her money). Here's for your little  
boy—and when you christen him  
I'll be his Godfather.  

Beg. Oh Sir, you are merry with me.  

In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely owns  
A dog that does not know me. These good Folks,  
For love of God, I must not pass their doors;  
But I'll be back with my best speed: for you—  

God bless and thank you both, my gentle Masters.  

[Exit Beggar.  

Mar. (to himself). The cruel Viper!—Poor devoted Maid,  
Now I do love thee:  

One. I am thunderstruck.  

Mar. Where is she—holla!  

[Calling to the Beggar, who returns; he looks at her  

staidly.}
You are Idonea's Mother!—
Nay, be not terrified—it does me good
To look upon you.

_Osw._ (interrupting). In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it?

_Bog._
Nay, I dare not speak;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.

_Osw._ Lord Clifford!

_Bog._ What can I do! believe me, gentle Sirs,
I love her, though I dare not call her daughter.

_Osw._ Lord Clifford—did you see him talk with
Herbert?

_Bog._ Yes, to my sorrow,—under the great oak
At Herbert's door—and when he stood beside
The blind Man—at the silent Girl he looked
With such a look—it makes me tremble, Sir,
To think of it.

_Osw._ Enough! you may depart.

_Mar._ (to himself). Father!—to God himself we
cannot give
A holier name; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,
To that abhorred den of brutish vice!—
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life
Is going from under me; these strange discoveries—
Looked at from every point of fear or hope,
Duty, or love—involves, I feel, my ruin.

ACT II.

_SCENE._ A Chamber in the Hostel—Oswald alone,
rising from a Table on which he had been
writing.

_Osw._ They chose him for their Chief!—what
covered part
He, in the preference, modest Youth, might take,
I neither know nor care. The insult bred
More of contempt than hatred; both are flown;
That either e'er existed is my shame:
'Twas a dull spark—a most unnatural fire
That died the moment the air breathed upon it.
—These fools of feeling are mere birds of winter
That haunt some barren island of the north,
Where, if a famishing man stretch forth his hand,
They think it is to feed them. I have left him
To solitary meditation;—now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash
Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever—here he comes.

Enter Marmaduke.

_Mar._ These ten years she has moved her lips
all day
And never speaks!

_Osw._ Who is it?

_Mar._ I have seen her.

_Osw._ Oh! the poor tenant of that ragged homestead,
Her whom the Monster, Clifford, drove to madness.

_Mar._ I met a peasant near the spot; he told me,
These ten years she had sat all day alone
Within those empty walls.

_Osw._ I too have seen her;
Chancing to pass this way some six months gone,
At midnight, I betook me to the Churchyard:
The moon shone clear, the air was still, so still
The trees were silent as the graves beneath them.
Long did I watch, and saw her pacing round
Upon the self-same spot, still round and round,
Her lips for ever moving.

_Mar._ At her door
Rooted I stood; for, looking at the woman,
I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.

_Osw._ But the pretended Father——

_Mar._ Earthly law
Measures not crimes like his.

_Osw._ We rank not, happily,
With those who take the spirit of their rule
From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they spare
The verminous brood, and cherish what they spare
While feeding on their bodies. Would that Idonea
Were present, to the end that we might hear
What she can urge in his defence; she loves him.

_Mar._ Yes, loves him; 'tis a truth that multiplies
His guilt a thousand-fold.

_Osw._ 'Tis most perplexing:

What must be done?

_Mar._ We will conduct her hither;
These walls shall witness it—from first to last
He shall reveal himself.

_Osw._ Happy are we,
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for himself;
Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.

_Mar._ Let us begone and bring her hither;—here
The truth shall be laid open, his guilt proved
Before her face. The rest be left to me.

_Osw._ You will be firm: but though we well may
trust
The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside; remember,
Yours is no common life. Self-stationed here,
Upon these savage confines, we have seen you
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy seas
That oft have checked their fury at your bidding.
'Mid the deep holds of Solway's savory waste,
Your single virtue has transformed a Band
Of fierce barbarians into Ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears
Have blessed their steps, the fatherless retire
For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is
In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.
Benevolence, that has not hearted to use
The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.
Your generous qualities have won due praise,
But vigorous spirits look for something more
Than Youth's spontaneous products; and to-day
You will not disappoint them; and hereafter—

Mar. You are wasting words; hear me then,
One for all:
You are a Man—and therefore, if compassion,
Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this Woman,
Even as I do; but I should loathe the sight,
If I could think one weak or partial feeling—

Osw. You will forgive me—

Mar. If I ever knew
My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'Tis at this moment. Oswald, I have loved
To be the friend and father of the oppressed,
A comforter of sorrow; there is something
Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not.—Let us lead him hither.

Osw. Stoop for a moment; 'tis an act of justice;
And where's the triumph if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office?
The deed is done—if you will have it so—
Here where we stand—that tribe of vulgar wretches
(You saw them gathering for the festival)
Rush in—the villains seize us—

Mar. Seize!

Osw. Yes, they—

Men who are little given to silt and weigh—
Would wreak on us the passion of the moment.

Mar. The cloud will soon disperse—farewell—but stay,
Thou wilt relate the story.

Osw. Am I neither
To bear a part in this Man's punishment,
Nor be its witness?

Mar. I had many hopes
That were most dear to me, and some will bear
To be transferr'd to thee.

Osw. When I'm dishonored!

Mar. I would preserve thee. How may this be
One. By showing that you look beyond the instant.
A few leagues hence we shall have open ground,
And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter
The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling rock
The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies—with the gloom,
And very superstition of the place,
Seasoning his wickedness. The Debanches
Would there perhaps have gathered the first fruits
Of this mock Father's guilt.

Enter Host conducting Herbert.

Host. The Baron Herbert
Attends your pleasure.

Osw. (to Host). We are ready—

(to Herbert) Sir! I hope you are refreshed.—I have just written
A notice for your Daughter, that she may know
What is become of you.—You'll sit down and
Sign it?

'Twill glad her heart to see her father's signature.

Her. Thanks for your care.

Sits down and writes. Exit Host.

Osw. (aside to Marmaduke). Perhaps it would
Be useful
That you too should subscribe your name.

Marmaduke over looks Herbert—then writes—examines
the letter eagerly.

Mar. I cannot leave this paper.

Osw. (aside). Dastard! I come—

Marmaduke goes towards Herbert and supports him—
Marmaduke tremblingly beckons Oswald to take his place.

Mar. (as he quits Herbert). There is a palsy
in his limbs—he shakes.

Enough Oswald and Herbert—Marmaduke following.

Scene changes to a Wood—a Group of Pilgrims
and Idona with them.

First Pil. A grove of darker and more lofty
shade
I never saw.

Sec. Pil. The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.

Old Pil. This news! It made my heart leap up
with joy.

Idon. Scarcely can believe it.

Old Pil. Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open Court, a letter
THE BORDERERS.

Which purported it was the royal pleasure
The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighbourhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hearing, Lady
Filled my dim eyes with tears.—When I returned
From Palestine, and brought with me a heart,
Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly, comfort,
I met your Father, then a wandering Outcast:
He had a Guide, a Shepherd’s boy; but grieved
He was that One so young should pass his youth
In such sad service; and he parted with him.
We joined our tales of wretchedness together,
And begged our daily bread from door to door.
I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady!

For once you loved me.

Idem. You shall back with me
And see your Friend again. The good old Man
Will be rejoiced to greet you.

Old Pil. It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o’ertook us, worn with travel,
In a deep wood remote from any town.
A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in.

Idem. And I was with you!

Old Pil. If indeed ’twas you—
But you were then a tottering Little-one—
We sate us down. The sky grew dark and darker:
I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as the winds
Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the woods;
Our little fire sent forth a cheering warmth
And we were comforted, and talked of comfort;
But ’twas an angry night, and o’er our heads
The thunder rolled in peals that would have made
A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.

O Lady, you have need to love your Father.
His voice—methinks I hear it now, his voice
When, after a broad flash that filled the cave,
He said to me, that he had seen his Child,
A face (no cherub’s face more beautiful)
Revealed by lustre brought with it from Heaven;
And it was you, dear Lady!

Idem. God be praised,
That I have been his comforter till now!
And will be so through every change of fortune
And every sacrifice his peace requires.—
Let us be gone with speed, that he may hear
These joyful tidings from no lips but mine.

[Exeunt Idem and Pilgrims.

SCENE, the Area of a half-ruined Castle—on one side the entrance to a dungeon—Oswald and Marlmadeke pacing backwards and forwards.

Mar. ’Tis a wild night.
Osw. I’d give my cloak and bonnet
For sight of a warm fire.
Mar. The wind blows keen;
My hands are numb.
Osw. Ha! ha! ’tis nipping cold.
[Blowing his fingers.

I long for news of our brave Comrades; Lacy
Would drive those Scottish Rovers to their dens
If once they blow a horn this side the Tweed.
Mar. I think I see a second range of Towers;
This castle has another Area—come,
Let us examine it.

Osw. ’Tis a bitter night;
I hope Idemus is well housed. That horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the wood
Rooned in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious Charge:
That would have been a vile mischance.

Mar. It would.
Osw. Justice had been most cruelly defrauded.
Mar. Most cruelly.
Osw. As up the steep we clomb,
I saw a distant fire in the north-east;
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon;
With proper speed our quarters may be gained
To-morrow evening.

[Lochs restlessly towards the mouth of the dungeon.

Mar. When, upon the plank,
I hadleth him cross the torrent, his voice blessed me:
You could not hear, for the foam beat the rocks
With deafening noise,—the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.
Osw. As well indeed it might.
Mar. And this ye deem
The fittest place?
Osw. (Aside). He is growing pitiful.
Mar. (listening). What an odd moaning that is!—
Osw. Mighty old
The wind should pipe a little, while we stand
Cooling our heels in this way!—I’ll begin
And count the stars.
Mar. (still listening). That dog of his, you are sure,
Could not come after us—he must have perished;
The torrent would have dashed an oak to splinters.
You said you did not like his looks—that he
Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me more
Than twenty armies.
Osw. How!  
Mar. The old blind Man,  
When you had told him the mischance, was troubled  
Even to the shedding of some natural tears  
Into the torrent over which he hung,  
Listening in vain.  
Osw. He has a tender heart!  
[Oswald offers to go down into the dungeon.  
Mar. How now, what mean you?  
Osw. Truly, I was going  
To waken our stray Baron. Were there not  
A farm or dwelling-house within five leagues,  
We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,  
Three good round years, for playing the fool here  
In such a night as this.  
Mar. Stop, stop.  
Osw. Perhaps,  
You'd better like we should descend together,  
And lie down by his side—what say you to it?  
Three of us—we should keep each other warm:  
I'll answer for it that our four-legged friend  
Shall not disturb us; further I'll not engage;  
Come, come, for manhood's sake!  
Mar. These drowsy shiverings,  
This mortal stupor which is creeping over me,  
What do they mean! were this my single body  
Opposed to armies, not a nerve would tremble:  
Why do I tremble now!—Is not the depth  
Of this Man's crimes beyond the reach of thought?  
And yet, in plumbing the abyss for judgment,  
Something I strike upon which turns my mind  
Back on herself, I think, again—my breast  
Concentres all the terrors of the Universe:  
I look at him and tremble like a child.  
Osw. Is it possible!  
Mar. One thing you noticed not:  
Just as we left the gale a clap of thunder  
Burst on the mountains with hell-reaving force.  
This is a time, said he, when guilt may shudder;  
But there's a Providence for them who walk  
In helplessness, when innocence is with them.  
At this audacious blasphemy, I thought  
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride the air.  
Osw. Why are you not the man you were that moment!  
[He draws Marmaduke to the dungeon.  
Mar. You say he was asleep.—look at this arm,  
And tell me if 'tis fit for such a work.  
Oswald, Oswald!  
[Leans upon Oswald.  
Osw. This is some sudden seizure!  
Mar. A most strange faintness—will you hunt me out  
A draught of water!  
Osw. Nay, to see you thus  
Moves me beyond my bearing.—I will try  
To gain the torrent's brink.  
[Exit Oswald.  
Mar. (after a pause). It seems an age  
Since that Man left me.—No, I am not lost.  
Her. (at the mouth of the dungeon). Give me your hand; where are you, Friends! and tell me  
How goes the night.  
Mar. 'Tis hard to measure time,  
In such a weary night, and such a place.  
Her. I do not hear the voice of my friend Oswald.  
Mar. A minute past, he went to fetch a draught  
Of water from the torrent. 'Tis, you'll say,  
A cheerless beverage.  
Her. How good it was in you  
To stay behind!—Hearing at first no answer,  
I was alarmed.  
Mar. No wonder; this is a place  
That well may put some fears into your heart.  
Her. Why so! a roofless rock had been a comfort,  
Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were;  
And in a night like this, to lend your cloaks  
To make a bed for me!—My Girl will weep  
When she is told of it.  
Mar. This Daughter of yours  
Is very dear to you.  
Her. Oh! but you are young;  
Over your head twice twenty years must roll,  
With all their natural weight of sorrow and pain,  
Ere be known to you how much a Father  
May love his Child.  
Mar. Thank you, old Man, for this! [Aside.  
Her. Fallen am I, and worn out; a useless Man;  
Kindly have you protected me to-night,  
And no return have I to make but prayers;  
May you in age be blest with such a daughter!—  
When from the Holy Land I had returned  
Sightless, and from my heritage was driven,  
A wretched Outcast—but this strain of thought  
Would lead me to talk fondly.  
Mar. Do not fear;  
Your words are precious to my ears; go on.  
Her. You will forgive me, but my heart runs over  
When my old Leader slipped into the flood  
And perished, what a piercing outcry you  
Sent after him. I have loved you ever since.  
You start—where are we!  
Mar. Oh, there is no danger;  
The cold blast struck me.  
Her. 'Twas a foolish question.  
Mar. But when you were an Outcast!—Heaven  
is just;  
Your piety would not miss its due reward;
THE BORDERERS.

The little Orphan then would be your succour, 
And do good service, though she knew it not, 
Her. I turned me from the dwellings of my 
Fathers, 
Where none but those who trampled on my rights 
Seemed to remember me. To the wide world 
I bore her, in my arms; her looks won pity; 
She was my Raven in the wilderness, 
And brought me food. Have I not cause to love 
her? 
Mar. Yes. 
Her. More than ever Parent loved a Child? 
Mar. Yes, yes. 
Her. I will not murmur, merciful God! 
I will not murmur; blasted as I have been, 
Thou hast left me ears to hear my Daughter's voice, 
And arms to fold her to my heart. Submissively 
Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.

Enter Oswald.

Osw. Herbert!—confusion! (aside). Here it 
is, my Friend, 
[Receives the Horn. 
A charming beverage for you to carouse, 
This bitter night. 
Her. Ha! Oswald! ten bright crosses 
I would have given, not many minutes gone, 
To have heard your voice. 
Osw. Your cough, I fear, good Baron, 
Has been but comfortless; and yet that place, 
When the tempestuous wind first drove us hither, 
Felt warm as a wren's nest. You'd better turn 
And under covert rest till break of day, 
Or till the storm abate. 
(To Marmaduke aside). He has restored you. 
No doubt you have been nobly entertained! 
But soft!—how came he forth! The Night-mare 
Conscience 
Has driven him out of harbour! 
Mar. I believe 
You have guessed right. 
Her. The trees renew their murmur: 
Come, let us house together. 
[Oswald conducts him to the dungeon.

Osw. (return). Had I not 
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the affair 
To its most fit conclusion, dost thou think 
I would so long have struggled with my Nature, 
And smothered all that's man in me!—away! 
[Leaving towards the dungeon.

This man's the property of him who best 
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a privilege; 
It now becomes my duty to resume it. 
Mar. Touch not a finger—

One. What then must be done? 
Mar. Which way see'er I turn, I am perplexed. 
One. Now, on my life, I grieve for you. The 
misery 
Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts 
Did not admit of stronger evidence; 
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set us right; 
Their verdict would abolish these weak scruples. 
Mar. Weak! I am weak—there does my torment lie, 
Feeding itself. 
One. Verily, when he said 
How his old heart would leap to hear her steps, 
You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's. 
Mar. And never heard a sound so terrible. 
One. Perchance you think so now! 
Mar. I cannot do it: 
Twice did I spring to grasp his withered throat, 
When such a sudden weakness fell upon me, 
I could have dropped asleep upon his breast. 
One. Justice—is there not thunder in the word! 
Shall it be law to stab the petty robber 
Who aims but at our purse; and shall this Par- 
ricide— 
Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dishonour 
Be worse than death) to that confiding Creature 
Whom he to more than filial love and duty 
Hath falsely trained—shall he fulfil his purpose! 
But you are fallen. 
Mar. Fallen should I be indeed— 
Murder—perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone, 
Betrayed, in darkness! Here to strike the blow— 
Away! away!—[Flings away his sword. 
One. Nay, I have done with you: 
We'll lead him to the Convent. He shall live, 
And she shall love him. With unquestioned title 
He shall be seated in his Barony, 
And we too chant the praise of his good deeds. 
I now perceive we do mistake our masters, 
And most despise the men who best can teach us: 
Henceforth it shall be said that had men only 
Are brave: Clifford is brave; and that old Man 
Is brave. 
[Taking Marmaduke's sword and giving it to him. 
To Clifford's arms he would have led 
His Victim—happly to this desolate house. 
Mar. (advancing to the dungeon). It must be 
ended!— 
One. Safely; do not rouse him; 
He will deny it to the last. He lies 
Within the Vault, a spear's length to the left. 
[Marmaduke descends to the dungeon. 
(Alone.) The Villains rose in mutiny to destroy me; 
I could have quelled the Cowards, but this Stripling
Must needs step in, and save my life. The look
With which he gave the boon—I see it now!
The same that tempted me to loathe the gift—
For this old venerable Grey-heard—faith
'Tis his own fault if he hath got a face
Which doth play tricks with them that look on it:
'Twas this that put it in my thoughts—that countenance—
His staff—his figure—Murder!—what, of whom?
We kill a worn-out horse, and who but women
Sigh at the deed! How down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He may live
To thank me for this service. Rainbow arches,
Highways of dreaming passion, have too long,
Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals tread;
Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows! I have learned
That things will work to end the slaves of the world
Do never dream of. I have been what he—
This Boy—when he comes forth with bloody hands—
Might envy, and am now—but he shall know
What I am now—(Oses and listens at the dungeon).
Praying or parleying!—tut!
Is he not eviscerate? He has been half-dead
These fifteen years—

Enter female Beggar with two or three of her Companions.
(Turning abruptly.) Ha! speak—what Thing
art thou?

(Beg.) Recognise her. Heavens! my good Friend!

(To her.) Forgive me, gracious Sir!—

Ose. (To her companions.) Begone, ye Slaves, or
I will raise a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like leaves.

[They retire affrighted.]

(Beg.) Indeed we meant no harm; we lodge
sometimes
In this deserted Castle—I repent me.

[Ose. to the dungeon—listens—returns to
the Beggar.]

Ose. Woman, thou hast a helpless Infant—keep
Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the forfeit.

(Beg. I do repent me, Sir; I fear the curse
Of that blind Man. 'Twas not your money, Sir—

Ose. Begone!

(Beg. (going). There is some wicked deed in
hand:

[Aside.]

Would I could find the old Man and his Daughter.

[Exit Beggar.

MARMADUKE re-enters from the dungeon.

Ose. It is all over then;—your foolish fears

Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and deed,
Made quiet as he is.

Mar. Why came you down?

And when I felt your hand upon my arm

And spake to you, why did you give no answer?

F feared you to waken him! he must have been

In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice.

There are the strangest echoes in that place!

Ose. Tut! let them gable till the day of doom.

Mar. Scarcely, by grooping, had I reached the

Spot,

When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn tight,

As if the blind Man's dog were pulling at it.

Ose. But after that?

Mar. The features of Idonea

Lurked in his face—

Ose. Psha! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again

With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me

To share your triumph?

Mar. Yes, her very look,

Smiling in sleep—

Ose. A pretty feat of Fancy!

Mar. Though but a glimpse, it sent me to my

prayers.

Ose. Is he alive?

Mar. What mean you? who alive?

Ose. Herbert! since you will have it, Baron

Herbert;

He who will gain his Seignory when Idonea

Hath become Clifford's harlot—is he living?

Mar. The old Man in that dungeon is alive.

Ose. Henceforth, then, will I never in camp or

field

Obey you more. Your weakness, to the Band,
Shall be proclaimed: brave Men, they all shall

hear it.

You a protector of humanity!

Avenger you of outraged innocence!

Mar. 'Twas dark—dark as the grave; yet did I

see,

Saw him—his face turned toward me; and I tell

Idonea's filial countenance was there

To baffle me—it put me to my prayers.

Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crevice,

Beheld a star twinkling above my head,

And, by the living God, I could not do it.

[Sinks exhausted.

Ose. (To himself.) Now may I perish if this turn
do more

Than make me change my course.

(To MARMADUKE.) Dear Marmaduke,

My words were rashly spoken; I recall them:

...
I feel my error; sheding human blood
Is a most serious thing.

Mor. Not I alone,
Thou too art deep in guilt.

Osw. We have indeed:
 Been most presumptuous. There is guilt in this,
Else could so strong a mind have ever known
These trepidations! Plain it is that Heaven
Has marked out this soul Wretch as one whose
Crimes Must never come before a mortal judgment-seat,
Or be chastised by mortal instruments.

Mor. A thought that’s worth a thousand
Worlds!

Osw. I grieve
That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.

Mor. Think not of that! ’tis over—we are safe.

Osw. (as if to himself, yet speaking aloud.)
The truth is hideous, but how stifle it!

(Turning to MARMADUKE.)

Give me your sword—nay, here are stones and
Fragments,
The heart of which would beat out a man’s brains;
Or you might drive your head against that wall.
No! this is not the place to hear the tale:
It should be told you pinioned in your bed,
On some vast and solitary plain
Blown to you from a trumpet.

Mor. Why talk thus!
Whatever the monster brooding in your breast
I care not; fear I have none, and cannot fear—

(The sound of a horn is heard.)

That horn again—’Tis some one of our Troop;
What do they here? Listen!

Osw. What! dogged like thieves!

Enter WALLACE and LACY, &c.

LACY. You are found at last, thanks to the
Vagrant Troop
For not misleading us.

Osw. (looking at WALLACE). That subtle Grey
beard—
I’d rather see my father’s ghost.

LACE (to MARMADUKE). My Captain,
We come by order of the Band. Belye
You have not heard that Henry has at last
Dissolved the Baron’s League, and sent abroad
His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate
The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies
As, in these long commotions, have been seized.
His Power is this way tending. It befits us
To stand upon our guard, and with our swords
Defend the innocent.

Mor. Lacy! we look
But at the surfaces of things; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
That flatters us, because it asks not thought:
The deeper malady is better hid;
The world is poisoned at the heart.

LACY. What mean you?
WAL. (whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon
OSWALD). Ay, what is it you mean?

Mor. Harkee, my Friends—

(Appearing gay.

Were there a Man who, being weak and helpless
And most forlorn, should bribe a Mother, pressed
By penury, to yield him up her Daughter,
A little Infant, and instruct the Babe,
Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father—

LACY. Why, if his heart be tender, that offence
I could forgive him.

Mor. (going on). And should he make the Child
An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her
To stretch her arms, and dim the gladness light
Of infant playfulness with piteous looks
Of misery that was not—

LACY. Troth, ’tis hard—
But in a world like ours—

Mor. (changing his tone). This self-same Man—
Even while he printed kisses on the cheek
Of this poor Babe, and taught its innocent tongue
To lie the name of Father—could he look
To the unnatural harvest of that time
When he should give her up, a Woman grown,
To him who bid the highest in the market
Of foul pollution—

LACY. The whole visible world
Contains not such a Monster?

Mor. For this purpose
Should he resolve to taint her Soul by means
Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;
Should he, by tales which would draw tears from iron,
Work on her nature, and so turn compassion
And gratitude to ministers of vice,
And make the spotless spirit of filial love
Prime mover in a plot to damn his Victim;
Both soul and body—

WAL. ’Tis too horrible;
Oswald, what say you to it?

LACY. Hew him down,
And fling him to the ravens.

Mor. But his aspect
It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.

WAL. (with an appearance of mistrust). But how,
What say you, Oswald?

LACY. (at the same moment). Stab him, were it
Before the Altar.
Mar. What, if he were sick,
Trottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind—

Lucy. Blind, say you!

One. (coming forward). Are we Men,
Or only we baby Spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment.
Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats down
The giant's strength; and, at the voice of Justice,
Sparcs not the worm. The giant and the worm—
She weighs them in one scale. The wiles of woman,
And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender cries
And helpless innocence—do they protect
The infant lamb! and shall the infirmities,
Which have enabled this enormous Culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a Sanctuary
To cover him from punishment! Shame!—Justice,
Admitting no resistances, bends alike
The feeble and the strong. She needs not here
Her bonds and chains, which make the mighty feeble.
—We recognise in this old Man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.

Lucy. By heaven, his words are reason!

One. Yes, my Friends,
His countenance is meek and venerable;
And, by the Mass, to see him at his prayers!
I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think of it!—
Poor Victim! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare thee;
But yet I trust, Idones, thou art safe.

Lucy. Idones!

Wal. How! what! your Idones?

[To MARSHALL.

Mar. Mine;

But now no longer mine. You know Lord Clifford;
He is the Man to whom the Maiden—pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign,
And in her ample heart loving even me—
Was to be yielded up.

Lucy. Now, by the head
Of my own child, this Man must die; my hand,
A whiter hair's wanting, shall itself entwine
In his grey hairs!—

Mar. (to Lucy). I love the Father in thee.
You know me, Friends; I have a heart to feel,
And I have felt, more than perhaps becomes me
Or duty sanctions.

Lucy. We will have ample justice.
Who are we, Friends! Do we not live on ground
Where Souls are self-defended, free to grow
Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy wind.
Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which decreed
This monstrous crime to be laid open—here,
Where Reason has an eye that she can use,
And Men alone are Umpires. To the Camp
He shall be led, and there, the Country round
All gathered to the spot, in open day
Shall Nature be avenged.

One. ’Tis nobly thought;
His death will be a monument for ages.

Mar. (to Lucy). I thank you for that hint. He
shall be brought
Before the Camp, and would that best and wisest
Of every country might be present. There,
His crime shall be proclaimed; and for the rest
It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide:
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and see
That all is well prepared.

Wal. We will obey you.

(Aside). But softly! we must look a little nearer.

Mar. Tell where you found us. At some future
time
I will explain the cause.

[Exit.

——

ACT III.

SCENE, the door of the Hostel, a group of Pilgrims as
before; IDONES and the Host among them.

Host. Lady, you'll find your Father at the Convent
As I have told you: He left us yesterday
With two Companions; one of them, as seemed,
His most familiar Friend. (Going) There was a
letter
Of which I heard them speak, but that I fancy
Has been forgotten.

Idon. (to Host). Farewell!

Host. Gentle pilgrims,
St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand.
[Exit IDONES and Pilgrims.

——

SCENE, a desolate Moor.

OSWALD (alone).

One. Carry him to the Camp! Yes, to the Camp.
Oh, Wisdom! a most wise resolve! and then,
That half a word should blow it to the winds!
This last device must end my work.—Methinks
It were a pleasant pastime to construct
A scale and table of belief—as thus—
Two columns, one for passion, one for proof;
THE BORDERERS.

Each rises as the other falls: and first,
Passion a unit and against us—proof—
Nay, we must travel in another path,
Or we're stuck fast for ever;—passion, then,
Shall be a unit for us; proof—no, passion!
We'll not insult thy majesty by time,
Person, and place—the where, the when, the how,
And all particulars that dull brains require
To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact,
They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.
A whispering to the Moralist who preach
That misery is a sacred thing: for me,
I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man,
Nor any half so sure. This Stripling's mind
Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface;
And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,
He talks of a transition in his Soul,
And dreams that he is happy. We dissect
The senseless body, and why not the mind?
These are strange sights—the mind of man,
Upturned,
Is in all natures a strange spectacle;
In some a hideous one.—hem! shall I stop?
No.—Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but then
They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,
And something shall be done which Memory
May touch, whose'er her Vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, from behind.

One. (turning to meet him.) But listen, for my peace—

Mar. Whence, I believe you.

One. But hear the proofs—

Mar. Ay, prove that when two peas
Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then
Be larger than the peas.—prove this!—'twere matter
Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream
It ever could be otherwise!

One. Last night
When I returned with water from the brook,
I overheard the Villains—every word
Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.
Said one, "It is agreed on. The blind Man
Shall feign a sudden illness, and the Girl,
Who en her journey must proceed alone,
Under pretence of violence, be seized.
She is," continued the detested Slave,
"she is right willing—strange if she were not!—
They say, Lord Clifford is a savage man;
But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic,
Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,
There's witchery in' t. I never knew a maid
That could withstand it. True," continued he,
"When we arranged the affair, she wept a little

(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that)
And said, 'My Father he will have it so.'"

Mar. I am your hearer.

One. This I caught, and more
That may not be retold to any ear.
The obstinate bolt of a small iron door
Detained them near the gateway of the Castle.
By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths
Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed
For festive decoration; and they said,
With brutal laughter and most foul allusion,
That they should share the banquet with their Lord
And his new Favorite.

Mar. Misery!—

One. How you would be disturbed by this dire news,
And therefore chose this solitary Moor,
Here to impart the tale, of which, last night,
I strove to ease my mind, when our two Comrades,
Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

Mar. Last night, when moved to lift the avenging
steel,
I did believe all things were shadows—yes,
Living or dead all things were bodiless,
Or but the mutual mockery of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.
Now I could laugh till my ribs ached. Oh Fool!
To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom!—Oswald,
I could fetch lectures out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.
Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason
Of love in all its shapes, beginnings, ends;
Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.

One. You take it as it merits—

Mar. One a King,
General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground
With carcasses, in lineament and shape
And substance, nothing differing from his own,
But that they cannot stand up of themselves;
Another sits it' th' am, and by the hour
Floats kingscups in the brook—a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spend-
thrift;
But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy—both fools, or wise alike,
Each in his way?

One. Trewly, I begin to think so.

Mar. Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy:
I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth
Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,  
And send it with a filip to its grave.  

Osw. Nay, you leave me behind.  

Mar. That such a One,  
So plious in demeanour! in his look  
So saintly and so pure!——Hark’ee, my Friend,  
I’ll plant myself before Lord Clifford’s Castle,  
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,  
And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley  
Most tumable.  

Osw. In faith, a pleasant scheme;  
But take your sword along with you, for that  
Might in such neighbourhood find seeming use.—  
But first, how wash our hands of this old Man!  
Mar. Oh yes, that mole, that viper in the path;  
Pлагue on my memory, him I had forgotten.  
Osw. You know we left him sitting—see him  
yonder.  

Mar. Ha! ha!—  

Osw. As ’twill be but a moment’s work,  
I will stroll on; you follow when ’tis done.  

[Exeunt.  

Scene changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance—Herbert is discovered seated on a stone.  

Her. A sound of laughter, too!—’tis well—I feared,  
The Stranger had some pitiable sorrow  
Pressing upon his solitary heart.  
Hush!—’tis the feebler and earth-loving wind  
That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.  
Alas! ’tis cold—I shiver in the sunshine—  
What can this mean? There is a psalm that speaks  
Of God’s parental mercies—with Idonea  
I used to sing it.—Listen!—what foot is there?  

Enter Marmaduke.  

Mar. (aside—looking at Herbert). And I have loved this Man! and she hath loved him!  
And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford!  
And there it ends—if this be not enough  
To make mankind merry for evermore,  
Then plain it is as day, that eyes were made  
For a wise purpose—verily to weep with!  

[Looking round.  
A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece  
Of Nature, finished with most curious skill!  
(To Herbert). Good Baron, have you ever  
practised tillage?  

Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre!  
Her. How glad I am to hear your voice! I know not  
Wherein I have offended you—last night  
I found in you the kindest of Protectors;  

This morning, when I spoke of weariness,  
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it  
About your own; but for these two hours past  
Once only have you spoken, when the lark  
Whirred from among the fern beneath our feet,  
And I, no coward in my better days,  
Was almost terrified.  

Mar. That’s excellent!—  
So, you bethought you of the many ways  
In which a man may come to his end, whose crimes  
Have roused all Nature up against him—pahaw!—  
Her. For mercy’s sake, is nobody in sight?  
No traveller, peasant, herdman!  

Mar. Not a soul:  
Here is a tree, ragged, and bent, and bare,  
That turns its goat’s-beard flakes of pea-green moss  
From the stern breathing of the rough sea-wind;  
This have we, but no other company:  
Commend me to the place. If a man should die  
And leave his body here, it were all one  
As he were twenty fathoms underground.  
Her. Where is our common Friend?  

Mar. A ghost, methinks—  
The Spirit of a murdered man, for instance—  
Might have fine room to rumble about here,  
A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.  

Her. Lost Man! if thou have any close-pect guilt  
Pressing upon thy heart, and this the hour  
Of visitation—  

Mar. A bold word from you!  
Her. Restore him, Heaven!  

Mar. The desperate Wretch!—A Flower,  
Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but now  
They have snapped her from the stem—Pah! let  
her lie  
Besolded with mire, and let the houseless snail  
Feed on her leaves. You knew her well—ay, there,  
Old Man! you were a very Lynx, you knew  
The worm was in her—  
Her. Mercy! Sir, what mean you?  
Mar. You have a Daughter!  

Her. Oh that she were here!—  
She hath an eye that sinks into all hearts,  
And if I have in aught offended you,  
Soon would her gentle voice make peace between us.  

Mar. (aside). I do believe he weeps—I could  
weep too—  
There is a vehemence of her voice that runs through his:  
Even such a Man my fancy bodily forth.  
From the first moment that I loved the Maid;  
And for her sake I loved her more: these tears—
I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been—yes, I thank thee, Heaven!
One happy thought has passed across my mind.
—It may not be—I am cut off from man;
No more shall I be man—no more shall I
Have human feelings!—(To Herbert)—Now, for
a little more
About your Daughter!

Her. Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us; little children,
Bathing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them! I have heard
The boisterous carman, in the milky road,
Check his loud whip and hail us with mild voice,
And speak with milder voice to his poor beasts.

Mar. The name of daughter in his mouth, he
prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.—Innocent!—
If he were innocent—then he would tremble
And be disturbed, as I am. (Turning aside.) I
have read
In Story, what men now alive have witnessed,
How, when the People’s mind was racked with
doubt,
Appeal was made to the great Judge: the

Acused
With naked feet walked over burning ploughshares.
Here is a Man by Nature’s hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.
Why else have I been led to this bleak Waste?
 Bare is it, without house or track, and destitute
Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea.
Here will I leave him—he—All-seeing God!
Such as he is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final Ordeal!—
He heard a voice—a shepherd-lad came to him
And was his guide; if once, why not again,
And in this desert! If never—then the whole
Of what he says, and looks, and does, and is,
Makes up one damning falsehood. Leave him here
To cold and hunger!—Pain is of the heart,
And what are a few throes of bodily suffering
If they can awaken one pang of remorse!

(Goes up to Herbert.
Old Man! my wrath is as a flame burnt out,
It cannot be rekindled. Thou art here
Led by my hand to save thee from perdition;
Thou wilt have time to breathe and think—

Her. Oh, Mercy!

Mar. I know the need that all men have of mercy,
And therefore leave thee to a righteous judgment.

Her. My Child, my blessed Child!

Mar. No more of that;
Thou wilt have many guides if thou art innocent;
Yes, from the utmost corners of the earth,
That Woman will come over this Waste to save thee.

(He pauses and looks at Herbert’s staff.
Ha! what is here! and carved by her own hand!

(Reads upon the staff.
“A I am eyes to the blind, saith the Lord.
He that puts his trust in me shall not fall!”
Yes, be it so;—repent and be forgiven—
God and that staff are now thy only guides.

(He leaves Herbert on the Moor.)
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Scene, an eminence, a Beacon on the summit.

Lacy, Wallace, Lennox, &c. &c.

Several of the Band (confusely). But patience! One of the Band. Curses on that Traitor, Oswald!—

Our Captain made a prey to foul device!— Len. (to Wal.). His tool, the wandering Beggar, made last night A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt, Knowing what otherwise we know too well, That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now; For rather would I have a nest of vipers Between my breast-plate and my skin, than make Oswald my special enemy, if you Deny me your support.

Lacy. We have been fooled— But for the motive! Wal. Nature such as his Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy! I learn'd this when I was a Confessor. I know him well; there needs no other motive Than that most strange incontinence in crime Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him And breath and being; where he cannot govern, He will destroy.

Lacy. To have been trapped like moles!— Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives: There is no crime from which this man would shrink; He reck'd not human law; and I have noticed That often when the name of God is uttered, A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

Len. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built Some uncouth superstition of its own.

Wal. I have seen traces of it.

Len. Once he headed A band of Pirates in the Norway seas; And when the King of Denmark summoned him To the oath of fealty, I well remember, 'Twas a strange answer that he made; he said, "I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in Heaven."

Lacy. He is no madman.

Wal. A most subtle doctor Were that man, who could draw the line that parts Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness, That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless Minds, Such Minds as find amid their fellow-men No heart that loves them, none that they can love, Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy In dim relation to imagined Beings.

One of the Band. What if he mean to offer up our Captain

An expiation and a sacrifice To those infernal deeds!

Wal. Now, if the event Should be as Lennox has foretold, then swear, My Friends, his heart shall have as many wounds As there are daggers here.

Lacy. What need of swearing! One of the Band. Let us away! Another. Away!

A third. Hark! how the horns Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the vale. Lacy. Stay you behind; and when the sun is down, Light up this beacon.

One of the Band. You shall be obeyed.

[They go out together.

Scene, the Wood on the edge of the Moor.

Marmadick (alone).

Mar. Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought, Yet calm,—I could believe, that there was here The only quiet heart on earth. In terror, Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter Oswald.

Osw. Ha! my dear Captain.

Mar. A later meeting, Oswald, Would have been better timed.

Osw. Alone, I see; You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now I feel that you will justify.

Mar. I had fears, From which I have freed myself—but 'tis my wish To be alone, and therefore we must part.

Osw. Nay, then—I am mistaken. There's a weakness About you still; you talk of solitude— I am your friend.

Mar. What need of this assurance At any time! and why given now!

Osw. Because You are now in truth my Master; you have taught me What there is not another living man Had strength to teach;—and therefore gratitude Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.

Mar. Wherefore press this on me?

Osw. Because I feel That you have shown, and by a signal instance, How they who would be just must seek the rule By diving for it into their own bosoms. To-day you have thrown off a tyranny That lives but in the torpid acquiescence.
THE BORDERERS.

Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the dusty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognise; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent Intellect.
Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you
Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,
Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.

Mar. I would be left alone.

One. (exultingly.) I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witness'd, and now hail your victory.

Mar. Spare me awhile that greeting.

One. It may be,
That some there are, squamish half-thinking
counsels,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,
And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!—
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 'twill burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude!—
The Eagle lives in Solitude!

Mar. Even so,
The Sparrow so on the house-top, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.

One. Now would you! and for ever!—My young
Friend,
As time advances either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we must have, willing or no;
And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,
Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming; some which, though they bear
Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposes thus melt into each other.

Mar. Time, since Man first drew breath, has never moved
With such a weight upon his wings as now;
But they will soon be lightened.

One. Ay, look up—
Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise:
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly

Because they carry in themselves an earnest
That we can suffer greatly.

Mar. Very true.

One. Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed;
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.

Mar. Truth—and I feel it.

One. What if you had bid
Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure
All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.

—I see I have disturbed you.

Mar. By no means.

One. Compassion!— pity!—pride can do without
them;
And what if you should never know them more!—
He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.
If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end—to teach
And not to purchase paling sympathy.

—Nay, you are pale.

Mar. It may be so.

One. Remorse—
It cannot live with thought; think on, think on,
And it will die. What! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;
What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

Mar. Now, whither are you wandering? That
a man
So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself—
It is most strange.

One. Murder!—what's in the word!—
I have no cases by me ready made
To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp!—
A shallow project;—you of late have seen
More deeply, taught us that the institutes
Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
Banished from human intercourse, exist
Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
A license to destroy him: our good governors
Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

That bears the shape of man; and for what purpose,
But to protect themselves from extirpation!—
This flimsy barrier you have overslept.

**Mar.** My Office is fulfilled— the Man is now
Delivered to the Judge of all things.

**Osw.** Dead!

**Mar.** I have borne my burden to its destined end.

**Osw.** This instant we'll return to our Companions—
Oh how long to see their faces again!

Enter Idonius, with Pilgrims who continue their journey.

**Idon.** (after some time). What, Marmaduke! now thou art mine for ever.
And Oswald, too! (To Marmaduke). On will we to my Father
With the glad tidings which this day hath brought;
We'll go together, and, such proof received
Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.

**Osw.** I interrupt you!

**Idon.** Think not so.

**Mar.** Idonius,
That I should ever live to see this moment!

**Idon.** Forgive me.—Oswald knows it all—he knows,
Each word of that unhappy letter fell
As a blood drop from my heart.

**Osw.** 'Twas even so.

**Mar.** I have much to say, but for whose ear!—
not thine.

**Idon.** Ill can I bear that look—Plead for me, Oswald!

You are my Father’s Friend.

(To Marmaduke). Alas, you know not,
And never can you know, how much he loved me.
Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was I not to be
His daughter, once his daughter! could I withstand
His pleading face, and feel his clasping arms,
And hear his prayer that I would not forsake him
In his old age—

**Mar.** Patience—Heaven grant me patience!—
She weeps, she weeps—my brain shall burn for hours
Ere I can shed a tear.

**Idon.** I was a woman;
And, balancing the hopes that are the dearest
To womankind with duty to my Father,
I yielded up those precious hopes, which nought
On earth could else have wrested from me;—if erring,
Oh let me be forgiven!

**Mar.** I do forgive thee.

**Idon.** But take me to your arms—this breast, alas!
It throbs, and you have a heart that does not feel it.

**Mar.** (wistfully). She is innocent.

(Its embraces her.

**Osw.** (aside). Were I a Moralist, I should make wondrous revolution here;
It were a quaint experiment to show
The beauty of truth—

**Idon.** (Addressing them.)
I see I interrupt you;
I shall have business with you, Marmaduke;
Follow me to the Hostel. [Exit Oswald.

**Idon.** Marmaduke,
This is a happy day. My Father soon
Shall sun himself before his native doors;
The lane, the hungry, will be welcome there.
No more shall he complain of wasted strength,
Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying heart;
His good works will be balm and life to him.

**Mar.** This is most strange!—I know not what it was,
But there was something which most plainly said,
That thou wert innocent.

**Idon.** Oh heavens! you’ve been deceived.

**Mar.** Thou art a Woman,
To bring perdition on the universe.

**Idon.** Already I’ve been punished to the height
Of my offence.

**Mar.** [Smiling affectionately.]
I see you love me still,
The labours of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your shoulder
I hung this belt.

[Pointing to the belt on which was suspended
Hersaune’s scrip.

**Mar.** Mercy of Heaven! [Sinks.

**Idon.** What ails you! [Distractedly.

**Mar.** The scrip that held his food, and I forgot
To give it back again!

**Idon.** What mean your words?

**Mar.** I know not what I said—all may be well,

**Idon.** That smile hath life in it!

**Mar.** This road is perilous;
I will attend you to a Hut that stands
Near the wood’s edge—rest there to-night, I pray
you:
For me, I have business, as you heard, with Oswald,
But will return to you by break of day. [Exeunt.
ACT IV.

SCENE. A desolate prospect—a ridge of rocks—a  
Chapel on the summit of one—Moon behind the  
rocks—night starry—irregular sound of a bell—  
HERBERT enters exhausted.

Her. That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed to guide me,  
But now it mocks my steps; its fitful stroke  
Can scarcely be the work of human hands.  
Hear me, ye Men, upon the cliffs, if such  
There be who pray nightly before the Altar.  
Oh that I had but strength to reach the place!  
My Child—my Child—dark—dark—I faint—from this  
wind—  
These stifling blasts—God help me!

Enter Elrwood.

Elr. Better this bare rock,  
Though it were tottering over a man’s head,  
Than a tight cage of dungeon walls for shelter  
From such rough dealing.

[A moaning voice is heard.  
Ha! what sound is that?

Trees creaking in the wind (but none are here)  
Send forth such noises—and that weary bell!  
Surely some evil Spirit abroad at night  
Is ringing it—’t would stop a Saint in prayer,  
And that—what is it? never was sound so like  
A human groan. Ha! what is here! Poor Man—  
Murdered! alas! speak—speak, I am your friend:  
No answer—hush—lost wretch, he lifts his hand  
And lays it to his heart—(Kneels to him.) I pray  
you speak!

What has befallen you?

Her. (faintly.) A stranger has done this,  
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.

Elr. Nay, think not so: come, let me raise  
you up:

[Raises him.

This is a dismal place—well—that is well—  
I was too fearful—take me for your guide  
And your support—my hut is not far off.  

[Draws him gently off the stage.

SCENE. A room in the Hotel—MARMADUK and  
OSWALD.

Mar. But for Idona!—I have cause to think  
That she is innocent.

Osw. Leave that thought awhile,  
As one of those beliefs which in their hearts  
Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no better  
Than feathers clinging to their points of passion.

This day’s event has laid on me the duty  
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,  
And without further preface.—In my youth,  
Except for that abatement which is paid  
By envy as a tribute to desert,  
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling  
Of every tongue—as you are now. You’ve heard  
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage  
Was hatched among the crew a foul Conspiracy  
Against my honour, in the which our Captain  
Was, I believed, prime Agent. The wind fell;  
We lay becalmed week after week, until  
The water of the vessel was exhausted;  
I felt a double fever in my veins,  
Yet rage suppressed itself;—to a deep stillness  
Did my pride tame my pride;—for many days,  
On a dead sea under a burning sky,  
I brooded o’er my injuries, deserted  
By man and nature;—if a breeze had blown,  
It might have found its way into my heart,  
And I had been—no matter—do you mark me?  

Mar. Quick—to the point—if any untold crime  
Doth haunt your memory.

Osw. Patience, hear me further!—  
One day in silence did we drift at noon  
By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and bare;  
No food was there, no drink, no grass, no shade,  
No tree, nor jutting eminence, nor form  
Inanimate large as the body of man,  
Nor any living thing whose lot of life  
Might stretch beyond the measure of one moon.  
To dig for water on the spot, the Captain  
Landed with a small troop, myself being one:  
There I reproached him with his treachery.  
Imperious at all times, his temper rose;  
He struck me; and that instant had I killed him,  
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades  
Rushed in between us: then did I insist  
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)  
That we should leave him there, alive!—we did so.  

Mar. And he was famished!

Osw. Naked was the spot;  
Me thinks I see it now—how in the sun  
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;  
And in that miserable place we left him,  
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures  
Not one of which could help him while alive,  
Or mourn him dead.

Mar. A man by men cast off,  
Left without burial! nay, not dead nor dying,  
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,  
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony  
With which he called for mercy; and—even so—  
He was forsaken!
There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water—

Upon that dismal hearing—did you not?

Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.

We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain!

'Twas an island

Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished; but the calm
The same dead calm, continued many days.

But his own crime had brought on him this doom,
His wickedness prepared it; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.

The man was famished, and was innocent!

The man had never wronged me,
Banish the thought, crush it, and be at peace.

His guilt was marked—these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.

And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of!

I had been deceived.

And he found no deliverance!

The Crow

Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.

So we pursued our voyage: when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad; my power at once
Shrank from me; plans and schemes, and lofty hopes—

All vanished. I gave way—do you attend?

The Crow deceived you!

Nay, command yourself.

It is a dismal night—how the wind howls!

I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid winter.

That was no life for me—I was o'erthrown,
But not destroyed.

The proofs—you ought to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at your heart—
As I have done.

A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;

Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;
And, whereas' ever I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.

You understand me—I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good—I saw it and burst forth
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.

[Marking Markabuke's countenance.

Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment, like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted
From action up to action with a mind
That never rested—without meat or drink
Have I lived many days—my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason—not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

O wretched Human-kind!—Until the mystery
Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
DOTH lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors!

Give not to them a thought. From Palestine
We marched to Syria: oh I left the Camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar,
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea:
In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being;
And felt, if aught on earth deserves a curse,
'Tis that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.

So much for my remorse!

Unhappy Man!

When from these forms I turned to contemplate
The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a Being who had passed alone
Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom——

Stop——

I may not, cannot, follow thee.

You must.

I had been nourished by the sickly food.
THE BORDERERS.

Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognise some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than oblivion; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.

Mar. I pity, can forgive, you; but those
wretched—
That monstrous perfidy!

One. Keep down your wrath.
False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despoiled,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priest might spin
Their veil, but not for me—twas in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,
One of Love's simple bondmen—the soft chain
Was off for ever; and the men, from whom
This liberation came, you would destroy:
Join me in thanks for their blind services.

Mar. 'Tis a strange aching that, when we would
curse
And cannot—You have betrayed me—I have
done—
I am content—I know that he is guiltless—
That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
Mutually consecrated. Poor old Man!
And I had heart for this, because thou lovedst
Her—who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood!—Together

[Turning to ONSAWL.

We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.

One. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant;
Let us be fellow-labourers, then, to enlarge
Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
In slavery; all is slavery; we receive
Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have come;
We need an inward sting to good us on.

Mar. Have you betrayed me? Speak to that.

One. The mask,
Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
Must be cast off. Know then that I was urged,
(For other impulse let it pass) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw
In you a mirror of my youthful self;
I would have made us equal once again,
But that was vain hope. You have struck home,
With a few drops of blood cut short the business;
Therewith for ever you must yield to me.

But what is done will save you from the blank
Of living without knowledge that you live:
Now you are suffering—for the future day,
'Tis his who will command it. Think of my story—
Herbert is innocent.

Mar. (in a faint voice, and doubtingly) You do
but echo
My own wild words!

One. Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;
'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
I will avow before the face of day.
Herbert is innocent.

Mar. What friend could prompt
This action! Innocent!—oh, breaking heart!—
Alive or dead, I'll find him. [Exit.


SCENE, the inside of a poor Cottage.

ELSIE and IDAEGA seated.

Idon. The storm beats hard—Mercy for poor or rich,
Whose heads are shelterless in such a night!
A Voice without. Holla! to bed, good Folks, within!

Eles. O save us!

Idon. What can this mean?

Eles. Alas, for my poor husband!—
We'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow;
The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights:
Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers

[The voices die away in the distance.

Returning from their Feast—my heart beats so—
A noise at midnight does so frighten me.


Eles. They are gone. On such a night, my husband,
Dragged from his bed, was cast into a dungeon,
Where, hid from me, he counted many years,
A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs—
Not even in theirs—whose brutal violence
So dealt with him.

Idon. I have a noble Friend
First among youths of knightly breeding, One
Who lives but to protect the weak or injured.
There again! [Listening.

Eles. 'Tis my husband's foot. Good Eldred
Has a kind heart; but his imprisonment
Has made him fearful, and he'll never be
The man he was.

Idon. I will retire;—good night!

[She goes within,
Enter Eldred, (vistes a bundle).

Eld. Not yet in bed, Eleanor!—there are stains in that frock which must be washed out.

Elen. What has befallen you?

Eld. I am belated, and you must know the cause—(speaking low) that is the blood of an unhappy Man.

Elen. Oh! we are undone for ever.

Eld. Heaven forbid that I should lift my hand against any man. Eleanor, I have shed tears tonight, and it comforts me to think of it.

Elen. Where, where is he?

Eld. I have done him no harm, but— it will be forgiven me; it would not have been so once.

Elen. You have not buried anything! You are no richer than when you left me!

Eld. Be at peace; I am innocent.

Elen. Then God be thanked—

[A short pause; she falls upon his neck.

Eld. To-night I met with an old Man lying stretched upon the ground—a sad spectacle: I raised him up with a hope that we might shelter and restore him.

Elen. (as if ready to run). Where is he? You were not able to bring him all the way with you; let us return, I can help you.

[Eldred shakes his head.

Eld. He did not seem to wish for life: as I was struggling on, by the light of the moon I saw the stains of blood upon my clothes—he waved his hand, as if it were all useless; and I let him sink again to the ground.

Elen. Oh that I had been by your side!

Eld. I tell you his hands and his body were cold—how could I disturb his last moments! he strove to turn from me as if he wished to settle into sleep.

Elen. But, for the stains of blood—

Eld. He must have fallen, I fancy, for his head was cut; but I think his malady was cold and hunger.

Elen. Oh, Eldred, I shall never be able to look up at this roof in storm or fair but I shall tremble.

Eld. Is it not enough that my ill stars have kept me abroad to-night till this hour! I come home, and this is my comfort!

Elen. But did he say anything which might have set you at ease?

Eld. I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his Child—his Daughter—(starting as if he heard a noise). What is that?

Elen. Eldred, you are a father.

Eld. God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

Elen. But you prayed by him? you waited the hour of his release?

Eld. The night was wasting fast; I have no friend; I am spited by the world—his wound terrified me—if I had brought him along with me, and he had died in my arms!—I am sure I heard something breathing—and this chair?

Elen. Oh, Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes—no hand to grasp your dying hand—I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all.

Eld. Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon?

Elen. And you left him alive?

Eld. Alive!—the damps of death were upon him—he could not have survived an hour.

Elen. In the cold, cold night.

Eld. (in a savage tone). Ay, and his head was bare; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it. You will never rest till I am brought to a felon's end.

Elen. Is there nothing to be done? cannot we go to the Convent?

Eld. Ay, and say at once that I murdered him!

Elen. Eldred, I know that ours is the only house upon the Waste; let us take heart; this Man may be rich; and could he be saved by our means, his gratitude may reward us.

Eld. 'Tis all in vain.

Elen. But let us make the attempt. This old Man may have a wife, and he may have children—let us return to the spot; we may restore him, and his eyes may yet open upon those that love him.

Eld. He will never open them more; even when he spoke to me, he kept them firmly sealed as if he had been blind.

Idon. (rushing out). It is, it is, my Father—

Eld. We are betrayed (looking at Idonius).

Elen. His Daughter!—God have mercy! (turning to Idonius).

Idon. (sinking down). Oh! lift me up and carry me to the place.

You are safe; the whole world shall not harm you.

Elen. This Lady is his Daughter.

Eld. (moved). I'll lead you to the spot.

ACT V.

SCENE, A wood on the edge of the Waste.

Enter Oswald, and a Forester.

For. He leaned upon the bridge that spans the glen, And down into the bottom cast his eye, That fastened there, as it would check the current.

Osw. He listened too; did you not say he listened?

For. As if there came such moaning from the flood As is heard often after stormy nights.

Osw. But did he utter nothing?

For. See him there!

MARMADUKE appearing.

Mar. Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged freebooters; That is no substance which ye settle on!

For. His senses play him false; and see, his arms Outspread, as if to save himself from falling!— Some terrible phantom I believe is now Passing before him, such as God will not Permit to visit any but a man Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.

[MARMADUKE disappears.

For. The game is up!—

Osw. If it be needful, Sir, I will assist you to lay hands upon him.

For. No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your business—

'Tis a poor wretch of an unsettled mind, Who has a trick of straying from his keepers; We must be gentle. Leave him to my care.

If his own eyes play false with him, these freaks Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine; The goal is reached. My Master shall become A shadow of myself—made by myself.

---

SCENE, the edge of the Moor.

MARMADUKE and ELDRED enter, from opposite sides.

Mar. (raising his eyes, and perceiving Eldred) In any corner of this savage Waste, Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old Man?

Eld. I heard—

Mar. You heard him, where? when he heard him?

Eld. As you know, The first hours of last night were rough with storm: I had been out in search of a stray heifer; Returning late, I heard a moaning sound; Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me, I hurried on, when straight a second moan,

A human voice distinct, struck on my ear. So guided, distant a few steps, I found An aged Man, and such as you describe.

Mar. You heard!—he called to you! Of all men The best and kindest!—but where is he? guide me, That I may see him.

Eld. On a ridge of rocks A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now: The bell is left, which no one dares remove; And, when the stormy wind blows o'er the peak, It rings, as if a human hand were there To pull the cord. I guess he must have heard it; And it had led him towards the precipice, To climb up to the spot whence the sound came; But he had failed through weakness. From his hand His staff had dropped, and close upon the brink Of a small pool of water he was laid, As if he had stopped to drink, and so remained Without the strength to rise.

Mar. Well, well, he lives, And all is safe: what said he?

Eld. But few words:

He only spake to me of a dear Daughter, Who, so he feared, would never see him more; And of a Stranger to him, One by whom He had been sore misled; but he forgave The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are troubled— Perhaps you are his son?

Mar. The All-seeing knows, I did not think he had a living Child— But whither did you carry him?

Eld. He was torn, His head was bruised, and there was blood about him—

Mar. That was no work of mine.

Eld. Nor was it mine. Mar. But had he strength to walk? I could have borne him A thousand miles.

Eld. I am in poverty, And know how busy are the tongues of men; My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one Whose good deeds will not stand by their own light; And, though it smote me more than words can tell, I left him.

Mar. I believe that there are phantoms, That in the shape of man do cross our path On evil instigation, to make sport Of our distress—and thou art one of them! But things substantial have so pressed on me—

Eld. My wife and children came into my mind.
Mar. Oh Monster! Monster! there are three of us, And we shall howl together.

[After a pause and in a feeble voice.]
I am deserted
At my worst need, my crimes have in a net
(Pointing to Eldred) Entangled this poor man— Where was it? where?
[Dragging him along.
Eld. 'Tis needless; spare your violence. His Daughter—
Mar. Ay, in the word a thousand scorpions lodge: This old man had a Daughter.
Eld. To the spot I hurried back with her.—O save me, Sir, From such a journey!—there was a black tree, A single tree; she thought it was her Father.— Oh Sir, I would not see that hour again For twenty lives. The daylight dawnd, and now— Nay; hear my tale, 'tis fit that you should hear it— As we approached, a solitary crow Rose from the spot;—the Daughter clapped her hands, And then I heard a shriek so terrible
[Marmaduke shrinks back.]
The startled bird quivered upon the wing.
Mar. Dead, dead!—
Eld. (after a pause). A dismal matter, Sir, forme, And seems the like for you; if 'tis your wish, I'll lead you to his Daughter; but 'twere best That she should be prepared; I'll go before.
Mar. There will be need of preparation.

[Eldred goes off.
Elea. (enters). Master! Your limbs sink under you, shall I support you?
Mar. (taking her arm). Woman, I've lent my body to the service Which now thou tak'st upon thee. God forbid That thou shouldst ever meet a like occasion With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was.
Elea. Oh, why have I to do with things like these?

[Exeunt.

Scene changes to the door of Eldred's cottage—
Idon. seated—enters Eldred.
Eld. Your Father, Lady, from a wilful hand Has met unkindness; so indeed he told me, And you remember such was my report: From what has just befallen me I have cause To fear the very worst.
Idon. My Father is dead; Why dost thou come to me with words like these?
Eld. A wicked Man should answer for his crimes.

Idon. Thou seest me what I am.
Eld. It was most heinous, And doth call out for vengeance.
Idon. Do not add, I prithee, to the harm thou 'st done already.
Eld. Hereafter you will thank me for this service. Hard by, a Man I met, who, from plain proofs Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt, Laid hands upon your Father. Fit it were You should prepare to meet him.
Idon. I have nothing To do with others; help me to my Father—
[She turns and sees Marmaduke leaning on Eleanor —throws herself upon his neck, and after some time.
In joy I met thee, but a few hours past; And thus we meet again; one human stay Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.
Mar. In such a wilderness—to see no thing,
No, not the plying moon!
Idon. And perish so.
Mar. Without a dog to moan for him.
Idon. Think not of it, But enter there and see him how he sleeps, Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.
Mar. Tranquil—why not?
Idon. Oh, peace!
Mar. He is at peace; His body is at rest; there was a plot, A hideous plot, against the soul of man: It took effect—and yet I baffled it,
In some degree.
Idon. Between us stood, I thought, A cup of consolation, filled from Heaven For both our needs; must I, and in thy presence, Alone partake of it!—Beloved Marmaduke!
Mar. Give me a reason why the wisest thing That the earth owns shall never choose to die, But some one must be near to count his groans. The wounded deer retires to solitude, And dies in solitude; all things but man, All die in solitude.

[Moving towards the cottage door.
Mysterious God,
If she had never lived I had not done it!—
Idon. Alas, the thought of such a cruel death Has overwhelmed me.—I must follow.
Eld. Lady! You will do well; (she goes) unjust suspicion may Cleave to this Stranger: if, upon his entering, The dead Man heave a groan, or from his side Uplift his hand—that would be evidence.
Elea. Shame! Eldred, shame!
Mar. (both returning) The dead have but one face. (to himself).
THE BORDERERS.

And such a Man—so meek and unoffending—
Helpless and harmless as a babe: a Man,
By obvious signal to the world's protection,
Solemnly dedicated—to decoy him!—

_Idon._ Oh, had you seen him living!—
_Mar._ (so filled)
With horror is this world) am unto thee
The thing most precious, that it now contains;
Therefore through me alone must be revealed
By whom thy Parent was destroyed, Idones!
I have the proofs!—

_Idon._
O miserable Father!
Thou didst command me to bless all mankind;
Nor to this moment, have I ever wished
Evil to any living thing; but hear me,
Hear me, ye Heavens!—(kneeling)—may vengeance haunt the fiend
For this most cruel murder: let him live
And move in terror of the elements;
The thunder send him on his knees to prayer
In the open streets, and let him think he sees,
If e'er he entereth the house of God,
The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head;
And let him, when he would lie down at night,
Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow!

_Mar._ My voice was silent, but my heart hath joined thee.

_Idon._ (leaning on MARSHADUKER). Left to the
mercy of that savage Man!
How could he call upon his Child!—O Friend!
[Turns to MARSHADUKER.

_Mar._ Ay, come to me and weep. (He kisses her.)
_ids._ Yes, Varlet, look,
The devils at such sights do clap their hands.

_Mar._

_Idon._ Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is deadly pale;
Hast thou pursued the monster?

_Mar._
I have found him.—
Oh! would that thou hadst perished in the flames!

_Idon._ Here art thou, then can I be desolate!—

_Mar._ There was a time, when this protecting hand
Availed against the mighty; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.

_Idon._ Wild words for me to hear, for me, an orphan,
Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care—here, is no malady.

[Taking his arm.

_Mar._ There is a malady—

(_Striking his heart and forehead_) And here, and here,
A mortal malady—I am accurst:
All nature curses me, and in my heart
Thy curse is fixed; the truth must be laid bare.
It must be told, and borne. I am the man,
(Adored, betrayed, but how it matters not)
Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
Who, casting as I thought a guilty Person
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did become
An instrument of Fiends. Through me, through me.
Thy Father perished.

_Idon._ Perished—by what mischance!
_Mar._ Beloved!—if I dared, so would I call thee—
Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen heart,
The extremes of suffering meet in absolute peace.

_Idon._ (reads) 'Be not surprised if you hear
that some signal judgment has befallen the man
who calls himself your father; he is now with
me, as his signature will show: abstain from con-
jecture till you see me.'

_Herbert._
'MARSHADUKER.'
The writing Oswald's; the signature my Father's:
(Looks steadily at the paper) And here is yours,—
do my eyes deceive me?
You have then seen my Father?

_Mar._ He has leaned
Upon this arm.

_Idon._ You led him towards the Convent!
_Mar._ That Convent was Stone-Arthur Castle.

_Thither._
We were his guides. I on that night resolved
That he should wait thy coming till the day
Of resurrection.

_Idon._ Misercous Woman,
Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,
I put denial on thy suit, and hence,
With the disastrous issue of last night,
Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.
Be calm, I pray thee!

_Mar._

_Oswald._
_Idon._

[Enter female Beggar.

_Beg._ And he is dead!—that Moor—how shall
I cross it?
By night, by day, never shall I be able
To travel half a mile alone.—Good Lady!
Forgive me!—Saints forgive me. Had I thought
It would have come to this!—

_Idon._ What brings you hither? speak!

_Beg._ (pointing to MARSHADUKER). This innocent
_Gentleman. Sweet heavens! I told him
Such tales of your dead Father!—God is my judge,
I thought there was no harm; but that bad Man,
He bribed me with his gold, and looked so fierce.
Mercy! I said I knew not what—oh pity me—
I said, sweet Lady, you were not his Daughter—
Pity me, I am haunted;—thrice this day
My conscience made me wish to be struck blind;
And then I would have prayed, and had no voice.
Idon. (to Marmaduke). Was it my Father!—
no, no, no, for he
Was meek and patient, feeble, old and blind,
Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life.
—But hear me. For one question, I have a heart
That will sustain me. Did you murder him?
Mar. No, not by stroke of arm. But learn the process:
Proof after proof was pressed upon me; guilt
Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilts,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even thee; and truth
And innocence, embodied in his looks,
His words and tones and gestures, did but serve
With me to aggravate his crimes, and heaped
Ruin upon the cause for which they pleaded.
Then pity crossed the path of my resolve:
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and cast
Idona! thy blind Father, on the Ordeal
Of the bleak Waste—left him—and so he died!—
[Idona sinks senseless: Beggar, Elanor, &c.,
crowd round, and bear her off.]
Why may we speak these things, and do no more;
Why should a thrust of the arm have such a power,
And words that tell these things be heard in vain?
She is not dead. Why!—If I loved this Woman,
I would take care she never woke again;
But she will wake, and she will weep for me,
And say, no blame was mine—and so, poor fool,
Will waste her curses on another name.
[He walks about distractedly.]

Enter Oswald.

Oswald. (to himself). Strong to overturn, strong
also to build up. [To Marmaduke.
The states and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough; but that, I trust,
Is all gone by. You have cast off the chains
That fettered your nobility of mind—
Delivered heart and head!
Let us to Palestine;
This is a paltry field for enterprise.
Mar. Ay, what shall we encounter next! This
issue—
Twas nothing more than darkness deepening
darkness,
And weakness crowned with the impotence of death!—
Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient. (ironically).

Start not!—Here is another face hard by;
Come, let us take a peep at both together,
And, with a voice at which the dead will quake,
Resound the praise of your morality—
Of this too much.
[Drawing Oswald towards the Cottage—stops short
at the door.]
Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked out thy
heart
And flung it to the dogs: but I am raised
Above, or sunk below, all further sense
Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight
Of that old Man's forgiveness on thy heart,
Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.
Coward I have been; know, there lies not now
Within the compass of a mortal thought,
A deed that I would shrink from;—but to endure,
That is my destiny. May it be thine:
Thy office, thy ambition, be hencethforth
To feed remorse, to welcome every sting
Of penitential anguish, yea with tears.
When seas and continents shall lie between us—
The wider space the better—we may find
In such a course fit links of sympathy,
An incommunicable rivalship
Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our view.
[Confused voices—several of the band enter—rush
upon Oswald and seize him.]
One of them. I would have dogged him to the
jaws of hell—
One. Ha! is it so!—That vagrant Hag!—this
comes
Of having left a thing like her alive! [Aside.]
Several voices. Despatch him!
One. If I pass beneath a rock
And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,
Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it crush me,
I die without dishonour. Famished, starved,
A Fool and Coward blende in to my wish!
[Smiles scornfully and contemptuously at Marmaduke.
Wol. 'Tis done! (stabs him.)
Another of the band. The ruthless Traitor!
Mar. A rash deed!—
With that reproof I do resign a station
Of which I have been proud.
Wil. (approaching Marmaduke). O my poor
Master!
Mar. Discerning Monitor, my faithful Wilfred,
Why art thou here? [Turning to Wallace.
Wallace, upon these Borders,
Many there be whose eyes will not want cause
To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms!
Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
That may record my story: nor let words—
Few must they be, and delicate in their touch
As light itself—be there withheld from Her
Who, through most wicked arts, was made an orphan
By One who would have died a thousand times,
To shield her from a moment's harm. To you,
Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the Lady,
By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
In all things worthier of that noble birth,
Whose long-suspended rights are now on the eve
Of restoration: with your tenderest care
Watch over her, I pray—sustain her——

Several of the band (angrily). Captain!

Merr. No more of that; in silence bear my doom:

A hermitage has furnished fit relief
To some offenders; other penitents,
Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen,
Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point.
They had their choice: a wanderer must I go,
The Spectre of that innocent Man, my guide.
No human ear shall ever hear me speak;
No human dwelling ever give me food,
Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild,
In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
But expiation, will I wander on——
A Man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life—till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

1798-9.
POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.

I.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

II.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

Stay near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

III.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to cry
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it;
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

IV.

FORESIGHT.

That is work of waste and ruin—
Do as Charles and I are doing!
Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them—here are many:
Look at it—the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any:
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
Pull as many as you can.
—Here are daisies, take your fill;
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:
Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom!

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them:
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.
THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bowie;
And for that promise spare the flower!

V.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD.

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild;
And innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chausism and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched;
Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images imparted
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

VI.

ADDRESS TO A CHILD,
DURING A NOISEROUS WINTER EVENING.
BY MY SISTER.

What way does the Wind come! What way does
he go!
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood, and through vale; and, o'er rocky
height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding
flight;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.
He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum';—but, if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
—Yet seek him,—and what shall you find in the
place!
Nothing but silence and empty space;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves!
As soon as 'twas daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright
twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And grows as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
—But let him range round; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm.
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—but that half-stifled knell,
Alas! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
—Come now we 'll to bed! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care!
He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in;
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a cosie warm house for Edward and me.

VII.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN.
BY THE SAME.

A month, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.
O blessed tidings! thought of joy!
The voice, heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laughed again,—
And shouted, “Mother, come to me!”

Louder and louder did he shout,
With wistless hope to bring her near;
“Nay, patience! patience, little boy!
Your tender mother cannot hear.”

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister’s breast;
She was not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back her sister’s glee;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o’er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook’s side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing
And all “since Mother went away!”

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The gooslings green, the ass’s colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But, see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment’s heavi ness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

’Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

ALICE FELL;
OR, POVERTY.

The post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound,—and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
“Whence comes,” said I, “this piteous moan!”
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

“My cloak!” no other word she spoke,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

“What ails you, child!”—she sobbed “Look here!”
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as o’er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

1837.
**THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.**

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answered she, half wild—
"Then come with me into the chaise."

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

"My child, in Durham do you dwell?"
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, "My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

And I to Durham, Sir, belong."
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

"And let it be of stuff grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!"
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

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**IX.**

**LUCY GRAY;**

or, MUSIC.

Or I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor;
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work— and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept — and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then across an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.
They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead?
Their spirits are in heaven?"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

x.

WE ARE SEVEN.

—A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wilder clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many! Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell,"
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."
XI.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS;

OR, DUNGEON-GYLL FORCE.

A PASTORAL.

The valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never never ending song,
To welcome in the May.
The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
Their work, if any work they have,
is out of mind—or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
Their rusty hats they trim;
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Gyll.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
"Down to the stomp of you old yew
We'll for our whistles run a race."
Away the shepherds flew;
They leapt—they ran—and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Gyll,

Seeing that he should lose the prize,
"Stop!" to his comrade Walter cries—
James stopped with no good will:
Said Walter then, exulting; "Here
You'll find a task for half a year.

Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross—
Come on, and tread where I shall tread."
The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a pitious moan—
Again! his heart within him dies—
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry; I ween
The Boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid—
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither strayed;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

* Gyll, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. Force is the west universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.
He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother’s side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty’s mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve’s delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

Now tell me, had you rather be,”
I said, and took him by the arm,
“On Kilve’s smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?”

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, “At Kilve I’d rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm.”

“Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why.”—
“I cannot tell, I do not know.”—
“Why, this is strange,” said I;

“For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm:
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea.”

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;
And three times to the child I said,
“Why, Edward, tell me why!”

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vase.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:
“At Kilve there was no weather-cock;
And that’s the reason why.”

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE.

There’s George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and
Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked school-boys, the highest no more
Than the height of a counsellor’s bag;
To the top of Great How* did it please them to climb:

* Great How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of
THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.

And there they built up, without mortar or lime,  
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay :  
They built him and christened him all in one day,  
An archibald both vigorous and hale ;  
And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones.  
Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones;  
The Magog of Legberthaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind salted forth,  
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north,  
Coming on with a terrible pother,  
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.  
And what did these school-boys! —The very next day  
They went and they built up another.

—Some little I’ve seen of blind boisterous works  
By Christian disturbers more savage than Turks,  
Spirtits busy to do and undo :  
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will  
Flag ;  
Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag ;  
And I’ll build up a giant with you.

XIV.

THE PET-LAMB.

A PASTORAL.

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;  
I heard a voice ; it said, “Drink, pretty creature, drink!”  
And, looking o’er the hedge, before me I espied  
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near ; the lamb was all alone,  
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;  
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,  
While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,  
Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail  
With pleasure shook.

“Drink, pretty creature, drink,” she said in such a tone  
That I almost received her heart into my own.

’Twas little Barbara Leathwaite, a child of beauty rare !  
I watched them with delight; they were a lovely pair.  
Now with her empty can the maiden turned away :  
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked ; and from a shady place  
I unobserved could see the workings of her face :  
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,  
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing :

“What ails thee, young One! what! Why pull so at thy cord!  
Is it not well with thee! well both for bed and board!  
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;  
Rest, little young One, rest; what is’t that aileth thee!

What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart!  
Thy limbs are they not strong! And beautiful thou art:  
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have no peers;  
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears!

If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,  
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain;  
For rain and mountain-storms! the like thou need’st not fear,  
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

Rest, little young One, rest; thou hast forgot the day  
When my father found thee first in places far away;  
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by none,  
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home:  
A blessed day for thee! then whither wouldst thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee
Upon the mountain tops no kinder could have been.

Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee
in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with
dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and
new.

Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are
now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the
plough;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind is
cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be
thy fold.

It will not, will not rest!—Poor creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so
in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see
nor hear.

Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and fair!
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come
there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee
again!"

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy
feet,
This song to myself did oftentimes repeat;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was
mine.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song;
"Nay," said I, "more than half to the damsel
must belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she spake
with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own."

O thou! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou saucy voyager! that dost sail
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she saw within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!
O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow!
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS
IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN INFANCY AND EARLY YOUTH.
FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

[This extract is reprinted from "The Friend."]
WISDOM and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nay was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons; happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Frolic and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We kissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tankled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feeblest, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

796.

XVII.

THE LONGEST DAY.

ADDRESS TO ——

Let us quit the leafy arbour,
And the torrent murmuring by;
For the sun is in his harbour,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renown her calm career;
For the day that now is ended,
Is the longest of the year.

Laura! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee!

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linden's song?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong?

Yet at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason,
Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleasing
Last forerunner of "Good night!"

Summer ebb,—each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.
He who governs the creation,
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden!
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number;
Look thou to Eternity!

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are thither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn;

Through the year’s successive portals;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals,
When his light returns from far.

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the many stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings;

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meakest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth’s roses are thy crown.

Grasp it—if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen;

And ensures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven’s unchanging year!

XVIII.

THE NORMAN BOY.

High on a broad unfertile tract of forest-skirted
Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man
his own,
From home and company remote and every playful
joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a ragged
Norman Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot, but from an English
Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice
came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of that sequestered
child
Whom, one bleak winter’s day, she met upon the
dreamy Wild.

His flock, along the woodland’s edge with relics
sprinkled o’er
Of last night’s snow, beneath a sky threatening the
fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy at
their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of
anxious heed.

There was he, where of branches rent and withered
and decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a
hut had made.
A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder
such as he.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly
lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add, but the
architect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well-shaped with
fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest
power and best
For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude
nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving
far and wide,
The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head
must hide.
That Cross beside he also raised as a standard for the true
And faithful service of his heart in the worst that might ensue
Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the houseless waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence was placed.

—Here, Lady! might I cease; but may, let us before we part
With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer of earnest heart,
That unto him, were'er shall lie his life's appointed way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-sufficing stay.

XIX.

THE POET'S DREAM,

SEQUEL TO THE NORMAN BOY.

Jear as those final words were penned, the sun broke out in power,
And gladdened all things; but, as chanced, within that very hour,
Air blackened, thunder growled, fire flashed from clouds that hid the sky,
And, for the Subject of my Verse, I heaved a pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts from heaviness be cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-crowned but appeared;
And, while around it storm as fierce seemed troubling earth and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling alone in prayer.

The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake with articulate call,
Bowed meekly in submissive fear, before the Lord of All;
His lips were moving; and his eyes, upraised to sue for grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dimness of that place.

How beautiful is holiness!—what wonder if the sight,
Almost as vivid as a dream, produced a dream at night?

It came with sleep and showed the Boy, no cherub,
not transformed,
But the poor ragged Thing whose ways my human heart had warmed.

Me had the dream equipped with wings, so I took him in my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling his faint alarms,
And bore him high through yielding air my debt of love to pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an hour of holiday.

I whispered, "Yet a little while, dear Child! thou art my own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or in town.
What shall it be—a mirthful throng! or that holy place and calm
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church of Notre Dame?"

"St. Ouen's golden Shrine! or choose what else would please thee most
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France, can boast!"

"My Mother," said the Boy, "was born near to a blessed Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allonville; good Angel, show it me!"

On wings, from broad and steadfast poise let loose
by this reply,
For Allonville, o'er down and dale, away then did we fly;
O'er town and tower we flew, and fields in May's fresh verdure drest;
The wings they did not flag; the Child, though grave, was not deprest.

But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of light that broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked down on that huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous where it stands
For twofold hallowing—Nature's care, and work of human hands!

Strong as an Eagle with my charge I glided round and round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window, and stair that wound
Gracefully up the gnarled trunk; nor left we 
unsurveyed 
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre 
of the shade.

I lighted—opened with soft touch the chapel's iron 
door, 
Past softly, leading in the Boy; and, while from 
roof to floor 
From floor to roof all round his eyes the Child 
with wonder cast, 
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than 
the last.

For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary 
showed, 
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glimmered 
here, there glowed, 
Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of 
gratitude; 
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts; and speech 
I thus renewed:

"Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard 
thy Mother say, 
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de 
la Paix; 
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and, 
when the voice was stopt 
By sudden pangs; what bitter tears have on this 
pavement dropt!

"Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favoured 
lot is thine, 
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many 
to this shrine; 
From body pains and pains of soul thou needest no 
release, 
Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy, 
in peace.

"Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness 
and praise, 
Give to Him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy 
most busy days; 
And in His sight the fragile Cross, on thy small 
hut, will be 
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel 
of this Tree;

"Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous 
Church in Rome 
Where thousands meet to worship God under a 
mighty Dome;

He sees the bending multitude, he hears the choral 
rites, 
Yet not the less, in children's hymns and lonely 
prayer, delights.

"God for his service needeth not proud work of 
human skill; 
They please him best who labour most to do in 
peace his will; 
So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be 
given 
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear 
us up to heaven."

The Boy no answer made by words, but, so earnest 
was his look, 
Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream—recorded in 
this book, 
Lest all that passed should melt away in silence 
from my mind, 
As visions still more bright have done, and left no 
trace behind.

But oh! that Country-man of thine, whose eye, 
loved Child, can see 
A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety, 
In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat 
this simple theme, 
Nor leave untold our happy flight in that 
adventurous dream.

Alas the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to thee from 
whom it flowed, 
Was nothing, scarcely can be sought, yet 'twas 
bounteously bestowed, 
If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle eyes will 
read 
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-touched, 
their fancies feed.*

XX.

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL.

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN.

PART I.

Seek who will delight in fable
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb 
Leapt from this steep bank to follow 'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

* See note.
Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother’s Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain:

But, as chance, a Cottage-maiden
(Ten years scarcely had she told)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved;
Clap your hands with joy my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved;

Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And be like a guardian angel
Came with succour from above.

PART II

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child
Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother’s care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father’s side.

Spare your blame,—remembrance makes him
Loth to rule by strict command;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand,

Dear cares, given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind’s relief.

Time passed on; the Child was happy,
Like a Spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime,
Learn how she can feel alike
Both for tiny harmless minnow
And the fierce and sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain;
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile,—with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell,
She in Grasmere’s old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing-bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire’s office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well.

When his spirit was departed
On that service she went forth;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
In her breast, unruly fire,
To control the froward impulse
And restrain the vague desire!

Easily a pious training
And a steadfast outward power
Would supplant the weeds and cherish,
In their stead, each opening flower.

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliv’rer,
Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought; and here be uttered
Prayer that Grace divine may raise
Her humane courageous spirit
Up to heaven, thro’ peaceful ways.
POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

I.

THE BROTHERS.

"Twas that Tourists, heaven preserve us! needs must we
Ev'ry profitable life: some glance along
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry yonder?—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves.

To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the caves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and backward-and-forward stops,
Her large round wheel was turning. Towards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder; and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and, down the path
That from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

"'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner;—and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oh in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees;—and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome idleness, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
His, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
—They were the last of all their race; and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him; and, not venturing to enquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
THE BROTHERS.

He to the solitary church-yard turned;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added.—He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-hour
He had remained; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt; and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before,—
That it was not another grave; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to
him:
And oh what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopped short,—and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Pursued him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write foot upon his forehead.—Planted thus
Beneath a sycamore that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet
life:
Yearly years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered! scarce a funeral
Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;
And yet, some changes must take place among you:
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our three-score years and ten

We are not all that perish.—I remember,
(For many years ago I passed this road)
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side—tis gone—and that dark leef!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had!

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

Leonard. But, surely, yonder—

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false.—On that tall pile
(Its the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: the huge crag
Was rent with lightning—one hath disappeared;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them—a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge;
A wood is felled—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries—one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side—
Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to those valleys!

Leonard. Yet your Church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull,—type of our earthy state
Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new
to me!
The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth:
We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then, for our immortal part! we want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

Leonard. Your Dalemen, then, do in each other's
thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves!

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've
heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,—
It looks just like the rest; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

Leonard. 'Tis a common case.
We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath your ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

Priest. That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder! and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to
son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little—yet a little,—and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.

Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred
him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Emerald:—
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him—but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel,—and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer—

Leonard. But those two Orphans!

Priest. Orphans!—such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived:—for, though their
parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your
kindred!

Ay—you may turn that way—'tis a grave
Which will bear looking at.

Leonard. These boys—I hope
They loved this good old Man!

Priest. They did—and truly:
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with
Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar, tendereness;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder, by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them!—From their house the school
Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridged stream, such as you may have
noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On sunny days, in one of those stray brooks,
Aye, more than once I have seen him, mild-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—

Leonard. It may be then—

Priest. Never did worthier lads break English
bread;
The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
The Brothers.

Could never keep those boys away from church,  
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.  
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner  
Among these rocks, and every hollow place  
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both  
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow  
there.

Like doe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills;  
They played like two young ravens on the crags:  
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well  
As many of their betters—and for Leonard!  
The very night before he went away,  
In my own house I put into his hand  
A bible, and I'd wager house and field  
That, if he be alive, he has it yet.

Leonard. It seems, these Brothers have not lived  
to be  
A comfort to each other—

Priest. That they might  
Live to such end is what both old and young  
In this our valley all of us have wished,  
And what, for my part, I have often prayed:

But Leonard—

Leonard. Then James is left among you!  
Priest. "Tis of the elder brother I am speaking:  
They had an uncle;—he was at that time  
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:  
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour  
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud:  
For the boy loved the life which we lead here;  
And though of unripe years, a striping only,  
His soul was knit to this his native soil.  
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak  
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,  
The estate and house were sold; and all their sheep,  
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,  
Had clothed the Ewbank for a thousand years:—  
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute,  
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,  
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.

Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.  
If there were one among us who had heard  
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,  
From the Great Gavel*, down by Lecca's banks,  
And down the Enea, far as Egremont,  
The day would be a joyous festival;  

And those two bells of ours, which there you see—  
Hanging in the open air—but, O good Sir!  
This is sad talk—they'll never sound for him—  
Living or dead.—When last we heard of him,  
He was in slavery among the Moors  
Upon the Barbary coast.—'Twas not a little  
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,  
Before it ended in his death, the Youth  
Was sadly crossed.—Poor Leonard! when we parted,  
He took me by the hand, and said to me,  
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,  
To live in peace upon his father's land,  
And lay his bones among us.

Leonard. If that day  
Should come, 't would need be a glad day for him;  
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then  
As any that should meet him—

Priest. Happy! Sir—

Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their graves,  
And that he had one Brother—

Priest. That is but  
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth  
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;  
And Leonard being always by his side  
Had done so many offices about him,  
That, though he was not of a timid nature,  
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy  
In him was somewhat checked; and, when his Brother  
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,  
The little colour that he had was soon  
Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and pined, and pined—

Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-grown men!  

Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away; we took him to us;  
He was the child of all the dales—he lived  
Three months with one, and six months with another;  
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love;  
And many, many happy days were his.  
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief  
His absent Brother still was at his heart.  
And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found  
(A practice till this time unknown to him)  
That often, rising from his bed at night,  
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping  
He sought his brother Leonard.—You are moved!  
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,  
I judged you most unkindly.

Leonard. But this Youth,

How did he die at last!
Priest.

One sweet May-morning,
(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
With two or three companions, whom their course
Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun—till he, at length,
Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
The humour of the moment, lagged behind.
You see ye precipe;—it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called, The Pillar.
Upon its airy summit crowned with heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened; some ran to the lake:
They found him at the foot of that same rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies!

Leonard. And that then is his grave!—Before his death
You say that he saw many happy years!

Priest. Ay, that he did—

Leonard. And all went well with him!—

Priest. If he had one, the youth had twenty homes.

Leonard. And you believe, then, that his mind was easy!—

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talked about him with a cheerful love.

Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed end!

Priest. Nay, God forbid!—You recollect I mentioned
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath, and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong:
And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasp'd, we think,
His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock
It had been caught mid way; and there for years
It hung—and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended—
The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,—
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother!"
The Vicar did not hear the words; and now,
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreat
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short;
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him:—his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Eremont, and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

1800.

II.

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE.

(See the chronicles of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Milton's History of England.)

Where be the temples which, in Britain's Isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed!
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been,
ARTESTAL AND ELIDURE.

What wonder, then, if in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour!

Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,
While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;

Where flowers and herbs unite, and happily some
Weeds be,
That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief
Free!

A King more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighbouring countries through his righteous sway;

He poured rewards and honours on the good;
The oppressor he withstood;

And while he served the Gods with reverence due
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and cities grew.

He died, whom Artestal succeeds—his son;
But how unworthy of that sire was he!

A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.

From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
The nobles leagued their strength
With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased;

And, on the vacant throne, his worthier Brother placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;
In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.

Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed;

And, tired with slight's his pride no more could brook,
He towards his native country cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind—the voyage sped;
He landed; and, by many dangers scared,
'Poorly provided, poorly followed,'
To Calsterium's forest he repaired.

How changed from him who, born to highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troyovant, his seat by silver Thames's side!

From that wild region where the crownless King
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread,—the sum of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,
From which the dusky wild boar flies in fear;
And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
Behold the hunter train!
He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Eldure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser;—can it be!
Methinks that I should recognize that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity!
He gazed rejoicing,—and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed—
"It is the king, my brother!" and, by sound
Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
Feebly returned by daunted Artega;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
And apprehensions dark and criminal.
Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;
And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
Thus Eldure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

"By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met;
—O Brother! to my knowledge lost so long,
But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost,—forgive the wrong,
(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn:
I was their natural guardian; and 'tis just
That now I should restore what hath been held in trust."

A while the astonished Artega stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed: "To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power! me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom! spare the bitter scorn:
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the wide-spread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite."

"I do not blame thee," Eldure replied;
"But, if my looks did with my words agree,
I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessed place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak!

Were this same spear, which in my hand I grasp,
The British sceptre, here would I too thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this clam
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,
While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest thorn!"

Then Artega thus spake: "I only sought,
Within this realm a place of safe retreat;
Beware of reposing an ambitious thought;
Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet!
Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
Art pitifully blind:
Full soon this generous purpose thou may'st rue,
When that which has been done no wishes can undo.

Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and right with right?
But thou—I know not how inspired, how led—
Would'st change the course of things in all men's sight!
And this for one who cannot imitate
Thy virtue, who may hate:
For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign lord;

Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
Or even conceive; surpassing me in love
Far as in power the eagle doth the worm:
I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall."

"Believe it not," said Eldure; "respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire's boast;
This can thy own experience testify:
Nor shall thy foes deny
ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE.

That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

And what if o'er that bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and ensuic fortune past?
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The flight that glittered like a warrior's shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-coves.

But is that gloom dissolved! how passing clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than before!
Even so thy latent worth will re-appear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone;
Re-seated on thy throne,
Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow, have confirmed thy native right to reign.

But, not to overlook what thou may'st know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers;—let them calmly wait
Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realised."

The Story tells what courses were pursued,
Until king Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude,
Rose,—and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his brother's head the crown,
Reliniquished by his own
Then to his people cried, "Receive your lord,
Garbonian's first-born son, your rightful king restored!"

The people answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more;—heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth's noblest penitent; from bondage freed
Of vice—thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert.
Long did he reign; and, when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honoured bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a crown (tempation that hath set
Discred in hearts of men till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)

"Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of "pious Elidure!"

II.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I've watch'd you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

IV.

A FAREWELL.

Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell!—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chatels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Hence are they in our sight—we have no more.
Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!  
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;  
We leave you here in solitude to dwell  
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;  
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,  
Bright gowan, and marigold, farewell!  
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,  
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;  
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,  
Our own contrivance, Building without peer!  
—A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,  
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gathered,  
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,  
Will come to you; to you herself will wed;  
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,  
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown  
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,  
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,  
Making all kindness registered and known;  
Then for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,  
Fair in herself and beautiful alone,  
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,  
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show  
To them who look not daily on thy face;  
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,  
And say'st, when we forsake thee, “Let them go!”  
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race  
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,  
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,  
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best;  
Joy will be flown in its mortality;  
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.  
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast  
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;  
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,  
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep  
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;  
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep  
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,  
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;  
Two burning months let summer overlap,  
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,  
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.  

Thus often would we leave our peaceful home,  
And find elsewhere his business or delight;  
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:  
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,  
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:  
Oft could we see him driving full in view  
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;  
What ill was on him, what he had to do,  
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man  
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—  
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.  
Down would he sit; and without strength or power  
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:  
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,  
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,  
Retired in that sunshine shade he lay;  
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was  
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;  
For happier soul no living creature has  
Than he had, being here the long day through.  
Some thought he was a lover, and did wo;  
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong;  
But verse was what he had been wedded to;  
And his own mind did like a tempest strong  
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,  
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,  
A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,  
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly  
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

Heavy his low-lung'd lip did oft appear,
Depress't by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forefend I his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailed angel on a battle-day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers unfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery:
And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear:
No livelier love in such a place could be;
There did they dwell—from earthy labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly aste down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.

VI.

LOUISA.

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION.

I met Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May!

She loves her fire, her cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that 's mine 'beneath the moon,'
If I with her but half a moon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

VII.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide sea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

VIII.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:
POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

IX.

I travelled among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy’s eyes surveyed.

X.

Ere with cold beads of midnight dew
Had mingled tears of thine,
I grieved, fond Youth! that thou shouldst sue
To haughty Geraldine.

Immovable by generous sighs,
She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
An oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
Forgetting in thy care
How the fast-rooted trees can toss
Their branches in mid air.

The humblest rivulet will take
Its own wild liberties;
And, every day, the imprisoned lake
Is flowing in the breeze.

Then, crouch no more on supplicant knee,
But scorn with scorn outbrave;
A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave!

XI.

LOOK at the fate of summer flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a winter’s day;
What space hath Virgin’s beauty to disclose
Her sweets, and triumph o’er the breathing rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
‘To draw, out of the object of his eyes,’
The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, ‘a refined Form,’
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies.

XII.

THE FORSAKEN.

The peace which others seek they find;
The heaviest storms not longest last;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past;
When will my sentence be reversed?
I only pray to know the worst;
And wish as if my heart would burst.

O weary struggle! silent years
Tell seemingly no doubtful tale;
And yet they leave it short, and fears
And hopes are strong and will prevail.
My calmest faith escapes not pain;
And, feeling that the hope is vain,
I think that he will come again.

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XIII.

Tis said, that some have died for love:
And here and there a church-yard grave is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side:
He loved—the pretty Barbara died;
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made:

"Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak!
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way you smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the heavens depart:
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

Oh! what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it cease?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,
Into your row of willows sit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain-bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chained!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong you waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb!
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

Thou Eglandine, so bright with sunny showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,
Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.

For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear."

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

1800.

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XIV.

A COMPLAINT.

There is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter! if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

1806.

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XV.

TO

Lest other hards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot;
But thou art no such perfect thing:
Rejoice that thou art not!
Heed not tho' none should call thee fair;  
So, Mary, let it be  
If nought in loveliness compare  
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,  
Whose veil is unremoved  
Till heart with heart in concord beats,  
And the lover is beloved.

XVI.

Yes! thou art fair, yet be not moved  
To scorn the declaration,  
That sometimes I in thee have loved  
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir;  
Dear Maid, this truth believe,  
Minds that have nothing to confer  
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that nature made thee fit  
To feed my heart's devotion,  
By laws to which all Forms submit  
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.

XVII.

How rich that forehead's calm expanse!  
How bright that heaven-directed glance!  
—Waft her to glory, wing'd Powers,  
Ere sorrow be renewed,  
And intercourse with mortal hours  
Bring back a humbler mood!  
So looked Cecilia when she drew  
An Angel from his station;  
So looked; not ceasing to pursue  
Her tuneful adoration!

But hand and voice alike are still;  
No sound here sweeps away the will  
That gave it birth: in service meek  
One upright arm sustains the cheek,  
And one across the bosom lies—  
That rose, and now forgets to rise,  
Subdued by breathless harmonies  
Of meditative feeling;  
Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,  
Through the pure light of female eyes,  
Their sanctity revealing!

XVIII.

What heavenly smiles! O Lady mine  
Through my very heart they shine;  
And, if my brow gives back their light,  
De thou look gladdest on the sight;  
As the clear Moon with modest pride  
Beholds her own bright beams  
Reflected from the mountain's side  
And from the headlong streams.

XIX.

TO —

O dearer far than light and life are dear,  
Full oft our human foresight I deplore;  
Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear  
That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,  
Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;  
While all the future, for thy purer soul,  
With 'sober certainties' of love is blest.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,  
Tells that these words thy humbleness offend;  
Yet bear me up—else faltering in the rear  
Of a steep march: support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,  
And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;  
Through Thee communion with that Love I seek:  
The faith Heaven strengthens where he moulds the Creed.

XX.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR.

I.

Smile of the Moon!—for so I name  
That silent greeting from above;  
A gentle flash of light that came  
From her whom drooping captives love;  
Or art thou of still higher birth?  
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,  
My torpor to reprove!
II.
Bright boon of pitying Heaven!—ahs,
I may not trust thy placid cheer!
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and still;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III.
And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,
Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

IV.
To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wide realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the seal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V.
Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher—to be cast thus low!
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On sights of more ambitions show
Than the sweet flowers of the fields!
—It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

VI.
Yet how!—for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time;
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII.
Unhliest distinction! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains:
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone;—but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII.
A Woman rules my prison's key;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent!

IX.
Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court!
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport;
Nought but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burden to support.

X.
Hark! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle-clock!
From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
Reposèd upon the block!

XXI.
THE COMPLAINT
OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

[When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work Haaren's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.]

I.
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;
In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

II.
My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III.
Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

IV.
My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see;
—As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.

V.
My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

VI.
I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

VII.
Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

XXII.
THE LAST OF THE FLOCK.

I.
In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdily he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II.
He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide:
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, "My friend,
What ails you! wherefore weep you so?"
—"Shame on you, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock."
When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed;
They throng, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

Six Children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereto to buy us bread.
‘Do this: how can we give to you,’
They cried, ‘what to the poor is due!’

I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day.

Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.

*Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one;
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—
Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past.

To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me:
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And, crazily and wearily
I went my work about;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;
And then at last from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one:
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock.”

XXXIII.

REPENTANCE.

A PASTORAL BALLAD.

The fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
Would have brought us more good than a burthen
Of gold,
Could we but have been as contented as they.
When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
'Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped in
his hand;
But, Allan, be true to me, Allan,—we'll die
Before he shall go with an inch of the land!'

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers;
Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
We could do what we liked with the land, it was ours;
And for us the brook murmured that ran by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late;
And often, like one overburthened with sin,
With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate,
I look at the fields, but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer's
day,
Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
'What ails you, that you must come creeping to me?'

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad;
Our comfort was near if we ever were cross;
But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we had,
We slighted them all,—and our birth-right was lost.

Oh, ill-judging sire of an innocent son
Who must now be a wanderer! but peace to that
strain!
Think of evening's repose when our labour was done,
The sabbath's return; and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
Looking down on the kin,and our treasure of sheep
That besprinkled the field; 'twas like youth in my
blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,
That follows the thought—We've no land in the vale,
Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie!

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET.

I.

Where art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead!
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,

Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II.

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

III.

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Engenious, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

IV.

Ah! little doth the young-one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest dream,
Heard by his mother unaware!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

V.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, 'Pride shall help me in my wrong;
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed: ' and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

Chains tie us down by land and sea;  
And wishes, vain as mine, may be.  
All that is left to comfort thee.

VII.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,  
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men;  
Or thou upon a desert thrown  
Inheritest the lion's den;  
Or hast been summoned to the deep,  
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep  
An incommunicable sleep.

IX.

I look for ghosts; but none will force  
Their way to me: 'tis falsely said  
That there was ever intercourse  
Between the living and the dead;  
For, surely, then I should have sight  
Of him I wait for day and night,  
With love and longings infinite.

X.

My apprehensions come in crowds;  
I dread the rustling of the grass;  
The very shadows of the clouds  
Have power to shake me as they pass:  
I question things and do not find  
One that will answer to my mind;  
And all the world appears unkind.

XI.

Beyond participation lie  
My troubles, and beyond relief:  
If any chance to heave a sigh,  
They pity me, and not my grief.  
Then come to me, my Son, or send  
Some tidings that my woes may end;  
I have no other earthly friend!

xxv.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT.  
BY MY SISTER.

The days are cold, the nights are long,  
The north-wind sings a doleful song;  
Then hush again upon my breast;  
All merry things are now at rest,  
Save thee, my pretty Love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,  
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;

There's nothing stirring in the house  
Save one weak, hungry, nibbling mouse,  
Then why so busy thou?

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;  
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright  
On the window pane bedecked with rain:  
Then, little Darling! sleep again,  
And wake when it is day.

xxvi.

MATERNAL GRIEF.

Departed Child! I could forget thee once  
Though at my bosom nursed; this woeful gain  
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul  
Is present and perpetually abides  
A shadow, never, never to be displaced  
By the returning substance, seen or touched,  
Seen by mine eyes, or clapsed in my embrace.  
Absence and death how differ they! and how  
Shall I admit that nothing can restore  
What one short sigh so easily removed!—  
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,  
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,  
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!

The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale  
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air  
That sanctifies its confines, and partook  
Reflected beams of that celestial light  
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth  
Not unvouchsafed—a light that warmed and  
cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind  
Which, in her own blest nature, rooted deep,  
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,  
And not hers only, their peculiar charms  
Unfolded,—beauty, for its present self,  
And for its promises to future years,  
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn  
A pair of Leverets each provoking each  
To a continuance of their fearless sport,  
Two separate Creatures in their several gifts  
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all  
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,  
Their starts of motion and their fits of rest,  
An indistinguishable style appears  
And character of gladness, as if Spring  
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit  
Of the rejoicing morning were their own.
POEMS FOUND ON THE AFFECTIONS.

Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen,
Ere, poucing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate; for oft-times from the sound
Of the survivor’s sweetest voice (dear child,
He knew it not) and from his happiest looks,
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother’s presence, shunned with
fear.
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy where’er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Pain colour over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered; and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields; and when the glare of day
Is gone, and twilight to the Mother’s wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary is the lost One’s grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of
Heaven
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart,
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

XXXVII.

THE SAILOR’S MOTHER.

One morning (raw it was and wet—
A foggy day in winter time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:

Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron’s was her mien and gait.

The ancient spirit is not dead;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begged an alms, like one in poor estate;
I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
"What is it," said I, "that you bear,
Beneath the covert of your Cloak,
Protected from this cold damp air!"
She answered, soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

And, thus continuing, she said,
"I had a Son, who many a day
Sailed on the seas, but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away;
And I have travelled weary miles to see
If sought which he had own; might still remain
for me.

The bird and cage they both were his;
’Twas my Son’s bird; and neat and trim
He kept it: many voyages
The singing-bird had gone with him;
When last he sailed, he left the bird behind;
From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his mind.

He to a fellow-lodger’s care
Had left it, to be watched and fed,
And pipe its song in safety;—there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I bear it with me, Sir;—he took such delight
in it."

1809.

THE CHILDLESS FATHER.

"Up, Timothy, up with your staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton’s grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds."

—Of cows and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as
snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.
XXIX.

THE EMISSARY MOTHER.

Once in a lonely hamlet I sojourned
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned,
In friendship she to me would often tell.

This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighbouring cottage; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there.

Once having seen her clasp with fond embrace
This Child, I chanted to myself a lay,
Endeavouring, in our English tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Babe might say:
And thus, from what I heard and knew, or guessed,
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

"Dear Babe, thou daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother!
An infant's face and looks are thine
And sure a mother's heart is mine:
Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labour in the harvest field:
Thy little sister is at play;
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me!

* In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a bush full of sprigs of box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.
She with her mother crossed the sea;
The babe and mother near me dwell;
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well;
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any child more dear!

VII.
—I cannot help it; ill intent
I've none, my pretty Innocent!
I weep—I know they do thee wrong,
These tears—and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good;
Thine eyes are on me—they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face,
My heart again is in its place!

VIII.
While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee:
Here's grass to play with, here are flowers;
I'll call thee by my darling's name;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little sister thou shalt be;
And, when one more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of Thee."

XXX.

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA.

The following tale was written as an Episodio, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.

O happy time of youthful lovers (thus
My story may begin) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!
To such inheritance of blessed fancy
(Fancy that sports more desperately with minds
Than ever fortune hath been known to do)
The high-born Vaudracour was brought, by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small repute,
Among the vine-clad mountains of Auvergne,
Was the Youth's birth-place. There he wooed a
Maid
Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit
With answering vows. Plebeian was the stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock,
From which her graces and her honours sprung:
And hence the father of the enamoured Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the thought
Of such alliance.—From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several homes,
Twins had they been in pleasure; after strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond again;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay;
And, in their happiest moments, not content,
If more divided than a sportive pair
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering
Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighbouring billows from each other's sight.

Thus, not without concurrence of an age
Unknown to memory, was an earnest given
By ready nature for a life of love;
For endless constancy, and placid truth;
But whatsoever of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for support
Of their maturer years, his present mind
Was under fascination;—he beheld
A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring;
Life turned the meanest of her implements,
Before his eyes, to price above all gold;
The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine;
Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn; all paradise
Could, by the simple opening of a door,
Let itself in upon him:—pathways, walks,
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank,
Surecharged, within him, overblest to move
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares;
A man too happy for mortality!

So passed the time, till whether through effect
Of some unguarded moment that dissolved
Virtuous restraint,—ah, speak it, think it, not!
Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who saw
So many bars between his present state
And the dear haven where he wished to be
In honourable wedlock with his Love,
Was in his judgment tempted to decline
To perilous weakness, and entrust his cause
To nature for a happy end of all;
Deem that by such fond hope the Youth was swayed,
And bear with their transgression, when I add
VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA.

That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.

To conceal
The threatened shame, the parents of the Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforewarned, that in some distant spot
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning came,
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his loss,
And all uncertain whether he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; but soon
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's retreat.
Easily may the sequel be divined—
Walks to and fro—watchings at every hour;
And the fair Captive, who, whence'er she may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within reach,
About the pendent nest, did thus esp
Her Lover; thence a stolen interview,
Accomplished under friendly shade of night.

I pass the raptures of the pair—such theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion; chiefly by that darling bard
Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its time,
And of the streams that laced the severing clouds
In the unrelenting east—Through all her courts
The vacant city slept; the busy winds,
That keep no certain intervals of rest,
Moved not; meanwhile the galaxy displayed
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft;—momentous but uneasy bliss!
To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
On that brief meeting's slender filament!

They parted; and the generous Vaudraceour
Reached speedily the native threshold, bent
On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
A sacrifice of birthright to attain
A final portion from his father's hand;
Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom then would flee
To some remote and solitary place,
Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
Where they may live, with no one to behold
Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
But now of this no whisper; not the less,
If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
Touching the matter of his passion, still,
In his stern father's hearing, Vaudraceour
Persisted openly that death alone
Should abrogate his human privilege
Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.

"You shall be baffled in your mad intent
If there be justice in the court of France."
Muttered the Father.—From these words the Youth
Conceived a terror; and, by night or day,
Stirred nowhere without weapons, that full soon
Found dreadful provocation: for at night
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armed men,
Acting, in furtherance of the father's will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One the rash Youth's ungovernable hand
Slew, and as quickly to a second gave
A perilous wound—he shuddered to behold
The breathless corpse; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,
And wore the fetters of a criminal.

Have you observed a tuft of winged seed
That, from the dandelion's naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro
Through the wide element! or have you marked
The heavier substances of a leaf-clad bough,
Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented! by such aid you may conceive
The perturbation that ensued;—ah, no!
Desperate the Maid—the Youth is stained with
blood;
Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet!
Yet as the troubled seed and tortured bough
Is Man, subjected to despotie sway.

For him, by private influence with the Court,
Was pardon gained, and liberty procured;
But not without exaction of a pledge,
Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
He flew to her from whom they would divide him—
He clave to her who could not give him peace—
Yes, his first word of greeting was,—"All right
Is gone from me; my lately-towering hopes,
To the least fibre of their lowest root,
Are withered; thou no longer canst be mine,
I thine—the conscience-stricken must not woo
The unruflled Innocent,—I see thy face,
Behold thee, and my misery is complete!"

"One, are we not?" exclaimed the Maiden—"One,
For innocence and youth, for weal and woe!"
Then with the father's name she coupled words
Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
, Checked her with filial meekness; for no thought
Uncharitable crossed his mind, no sense
Of hasty anger rising in the eclipse
Of true domestic loyalty, did e'er
Find place within his bosom.—Once again
The persevering wedge of tyranny
Achieved their separation: and once more
Were they united,—to be yet again
Disparted, pitiable lot! But here
A portion of the tale may well be left
In silence, though my memory could add
Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,
Was traversed from without; much, too, of thoughts
That occupied his days in solitude
Under privation and restraint; and what,
Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
And what, through strong compunction for the past,
He suffered—breaking down in heart and mind!

Doomed to a third and last captivity,
His freedom he recovered on the eve
Of Julia's travail. When the babe was born,
Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes
Of future happiness. “You shall return,
Julia,” said he, “and to your father's house
Go with the child.—You have been wretched; yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.
Malice, beholding you, will melt away.
Go!—tis a town where both of us were born;
None will reproach you, for our truth is known;
And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate
Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
With ornaments—the prettiest, nature yields
Or art can fashion, shall you deck our boy,
And feed his countenance with your own sweet looks
Till no one can resist him.—Now, even now,
I see him sporting on the sunny lawn;
My father from the window sees him too;
Startled, as if some new-created thing
Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods
Bounded before him;—but the unwept Child
Shall by his beauty win his grandsire's heart
So that it shall be softened, and our loves
End happily, as they began!”

Those gleams
Appeared but seldom; often was he seen
Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother's bosom; resting thus
His head upon one breast, while from the other
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.

—That pillow is no longer to be thine,
Fond Youth! that mournful solace now must pass
Into the list of things that cannot be!
Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
The sentence, by her mother's lip pronounced,
That dooms her to a convent.—Who shall tell,
Who dares report, the tidings to the lord
Of her affections! so they blindly asked
Who knew not to what quiet depths a weight
Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down:
The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
Composed and silent, without visible sign
Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
When the impatient object of his love
Upbraided him with slackness, he returned
No answer, only took the mother's hand
And kissed it; seemingly devoid of pain,
Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed,
Was a dependant on the obdurate heart
Of one who came to disunite their lives
For ever,—sad alternative! preferred,
By the unbending Parents of the Maid,
To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
—So be it!

In the city he remained
A season after Julia had withdrawn
To those religious walls. He, too, departs—
Who with him!—even the senseless Little-one.
With that sole charge he passed the city-gates,
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
That rose a brief league distant from the town,
The dwellers in that house where he had lodged
Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
Impelled;—they parted from him there, and stood
Watching below till he had disappeared
On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took,
Throughout that journey, from the vehicle
(Slow-moving ark of all his hopes!) that veiled
The tender infant: and at every inn,
And under every hospitable tree
At which the bearers halted or reposed,
Laid him with timid care upon his knees,
And looked, as mothers ne'er were known to look,
Upon the nursing which his arms embraced.

This was the manner in which Vautracour
Departed with his infant; and thus reached
His father's house, where to the innocent child
Admittance was denied. The young man spake
No word of indignation or reproof,
But of his father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him
THE IDIOT BOY.

Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants required;
For wishes he had none. To a lodge that stood
Deep in a forest, with leaves given, at the age
Of four-and-twenty summers he withdrew;
And thither took with him his motherless Babe,
And one domestic for their common needs,
An aged woman. It condoled him here
To attend upon the orphan, and perform
Obsequious service to the precious child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died.—
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which:
Their be the blame who caused the woe, not mine!

From this time forth he never shared a smile
With mortal creature. An Inhabitant
Of that same town, in which the pair had left
So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
By chance of business, coming within reach
Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
Repaired, but only found the matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
For that her Master never uttered word
To living thing—not even to her.—Behold!
While they were speaking, Vautracour approached;
But, seeing some one near, as on the latch
Of the garden-gate his hand was laid, he shrunk—
And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
Shocked at his savage aspect, from the place
The visitor retired.

Thus lived the Youth
Cut off from all intelligence with man,
And shunning even the light of common day;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through
France Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

Searcely a soul is out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burn at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein!

But Betty's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she sees they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
Whereby the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done! what will betide!

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a hurriedly now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.
And Betty o' er and o' er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,—
Come home again, what' er befal,
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the Pony's side;
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead:
The Moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship:
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He's at the guide-post—he turns right;
She watches till he's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
Her Messenger's in merry tune;
The owlets hoot, the owlets cur,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree;
For of this Pony there's a rumour,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And when he thinks, his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not so much hurried:
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.
THE IDIOT BOY.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
"As sure as there's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he'll be back again;
They'll both be here—'tis almost ten—
Both will be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—"He must be near,"
Quoth Betty, "and will soon be here,
As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Betty is not yet in sight:
—The Moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
"A little idle sumnering Thing!"
With other names, an endless string;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
"How can it be he is so late!
The Doctor, he has made him wait;
Susan! they'll both be here anon."

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad quandary;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay!
—She's in a sad quandary.

The clock is on the stroke of one,
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road;
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mishances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, "God forbid it should be true!"
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
"Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

I must be gone, I must away:
Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb—"
"Oh God forbid!" poor Susan cries.

"What can I do?" says Betty, going,
"What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
I fear you're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

"Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There's nothing that can ease my pain."
Then off she flies; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green;
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
A thought with which her heart is sore—
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

"Oh saints! what is become of him!
Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

Or him that wicked Pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall."
At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
"If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony had his share.

But now she's fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor's door she cries;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

"Oh Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny!"
"I'm here, what's 't you want with me?"
"Oh Sir! you know I'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him—him you often see;

He's not so wise as some folks be?"
"The devil take his wisdom!" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
"What, Woman! should I know of him?"
And, grumbling, he went back to bed!

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh! what a wretched Mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she flies,
No wonder if her senses fail;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
"O cruel! I'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was never before,
There's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lost she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
"Oh dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head:
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing!
What they've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.
THE IDIOT BOY.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Your valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures:
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befell;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind!
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me!
And can ye thus unfriended leave me;
Ye Muses! whom I love so well!

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse!

Unto his horse—there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy every where;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

"Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You've done your best, and that is all:" She took the reins, when this was said, And gently turned the Pony's head From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road!
Who is it, but old Susan Gale!
Long time lay Susan lost in thought;
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

"Alas! what is become of them!
These fears can never be endured;
I'll to the wood."—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward went;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, "Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen:
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you.)
"The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold!"
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

XXXII.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—enriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Uprox the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,  
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,  
When others heeded not, He heard the South  
Make subterraneous music, like the noise  
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills,  
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock  
Betrayed him, and he to himself would say,  
"The winds are now devising work for me!"  
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives  
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him  
Up to the mountains: he had been alone  
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,  
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.  
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.  
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose  
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,  
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.  
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed  
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step  
He had so often climbed; which had impressed  
So many incidents upon his mind  
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;  
Which, like a book, preserved the memory  
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,  
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts  
The certainty of honourable gain;  
Those fields, those hills—what could they less!  
Had laid  
Strong hold on his affections, were to him  
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.  
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—  
Though younger than himself full twenty years.  
She was a woman of a stirring life,  
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had  
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;  
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest  
It was because the other was at work.  
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,  
An only Child, who had been born to them  
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began  
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,  
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,  
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,  
The one of an inestimable worth,  
Made all their household. I may truly say,  
That they were as a proverb in the vale  
For endless industry. When day was gone,  
And from their occupations out of doors  
The Son and Father were come home, even then,  
Their labour did not cease; unless when all  
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,  
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,  
Sat round the basket piled with eaten cakes,  
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal  
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)  
And his old Father both betook themselves  
To such convenient work as might employ  
Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card  
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair  
Some injury done to sickle, thal, or scythe,  
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,  
That in our ancient uncouth country style  
With huge and black projection overbrowed  
Large space beneath, as duly as the light  
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;  
An aged utensil, which had performed  
Service beyond all others of its kind.  
Early at evening did it burn—and late,  
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,  
Which, going by from year to year, had found,  
And left the couple neither gay perhaps  
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,  
Living a life of eager industry.  
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,  
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,  
Father and Son, while far into the night  
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,  
Making the cottage through the silent hours  
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.  
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,  
And was a public symbol of the life  
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,  
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground  
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,  
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,  
And westward to the village near the lake;  
And from this constant light, so regular  
And so far seen, the House itself, by all  
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,  
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,  
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs  
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart  
This son of his old age was yet more dear—  
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same  
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—  
Than that a child, more than all other gifts  
That earth can offer to declining man,  
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,  
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail,
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sat with a fotted sheep before him stretched
Under the large oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thenze in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE *, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now! that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again!

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In sorety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom less like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman’s help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done! Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"

At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There’s Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar’s wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—“Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meet and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke’s best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he could go, the Boy should go to-night.”

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael’s side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep;
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, “Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die.”
The Youth made answer with a jovial voice;

And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over: Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke’s. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
“He shall depart to-morrow.” To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet’s edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him:—“My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; ‘twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First camest into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father’s tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother’s breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived:
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from three score years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three years past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go.
"

At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands."
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
to see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale—do thou thy part;
I will do mine. I will begin again
With many tasks that were assigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love; when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,

When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'rt bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befal thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped
down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming
peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To shun in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE.

His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the beauteous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

XXXII.

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE.

How beautiful when up a lofty height
Honour ascends among the humblest poor,
And feeling sinks as deep! See there the door
Of One, a Widow, left beneath a weight
Of blamless debt. On evil Fortune's spite
She wasted no complaint, but strove to make
A just repayment, both for conscience-sake
And that herself and hers should stand upright
In the world's eye. Her work when daylight failed
Paused not, and through the depth of night she kept
Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
With some, the noble Creature never slept;
But, one by one, the band of death assaulted
Her children from her lowest heart bewept.

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her tears to flow,
Till a winter's noon-day placed her buried Son
Before her eyes, last child of many gone—
His raiment of angelic white, and lo!
His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
Which they are touching; yeas far brighter, even
As that which comes, or seems to come, from heaven,
Surpasses all these elements can shew.
Much she rejoiced, trusting that from that hour
Whate'er befell she could not grieve or pine;
But the Transfigured, in and out of season,
Appeared, and spiritual presence gained a power
Over material forms that mastered reason.
Oh, gracious Heaven, in pity make her thine!

But why that prayer! As if to her could come
No good but by the way that leads to bliss
Through Death,—so judging we should judge amiss.
Since reason failed and it was her threatened doom,
Yet frequent transports mitigate the gloom;
Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
The air or laugh upon a precipice;
No, passing through strange sufferings toward the tomb
She smiles as if a martyr's crown were won:
Oft, when light breaks through clouds or waving trees,
With outspread arms and fallen upon her knees
The Mother hailed in her descending Son
An Angel, and in earthly ecstacies
Her own angelic glory seems begun.

XXXIV.

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE.

[The subject of the following poem is from the Orlandus
of the author's friend, Kasius Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledg-
ment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the pity and chivalry of the olden time.]

You have heard 'a Spanish Lady
How she wooed an English man*;
Hear now of a fair Armenian,
Daughter of the proud Soldan;
How she loved a Christian Slave, and told her pain
By word, look, deed, with hope that he might love again.

* See, in Percy's Reliques, that fine old ballad, "The Spanish Lady's Love;" from which Poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.
“Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,”
Said she, lifting up her veil;
“Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale.”
“Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
From twig or bed an humbler flower, even for your sake!”

“Grieved am I, submissive Christian!
To behold thy captive state;
Women, in your land, may pity
(May they not?) the unfortunate.”
“Yes, kind Lady! otherwise man could not hear
Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care.”

“Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs;
Thee from bondage would I rescue
And from vile indignities;
Nurtured, as thy men bespeaks, in high degree,
Look up—and help a hand that longs to set thee free.”

“Lady! dread the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father’s rage:
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it came.”

“Generous Frank! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure:
Hardships for the brave encountered,
Even the feeblest may endure:
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind
My father for slave’s work may seek a slave in mind.”

“Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm!”
“Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm:
Leading such companion I that gilded dome,
You minarets, would gladly leave for his worst home!”

“Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess!
And your brow is free from scorn,
Else these words would come like mockery,
Sharper than the pointed thorn.”
“Whence the undeserved mistrust! Too wide apart
Our faith hath been,—O would that eyes could see the heart!”

“Tempt me not, I pray; my doom is
These base implements to wield;
Rusty lance, I ne’er shall grasp thee,
Ne’er assail my cobweb’d shield!
Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
Nor Her who thinking of me there counts widowed hours.”

“Prisoner! pardon youthful fancies;
Wedded! If you can, say no!
Blessed is and be your consort;
Hopes I cherished—let them go!
Handmaid’s privilege would leave my purpose free,
Without another link to my felicity.”

“Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare;
Bony, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair.”
“Humble love in me would look for no return,
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn.”

“Gracious Allah! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod!
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven dost wear!
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt! where am I! where!”

Here broke off the dangerous converse:
Less impassioned words might tell
How the pair escaped together,
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart while through her father’s door,
And from her narrow world, she passed for evermore.
XIV.

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps; she shrunk from trust
In a sensual creed that trampled
Woman's birthright into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
If she, a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

XV.

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge:
In those old romantic days
Mighty were the soul’s commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

XVI.

Thought inform ne’er came between them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest-fruit with social hands;
Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moonbeam
Bend with the breeze their heads, beside a crystal stream.

XVII.

On a friendly deck repose,
They at length for Venice steer;
There, when they had closed their voyage,
One, who daily on the pier
Watched for tidings from the East, beheld his Lord,
Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not uttering word.

XVIII.

Mutual was the sudden transport;
Breathless questions followed fast,
Years contracting to a moment,
Each word greedier than the last;
"Hie thee to the Countess, friend! return with speed,
And of this Stranger speak by whom her lord was freed.

XIX.

Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompense, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient place.

XX.

Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by beams of gospel-light."

XXI.

Swiftly went that grey-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks and praises, each a gage
For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger’s way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

XXII.

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls,
Runs a deafening noise of welcome!—
Blest, though every tear that falls
Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

XXIII.

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

XXIV.

On the ground the weeping Countess
Kneel, and kissed the Stranger’s hand;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal bond:
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

XXV.

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,
Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister, loved.
Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only strife.
XXV.

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded Wives—
Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on
earth.

1820.

XXXV.

LOVING AND LIKING:  
IMPROVING TUNES,
ADDRESSED TO A CHILD.

(By My Sisters.)

There's more in words than I can teach:
Yet listen, Child!—I would not preach;
But only give some plain directions
To guide your speech and your affections
Say not you love a roasted fowl,
But you may love a screaming owl,
And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode
Within the mousy garden wall
When evening dews begin to fall.
Oh mark the beauty of his eye:
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel in his head:
And when, upon some showery day,
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavour
To take the intruder into favour;
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love him in the pool,
That is for him a happy school,
In which he swims as taught by nature,
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
A love for things that have no feeling:
The spring's first rose by you copied,
May fill your breast with joyful pride;
And you may love the strawberry-flower,
And love the strawberry in its bower;
But when the fruit, so often praised
For beauty, to your lip is raised,

Say not you love the delicate treat,
But like it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat,

Long may you love your pensioner mouse,
Though one of a tribe that torment the house:
Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat,
Deadly foe both of mouse and rat;
Remember she follows the law of her kind,
And Instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
Her tread that would scarcely crush a worm,
And her soothing song by the winter fire,
Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.

I would not circumscribe your love:
It may soar with the eagle and brood with the dove,
May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
Loving and liking are the solace of life,
Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-bed of
strife.

You love your father and your mother,
Your grown-up and your baby brother;
You love your sister, and your friends,
And countless blessings which God sends:
And while these right affections play,
You live each moment of your day;
They lead you on to full content,
And likings fresh and innocent,
That store the mind, the memory feed,
And prompt to many a gentle deed;
But likings come, and pass away;
'Tis love that remains till our latest day:
Our heavenward guide is holy love,
And will be our bliss with saints above.

1822.

XXXVI.

FAREWELL LINES.

'Hom bliss is only for a higher state,'
But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
With patience merit the reward of peace,
Peace ye deserve; and may the solid good,
Sought by a wise though late exchange, and here
With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-roof
To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
Nor for the world's best promises renounced.
Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
That lonely union, privacy so deep,
Such calm employments, such entire content.
So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
A pair of herons oft-times have I seen,
Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease;
And so, when night with grateful gloom had fallen,
Two glow-worms in such nearness that they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their repose.—

When wandering among lakes and hills I note,
Once more, those creatures thus by nature paired,
And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, will they repay the debt,
And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends! shall meet again.

XXXVII.

THE REDBREAST.

(SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND COTTAGE.)

Driven in by Autumn’s sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures bare,
Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home:
Not like a beggar is he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
 Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.
But pensive fancies putting by,
And wild-sound sorrows, speedily
He plays the expert ventrioliast;
And, caught by glimpses now—now missed,
Puzzles the listener with a doubt
If the soft voice he throws about
Comes from within doors or without!
Was ever such a sweet confusion,
Sustained by delicate illusion!
He’s at your elbow—to your feeling
The notes are from the floor or ceiling;
And there’s a riddle to be guessed,
’Till you have marked his heaving chest,
And busy throat whose sink and swell,
Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
In Robin’s bosom, as a chosen cell.

Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird
If seen, and with like pleasure stirred
Command him, when he’s only heard.

But small and fugitive our gain
Compared with hers who long hath lain,
With languid limbs and patient head
Reposing on a lone sick-bed;
Where now, she daily hears a strain
That cheateth her of too busy cares,
Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
And who but this dear Bird beguiled
The fever of that pale-faced Child;
Now cooling, with his passing wing,
Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring:
Recalling now, with descent soft
Shed round her pillow from aloft,
Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
And the invisible sympathy
Of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Blessing the bed she lies upon!'
And sometimes, just as listening ends
In slumber, with the cadence blends
A dream of that low-warbled hymn
Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim
Lamps of faith, now burning dim,
Say that the Cherubs carved in stone,
When clouds gave way at dead of night
And the ancient church was filled with light,
Used to sing in heavenly tone,
Above and round the sacred places
They guard, with winged baby-faces.

Thrice happy Creature! in all lands
Nurtured by hospitable hands:
Free entrance to this cot has he,
Entrance and exit both yet free;
And, when the keen unruffled weather
That thus brings man and bird together,
Shall with its pleasantness be past,
And easement closed and door made fast,
To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season’s rage
For the whole house is Robin’s cage.
Whether the bird fit here or there,
O’er table lift, or perch on chair,
Though some may frown and make a stir,
To scare him as a trespasser,
And he believe will flinch or start,
Good friends he has to take his part;
One chiefly, who with voice and look
Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
Where sits the Dame, and hears away.

* The words—

‘Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on,‘

are part of a child’s prayer, still in general use through the northern counties.
POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

XXXVIII.

HER EYES ARE WILD.

I.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II.

"Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle, here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III.

A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me;
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

IV.

Ouch, little babe, oh ouch again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It lessens something at my chest;

About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree:
It comes to cool my babe and me.

V.

Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI.

Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII.

Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own!—and, if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love;
And what if my poor cheek be brown!
'Tis well for me, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII.

Dread not their taunts, my little life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed;
From him no harm my babe can take;
But he, poor man! is wretched made;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IX.</th>
<th>X.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'll teach my boy the sweetest things:</td>
<td>Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!</td>
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<tr>
<td>I'll teach him how the owlet sings.</td>
<td>For I thy own dear mother am:</td>
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<tr>
<td>My little babe! thy lips are still,</td>
<td>My love for thee has well been tried:</td>
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<tr>
<td>And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.</td>
<td>I've sought thy father far and wide:</td>
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<td>—Where art thou gone, my own dear child!</td>
<td>I know the poisons of the shade:</td>
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<td>What wicked looks are those I see!</td>
<td>I know the earth-nuts fit for food:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alas! alas! that look so wild,</td>
<td>Then, pretty dear, be not afraid:</td>
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<tr>
<td>It never, never came from me:</td>
<td>We'll find thy father in the wood:</td>
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<tr>
<td>If thou art mad, my pretty lad,</td>
<td>Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then I must be for ever sad.</td>
<td>And there, my babe, we'll live for aye.</td>
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1795.
POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such incidents, and renew the gratification of such feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

I.

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a Vernon tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
The steps of June; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between
Them and their object: but, meanwhile, prevailed
Such an entire contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length 1 to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
Vised with this waterfall, and made a song,
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;
But 'twas the foliage of the rocks—the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And, on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,

"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My Emma, I will dedicate to thee."
—Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of Emma's Dell.

1809.

II.

TO JOANNA.

Amid the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fire-side,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence be taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath these lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour, the old steeple-tower,
The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

Came forth to greet me; and when he had asked,
"How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid?
And when will she return to us?" he paused;
And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like an Uncle Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out
Some uncounted name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.
—Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engendered between malice and true love,
I was not loth to be so catechised,
And this was my reply:—"As it befell,
One summer morning we had walked abroad
At break of day; Joanna and myself.
—'Twas that delightful season when the broom,
Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copse runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And when we came in front of that tall rock
That eastward looks, I there stopped short—and
stood
Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
—When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a deep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavaun; Hammar-scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet;—back out of the clouds
Of Grasmere southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
—Now whether (said I to our cordial Friend,
Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smiled in my face) this were in simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impalpable
To me alone imparted, sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my side

The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
To shelter from some object of her fear.
—And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true,
I chiselled out in those rude characters
Joanna's name deep in the living stone:—
And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
Have called the lovely rock, Joanna's Rock." 1809.

Note.—In Cumberland and Westmorland are several Inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.
The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydal, falls into Wynnecotmore. On Helmcrag, that impressive single mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or caverns, which in the language of the country are called duncans. Most of the mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

III.

There is an Eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun;
We can behold it from our orchard-seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteor make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.
1809.

IV.

A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.

Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:
And there myself and two beloved Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
—-Ill suits the road with one in haste; but we
Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore—
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
—-And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the queen Osmunda named;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
—-So fared we that bright morning: from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
"Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
"The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time."
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereas he turned his head
To greet us—and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musings and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
—-Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncease indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears.

1830.

V.

TO M. H.

Our walk was far among the ancient trees:
There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
But a thick umbrage—checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches—of itself had made
A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone-basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts:
And therefore, my sweet Mary, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You!

1800.
POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.

VI.

When, to the attractions of the busy world,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habituation in this peaceful vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow.
Upon a hill
At a short distance from my cottage stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloisteral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.
Here, in a safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And, sometimes, on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was I loth
To sympathise with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired.—A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of fir; and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush’s nest;
A last year’s nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees; all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes,
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock,
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove,—
Some nook where they had made their final stand,
Huddling together from two fears—the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
In such perplexed and intricate array;
That vainly did I seek, beneath their stems
A length of open space, where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care;
And, baffled thus, though earth from day to day
Was fettered, and the air by storm disturbed,
I ceased the shelter to frequent,—and priz’d,
Less than I wished to prize, that calm recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood

Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
For what was now so obvious. To abide,
For an allotted interval of ease,
Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
From the wild sea a cherished Visitor;
And with the sight of this same path—begun,
Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
That, to this opportune recess allured,
He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot
That haunts the Sailor measuring o’er and o’er
His short domain upon the vessel’s deck,
While she pursues her course through the dreary sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite’s pleasant shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills
And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
Year followed year, my Brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other’s mind was fashioned; and at length,
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a School-boy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections; Nature there
Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A silent Poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man’s touch.
—Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name,—and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong;
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver-how, and Grasmere’s peaceful lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark fires, a visionary scene!
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of cloudless splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel’s deck
In some far region, here, while o’er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,  
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,  
Alone I tread this path;—for aught I know,  
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store  
Of indistinguishable sympathies,  
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day  
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet  
A second time, in Grasmere’s happy Vale.  

Note.—This wish was not granted; the lamented Person  
not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his  
duty as Commander of the Honourable East India  
Company’s Vessel, the Earl of Abergavenny.  

VII.  

Forth from a jutting ridge, around whose base  
Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks ascend  
In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair  
Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,  
O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,  
Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes

Ever beheld. Up-lead with mutual help,  
To one or other brow of those twin Peaks  
Were too adventurous Sisters wont to climb,  
And took no note of the hour while thence they  
gazed,  
The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by  
side,  
In speechless admiration. I, a witness  
And frequent sharer of their calm delight  
With thankful heart, to either Eminence  
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.  
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand  
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love  
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles—  
That, while the generations of mankind  
Follow each other to their hiding-place  
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure  
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced  
With like command of beauty—grant your aid  
For Mary's humble, Sarah's silent, claim,  
That their pure joy in nature may survive  
From age to age in blended memory.  

1843.
POEMS OF THE FANCY.

I.

A MORNING EXERCISE.

Fancy, who leads the pastimes of the glad,  
Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to throw;  
Sending sad shadows after things not sad,  
Peopling the harmless fields with signs of woe:  
Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry  
Becomes an echo of man's misery.

Blithe ravens croak of death; and when the owl  
Tries his two voices for a favourite strain—  
Tu-whit—Tu-who! the unsuspecting fowl  
Forebodes mishap or seems but to complain;  
Fancy, intent to harness and annoy,  
Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,  
Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;  
A feathered task-master cries, "Work away!"  
And, in thy iteration, "Whoop poor Will!"  
Is heard the spirit of a toil-worn slave,  
Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave.

What wonder! at her bidding, ancient lays  
Steeped in dire grief the voice of Phoebus;  
And that fleet messenger of summer days,  
The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell;  
But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark  
To melancholy service—hark! O hark!

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,  
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed;  
But He is risen, a later star of dawn,  
Glittering and twinkling near thy rosy cloud;  
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark;  
The happiest bird that sprung out of the Ark!

Hail, blest above all kinds!—Supremely skilled  
Restless with fixed to balance, high with low,  
Thou leavest the halcyon free her hopes to build  
On such forbearance as the deep may show;  
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly ties,  
Leavest to the wandering bird of paradise.

* See Waterton's Wanderings in South America.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the meek dove;  
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee;  
So constant with thy downward eye of love;  
Yet, in aerial singleness, so free;  
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice  
In power of wing and never-wearied voice.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,  
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain,  
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)  
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:  
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing  
All independent of the leafy spring.

How would it please old Ocean to partake,  
With sailors longing for a breeze in vain,  
The harmony thy notes most gladly make  
Where earth resembles most his own domain!  
Urnun's self might welcome with pleased ear  
These matins mounting towards her native sphere.

Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no bars  
To day-light known dexter from that pursuit,  
'Tis well that some sage instinct, when the stars  
Come forth at evening, keeps Thee still and mute;  
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline  
Wert thou among them, singing as they shine!

II.

A FLOWER GARDEN,

AT COBHAM HALL, LANCASHIRE.

Tell me, ye Zephyrs! that unfold,  
While fluttering o'er this gay recess,  
Finions that famed the teeming mould  
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,  
Did only softly-stealing hours  
There close the peaceful lives of flowers?

Say, when the moving creatures saw  
All kinds commingled without fear,  
Prevailed a like indulgent law  
For the still growths that prosper here!  
Did wanton fawn and kid forbear  
The half-blown rose, the lily spare?
Or peeped they often from their beds
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads
A bosom to the sun endeared!
If such their harsh untimely doom,
It falls not here on bud or bloom.

All summer long the happy Eve
Of this fair Spot her flowers may bind,
Nor e’er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find
That love for little things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian fence is wound,
So subtly are our eyes beguiled
We see not nor suspect a bound,
No more than in some forest wild;
The sight is free as air—or crest
Only by art in nature lost.

And, though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feed on never-sullied dew,
Ye, gentle breezes from the west,
With all the ministers of hope
Are tempted to this sunny slope!

And hither throns of birds resort;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests;
While hare and leverets, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate Enclosure shews
Of modest kindness, that would hide
The firm protection she bestows;
Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Ensuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse—her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart,
She left that farewell offering,
Memento for some docile heart;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth’s willing Page;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy’s Shade.

III.

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o’er the wood with startling sound;
Then—all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.

Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.

From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o’er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where e’er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all slip and hop;
There’s not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and every where
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the ministrelsy.

IV.

THE WATERFALL AND THE EOLANTINE

I.

"Knows, thou fond presumptuous Elf,"
Exclaimed an angry Voice,
"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"

A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

From that hour the Briar-rose,
In that foaming and that foam
A child of misery was cast,
Since he could not to his Brow
Lay down this lovely task.

II.

"Dost thou presume my course to block!
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I’ll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."
The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last,
He ventured to reply.
POEMS OF THE FANCY.

III.

"Ah!" said the Briar, "blame me not; Why should we dwell in strife? We who in this sequestered spot Once lived a happy life! You stirred me on my rocky bed— What pleasure through my veins you spread The summer long, from day to day, My leaves you freshened and bedewed; Nor was it common gratitude That did your cares repay.

IV.

When spring came on with bud and bell, Among these rocks did I Before you hung my wreaths to tell That gentle days were nigh! And in the sultry summer hours, I sheltered you with leaves and flowers; And in my leaves—now shed and gone, The linnet lodged, and for us two Chanted his pretty songs, when you Had little voice or none.

V.

But now proud thoughts are in your breast— What grief is mine you see, Ah! would you think, even yet how blest Together we might be! Though of both leaf and flower bereft, Some ornaments to me are left— Rich store of scarlet hips is mine, With which I, in my humble way, Would deck you many a winter day, A happy Eglantine!"

VI.

What more he said I cannot tell, The Torrent down the rocky dell Came thundering loud and fast; I listened, nor aught else could hear; The Briar quaked—and much I fear Those accents were his last.

VII.

THE OAK AND THE BROOM.

A pastoral.

I.

His simple truths did Andrew glean Beside the babbling rills; A careful student he had been Among the woods and hills.

One winter’s night, when through the trees The wind was roaring, on his knees His youngest born did Andrew hold; And while the rest, a ruddy quire, Were seated round their blazing fire, This Tale the Shepherd told.

II.

"I saw a crag, a lofty stone As ever tempest beat! Out of its head an Oak had grown, A Broom out of its feet. The time was March, a cheerful noon— The thaw-wind, with the breath of June, Breathed gently from the warm south-west: When, in a voice sedate with age, This Oak, a giant and a sage, His neighbour thus addressed:—

III.

Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay, Along this mountain’s edge, The Frost hath wrought both night and day, Wedge driving after wedge. Look up! and think, above your head What trouble, surely, will be bred; Last night I heard a crash—’tis true, The splinters took another road— I see them yonder—what a load For such a Thing as you!

IV.

You are preparing as before, To deck your slender shape; And yet, just three years back—no more— You had a strange escape: Down from you cliff a fragment broke; It thundered down, with fire and smoke, And hitherward pursued its way; This ponderous block was caught by me, And o’er your head, as you may see, ’Tis hanging to this day!

V.

If breeze or bird to this rough steep Your kind’s first seed did bear; The breeze had better been asleep, The bird caught in a snare: For you and your green twigs decay The little wistow shepherd-boy To come and slumber in your bower; And, trust me, on some sultry noon, Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon! Will perish in one hour.
From me this friendly warning take—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose:
'My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true,
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year,
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors! Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother-owl
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;
But in the branches of the oak
Two ravens now began to creak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there.

One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day.'
And, should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!
__1799__

### VII.

**TO THE DAISY.**

* Her * divine skill taught me this,
  That from every thing I saw
  I could some instruction draw,
  And raise pleasure to the height
  Through the meanest object's sight.
  By the murmurs of a spring.
  Or the least bough's rustling:
  By a Daisy whose leaves spread
  That when Titan goes to bed;
  Or a shady bush or tree;
  She could more infuse in me
  Than all Nature's beauties can
  In some other wiser man.*
  G. Wither.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake,
Of Thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may see thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved if thou be set at nought;
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted,

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impaling;

* His muse.

Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy name;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scarce
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that needs
The common life, our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-emitted by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lurk or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time,—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favourite.*

VIII.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

Wirm little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similies,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next,—and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish,—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some færy bold
In sight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are

In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright Flower! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that elate fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

IX.

THE GREEN LINNET.

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstacies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

* See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.
POEMS OF THE FANCY.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-caves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

X.

TO A SKY-LARK.

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banquetting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scornful;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.*

Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower!—I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face

* Common Pilewort.
POEMS OF THE FANCY.

On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane;—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

I'll bespeak the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slip'st into thy sheltering hold;
Liveliest of the vernal train
When ye all are out again.

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
By what charm of sight or smell,
Does the dim-eyed curious Bee,
Labouring for her waxen cells,
Fondly settle upon Thee
Prized above all buds and bells
Opening daily at thy side,
By the season multiplied?

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing 'beneath our shoon,'
Let the bold Discoverer shun
In his bark the polar sea;
Rear who will a pyramid
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little Flower.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

Nine pleasures newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet:
February last, my heart
First of them was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whose'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Wookman worthy to be sainted)
Set the sign-board in a blaze,
When the rising sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'Kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think, I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and Thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

XII.

THE SEVEN SISTERS;

THE SOLITUDE OF BINNERIE.

Seven Daughters had Lord Archibald,
All children of one mother:
You could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A garland, of seven lilies, wrought!
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well,
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnerie!
II.
Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Eric
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering:
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

III.
Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, Father-knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

IV.
Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, “Your Father loves to roam:
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!”
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

VI.
The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o’er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little Islands, green and bare,
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those sisters fair,
By faeries all are buried there,
And there together sleep.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

XIV.
Who fancied what a pretty sight
This Rock would be if edged around
With living snow-drops! circlet bright!
How glorious to this orchard-ground!
Who loved the little Rock, and set
Upon its head this coronet?
Was it the humour of a child!
Or rather of some gentle maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed!
Of man mature, or matron sage?
Or old man toying with his age?

I asked—’twas whispered; The device
To each and all might well belong:
It is the Spirit of Paradise
That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

XV.
THE
REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY.

Art thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn-winds are sobbing!
Art thou the Peter of Norway Bears?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland!
The bird, who by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men!  
Could Father Adam* open his eyes  
And see this sight beneath the skies,  
He’d wish to close them again.  
—If the Butterfly knew but his friend,  
Hither his flight he would bend;  
And find his way to me,  
Under the branches of the tree:  
In and out, he darted about;  
Can this be the bird, to man so good,  
That, after their bewildering,  
Covered with leaves the little children,  
So painfully in the wood!  

What aileth thee, Robin, that thou could’st pursue  
A beautiful creature,  
That is gentle by nature!  
Beneath the summer sky  
From flower to flower let him fly;  
’Tis all that he wishes to do.  
The cheerer Thou of our in-door sadness,  
He is the friend of our summer gladness:  
What hinderst, then, that ye should be  
Playmates in the sunny weather,  
And fly about in the air together!  
His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,  
A crimson as bright as thine own:  
Wouldest thou be happy in thy nest,  
O pious Bird! whom man loves best,  
Love him, or leave him alone!  

XVI.

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL.

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL VAILES OF WESTMORLAND.

Swiftly turn the murmuring wheel!  
Night has brought the welcome hour,  
When the weary fingers feel  
Help, as if from faery power;  
Dewy night o’ershades the ground;  
Turn the swift wheel round and round!  

Now, beneath the starry sky,  
Couch the widely-scattered sheep;—  
Ply the pleasant labour, ply!  
For the spindle, while they sleep,  
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,  
Gathering up a trustier line.

* See Paradise Lost, Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing 'two Birds of gayest plume,' and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

Short-lived likings may be bred  
By a glance from fickle eyes;  
But true love is like the thread  
Which the kindly wools supplies,  
When the flocks are all at rest  
Sleeping on the mountain’s breast.

XVII.

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS.

"Who but shall raise the sight with pleasure  
When the wings of genius rise,  
Their ability to measure  
With great enterprise;  
But in man was never such daring  
As you Hawk exhibits, pairing  
His brave spirit with the war in  
The stormy skies!

Mark him, how his power he uses,  
Lays it by, at will resumes!  
Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses  
Clouds and utter glooms!  
There, he wheels in downward mazes;  
Sunward now his flight he raises,  
Catches fire, as seems, and blazes  
With unjured plumes!"

ANSWER.

"Stranger, 'tis no act of courage  
Which aloft thou dost discourse;  
No bold bird gone forth to forage  
'Mid the tempest stern;  
But such mockery as the nations  
See, when public perturbations  
Lift men from their native stations,  
Like you tuft of fern;  

Such it is; the aspiring creature  
Soaring on undaunted wing,  
(So you fancied) is by nature  
A dull helpless thing,  
Dry and withered, light and yellow!—  
That to be the tempest’s fellow!  
Wait—and you shall see how hollow  
Its endeavouring!"
XVIII.

ON SEEING A NEEDLECASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP.

THE WORK OF E.M.A.

Flowers are on every Muse's face,
Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimicry should thus disgrace
The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size!
Needles for strings in apt gradation!
Minerva's self would stigmatize
The unclassic profanation.

Even her own needle that subdued
Arachne's rival spirit,
Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest mood,
Such honour could not merit.

And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
A living lord of melody!
How will her Sire be reconciled
To the refined indignity!

I spake, when whispered a low voice,
As Bard! moderate your ire;
Spirits of all degrees rejoice
In presence of the lyre.

The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
Dwarf Genti, moonlight-loving Fays,
Have shells to fit their tiny bands
And suit their slender lays.

Some, still more delicate of ear,
Have_ints [intes] (believe my words)
Whose framework is of gossamer,
While sunbeams are the chords.

Gay Sylphs this miniature will court,
Made vocal by their brushing wings,
And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
Around its polished strings;

Whence straws to love-sick maiden dear,
While in her lonely bower she tries
To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
By fanciful embroideries.

Trust, angry Bard! a knowing Sprite,
Nor think the Harp her lot deplores;
Though 'mid the stars the Lyre shine bright,
_Love stoops as fondly as he soars._

XIX.

TO A LADY,

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD WRITE HER A
FORM UPON SOME DRAWINGS THAT SHE HAD MADE OF
FLOWERS IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA.

Fair Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade,
I who ne'er sate within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have strayed!
How they in sprightly dance are worn
By Shepherd-groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
These eyes have never seen.

Yet tho' to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give,
Your portraits still may reach the heart
And there for gentle pleasure live;
While Fancy ranging with free scope
Shall on some lovely Alien set
A name with us endeared to hope,
To peace, or fond regret.

Still as we look with nectar care,
Some new resemblance we may trace:
A Heart's-case will perhaps be there,
A Speedwell may not want its place.
And so may we, with charmed mind
Beholding what your skill has wrought,
Another Star-of-Bethlehem find,
A new Forget-me-not.

From earth to heaven with motion fleet
From heaven to earth our thoughts will pass,
A Holy-thistle here we meet
And there a Shepherd's weather-glass;
And haply some familiar name
Shall grace the fairest, sweetest, plant
Whose presence cheers the drooping frame
Of English Emigrant.

Gazing she feels its power beguile
Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier breath;
Alas! that meek that tender smile
Is but a harbinger of death:
And pointing with a feeble hand
She says, in faint words by sighs broken,
Bear for me to my native land
This precious Flower, true love's last token.
XX.

GLAD sight wherever new with old
Is joined through some dear homeborn tie;
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.
Vain is the glory of the sky,
The beauty vain of field and grove
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love.

XXI.

THE CONTRAST.

THE PARROT AND THE WREN.

Within her gilded cage confined,
I saw a dazzling Belle,
A Parrot of that famous kind
Whose name is Non-pareil.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes;
And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
With pearl or glistening agate vies
Her finely-curved bill.

Her plump mantle's living hues
In mass opposed to mass,
Outline the splendour that imbues
The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an after Mate
Did never tempt the choice
Of feathered Thing most delicate
In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian bowers,
And singleness her lot,
She trills her song with tutored powers,
Or mocks each casual note.

No more of pity for regrets
With which she may have striven!
Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given;

Arch, volatile, a sportive bird
By social glee inspired;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired!

XXII.

THE DANISH BOY.

A FRAGMENT.

Between two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a lonely hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest;
Within this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build her nest.
No beast, no bird hath here his home;
Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers:—to other dells
Their burthens do they bear;
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.
POEMS OF THE FANCY.

III.
A Spirit of noon-day is he;
Yet seem a form of flesh and blood;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm tied fresh and blue
As budding pines in spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV.
A harp is from his shoulder slung;
Resting the harp upon his knee;
To words of a forgotten tongue,
He suits its melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
He is the darling and the joy;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain-ponies prick their ears,
—They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sings alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V.
There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove;
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

XXIV.

STRAY PLEASURES.

'—Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find.'

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold ye Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered fast:
To the small wooden isle where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given;
—And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

XXXII.

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING ZEW.

Tsoura the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.
Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.
What, if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground:
And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
Yield him no domestic cave,
Slumbers without sense of motion,
Couched upon the rocking wave.
If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.
The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
Vagrant over desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs repose
When chill night that care demands.
Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.

1799.
Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter 'tis theirs;
And if they had care, it has scattered their cares,
While they dance, crying, "Long as ye please!"

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss;
Each wave, one and 't'other, speeds after his brother;
They are happy, for that is their right!

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM;
OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOW-WORM.

A Pilgrim, when the summer day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof;
But him the haughty Warden spurned;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned,
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.

He paced along; and, pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree,
Whose moss-grown root might serve for couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye;
Then, from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched with kindred look,
A Glow-worm, in a dusky nook,
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighbouring stream
Induced a soft and slumberous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy bounds
He recognised the earth-born Star,
And that which glittered from afar;
And (strange to witness!) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb, there came
Intelligible sounds.

But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,
With thy acknowledged glories,—No!
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show
What favours do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn.

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread
A hooting sound—for sough but sleep unfit!
Hills quaked, the rivers backward ran;
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan;
And reeled with visionary stir
In the blue depth, like Lucifer
Cast headlong to the pit!

Fire raged: and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream brought forth:
And all the happy Souls that rode
Transfigured through that fresh abode,
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone wearily mid their native dust,
The Glow-worms of the earth!

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice
Of Him who slept upon the open lea:
Waking at morn he murmured not;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot
Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared,
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree.
XXVI.

THE POET AND THE CAGED TURTLEDOVE.

As often as I murmur here
My half-formed melodies,
Straight from her oyster mansion near,
The Turtle dove replies:
Though silent as a leaf before,
The captive promptly coos;
Is it to teach her own soft love,
Or second my weak Muse?

I rather think, the gentle Dove
Is murmuring a reproof,
Displeased that I from lays of love
Have dared to keep aloof;
That I, a Bard of hill and dale,
Have caroll’d, fancy free,
As if nor dove nor nightingale,
Had heart or voice for me.

If such thy meaning, O forbear,
Sweet Bird! to do me wrong;
Love, blessed Love, is every where
The spirit of my song:
Mid grove, and by the calm fireside,
Love animates my lyre—
That coo again!—’t is not to chide,
I feel, but to inspire.

XXVII.

A WREN’S NEST.

Amidst the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren’s
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a laboured roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, ’mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brace
That overhangs a brook.

There to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting bird’s return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest;

This, one of those small builders prove
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout;

For She who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfill.

High on the trunk’s projecting brow,
And fixed an infant’s span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest
The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things; but once
Looked up for it in vain:

’Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler’s pray,
Who needs not beauty, love, or song,
’Tis gone! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth;
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.
Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent,

Rest, Mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft
In foresight, or in love.

1833.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

You call it, "Love lies bleeding,"—so you may,
Though the red Flower, not prostrate, only droops,
As we have seen it here from day to day,
From month to month, life passing not away:
A flower how rich in sadness! Even thus stoops,
(Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power)
Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
Earthward in uncomplaining languishment,
The dying Gladiator. So, sad Flower!
(’Tis Fancy guides me willing to be led,
Though by a slender thread,) So dropped Adonis bathed in sanguine dew
Of his death-wound, when he from innocent air
The gentlest breath of resignation drew;
While Venus in a passion of despair
Rent, weeping over him, her golden hair
Spangled with drops of that celestial shower.
She suffered, as Immortals sometimes do;
But pangs more lasting far, that Lover knew
Who first, weighed down by scorn, in some lone bower
Did press this semblance of untitled smart
Into the service of his constant heart,
His own dejection, downcast Flower! could share
With thine, and gave the mournful name which
Thou wilt ever bear.

XXX.

COMPANION TO THE FOREGOING.

Never enlivened with the liveliest ray
That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more deprest,
This Flower, that first appeared as summer's guest,
Preserves her beauty mid autumnal leaves
And to her mournful habit fondly cleaves.
When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom,
One after one submitting to their doom,
When her coevals each and all are fled,
What keeps her thus reclined upon her lonesome bed!

The old mythologists, more impress'd than we
Of this late day by character in tree
Or herb, that claimed peculiar sympathy,
Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
Or with the language of the viewless air
By bird or beast made vocal, sought a cause
To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws
But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand tales
Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian vales
Nor doubt that something of their spirit sway'd
The fancy-stricken Youth or heart-sick Maid,
Who, while each stood companionless and eyed
This undeparing Flower in crimson dyed,
Thought of a wound which death is slow to cure,
A fate that has endured and will endure,
And, patience coveting yet passion feeding,
Called the dejected Lingerer, Love lies bleeding.

XXX.

RURAL ILLUSIONS.

Sylph was it! or a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock?
A second darted by—but lo!
Another of the flock,
Through sunshine fritting from the bough
To nestle in the rock.
Transient deception! a gay freak
Of April's mimicries!
Those brilliant strangers, hailed with joy
Among the budding trees,
Proved last year's leaves, pushed from the spray
To frolic on the breeze.

Maternal Flora! show thy face,
And let thy hand be seen,
Thy hand here sprinkling tiny flowers,
That, as they touch the ground,
Take root (so seems it) and look up
In honour of their Queen.
Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
That not in vain aspired
To be confounded with live growths,
Most dainty, most admired,
Were only blossoms dropped from twigs
Of their own offspring tired.

Not such the World's illusive shows;
Her wingless flutterings,
Her blossoms which, though shed, outbrave
The flowret as it springs,
For the undeceived, smile as they may,
Are melancholy things:
But gentle Nature plays her part
With ever-varying wiles,
And transient feignings with plain truth
So well she reconciles,
That those fond Idlers most are pleased
Whom oftentimes she beguiles.

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES.

That way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!
See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves—one—two—and three—
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddy ing round and round they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his waving parachute.

—But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop and there are none:
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:

Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer:
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care.
For the blandits of the crowd!
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure!

'Tis a pretty baby-treat;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other play-mate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale so blithe a place;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day:
Some are sleeping; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood;
And, among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung—head pointing towards the ground—
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin!
Prettiest Tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart and light of limb;
What is won become of Him!
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound,
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly Morning spills the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweetler even than gaiety!

Yet, whatever enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable coil
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature;
Whatsoever we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Laura's face;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair!
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladnessness.
—Pleased by any random toy;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a joyful thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER,
ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD ON THAT DAY.

—Hast thou then survived—
Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn—one life of that bright star,
The second glory of the Heavens!—Thou hast;
Already hast survived that great decay,
That transformation through the wide earth felt,
And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the Race of human kind proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to Him
Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory? neither
A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend
Through 'heaven's eternal year.'—Yet hail to Thee,
Frail, feeble, Monthling!—by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned out
Not idly.—Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the cherishful elements exposed
On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wandered with thee.—Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm-clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy hath small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now—to solemnise thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty—parallel have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first:—thy sinless progress, through a world
By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds,
THE WAGGONER.

Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft-times their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn
With brightness! leaving her to post along,
And range about, disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, Babe
That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast fore-knowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and sleep'st
In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er
By breathing mist; and thine appears to be
A mournful labour, while to her is given
Hope, and a renovation without end.
—That smile forbids the thought; for on thy face
Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there been seen;
Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness; or shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim?
Such are they; and the same are tokens, signs,
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,
Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt;
And Reason's godlike Power be proud to own.

XXXIII.

THE WAGGONER.

In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient Merchant wondering waits in vain,
And Mecca saddened at the long delay.

TO

CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

When I sent you, a few weeks ago, the Tale of Peter Bell, you asked 'why The Waggoner was not added?'
—To say the truth,—from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended, this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, The Waggoner was read to you in manuscript, and, as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope, that, since the beauties on which the Poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being therefore in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

CANTO FIRST.

'Tis spent,—this burning day of June!
Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is stealing;
The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round, is wheeling;
That solitary bird
Is all that can be heard
In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon!

Confiding Glow-worms, 'tis a night
Propitious to your earth-born light!
But, where the scattered stars are seen
In lazy straits the clouds between,
Each, in his station twinkling not,
Seems changed into a pallid spot.
The mountains against heaven's grave weight
Rise up, and grow to wondrous height.

The air, as in a lion's den,
Is close and hot;—and now and then
Comes a tired and sultry breeze
With a haunting and a panting,
Like the stifling of disease;
But the dews allay the heat,
And the silence makes it sweet.

Hush, there is some one on the stir!
'Tis Benjamin the Waggoner;
Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
Companion of the night and day.
That far-off tinkling of drowsy cheer,
Mix'd with a faint yet grating sound
In a moment lost and found,
The Wain announces,—by whose side
Along the banks of Rydal Mere
He paces on, a trusty Guide.
Listen! you can scarcely hear!
Hither he his course is bending;
Now he leaves the lower ground,
And up the craggy hill ascending
Many a stop and stay he makes,
Many a breathing-fit he takes;
Steep the way and wearisome,
Yet all the while his whip is dumb!

The Horses have worked with right good-will,
And so have gained the top of the hill;
He was patient, they were strong,
And now they smoothly glide along,
Recovering breath, and pleased to win
The praises of mild Benjamin.
Heaven shield him from mishap and snare!
But why so early with this prayer?

Is it for threatenings in the sky?
Or for some other danger nigh?
No; none is near him yet, though he
Be one of much infirmity;
For at the bottom of the brow,
Where once the Dove and Olive-bough
Offered a greeting of good ale
To all who entered Grasmere Vale;
And called on him who must depart
To leave it with a jovial heart;
There, where the Dove and Olive-bough
Once hung, a Post harbours now,
A simple water-drinking Bard;
Why need our Hero then (though frail
His best resolves) be on his guard?
He marches by, secure and bold;
Yet while he thinks on times of old,
It seems that all looks wondrous cold;
He shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head,
And, for the honest folk within,
It is a doubt with Benjamin
Whether they be alive or dead!

Here is no danger,—none at all!
Beyond his wish he walks secure;
But pass a mile—and then for trial,—
Then for the pride of self-denial;
If he resist that tempting door,
Which with such friendly voice will call;
If he resist those casement panes,
And that bright gleam which thence will fall
Upon his Leaders’ bells and manes,
Inviting him with cheerful lure:
For still, though all be dark elsewhere,
Some shining notice will be there,
Of open house and ready fare.

The place to Benjamin right well
Is known, and by as strong a spell
As used to be that sign of love
And hope—the Olive-bough and Dove;
He knows it to his cost, good Man!
Who does not know the famous Swan?
Object uncouth! and yet our boast,
For it was painted by the Host;
His own conceit the figure planned,
’Twas coloured all by his own hand;
And that frail Child of thristy clay,
Of whom I sing this rustic lay,
Could tell with self-dissatisfaction
Quaint stories of the bird’s attraction!*

Well! that is past—and in despite
Of open door and shining light.
And now the conqueror essays
The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
And with his team is gentle here
As when he clomb from Rydal Mere;
His whip they do not dread—his voice
They only hear it to rejoice.
To stand or go is at their pleasure;
Their efforts and their time they measure
By generous pride within the breast;
And, while they strain, and while they rest,
He thus pursues his thoughts at leisure.

Now am I fairly safe to-night—
And with proud cause my heart is light:
I trespassed lately worse than ever—
But Heaven has blest a good endeavour;
And, to my soul’s content, I find
The evil One is left behind.
Yes, let my master fume and fret,
Here am I—with my horses yet!
My jolly team, he finds that ye
Will work for nobody but me!
Full proof of this the Country gained;
It knows how ye were vexed and strained,
And forced unworthy stripes to bear,
When trusted to another’s care.
Here was it—on this rugged slope,
Which now ye climb with heart and hope,
I saw you, between rage and fear,
Plunge, and fling back a spiteful ear,
And ever more and more confused,
As ye were more and more abused:
As chance would have it, passing by
I saw you in that jeopardy:

* This rude piece of self-taught art (such is the progress of refinement) has been supplanted by a professional production.
A word from me was like a charm;
Ye pulled together with one mind;
And your huge barthken, safe from harm,
Moved like a vessel in the wind!
—Yes, without me, up hills so high
'Tis vain to strive for mastery.
Then grieve not, jolly team! though tough
The road we travel, steep, and rough;
Though Rydal-heights and Dunmail-raise,
And all their fellow banks and brases,
Full often make you stretch and strain,
And hale for breath and halt again,
Yet to their sturdiness 'tis owing
That side by side we still are going!

While Benjamin in earnest mood
His meditations thus pursued,
A storm, which had been smothered long,
Was growing inwardly more strong;
And, in its struggles to get free,
Was bustling employed as he.
The thunder had begun to growl—
He heard not, too intent of soul;
The air was now without a breath—
He marked not that 'twas still as death.
But soon large rain-drops on his head
Full with the weight of drops of lead—
He starts—and takes, at the admonition,
A sage survey of his condition.
The road is black before his eyes,
Glimmering faintly where it lies;
Black is the sky—and every hill,
Up to the sky, is blacker still—
Sky, hill, and dale, one dismal room,
Hung round and overhung with gloom;
Save that above a single height
Is to be seen a lurid light,
Above Helm-crag—*a streak half dead,
A burning of portentous red;
And near that lurid light, full well
The Astrologer, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,
Puzzling aloft his curious wis;
He whose domain is held in common
With no one but the ancient woman
Cowering beside her rifted cell,
As if intent on magic spell—
Dread pair, that, spite of wind and weather,
Still sit upon Helm-crag together!

* A mountain of Grasmere, the broken summit of which presents two figures, full as distinctly shaped as that of the famous Cobbler near Arrochar in Scotland.

The Astrologer was not unseen
By solitary Benjamin;
But total darkness came anon,
And he and every thing was gone;
And suddenly a ruffling breeze,
(That would have rocked the sounding trees
Had aught of sylvan growth been there)
Swept through the Hollow long and bare:
The rain rushed down—the road was battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is groaning near them,
Sees nothing, and can scarcely hear them.
He is astounded,—wonder not,—
With such a charge in such a spot;
Astounded in the mountain gap
With thunder-peals, clap after clap,
Close-treading on the silent flashes—
And somewhere, as he thinks, by crashes
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go—
Till, breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray again.

Meanwhile, uncertain what to do,
And oftentimes compelled to halt,
The horses cautiously pursue
Their way, without mishap or fault;
And now have reached that pile of stones,
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones;
He who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and those of all his power,
Slain here in a disastrous hour!

When, passing through this narrow strait,
Stony, and dark, and desolate,
Benjamin can faintly hear
A voice that comes from some one near,
A female voice:—"Who'er you be,
Stop," it exclaimed, "and pity me!"
And, less in pity than in wonder,
Amid the darkness and the thunder,
The Waggoner, with prompt command,
Summons his horses to a stand.

While, with increasing agitation,
The Woman urged her supplication,
In rueful words, with sobs between—
The voice of tears that fell unseen;
There came a flash—a startling glare,
And all Seat-Sandal was laid bare!
"Tis not a time for nice suggestion,  
And Benjamin, without a question,  
Taking her for some way-worn rover,  
Said, "Mount, and get you under cover!"

Another voice, in tone as hoarse  
As a swoln brook with rugged course,  
cried out, "Good brother, why so fast!  
I've had a glimpse of you—avast!  
Or, since it suits you to be civil,  
Take her at once—for good and evil!"

"It is my Husband," softly said  
The Woman, as if half afraid:  
By this time she was snug within,  
Through help of honest Benjamin;  
She and her Babe, which to her breast  
With thankfulness the Mother pressed;  
And now the same strong voice more near  
Said cordially, "My Friend, what cheer!  
Rough doings these! as God's my judge,  
The sky owes somebody a grudge!  
We've had in half an hour or less  
A twelvemonth's terror and distress!"

Then Benjamin entreats the Man  
Would mount, too, quickly as he can:  
The Sailor—Sailor now no more,  
But such he had been heretofore—  
To courteous Benjamin replied,  
"Go you your way, and mind not me;  
For I must have, whate'er betide,  
My Ass and fifty things beside,—  
Go, and I'll follow speedily!"

The Waggon moves—and with its load  
Descends along the sloping road;  
And the rough Sailor instantly  
Turns to a little tent hard by:  
For when, at closing-in of day,  
The family had come that way,  
Green pasture and the soft warm air  
Tempted them to settle there.—  
Green is the grass for feast to graze,  
Around the stones of Dummall-raise!

The Sailor gathers up his bed,  
Takes down the canvass overhead;  
And, after farewell to the place,  
A parting word—though not of grace,  
Pursues, with Ass and all his store,  
The way the Waggon went before.

CANTO SECOND.

If Wytheburn's modest House of prayer,  
As lowly as the lowliest dwelling,  
Had, with its belfry's humble stock,  
A little pair that hung in air,  
Been mistress also of a clock,  
(And one, too, not in crazy plight)  
Twelve strokes that clock would have been telling  
Under the brow of old Helvellyn—  
Its bead-roll of midnight,  
Then, when the Hero of my tale  
Was passing by, and, down the vale  
(The vale now silent, hushed I ween  
As if a storm had never been)  
Proceeding with a mind at ease;  
While the old Familiar of the seas  
Intent to use his utmost haste,  
Gained ground upon the Waggon fast,  
And gives another hasty cheer;  
For spite of rumbling of the wheels,  
A welcome greeting he can hear;—  
It is a fiddle in its glee  
Dining from the CHERRY TREE!

Then the sound—the light is there—  
As Benjamin is now aware,  
Who, to his inward thoughts confined,  
Had almost reached the festive door,  
When, startled by the Sailor's roar,  
He hears a sound and sees the light,  
And in a moment calls to mind  
That 'tis the village MERRY-NIGHT!*  

Although before in no dejection,  
At this insidious recollection  
His heart with sudden joy is filled,—  
His ears are by the music thrilled,  
His eyes take pleasure in the road  
Glittering before him bright and broad;  
And Benjamin is wet and cold,  
And there are reasons manifold  
That make the good, tow'rds which he's yearning,  
Look fairly like a lawful earning.

Nor has thought time to come and go,  
To vibrate between yes and no;  
For, cries the Sailor, "Glorious chance  
That blew us hither!—let him dance,  
Who can or will!—my honest soul,  
Our treat shall be a friendly bowl!"

* A term well known in the North of England, and applied to rural Festivals where young persons meet in the evening for the purpose of dancing.
THE WAGGONER.

The fiddler’s squeak— that call to bliss,
Ever followed by a kiss;
They envy not the happy lot,
But enjoy their own the more!

While thus our jovial Travellers fare,
Up springs the Sailor from his chair—
Limps (for I might have told before)
That he was lame) across the floor—
Is gone—returns—and with a prize;
With what!—a Ship of lusty size;
A gallant stately Man-of-war,
Fixed on a smoothly-sliding car.
Surprise to all, but most surprise
To Benjamin, who rubs his eyes,
Not knowing that he had befriended
A Man so gloriously attended!

“Thus,” cries the Sailor, “a Third-rate is—
Stand back, and you shall see her gratis!
This was the Flag-ship at the Nile,
The Vanguard—you may smirk and smile,
But, pretty Maid, if you look near,
You’ll find you’ve much in little here!
A nobler ship did never swim,
And you shall see her in full trim:
I’ll set, my friends, to do you honour,
Set every inch of sail upon her.”
So said, so done; and masts, sails, yards,
He names them all; and interlards
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the showman’s part;
And then, as from a sudden check,
Cries out—“Tis there, the quarter-deck
On which brave Admiral Nelson stood—
A sight that would have roused your blood!
One eye he had, which, bright as ten,
Burned like a fire among his men;
Let this be land, and that be sea,
Here lay the French—and thus came we!”

Hushed was by this the fiddler’s sound,
The dancers all were gathered round,
And, such the stillness of the house,
You might have heard a nibbling mouse;
While, borrowing helps where’er he may,
The Sailor through the story runs
Of ships to ships and guns to guns;
And does his utmost to display
The dismal conflict, and the might
And terror of that marvellous night!

* At the close of each strathspey, or Jig, a particular note from the fiddle summons the Rustic to the agreeable duty of saluting his partner.
A bowl, a bowl of double measure, "
Cries Benjamin, "a draught of length,
To Nelson, England’s pride and treasure,
Her balwark and her tower of strength!"
When Benjamin had seized the bowl,
The mastiff, from beneath the waggons,
Where he lay, watchful as a dragon,
Rattled his chain;—‘twas all in vain,
For Benjamin, triumphant soul!
He heard the monitory growl;
Heard—and in opposition quaffed
A deep, determined, desperate draught!
Nor did the battered Tar forget,
Or flinch from what he deemed his debt:
Then, like a hero crowned with laurel,
Back to her place the ship he led;
Wheedled her back in full apparel;
And so, flag flying at mast-head,
Re-yoked her to the Ass—anon,
Cries Benjamin, "We must be gone."
Thus, after two hours’ hearty stay,
Again behold them on their way!

CANTO THIRD.
Right gladly had the horses stirred,
When they the wished-for greeting heard,
The ship’s loud notice from the door,
That they were free to move once more.
You thank, those doings must have bred
In them disheartening doubts and dread;
No, not a horse of all the eight,
Although it be a moonless night,
Fears either for himself or freight;
For this they know (and let it hide,
In part, the offences of their guide)
That Benjamin, with clouded brains,
Is worth the best with all their pains;
And, if they had a prayer to make,
The prayer would be that they may take
With him whatever comes in course,
The better fortune or the worse;
That no one else may have business near them,
And, drunk or sober, he may steer them.

So, forth in dauntless mood they fare,
And with them goes the guardian pair.

Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion!
Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height;
And higher still—a greedy flight!
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal dog come to her?
No notion have they—not a thought,
That is from joyless regions brought!
And, while they coast the silent lake,
Their inspiration I partake;
Share their empyreal spirits—yes,
With their enraptured vision, see—
O fancy—what a jubilee!
What shifting pictures—clad in gleams
Of colour bright as feverish dreams!
Earth, spangled sky, and lake serene,
Involved and restless all—a scene
Pregnant with mutual exaltation,
Rich change, and multiplied creation!
This sight to me the Muse imparts;
And then, what kindness in their hearts!
What tears of rapture, what vow-making,
Profound entreaties, and hand-shaking!
What solemn, vacant, interlacing,
As if they’d fall asleep embracing!
Then, in the turbulence of glee,
And in the excess of anxiety,
Says Benjamin, "That Ass of thine,
He spoils thy sport, and hinders mine:
If he were tethered to the waggons,
He’d drag as well what he is dragging;
And we, as brother should with brother
Might trudge it alongside each other!"

Forthwith, obedient to command,
The horses made a quiet stand;
And to the waggons’ skirts was tied
The Creature, by the Mastiff’s side;
The Mastiff wondering, and perplex’d
With dread of what will happen next;
And thinking it but sorry cheer,
To have such company so near!

This new arrangement made, the Wain
Through the still night proceeds again;
No Moon hath risen her light to lend;
But indistinctly may be seen
The Vanguard, following close behind,
Sails spread, as if to catch the wind!

"Thy wife and child are snug and warm,
Thy ship will travel without harm;
I like," said Benjamin, "her shape and stature:
And this of mine—this bulky creature
Of which I have the steering—this,
Seen fairly, is not much amiss!
We want your streamers, friend, you know;
But, altogether as we go,
THE WAGGONER.

We make a kind of handsome show!
Among these hills, from first to last,
We 've weathered many a furious blast;
Hard passage forcing on, with head
Against the storm, and canvas spread.
I hate a boaster; but to thee
Will say 't, who know'st both land and sea,
The unlikeliest hulk that stems the brine
Is hardly worse beset than mine,
When cross-winds on her quarter beat;
And, fairly lifted from my feet,
I stagger onward—heaven knows how;
But not so pleasantly as now:
Poor pilot I, by snows confounded,
And many a frountous pit surrounded!
Yet here we are, by night and day
Grinding through rough and smooth our way;
Through foul and fair our task fulfilling;
And long shall be so yet—God willing!"

"Ay," said the Tar, "through fair and foul—
But save us from yon screeching owl!"
That instant was begun a fray
Which called their thoughts another way:
The mastiff, ill-conditioned Carl!
What must he do but growl and snarl,
Still more and more dissatisfied
With the meek comrade at his side!
Till, not incensed though put to proof,
The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
Salutes the Mastiff on the head;
And so were better manners bred,
And all was calmed and quieted.

"You screech-owl," says the Sailor, turning
Back to his former cause of mourning,
"You owl!—pray God that all be well!
'Tis worse than any funeral bell!
As sure as I've the gift of sight,
We shall be meeting ghosts to-night!"
—Said Benjamin, "This whip shall lay
A thousand, if they cross our way.
I know that Wanton's noisy station,
I know him and his occupation;
The jolly bird hath learned his cheer
Upon the banks of Windermere;
Where a tribe of them make merry,
Mocking the Man that keeps the ferry;
Hallowing from an open throat,
Like travellers shouting for a boat.—
The tricks he learned at Windermere
This vagrant owl is playing here—
That is the worst of his employment:
He's at the top of his enjoyment!"

This explanation stilled the alarm,
Cured the foreboder like a charm;
This, and the manner, and the voice,
Summoned the Sailor to rejoice;
His heart is up—he fears no evil
From life or death, from man or devil;
He wheels—and, making many stops,
Brandished his crutch against the mountain tops;
And, while he talked of blows and scars,
Benjamin, among the stars,
Beheld a dancing—and a glancing;
Such retiring and advancing
As, I ween, was never seen
In bloodiest battle since the days of Mars!

CANTO FOURTH.

Thus they, with freaks of proud delight,
Beguile the remnant of the night;
And many a snatch of jocial song
Regales them as they wind along;
While to the music, from on high,
The echoes make a glad reply.—
But the sage Muse the revel heeds
No farther than her story needs;
Nor will she servilely attend
The loitering journey to its end.
—Blithe spirits of her own impel
The Muse, who scents the morning air,
To take of this transported pair
A brief and unprofessed farewell;
To quit the slow-paced waggon's side,
And wander down you Hawthorn dell,
With musing tread and vagrant step,
With murmuring Greta for her guide.
—There doth she ken the awful form
Of Raven-crag—black as a storm—
Glimmering through the twilight pale;
And Ghimmer-crag, 's tall twin brother,
Each peering forth to meet the other:—
And, while she roves through St. John's Vale,
Along the smooth unpathwayed plain,
By sheep-track or through cottage lane,
Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude,
Her unsuspecting eye, perchance,
With the rude shepherd's favoured glance,
Beholds the faeries in array,
Whose party-coloured garments gay
The silent company betray:
Red, green, and blue; a moment's sight!
For Skiddaw-top with rosy light
Is touched—and all the hand take flight.

* The crag of the ewe lamb.
POEMS OF THE FANCY.

— Fly also, Muse! and from the dell
Mount to the ridge of Nathdale Fell;
Then see, look thou forth o’er wood and lawn
Hear with the frost-like dews of dawn;
Across ye meadowy bottom look,
Where close fogs hide their parent brook;
And see, beyond that hamlet small,
The ruined towers of Threlkeld-hall,
Lurking in a double shade,
By trees and lingering twilight made!
There, at Blencathara’s rugged feet,
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat
To noble Clifford; from annoy
Concealed the persecuted boy,
Well pleased in rustic garb to feed
His flock, and pipe on shepherd’s reed
Among this multitude of hills,
Crags, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
Which soon the morning shall enfold,
From east to west, in ample vest
Of massy gloom and radiance bold.

The mist, that o’er the streamlet’s bed
Hung low, begin to rise and spread;
Even while I speak, their skirts of grey
Are smitten by a silver ray;
And lo!—up Castrigg’s naked steep
(Where, smoothly urged, the vapours sweep
Along—and scatter and divide,
Like fleeting clouds self-multiplied)
The stately waggon is ascending,
With faithful Benjamin attending,
Apparent now beside his team—
Now lost amid a glittering steam:
And with him goes his Sailor-friend,
By this time near their journey’s end;
And, after their high-minded riot,
Sickening into thoughtful quiet;
As if the morning’s pleasant hour,
Had for their joys a killing power.
And, sooth, for Benjamin a veil
Is opened of still deeper pain
As if his heart by notes were stung
From out the lowly hedge-rows flung;
As if the warbler lost in light
Reproved his soars of the night,
In strains of rapture pure and holy
Uproared his destempered folly.

Drooping is he, his step is dull;
But the horses stretch and pull;
With increasing vigour climb,
Eager to repair lost time;
Whether, by their own desert,
Knowing what cause there is for shame,
They are labouring to aver
As much as may be of the blame,
Which, they foresee, must soon alight
Upon his head, whom, in despite
Of all his failings, they love best;
Whether for him they are distrest
Or, by length of fasting roused,
Are impatient to be housed;
Up against the hill they strain
Tugging at the iron chain,
Tugging all with might and main,
Last and foremost, every horse
To the utmost of his force!
And the smoke and respiration,
Rising like an exhalation,
Blend with the mist—a moving shroud
To form, an indissolving cloud;
Which, with slant ray, the merry sun
Takes delight to play upon.
Never golden-haired Apollo,
Pleased some favourite chief to follow
Through accidents of peace or war,
In a perilous moment throw
Around the object of his care
Veil of such celestial hue;
Interposed so bright a screen—
Him and his enemies between!

Alas! what boots it!—who can hide,
When the malicious Fates are bent
On working out an ill intent!
Can destiny be turned aside!
No—sad progress of my story!
Benjamin, this outward glory
Cannot shield thee from thy Master,
Who from Keswick has pricked forth,
Sour and surly as the north;
And, in fear of some disaster,
Comes to give what help he may,
And to hear what thou canst say;
If, as needs he must forebode,
Thou hast been loitering on the road!
His fears, his doubts, may now take flight—
The wished-for object is in sight;
Yet, trust the Muse, it rather hath
Stirred him up to livelier wrath;
Which he stiles, moody man!
With all the patience that he can;
To the end that, at your meeting,
He may give thee decent greeting.

There he is—resolved to stop,
Till the waggon gains the top.
THE Waggoner.

But stop he cannot—must advance:
Him Benjamin, with lucky glance,
Espies—and instantly is ready,
Self-collected, poised, and steady:
And, to be the better seen,
Issues from his radiant shroud,
From his close-attending cloud,
With careless air and open mien.
Erect his port, and firm his going;
So struts you cock that now is crowing;
And the morning light in grace
Strikes upon his lifted face,
Hurrying the pallid hue away
That might his trespasses betray.
But what can all avail to clear him,
Or what need of explanation,
Parley or interrogation?
For the Master sees, alas!
That unhappy Figure near him,
Limping o’er the dewy grass,
Where the road it fringes, sweet,
Soft and cool to way-worn feet;
And, O indignity! an Ass,
By his noble Mastiff’s side,
Tethered to the waggon’s tail:
And the ship, in all her pride,
Following after in full sail!
Not to speak of babe and mother;
Who, contented with each other,
And snug as birds in leafy arbour,
Find, within, a blessed harbour!

With eager eyes the Master pries;
Looks in and out, and through and through;
Says nothing—till at last he spies
A wound upon the Mastiff’s head,
A wound, where plainly might be read
What feats an Ass’s hoof can do!
But drop the rest:—this aggravation,
This complicated provocation,
A hoard of grievances unsealed;
All past forgiveness it repealed;
And thus, and through distempered blood
On both sides, Benjamin the good,
The patient, and the tender-hearted,
Was from his team and waggon parted;
When duty of that day was o’er,
Laid down his whip—and served no more.—
Nor could the waggon long survive,
Which Benjamin had ceased to drive:
It lingered on;—guide after guide
Ambitiously the office tried;
But each unmanageable hill
Called for his patience and his skill;—

And sure it is, that through this night,
And what the morning brought to light,
Two losses had we to sustain,
We lost both WAGGONER and WAIN!

Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
The gift of this adventurous song;
A record which I dared to frame,
Though timid scruples checked me long;
They checked me—and I left the theme
Untouched:—in spite of many a gleam
Of fancy which thereon was shed,
Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
Upon the side of a distant hill:
But Nature might not be gainsaid;
For what I have and what I miss
I sing of these:—it makes my bliss
Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes—will sometimes leap
From hiding-places ten years deep;
Or haunts me with familiar face,
Returning, like a ghost unshad,
Until the debt I owe be paid.
Forgive me, then; for I had been
On friendly terms with this Machine:
In him, while he was wont to trace
Our roads, through many a long year’s space,
A living almanack had we;
We had a speaking diary,
That in this uneventful place,
Gave to the days a mark and name
By which we knew them when they came.
—Yes, I, and all about me here,
Through all the changes of the year,
Had seen him through the mountains go,
In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
Majestically huge and slow:
Or, with a milder grace adorning
The landscape of a summer’s morning;
While Grasmere smoothed her liquid plain
The moving image to detain;
And mighty Fairfield, with a chime
Of echoes, to his march kept time;
When little other business stirred,
And little other sound was heard;
In that delicious hour of balm,
Stillness, solitude, and calm,
While yet the valley is arrayed,
On this side with a sober shade;
On that is prodigally bright—
Crag, lawn, and wood—with rosy light.
—But most of all, thou lordly Wain!
I wish to have thee here again,
When windows flap and chimney roars,
And all is dismal out of doors;
And, sitting by my fire, I see
Eight sorry carts, no less a train!
Unworthy successors of thee,
Come straggling through the wind and rain:
And oft, as they pass slowly on,
Beneath my windows, one by one,
See, perched upon the naked height
The summit of a cumbrous freight,
A single traveller—and there
Another; then perhaps a pair—

| The lame, the sickly, and the old;  | Men, women, heartless with the cold; |
| And babes in wet and starveling plight; | Which once, be weather as it might, |
| Had still a nest within a nest, | Thy shelter—and their mother's breast! |
| Then most of all, then far the most, | Do I regret what we have lost; |
| Am grieved for that unhappy sin | And of his stately Charge, which none |
| Which robbed us of good Benjamin;— | Could keep alive when He was gone! |

1805.
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

I.
THERE WAS A BOY.
There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long howls, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the church-yard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And, through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mate—looking at the grave in which he lies!

1790.

II.
TO THE CUCKOO.
O little New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fiery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

1804.

III.
A NIGHT-PIECE.

— —— Tis sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or tower.  
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam  
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads  
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye  
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split  
Asunder,—and above his head he sees  
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.  
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,  
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small  
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss  
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,  
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,  
But they are silent;—still they roll along  
Immeasurably distant; and the vaults,  
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,  
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.  
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,  
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,  
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,  
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

IV.

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY.

—— Not a breath of air  
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.  
From the brook’s margin, wide around, the trees  
Are stillest as the rocks; the brook itself,  
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,  
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm  
Where all things else are still and motionless.  
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance  
Escaped from bolsterous winds that rage without,  
Has entered, by the stately oaks unfelt,  
But to its gentle touch how sensitive  
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow  
Of you dim cave, in seeming silence makes  
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,  
Powerful almost as vocal harmony  
To stay the wanderer’s steps and soothe his thoughts.

V.

YEW-TREES.

There is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,  
Which to this day stands single, in the midst  
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore:  
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands  
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched  
To Scotland’s heaths; or those that crossed the sea  
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,  
Perhaps at earlier Crevy, or Poictiers.  
Of vast circumference and gloom profound  
This solitary Tree! a living thing  
Produced too slowly ever to decay;  
Of form and aspect too magnificent  
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note  
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,  
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;  
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth  
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine  
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;  
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks  
That threaten the profane;—a pillar’d shade,  
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,  
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged  
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof  
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked  
With unenjoying berries—ghostly Shapes  
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,  
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton  
And Time the Shadow;—there to celebrate,  
As in a natural temple scattered o’er  
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,  
United worship; or in mute repose  
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood  
Murmuring from Glaramara’s inmost caves.

VI.

NUTTING.

—— It seems a day  
(I speak of one from many singled out)  
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;  
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,  
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth  
With a huge wallet o’er my shoulders slung,  
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps  
Tow’rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds  
Which for that service had been husband’d,  
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—  
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile  
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles;—and, in truth,  
More ragged than need was! O’er pathless rocks,  
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thicketts,  
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook  
Unvisited, where not a broken bough  
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign  
Of devastation; but the hazels rose  
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

A virgin scene! — A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet; — or beneath the trees I sat
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And — with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep.—
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Honor to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with
crash
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being; and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past;
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exciting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch — for there is a spirit in the woods.

VIII.

THE SIMPLOX PASS.

——Buonox and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spoke by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the ravine stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

VIII.

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too! —
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly plumed,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

IX.

O Nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart! —
These notes of thine — they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dewy, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come-at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he cooed;
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song—the song for me!

X.

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overpowering power
To kindle or restrain.

She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And her's shall be the breathing balm,
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmurings sound
Shall pass into her face.

And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell!"

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's voice was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

XII.

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.
No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1804.

XIII.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

"Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her! She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven; but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes!

1795.

XIV.

POWER OF MUSIC.

As Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old;
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
Was e'er heard ever like his fiddle and him!

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer oppress

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So He, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste—
What matter! he's caught—and his time runs to waste;
The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret;
And the half-breathless Lamplighter—he's in the net!

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;
If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the wall;—he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in;
From the old and the young, from the poorest,
And there!
The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a land;
I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would! oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!—
That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream;
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

1806.
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

xv.

STAR-GAZERS.

What crowd is this! what have we here! we must
not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's
waters float.

The Show-man chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's
busy Square;
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are
blue and fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands
ready with the fee,
And envies him that's looking;—what an insight
must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause! Shall thy
Implement have blame,
A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put
to shame!
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in
fault?
Their eyes, or minds! or, finally, is yon resplendent
vault!

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have
here!
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can
be dear!
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of
mightiest fame,
Doth she betray us when they're seen! or are they
but a name!

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to
do her wrong!
Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long
have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but
be sad!

Or must we be constrained to think that these
Spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multi-
tude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore
prostrate lie!
No, no, this cannot be;—men thirst for power and
majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful
mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed! a grave and steady
joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no out-
ward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and
divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who
pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than
before:
One after One they take their turn, nor have I one
espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

1805.

xvi.

WRITTEN IN MARCH,

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF
SIBER'S WATER.

The Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now death fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The Ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

1801.
XVII.
Lyre! though such power do in thy magic live
As might from India's farthest plain
Recall the not unwilling Maid,
Assist me to detain
The lovely Fugitive:
Check with thy notes the impulse which, betrayed
By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to aid.
Here let me gaze enraptured upon that eye,
The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
Of contemplation, the calm port
By reason fenced from winds that sigh
Among the restless sails of vanity.
But if no wish be hers that we should part,
A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.
Where all things are so fair,
Enough by her dear side to breathe the air
Of this Elysian weather;
And, on or in, or near, the brook, espy
Shade upon the sunshine lying
Faint and somewhat pensively;
And downward Image gaily lying
With its upright living tree
Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue sky
As soft almost and deep as her cerulean eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance
Cast up the Stream or down at her beseeching,
To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily distrest
By ever-changing shape and want of rest;
Or watch, with mutual teaching,
The current as it plays
In flashing leaps and stealthy creeps
Adown a rocky maze;
Or note (translucent summer's happiest chance!)
In the slope-channel floor'd with pebbles bright,
Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,
So vivid that they take from keenest sight
The liquid veil that seeks not to hide them.

XVIII.
BEGGARS.
Sure had a tall man's height or more;
Her face from summer's noonday heat
No bonnet shaded; but she wore
A mantle, to her very feet
Descending with a graceful flow,
And on her head a cap as white as new-fallen snow.

Her skin was of Egyptian brown:
Haughty, as if her eye had seen
Its own light to a distance thrown,
She towered, fit person for a Queen
To lead those ancient Amazonian files;
Or ruling Bandit's wife among the Grecian isles.

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
And begged an alms with doleful plea
That ceased not; on our English land
Such woes, I knew, could never be;
And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
Was beautiful to see—a weed of glorious feature.

I left her, and pursued my way;
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little Boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The taller followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers the gayest of the land.

The other wore a rimless crown
With leaves of laurel stuck about;
And, while both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout,
In their fraternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild Suppliant's face.

Yet they, so blithe of heart, seemed fit
For finest tasks of earth or air:
Wings let them have, and they might flit
Precursors to Aurora's car,
Scattering fresh flowers; though happier far, I ween,
To hunt their flattering game o'er rock and level green.

They dart across my path—but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine!
Said I, "not half an hour ago
Your Mother has had alms of mine."
"That cannot be," one answered—"she is dead!"—
I looked reproof—they saw—but neither hung his head.

"She has been dead, Sir, many a day."
"Hush, boys! you're telling me a lie;
It was your Mother, as I say!"
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
"Come! come!" cried one, and without more ado,
Off to some other play the joyous Vagrants flew!
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

XIX.

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING,
COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER.

WHERE are they now, those wanton Boys!
For whose free range the dead earth
Was filled with animated toys,
And implements of frolic mirth;
With tools for ready wit to guide;
And ornaments of seemlier pride,
More fresh, more bright, than princes wear;
For what one moment flung aside,
Another could repair;
What good or evil have they seen
Since I their pastime witnessed here,
Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer!
I ask—but all is dark between!

They met me in a genial hour,
When universal nature breathed
As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
A time to overrule the power
Of discontent, and check the birth
Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
The most familiar bane of life
Since parting Innocence bequeathed
Mortality to Earth!
Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
Sailed through the sky—the brooks ran clear;
The lambs from rock to rock were bounding;
With songs the budding groves resounding;
And to my heart are still endeared
The thoughts with which it then was cheered;
The faith which saw that gladsome pair
Walk through the fire with unsinged hair.
Or, if such faith must needs deceive—
Then, Spirits of beauty and of grace,
Associates in that eager chase;
Ye, who within the blameless mind
Your favourite seat of empire find—
Kind Spirits! may we not believe
That they, so happy and so fair
Through your sweet influence, and the care
Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
From touch of deadly injury!
Destined, what's-er their earthly doom,
For mercy and immortal bloom!

XX.

GIPSIES.

Yet are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
Men, women, children, yea the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
—Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone,
while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
Much witnessing of change and cheer,
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest;—
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
Outshining like a visible God
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them—but they
Regard not her;—oh better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life;
Life which the very stars reprove
As on their silent tasks they move!
Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
In scorn I speak not;—they are what their birth
And breeding suffer them to be;
Wild outcasts of society!

XXI.

RUTH.

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.
Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak:
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire;
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

What days and what bright years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love:
"For there," said he, "are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

Beloved Ruth!—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.
Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favored bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn;
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

No more of this; for now, by thee
Dear Ruth! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came, the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May;
—they all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.
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When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,  
There came a respite to her pain;  
She from her prison fled;  
But of the Vagrant none took thought;  
And where it liked her best she sought  
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:  
The master-current of her brain  
Ran permanent and free;  
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,  
There did she rest; and dwell alone  
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools  
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,  
And airs that gently stir  
The vernal leaves—she loved them still;  
Nor ever taxed them with the ill  
Which had been done to her.

A barn her winter's supplies;  
But, till the warmth of summer skies  
And summer days is gone,  
(And all do in this tale agree)  
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,  
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!  
And Ruth will, long before her day,  
Be broken down and old:  
Sore aches she needs must have! but less  
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,  
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prey by want of food,  
She from her dwelling in the wood  
Repairs to a road-side;  
And there she begs at one steep place  
Where up and down with easy pace  
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That eaten pipe of hers is mute,  
Or thrown away; but with a flute  
Her loneliness she cheers:  
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,  
At evening in his homeward walk  
The Quantrall woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills  
Setting her little water-mills  
By spouts and fountains wild—  
Such small machinery as she turned  
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,  
A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,  
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould  
Thy corpse shall buried be,  
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,  
And all the congregation sing  
A Christian psalm for thee.

---

XXII.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

I.

There was a roaring in the wind all night;  
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;  
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;  
The birds are singing in the distant woods;  
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;  
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;  
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;  
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;  
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors  
The hare is running races in her mirth;  
And with her feet she from the plashy earth  
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,  
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III.

I was a Traveller then upon the moor  
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;  
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;  
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:  
The pleasant season did my heart employ;  
My old remembrances went from me wholly;  
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV.

But, as it sometimes chancest, from the might  
Of joy in minds that can no further go,  
As high as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low;  
To me that morning did it happen so;  
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;  
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor  
could name.

V.

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;  
And I behought me of the playful hare:  
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;  
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;  
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;  
But there may come another day to me—  
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.
VI.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, now for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

VII.

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we defied:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and
madness.

VIII.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these unuttered thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs-

IX.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Concealed on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

X.

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

XI.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII.

At length, himself unstirring, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he coned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

XIII.

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue!
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orb of his yet-vivid eyes.

XIV.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

XV.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather locusts, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI.

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarcely heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"
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<th>THE THORN.</th>
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<th>THE THORN.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>And this poor Thorn they clasp it round</td>
<td>1. &quot;There is a Thorn—it looks so old,</td>
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<td>So close, you'd say that they are bent</td>
<td>In truth, you'd find it hard to say</td>
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<td>With plain and manifest intent</td>
<td>How it could ever have been young,</td>
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<td>To drag it to the ground;</td>
<td>It looks so old and grey.</td>
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<td>And all have joined in one endeavour</td>
<td>Not higher than a two years' child</td>
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<td>To bury this poor Thorn for ever.</td>
<td>It stands erect, this aged Thorn;</td>
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<td>No leaves it has, no prickly points;</td>
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<td>A wretched thing forlorn.</td>
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<td>With lichen is it overgrown.</td>
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And to herself she cries,

‘Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!’

VII.

At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits
When the blue daylight’s in the skies,
And when the whirlwind’s on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,

‘Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!’

VIII.

“Now wherefore, thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor Woman go?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight’s in the sky
Or when the whirlwind’s on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry?
O wherefore! wherefore! tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry!”

IX.

“I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows:
But would you gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The hillock like an infant’s grave,
The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey;
Pass by her door—’tis seldom shut—
And, if you see her in her hut—
Then to the spot away!
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there.”

X.

“But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy Woman go,
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow!”

“Full twenty years are past and gone
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden’s true good-will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved.

XI.

And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other Maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

XII.

They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
What could she seek?—or wish to hide?
Her state to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and was mad;
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father—would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith!

XIII.

Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought
About its mother’s heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And, when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XIV.

More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you;
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew;
Nay—if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell;
And if ‘twas born alive or dead,
Far less could this with proof be said;
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.
THE THORN.

XV.
And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
"Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVI.
But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVII.
"Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

XVIII.
I did not speak—I saw her face;
Her face!—it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go;
And, when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shoulders, and you hear her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"

XIX.
"But what's the Thorn! and what the pond!
And what the hill of moss to her?
And what the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir!"
"I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree;
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond:
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX.
I've heard, the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant's blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could!
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXI.
And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;
And for the little infant's bones
With spears they would have sought.
But instantly the hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir!
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass—it shook upon the ground!
Yet all do still aver
The little Babe lies buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII.
I cannot tell how this may be
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss that strive
To drag it to the ground;
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

1798.
XXXIV.

HART-LEAP WELL.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

Then Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor With the slow motion of a summer’s cloud And now, as he approached a vassal’s door, “Bring forth another horse!” he cried aloud.

“Another horse!”—That about the vassal heard And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey; Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser’s eyes; The horse and horseman are a happy pair; But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies, There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter’s Hall, That as they galloped made the echoes roar; But horse and man are vanished, one and all; Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind, Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain: Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind, Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight halloed, he cheered and chided them on With suppliant gestures and upbraiding stern; But breath and eye-strain fail; and, one by one, The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race! The fugitives that so joyfully were blown! —This chase it looks not like an earthly chase; Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side; I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died; But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn; He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy; He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn, But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned, Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat; Weak as a lamb the hour that it was yeased; And white, with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched: His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill, And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest, (Never had living man such joyful lot!) Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west, And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least Four roads of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, “Till now Such sight was never seen by human eyes: Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow, Down to the very fountain where he lies.

I’ll build a pleasure-house upon this spot, And a small arboret, made for rural joy; "Th’will be the traveller’s shed, the pilgrim’s cot, A place of love for damsels that are coy.

A cunning artist will I have to frame A basin for that fountain in the dell! And they who do make mention of the same, From this day forth, shall call it Hart-Leap Well.

And, gallant Stag! to make thy praise known, Another monument shall here be raised; Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone, And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

And, in the summer-time when days are long, I will come hither with my Paramour; And with the dancers and the minstrel’s song We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

Till the foundations of the mountains fall My mansion with its arbours shall endure;— The joy of them who till the fields of Swale, And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!"

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead, With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring. —Soon did the Knight perform what he had said; And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.
HART-LEAP WELL.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel’s song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND.

The moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
’Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“Here in old time the hand of man hath been.”

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd’s garb attired,
Came up the hollow:—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
“A jolly place,” said he, “in times of old!
But something ails it now: the spot is curst.

You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great Lodge! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

There’s neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I’ve guessed, when I’ve been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

What thoughts must through the creature’s brain
have past!
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Luited by the fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother’s side.

In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.”

“Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine:
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.
The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

The pleasure-house is dust:—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

1806.

XXV.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE,
UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS.

Houn in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont’s murmur mingled with the Song—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:

"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

They came with banner, spear, and shield;
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough’n.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden’s course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower:—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont’s side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer—
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
—Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where!
No, they must not enter there,
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghastly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock’s side, a Shepherd-boy!
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE.

Can this be He who kithere came
In secret, like a smothered flame!
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away
The last she to her Babie did say:
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'  

Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosechle's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
—Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; never seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stood down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.

He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Arms rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance—
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and hessed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
'First shall head the flock of war!'"  

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed:
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead;
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage-hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

1897.
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

XXVI.

LINES,

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TENTERN ABBEY, ON REVISING THE BANKS OF THE WYE
DURING A TOUR.

JULY 12, 1798.

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copse. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembred pleasure:—such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.
Poems of the Imagination.

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create*,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations!—Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—will thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unweary'd in that service: rather say
With warmer love,—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

1798.

XXVII.
It is no Spirit who from heaven hath flown,
And is descending on his embassy;
Nor Traveller come from earth the heavens tospy!
'Tis Hesperus—that he stands with glittering
Crown,
First admonition that the sun is down!
For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass by;
A few are near him still—and now the sky,
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought
Within me when I recognised thy light;
A moment I was startled at the sight:
And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That I might step beyond my natural race
As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
Some ground not mine: and, strong her strength above,
My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there with steps that no one shall reprove!

1903.

XXVIII.

French Revolution,

As it appeared to Enthusiasts at its commencement*.
Reprinted from "The Friend."

Oh! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliaries which then stood

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

This and the Extract, page 62, and the first Piece of this Class are from the unpublished Poem of which some account is given in the Preface to the Excursion.
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!—Oh! times,
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,
When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress—to assist the work,
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favoured solely, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
(As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtlety, and strength
Their ministers,—who in kingly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it;—they, too, who, of gentle mood,
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves;—
Now was it that both found, the meek and lofty
Did both find, helpers to their heart's desires,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish;
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

XXIX.

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!

Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
Voices of two different natures!

Have not we too?—yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar;
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are.

xxx.

TO A SKY-LARK.

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

xxxi.

LAODAMIA.

"With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore,—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Sufferer heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.
LAODAMIA.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence! his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—‘tis He!
And a God leads him, winged Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clas!;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesilæus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were destrest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parece threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—"

"Ah, wherefore!—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corpse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom!
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Theseus stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

But if thou goest, I follow——" "Peace!" he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.
He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pollicid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chiefains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchanted.

The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die!'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then reured:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object.
Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."—

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corpse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exerted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellaspond (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Illus's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight!*

* For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's
Natural History, lib. xvi. cap. 44.; and for the features in
the character of Proteus see the Epigonia in Aulis of
Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a
mournful region, among unhappy Lovers.

His Laodamia

It Comes.
DION.

XXXII.

DION.

(SEE PLUTARCH).

i.

SERENE, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtyness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage then did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere—
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

ii.

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear
and shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on!—The anxious people see
Lone-extended Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corset clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Le! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine;—
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;
And flowers are on his person thrown
In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were!

iii.

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn
Iliissus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breast of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws
Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved
with stars)
Which Dion learned to measure with sublime
delight;—
But He hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;
And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go—
But whence that sudden check! that fearful start!
He hears an uncth sound—
Anon his lifted eyes
Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
Like Asster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;
Or Boreas when he scours the snow
That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Memalus he stops
His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

iv.

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—
No pause admitted, no design avowed!
"Avaunt, inexplicable Guest!—avaunt,"
Exclaimed the Chieftain—"let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid flame,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt;
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have
borne?"
V.

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains against, and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;
Whence angry perturbations,—and that look
Which no Philosophy can brook!

VI.

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!
O matchless perfidy! portentous bust
Of monstrous crime!—that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Sarmassan low in dust!
Shudder'd the walls—the marble city wept—
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral graffed on his Fate;—
1 Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends.'
1816.

XXXIII.

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE.

Within the mind strong fancies work,
A deep delight the bosom thrills,
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills:
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appannage of human kind,
Nor hint of man; if stone or rock
Seem not his handy-work to mock
By something cognizably shaped;
Mockery—or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strown,
Or from the Flood escaped:
Altars for Druid service fit;
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glow-worm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice)
Wrinkled Egyptian monument;
Green moss-grown tower; or hoary tent;
Tents of a camp that never shall be raised—
On which four thousand years have gazed!

II.

Ye plough-shares sparkling on the slopes!
Ye snow-white lambs that trip
Imprison'd 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership!
Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
To feed the insatiate Prodigal!
Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
All that the fertile valley shields;
Wages of folly—baits of crime,
Of life's uneasy game the stake,
Playthings that keep the eyes awake
Of drowsy, dotard Time;—
O care! O guilt!—O vales and plains,
Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
A Genius dwells, that can subdue
At once all memory of You,—
Most potent when mists veil the sky,
Mists that distort and magnify;
While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

III.

List to those shriller notes!—that march
Perchance was on the blast,
When, through this Height's inverted arch,
Rome's earliest legion passed!
—They saw, adventurously impelled,
And older eyes than theirs beheld,
This block—and you, whose church-like frame
Gives to this savage Pass its name.
Aspiring Road! that loves to hide
Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
Not seldom may the hour return
When thou shalt be my guide:
And I (as all men may find cause,
When life is at a weary pause,
And they have panted up the hill
Of duty with reluctant will)
Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
For the rich bounties of constraint;
Whence of invigorating transports flow
That choice lacked courage to bestow!
iv.

My Soul was grateful for delight
That wore a threatening brow;
A veil is lifted—can she slight
The scene that opens now!
Though habitation none appear,
The greenness tells, man must be there;
The shelter—that the perspective
Is of the clime in which we live;
Where Teil pursues his daily round;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears—and Love,
In woodland bowers or birchens grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
—Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain!
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd-boy;
And who is she? Can that be Joy!
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
"Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion fair!"

XXXIV.

TO ENTERPRISE.

Keep for the Young the impassioned smile
Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee stand
High on that chalky cliff of Briton's Isle,
A slender volume grasping in thy hand—
(Perchance the pages that relate
The various turns of Crusoe's fate)—
Ah, spare the exulting smile,
And drop thy pointing finger bright
As the first flash of beacon light;
But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
Nor turn thy face away
From One who, in the evening of his day,
To thee would offer no presumptuous hymn!

1.

Bold Spirit! who art free to rove
Among the starry courts of Jove,
And oft in splendour dost appear
Embody'd to poetic eyes,
While traversing this nether sphere,
Where Mortals call thee Enterprise.

Daughter of Hope! her favourite Child,
Whom she to young Ambition gave,
When hunter's arrow first defied
The grove, and stained the turf with gore;
Thee winged Fancy took, and nursed
On broad Euphrates' palmy shore,
And where the mightier Waters burst
From caves of Indian mountains hoar!
She wrapped thee in a panther's skin,
And Thou, thy favourite food to win,
The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst stare
From her rock-fortress in mid air,
With infant shout; and often sweep,
Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain;
Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
Upon the couchant lion's mane!
With rolling years thy strength increased;
And, far beyond thy native East,
To thee, by varying titles known
As variously thy power was shown,
Did incense-bearing altars rise,
Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
From suppliants panting for the skies!

1817.

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demi-god
Mounting from glorious deed to deed
As thou from clime to clime didst lead;
Yet still, the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays,
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripping seeks the tented field;
The aspiring Virgin kneels; and, pale
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,
A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy,
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground,—or a couch of rest;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser awed in vain
By chasm or dizzy precipice;
And hast Thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight!
How they, in bells of crystal, dive—
Where winds and waters cease to strive—
For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep;
And all the sad and precious things
Which there in ghastly silence sleep!
Or, adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calm no longer dreaded,
In never-sackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow;
And, slanting sails and soaring cars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores!
—Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead,
Nile trembles at his fountain head;
Then speak'st—and lo! the polar Seas
Unbosom their last mysteries.
—But oh! what transports, what sublime reward,
Won from the world of mind, dost thou prepare
For philosophic Sage; or high-souled Bard
Who, for thy service trained in lonely woods,
Hath fed on pageants floating through the air,
Or calcined in depth of limpid floods;
Nor grieves—thou'lt doomed thro' silent night to bear
The domination of his glorious themes,
Or struggle in the net-work of thy dreams!

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,
From source still deeper, and of higher worth,
'Tis thine the quickening impulse to control,
And in due season send the mandate forth;
Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
When but a single Mind resolves to crush no more.

Dread Minister of wrath!
Who to their destined punishment dost urge
The Pharnaces of the earth, the men of hardened heart!
Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
When they in pomp depart
With trampling horses and resplendent cars—
Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge;
Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown strands;
Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands—
An Army now, and now a living hill
That a brief while heaves with convulsive throes—
Then all is still;
Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless snows!

Back flows the willing current of my Song;
If to provoke such doom the Impious dare,
Why should it daunt a blameless prayer?
—Bold Goddess! range our Youth among;
Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat
In hearts no longer young;
Still may a veteran Few have pride
In thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet;
In fixed resolves by Reason justified;
That to their object cleave like slept
Whitening a pine tree's northern side,
When fields are naked far and wide,
And withered leaves, from earth's cold breast
Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can find rest.

But, if such homage thou disdain
As doth with mellowing years agree,
One rarely absent from thy train
More humble favours may obtain
For thy contented Votary.
She, who incites the fickle lambs
In presence of their heedless dams,
And to the solitary fawn
Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
That wakes the breeze, the sparkling lymph
Doth hurry to the lawn;
She, who inspires that strain of joyance holy
Which to the sweet Bird, mistress of melancholy
Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead for me;
And vernal mornings opening bright
With views of undefined delight,
And cheerful songs, and sure that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be mine.

But thou, O Goddess! in thy favourite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's store-house fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile!—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society;
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with Thee!
XXXV.
TO———,
ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HELVELLYN.

Inmate of a mountain-dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether’s arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows;
What a vast abyss is there!
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair!

And a record of communion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield!

Maiden! now take flight,—inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine!
With the morning’s roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest
Flung from of the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west!

Thine are all the coral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;
Listen to their songs!—or halt,

To Niphates’ top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared;

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty!

XXXVI.
TO A YOUNG LADY,
WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

Dear Child of Nature, let them rail!
—There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

1803.

XXXVII.
WATER-FOWL.

Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter.—Extract from the Author’s Book on the Lakes.

Mark how the feathered tenants of the flood,
With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
 Inferior to angelical, prolong
Their curious pastime! shaping in mid air
(And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
High as the level of the mountain-tops)
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath—
Their own domain; but ever, while intent
On tracing and re-tracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circles, to and fro,
Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. ’Tis done—
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased;
But lo! the vanished company again
Ascending; they approach—I hear their wings
Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound
Past in a moment—and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes;
They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image; 'tis themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch; then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB.

Turs Height a ministering Angel might select:
For from the summit of Black Comb (dread name
Derived from clouds and storms!) the ampest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands—low dusky tracts,
Where Trent is nursed, far southward! Cambrian
hills
To the south-west, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eye-sight linked with these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde:—
Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth
Gigantic mountains rough with crags; beneath,
Right at the imperial station's western base
Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretched
Far into silent regions blue and pale;—
And visibly enshirring Mona's Isle
That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifted slowly
(Above the convex of the watery globe)
Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
Her habitable shores, but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie
At the spectator's feet. Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud? Or there
Do we behold the line of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-swain
(Like the bright confines of another world)
Not doubtfully perceived. Look homeward now!
In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle, how pure!—Of Nature's works,
In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
A revelation infinite it seems;
Display August of man's inheritance,
Of Britain's calm felicity and power!

Those silver clouds collected round the sun
His mid-day warmth abate not, seeming less
To overshadow than multiply his beams
By soft reflection—grateful to the sky,
To rocks, fields, woods. Nor doth our human sense
Ask, for its pleasure, screen or canopy
More ample than the time-dismantled Oak
Spreads o'er this tuft of heath, which now, attired
In the whole fulness of its bloom, affords
Couch beautiful as e'er for earthly use
Was fashioned; whether by the hand of Art,
That eastern Sultan, amid flowers enwrought
On silken tissue, might diffuse his limbs
In languor; or, by Nature, for repose
Of panting Wood-nymph, weared with the chase.
O Lady! fairer in thy Poet's sight
Than fairest spiritual creature of the groves,
Approach;—and, thus invited, crown with rest
The noon-tide hour: though truly some there are
Whose footsteps superstitiously avoid
This venerable Tree: for, when the wind
Blows keenly, it sends forth a cracking sound
(Above the general roar of woods and crags)
Distinctly heard from far—a doleful note!
As if (so Grecian shepherds would have deemed)
The Hamadryad, pent within, bewailed
Some bitter wrong. Nor is it unbelieved,
By ruder fancy, that a troubled ghost
Haunts the old trunk; lamenting deeds of which
The flowery ground is conscious. But no wind
Sweeps now along this elevated ridge;
Not even a zephyr stirs;—the obnoxious Tree
Is mute; and, in his silence, would look down,
O lovely Wanderer of the trackless hills,
On thy reclining form with more delight
Than his coevals in the sheltered vale
Seem to participate, whilst they view
Their own far-stretching arms and leafy heads
Vividly pictured in some glassy pool,
That, for a brief space, checks the hurrying stream!
THE TRIAD.

Show me the noblest Youth of present time, Whose trembling fancy would to love give birth; Some God or Hero, from the Olympian eline Returned, to seek a Consort upon earth; Or, in no doubtful prospect, let me see The brightest star of ages yet to be, And I will mate and match him blissfully.

I will not fetch a Naiad from a flood Pure as herself—(song lacks not mightier power) Nor leaf-crowned Dryad from a pathless wood, Nor Sea-nymph glistening from her coral bower; Mere Mortals bodied forth in vision still, Shall with Mount Ida’s triple lustre fill The chaster coverts of a British hill.

"Appear!—obey my lyre’s command! Come, like the Graces, hand in hand! For ye, though not by birth allied, Are Sisters in the bond of love; Nor shall the tongue of curious pride Presume those interweavings to reprove In you, which that fair progeny of Jove, Learned from the tuneful spheres that glide In endless union, earth and sea above."

—I sing in vain;—the pines have hushed their waving; A peerless Youth expectant at my side, Breathless as they, with unabated craving Looks to the earth, and to the vacant air; And, with a wandering eye that seems to chide, Asks of the clouds what occupants they hide:— But why solicit more than sight could bear, By casting on a moment all we dare! Invoke we those bright Beings one by one; And what was boldly promised, truly shall be done.

"Fear not a constraining measure!— Yielding to this gentle spell, Lucida! from domes of pleasure, Or from cottage-sprinkled dell, Come to regions solitary, Where the eagle builds her aery, Above the hermit’s long-forsaken cell!"

—She comes!—behold That Figure, like a ship with snow-white sail! Nearer she draws; a breeze uplifts her veil; Upon her coming wait As pure a sunshine and as soft a gale

As e’er, on herbage covering earth’s mold, Tempted the bird of Juno to unfold His richest splendour—when his veering gait And every motion of his starry train Seem governed by a strain Of music, audible to him alone.

"O Lady, worthy of earth’s proudest throne! Nor less, by excellence of nature, fit Beside an unambitious hearth to sit Domestic queen, where grandeur is unknown; What living man could fear The worst of Fortune’s malice, wert Thou near, Humbled that lily-stem, thy sceptre meek, That its fair flowers may from his cheek Brush the too happy tear!— Queen, and handmaid lowly! Whose skill can speed the day with lively cares, And banish melancholy By all that mind invents or hand prepares; O Thou, against whose lip, without its smile And in its silence even, no heart is proof; Whose goodness, sinking deep, would reconcile The softest Nursling of a gorgeous palace To the bare life beneath the hawthorn-roof Of Sherwood’s Archer, or in caves of Wallace— Who that hath seen thy beauty could content His soul with but a glimpse of heavenly day? Who that hath loved thee, but would lay His strong hand on the wind, if it were bent To take thee in thy majesty away!— Pass onward (even the glancing deer Till we depart intrude not here) That mossy slope, o’er which the woodbine throws A canopy, is smoothed for thy repose!"

Glad moment is it when the throng Of warblers in full concert strong Strive, and not vainly strive, to rout The lagging shower, and force coy Phoebus out, Met by the rainbow’s form divine, Issuing from her cloudy shrine;— So may the thrillings of the lyre Prevail to further our desire, While to these shades a sister Nymph I call.

"Come, if the notes thine ear may pierce, Come, youngest of th’ lovely Three, Submissive to the might of verse And the dear voice of harmony, By none more deeply felt than Thee!"

—I sang; and lo! from pastimes virginal She hastens to the tents Of nature, and the lonely elements.
Air sparkles round her with a dazzling sheen;
But mark her glowing cheek, her vesture green!
And, as if wishful to disarm
Or to repay the potent Charm,
She bears the stringed lute of old romance,
That cheered the trebled arbour’s privacy,
And soothed war-weary knights in raffled hall.
How vived, yet how delicate, her glee!
So tripped the Muse, inventress of the dance,
So, truant in waste woods, the blithe Euphrosyne!

But the ringlets of that head
Why are they ungarlanded?
Why bedeck her temples less
Than the simplest shepherdess?
Is it not a brow inviting
Choicest flowers that ever breathed,
Which the myrtle would delight in
With Idalian rose enwreathed?
But her humility is well content
With one wild floweret (call it not forlorn)
FLOWER OF THE WINDS, beneath her bosom worn—
Yet more for love than ornament.

Open, ye thickets! let her fly,
Swift as a Thracian Nymph o’er field and height!
For She, to all but those who love her, shy,
Would gladly vanish from a Stranger’s sight;
Though where she is beloved and loves,
Light as the wheeling butterfly she moves;
Her happy spirit as a bird is free,
That rifles blossoms on a tree,
Turning them inside out with arch audacity.
Alas! how little can a moment show
Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays;
A face o’er which a thousand shadows go!
—She stops—is fastened to that rivulet’s side;
And there (while, with sedler men,
O’er timid waters that have scarcely left
Their birth-place in the rocky cleft
She bends) at leisure may be seen
Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified—
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth;
The bland composure of eternal youth!

What more changeful than the sea?
But over his great tides
Fidelity presides;
And this light-hearted Maiden constant is as he.
High is her aim as heaven above,
And wide as either her good-will;
And, like the lowly reed, her love
Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill:

Insight as keen as frosty star
Is to her charity no bar,
Nor interrupts her frolic graces
When she is, far from these wild places,
Encircled by familiar faces.
O the charm that manners draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law!
If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, aught ensue
Untoward or unfit;
She, in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure,
Sheds round the transient harm or vague mischance
A light unknown to tutored elegance;
Her’s is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushed;
And the fault (if fault it be)
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety,
And kindle sportive wit—
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains free
As if she knew that Oberon king of Faery
Had crossed her purpose with some quaint vagary,
And heard his viewless bands
Over their mouthful triumph clapping hands.

“Last of the Thrice, though eldest born,
Reveal thyself, like pensive Morn
Touched by the skyhark’s earliest note,
Ere humbler gladness be afloat.
But whether in the semblance drest
Of Dawn—or Eve, fair vision of the west,
Come with each anxious hope subdued
By woman’s gentle fortitude,
Each grief, through meekness, settling into rest.
—Or I would hail thee when some high-wrought page
Of a closed volume lingering in thy hand
Has raised thy spirit to a peaceful stand
Among the glories of a happier age.”

Her brow hath opened on me—see it there,
Brightening the umbrage of her hair;
So gleams the crescent moon, that loves
To be descried through shady groves.
Tenderest bloom is on her cheek;
Wish not for a richer streak;
Nor dread the depth of meditative eye;
But let thy love, upon that azure field
Of thoughtfulness and beauty, yield
Its homage offered up in purity.
What wouldst thou more! In sunny glade,
Or under leaves of thickest shade,
THE WISHING-GATE.

Was such a stillness o'er diffused
Since earth grew calm while angels mused!
Softly she treaded, as if her foot were loth
To crush the mountain dew-drops—soon to melt
On flower's breast; as if she felt
That flowers themselves, what'er their hue,
With all their fragrance, all their glistening,
Call to the heart for inward listening—
And though for bridal wreaths and tokens true
Welcomed wisely; though a growth
Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,
As fitly spring from turf the mourner weeps on—
And without wrong are cropt the marble tomb
to strew.
The Charnel is o'er; the mute Phantoms gone,
Nor will return—but droop not, favoured Youth!
The apparition that before thee shone
Obeyed a summons covetous of truth.
From these wild rocks thy footsteps I will guide
To bowers in which thy fortune may be tried,
And one of the bright Three become thy happy
Bride.

1824.

XLI.

THE WISHING-GATE.

In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old high-way lead-
ing to Ambleside, is a gate, which, time out of mind,
has been called the Wishing-gate, from a belief that
wishes formed or indulged there have a favourable
issue.

Hope rules a land for ever green:
All powers that serve the bright-eyed Queen
Are confident and gay;
Clouds at her bidding disappear;
Points she to aught!—the bliss draws near,
And Fancy smooths the way.

But such the land of Wishes—there
Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
And thoughts with things at strife;
Yet how forlorn, should ye depart
Ye superstitions of the heart,
How poor, were human life!

When magic lore abjures its might,
Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
One tender claim abate;
Witness this symbol of your sway,
Surviving near the public way,
The rustic Wishing-gate!

Inquire not if the faery race
Shed kindly influence on the place,
Ere northward they retired;
If here a warrior left a spell,
Panting for glory as he fell;
Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
Composed with Nature's finest care,
And in her fondest love—
Peace to embosom and content—
To overawe the turbulent,
The selfish to reprove.

Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
Unknowing, and unknown,
The infection of the ground partakes,
Longing for his Belov'd—who makes
All happiness her own.

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?
The local Genius ne'er befriended
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincerely
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,
Might stop before this favoured scene,
At Nature's call, or blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to seek,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;
Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest,
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity.

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED.

'Tis gone—with old belief and dream
That round it clung, and tempting scheme
Released from fear and doubt;
And the bright landscape too must lie,
By this blank wall, from every eye,
Relentlessly shut out.

Bear witness ye who seldom passed
That opening—but a look ye cast
Upon the lake below,
What spirit-stirring power it gained
From faith which here was entertained,
Though reason might say no.

Biest is that ground, where, o'er the springs
Of history, Glory claps her wings,
Fame sheds the exulting tear;
Yet earth is wide, and many a nook
Unheard of is, like this, a book
For modest meanings dear.

It was in sooth a happy thought
That grafted, on so fair a spot,
So confident a token
Of coming good—-the charm is fled;
Indulgent centuries spun a thread,
Which one harsh day has broken.

Alas ! for him who gave the word ;
Could he no sympathy afford,
Derived from earth or heaven,
To hearts so oft by hope betrayed;
Their very wishes wanted aid
Which here was freely given !

Where, for the love-lorn maiden's wound,
Will now so readily be found
A balm of expectation !
Anxious for far-off children, where
Shall mothers breathe a like sweet air
Of home-felt consolation !

And not unfelt will prove the loss
'Mid trivial care and petty cross
And each day's shallow grief;
Though the most easily beguiled
Were oft among the first that smiled
At their own fond belief.

If still the reckless change we mourn,
A reconciling thought may turn
To harm that might lurk here,
Ere judgment prompted from within
Fit aims, with courage to begin,
And strength to persevere.

Not Fortune's slave is Man: our state
Enjoins, while firm resolves await
On wishes just and wise,
That strenuous action follow both,
And life be one perpetual growth
Of heaven-ward enterprise.

So taught, so trained, we boldly face
All accidents of time and place;
Whatever props may fall,
Trust in that sovereign law can spread
New glory o'er the mountain's head,
Fresh beauty through the vale.

That truth informing mind and heart,
The simplest cottager may part,
Ungrieved, with charm and spell;
And yet, lost Wishing-gate, to thee
The voice of grateful memory
Shall bid a kind farewell !

See Note at the end of the Volume.

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK.

A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slight; yet
Yet there the glow-worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.

What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down !
PRESENTIMENTS.

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;
The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the root the root adheres
In every fibre true.

Close clings to earth the living rock,
Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
And God upholds them all;
So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
Her annual funeral.

Here closed the meditative strain;
But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered;
The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
I gave this after-lay.

I sang—Let myriads of bright flowers,
Like Thee, in field and grove
Revive unenvious—mightier far,
Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
Is God’s redeeming love;

That love which changed—for wan disease,
For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age—
Their moral element,
And turned the thistles of a curse
To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A court for Deity.

XLIV.

PRESENTIMENTS.

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right
Who deem that ye from open light
Retire in fear of shame;
All hearts-borne Instincts shun the touch
Of vulgar sense,—and, being such,
Such privilege ye claim.

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
Wore mine in early days;
And now, unforced by time to part
With fancy, I obey my heart,
And venture on your praise.

What though some busy foes to good,
Too potent over nerve and blood,
Lark near you—and combine
To taint the health which ye infuse;
This hides not from the moral Muse
Your origin divine.

How oft from you, decided Powers!
Comes Faith that in auspicious hours
Builds castles, not of air;
Bodings unsanctioned by the will
Flow from your visionary skill,
And teach us to beware.

The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift,
That no philosophy can lift,
Shall vanish, if ye please,
Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
The spirits at your bidding play
In gaiety and ease.

Star-guided contemplations move
Through space, though calm, not raised above
Prognostics that ye rule;
The naked Indian of the wild,
And haply, too, the cradled Child,
Are pupils of your school.

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments?
A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.
The laughter of the Christmas hearth
With sighs of self-exhausted mirth
Ye feelingly reprove;
And daily, in the conscious breast,
Your visitations are a test
And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpreting,
The simply-mock foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
As sail hath been unfurled;
For dancers in the festive hall
What gaily partners hath your call
Fetcheth from the shadowy world.

'Tis said, that warnings ye dispense,
Embodied by a keener sense;
That men have lived for whom,
With dread precision, ye made clear
The hour that in a distant year
Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight! Yet there are
Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
Truth shows a glorious face,
While on that isthmus which commands
The councils of both worlds, she stands,
Sage Spirits! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
All changes of the element,
Whose wisdom fixed the scale
Of natures, for our wants provides
By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
When lights of reason fail.

XLV.

VERNAL ODE.

Rerum Natura tota est nasquam magis quam in minimis.

Beneath the concave of an April sky,
When all the fields with freshest green were dight,
Appeared, in presence of the spiritual eye
That sinks or supersedes our grosser sight,

The form and rich habiliments of One
Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
When it reveals, in evening majesty,
Features half lost amid their own pure light.
Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
He hung,—then floated with angelic ease
(Softening that bright effulgence by degrees)
Till he had reached a summit sharp and bare,
Where oft the venturous beiger drinks the noon tide breeze.

Upon the apex of that lofty cone
Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the east
Suddenly raised by some enchanter's power,
Where nothing was; and firm as some old Tower
Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
Waves high, embellished by a gleaming shower!

II.

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
Reposed a golden harp;—he touched the strings;
And, after prelude of unearthly sound
Poured through the echoing hills around,
He sang—

"No wintry desolations,
Scooring blight or noxious dew,
Affect my native habitations;
Buried in glory, far beyond the scope
Of man's inquiring gaze, but to his hope
Imaged, though faintly, in the hue
Profound of night's ethereal blue;
And in the aspect of each radiant orb;—
Some fixed, some wandering with no timid curb;
But wandering star and fixed, to mortal eye,
Blended in absolute serenity,
And free from semblance of decline;—
Fresh as if Evening brought their natal hour,
Her darkness splendid gave, her silence power,
To testify of Love and Grace divine.

III.

What if those bright fires
Shine subject to decay,
Sons haply of extinguished sires,
Themselves to lose their light, or pass away
Like clouds before the wind,
Be thanks poured out to Him whose hand bestows,
Nightly, on human kind
That vision of endurance and repose.
—And though to every draught of vital breath
Renewed throughout the bounds of earth or ocean,
The melancholy gates of Death
Respond with sympathetic motion;
Though all that feeds on nether air,
Howe'er magnificent or fair,
Grows but to perish, and entrust
Its ruins to their kindred dust;
Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
Her procrustine vigils Nature keeps
Amid the unfathomable deeps;
And saves the peopled fields of earth
From dread of emptiness or death.
Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'r'd the sky
The foliaged head in cloud-like majesty,
The shadow-casting race of trees survive:
Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
Sweet flowers — what living eye hath viewed
Their myriads — endlessly renewed,
Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray;
Where'er the subtle waters stray;
Wherever sportive zephyrs bend
Their course, or genial showers descend!
Mortals, rejoice! the very Angels quit
Their mansions unsusceptible of change,
Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
And through your sweet vicissitudes to range!"
Roused by this kindliest of May-showers,
The spirit-quickener of the flowers,
That with moist virtue softly cleaves
The beds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats—
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste,
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged;
Give ear, O Man! to their appeal
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst think, as well as feel.

Mount from the earth; aspire! aspire!
So pleads the town’s cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height
Sink, to attain a loftier flight;
While incense from the altar breathes
Rich fragrance in emblazoned wreaths;
Or, flung from swinging censor, sheds
The taper-lights, and curls in clouds
Around angelic forms, the still
Creation of the painter’s skill,
That on the service wait concealed
One moment, and the next revealed
——Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
And for no transient ecstasies!
What else can mean the visual plea
Of still or moving imagery——
The iterated summons loud,
Not wasted on the attendant crowd,
Nor wholly lost upon the throng
Hurrying the busy streets along!

Also! the sanctities combined
By art to unseal the mind
Decay and languish; or, as creeds
And humourous change, are spurned like weeds:
The priests are from their altars thrust;
Temples are levelled with the dust;
And solemn rites and awful forms
Founder amid fanatic storms.
Yet evermore, through years renewed
In undisturbed vicissitude
Of seasons balancing their flight
On the swift wings of day and night,
Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
Wide open for the scattered Poor.
Where flower-breathed incense to the skies
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-crowned by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;

Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unweary’d canticles,
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun’s bright head—
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine portion Nature yields,
That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart:
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

XLVII.

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK.

Wouldst thou be taught, when sleep has taken flight,
By a sure voice that can most sweetly tell,
How far-off yet a glimpse of morning light,
And if to lure the transient back be well,
Forbear to correct a Repeater’s stroke,
That answering to thy touch, will sound the hour;
Better provide thee with a Cuckoo-clock
For service hung behind thy chamber-door;
And in due time the soft spontaneous shock,
The double note, as if with living power,
Will to composure lead—or make thee blithe as
Bird in bower.

List, Cuckoo—Cuckoo!—oft tho’ tempests howl,
Or nipping frost remind thee trees are bare,
How cattle pine, and droop the shivering owl,
Thy spirits will seem to feed on balmy air:
I speak with knowledge,—by that Voice beguiled,
Thou wilt salute old memories as they throng
Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
Through fresh green fields, and budding groves among,
Will make thee happy, happy as a child;
Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers, and song,
And breathe as in a world where nothing can go wrong.

And know—that, even for him who shuns the day
And nightly tosses on a bed of pain;
Whose joys, from all but memory swept away,
Must come unlook’d for, if they come again;
Know—that, for him whose waking thoughts, severe
As his distress is sharp, would scorn my theme,
The mimic notes, striking upon his ear
In sleep, and intermingling with his dream,
Could from sad regions send him to a dear
Delightful land of verdure, shower and gleam,
To mock the wondering Voice beside some haunted
stream.

O bounty without measure! while the grace
Of Heaven doth in such wise, from humblest
springs,
Pour pleasure forth, and solaces that trace
A mazy course along familiar things,
Well may our hearts have faith that blessings come,
Streaming from founts above the starry sky,
With angels when their own untroubled home
They leave, and speed on nightly embassy
To visit earthly chambers,—and for whom!
Yes, both for souls who God's forbearance try,
And those that seek his help, and for his mercy sigh.

TO THE CLOUDS.

Army of Clouds! ye winged Host in troops
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
O whither with such eagerness of speed?
What seek ye, or what shun ye? of the gale
Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
Or racing o'er your blue ethereal field
Contend ye with each other? of the sea
Children, thus post ye over vale and height
To sink upon your mother's lap—and rest!
Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first mine eyes
Beheld in your impetuous march the likeness
Of a wide army pressing on to meet
Or overtake some unknown enemy?

But your smooth motions suit a peaceful aim;
And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, compares
Your squadrons to an endless flight of birds
Aerial, upon due migration bound
To milder climes; or rather do ye urge
In caravan your hasty pilgrimage
To pause at last on more aspiring heights
Than these, and utter your devotion there
With thunderous voice! Or are ye jubilant,
And would ye, trucking your proud lord the Sun,
Be present at his setting; or the pomp
Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and stand

Posing your splendours high above the heads
Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen God?
Whence, whence, ye Clouds! this eagerness of
speed?
Speak, silent creatures.—They are gone, are fled,
Buried together in your gloomy mass
That loads the middle heaven; and clear and bright
And vacant doth the region which they thronged
Appear; a calm descent of sky conducting
Down to the unapproachable abyss,
Down to that hidden gulf from which they rose
To vanish—fleet as days and months and years,
Fleet as the generations of mankind,
Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
The lingering world, when time hath ceased to be.
But the winds roar, shaking the rooted trees,
And see! a bright precursor to a train
Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
That sullenly refuses to partake
Of the wild impulse. From a fount of life
Invisible, the long procession moves
Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
Which they are entering, welcome to mine eye
That sees them, to my soul that owns in them,
And in the bosom of the firmament
O'er which they move, wherein they are contained,
A type of her capacious self and all
Her restless progeny.

A humble walk
Here is my body doomed to tread, this path,
A little hoary line and faintly traced,
Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's foot
Or of his flock!—joint vestige of them both.
I pace it unresisting, for my thoughts
Admit no bondage and my words have wings.
Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid harp,
To accompany the verse! The mountain blast
Shall be our hand of music; he shall sweep
The rocks, and quivering trees, and billowy lake,
And search the fibres of the caves, and they
Shall answer, for our song is of the Clouds
And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales—
Which by their aid re-clothe the naked lawn
With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
And moisten the parched lips of thristy flowers—
Love them; and every idle breeze of air
Bends to the favourite burthen. Moon and stars
Keep their most solemn vigils when the Clouds
Watch also, shifting peaceably their place
Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when they lie,
As if some Protean art the change had wrought,
In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
And all degrees of beauty. O ye Lightnings!
Ye are their perilous offspring; and the Sun—
Source inexhaustible of life and joy,
And type of man’s far-darting reason, therefore
In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
A blazing intellectual deity—
Loves his own glory in their looks, and showers
Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
Visions with all but beatific light
Enriched—too transient were they not renewed.
From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
In silent rapture, credulous desire
Nourish the hope that memory lacks not power
To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain thought!
Yet why repine, created as we are
For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?

A sense of seemingly presumptuous wrong
Gave the first impulse to the Poet’s song;
But, of his scorn repenting soon, he drew
A juster judgment from a calmer view;
And, with a spirit freed from discontent,
Thankfully took an effort that was meant
Not with God’s bounty, Nature’s love, to vie,
Or made with hope to please that inward eye
Which ever strives in vain itself to satisfy,
But to recall the truth by some faint trace
Of power ethereal and celestial grace,
That in the living Creature find on earth a place.

XLIX.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE BIRD
OF PARADISE.

This gentlest Poet, with free thoughts endowed,
And a true master of the glowing strain,
Might scan the narrow province with disdain
That to the Painter’s skill is here allowed.
This, this the Bird of Paradise! disdain
The daring thought, forget the name;
This the Sun’s Bird, whom Glendower’s might
own
As no unworthy Partner in their flight
Through seas of ether, where the ruffling sway
Of ether air’s rude billows is unknown;
Whom Sylphs, if ever for casual pastime they
Through India’s spicy regions wing their way,
Might bow to as their Lord. What character,
O sovereign Nature! I appeal to thee,
Of all thy feathered progeny
Is so unrivalled, and what shape so fair?
So richly decked in variegated down,
Green, sable, shining yellow, shadowy brown,
Tints softly with each other blended,
Hues doubtfully begun and ended;
Or intershooting, and to sight
Lost and recovered, as the rays of light
Glance on the conscious plumes touched here and
there!
Full surely, when with such proud gifts of life
Began the pencil’s strife,
Overweening Art was caught as in a snare.

A JEWISH FAMILY.

(IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE RHINE.)

Genius of Raphael! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou wouldst forgo the neighbouring Rhine,
And all his majesty—
A studious forehead to incline
O’er this poor family.

The Mother—her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name;
An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give—
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies!
I speak as if of sense beguiled;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisit Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within;
ON THE POWER OF SOUND.

The grace of parting Infancy
By blushes yet untamed;
Age faithful to the mother’s knee,
Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
As flowers, stand side by side;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
The Christian of his pride:
Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
Upon them not forlorn,
Though of a lineage once abhorred,
Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Both here preserve a living light,
From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem!

1822.

ON THE POWER OF SOUND.

ARGUMENT.
The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony.—Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of 6th Stanza).—The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot.—Origin of music, and its effect in early ages—how produced (to the middle of 10th Stanza).—The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severely.—Wash uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation.—(Stanza 12th). The Pythagorean theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe—imagination consonant with such a theory.—Wash expressed (in 11th Stanza) realised, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator.—(Last Stanza) the destruction of earth and the planetary system—the survival of audible harmony, and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ.

I.

Thy functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit astral
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave;

Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
And whispers for the heart, their slave;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh; and warbled air,
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
And requiem answered by the pulse that beats
Devoutly, in life’s last retreats!

II.
The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
They hurl perrenchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That roar, the prowling lion’s Here I am,
How fearful to the desert wide!
That bleat, how tender! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Dull, cuckoo!—let the vernal soul
Go with thee to the frozen zone;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll!
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun’s faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor’s prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow’s cottage-lullaby.

III.

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of voice—to hound and horn
From rocky steep and rock-bestubbéd meadows
Flung back, and, in the sky’s blue caves, reborn—
On with your pastime! till the church-tower bells
A greeting give of measured glee;
And milder echoes from their cells
Repeat the bridal symphony.
Then, or far earlier, let us rove
Where mists are breaking up or gone,
And from aloft look down into a cove
Bespinkled with a careless quire,
Happy milk-maids, one by one
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

IV.

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind man’s gloom, exalts the veteran’s mirth;
Unscorned the peasant’s whistling breath, that
Lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime.
You pilgrims see—in lagging file
They move; but soon the appointed way
A choral Ave Maria shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine
Glisten with a livelier ray:
Nor friendless he, the prisoner of the mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

v.
When civic renovation
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
Piping through cave and battlemented tower;
Then starts the shaggy, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet!
Who, from a martial pageant, spreads
Incitements of a battle-day,
Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with plumeless heads!
—
Even she whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire
Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

vi.
How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions trod!
O Thou, through whom the temple rings with praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense
Thy votaries, woefully resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better, mind;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried;
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp,
Soothe it into patience,—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere manly burns, or patriot bleeds.

vii.
As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul!
Or, awed he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth
With Order dwell, in endless youth!

viii.
Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight! truth's undaunted lover,
To the first leagues of tutored passion climb,
When Music deign'd within this grosser sphere
Her subtle essence to unfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.
Yet strenuous was the infant Age:
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
Of rapt imagination sped her march
Through the realms of woe and weal:
Hell to the lyre bowed low; the upper arch
Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

ix.
The Gift to king Amphion
That wailed a city with its melody
Was for belief no dream,—thy skill, Arion!
Could humanize the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves,
Leave for one chant,—the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er withing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round.
Self-ct, as with a desperate course,
'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse;
And singing, while the accordaned hand
Sweeps his harp, the Master rides;
So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
And he, with his preserver, shine star-bright
In memory, through silent night.

x.
The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
Couched in the shadow of Mæonian pines,
Was passing sweet;—the eyeballs of the leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
ON THE POWER OF SOUND.

How did they sparkle to the cymbal’s clang!  
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground  
In cadence,—and Silenus swang  
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.  
To life, to life give back thine ear:  
Ye who are longing to be rid  
Of fable, though to truth subservient, bear  
The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell  
Echoed from the coffin-lid;  
The convict’s summons in the steeple’s knell;  
‘The vain distress-gun,’ from a leeward shore,  
Repeated—heard, and heard no more!

For terror, joy, or pity,  
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes:  
From the babe’s first cry to voices of regal city,  
Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats  
Far as the woodlands—with the trill to blend  
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale  
Might tempt an angel to descend,  
While hovering o’er the moonlight vale.  
Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no scheme,  
No scale of moral music—to unite  
Powers that survive but in the faintest dream  
Of memory!—O that ye might stoop to bear  
Chains, such precious chains of sight  
As laboured minstrelies through ages wear!  
O for a balance the truth to tell  
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

By one pervading spirit  
of tones and numbers all things are controlled,  
as sages taught, where faith was found to merit  
Initiation in that mystery old.  
The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds astir  
as they themselves appear to be,  
Innumerable voices fill  
With everlasting harmony;  
The towering headlands, crowned with mist,  
Their feet among the billows, know  
That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;  
Thy pinions, universal Air,  
Ever waving to and fro,  
Are delegates of harmony, and bear  
Strains that support the Seasons in their round;  
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XII.  
Break forth into thanksgiving,  
Ye banded instruments of wind and chords;  
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,  
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words!  
Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,  
Nor mute the forest hum of noon;  
Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed  
From snowy peak and cloud, attune  
Thy hungry barkings to the hymn  
Of joy, that from her utmost walls  
The six-days’ Work, by flaming Seraphim  
Transmits to Heaven! As deep to deep  
Shouting through one valley calls,  
All worlds, all natures, mood and measure keep  
For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured  
Into the ear of God, their Lord!

XIV.  
A Voice to Light gave Being;  
To Time, and Man his earth-born chronicler;  
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,  
And sweep away life’s visionary stir;  
The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,  
Arm at its blast for deadly wars)  
To archangelic lips applied,  
The grave shall open, quench the stars.  
O Silence! are Man’s noisy years  
No more than moments of thy life?  
Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,  
With her smooth tones and discords just,  
Tempered into rapturous strife,  
Thy destined bond-slave! No! though earth be dust  
And vanish, though the heavens dissolve, her stay  
Is in the Word, that shall not pass away.
PETER BELL.

A TALE.

What's in a Name?

Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Caesar?

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P.L., &C. &C.

My Dear Friend,—The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its Manuscript state, nearly survived its minority,—for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favourable reception; or, rather, to fit it for filling permanently a station, however humble, in the Literature of our Country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavours in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it, may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulse.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will show, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, you have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledge my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted, that to you, as a Master in that province of the art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is not an inappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name yours has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RIVRAL MOUNT, April 7, 1819.

PROLOGUE.

There's something in a flying horse,
There's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
For shape just like the crescent-moon.

And now I have a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon:
Fast through the clouds my boat can sail;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon!

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea;
The noise of danger's in your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me!

Meanwhile untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe;
And, did not pity touch my breast,
To see how ye are all distressed,
Till my ribs ached, I'd laugh at you!

Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sate in such another;
Whether among the winds we strife,
Or deep into the clouds we dive,
Each is contented with the other.

Away we go—and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars!
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent-moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

Up goes my Boat among the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her:
Up goes my little Boat so bright!

The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull—
We pry among them all; have shot
High over the red-haired race of Mars,
Covered from top to toe with scars;
Such company I like it not!
The towns in Saturn are decayed,
And melancholy Spectres throng them;—
The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail among them.

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That little Earth of ours!

Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth:—
Whole ages if I here should roam,
The world for my remarks and me
Would not a wit the better be;
I've left my heart at home.

See! there she is, the matchless Earth!
There spreads the famed Pacific Ocean!
Old Andes thrusts you craggy spear
Through the grey clouds; the Alps are here,
Like waters in commotion!

You tawny slip is Libya's sands;
That silver thread the river Dnieper;
And look, where clothed in brightest green
Is a sweet Isle, of isles the Queen;
Ye fairies, from all evil keep her!

And see the town where I was born!
Around those happy fields we span
In boyish gambols;—I was lost
Where I have been, but on this coast
I feel I am a man.

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, never, never!—
How tunefully the forests ring!
To hear the earth's soft murmuring
Thus could I hang for ever!

"Shame on you!" cried my little Boat,
"Was ever such a homesick Loon,
Within a living Boat to sit,
And make no better use of it;
A Boat twin-sister of the crescent-moon!

Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
Fluttered so faint a heart before;—
Was it the music of the spheres
That overpowered your mortal ears?
—Such din shall trouble them no more.

These nether precincts do not lack
Chars of their own;—then come with me;
I want a comrade, and for you
There's nothing that I would not do;
Nought is there that you shall not see.

Haste! and above Siberian snows
We'll sport amid the boreal morning;
Will mingle with her lustres gliding
Among the stars, the stars now hiding,
And now the stars adorning.

I know the secrets of a land
Where human foot did never stray;
Fair is that land as evening skies,
And cool, though in the depth it lies
Of burning Africa.

Or we'll into the realm of Faery,
Among the lovely shades of things;
The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair,
The shades of palaces and kings.

Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
Less quiet regions to explore,
Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
How earth and heaven are taught to feel
The might of magic lore!"

“My little vagrant Form of light,
My gay and beautiful Caneo,
Well have you played your friendly part;
As kindly take what from my heart
Experience forces—then adieu!

Temptation lurks among your words;
But, while these pleasures you're pursuing
Without impediment or let,
No wonder if you quite forget
What on the earth is doing.

There was a time when all mankind
Did listen with a faith sincere
To tuneful tongues in mystery versed;
Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
The wonders of a wild career.

Go—(but the world's a sleepy world,
And 'tis, I fear, an age too late)
Take with you some ambitious Youth!
For, restless Wanderer! I, in truth,
Am all unfit to be your mate.
Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers;
The common growth of mother-earth
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

The dragon’s wing, the magic ring,
Suffice me, what more should I desire
To stir, to soothe, or elevate!
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life’s daily prospect find,
May find or there create!

A potent wand doth Sorrow wield;
What spell so strong as guilty Fear!
Repentance is a tender Sprite;
If aught on earth have heavenly might,
’Tis lodged within her silent tear.

But grant my wishes,—let us now
Descend from this ethereal height;
Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
More daring far than Hippogriff,
And be thy own delight!

To the stone-table in my garden,
Loved haunt of many a summer hour,
The Squire is come: his daughter Besse
Beside him in the cool recess
Sits blooming like a flower.

With these are many more convened;
They know not I have been so far;
I see them there, in number nine,
Beneath the spreading Weymouth-pine!
I see them—there they are!

There sits the Vicar and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fall,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell the Potter.

Off flew the Boat—away she flees,
Spurning her freight with indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, toward my stone-table
Limped on with sore vexation.

“O, here he is!” cried little Besse—
She saw me at the garden-door;
“We’ve waited anxiously and long,”
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them or more!

“Reproach me not—your fears be still—
Be thankful we again have met—
Resume, my Friends! within the shade
Your seats, and quickly shall be paid
The well-remembered debt.”

I spake with faltering voice, like one
Not wholly rescued from the pale
Of a wild dream, or worse illusion;
But, straight, to cover my confusion,
Began the promised Tale.

PART FIRST.

All by the moonlight river side
Groaned the poor Beast—nay! in vain;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck—and struck again.

“Hold!” cried the Squire, “against the rules
Of common sense you’re surely sinning;
This leap is for us all too bold;
Who Peter was, let that be told,
And start from the beginning.”

“A Potter, Sir, he was by trade,”
Said I, becoming quite collected;
"And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.

He, two-and-thirty years or more,
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surge and roar
On farthest Cornwall’s rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

And he had seen Caernarvon’s towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;
And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o’er the fen that ponderous knell—
A far-renowned alarum!

* In the dialect of the North, a hawk of earthenware
is thus designated.
At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr;
And far as Aberdeen.

And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses;
And he had lain beside his asse
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding scars;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars:

And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam;
Where'er a knot of houses lay
On headland, or in hollow bay;—
Sure never man like him did roam!

As well might Peter, in the Fleet,
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;—
He travelled here, he travelled there;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brink
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle pannier train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

At noon, when, by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.

Nay, start not!—wedded wives—and twelve!
But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I cannot tell;
For, he it is said of Peter Bell,
To see him was to fear him.

Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once, that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence;
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.
Poems of the Imagination.

He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

His forehead wrinkled was and furred;
A work, one half of which was done
By thinking of his *when* and *how*?
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!”

One Night, (and now my little Bess!)
We’ve reached at last the promised Vale!
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river’s winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone;—
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudged along through copse and brake,
He trudged along over hill and dale;
Nor for the moon cared he a title,
And for the stars he cared as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But, chancing to espay a path
That promised to cut short the way;
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerily his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried, like a bird
Darkling, among the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter’s mood is changed,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath;—
There’s little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up, now down, the Rover wends,
With all the sail that he can carry,
Till brought to a deserted quarry—
And there the pathway ends.

He paused—for shadows of strange shape,
Massy and black, before him lay;
But through the dark, and through the cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way.

Right through the quarry;—and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.

The Swale flowed under the grey rocks,
But he flowed quiet and unseen;—
You need a strong and stormy gale
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

And is there no one dwelling here,
No hermit with his head and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does one live near this green grass?

Across the deep and quiet spot
Is Peter driving through the grass—
And now has reached the skirting trees;
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass.

“A prize!” cries Peter—but he first
Must spy about him far and near:
There’s not a single house in sight,
No woodman’s hut, no cottage light—
Peter, you need not fear!

There’s nothing to be seen but woods,
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one Beast, that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream.
His head is with a halter bound;  
The halter seizing, Peter leapt  
Upon the Creature’s back, and plied  
With ready heels his shaggy side;  
But still the Ass his station kept.

Then Peter gave a sudden jerk,  
A jerk that from a dungeon-floor  
Would have pulled up an iron ring;  
But still the heavy-headed Thing  
Stood just as he had stood before!

Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,  
“There is some plot against me laid;”  
Once more the little meadow-ground  
And all the hoary cliffs around  
He cautiously surveyed.

All, all is silent—rocks and woods,  
All still and silent—far and near!  
Only the Ass, with motion dull,  
Upon the pivot of his skull  
Turns round his long left ear.

Thought Peter, What can mean all this!  
Some ugly witchcraft must be here!  
—Once more the Ass, with motion dull,  
Upon the pivot of his skull  
Turned round his long left ear.

Suspicion ripened into dread;  
Yet with deliberate action slow,  
His staff high-raising, in the pride  
Of skill, upon the sounding hide,  
He dealt a sturdy blow.

The poor Ass staggered with the shock;  
And then, as if to take his ease,  
In quiet uncomplaining mood,  
Upon the spot where he had stood,  
Dropped gently down upon his knees;

As gently on his side he fell;  
And by the river’s brink did lie;  
And, while he lay like one that mourned,  
The patient Beast on Peter turned  
His shining hazel eye.

’Twas but one mild, reproachful look,  
A look more tender than severe;  
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,  
He turned the eye-ball in his head  
Towards the smooth river deep and clear.
From Peter's hand the sapling dropped!
Threat has he none to execute;
"If any one should come and see
That I am here, they'll think," quoth he,
"I'm helping this poor dying brute."

He scents the Ass from limb to limb,
And ventures now to uplift his eyes;
More steady looks the moon, and clear,
More like themselves the rocks appear
And touch more quiet skies.

His scorn returns—his hate revives;
He stoops the Ass's neck to seize
With malice—that again takes flight;
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, among the inverted trees.

Is it the moon's distorted face?
The ghost-like image of a cloud?
Is it a gallows there portrayed?
Is Peter of himself afraid?
Is it a coffin—or a shroud?

A grisly idol hewn in stone!
Or imp from witch's lap let fall!
Perhaps a ring of shining fairies;
Such as pursue their feared vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall!

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering?
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren!

Never did pulse so quickly throb,
And never heart so loudly panted;
He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like some one reading in a book—
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell!
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear!
His hat is up—and every hair
Bristles, and whitens in the moon!

He looks, he ponders, looks again;
He sees a motion—hears a groan;
His eyes will burst—his heart will break—
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And back he falls, as if his life were flown!
He pulls—and looks—and pulls again;
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head-foremost from the river’s bed
Uprises like a ghost!

And Peter draws him to dry land;
And through the brain of Peter pass
Some poignant twitches, fast and faster;
“No doubt,” quoth he, “he is the Master
Of this poor miserable Ass!”

The meagre Shadow that looks on—
What would he now! what is he doing!
His sudden fit of joy is flown,—
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing;

But no—that Peter on his back
Must mount, he shews well as he can:
Thought Peter then, come weal or woe,
I’ll do what he would have me do,
In pity to this poor drowned man.

With that resolve he boldly mounts
Upon the pleased and thankful Ass;
And then, without a moment’s stay,
That earnest Creature turned away,
Leaving the body on the grass.

Intent upon his faithful watch,
The Beast four days and nights had past;
A sweeter meadow never was seen,
And there the Ass four days had been,
Nor ever once did break his fast:

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart;
The mead is crossed—the quarry’s mouth
Is reached; but there the trusty guide
Into a thicket turns aside,
And deftly ambles towards the south.

When hack a burst of doleful sound!
And Peter honestly might say,
The like came never to his ears,
Though he has been, full thirty years,
A rover—night and day!

’Tis not a plover of the moors,
’Tis not a bittern of the fen;
Nor can it be a barking fox,
Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks,
Nor wild-cat in a woody glen!

The Ass is startled—and stops short
Right in the middle of the thicket;
And Peter, wont to whistle loud
Whether alone or in a crowd,
Is silent as a silent cricket.

What’s all you now, my little Boss!
Well may you tremble and look grave!
This cry—that rings along the wood,
This cry—that floats adown the flood,
Comes from the entrance of a cave:

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And if I had the power to say
How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his
Till you had kissed his tears away!

Grasping a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red,
Into the cavern’s mouth he peeps;
Thence back into the moonlight creeps;
Whom seeks he—whom!—the silent dead:

His father!—Him doth he require—
Him hath he sought with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees;
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o’er the open plains.

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distress’d
Like a poor bird—her plundered nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan!

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass conjectures well;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible.

But Peter—when he saw the Ass
Not only step but turn, and change
The cherished tenor of his pace
That lamentable cry to chase—
It wrought in him conviction strange;

A faith that, for the dead man’s sake
And this poor slave who loved him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall,
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befell.
Meanwhile the Ass to reach his home,  
Is striving stoutly as he may;  
But, while he climbs the woody hill,  
The cry grows weak—and weaker still;  
And now at last it dies away.

So with his freight the Creature turns  
Into a gloomy grove of beech,  
Along the shade with footsteps true  
Descending slowly, till the two  
The open moonlight reach.

And there, along the narrow dell,  
A fair smooth pathway you discern,  
A length of green and open road—  
As if it from a fountain flowed—  
Winding away between the ferns.

The rocks that tower on either side  
Build up a wild fantastic scene;  
Temples like those among the Hindoos,  
And mosques, and spires, and abbey windows,  
And castles all with ivy green!

And, while the Ass pursues his way,  
Along this solitary dell,  
As pensively his steps advance,  
The mosques and spires change countenance,  
And look at Peter Bell!

That unintelligible cry  
Hath left him high in preparation,—  
Convinced that he, or soon or late,  
This very night will meet his fate—  
And so he sits in expectation!

The strenuous Animal hath clomb  
With the green path; and now he wends  
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,  
Is undisturbed immensity  
A level plain extends.

But whence this faintly-rustling sound  
By which the journeying pair are chased?  
—A withered leaf is close behind,  
Light plaything for the sportive wind  
Upon that solitary waste.

When Peter spied the moving thing,  
It only doubled his distress;  
"Where there is not a bush or tree,  
The very leaves they follow me—  
So huge hath been my wickedness!"

To a close lane they now are come,  
Where, as before, the enduring Ass  
Moves on without a moment's stop,  
Nor once turns round his head to crop  
A bramble-leaf or blade of grass.

Between the hedges as they go,  
The white dust sleeps upon the lane;  
And Peter, ever and anon  
Back-looking, scarce, upon a stone,  
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

A stain—as of a drop of blood  
By moonlight made more faint and wan;  
Ha! why these sinkings of despair!  
He knows not how the blood comes there—  
And Peter is a wicked man.

At length he spies a bleeding wound,  
Where he had struck the Ass's head;  
He sees the blood, knows what it is,—  
A glimpse of sudden joy was his,  
But then it quickly fled;

Of him whom sudden death had seized  
He thought,—of thee, O faithful Ass!  
And once again those ghastly pains,  
Shoot to and fro through heart and reins,  
And through his brain like lightning pass

PART THIRD.

I've heard of one, a gentle Soul,  
Though given to sadness and to gloom,  
And for the fact will vouch,—one night  
It chanced that by a taper's light  
This man was reading in his room;

Bending, as you or I might bend  
At night o'er any pleasing book,  
When sudden blackness overspread  
The snow-white page on which he read,  
And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round,—  
And to his book he turned again;  
—The light had left the lonely taper,  
And formed itself upon the paper  
Into large letters—bright and plain!

The godly book was in his hand—  
And, on the page, more black than coal,  
Appeared, set forth in strange array,  
A word—which to his dying day  
Perplexed the good man's gentle soul.
The ghostly word, thus plainly seen,
Died never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

Dread Spirits! to confound the meek
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering colour, form, and stature!
—Let good men feel the soul of nature,
And see things as they are.

Yet, potent Spirits! well I know,
How ye, that play with soul and sense,
Are not unused to trouble friends
Of goodness, for most gracious ends—
And this I speak in reverence!

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well;
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

Your presence often have I felt
In darkness and the stormy night;
And, with like forces, if need there be,
Ye can put forth your agency
When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

Then, coming from the wayward world,
That powerful world in which ye dwell,
Came, Spirits of the Mind! and try
To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
What may be done with Peter Bell!

—O, would that some more skilful voice
My further labour might prevent!
Kind Listeners, that around me sit,
I feel that I am all unfit
For such high argument.

I’ve played, I’ve danced, with my narration;
I loitered long ere I began:
Ye waited then on my good pleasure;
Pour out indulgence still, in measure
As liberal as ye can!

Our Travellers, ye remember well,
Are thridding a sequestered lane;
And Peter many tricks is trying,
And many anodynes applying,
To ease his conscience of its pain.

By this his heart is lighter far;
And, finding that he can account
So smugly for that crimson stain,
His evil spirit up again
Does like an empty bucket mount.

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial;
"Blood drops—leaves rustle—yet," quoth he,
"This poor man never, but for me,
Could have had Christian burial.

And, say the best you can, 'tis plain,
That here has been some wicked dealing;
No doubt the devil in me wrought;
I'm not the man who could have thought
An Ass like this was worth the stealing?"'

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box;
And, in a light and careless way,
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds,
Whose cunning eye can see the wind,
Tell to a curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turned round his head, and grieved.

Appalling process! I have marked
The like on heath, in lonely wood;
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous—yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance showed—
Whom, to upset his spirit of mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road,

Rolled audibly! it swept along,
A muffled noise—a rumbling sound!—
'Twas by a troop of miners made,
Flying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms underground.

Small cause of dire effect! for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charged to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'Twas Peter Bell the Potter.

O
But, as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre bewn;
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffened them, maintain their post;
So he, beneath the gazing moon:—

The Beast bestriding thus, he reached
A spot where, in a sheltering cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown,
And tufted with an ivy grove;

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
It seemed—wall, window, roof and tower—
To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

As ruinous a place it was,
Thought Peter, in the shire of Fife
That served my turn, when following still
From land to land a reckless will
I married my sixth wife!

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brim-full of a carousing crew,
That make, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

I cannot well express the thoughts
Which Peter in those noises found;—
A stifling power compressed his frame,
While—as a swimming darkness came
Over that dull and dreamy sound.

For well did Peter know the sound;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul, I ween,
But a few hours ago, had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise.

Now, turned adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course;
Like planet-stricken men of yore,
He trembles, smitten to the core
By strong commotion and remorse.

But, more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild!

Her dwelling was a lonely house,
A cottage in a heathy dell;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell.

But many good and pious thoughts
Had she; and, in the kirk to pray,
Two long Scotch miles, through rain or snow,
To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every Sabbath-day.

And, when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledged his truth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife.

A mother’s hope is hers;—but soon
She drooped and pined like one forlorn;
From Scripture she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn.

For she had learned how Peter lived,
And took it in most grievous part;
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Upon the rights of visual sense
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than magic spell.

Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspen play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway:

And stretched beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl—it is no other;
And hears her crying as she cried,
The very moment that she died,
“My mother! oh my mother!”

The sweat pears down from Peter’s face,
So grievous is his heart’s contrition;
With agony his eye-balls ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision!
Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His pace hath no offence betrayed;
But now, while down that slope he wends,
A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade:

The voice, though clamorous as a horn
Re-echoed by a naked rock,
Comes from that tabernacle—List!
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock!

"Repent! repent!" he cries aloud,
"While yet ye may find mercy—strive
To love the Lord with all your might;
Turn to him, seek him day and night,
And save your souls alive!

Repent! repent! though ye have gone,
Through paths of wickedness and woe,
And, though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow!"

Even as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear!—
He melted into tears.

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness!
And fast they fell, a plentiful shower!
His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing, power!

Each fibre of his frame was weak;
Weak all the animal within;
But, in its helplessness, grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin.

'Tis said, meek Beast! that, through Heaven's grace,
He not unmoved did notice now
The cross upon thy shoulder scored,
For lasting impress, by the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow;

Memorial of his touch—thet day
When Jesus humbly deigned to ride,
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified!

Meanwhile the persevering Ass,
Turned towards a gate that hung in view
Across a shady lane; his chest
Against the yielding gate he pressed
And quietly passed through.

And up the stony lane he goes;
No ghost more softly ever trod;
Among the stones and pebbles, he
Sets down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod.

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Went twice two hundred yards or more,
And no one could have guessed his aim,—
Till to a lonely house he came,
And stopped beside the door.

Thought Peter, 'tis the poor man's home!
He listens—not a sound is heard
Save from the trickling household rill;
But, stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little Girl appeared.

She to the Meeting-house was bound
In hopes some tidings there to gather:
No glimpse it is, no doubtful gleam;
She saw—and uttered with a scream,
"My father! here's my father!"

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched Mother—
Her joy was like a deep affright:
And forth she rushed into the light,
And saw it was another!

And, instantly, upon the earth,
Beneath the full moon shining bright,
Close to the Ass's feet she fell;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight.

As he beheld the Woman lie
Breathless and motionless, the mind
Of Peter sadly was confused;
But, though to such demands unused,
And helpless almost as the blind,

He raised her up; and, while he held
Her body propped against his knee,
The Woman waked—and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moaned most bitterly.
"Oh! God be praised—my heart's at ease—
For he is dead—I know it well!"
—At this she wept a bitter flood;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell.

He trembles—he is pale as death;
His voice is weak with perturbation;
He turns aside his head, he pauses;
Poor Peter from a thousand causes,
Is crippled sore in his narration.

At length she learned how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow-ground;
And that her Husband now lay dead,
Beside that leafless river's bed
In which he had been drowned.

A piercing look the Widow cast
Upon the Beast that near her stands;
She sees 'tis he, that 'tis the same;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings, and wrings her hands.

"O wretched loss—untimely stroke!"
If he had died upon his bed!
He knew not one forewarning pain;
He never will come home again—
Is dead, for ever dead!"

Beside the Woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human kind
Had never felt before.

At length, by Peter's arm sustained,
The Woman rises from the ground—
"Oh, mercy! something must be done,
My little Rachel, you must run,—
Some willing neighbour must be found.

Make haste—my little Rachel—do,
The first you meet with—bid him come,
Ask him to lend his horse to-night,
And this good Man, whom Heaven requite,
Will help to bring the body home."

Away goes Rachel weeping loud—
An Infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry;
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,
"Seven are they, and all fatherless!"

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature, through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

Upon a stone the Woman sits
In agony of silent grief—
From his own thoughts did Peter start;
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief.

But roused, as if through every limb
Had past a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And on the pillow lays her burning head.

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands pressed against his brow,
His elbows on his tremulous knees.

There, self-involved, does Peter sit
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep!
The trance is passed away—he wakes;

He lifts his head—and sees the Ass
Yet standing in the clear moonshine;
"When shall I be as good as thou!"
Oh! would poor beast, that I had now
A heart but half as good as thine!"

But He—who deviously hath sought
His Father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night his grief and sorrowful fear—
He comes, escaped from fields and floods;

With weary pace is drawing nigh;
He sees the Ass—and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As hath this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving!

Forth to the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs;
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb,—
He kisses him a thousand times!
MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage-door;
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobbed even like a child,
"Oh! God, I can endure no more!"

—Here ends my Tale: for in a trice
Arrived a neighbour with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway;
And, with due care, ere break of day,
Together they brought back the Corpse.

And many years did this poor Ass,
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming-Lane,
Help by his labour to maintain
The Widow and her family.

And Peter Bell, who, till that night,
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, renounced his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
Became a good and honest man.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

DEDICATION.

HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
In perfect shape (whose beauty Time shall spare
Though a breath made it like a bubble blown
For summer pastime into wanton air).
Happy the thought best likened to a stone
Of the sea-beach, when polished with no care,
Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,

Which for the loss of that moist gleam alone
That tempted first to gather it. There here,
O chief of Friends! such feelings I present
To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
Were a vain notion; but the hope is dear,
That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content!

PART I.

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bowls:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

WELL mayst thou hail—and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode;—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof, window,
door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yes, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

ADMONITION.

Intended more particularly for the pursuit of those who may have
b happened to be enamored of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in
the Country of the Lakes.

---End of This Page---
III.

"Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler’s balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

IV.

At Applethwaite, near Keswick.
1804.

Beaumont! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling—a bright hope
To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.
And should these slacken, honoured Beaumont!
still
Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil.
Whether this boon be granted us or not,
Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

V.

1803.

Pelion and Oss flourished side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring Hill, which ‘did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,’
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus’ self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrudgs
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

VI.

There is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Often than Ganges or the Nile: a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still!
Months perish with their moons; year treads on year;
But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they;
The Immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

VII.

Her only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you
And others of your kind, ideal crew!
While here sits One whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love!

VIII.

The fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as* the Genius played
In his still haunts on Bagdad’s summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirza’s eyes,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Archers are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas;
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain’s head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

* See the Vision of Mirza in the Spectator.
IX.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,

Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.

Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
You cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.

Soul-soothing Art! whom Morning, Noon-tide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeable pageantry;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

X.

"Why, Minstrel, these uneuful murmurs—
Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar?"
"Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
From its own country, and forgive the strings."
A simple answer! but even so forth springs,
From the Castilian fountain of the heart,
The Poetry of Life, and all that Art
Divine of words quickening insensate things.
From the submissive necks of guiltless men
Stretched on the block, the glittering axe recoils;
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils
Of mortal sympathy; what wonder then
That the poor Harp distempered music yields
To its sad Lord, far from his native fields!

XL

AERIAL ROCK—whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my sight;
When I step forth to hail the morning light;
Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell—how
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow?
How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest?
—By planting on thy naked head the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
That doth presume no more than to supply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers! and catch a gleam
Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

XII.

TO SLEEP.

O gentle Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shave
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled;
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

XIII.

TO SLEEP.

Fond words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest, Fancy calls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungenerously made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
More slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

XIV.

TO SLEEP.

A Flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!
XV.

THE WILD DUCK’S NEST.

The imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owes not a sylvan bower; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring,
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.

Words cannot paint the o’ershadowing yew-tree
And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow crown [bough],
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother’s softest plumes allow:
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride!

XVI.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN “THE COMPLETE ANGLER.”

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton: Sage benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.

Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline—
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree;
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety! [noook

XVII.

TO THE POET, JOHN Dyer.

Bard of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood stray’d,
Those southern tracts of Cambria; deep embayed,
With green-hills fenced, with ocean’s murmurlull’d;
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet calle’d
For worthless brows, while in the passive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd’s bleating flock shall stray
O’er naked Snowdon’s wide aerial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill!

XVIII.

ON THE DEFRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM.

See Milton’s Sonnet, beginning, “A Book was writ of late called
“Tetrachordon.”

A Book came forth of late, called Peter Bell;
Not negligent the style;—the matter!—good
As aught that song records of Robin Hood;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell;
But some (who brook those hackneyed themes
full well,
Nor heat, at Tam o’ Shanter’s name, their blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.

Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen,
Who mad’dst at length the better life thy choice,
Heed not such onset! may, if praise of men
To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
Lift up that grey-haired forehead, and rejoice
In the just tribute of thy Poet’s pen!

XIX.

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute;
And Care,—a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and sofiest reprehend;
And Love,—a charmer’s voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse—else troubled without end:
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving trace and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedately
On those revolting motions did await
Assiduously—to soothe her aching breast;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

XX.

TO S. H.

Excuse is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn’st at the Wheel that slept with dust o’er-
My nerves from no such murmur shrink,—tho’ near,
Soft as the Dorhawk’s to a distant ear,
When twilight shades darken the mountain’s head.
Even she who toils to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
To household virtues. Venerable Art,
Torn from the Poor! yet shall kind Heaven protect
Its own; though Rulers, with undue respect,
Trust to crowded factory and mart
And proud discoveries of the intellect,
Heed not the pillage of man’s ancient heart.
MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

XXI.
COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY.

With each recurrence of this glorious morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
Put on fresh raiment—till that hour unworn:
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
And she who span it called the daintiest fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace,
Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
A blest estate when pietie sublime
These humble props disclaimed not! O green dales!
Sad may I be who heard your sabbath chime
When Art's abused inventions were unknown;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales!

XXII.
DECAY OF PITY.

Of'rt have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and Sires—who, puncrtual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
Through the long year the House of Prayer would
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak [seek:
Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
But with one fervour of devotion meek.
I see the places where they once were known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
Is ancient Pity for ever flown?
Alas! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
That, struggling through the western sky, have won
Their passive light from a departed sun!

XXIII.
COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN THE VALLE OF GRASMERE, 1812.

What need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace!
Angels of love, look down upon the place;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise:—serious is her face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife;
But, when the closer view of wedded life
 Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

XXIV.
FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

Yes! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea.
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

XXV.
FROM THE SAME.

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heaven-ward course must
Beyond the visible world she scorns to seek [hold;
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes:—nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul: love better what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

XXVI.
FROM THE SAME. TO THE SUPREME BEING.

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works thou art the seed,
That quickens only where thou say'st it may:
Unless Thou show to us thine own true way
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.
XXVII.

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee! Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

XXVIII.

I,

Men thought I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the rudest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, pale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
These steps I clomb; the mists before me gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

XXIX.

November, 1836.

II.

Even so for me a Vision sanctified
The way of Death; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance—all the rapture of thy mien—
When thou, dear Sister! wert become Death's
No trace of pain or languor could abide [Dread:
That change—age on thy brow was smoothed—
Thy cold
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly burn;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return:
And let my spirit in that power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

XXX.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! The mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp' st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

XXXI.

Where lies the Land to which ye Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boat's the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may;
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

XXXII.

With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espie
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And hastily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's lock;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
On went She, and due north her journey took.
XXXIII.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I’d rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

XXXIV.

A valiant Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On coignes of vantage hang their nests of clay;
How quickly from that sery hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring;
While the stars shine, or while day’s purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring;
Where even the motion of an Angel’s wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquility
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

XXXV.

Weak is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe;—and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!
Thus might he paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life’s dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined:
’Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer’s temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction’s heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow’s keenest wind.

XXXVI.

To the memory of Baisley Calvert.

Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
 Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where’er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse’s diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be sought of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived, Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

PART II.

I.

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch’s wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camiões soothed an exile’s grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worn lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in
flocks;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
AtWakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,—
When she stands erecting the Clown’s head, and
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think, [mocks
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such glean
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.
III.

TO R. B. HAYDON.

High is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

IV.

From the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, Gillies, rise: the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a winged steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guardian waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct.—Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

V.

Fair Prime of life! were it enough to gild
With ready sunbeams every straggling shower;
And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
For Fancy's errands,—then, from fields half-tilled
Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy flower,
Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant thy power,
Unpitted by the wise, all censure stilled.

Ah! show that wordier honours are thy due;
Fair Prime of life! arouse the deeper heart;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim;
And, if there be a joy that slights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.

VI.

I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
Depressed; and then extinguished: and our state,
In this, how different, lost Siax, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

VII.

I heard (alas! 't was only in a dream)
Strains—which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as she inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow* Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires!
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
She soared—and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow.

VIII.

RETIREMENT.

If the whole weight of what we think and feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot Friend!
From thy remonstrance would be no appeal;
But to promote and fortify the word
Of our own Being is her paramount end;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign bliss:
Here, with no thirst but what the stream can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe; while the unincumbered Mind
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven amiss.

* See the Phaedon of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.
MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

IX.

Nor Love, nor War, nor the tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with affections strange—
Not these a\textit{lone} inspire the tuneful shell;
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

X.

\textit{Mark} the concentrated hazels that enclose
You old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noonside suns—and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly from the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains.—\textit{Live, ye trees}! And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep:
For more than Faunty to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time’s forlorn humanities.

XI.

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE.

Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell;
The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed—a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
Mid seas how steadfast! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture; but we felt the while
We should forget them; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

XII.

\textit{—they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away}.

Those words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life’s unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood;
It is unstable as a dream of night;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man’s gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

XIII.

SEPTEMBER, 1815.

WHILE not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigiously fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter yielded
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, \textit{“Prepare}
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields.”
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature’s tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and you crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

XIV.

NOVEMBER 1.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from your distant mountain’s head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, you mountain’s glittering head—
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality’s earth-sullying wing,
Unseen, unstained! Nor shall the aërial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

XV.

COMPOSED DURING A STORM.

One who was suffering tumult in his soul
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth—his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowl
Insidiously, untimely thunders growl;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-mitten; for, that instant, did appear
Large space (mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky,
An azure disc—shield of Tranquillity;
Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!

XVI.

TO A SNOW-DROP.

Lone Flower, hemmed in with snows and white as
But harder far, once more I see thee bend [they
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbaked guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, way-lay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic poers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Claste Snow-drop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

XVII.

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER.

With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea;
and extracts of similar character from other Writers; transcribed
by a female friend.

LADY! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore;
And culled, from sunry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave
The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs; and ventured to explore
Dim shades—for reliques, upon Leith's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned;
And lo this Work!—a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

XVIII.

TO LADY BRAGMONT.

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs—to hang upon the warm alce
And sheltering wall; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall bither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

XIX.

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know;— 't was rightly said;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains!
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn.

XX.

The Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!"
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.
MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

XXI.
When haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
Like these frail snow-drops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate?
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command.
Might overwhelm, but could not separate!

XXII.
Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art Thou as indiscriminating Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions—Ancient Power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power! brought forth;
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between;
The flood, the stars—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

XXIII.
Worn how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
'How silently, and with how wan a face!'
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should rally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurling and sparkling through the clear blue heaven;
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

XXIV.
Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a declining sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns ye Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The lake below reflects it not; the sky
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing;—or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

XXV.
The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand,
And, haply, there the spirits of the best
Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest;
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,
A habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see—is done, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.
Glad thought for every season! but the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's solemn art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.

XXVI.
Desponding Father! mark this altered bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews; what more unsightly now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible! yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life: a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call:
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in Parents, sinful above all.
XXVII.

CAPTIVITY.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

"As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray;
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state!
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late!—
O be my spirit, like my thraldom, strait;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind!"

XXVIII.

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY.

When human touch (as monkish books attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury bells
Broke forth in concert fumg adown the dells,
And upward, high as Malvern's cloudy crest;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble Lady blest
To rapture! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved mistress; soon the music died,
And Catherine said, 

Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long had sought
A home that by such miracle of sound
Must be revealed—she heard it now, or felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought;
And there, a saintly Anchoree, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground.

XXIX.

"gives to cry nothing
A local habitation and a name."

Though narrow be that old Man's cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems;
For he hath hawking empire, wide as dreams;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seem the Seven Whistlers in their nightly rounds,
And counted them: and oftentimes will start—
For overhead are sweeping Gabriël's Hounds
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aerial grounds!"
XXXIII.

This, and the two following, were suggested
by Mr. W. Westall’s views of the caves, etc.
in Yorkshire.

Pure element of waters! wheresoe’er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
Green herbs, bright flowers, and bery-bearing
plants,
Rise into life and in thy train appear:
And, through the sunny portion of the year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants:
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants;
And heart and mind and hunter with his spear,
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man’s perturbed soul thy sway benign;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
Their anguish,—and they blend sweet songs with
thine.*

XXXIV.

Malham Cove.

Was the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky ground,
Tiers under tier, this semicircque profound?
(Giants—the same who built in Erin’s isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil!)
—O, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausible smile
Of all-beholding Phobus! But, alas,
Vain earth! false world! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven; for, ’mid the wreck of is and was,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o’er thought’s optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

XXXV.

Gordale.

At early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave;
Then, pensive Votary! let thy feet repair
To Gordale-chaos, terrific as the air
Where the young lions couch; for so, by leave

Of the propitious hour, thou may’st perceive
The local Deity, with o’er hair
And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn,
Recumbent: Him thou may’st behold, who hides
His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn,
Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides!

XXXVI.

Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne’er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

XXXVII.

Conclusion.

To ——

If these brief Records, by the Muses’ art
Produced as lonely Nature or the strife
That animates the scenes of public life *
Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part;
And if these Transcripts of the private heart
Have gained a sanction from thy falling tears;
Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
Breathed from eternity; for as a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies: now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
Of the revolving world. Away, away,
All fleeting cares, all transitory zeal!
So timely Grace the immortal wing may heal,
And honour rest upon the senseless clay.

* This line alludes to Sonnets which will be found in another Class.
PART III.

I.

The bold wings of Poesy affect
The clouds, and wheel around the mountain tops
Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops
Well pleased to skim the plain with wild flowers deck,
Or muse in solemn grove whose shades protect
The lingering dew—there steals along, or stops
Watching the least small bird that round her hops,
Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.
Her functions are they therefore less divine,
Her thoughts less deep, or void of grave intent
Her simplest fancies! Should that fear be thine,
Aspiring Votary, ere thy hand present
One offering, kneel before her modest shrine,
With brow in penitential sorrow bent!

II.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

Ye sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth,
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford! domes and towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason; till, in south,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Face the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street—
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

III.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

Shame on this faithless heart! that could allow
Such transport, though but for a moment's space;
Not while—to aid the spirit of the place—
The crescent moon clave with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough
But in plain daylight—She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow!
Sweet Fancy! other gifts must I receive;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim;
Take from her brow the withering flowers of envy,
And to that brow life's morning wreath restore;
Let her be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

IV.

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING HENRY EIGHTH, TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE.

The imperial stature, the colossal stride,
Are yet before me; yet do I behold
The broad full visage, chest of amplest mould,
The vestments bordered with barbaric pride:
And lo! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy
With the keen threatenings of that fulgent eye,
Below the white-rimmed bonnet, far-descended.
Who trembles now at thy capricious mood!
'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty King,
We rather think, with grateful mind sedate,
How Providence educeth, from the spring
Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,
Which neither force shall check nor time abate!

V.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE THE THIRD).

Ward of the Law!—dread Shadow of a King!
Whose realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as life o'er life could fling,
Save haply for some feeble glimmering
Of Faith and Hope—if thou, by nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best!—Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell, silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

VI.

JUNE, 1820.

Fame tells of groves—from England far away—
* Groves that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay;
Such bold report I venture to gain:
For I have heard the quire of Richmond hill
Chanting, with indefatigable hill,
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing cares
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-voiced Poet of the Seasons stood—
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

* Wallachia is the country alluded to.
VII.
A FARMHOUSE IN OXFORDSHIRE.
Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line;
The turf uniues, the pathways intertwine;
And, whereas 'er the stepping footstep tends,
Garden, and that Domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbours rest together; here confound
Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends
With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

VIII.
COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE IN NORTH WALES.
Through shattered galleries, 'mid roofless halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft betrayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to upbraid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the Thrills
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.
Relief of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time loves Thee! at his call the Seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
And, though past pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recollection, his gift, is thine!

IX.
TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.
Composed in the Grounds of Plas Newydd, near Llangollen, 1824.
A STREAM, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
Along the Vale of Meditation * flows;
So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose;
Or haply there some pious hermit chose
To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim;
To whom the wild sequestered region owes,
At this late day, its sanctifying name...
Glyn Capaillgearch, in the Cambrian tongue,
In ours, the Vale of Friendship, let this spot
Be named; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
On Derva's banks, ye have abode so long;
Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
Even on this earth, above the reach of Time!

X.
TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, NORTH WALES 1824.
How art thou named! In search of what strange land
From what huge height, descending! Can such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
Desperate as thine! Or come the incessant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the throbbing rocks
Of Via Mala! There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods-climbing above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

XI.
IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL.
Wild Redbreast! hast thou at Jemima's lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus bolyly, Love might say,
A half-blowen rose had tempted thee to sip
Its glistening dews; but hallowed is the clay
Which the Muse warms; and I, whose head is grey,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship;
Nor could I let one thought—one motion—slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground!
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound;
Then peck or pereh, fond Flutterer! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.

XII.
WHEN PHILECOTES IN THE LEMMIAN ISLE
Like a Form sculptured on a monument
Lay conched; on him or his dread bow unbent
Some wild Bird oft might settle and beguile
The rigid features of a transient smile,
Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
Slaughtering the pains of ruthless banishment
From his lov'd home, and from heroic toil.
And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness, that no Bastile
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased to feel.
III.

While Azna's peers and early playmates tread,
In freedom, mountain-turf and river's marge;
Or float with music in the festive large;
Rein the proud steed, or through the dance are led;
Her doom it is to press a weary bed—
Till off her guardian Angel, to some charge
More urgent called, will stretch his wings at large,
And friends too rarely prop the languid head.
Yet, helped by Genius—untired comforter,
The presence even of a stuffed Owl for her
Can cheat the time; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlit skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor shout;
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring eyes.

IV.

To the Cuckoo.

Nor the whole warbling grove in concert heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unair'd,
Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish: time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the Spring!

V.

(Miss not the occasion: by the forelock take
That wobbling Power, the seven-foaling Time
Last a mere moment's putting off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.)

"Waite, prithee, wait!" this answer Lesbia threw
Forth to her Dove, and took no further heed
Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul engrossing speed;
But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed
She rose, and toward the close-shut casement drew,
Whence the poor unregarded Favourite, true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance. What a shriek
Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
Of harmony!—a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach! for, from aloft, a Kite [skeak
Pounced,—and the Dove, which from its ruthless
She could not rescue, perished in her sight!

VI.

The Infant M—— M——
Usurer Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Month by month each chase,
And sought the reins that Infant's voice: no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one entwined with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light;
A nursing couch upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

VII.

To ———, in her Seventieth Year.

Such age how beautiful! Oh Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
[sight, Than flesh and blood; where'er thou meet'st my
When I beheld thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

VIII.

To ROTHHA. Q——

Rotha, my Spiritual Child! this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay;
Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
For steadfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
Embodied in the music of this Lay. [Stream*
Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain
Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
After her throes, this Stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.

* The river Rotha, that flows into Windermere from the
Lakes of Grasmere and Rydal.
XXIX.
A GRAVE-STONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE CLOISTERS OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

“Miserrimus!” and neither name nor date, prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone; sought but that word assigned to the unknown, that solitary word—to separate from all, and cast a cloud around the fate of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one, who chose his epitaph—Himself alone could thus have dared the grave to animate, and claim, among the dead, this awful crown; nor doubt that He marked also for His own close to these choral steps a burial-place, that every foot might fall with heavier tread, trampling upon his vilness. Stranger, pass softly!—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

XX.
ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE.

While poring Antiquarians search the ground upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a Seer, takes fire:—Men that have been reappear, Romans for travel girt, for business gowned; and some recline on couches, myrtle-crowned, in festal glee: why not! For fresh and clear, as if its hues were of the passing year, dawns this time-buried pavement. From that mound hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maximines, shrunk into coins with all their warlike toil: or a fierce impress issues with its foil of tenderness—the Wolf, whose suckling Twins the unlettered plebeian pities when he wins the casual treasure from the furrowed soil.

XXI.
1839.

CHATSWORTH! thy stately mansion, and the pride of thy domain, strange contrast do present to house and home in many a craggy rent of the wild Peak; where new-born waters glide through fields whose thrifty occupants abide as in a dear and chosen banishment, with every semblance of entire content; so kind is simple Nature, fairly tried! Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her trust to pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms, may learn, if judgment strengthens with his growth, that, not for Fancy only, pomp hath charms; and, strenuous to protect from lawless harms the extremes of favoured life, may honour both.

XXII.
A TRADITION OF OKEN HILL IN DARLEY DALE, DERBYSHIRE.

“Tis said that to the brow of you fair hill Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face from face, nor one look more exchanging, grief to still or feed, each planted on that lofty place a chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfill their courses, like two new-born rivers, they in opposite directions urged their way down from the far-seen mount. No blast might kill or blight that fond memorial;—the trees grew, and now entwine their arms; but ne'er again embraced those Brothers upon earth's wide plain; nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew until their spirits mingled in the sea that to itself takes all, Eternity.

XXIII.
FILIAL PIETY.

(Upon the way-side between Preston and Liverpool.)

Untouched through all severity of cold; inviolate, whate'er the cottage hearth might need for comfort, or for festal mirth; that pile of turf is half a century old: yes, Traveller! fifty winters have been told since suddenly the dart of death went forth 'gainst him who raised it—his last work on earth: thence has it, with the Son, so strong a hold upon his Father's memory, that his hands, through reverence, touch it only to repair its waste. Though crumbling with each breath of air, in annual renovation thus it stands—rude Mausoleum! but wreath nestle there, and red-breasts warble when sweet sounds are rare.

XXIV.
TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT.

(Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Fitchewall, Esq., for St. John's College, Cambridge.)

Go, faithful Portrait! and where long hath knelt Margaret, the saintly Foundress, take thy place; and, if Time spare the colours for the grace which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt, thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms melt and states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem to breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream, and think and feel as once the Poet felt. Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown Unrecognised through many a household tear more prompt, more glad, to fall than drops of dew by morning shed around a flower half-blown; tears of delight, that testified how true to life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear!
XXIV.

WHY art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the tremendous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For thought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless egantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!

XXV.

TO E. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE ON THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA.

Haydon! let worthier judges praise the skill
Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colours; I applaud those signs
Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill;
That unencumbered whole of blank and still
Sky without cloud—ocean without a wave;
And the one Man that labour'd to enslave
The World, sole-standing high on the bare hill—
Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent face
Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place
With light reflected from the invisible sun
Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye
Like them. The ungainly Power pursueth his way,
And before him doth dawn perpetual run.

XXVI.

A POET!—He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unprop'd upon the staff.
Which Art hath lodg'd within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have kill'd him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its own divine vitality.

XXVIII.

Torn most alluring clouds that mount the sky
Owe to a troubled element their forms,
Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye
We watch their splendour, shall we covet storms,
And wish the Lord of day his slow decline
Would hasten, that such pomp may float on high!
Behold, already they forget, to shine,
Dissolve—and leave to him who gaz'd a sigh.
Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whensoever it may,
Peace let us seek,—to steadfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bower's,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.

XXIX.

ON A PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON
UPON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, BY HAYDON.

By Art's bold privilege Warrior and War-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck;
Let the Steed glory while his Master's hand
Lies fixed for ages on his conscious neck;
But by the Chief's face, though at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph and all human pride!
Yon trophied Mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence! Him the mighty deed
Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that time-worn face, for he such seed
Has sown as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame
In Heaven; hence no one blushes for thy name,
Conqueror, mid some sad thoughts, divinely blest!

XXX.

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838.

Life with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach! they meet the coming tide;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfaction;
Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new!
XXXI.

Lo! where she stands fixed in a saint-like trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast!
Nor wants her eyeball an ethereal glance;
But not the less—many more—that countenance,
While thus illumined, tells of painful strife
For a sick heart made weary of this life
By love, long crossed with adverse circumstance.

—Would She were now as when she hoped to pass
At God’s appointed hour to them who tread
Heaven’s sapphire pavement, yet breathed well
content,
Well pleased, her foot should print earth’s common
grass,
Lived thankful for day’s light, for daily bread,
For health, and time in obvious duty spent.

TO A PAINTER.

All praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed;
But ‘tis a fruitless task to paint for me,
Who, yielding not to changes Time has made,
By the habitual light of memory see
Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot fade,
And smiles that from their birth-place we’er shall flee
Into the land where ghosts and phantoms be;
And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.

Couldst thou go back into far-distant years,
Or share with me, fond thought! that inward eye,
Then, and then only, Painter! could thy Art
The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
Which hold, whate’er to common sight appears,
Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Though I beheld at first with blank surprise
This Work, I now have gazed on it so long;
I see its truth with unreluctant eyes;
O, my Beloved! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it sprung,
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive:
Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
And the old day was welcome as the young,
As welcome, and as beautiful—in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more holy:
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision, future, present, past.

XXXIV.

HARK! ’tis the Thrush, undaunted, undrepcrest,
By twilight premature of cloud and rain;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his Love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks; thou hast snapped a fire-side Prisoner’s chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.
Ye, I will forth, hold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life’s day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrilled by loose snatchers of the social Lay.

HYDAL MOUNT, 1838.

XXXV.

’Tis He whose yester-evening’s high disdain
Beat back the roaring storm—but how subdued
His day-break note, a sad vicesitude!
Does the hour’s drowsy weight his glee restrain?
Or, like the nightingale, her joyous vein
Pleased to renounce, does this dear Thrush attain
His voice to suit the temper of jou Moon
Doubly depressed, setting, and in her wane!
Rise, tardy Sun! and let the Songster prove
(The balance trembling between night and morn
No longer) with what ecstasy upborne
He can pour forth his spirit. In heaven above,
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.

XXXVI.

On what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
Yet—though dread Powers, that work in mystery,
spin
Entanglements of the brain; though shadows stretch
O’er the chilled heart—reflect; far, far within
Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch,
But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
To Her from heights that Reason may not win.
Like Children, She is privileged to hold
Divine communion; both do live and move,
Whate’er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
Iply illumined by Heaven’s pitting love;
Love pitying innocence not long to last,
In them—in Her our sins and sorrows past.
XXXVII.

INTENT on gathering wool from hedge and brake
You busy Little-ones rejoice that soon
A poor old Dame will bless them for the boon:
Great is their glee while flake they add to flake
With rival earnestness; far other strife
Than will hereafter move them, if they make
Pastime their idol, give their day of life
To pleasure snatched for reckless pleasure’s sake.
Can pomp and show slay one heart-born grief?
Pains which the World inflicts can she requite?
Not for an interval however brief;
The silent thoughts that search for steadfast light,
Love from her depths, and Duty in her might,
And Faith—these only yield secure relief.

March 8th, 1843.

XXXVIII.

A PLEA FOR AUTHORS, MAY 1838.

FAILING impartial measure to dispense
To every author, Equity is lame;
And social Justice, stript of reverence
For natural rights, a mockery and a shame;
Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
If, guarding grossest things from common claim
Now and for ever, She, to works that came
From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.
“What! lengthened privilege, a lin’d tie,
For Books!” Yes, heartless Ones, or be it proved
That “tis a fault in Us to have lived and loved
Like others, with like temporal hopes to die;
No public harm that Genius from her course
Be turned; and streams of truth dried up, even at
their source!

XXXIX.

VALEDICTORY SONNET.

Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838.

Serving no haughty Muse, my hands have here
Disposed some cultured Flowerets (drawn from spots
Where they bloomed singly, or in scattered knots),
Each kind in several beds of one parterre;
Both to allure the casual Loiterer,
And that, so placed, my Nurturings may requisite
Studious regard with opportune delight,
Nor be unthought, unless I fondly err.
But metaphor dismissed, and thanks apart,
Reader, farewell! My last words let them be—
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art
Through It have won a passage to thy heart;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee!

XL.

TO THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.
MASTER OF HARBOR SCHOOL.

After the perusal of his Theophilus Anglicanum, recently published.

ENLIGHTENED Teacher, gladly from thy hand
Have I received this proof of pains bestowed
By Thee to guide thy Pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every hand,
The Church, when trusting in divine command
And in her Catholic attributes, hath trod;
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart’s wish, thy labour blest by God!
So the bright faces of the young and gay
Shall look more bright—the happy, happier still;
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will
And, like the Spire that from your classic Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and way.

Rydal Mount, Dec. 11, 1843.

XLI.

TO THE PLANET VENUS.

Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to the Earth, Jan. 1838.

What strong allurement draws, what spirit guides,
Thee, Vesper! brightening still, as if the nearer
Thou com’st to man’s abode the spot grew dearer
Night after night! True is it Nature hides
Her treasures less and less.—Man now presides
In power, where once he trembled in his weakness;
Science advances with gigantic strides;
But are we not enriched in love and meekness?
Aught dost thou see, bright Star! of pure and wise
More than in bumble times gracecd human story;
That makes our hearts more apt to sympathise
With heaven, our souls more fit for future glory,
When earth shall vanish from our closing eyes,
Ere we lie down in our last dormitory?

XLII.

WANSFELL!* this Household has a favoured lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
Or when along thy breast severely float
Evening’s angelic clouds. Yet ne’er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, alone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

Dec. 24, 1842.

* The Hill that rises to the south-east, above Ambleside.
XLIII.

While beams of orient light shoot wide and high,
Deep in the vale a little rural Town*
Breathes forth a cloud-like creature of its own,
That mounts not toward the radiant morning sky,
But, with a less ambitious sympathy,
Hangs o'er its Parent waking to the cares
Troubles and toils that every day prepares.
So Fancy, to the musing Poet's eye,
Endears that Lingerer. And how blest her sway
(Like influence never may my soul reject)
If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith decked
With glorious forms in numberless array,
To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
Gleams from a world in which the saints repose.

Jan 1, 1843.

XLIV.

In my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
Slowly surmounting some invidious hill,
Rose out of darkness: the bright Work stood still;
And might of its own beauty have been proud,
But it was fashioned and to God was vowed
By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
Spirit divine through forms of human art:
Faith had herarch—her arch, when winds blow loud,
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled;
And Love her towers of dread foundation laid
Under the grave of things; Hope had her spire
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher;
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice—it said,
"Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when we build."

XLV.

ON THE PROJECTED KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY.

Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault†? Schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and mid the busy world kept pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
Must perish?—how can they this blight endure?
And must he too the ruthless change beomam

* Ambleside.
† The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be over-rated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. "Fell it!" exclaimed the yeoman, "I had rather fall on my knees and worship it." It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Oroest-head
Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance:
Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with your strong
And constant voice, protest against the wrong.

October 12th, 1844.

XLVI.

Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a benevolent star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,
And clear way made for her triumphal car
Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!
Heard ye that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?
Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
To share the passion of a just disdain.

XLVII.

AT FURNESS ABBEY.

Here, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
Man left this Structure to become Time's prey
A soothing spirit follows in the way
That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin
Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
The flowers in pearly dews their bloom renewing!
Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour;
Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower
Whose casing occupants with joy proclaim
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile
Where, Cavendish, this seems nothing but a name!

XLVIII.

AT FURNESS ABBEY.

Well have ye Railway Labourers to this ground
Withdrawn for moontide rest. They sit, they walk
Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
Is heard; to grave demeanour all are bound;
And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful sound
Hallows once more the long-deserted Quire
And thrills the old sepulchral earth, around.
Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was raised,
To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace:

All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
And by the general reverence God is praised;
Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
While thus these simple-hearted men are moved!

**MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.**

1803.

I.

DEPARTURE

*FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE.*

August, 1803.

This gentle Shade that walked Elysian plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains;
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overlap
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed there.
Change for the worse might please, incursion bold
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold;
O'er Limbo lake with airy flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.
Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my mind,
Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perchance without one look behind me cast,
Some barrier with which Nature, from the birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on earth.

O pleasant transit, Grasmere! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as shone;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice; or, if constrained in part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the heart;
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps!—A bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is true;
Never can the way be triscome or forlorn
That winds into itself for sweet return.

II.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS.

1803.

Seven years after his death.

I shiver, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that 's here
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius 'glistened' forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now!—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou 'poor Inhabitant below,'
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gownans blow,
Or on wild Heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died.)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight.

For he is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harbour'd where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distress'd;
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a deviouns race,
May He who halloweth the place
Where Man is laid
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chaunted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

III.

THOUGHTS

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF NITH,
NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE.

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid Stream
Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
We went to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet Lay.

How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, you far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his noble-pensive mood,
The Rustic sate.
Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen;
He rules mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings!

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rudest thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live!—
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!*  

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life’s hill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display;
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware!
But if the Poet’s wit ye share,
Like him can speed
The social hour—of tenfold care
There will be need;

For honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
Your steps pursue;
And of your Father’s name will make
A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retires,
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
With service meet;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
His spirit greet;

Or where, ‘mid ‘lonely heights and hows,’
He paid to Nature tuneful vows;
Or wiped his honourable brows
Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs
Upturned the soil;

His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way;
But ne’er to a seductive lay
Let faith be given;
Nor deem that ‘light which leads astray,
Is light from Heaven.’

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;
Be independent, generous, brave;
Your Father such example gave,
And such revere;
But he admonished by his grave,
And think, and fear!
ELLEN IRWIN:  
or,  
THE BRAES OF KIRLIE.*

Fair Ellen Irwin, when she sat  
Upon the braes of Kirlie,  
Was lovely as a Grecian maid  
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle;  
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,  
And there did they beguile the day  
With love and gentle speeches,  
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many knights and many squires  
The Bruce had been selected;  
And Gordon, fairest of them all,  
By Ellen was rejected.  
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!  
For it may be proclaimed with truth,  
If Bruce hath loved sincerely,  
That Gordon loves as dearly.

But what are Gordon's form and face,  
His shattered hopes and crosses,  
To them, 'mid Kirlie's pleasant braes,  
Reclined on flowers and mosses!  
Alas that ever he was born!  
The Gordon, couchèd behind a thorn,  
Sees them and their caressing;  
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon, maddened by the thoughts  
That through his brain are travelling,  
Rushed forth, and at the heart of Bruce  
He launched a deadly javelin!  
Fair Ellen saw it as it came,  
And, starting up to meet the same,  
Did with her body cover  
The Youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,  
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,  
Thus, from the heart of her True-love,  
The mortal spear repelling.  
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain  
The Gordon, sailed away to Spain;  
And fought with rage incessant  
Against the Moorish crescent.

But many days, and many months,  
And many years ensuing,  
This wretched Knight did vainly seek  
The death that he was wooing.  
So, coming his last help to crave,  
Heart-broken, upon Ellen's grave  
His body he extended,  
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard  
The tale I have been telling,  
May in Kirkonnel churchyard view  
The grave of lovely Ellen:  
By Ellen's side the Bruce is hid;  
And, for the stone upon his head,  
May no rude hand deface it,  
And its forlorn rēit rēit !

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.  
(At Invernessed, upon Loch Lomond.)

Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower  
Of beauty is thy earthy dower!  
Twice seven consenting years have shed  
Their utmost bounty on thy head:  
And these grey rocks; that household lawn;  
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;  
This fall of water that doth make  
A murmur near the silent lake;  
This little bay; a quiet road  
That holds in shelter thy Abode—  
In truth together do ye seem  
Like something fashioned in a dream;  
Such Forms as from their covert peep  
When earthy cares are laid asleep!  
But, O fair Creature! in the light  
Of common day, so heavenly bright,  
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,  
I bless thee with a human heart;  
God shield thee to thy latest years!  
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;  
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray  
For thee when I am far away:  
For never saw I mien, or face,  
In which more plainly I could trace  
Benignity and home-bred sense  
Ripening in perfect innocence.  
Here scattered, like a random seed,  
Remote from men, Thou dost not need

* The Kirlie is a river in the southern part of Scotland,  
on the banks of which the events here related took place.
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wearest upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountainer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland call
For thee who art so beautiful!
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress
A Shepherd, than a Shepherdless!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part:
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

VII.

GLEN-ALMAIN;

or,

THE NARROW GLEN.

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the Narrow Glen;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last.
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unconcealed;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

VIII.

STEPPING WESTWARD.

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side
of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our
road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had
been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met,
in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region; two
well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way
of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"
"What, you are stepping westward?"—"Yes."
"T'would be a wildish destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:  
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,  
Though home or shelter he had none;  
With such a sky to lead him on!  

The dewy ground was dark and cold;  
Behind, all gloomy to behold;  
And stepping westward seemed to be  
A kind of heavenly destiny:  
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound  
Of something without place or bound;  
And seemed to give me spiritual right  
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake  
Was walking by her native lake;  
The salutation had to me  
The very sound of courtesy:  
Its power was felt; and while my eye  
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,  
The echo of the voice enwrought  
A human sweetness with the thought  
Of travelling through the world that lay  
Before me in my endless way.

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang  
As if her song could have no ending;  
I saw her singing at her work,  
And o'er the sickle bending;—  
I listened, motionless and still;  
And, as I mounted up the hill,  
The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.

X.

ADDRESS

to

KILCHURN CASTLE, UPON LOCH AWE.

From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened  
upon our view,—a ruined Castle on an Island (for an  
Island the flood had made it) at some distance from the  
shore, backed by a Cove of the Mountains Cruachan,  
down which came a foaming stream. The Castle  
occupied every foot of the Island that was visible to us,  
appearing to rise out of the water,—mists rested upon  
the mountain side, with spots of sunshine; there was a  
mild descent to the low grounds, a solemn grandeur  
in the mountains, and the Castle was wild, yet stately—  
not dismantled of turrets—nor the walls broken down,  
though obviously a ruin.—Extract from the Journal of  
my Companion.

CHILD of loud-throated War! the mountain Stream  
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest  
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age;  
Save when the wind sweeps by and sounds are caught  
Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.  
Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers there are  
That touch each other to the quick in modes  
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,  
No soul to dream of. What art Thou, from care  
Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,  
Nor by soft Peace adopted; though, in place  
And in dimension, such that thou might'st seem  
But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,  
Hugo Cruachan, (a thing that meaner hills  
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered harm;)  
Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims  
To reverence, suspends his own; submitting  
All that the God of Nature hath conferred,  
All that he holds in common with the stars,  
To the memorial majesty of Time  
Impersonated in thy calm decay!

Take, then, thy seat, Viceroy unpropitiated!  
Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light  
Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,  
Do thou, in turn, be paramount; and rule
Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite
To pay thee homage; and with these are joined,
In willing admiration and respect,
Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called
Youthful as Spring.—Shade of departed Power,
Skeleton of unfeathered humanity,
The chronicler who has who should call
Into the company of disjointed soul
The toils and struggles of thy infant years!
Your foaming flood seems motionless as ice;
Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
Frozen by distance; so, majestic pile,
To the perception of this Age, appear
Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued
And quieted in character—the strife,
The pride, the fury uncontrollable,
Lost on the aerial heights of the Crusades!

XI.

ROB ROY'S GRAVE.

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known; his grave
Is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small
pitch-blake burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate
appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands
of Scotland.

A FAMOUS MAN is Robbon Hood,
The Scotch ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a thief as good,
An outlaw of all daring mood;
She has her brave Rob Roy!
Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
And let us chant a passing strain,
In honour of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart
And wondrous length and strength of arm:
Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as wise as brave;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave;
As wise in thought as bold in deed:
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, "What need of books!
Burn all the statutes and their shelves:
They stir us up against our kind;
And worse, against ourselves.

We have a passion—make a law,
Too false to guide us or control!
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few:
These find I graven on my heart:
That tells me what to do.

The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind!
With them no strife can last; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.

All freakishness of mind is checked;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

All kinds, and creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit:
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I'll take the shortest way!"

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer heat and winter snow:
The Eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below.

So was it—would, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate;
For Poldy was then too strong—
He came an age too late;
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

Or shall we say an age too soon?
For, were the bold Man living now,
How might he flourish in his pride,
With bads on every bough!

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,
Would all have seemed but paltry things,
Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never lingered here,
To these few mensas Vales confined;
But thought how wide the world, the times
How fairly to his mind!

And to his Sword he would have said,
"Do Thou my sovereign will enact
From land to hand through half the earth!
Judge them of law and fact!

'Tis fit that we should do our part,
Becoming, that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpassed
In fatherly concern.

Of old things all are over old,
Of good things none are good enough:
We'll shew that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

I, too, will have my kings that take
From me the sign of life and death:
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
Obedient to my breath."

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
As might have been, then, thought of joy!
France would have had her present Boast,
And we our own Rob Roy!

Oh! say not so; compare them not;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave!
Would wrong thee nowhere; least of all
Here standing by thy grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
Wild Chieftains of a savage Clan!
Hasted this to boast of; thou didst love
The liberty of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thee would'st have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand;
And all the oppressed, who owned strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bears witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Vool's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braves!

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of Rob Roy's name.

XII.
SONNET.

DEDICATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy Lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horse,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

YARROW UNVISITED.

(See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning

*Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!"

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clevenford,
Then said my 'winesome Marrow,'
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."
"Let Yarrow folk, flee Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

There's Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow!

What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under!
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
My true-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock*;
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-nill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it;
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Yarrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

XIV.
SONNET
IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY,
An invasion being expected, October 1803.

Six thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killiecrankie were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
O for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

XV.
THE MATRON OF JEDBOROUGH AND HER HUSBAND.

At Jedborough, my companion and I went into private lodgings for a few days; and the following Verses were
called forth by the character and domestic situation of the Hostess.

Age! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers,
And call a train of laughing Hours; And bid them dance, and bid them sing; And thou, too, mingle in the ring! Take to thy heart a new delight; If not, make merry in despite.
That there is One who owns thy power:—
But dance! for under Jedborough Tower, A Matron dwells who, though she bears
The weight of more than seventy years, Lives in the light of youthful glee,
And she will dance and sing with thee.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

Nay! start not at that Figure—there!
Him who is rooted to his chair!
Look at him—look again! for he
Hath long been of thy family,
With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man,
He sits, and with a vacant eye;
A sight to make a stranger sigh!
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom:
His world is in this single room:
Is this a place for mirthful cheer?
Can merry-making enter here!

The joyous Woman is the Mate
Of him in that forlorn estate!
He breathes a subterraneous damp;
But bright as Vesper shines her lamp:
He is as mute as Jedborough Tower:
She jocund as it was of yore,
With all its bravery on; in times
When all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the Vale to holiday.

I praise thee, Matron! and thy due
Is praise, heroic praise, and true!
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness unshaken and bold;
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent:
This do I see; and something more;
A strength unthought of heretofore!
Delighted am I for thy sake;
And yet a higher joy partake:
Our Human-nature throws away
Its second twilight, and looks gay;
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah! see her helpless Charge! enclosed
Within himself as seems, composed;
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead! yet in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro
The persons that before them go,
He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail;
She strikes upon him with the heat
Of July suns; he feels it sweet;
An animal delight though dim!
’Tis all that now remains for him!

The more I looked, I wondered more—
And, while I scanned them o’er and o’er,
Some inward trouble suddenly
Broke from the Matron’s strong black eye—
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright!
Nor long this mystery did detain
My thoughts;—she told in pensive strain
That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a twofold stroke;
Ill health of body; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.

So be it!—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our Lord and friend!
Who from disease and suffering
Hath called for thee a second spring;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness;
Which makes of thine a blissful state;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate!

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XVI.

FLY, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale!
Say that we come, and come by this day’s light;
Fly upon swiftest wing round field and height,
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The kitten frolic, like a gamesome sprite,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not fail;
And from that Infant’s face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary’s one companion child—
That hath her six weeks’ solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear;
While we have wandered over wood and wild—
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

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XVII.

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY.

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRE-SIDE, AFTER RETURNING TO
THE VALE OF GRASMERE.

Now we are tired of boisterous joy,
Have romped enough, my little Boy!
Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest;
This corner is your own.
There! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly:
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befell
A poor blind Highland Boy.

A Highland Boy—why call him so!
Because, my Darlings, ye must know
That, under hills which rise like towers,
Far higher hills than these of ours!
He from his birth had lived.

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight
The sun, the day; the stars, the night;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child.

And yet he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

His Mother, too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love:
For, was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love.

And proud she was of heart, when clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To Kirk he on the sabbath day
Went hand in hand with her.

A dog too, had he; not for need,
But one to play with and to feed;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide.

And then the bagpipes he could blow—
And thus from house to house would go;
And all were pleased to hear and see,
For none made sweeter melody
Than did the poor blind Boy.

Yet he had many a restless dream;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,
And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
Near which their cottage stood.

Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small like ours, a peaceful flood;
But one of mighty size, and strange;
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
And stirring in its bed.

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great Sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills
And drinks up all the pretty rills
And rivers large and strong:

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns, on errand still the same;
This did it when the earth was new;
And this for evermore will do,
As long as earth shall last.

And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships that safely ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands.

And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind Boy always had his share;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the Deep.

Yet more it pleased him, more it stirred,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting, and the jolly cheers;
The bustle of the mariners
In stillness or in storm.

But what do his desires avail!
For He must never handle sail;
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship, or fisher's boat,
Upon the rocking waves.

His Mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this: "My Son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone;
The danger is so great."

Thus lived he by Loch-Leven's side
Still sounding with the sounding tide,
And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
Till he was ten years old.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

When one day (and now mark me well),
Ye soon shall know how this befell:
He in a vessel of his own,
On the swift flood is hurring down,
Down to the mighty Sea.

In such a vessel never more
May human creature leave the shore!
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind Mariner!
For death will be his doom.

But say what bears him! —Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright;
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
Are brought in ships from far.

Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen;
Each hut, perchance, might have its own;
And to the Boy they all were known —
He knew and prized them all.

The rarest was a Turtle-shell
Which he, poor Child, had studied well;
A shell of ample size, and light
As the pearly car of Amphitrite,
That sportive dolphins drew.

And, as a Coracle that braves
On Vega's breast the fretful waves,
This shell upon the deep would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge.

And this the little blind Boy knew:
And he a story strange yet true
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English Boy, O thought of bliss!
Had stoutly launched from shore;

Launched from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay
His father's ship, and had sailed far—
To join that gallant ship of war;
In his delightful shell.

Our Highland Boy oft visited
The house that held this prize; and, led
By choice or chance, did thither come
One day when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarred.

While there he sate, alone and blind,
That story flashed upon his mind:
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it on his head.

He launched his vessel,—and in pride
Of spirit, from Loch Leven's side,
Stepped into it—his thoughts all free
As the light breezes that with glee
Sang through the adventurer's hair.

A while he stood upon his feet;
He felt the motion—took his seat;
Still better pleased as more and more
The tide retreated from the shore,
And sucked, and sucked him in.

And there he is in face of Heaven.
How rapidly the Child is driven!
The fourth part of a mile, I ween,
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
By any human eye.

But when he was first seen, oh me
What shrieking and what misery!
For many saw; among the rest
His Mother, she who loved him best,
She saw her poor blind Boy.

But for the child, the sightless Boy,
It is the triumph of his joy!
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
Was never half so blessed.

And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay!
For, if good Angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
This Child will take no harm.

But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
Are stilled—all is still.

And quickly with a silent crew
A boat is ready to pursue;
And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
They follow the blind Boy.
But soon they move with soler pace;  
So have ye seen the fowler chase  
On Grassmere’s clear unruffled breast  
A youngling of the wild-duck’s nest  
With deftly-lifted oar;  

Or as the wily sailors crept  
To seize (while on the Deep it slept)  
The hapless creature which did dwell  
Erewhile within the dancing shell,  
They steal upon their prey.  

With sound the least that can be made,  
They follow, more and more afraid,  
More cautious as they draw more near;  
But in his darkness he can hear,  
And guesses their intent.  

"Lei-gha—Lei-gha"—he then cried out,  
"Lei-gha—Lei-gha"—with eager shout;  
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,  
And what he meant was, “Keep away,  
And leave me to myself!”  

Alice! and when he felt their hands—  
You’ve often heard of magic wands,  
That with a motion overthrow  
A palace of the pensive show,  
Or melt it into air:  

So all his dreams—that inward light  
With which his soul had shone so bright—  
All vanished;—’twas a heartfelt cross  
To him, a heavy, bitter loss—  
As he had ever known.  

But hark! a gratulating voice,  
With which the very hills rejoice:  
’Tis from the crowd, who tremblingly  
Have watched the event, and now can see  
That he is safe at last.  

And then, when he was brought to land,  
Full sure they were a happy band,  
Which, gathering round, did on the banks  
Of that great Water give God thanks,  
And welcomed the poor Child.  

And in the general joy of heart  
The blind Boy’s little dog took part;  
He leapt about, and oft did kiss  
His master’s hands in sign of bliss,  
With sound like lamentation.  

But most of all, his Mother dear,  
She who had fainted with her fear,  
Rejoiced when she espied  
The Child; when she can trust her eyes,  
And touch the blind Boy.  

She led him home, and wept amain,  
When he was in the house again:  
Tears flowed in torrents from her eyes;  
She kissed him—how could she chastise!  
She was too happy far.  

Thus, after he had fondly braved  
The perilous Deep, the Boy was saved;  
And, though his fancies had been wild,  
Yet he was pleased and reconciled  
To live in peace on shore.  

And in the lonely Highland dell  
Still do they keep the Turtle-shell;  
And long the story will repeat  
Of the blind Boy’s adventurous feat,  
And how he was preserved.  

Note.—It is recorded in Dampier’s Voyages, that a boy,  
son of the captain of a Man-of-War, seated himself in a  
Turtle-shell, and floated in it from the shore to his father’s  
ship, which lay at anchor at the distance of half a mile.  
In deference to the opinion of a Friend, I have substituted  
such a shell for the less elegant vessel in which my blind  
Voyager did actually entrust himself to the dangerous cur-  
cent of Loch Leven, as was related to me by an eye-witne
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

1814.

I.
SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS OF LOCH LOMOND, A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE RETREAT OF A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM THIS HABITATION ACQUIRED THE NAME OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL.

I.
To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen,
Or depth of labyrinthine glen;
Or into trackless forest set
With trees, whose lofty umbrage met;
World-wearied Men withdrew of yore;
(Penance their trust, and prayer their store);
And in the wilderness were bound
To such apartments as they found;
Or with a new ambition raised;
That God might suitably be praised.

II.
High lodged the Warrior, like a bird of prey;
Or where broad waters round him lay:
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices—buried, lost!
Within this little lonely isle
There stood a consecrated Pile;
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits hung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom!

III.
Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had hurled,
Their habitation shook—it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired
Who neither grovelled nor aspired:
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past deified;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge!

IV.
Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills;—but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome;
And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own pledged word,
Had found, in rage and widely dealt,
Its warfare’s bourn, its travel’s belt!

V.
All, all were dispossessed, save him whose smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle!
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade;
But the ground lay within that ring
To which he only dared to cling;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change; who heard a claim
How loud! yet lived in peace with shame.

VI.
From year to year this shaggy Mortal went
(So seemed it) down a strange descent:
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unallowed name;
Him, free from all malicious taint,
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied—to indite,
In his lone isle, the dreams of night;
Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan!

VII.
Suns that through blood their western harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought;
Towers rent, winds combating with woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods;
And beast and bird that from the spell
Of sleep took import terrible;—
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day!
VIII.
How disappeared He!—ask the newt and toad,
Inheritors of his abode;
The crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft;—but he thou curbed,
O fond fancy! 'mid a scene
Of aspect winning and serene;
For those offensive creatures shun
Thequisition of the sun!
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight.

IX.
Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath;—
Nor flouting Summer—when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose;
Or calls the lilly from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep;
Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the Brownie's Den.

Wild Resource! beantous as the chosen spot
In Nysa's isle, the embellished grot;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rheo's eye;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage, glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god;
All colours,—and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial check!

II.
COMPOSED AT CORA LINN;
IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER.

—How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.'

M. S.

Loof of the vale! astounding Flood;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes—conscious of thy power;
The caves reply with hollow moan;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower!
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

III.

EFFUSION,

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE NID, NEAR KNARESBOROUGH.

The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when we must expect it. We were first, however, conducted into a small apartment, where the Gardener desired us to look at a picture of Osian, which, while he was telling the history of the young Artist who executed the work, disappeared, parting in the middle—saying sounder as by the touch of magic—and lo! we are at the entrance of a splendid apartment, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions; the great cascade, opposite the window, which faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls."—Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-Traveller.

What He—who, mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Both yet frequent the hill of storms,
The stars dim-twinkling through their forms!
What! Osian here—a painted Thraill,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art;
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing;
One loud cascade in front, and lo!
A thousand like it, white as snow—
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts! of their terrors
Not striped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood
Thundering adown a rocky wood.
What pains to dazzle and confound!
What strife of colour, shape and sound
In this quaint medley, that might seem
Devised out of a sick man’s dream!
Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
As ever made a man dizzy,
When disenchaunted from the mood
That loves on sullen thoughts to brood!

O Nature—in thy changeful visions,
Through all thy most abrupt transitions
Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
Ever averse to pantomime,

Thee neither do they know nor us
Thy servants, who can trifle thus;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,
Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot;
Recalled some feeling—to set free
The Bard from such indignity!

* The Effigies of a valiant Wight
I once beheld, a Templar Knight;
Not prostrate, not like those that rest
On tombs, with palms together prest,
But sculptured out of living stone,
And standing upright and alone,
Both hands with rival energy
Employed in setting his sword free
From its dull sheath—stern sentinel
Intent to guard St. Robert’s cell;
As if with memory of the affray
Far distant, when, as legends say,
The Monks of Fountain’s thronged to force
From its dear home the Hermits’ corse,
That in their keeping it might lie;
To crown their abbey’s sanctity,
So had they rushed into the grot
Of sense despised, a world forgot,
And torn him from his loved retreat,
Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat
Still hint that quiet best is found,
Even by the Living, under ground;
But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
Defeating, put the Monks to shame,
There where you see his Image stand
Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
Which lingering Nid is proud to show
Reflected in the pool below.

Thus, like the men of earliest days,
Our sires set forth their grateful praise:
Uncouth the workmanship, and rude!
But, nursed in mountain solitude,
Might some aspiring artist dare
To seize whate’er, through misty air,
A ghost, by glimpses, may present
Of imitable lineament,
And give the phantom an array
That less should scorn the abandoned clay;
Then let him hew with patient stroke
An Osian out of mural rock,

* On the banks of the River Nid, near Knaresborough.
And leave the figurative Man—
Upon thy margin, roaring Bran!—
Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
An everlasting watch to keep;
With local sanctities in trust,
More precious than a hermit's dust;
And virtues through the mass infused,
Which old idolatry abused.

What though the Granite would deny
All fervour to the sightless eye;
And touch from rising suns in vain
 Solicit a Mennonian strain;
Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
The wind might force the deep-grooved harp
To utter melancholy moans
Not unconnected with the tones
Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones;
While grove and river notes would lend,
Less deeply sad, with these to blend!

Vain pleasures of luxurious life,
For ever with yourselves at strife;
Through town and country both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds;
When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder—to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth;
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing—
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart!

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced
With baubles of theatric taste,
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley bands of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

IV.

YARROW VISITED,

September, 1814.

(See page 225).

And is this—Yarrow!—This the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream!
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why!—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding!
His bed perchance was won smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
 Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.
POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY.

PART I.

I.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st
wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

II.

CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and
blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,
A seeming reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!

III.

Composed near Calais, on the road leading to Arras, August 7, 1802.

Jove's! as from Calais southward you and I
Went pacing side by side, this public Way
Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day*,
When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the sky:
From hour to hour the antiquated Earth
Beat like the heart of Man: songs, garlands, mirth,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
'Good morrow, Citizen!' a hollow word,
As if a dead man spoke it! Yet despair
Touces me not, though pensive as a bird
Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare†.

IV.

1801.

I grieved for Bonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest mood
Of that Man's mind—what can it be! what food
Fed his first hopes! what knowledge could he gain!
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount: this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are
these.

* 14th July, 1790.
† See Note.
V.

CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802.

Festivals have I seen that were not names:
This is young Buonaparte's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established sway—
Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
Calais is not: and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
His business as he likes. Far other show
My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time:
The senseless ness of joy was then sublime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

VI.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guide seduced; no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

VII.

THE KING OF SWEDEN.

The Voice of song from distant lands shall call
To that great King: shall hail the crowned Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbounding Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand; or fall,
If fall they must. Now, wiser doth it tend!
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be; is raised above
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortune, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him, him their rightful son.

* See note.

VIII.

TO TOUSSAINT L'Ouverture.

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chiefain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

IX.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802.

Among the conspicuous acts of tyranny that disgraced those times, was
the chaining of all Negroes from France by decree of the govern-
ment; we had a fellow-passenger who was one of the expelled.
We had a female Passenger who came
From Calais with us, spotless in array,—
A white-robed Negro, like a lady gay,
Yet downcast as a woman fearing blame;
Mole, destitute, as seemed, of hope or aim
She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on all proffered intercourse did lay
A weight of languid speech, or to the same
No sign of answer made by word or face:
Yet still her eyes retained their tropic fire,
That, burning independent of the mind,
Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
To mock the Outcast—O ye Heavens, be kind!
And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted Race!

X.

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING.

Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crowes, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells;—those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION,

XI.
SEPTEMBER, 1802. NEAR DOVER.

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk; for vexly the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity;
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to them, and said that by the soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

XII.
THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou diest rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou foughtst against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine heights at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft;
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is lost;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

XIII.
WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drear
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

XIV.
LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and lower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life’s common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

XV.

GREAT men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none:
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend;
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, ’tis strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

XVI.

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world’s praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, ’tis with pomp of waters, unwithstood,
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the cheek of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth’s first blood, have titles manifold.
XVIII.

OCTOBER, 1803.

One might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unit for men; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours: rural works are there,
And ordinary business without care;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
How pious then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite:
Should come in phrasing and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth!

XIX.

THERE is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach that he must share
With Human-nature! Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine;
And earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
Fade, and participate in man's decline.

XX.

OCTOBER, 1803.

These times strike monied worldlings with dismay:
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or unsatisfied are given,
Sound, healthy, children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death!

XXI.

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou should'st
wear
Thy heart from its emasculating soil:
The truth should now be better understood;
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou would'st step
between.
England! all nations in this charge agree:
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!

XXII.

OCTOBER, 1803.

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
I see one Man, of men the meanest too!
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
With mighty Nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great:
Nothing is left which I can venerate;
So that a doubt almost within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!
I measure back the steps which I have trod;
And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.
XXIII.

TO THE MEN OF KENT. OCTOBER, 1803.

Vanguard of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardihood,
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before; —
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from shore to shore; ——
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!

XXIV.

What if our numbers barely could defy
The arithmetical babble, must foreign hordes,
Slaves, vile as ever were befooled by words,
Striking through English breasts the anarchy
Of Terror, bear us to the ground, and tie
Our hands behind our backs with felon cords?
Yields every thing to discipline of swords?
Is man as good as man, none low, none high? —
Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
When in some great extremity breaks out
A people, on their own beloved Land
Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
Of a just God for liberty and right.

XXV.

LINES ON THE EXPECTED INVASION.

1803.

Come ye—who, if (which Heaven avert!) the Land
Were with herself at strife, would take your stand,
Like gallant Falkland, by the Monarch's side,
And, like Montrose, make Loyalty your pride—
Come ye—who, not less zealous, might display
Banners at enmity with regal sway,
And, like the Pym and Millions of that day,
Think that a State would live in sounder health
If Kingship bowed its head to Commonwealth—
Ye too—whom no discreditable fear
Would keep, perhaps with many a fruitless tear,
Uncertain what to choose and how to steer—
And ye—who might mistake for sober sense
And wise reserve the plea of indolence—

Come ye—whate'er your creed—O waken all,
Whate'er your temper, at your Country's call;
Resolving (this a free-born Nation can)
To have one Soul, and perish to a man,
Or save this honoured Land from every Lord
But British reason and the British sword.

XXVI.

ANTICIPATION. OCTOBER, 1803.

Shout, for a mighty Victory is won!
On British ground the Invaders are laid low;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again!—the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful shroud
And greet your sons! drums beat and trumpets blow!
Make merry, wives! ye little children, stun
Your grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise!
Clap, infants, clap your hands! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys: —
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

XXVII.

NOVEMBER, 1806.

Another year!—another deadly blow! —
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And we are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foetacite doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

XXVIII.

O DE.

Who rises on the banks of Seine,
And binds her temples with the civie wreath!
What joy to read the promise of her men!
How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath!
DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY.

But they are ever playing,  
And twinkling in the light,  
And, if a breeze be straying,  
That breeze she will invite;  
And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is fair,  
And calls a look of love into her face,  
And spreads her arms, as if the general air  
Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.  
—Melt, Principalities, before her melt!  
Her love ye hailed—her wrath have felt!  
But she through many a change of form hath gone,  
And stands amidst you now an armed creature,  
Whose panoply is not a thing put on,  
But the live scales of a portentous nature;  
That, having forced its way from birth to birth,  
stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a terror to  
the Earth!  

II.  
I marked the breathings of her dragon crest;  
My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,  
In many a midnight vision bowed  
Before the ominous aspect of her spear;  
Whether the mighty beam, in scorn upheld,  
Threatened her foes, or, pompously at rest,  
Seemed to bisect her orb'd shield,  
As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud  
Across the setting sun and all the fiery west.  

III.  
So did she daunt the Earth, and God defy!  
And, whereas'er she spread her sovereignty,  
Pollution tainted all that was most pure.  
—Have we not known—and live we not to tell—  
That Justice seemed to hear her final knell?  
Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast  
Her stores, and sighed to find them insecure!  
And Hope was maddened by the drops that fell  
From shades, her chosen place of short-lived rest.  
Shame followed shame, and woe supplanted woe—  
Is this the only change that time can show!  
How long shall vengeance sleep? Ye patient  
Heavens, how long!  
—Infirm execution! from the tongue  
Of Nations wanting virtue to be strong  
Up to the measure of accorded might,  
And daring not to feel the majesty of right!  

IV.  
Weak Spirits are there—who would ask,  
Upon the pressure of a painful thing,  
The lion's sinews, or the eagle's wing;  
Or let their wishes loose, in forest-glade,  
Among the lurking powers  
Of herbs and lowly flowers,  
Or seek, from saints above, miraculous aid—  
That Man may be accomplished for a task  
Which his own nature hath enjoined;—and why?  
If, when that interference hath relieved him,  
He must sink down to languish  
In worse than former helplessness—and lie  
Till the caves roar,—and, imbecility  
Again engendering anguish, seized him.  
The same weak wish returns, that had before de-  

V.  
—But Thou, supreme Disposer! may'st not speed  
The course of things, and change the creed  
Which hath been held aloft before men's sight  
Since the first framing of societies,  
Whether, as hards have told in ancient song,  
Built up by soft seducing harmonies;  
Or prest together by the appetite,  
And by the power, of wrong.

PART II.

I.  
ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY.  
A Roman Master stands on Grecian ground,  
And to the people at the Isthmian Games  
Assembled, He, by a herald's voice, proclaims  
The Liberty of Greece:—the words rebound  
Until all voices in one voice were drowned;  
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!  
And birds, high flying in the element,  
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound!  
Yet were the thoughtful grieved; and still that voice  
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy's ear:  
Ah! that a Conqueror's words should be so dear:  
Ah! that a boon could shed such rapturous joys!  
A gift of that which is not to be given  
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.

II.  
UPON THE SAME EVENT.  
When, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn  
The tides passed of servitude repealed,  
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,  
The rough Xolians smiled with bitter scorn.  
"Tis known," cried they, "that he, who would adorn  
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,  
Must either win, through effort of his own,  
The prize, or be content to see it worn  
By more deserving brows.—Yet so ye prop,  
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon,  
Your feeble spirits! Greece her head hath bowed,  
As if the wreath of liberty thereon  
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,  
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top."
TO THOMAS CLARKEON, ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR THE ABDICATION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.
MARCH, 1807.

Clarkson! it was an obstinate hill to climb:
How toilsome—nay, how dire—was, by thee
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly;
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst lead first forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee—O true yoke-fellow of Time,
Duty's intrepid liege-man, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn;
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind!

A PROPHET. FEBRUARY, 1807.

High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!
Thus in your books the record shall be found,
‘A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound—
Arminius!—all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze; they rose, a Nation, true,
True to herself—the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance;
Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame.’
—Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who could first advance
His banner in accorded league with France,
First open traitor to the German name!

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE.
1807.

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeld
By breezeless air to smoothest polish yield,
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows triumphantly revealed
At happy distance from earth's gnawing field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror!—or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires!—But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the
“Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds [reeds,
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!”

Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
The genuine men and character would trace
Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
Promising the world's audacious vanities!
Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise;
The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
Anxious an aery name to immortalize.
There, too, ere wiles and politic dispute
Gave specious colouring to aim and act,
See the first mighty Hunter leave the brute—
To chase mankind, with men in armories packed
For his field-pastime high and absolute,
While, to dislodge his game, cities are sacked!

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT, OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTIA.
1809.

Nor amid the World's vain objects that enslave
The free-born Soul—that World whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave—
Not there; but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds, that never shall be still;
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way;
And look and listen—gathering, whence I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION.

I dropped my pen; and listened to the Wind
That sang of trees up-torn and vessels torn—
A midnight harmony; and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains confined
Of business, care, or pleasure; or resigned
To timely sleep. Though like the impasioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptance from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past;
And to the attendant promise will give heed—
The prophecy—like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrivel,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.
IX.
HOFFER.
Of mortal parents is the Hero born
By whom theundaunted Tyrolese are led!
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phoebus through the gates of morn
When dreary darkness is dissolomited,
Yet mark his modest state! upon his head,
That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock
From van to rear—and with one mind would flee,
But half their host is buried—on rock on rock
Descends:—beneath this godlike Warrior, see!
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

X.
ADVANCE—come forth from thy Tyrolese ground,
Dear Liberty! stern Nymph of soul untamed;
Sweet Nymph, O righty of the mountains named!
Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound;
Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep: and forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps reound
And babble of her pastime!—On, dread Power!
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's bower—
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

XI.
FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE.
The Land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die:
This is our maxim, this our plety;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we would perform in arms—we must!
We read the dictate in the infant's eye;
In the wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us.—Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart!
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind!
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

XII.
ALAS! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword!—Her haughty Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought!

XIII.
And is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafax, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.

XIV.
O'er the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal Pan;
But more exalted, with a brighter train:
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain!
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death:—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?
ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE.

It was a moral end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or elevating thought?
Nor hail that moral good been blindly sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unconquered soul:
And when, impatient of their guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

HAIL, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacles demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtues; they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse;
Disease consumed thy vitals; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force:
Dread trials! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from necessity received.

XVII.

Say, what is Honour!—'Tis the finest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fall,
Hail is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust—
A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil:
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

XVIII.

The martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corpses: drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a Daughter of her Throne hath sold!
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast!

XX.

Call not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear; rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and state
Have 'perished by his choice, and not his fate!'
Hence lives He, to his inner self endowed;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sets a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven
ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.*

* See Note to Sonnet VII. page 237.
DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY.

XXI.

Look now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune; who, in cruel sight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind Goddess,—ruthless, undismayed;
And so hath gained at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force!
Curses are his dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

XXII.

Is there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chief, in by a tyrant's doom,
Forced to descend into his destined tomb—
A dungeon dark! where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear;
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side appear,
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise:—
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

XXIII.

Ah! where is Palafox! Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed, remote from ken
Of pitying human-nature! Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to battle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!—Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

XXIV.

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Adorn the peaceful corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncovered to his grave: 'tis closed,—her loss
The Mother theys mourns, as she needs must mourn;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued;
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.

XXV.

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF
THOSE FUNERALS.

1810.

Yet, yet, Biscayans! we must meet our Foes
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain
To gather round the hiers these festal shows.
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's hier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

XXVI.

THE OAK OF GUERNICA.

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laberde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in
the year 1296, after hearing mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, resolved to cut this tree, under which they swore to the
Biscayans to maintain their freedom (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this people will appear from the following:

SUGGESTED ADDRESS TO THE SAME. 1810.

Oak of Guernica! Tree of holier power
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
Heard from the depths of its aerial bower—
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
If never more within their shady round
These lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay’s ancient liberty.

XXVII.

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD.

We can endure that He should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came ;
Such food a Tyrant’s appetite demands :
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and be posses,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway ;
Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak ;
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength
to bear.

XXVIII.

AVANCE all specious planck of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence !
I better like a blunt indifference,
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight: and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind;
And piety towards God. Such men of old
Were England’s native growth; and, throughout
Spain,
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain;
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

XXIX.

1810.

Overwhelming Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth;
But from within proceeds a Nation’s health;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.

There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood;
Who to their Country’s cause have bound a life
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
To labour, and to prayer, to nature, and to heaven*.

XXX.

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERRILLAS.

Hunger, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height—
Those hardships ill-sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam: but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope; but they are fled—
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead:’
Where now?—Their sword is at the Foeman’s heart!
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

XXXI.

SPANISH GUERRILLAS.

1811.

They seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their foes,
For they have learnt to open and to close
The ridges of grim war; and at their head
Are captains such as erst their country bred
Or fostered, self-supporting chiefs,—like those
Whom hearty Rome was fearful to oppose;
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
In one who lived unknown a shepherd’s life
Redounded Viriatus breathes again;
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
With that great Leader’s vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
In some green island of the western main.

XXXII.

1811.

The power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave People into light can bring

* See Laborde’s character of the Spanish people; from him the sentiment of these last two lines is taken.
+ Servitus.
DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY.

Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
By just revenge inflamed! No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a fatal place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves.—From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

XXXIII.
1811.

HERE pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount duty that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man’s suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart—
That an accused thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor—touched with due abhorrence of their guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity—
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

XXXIV.
THE FRENCH ARMY IN RUSSIA.
1812–13.

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a traveller old,
Propelled on a staff, and, through the sullen day,
In hooded mantle, limping o’er the plain,
As though his weakness were disturbed by pain:
Or, if a juster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
Infirnly grasped within a palsied hand.
These emblems suit the helpless and forlorn;
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was,—dread Winter! who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghoastly net,
That host, when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition’s barren goal—
That host, as huge and strong as o’er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride!
As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of their warrior youth;
He called on Frost’s inexorable tooth
Life to consume in Manhood’s firmest hold;
Nor spared the revered blood that feebly runs;
For why,—unless for liberty enrolled
And sacred home,—ah! why should hoary Age be bold?

Fleet the Tartar’s restless steed,
But fleeter far the pinions of the Wind,
Which from Siberian caves the Monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the Snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride.

No pitying voice commands a halt,
No courage can repel the dire assault;
Distracted, spiritless, benumbed, and blind,
Whole legions sink—and, in one instant, find
Burial and death: look for them—and desery
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy!

XXXV.
ON THE SAME OCCASION.
Ye Storms, resound the praises of your King!
And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while father Time
Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter’s triumph sing!
Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and fruits, and flowers,
Of Winter’s breath surcharged with sleet showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing!
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain;
Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aerial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter—He hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your bounties vain!

XXXVI.

By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice; by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood;
The unfeeling Elements no claim shall raise
To rob our Human-nature of just praise
For what she did and suffered. Pledges sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if Faith might tread the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice—to quell that Host
Gathered his power, a manifest ally;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Favmis, Snow, and Frost,
"Finish the strife by deadliest victory!"
XXXVIII.

The Gleaners on the Heights of Rockingham

HEAVEN passed the stride;—she field throughout
Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
Cheeked in the very act and deed of blood,
With breath suspended, like a listening scout.

O Silence! thou art mother of a shout
That through the texture of you aures dense
Cleave its glad way, a cry of harvest home
Untoed to Heaven in Antony decreed!

Woe, The barrier shine hath flashed, through battle
On men who gave heart-smitten by the view,
As if all Germany had felt the shock!

—Fly, wretched Gauls! ere they the charge renew
Who have seen themselves now casting off the yoke—

The unapproachable stream his course pursue.

XXXIX.

S Bernard, 1813.

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged sovereign sits, to the ebull and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,
Inaccessible. He sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapt in twofold night,
Whom no weak hope deceived; whose mind ensnared,
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.

Dread King of Kings, twicken a ray divine
To his forlorn condition! let thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;
Permit his heart to kindle, and to embrace
(Though it were only for a moment's space)
The triumphs of this hour; for they are Thine!

And Fancy, keeping unrelenting watch,
Was free her choicest favours to dispense;
I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,
A landscape more august than happiest skill
Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;

An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer rove;
Nor wanting lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
And scattered rural farms of aspect bright;

And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
The azur sea upwelled upon the sight.
Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows!

But not a living creature could be seen
Through its wide circuit, that, in deep repose,
And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
Lay hushed; still—through a portal in the sky
Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a storm,
Opening before the sun's triumphant eye
Issued, to sudden view, a glorious Form!
Earthward it glided with a swift descent:
Saint George himself this Visitant must be;

And, ere a thought could ask on what intent
He sought the regions of humanity,
A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
City and field and flood;—aloud it cried—

"Though from my celestial home,
"Like a Champion, armed I come;
"On my helm the dragon crest,
"And the red cross on my breast;

"I, the Guardian of this Land,
"Speak not now of toilsome duty;
"Well obey'd was that command—

"Whence bright days of festive beauty;

"Haste, Virgins, haste!—the flowers which summer gave
"Have perished in the field;
"But the green thickets plentifully shall yield
"Fit garlands for the brave,

"That will be welcome, if by you entwined;
"Haste, Virgins, haste; and ye Matrons grave,

"Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
"And gather what ye find
"Of hardy laurel and wild holly boughs—

"To deck your stern Defenders' modest brows!
"Such simple gifts prepare,

"Though they have gained a worthier need;
"And in due time shall share
"Those palms and amaranthine wreaths

"Unto their martyred Countrymen decreed,
"In realms where everlasting freshness breathes!"
Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty.

II.

And lo! with crimson banners proudly streaming,
And upright weapons innocently gleaming,
Along the surface of a spacious plain
Advance in order the redoubtcd Bands,
And there receive green chaplets from the hands
Of a fair female train—
Maids and Matrons, dight
In robes of dazzling white;
While from the crowd bursts forth a rapturous noise
By the cloud-capt hills recorted;
And a throng of rosy boys
In loose fashion tell their joys;
And grey-haired sires, on staffs supported,
Look round, and by their smiling seem to say,
Thus strives a grateful Country to display
The mighty debt which nothing can repay!

III.

Anon before my sight a palace rose
Built of all precious substances,—so pure
And exquisite, that sleep alone bestows
Ability like splendour to endure:
Entered, with streaming thousands, through the gate,
I saw the banquet spread beneath a Dome of state;
A lofty Dome, that dared to emulate
The heaven of sable night
With starry lustre; yet had power to throw
Solenn effigines, clear as solar light,
Upon a princely company below,
While the vault rang with choral harmony,
Like some Nymph-haunted grot beneath the roaring sea.
—No sooner ceased that peal, than on the verge
Of exultation hung a dirge
Breathed from a soft and lonely instrument,
That kindled recollections
Of agonised affections;
And, though some tears the strain attended,
The mournful passion ended
In peace of spirit, and sublime content!

IV.

But garlands wither; festal shows depart,
Like dreams themselves; and sweetest sound—
(Albeit of effect profound)
It was—and it is gone!
Victorious England! bid the silent Art
Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not fade,
Those high achievements; even as she arrayed
With second life the deed of Marathon
Upon Athenian walls;

So may she labour for thy civic halls:
And be the guardian spaces
Of consecrated places,
As nobly graced by Sculpture’s patient toil;
And let imperishable Columns rise
Fixed in the depths of this courageous soil;
Expressive signals of a glorious strife,
And competent to shed a spark divine
Into the torpid breast of daily life;—
Records on which, for pleasure of all eyes,
The morning sun may shine
With gratulation thoroughly benign!

V.

And ye, Pierian Sisters, sprung from Jove
And sage Memene,—full long debarked
From your first mansions, exiled all too long
From many a hallowed stream and grove,
Dear native regions where ye wont to rove,
Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
Of never-dying song!
Now (for, though Truth descending from above
The Olympian summit hath destroyed for aye
Your kindred Deities, Ye live and move,
Spared for obedience from perpetual love
For privilege redeemed of godlike sway)
Now, on the margin of some spotted fountain,
Or top serene of unmolested mountain,
Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
And for a moment meet the soul’s desires!
That I, or some more favoured Bard, may hear
What ye, celestial Maids! have often sung
Of Britain’s acts,—may catch it with rapt ear,
And give the treasure to our British tongue!
So shall the characters of that proud page
Support their mighty theme from age to age;
And, in the desert places of the earth,
When they to future empires have given birth,
So shall the people gather and believe
The bold report, transferred to every clime;
And the whole world, not envious but admiring,
And to the like aspiring,
Own—that the progeny of this fair Isle
Had power as lofty actions to achieve
As were performed in man’s heroic prime;
Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held
Its even tenor, and the foe was quelled,
A corresponding virtue to beguile
The hostile purpose of wide-wasting Time—
That not in vain they laboured to secure,
For their great deeds, perpetual memory,
And fame as largely spread as land and sea,
By Works of spirit high and passion pure!
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION,

XLI.
FEELINGS OF A FRENCH ROYALIST,
on the disinterment of the remains of the Duke
D'ENGHESIN.

Dear Reliques! from a pit of vilest mould
Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings;
And to inflict shame’s salutary stings
On the remorseless hearts of men grown old
In a blind worship; men perversely bold
Even to this hour,—yet, some shall now forsake
Their monstrous idol if the dead o'er spake,
To warn the living; if truth were ever told
By aught redeemed out of the hollow grave:
O murdered Prince! meek, loyal, pious, brave!
The power of retribution once was given:
But 'tis a rueful thought that willy hands
So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
Of Justice sent to earth from highest Heaven!

XLII.

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.
[The last six lines intended for an inscription.]
FEBRUARY, 1816.

INSTREPID sons of Abdon! not by you
Is life despised; ah no, the spacious earth
Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,
So many objects which love is due:
Ye slight not life—to God and Nature true;
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
When duty bids you bleed in open war:
Hence hath your prowess quelled that impious crew.
Heroes!—for instant sacrifice prepared;
Yet filled with ardour and on triumph bent
'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared
To guard the fallen, and consummate the event,
Your Country rears this sacred Monument!

XLIII.

SIEGE OF VIENNA RAISED BY JOHN SCHIESKI.
FEBRUARY, 1816.

O, for a kindling touch from that pure flame
Which ministered, meanwhile, to a sacrifice
Of gratitude, beneath Italian skies,
In words like these: 'Up, Voice of song! proclaim
Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim:
For lo! the Imperial City stands released
From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
And Christendom respires; from guilt and shame
Redeemed, from miserable fear set free
By one day's feat, one mighty victory.

'—Chant the Deliverer's praise in every tongue!
The cross shall spread, the crescent hath waxed
dim;
He conquering, as in joyful Heaven is sung,
He conquering through God, and God by him *.

XLIV.

O D E.
FEBRUARY, 1815.

IMAGINATION—ne'er before content,
But aye ascending, restless in her pride
From all that martial feats could yield
To her desires, or to her hopes present—

* See Fillestia's Ode.
† From all this world's encumbrance did himself assail.'
—Spenser.
DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY.

Stood to the Victory, on that Belge field,
Achieved, this closing deed magnificent,
And with the embrace was satisfied.
—Fly, ministers of Fame,
With every help that ye from earth and heaven
may claim!
Bear through the world these tidings of delight!
—Hours, Days, and Months, have borne them in
the sight
Of mortals, burying like a sudden shower
That land-ward stretches from the sea,
The morning's splendours to devour;
But this swift travel scorns the company
Of irksome change, or threats from saddening
power.
—The shock is given—the Advancing blood—
Lo, Justice triumphs! Earth is freed!
Joyful ammunition!—it went forth—
It pierced the caverns of the slumbering North—
It found no barrier on the ridge
Of Andes—frozen gulphs became its bridge—
The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight—
Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed—
The Arabian desert shapes a willing road
Across her burning breast,
For this refreshing incense from the West—
—Where snakes and lions breed,
Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,
Wherever fruits are gathered, and where'er
The upturned soil receives the hopeful seed—
While the Sun rules, and crosses the shades of night—
The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight!—
The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,
And in its sparkling progress read
Of virtue crowned with glory's deathless meed:
Tyrians exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats
are done;
Even the proud Realm, from whose distracted
borders
This messenger of good was launched in air,
France, humbled France, amid her wild disorders,
Foes, and hereafter shall the truth declare,
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-plausible voice.

The peaceful guest advancing from afar.
Bright be the peaceful Fabric, as a star
Fresh risen, and beautiful within!—there meet
Dependence infinite, proportion just;
A Pile that Grace approves, and Time can trust
With his most sacred wealth, heroic dust.

But if the valiant of this land
In reverence of modesty demand,
That all observance, due to them, be paid
Where their serene progenitors are laid;
Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saint-like sages,
England's illustrious sons of long, long ages;
Be it not scurred that solemn rites,
Within the circuit of those Gothic walls,
Shall be performed at proper intervals;
Communion holy that unites
The living generations with the dead;
By the deep soul-moving sense
Of religious eloquence—
By visual pomp, and by the tie
Of sweet and threatening harmony;
Soft notes, awful as the ocean
Of destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness
Into elevated gladness;
While the white-robed choir attendant,
Under mouldering banners pendant,
Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
Songs of victory and praise,
For them who bravely stood unshun, or bled
With medicable wounds, or found their graves
Upon the battle field, or under ocean's waves;
Or were conducted home in single state,
And long procession—there to lie,
Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate!

iv.
Nor will the God of peace and love
Such martial service disapprove.
He guides the Pestilence—the cloud
Of locusts travels on his breath;
The region that in hope was plunged
His drought consumes, his mildest taints with death;
He springs the rushing Volcano's mine,
He puts the Earthquake on her still design,
Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
Cities and towns—men Thou—the work is Thine—
The fierce Tornado sleeps within thy courts—
He hears the word—he flies—
And navies perish in their ports;
For Thou art angry with thine enemies!
For these, and mourning for our errors,
And sins, that point their terrors,
We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
And magnify thy name, Almighty God!
But Man is thy most awful instrument,
In working out a pure intent;
Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
And for thy righteous purpose they prevail;
Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
Of them who in thy laws delight:
Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts!

v.
Forbear:—to Thee—
Father and Judge of all, with fervent tongue
But in a gentler strain
Of contemplation, by no sense of wrong,
(Too quick and keen) incited to disdain
Of pity pleading from the heart in vain—
To Thee:—To Thee
Just God of christianised Humanity
Shall praises be poured forth, and thanks ascend,
That thou hast brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!
Blest, above measure blest,
If on thy love our Land her hopes shall rest,
And all the Nations labour to fulfill
Thy law, and live henceforth in peace, in pure
good will.

XLVI.

ODE.

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL THANKSGIVING. JANUARY 18, 1816.

i.
Hail, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!
Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
On hearts how'er insensible or rude;
Whether thy punctual visitations smite
The haughty towers where monarchs dwell;
Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence bright
Cheer'st the low threshold of the peasant's cell!
Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,
Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,
Which even in deepest winter testify
Thy power and majesty,
Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.
—Well does thine aspect usher in this Day:

As aptly suits therewith that modest pace
Submitted to the chains
That bind thee to the path which God ordains
That thou shalt trace,
Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away!
Nor less, the stillness of these frosty plains,
Their utter stillness, and the silent grace
Of yon ethereal summits white with snow,
(Whose tranquil pomp and spotless purity
Report of storms gone by
To us who tread below)
Do with the service of this Day accord.
—Divinest Object which the uplifted eye
Of mortal man is suffered to behold;
Thou, who upon yon snow-clad Heights has poured
Meekest seraph, nor forget'st the humble Vale;
Thou who dost warm Earth's universal mould,
And for thy bounty yet not unadored
By pious men of old;
Once more, heart-cheering Sun; I bid thee hail!
Bright be thy course to-day, let not this promise fail!

ii.
'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,
All nature seems to hear me while I speak,
By feelings urged that do not vainly seek
Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
That stream in blithe succession from the throats
Of birds, in leafy bower,
Warbling a farewell to a Vernon shower.
—There is a radiant though a short-lived flame,
That burns for Poets in the dawning east;
And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
When the captivity of sleep had ceased;
But He who fixed immovably the frame
Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
A solid refuge for distress—
The towers of righteousness;
He knows that from a holier altar came
The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice;
Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
The current of this matin song;
That deeper far it lies
Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

iii.
Have we not conquered!—by the vengeful sword?
Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
That curbed the baser passions, and left free
A loyal band to follow their liege Lord
Clear-sighted Honour, and his said Compeers,
Along a track of most unmatured years;
In execution of heroic deeds
Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
Of morning dew upon the untravelled meads,
Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.
He, who in concert with an earthly string
Of Britain's acts would sing,
He with enraptured voice will tell
Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell;
Of One that mid the falling never failed—
Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed.
Shall represent her labouring with an eye
Of circumspect humanity;
Shall show her clothed with strength and skill,
All martial duties to fulfil;
Firm as a rock in stationary fight;
In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at mid night
To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream—
Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

And thus is missed the sole true glory
That can belong to human story!
At which they only shall arrive
Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
The very humblest are too proud of heart;
And one brief day is rightly set apart
For Him who lifted up and layeth low;
For that Almighty God to whom we owe,
Say not that we have vanished—but that we
survive.

How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the Song be tardy to proclaim
That less than power unbounded could not tame
That soul of Evil—which, from hell let loose,
Had filled the astonished world with such abuse
As boundless patience only could endure!
—Wide-wasted regions—cities wrapt in flame—
Who sees, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven—who never saw, may heave a sigh;
But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, toils on fire,
Are but the avowed attire
Of warfare waged with desperate mind
Against the life of virtue in mankind;
Assaulting without ruth
The citadels of truth;
While the fair gardens of civility,
By ignorance defaced,
By violence laid waste,
Perish without reprieve for flower or tree!

A crouching purpose—a distracted will—
Opposed to hopes that barned upon scorn,
And desires whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could fill;
Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,
And to celerities of lawless force;
Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse—
What could they gain but shadows of redress!
—So bad proceeded propagating worse;
And discipline was passion's dire excess.
Widens the fatal web, its lines extend,
And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend.
When will your trials teach you to be wise?
—O prostrate Lands, consult your agonies!

No more—the guilt is banish'd,
And, with the guilt, the shame is fled;
And, with the guilt and shame, the Woe hath
vanish'd,
Shaking the dust and ashes from her head!
—No more—these lingeringes of distress
Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
What robe can Gratitude employ
So secret as the radiant vest of Joy?
What steps so suitable as those that move
In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
Of glory, and felicity, and love,
Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures?

O Britain! dearer far than life is dear,
If one there be
Of all thy progeny
Who can forget thy prowess, never more
Be that ungrateful Son allowed to hear
Thy green leaves rustle or thy torrents roar.
As springs the lion from his den,
As from a forest-brake
Upstarts a glistering snake,
The bold Arch-despot reappeared;—again
Wide Europe heaves, impatient to be cast,
With all her armed Powers,
On that offensive soil, like waves upon a
thousand shores.
The trumpet blew a universal blast!
But Thou art foremost in the field:—there stand:
Receive the triumph destined to thy hand!
All States have glorified themselves:—their claims
Are weighed by Providence, in balance even;
And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
Exalted office, worthily sustained!

Preserve, O Lord! within our hearts
The memory of thy favour,
That else insensibly departs,
And loses its sweet savour!

Lodge it within us!—as the power of light
Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
So shine our thankfulness for ever bright!

What offering, what transcendent monument
Shall our sincerity to Thee present?
—Not work of hands; but trophies that may reach
To highest Heaven—the labour of the Soul;
That builds, as thy unerring precepts teach,
Upon the internal conquests made by each,
Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
Yet will not heaven disown nor earth gainsay
The outward service of this day;
Whether the worshippers entreat
Forgiveness from God’s merciful seat;
Or thanks and praises to His throne ascend
That He has brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!—

Ha!—what a ghastly sight for man to see;
And to the heavenly saints in peace who dwell,
For a brief moment, terrible;
But, to thy sovereign penetration, fair,
Before whom all things are, that were,
All judgments that have been, or e’er shall be;
Links in the chain of thy tranquillity!
Among the bosom of this favoured Nation,
Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undulation!
Let all who do this land inherit
Be conscious of thy moving spirit!
Oh, ’tis a godly Ordinance,—the sight,
Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight;

Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
And, at one moment, in one rapture, strive
With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
For thy protecting care,

Their solemn joy—praising the Eternal Lord
For tyranny subdued,
And for the sway of equity renewed,
For liberty confirmed, and peace restored!

But hark—the summons!—down the placid lake
Floats the soft cadence of the church-tower bells;
Bright shines the Sun, as if its beams would wake
The tender insects sleeping in their cells;
Bright shines the Sun—and not a breeze to shake
The drops that tip the melting icicles.

O, enter now his temple gate!
Inviting words—perchance already flung
(As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
Of some old Minster’s venerable pile)
From voices into zealous passion stung,
While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,
And has begun—its clouds of sound to cast

Forth towards empyreal Heaven,
As if the fretted roof were riven.
Us, humbler ceremonies now await;
But in the bosom, with devout respect
The banner of our joy we will erect,
And strength of love our souls shall elevate:
For to a few collected in his name,
Their heavenly Father will incline an ear
Gracious to service hallowed by its aim;—

Awake! the majesty of God revere!

Go—and with foreheads meekly bowed
Present your prayers—go—and rejoice aloud—
The Holy One will hear!

And what, ’mid silence deep, with faith sincere,
Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
Shall simply feel and purely meditate—
Of warnings—from the unprecedented might,
Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed;
And of more arduous duties thence imposed
Upon the future advocates of right;

Of mysteries revealed,
And judgments unrepealed,
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution,—

To his omniscience will appear
An offering not unworthy to find place,
On this high Day of Thanks, before the Throne of Grace!
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

1820.

DEDICATION.

(MENT WITH THESE POEMS, IN MS., TO ———)

Dear Fellow-travellers! think not that the Muse,
To You presenting these memorial Lays,
Can hope the general eye thenceon would gaze,
As on a mirror that gives back the hues
Of living Nature; no—though free to choose
The pleasant bowers, the most inviting ways,
The fairest landscapes and the brightest days——

HYDE. MOUNT. Nov. 1821.

Her skill she tried with less ambitious views.
For You she wrought: Ye only can supply
The life, the truth, the beauty: she confides
In that enjoyment which with You abides,
Trusts to your love and vivid memory;
Thus far contented, that for You her verse
Shall lack not power the meeting soul to pierce!

W. WORDSWORTH.

III.

BRUGÈS.

The Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
And with devout solemnities entwined—
Mounts to the seat of grace within the mind:
Hence Forms that glide with swan-like ease along,
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
To an harmonious decency confined:
As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple, dedicate
To mutual respect in thought and deed;
To leisure, to forbearances sedate;
To social cares from jarring passions freed;
A deeper peace than that in deserts found!

IV.

INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS.

In Bruges town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled;
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet,
The grass-grown pavement tread.
There heard we, halting in the shade
Fling from a Convent-tower,
A harp that tuneful prelude made
To a voice of thrilling power.
The measure, simple truth to tell,  
Was fit for some gay throng;  
Though from the same grim turret fell  
The shadow and the song.  
When silent were both voice and chords,  
The strain seemed doubly dear,  
Yet sad as sweet,—for English words  
Had fallen upon the ear.  

It was a breezy hour of eve;  
And pinnacle and spire  
Quivered and seemed almost to heave,  
Clothed with innocent fire;  
But, where we stood, the setting sun  
Showed little of his state;  
And, if the glory reached the Nun,  
'Twas through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,  
Nor pity idly born,  
If even a passing Stranger sighs  
For them who do not mourn.  
Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,  
Captive, whoe'er thou be!  
Oh! what is beauty, what is love,  
And opening life to thee!  

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,  
A feeling sanctified  
By one soft trickling tear that stole  
From the Maiden at my side;  
Less tribute could she pay than this,  
Borne gaily o'er the seas,  
Fresh from the beauty and the bliss  
Of English liberty!

V.

AFTEI VISITING THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

A winged Goddess—cloth'd in nature wrought  
Of rainbow colours; One whose port was bold,  
Whose overburthened hand could scarcely hold  
The glittering crowns and garlands which it brought—  
Hovered in air above the far-famed Spot.  
She vanished; leaving prospect blank and cold  
Of wind-swept corn that wide around us rolled  
In dreary billows, wood, and meagre cot,  
And monuments that soon must disappear;  
Yet a dread local recompence we found;  
While glory seemed betrayed, while patriot-zeal  
Sank in our hearts, we felt as men should feel  
With such vast heaps of hidden carnage near,  
And horror breathing from the silent ground!

VI.

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE.

What lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose?  
Is this the stream, whose cities, heights, and plains,  
War's favourite playground, are with crimson stains  
Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dews?  
The Morn, that now, along the silver Meuse,  
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains  
To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,  
Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews  
The ripening corn beneath it.  
As mine eyes  
Tum from the fortified and threatening hill,  
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,  
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade—  
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise  
From the smooth meadow-ground, serene and still!

VII.

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

Was it to disenchant, and to undo,  
That we approached the Seat of Charlemaine?  
To sweep from many an old romantic strain  
That faith which no devotion may renew?  
Why does this puny Church present to view  
Her feeble columns? and that scanty chair?  
This sword that one of our weak times might wear!  
Objects of false pretence, or meagre true!  
If from a traveller's fortune I might claim  
A palpable memorial of that day,  
Then would I seek the Pyrenean Breach  
That Roland clove with huge two-handed sway,  
And to the enormous labour left his name,  
Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach.

VIII.

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT COLOGNE.

O for the help of Angels to complete  
This Temple—Angels governed by a plan  
Thus far pursued (how gloriously!) by Man,  
Studious that He might not disdain the seat  
Who dwells in heaven! But that aspiring seat  
Hath failed; and now, ye Powers! whose gorgeous wings  
And splendid aspect ye emblazonings  
But faintly picture, 'twere an office meet  
For you, on these unfinished shafts to try  
The midnight virtues of your harmony:—  
This vast design might tempt you to repeat  
Strains that call forth upon empyreal ground  
Immortal Fabrics, rising to the sound  
Of penetrating harps and voices sweet!
IX.

IN A CARRIAGE, UPON THE BANKS OF THE RHINE.
Amid this dance of objects sadness steals
O'er the defrauded heart—while sweeping by,
As in a fit of Thespian jollity,
Beneath her vine-leaf crown the green Earth reels:
Backward, in rapid evanescence, wheels
The venerable pageantry of Time,
Each beetle rampart, and each tower sublime,
And what the Dell unwillingly reveals
Of lurking cloisteral arch, through trees espied
Near the bright River's edge. Yet why repine?
To muse, to creep, to halt at will, to gaze—
Such sweet way-faring—of life's spring the pride,
Her summer's faithful joy—that still is mine,
And in fit measure cheers autumnal days.

X.

HYMN,
FOR THE BOATMEN, AS THEY APPROACH THE RAPIDS UNDER THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG.
Just! bless our slender Boat,
By the current swept along;
Loud its threatenings—let them not
Drown the music of a song
Breathed thy merrily to implore,
Where these troubled waters roar!
Saviour, for our warning, seen
Bleeding on that precious Rock;
If, while through the meadows green
Gently wound the peaceful flood,
We forgot Thee, do not Thou
Disregard thy Suppliants now!
Hither, like you ancient Tower
Watching o'er the River's bed,
Fling the shadow of thy power,
Else we sleep among the dead;
Thou who trod'st the billowy sea,
Shield us in our jeopardy!
Guide our Bark among the waves;
Through the rocks our passage smooth;
Where the whirlpool frets and raves
Let thy love its anger soothe:
All our hope is placed in Thee;
Miserere Domine*!

* See Note.

XI.

THE SOURCE OF THE DANUBE.
Not, like his great Competors, indigantly
Doth Danube spring to life*!
The wandering Stream
(Who loves the Cross, yet to the Crescent's gleam
Unfolds a willing breast) with infant glee
Slips from his prison walls: and Fancy, free
To follow in his track of silver light,
Mounts on rapt wing, and with a moment's flight
Hath reached the encirclement of that gloomy sea
Whose waves the Orphian lyre forbid to meet
In conflict; whose rough winds forgot their jars
To waft the heroic progeny of Greece;
When the first Ship sailed for the Golden Fleece—
Amor—exalted for that daring feat
To fix in heaven her shape distinct with stars.

XII.

ON APPROACHING THE STAUB-BACH, LAUTERBRUNNEN.
Uttered by whom, or how inspired—designed
For what strange service, does this concert reach
Our ears, and near the dwellings of mankind!
Mid fields familiarized to human speech—
No Mermaids warble—to allay the wind
Driving some vessel toward a dangerous beach—
More thrilling melodies; Witch answering Witch,
To chant a love-spell, never interwoven
Notes shrill and wild with art more musical:
Alas! that from the lips of abject Want
Or Idleness in tatters mendicant
The strain should flow—free Fancy to cultural,
And with regret and useless pity haunt
This bold, this bright, this sky-born, Waterfall†!

XIII.

THE FALL OF THE AAR—HANDEL.
From the fierce aspect of this River, throwing
His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
Back in astonishment and fear we shrink:
But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
Flowers we spy beside the torrent growing;
Flowers that peep forth from many a cleft and chink,
And, from the whirlwind of his anger, drink
Hues ever fresh, in rocky fortress blowing:
They suck—from breath that, threatening to destroy,
Is more benignant than the dewy eve—
Beauty, and life, and motions as of joy:
Nor doubt but He to whom you Pine-trees nod
Their heads in sign of worship, Nature's God,
These humbler adorations will receive.

XIV.

MEMORIAL,
NEAR THE OUTLET OF THE LAKE OF THUN.

DEM
ANDENKEN
MEINES FREUNDEN
ALOYS RUDING
MDCCCVIII.

Alois Ruding, it will be remembered, was Captain-General of the Swiss forces, which, with a courage and perseverance worthy of the cause, opposed the Napoleonic and too successful attempts of Bonaparte to subjugate their country.

Around a wild and woody hill
A gravelled pathway leading,
We reach'd a votive Stone that bears
The name of Alois Ruding.

Well judged the Friend who placed it there
For silence and protection;
And hapsy with a finer care
Of dutiful affection.

The Sun regards it from the West;
And, while in summer glory
He sets, his sinking yields a type
Of that pathetic story:

And oft he tempts the patriot Swiss
Amid the grove to linger;
Till all is dim, save this bright Stone
Touched by his golden finger.

XV.

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE CATHOLIC CANTONS.

Doomed as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The altar, to deride the face,
Where simple Sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn cell to gaze:
Hail to the firm unmoving cres
Aloft, where pines their branches toss!
And to the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champain wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity!—to bid us think,
And feel, if we would know.

XVI.

AFTER-THOUGHT.

Oh Life! without thy chequered scene
Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
Success and failure, could a ground
For magnanimity be found;
For faith, 'mid ruined hopes, serene!
Or whence could virtue flow!

Pain entered through a ghastly breach—
Nor while sin lasts must effort cease;
Heaven upon earth's an empty boast;
But, for the bower of Eden lost,
Mercy has placed within our reach
A portion of God's peace.

XVII.

SCENE ON THE LAKE OF BRIENZ.

'What know we of the Blest above
But that they sing and that they love?'
Yet, if they ever did inspire
A mortal hymn, or shaped the choir,
Now, where those harvest Damsels float
Homeward in their rugged Boat,
(While all the ruffling winds are fled—
Each slumbering on some mountain's head)
Now, surely, hath that gracious aid
Been felt, that influence is displayed.
Pupils of Heaven, in order stand
The rustic Maidens, every hand
Upon a Sister's shoulder laid,—
To chant, as glides the boat along,
A simple, but a touching, song;
To chant, as Angels do above,
The melodies of Peace in love!
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

XVIII.

ENGELBERG, THE HILL OF ANGELS.

For gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes
The work of Fancy from her willing hands;
And such a beautiful creation makes
As renders needless spells and magic wands,
And for the boldest tale belief commands.
When first mine eyes beheld that famous Hill
The sacred Engelberg, celestial Bands,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that changed their hues at will.

Clouds do not name those Visitants; they were
The very Angels whose authentic lays,
Sung from that heavenly ground in middle air,
Made known the spot where piety should raise
A holy Structure to the Almighty's praise.
Resplendent Apparition! if in vain
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze;
And watch the slow departure of the train,
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to detain.

* See Note.
+ Mount Right.

XX.

OUR LADY OF THE SNOW.

Meek Virgin Mother, more benign
Than fairest Star, upon the height
Of thy own mountain _sprite to keep
Lone vigils through the hours of sleep,
What eye can look upon thy shrine
Untroubled at the sight!

These crowded offerings as they hang
In sign of misery relieved,
Even these, without intent of theirs,
Report of comfortless despair,
Of many a deep and careless pang
And confidence deceived.

To Thee, in this aerial grot
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferers that no more rely
On mortal succour—all who sigh
And pine, of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin Mother mild!
Though plenteous flowers around thee blow,
Not only from the dreary strife
Of Winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy Votaries aptly styled,
OUR LADY OF THE SNOW.

Even for the Man who stops not here,
But down the irrigious valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady! rings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs
A tender sense of shadowy fear,
And chastening sympathies!

Nor falls that intermingling shade
To summer-gladsomeness unkind:
It chastens only to require
With gleams of fresher, purer, light;
While, o'er the flower-enamelled glade,
More sweetly breathes the wind.

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

EFFUSION,

IN PRESENCE OF THE PAINTED TOWER OF TELL, AN ACCOUNT.

This Tower stands upon the spot where grew the Linden Tree against which his Son is said to have been placed, when the Father's archery was put to proof under circumstances so famous in Swiss Story.

What though the Italian pencil wrought not here,
Nor such fine skill as did the meed bestow
On Marathonian valour, yet the tear
Springs forth in presence of this gaudy show,
While narrow cares their limits overflow.
Thrice happy, burghers, peasants, warriors old,
Infants in arms, and ye, that as ye go
Home-ward or school-ward, apo what ye behold;
Heroes before your time, in frolic fancy bold!

And when that calm Spectraress from on high
Looks down—the bright and solitary Moon,
Who never gazes but to beautify;
And snow-fed torrents, which the blaze of noon
Roused into fury, murmur a soft tone
That fosters peace, and gentleness recalls;
XXI.

THE TOWN OF SCHWITZ.

By antique Fancy trimmed—though lowly, bred
To dignity,—in thee, O SCHWITZ! are seen
The genuine features of the golden mean;
Equality by Prudence governed,
Or jealous Nature ruling in her stead;
And, therefore, art thou best with peace, serene
As that of the sweet fields and meadows green
In unambitious compass round thee spread.

Majestic Bern, high on her guardian steep,
Holding a central station of command,
Might well be styled this noble body’s Head;
Thou, lodged midmountainous entrenchments deep,
Its Heart; and ever may the heroic Land
Thy name, O SCHWITZ, in happy freedom keep* !

XXII.

ON HEARING THE “RAINE DES VACHES” ON THE TOP OF THE PASS OF ST. GOATHARD.

I LISTEN—but no faculty of mine
Avails those modulations to detect,
Which, heard in foreign lands, the Swiss affect
With tenderest passion; leaving him to pine
(For fame reports) and die,—his sweet-breath’d kine
Remembering, and green Alpine pastures decked
With vernal flowers. Yet may we not reject
The tale as fabulous.—Here while I recline,
Mindful how others by this simple strain

* Nearly 500 years (say Etzel, speaking of the French Invasion) had elapsed, when, for the first time, foreign soldiers were seen upon the frontiers of this small Canton, to impose upon it the laws of their governors.

Are moved; for me—upon this Mountain named
Of God himself from dread pre-eminence—
Aspiring thoughts, by memory reclaimed,
Yield to the Muse’s touching influence;
And joys of distant home my heart enchain.

XXIII.

FORT FUENTES.

The Ruins of Fort Fuentes form the crest of a rocky eminence that rises from the plain at the head of the lake of Como, commanding views up the Valatine, and toward the town of Chiavenna. The prospect in the latter direction is characterised by melancholy sublimity. We recoiled at being favoured with a distinct view of those Alpine heights; not, as we had expected from the breaking up of the storm, steeped in celestial glory, yet in communion with clouds floating or stationary—scatterings from heaven. The Ruin is interesting both in mass and in detail. An Inscription, upon elaborately-sculptured marble lying on the ground, records that the Fort had been erected by Count Fuentes in the year 1600, during the reign of Philip the Third; and the Chapel, about twenty years after, by one of his Descendants. Marble pillars of gateways are yet standing, and a considerable part of the Chapel walls: a smooth green turf has taken place of the pavement, and we could see no trace of altar or image; but everywhere something to remind one of former splendour, and of devastation and tumult. In our ascent we had passed abundance of wild vines intermingled with boughs: near the ruins were some ill tended, but growing willingly; and rock, turf, and fragments of the pile, are alike covered or adorned with a variety of flowers, among which the rose-coloured pink was growing in great beauty. While descending, we discovered on the ground, apart from the path, and at a considerable distance from the ruined Chapel, a statue of a Child in pure white marble, unjewelled by the explosion that had driven it so far down the hill. “How little,” we exclaimed, “are those things valued here! Could we but transport this pretty Image to our own garden!” —Yet it seemed it would have been a pity any one should remove it from its couch in the wilderness, which may be its own for hundreds of years.—Extract from Journal.

DREAD hour! when, upheaved by war’s sulphurous blast,
This sweet-visaged Cherub of Parian stone
So far from the holy enclosure was cast,
To couch in this thicket of brambles alone;

To rest where the lizard may bask in the palm
Of his half-open hand pure from blemish or speck;
And the green, gilded snake, without troubling the calm
Of the beautiful countenance, twine round his neck;
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

Where haply (kind service to Piety due!) When winter the grove of its mantle bereaves, Some bird (like our own honoured redbreast) may swere The desolate Slumberer with moss and with leaves.

Fuentes once harboured the good and the brave, Nor to her was the dance of soft pleasure unknown; Her banners for festal enjoyment did wave While the thrill of her fifes thro’ the mountains was blown:

Now gads the wild vine o’er the pathless ascent— O silence of Nature, how deep is thy sway, When the whirlwind of human destruction is spent, Ours tumults appeased, and our strifes passed away!

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XXIV.

THE CHURCH OF SAN SALVADOR, SEEN FROM THE LAKE OF LUGANO.

This Church was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, but the altar and the image of the Patron Saint were untouched. The Mount, upon the summit of which the Church is built, stands amid the inaccessibilities of the Lake of Lugano; and is, from a hundred points of view, its principal ornament, rising to the height of 2000 feet and, on one side, nearly perpendicular. The ascent is toilsome; but the traveller who performs it will be amply rewarded. Splendid fertility, rich woods and dazzling waters, seclusion and confinement of view contrasted with sea-like extent of plain fading into the sky; and this, again, in an opposite quarter, with an horizon of the loveliest and loftiest Alps—one in composing a prospect more diversified by magnificence, beauty, and sublimity, than perhaps any other point in Europe, of so inconsiderable an elevation, commands.

Those sacred Pillars whose turrets rise From yeast steep mountain’s loftiest stage, Guarded by lone San Salvador; Sink (if thou must) as heretofore, To sulphurous bolts a sacrifice, But never to human rage!

On Horæ’s top, on Sinai, deigned To rest the universal Lord: Why leap the fountains from their cells Where everlasting Bounty dwells?— That, while the Creature is sustained, His God may be adored.

Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times— Let all remind the soul of heaven; Our slack devotion needs them all; And Faith—so oft of sense the thrill,

While she, by aid of Nature, climbs— May hope to be forgiven.

Glory, and patriotic Love, And all the Pomp of this frail word Which men call Earth, have yearned to seek, Associate with the simply meek, Religion in the sainted grove, And in the hallowed grot.

This is, in time of adverse shocks, Of fainting hopes and backward wills, Did mighty Tell repair of old— A Hero cast in Nature’s mould, Deliverer of the steadfast rocks And of the ancient hills!

He, too, of battle-martyrs chief! Who, to recall his daunted peers, For victory shaped an open space, By gathering with a wide embrace, Into his single breast, a sheaf Of fatal Austrian spears.

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XXXV.

THE ITALIAN ITINERANT, AND THE SWISS GOATHERD.

PART I.

Now that the farewell tear is dried, Heaven prosper thee, be hope thy guide! Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy; The wages of thy travel, joy!

Whether for London bound—to trill Thy mountain notes with simple skill; Or on thy head to poise a show Of Images in solemn row; The graceful form of milk-white Steed, Or Bird that soared with Ganymede; Or through our hamlets thou wilt bear The sightless Milton, with his hair Around his placid temples curled; And Shakspeare at his side—a freight, If clay could think and mind were weight, For him who bore the world!

Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy; The wages of thy travel, joy!

* Arnold Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach, broke an Austrian phalanx in this manner. The event is one of the most famous in the annals of Swiss heroism; and pictures and prints of it are frequent throughout the country.
But thou, perhaps, (alert as free
Though serving sage philosophy)
Wilt ramble over hill and dale,
A Vender of the well-wrought Scale,
Whose sentient tube instructs to time
A purpose to a fickle cline:
Whether thou choose this useful part,
Or minister to finer art,
Though robbed of many a cherished dream,
And crossed by many a shattered scheme,
What stirring wonders wilt thou see
In the proud Isle of liberty!
Yet will the Wanderer sometimes pine
With thoughts which no delights can chase,
Recal a Sister’s last embrace,
His Mother’s neck entwine;
Nor shall forget the Maiden coy
That would have loved the bright-haired Boy!

My Song, encouraged by the grace
That beams from his ingenuous face,
For this Adventurer scruples not
To prophesy a golden lot;
Due recompence, and safe return
To Como’s steeples—his happybourne!
Where he, aloft in garden glade,
Shall tend, with his own dark-eyed Maid,
The hollowing mate, and prop the twig
That ill supports the luscious fig;
Or feed his eye in paths sun-proof
With purple of the trellis-roof,
That through the jealous leaves escapes
From Cadenabbio’s pendent grapes.
—Oh might he tempt that Goatherd-child
To share his wanderings! him whose look
Even yet my heart can scarcely brook,
So touchingly he smiled—
As with a rapture caught from heaven—
For unasked alms in pity given.

PART II.

Wry nodding plumes, and lightly drest
Like foresters in leaf-green vest,
The Helvetic Mountain-marks, on ground
For Tell’s dread archery renowned,
Before the target stood—to claim
The guardian of the steadiest aim.
Loud was the rifle-gun’s report—
A startling thunder quick and short!

But, flying through the heights around,
Echo prolonged a tell-tale sound
Of hearts and hands alike prepared
The treasures they enjoy to guard!
And, if there be a favoured hour
When Heroes are allowed to quit
The tomb, and on the clouds to sit
With tutelary power,
On their Descendants shedding grace—
This was the hour, and that the place.

But Truth inspired the Bards of old
When of an iron age they told,
Which to unequal laws gave birth,
And drove Astraea from the earth.
—A gentle Boy (perchance with blood
As noble as the best endued),
But seemingly a Thing despised;
Even by the sun and air unprized;
For not a tinge or flowery streak
Appeared upon his tender cheek
Heart-deaf to those rebounding notes,
Apart, beside his silent goats,
Sate watching in a forest shed,
Pale, ragged, with bare feet and head;
Mute as the snow upon the hill,
And, as the saint he prays to, still.
Ah, what avails heroic deed!
What liberty! if no defence
Be won for feeble Innocence.
Father of all! though wilful Manhood read
His punishment in soul-distress,
Grant to the morn of life its natural blessedness!

THE LAST SUPPER, BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, IN THE
REFECTORY OF THE CONVEXT OF MARIA DELLA
GRAZIA—MILAN.*

Two’ searching dampes and many an envious flaw
Have marred this Work; the calm ethereal grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour’s face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to awe
The Elements; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the Beholder—and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives: lip, forehead, cheek,

* See Noto.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth!

XXVIL.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 1820.

High on her speculative tower
Stood Science waiting for the hour
When Sol was destined to endure
That darkening of his radiant face
Which Superstition strove to chase,
Erewhile, with rites impure.

Afloat beneath Italian skies,
Through regions fair as Paradise
We gaily passed,—till Nature wrought
A silent and unlooked-for change,
That checked the desultory range
Of joy and sprightly thought.

Where'er was dipped the toiling ear,
The waves danced round us as before,
As lightly, though of altered hue,
Mid recent coolness, such as falls
At noontide from unbraggous walls
That screen the morning dew.

No vapour stretched its wings; no cloud
Cast far or near a murky shroud;
The sky an azure field displayed;
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently charmed,
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,
And as in slumber laid,—

Or something night and day between,
Like moonshine—but the hue was green;
Still moonshine, without shadow, spread
On jutting rock, and curved shore,
Where gazed the peasant from his door
And on the mountain's head.

It tinged the Julian steep—it lay,
Lugano! on thy ample bay;
The solemnizing veil was drawn
O'er villas, terraces, and towers;
To Albogasio's olive bowers,
Porlezza's verdant lawn.

But Fancy with the speed of fire
Hath past to Milan's loftiest spire,
And there alights 'mid that aerial host
Of Figures human and divine*;
White as the snows of Apennine
Indurated by frost.

Awe-stricken she beholds the array
That guards the Temple night and day;
Angels she sees—that might from heaven have flown,
And Virgin-saints, who not in vain
Have striven by purity to gain
The beatific crown—

Sees long-drawn files, concentric rings
Each narrowing above each;—the wings,
The uplifted palms, the silent marble lips
The starry zone of sovereign height†—
All steeped in this portentous light!
All suffering dim eclipse!

Thus after Man had fallen (if aught
These perishable spheres have wrought
May with that issue be compared)
Throng of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared.

Lo! while I speak, the labouring Sun
His glad deliverance has begun:
The cypress waves her sombre plume
More cheerily; and town and tower,
The vineyard and the olive-bower,
Their lustre re-assume!

O Ye, who guard and grace my home
While in far-distant lands we roam,
What countenance hath this Day put on for you?
While we looked round with favoured eyes,
Did all the mists hide lake and skies
And mountains from your view?

Or was it given you to behold
Like vision, pensive though not cold,
From the smooth breast of gay Winandermere!
Saw ye the soft yet awful veil
Spread over Grasmere's lovely dale,
Helvellyn's brow severe!

* See Note.
† Above the highest circle of figures is a zone of metallic stars.
I ask in vain—and know far less
If sickness, sorrow, or distress
Have spared my Dwelling to this hour;
Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailling love
And all-controlling power.

XXVIII.

THE THREE COTTAGE GIRLS.

I.

How blest the Maid whose heart—yet free
From Love's uneasy sovereignty—
Beats with a fancy running high,
Her simple cares to magnify;
Whom Labour, never urged to toil,
Hath cherished on a healthful soil;
Who knows not pomp, who heed not pelf;
Whose heaviest sin is it to look
Askance upon her pretty Self
Reflected in some crystal brook;
Whom grief hath spared—who sheds no tear
But in sweet pity; and can hear
Another's praise from envy clear.

II.

Such (but O lavish Nature! why
That dark unfathomable eye,
Where lurks a Spirit that replies
To stillest mood of softest skies,
Yet hints at peace to be o'erthrown,
Another's first, and then her own!)
Such, haply, you Italian Maid,
Our Lady's laggard Votarex,
Hailing beneath the chestnut shade
To accomplish there her loveliness:
Nice aid maternal fingers lend;
A Sister serves with slacker hand;
Then, glittering like a star, she joins the festal band.

III.

How blest (if truth may entertain
Coy fancy with a bolder strain)
The Helvetic Girl—who daily braves,
In her light skiff, the tossing waves,
And quits the bosom of the deep
Only to climb the rugged steep
—Say whence that modulated shout!
From Wood-nymph of Diana's throng!
Or does the greeting to a rout
Of giddy Bacchanals belong?
Jubilant outcry! rock and glade
Resounded—but the voice obeyed
The breath of an Helvetic Maid.

IV.

Her beauty dazzles the thick wood;
Her courage animates the flood;
Her steps the elastic green-ward meets
Returning unreluctant sweets;
The mountains (as ye heard) rejoice
Aloud, saluted by her voice!
Blithe Paragon of Alpine grace,
Be as thou art—for through thy veins
The blood of Heroes runs its race!
And nobly wilt thou break the chains
That, for the virtuous, Life prepares;
The fetters which the Matron wears;
The patriot Mother's weight of anxious cares!

V.

* 'Sweet Highland Girl! a very shower
Of beauty was thy earthy dower;
When thou didst flit before mine eyes,
Gay Vision under sultry skies,
While Hope and Love around thee played,
Near the rough falls of Inverneyd! Have they, who nursed the blossom, seen
No breach of promise in the fruit!
Was joy, in following joy, as keen
As grief can be in grief's pursuit!
When youth had flown did hope still bless
Thy going—or the cheerfulness
Of innocence survive to mitigate distress!

VI.

But from our course why turn—to tread
A way with shadows overspread;
Where what we gladliest would believe
Is feared as what may most deceive!
Bright Spirit, not with amaranth crowned
But heath-bells from thy native ground.
Time cannot thin thy flowing hair,
Nor take one ray of light from thee;
For in my Fancy thou dost share
The gift of immortality:
And there shall bloom, with Thee allied,
The Votarex by Legano's side;
And that intrepid Nymph, on Uri's steep, descried!

XXIX.

THE COLUMN INTENDED BY NAPOLEON FOR A TRIUMPHAL EDICIFCE IN MILAN, NOW LYING BY THE WAY-SIDE IN THE SIMPLON PASS.

Ambition—following down this far-famed slope
Her Pioneer, the snow-dissolving Sun,
While clarions prate of kingdoms to be won—
Perchance, in future ages, here may stop;

* See address to a Highland Girl, p. 221.
Taught to mistrust her flattering horoscope
By admonition from this prostrate stone!
Memento uninscribed of Pride o'erthrown;
Vanity's hieroglyphic; a choice trope
In Fortune's rhetoric. Daughter of the Rock,
Rest where thy course was stayed by Power divine!
The Soul transported sees, from hint of thine,
Crimes which the great Avenger's hand provoke,
Hears combat whistling o'er the ensanguined hearth:
What groans! what shrieks! what quietness in
death!

Each step hath its value while homeward we move;—
O joy when the girdle of England appears!
What moment in life is so conscious of love,
Of love in the heart made more happy by tears!

XXX.

STANZAS,

WALLONEBROS! I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor,
To listen to Adon's precipitous flood,
When the stillness of evening hath deepened its roar;
To range through the Temples of Poros
To muse In Pomona preserved by her burial in earth;
On pictures to gaze where they drank in their lines;
And number sweet songs on the ground of their
birth!

The beauty of Florence, the grandeur of Rome,
Could I leave them unseen, and not yield to regret?
With a hope (and no more) for a season to come,
Which never may discharge the magnificent debt! Thos fortunate Region! whose Greatness inurned
Awoke to new life from its ashes and dust;
Twice-glorified fields! if in sadness I turned
From your infinite marvels, the sadness was just.

Now, risen ere the light-footed Chamois retires
From dew-sprinkled grass to heights guarded with
snow;
Toward the mists that hang over the land of my Sires,
From the climate of myrtles contented I go.
My thoughts become bright as yon edging of Pines
On the steep's lofty verge: how it blacken'd the
air!
But, touched from behind by the Sun, it now shines
With threads that seem part of his own silver hair.

Though the toil of the way with dear Friends we divide,
Though by the same zephyr our temples be fanned
As we rest in the cool orange-bower side by side,
A yearning survives which few hearts shall with-
stand:

XXXI.

ECCH, UPON THE GEMMI.

What beast of chase hath broken from the cover!
Stern Gemmi listens to as full a cry,
As multitudinous a harmony
Of sounds as rang the heights of Latmos over,
When, from the soft couch of her sleeping Lover,
Up-starting, Cynthia skimmed the mountain-dew
In keen pursuit—and gave, where'er she flew,
Impetuous motion to the Stars above her.
A solitary Wolf-dog, ranging on
Through the bleak con cave, wakes this wondrous chime
Of airy voices locked in unison,—
Faint—far-off—near—deep—solemn and sublime!—
So, from the body of one guilty deed,
A thousand ghostly fears, and haunting thoughts, proceed!

XXXII.

PROCESSIONS.

SUGGESTED ON A SABBATH MORNING IN THE VALE OF
CHAMONT.

To appease the Gods; or public thanks to yield;
Or to solicit knowledge of events,
Which in her breast Futurity concealed;
And that the past might have its true intents
Feelingly told by living monuments—
Mankind of yore were prompted to devise
Rites such as yet Persepolis presents
Graven on her cankered walls, solemnities
That moved in long array before admiring eyes.

The Hebrews thus, carrying in joyful state
Thick boughs of palm, and willows from the brook,
Marched round the altar—to commemorate
How, when their course they through the desert
took,
Guided by signs which me'er the sky forsook,
They lodged in leafy tents and cabins low;
Green boughs were borne, while, for the blast that
shook
Down to the earth the walls of Jericho,
Shouts rise, and storms of sound from lifted trump-
ets blow!
And thus, in order, said the sacred grove
Fed in the Libyan waste by gushing wells,
The priests and damsel of Amnon Jove
Provoked responses with shrill canticles;
While, in a ship begirt with silver bells,
They round his altar bore the horned God,
Old Chaim, the solar Deity, who dwells
Aloft, yet in a tilting vessel rode,
When universal sea the mountains overflowed.

Why speak of Roman Pomp! the haughty claims
Of Chiefs triumphant after ruthless wars;
The feast of Neptune—and the Cereal Games,
With images, and crowns, and empty cars;
The dancing Salii—on the shields of Mars
Smiting with fury; and a deeper dread
Scattered on all sides by the hideous jars
Of Corybantic cymbals, while the head
Of Cybèle was seen, sublimely turreted!

At length a Spirit more subdued and soft
Appeared—to govern Christian pageantries:
The Cross, in calm procession, borne aloft
Moved to the chant of sober litanies.
Even such, this day, came wafted on the breeze
From a long train—in hooded vestments fair
Enwrought—and winding, between Alpine trees
Spiry and dark, around their House of prayer,
Below the icy bed of bright Argentiere.

Still in the vivid freshness of a dream,
The pageant haunts me as it met our eyes!
Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a living Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise*
For the same service, by mysterious ties;
Numbers exceeding credible account
Of number, pure and silent Votaries
Issuing or issued from a wintry fount;
The impenetrable heart of that exalted Mount!

They, too, who send so far a holy gleam
While they the Church engird with motion slow,
A product of that awful Mountain seem,
Pour’d from its vaults of everlasting snow;
Not virgin lilies marshalled in bright row,
Not swans descending with the stealthy tide,
A livelier sisterly resemblance show
Than the fair Fruma, that in long order glide,
Bear to the glacier band—those Shapes aloft
desired.

Trembling, I look upon the secret springs
Of that licentious craving in the mind
To act the God among external things,
To bind, on apt suggestion, or unhind;
And marvel not that antique Faith inclined
To crowd the world with metamorphosis,
Vouchsafed in pity or in wrath assigned;
Such insolent temptations wouldst thou miss,
Avoid these sights; nor brood o’er Fabio’s dark abyss!

XXXIII.

ELEGIAIC STANZAS.

The lamented Youth whose untimely death gave occasion to these elegiac verses, was Frederick William Goddard, from Boston in North America. He was in his twentieth year, and had resided for some time with a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Geneva for the completion of his education. Accompanied by a fellow-pupil, a native of Scotland, he had just set out on a Swiss tour when it was his misfortune to fall in with a friend of mine who was hastening to join our party. The travellers, after spending a day together on the road from Berno and at Soleur, took leave of each other at night, the young men having intended to proceed directly to Zurich. But early in the morning my friend found his new acquaintances, who were informed of the object of his journey, and the friends he was in pursuit of, equipped to accompany him. We met at Lucerne the succeeding evening, and Mr. G. and his fellow-student became in consequence our traveling companions for a couple of days. We ascended the Right together; and, after contemplating the sunrise from that noble mountain, we separated at an hour and on a spot well suited to the parting of those who were to meet no more. Our party descended through the valley of our Lady of the Snow, and our late companions, to Art. We had hoped to meet in a few weeks at Geneva; but on the third succeeding day (on the 21st of August) Mr. Goddard perished, being covered in a boat while crossing the lake of Zurich. His companion saved himself by swimming, and was hospitably received in the mansion of a Swiss gentleman (M. Keller) situated on the eastern coast of the lake. The corpse of poor Goddard was cast ashore on the estate of the same gentleman, who generously performed all the rites of hospitality which could be rendered to the dead as well as to the living. He caused a handsome mural monument to be erected in the church of Kismächt, which records the premature fate of the young American, and on the shores too of the lake the traveller may read an inscription pointing out the spot where the body was deposited by the waves.

*See Note.

LUZEL. loured by the sound of pastoral bells,
Rude Nature’s Pilgrims did we go,
From the dread summit of the Queen*
Of mountains, through a deep ravine,
Where, in her holy chapel, dwells
*Our Lady of the Snow.*

* Mount Right—Regina Montium.
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The sky was blue, the air was mild;
Free were the streams and green the bowers;
As if, to rough assaults unknown,
The genial spot had ever shown
A countenance that as sweetly smiled—
The face of summer-hours.

And we were gay, our hearts at ease;
With pleasure dancing through the frame
We journeyed; all we knew of care—
Our path that straggled here and there;
Of trouble—but the fluttering breeze;
Of Winter—but a name.

If foresight could have rent the veil
Of three short days—but hush—no more!
Calm is the grave, and calmer none
Than that to which thy cares are gone,
Thou Victim of the stormy gale;
Asleep on Zornik's shore!

Oh Godard! what art thou— a name—
A sunbeam followed by a shade!
Nor more, for aught that time supplies,
The great, the experienced, and the wise:
Too much from this frail earth we claim,
And therefore are betrayed.

We met, while festive mirth ran wild,
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave,
With current swift and undefined,
The towers of old Lucerne.

We parted upon solemn ground
Far-lifted towards the unfading sky;—
But all our thoughts were then of Earth,
That gives to common pleasures birth;
And nothing in our hearts we found
That prompted even a sigh.

Fetch, sympathising Powers of air,
Fetch, ye that post o'er seas and lands,
Herbs moistened by Virginian dew,
A most untimely grave to strew,
Whose turf may never know the care
Of kindred human hands!

Beloved by every gentle Muse
He left his Transalpine home:
Europe, a realised romance,
Had opened on his eager glance;
What present bliss!—what golden views!
What stores for years to come!

Though lodged within a vigorous frame,
His soul her daily tasks renewed,
Blieth as the lark on sun-gilt wings
High poised—or as the zephyr that sings
In shady places, to proclaim
Her modest gratitude.

Not vain is sadly-uttered praise;
The words of truth's memorial vow
Are sweet as morning fragrance shed
From flowers mid Godard's ruins bred;
As evening's fondly-lingering rays,
On Right's silent brow.

Lamented Youth! to thy cold clay
Fit obsequies the Stranger paid;
And piety shall guard the Stone
Which hath not left the spot unknown
Where the wild waves resigned their prey—
And that which marks thy bed.

And, when thy Mother weeps for Thee,
Lost Youth! a solitary Mother;
This tribute from a casual Friend
A not unwelcome aid may lend,
To feed the tender luxury,
The rising pang to smother.

XXXIV.

SKY-PROSPECT—FROM THE PLAIN OF FRANCE.

Lo! in the burning west, the craggy nape
Of a proud Ararat! and, thereupon,
The Ark, her melancholy voyage done!
You rampant cloud mimics a lion's shape;
There, combate a huge crocodile—agape
A golden spear to swallow! and that brown
And massey grove, so near you blazing town,
Stirs and recedes—destruction to escape!
Yet all is harmless—as the Elysian shades
Where Spirits dwell in undisturbed repose—
Silently disappears, or quickly fades;
Meek Nature's evening comment on the shows
That for oblivion take their daily birth
From all the fuming vanities of Earth!

* The persuasion here expressed was not groundless.
The first human consolation that the afflicted Mother felt,
was derived from this tribute to her son's memory, a fact
which the author learned, at his own residence, from her
Daughter, who visited Europe some years afterwards.—
Godard is one of the villages desolated by the fall of part
of the Mountain Rosberg.
XXXV.

ON BEING STRANDED NEAR THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE.

Why cast ye back upon the Gallic shore
Ye furious waves! a patriotic Son
Of England—who in hope her coast had won,
His project crowned, his pleasant travel o'er!
Well—let him pace this noted beach once more,
That gave the Roman his triumphal shells;
That saw the Corsican his cap and bells
Haughtily shake, a dreaming Conqueror!—
Enough: my Country's cliffs I can behold,
And proudly think, beside the chafing sea,
Of checked ambition, tyranny controlled,
And folly cursed with endless memory:
These local recollections ne'er can cloy;
Such ground I from my very heart enjoy!

XXXVI.

AFTER LANDING.—THE VALLEY OF DOVER.

Where be the noisy followers of the game [passed
Which faction breeds; the turmoil where! that
Through Europe, echoing from the newsman's blast,
And filled our hearts with grief for England's shame.
Peace greets us;—rambling on without an aim
We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate, couched on the grassy lea;
And hear far-off the mellow horn proclaim
The Season's harmless pastime. Ruder sound
Stirs not; enshroud I gaze with strange delight,
While consciousness, not to be disowned,
Here only serve a feeling to invite
That lifts the spirit to a calmer height,
And makes this rural stillness more profound.

XXXVII.

AT DOVER.

From the Pier's head, musing, and with increase
Of wonder, I have watched this sea-side Town,
Under the white cliff's battlemented crown,
Hushed to a depth of more than Sabbath peace:
The streets and quays are thronged, but why disown
Their natural utterance: whence this strange release
From social noise—silence elsewhere unknown!—
A Spirit whispered, "Let all wonder cease;
Ocean's o'erpowering murmur their release:
The sense from pressure of life's common din;
As the dread Voice that speaks from out the sea
Of God's eternal Word, the Voice of Time
Doth deade, shocks of tumult, shrieks of crime,
The shouts of folly, and the groans of sin."

XXXVIII.

DESLATORY STANZAS,

UPON RECEIVING THE PECULIAR BEATS FROM TOWN.

Is then the final page before me spread,
Nor further outlet left to mind or heart?
Presumptuous Book! too forward to be read.
How can I give thee licence to depart?
One tribute more: unbidden feelings run
Forth from their coverts; slighted objects
My spirit is the scene of such wild war
As on Parnassus rules, when lightning shone Visibly leading on the thunder's harmony.

All that I saw returns upon my view,
All that I heard comes back upon my ear,
All that I felt this moment doth remain;
And where the foot with no unmann'd fear
Recollected—wings alone could travel—far
I move at ease; and meet contending
That press upon me, crossing the career
Of recollections vivid as the dreams
Of midnight—cities, plains, forests, and

Where Mortal never breathed I dare to say;
Among the interior Alps, gigantic ever,
Who triumphed o'er diluvian power!—say
What are they but a wreck and ruin,
Whose only business is to perish:—true
To which and course, these wrinkled Sees do
Labour their proper greatness to subdue;
Speaking of death alone, beneath a cairn
Where life and ruin flow in plement and

Fancy hath flung for me an airy bridge
Across thy long deep Valley, furious Rhine!
Arch that here rests upon the granite lip
Of Monte Rossa—there onย†triller stone
Of secondary birth, the Jungfrau's arm;
And, from that arch, down-looking on the land
The aspect I behold of every zone;
A sea of foliage, tossing with the gale,
Blithe Autumn's purple crown, and Winter's mail!

Far as St. Mauric, from yon eastern Peak
Down the main avenue my sight can range:
And all its branchy vales, and all that lies
Within them, church, and town, and hamlet,
For my enjoyment meet in vision spread:
Snoes, torrents;—to the region's utmost
Life, Death, in amicable interchange;

* See Note.

* At the head of the Vallais. See Note.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT. 269

One after one, its tablets, that unfold
The whole design of Scripture history;
From the first tasting of the fatal Tree,
Till the bright Star appeared in eastern skies,
Announcing, One was born mankind to free;
His acts, his wrongs, his final sacrifice;
Lessons for every heart, a Bible for all eyes.

Our pride misleads, our timid likings kill.
—Long may these homely Works devised of old,
These simple efforts of Helvetic skill,
Aid, with congenial influence, to uphold
The State,—the Country’s destiny to mould;
Turning, for them who pass, the common dust
Of servile opportunity to gold;
Filling the soul with sentiments august—
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just!

No more; Time halts not in his noiseless march—
Nor turns, nor winds, as doth the liquid flood;
Life slips from underneath us, like that arch
Of airy workmanship whereon we stood,
Earth stretched below, heaven in our neighbourhood.
Go forth, my Little Book! pursue thy way;
Go forth, and please the gentle and the good;
Nor be a whisper stifled, if it say
That treasures, yet untouched, may grace some
future Lay.

* See Notes.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY.

1837.

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON.

These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet Return to thee
For kindnesses that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.

W. WORDSWORTH.

The Tour of which the following Poems are very inadequate remembrances was shortened by report, too well founded, of the prevalence of Cholera at Naples. To make some amends for what was reluctantly left unseen in the South of Italy, we visited the Tuscan Sanctuaries among the Apennines, and the principal Italian Lakes among the Alps. Neither of those lakes, nor of Venice, is there any notice in these Poems, chiefly because I have touched upon them elsewhere. See, in particular, "Descriptive Sketches," "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent in 1820," and a Sonnet upon the extinction of the Venetian Republic.

I.

MUSINGS NEAR AQUAPENDENTE.

April, 1837.

Ye Apennines! with all your fertile vales
Deeply embosomed, and your windsing shores
Of either sea, an Islander by birth,
A Mountaineer by habit, would resound
Your praise, in meet accordance with your claims
Restowed by Nature, or from man's great deeds
Inherited:—presumptuous thought!—it fled
Like vapour, like a towering cloud, dissolved.
Not, therefore, shall my mind goe way to sadness;
You snow-white torrent-fall, plumb down it drops
Yet ever hangs or seems to hang in air,
Lulling the leisure of that high perched town,
AQUAPENDENTE, in her lofty site
Its neighbour and its namesake—town, and flood
Forth flashing out of its own gloomy chasm
Bright sunshine—a fresh verdure of this lawn
Strewn with grey rocks, and on the horizon's verge,
O'er interventious waste, through glistening haze,
Unquestionably known, that cone-shaped hill
With fructified summit, no indifferent sight.
To travellers, from so much comforts as are thine,
Bleak Raddison! I escaped with joy—
These are before me; and the varied scene
May well suffice, till noon-tide's sultry heat

Relax, to fix and satisfy the mind
Passive yet pleased. What! with this Broom in flower
Close at my side. She bids me fly to greet
Her sisters, soon like her to be attired
With golden blossoms opening at the feet
Of my own Fairfield. The glad greeting given,
Given with a voice and by a look returned
Of old companionship. Time counts not minutes
Ere, from accustomed paths, familiar fields,
The local Genius hurries me aloft,
Transported over that cloud-wooning hill,
Sext Sandal, a fond suitor of the clouds,
With dream-like smoothness, to Helvellyn's top,
There to alight upon crisp moss and range,
Obtaining ampler boon, at every step,
Of visual sovereignty—hills multitudinous,
(Not Apennine can boast of fairer) hills
Pride of two nations, wood and lake and plains,
And prospect right below of deep coves shaped
By skeleton arms, that, from the mountain's trunk
Extended, clasp the winds, with mutual moon
Struggling for liberty, while undismayed
The shepherd struggles with them. Onward thence
And downward by the skirt of Greenside fell,
And by Glenridding-aces, and low Glenecogn,
Places forsaken now, though loving still
The muses, as they loved them in the days
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY.

Of the old minstrels and the border bards.—
But here am I fast bound; and let it pass,
The simple rapture;—who that travels far
To feed his mind with watchful eyes could share
Or wish to share it?—One there surely was,
"The Wizard of the North," with anxious hope
Brought to this genial climate, when disease
Preyed upon body and mind,—yet not the less
Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
That spoke of bards and minstrels; and his spirit
Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn's brow,
Where once together, in his day of strength,
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads.

Years followed years, and when, upon the eve
Of his last going from Tweed-side, thought turned,
Or by another's sympathy was led,
To this bright land, Hope was for him no friend,
Knowledge no help; imagination shaped
No promise. Still, in more than ear-deep seats,
Survives for me, and cannot but survive
The tone of voice which wedded borrowed words
To sadness not their own, when, with faint smile
Forced by intent to take from speech its edge,
He said, "When I am there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow." Prophecy
More than fulfilled, as gay Campania's shores
Soon witnessed, and the city of seven hills,
Her sparkling fountains, and her mouldering tombs;
And more than all, that Eminence which showed
Her splendours, seen, not felt, the while he stood
A few short steps (painful they were) apart
From Tasso's Convent-laven, and retired grave.

Peace to their Spirits! why should Poesy
Yield to the lure of vain regret, and hover
In gloom on wings with confidence outspread
To move in sunshine!—Uter thanks, my Soul!
Tempered with awe, and sweetened by compassion
For them who in the shades of sorrow dwell,
That I—so near the term to human life
Appointed by man's common heritage,
Frail as the frailest, one withal (if that
Deserve a thought) but little known to fame;—
Am free to rove where Nature's loveliest looks,
Art's noblest relics, history's rich bequests,
Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
The whole world's Darling—free to rove at will
O'er high and low, and if requiring rest,
Rest from enjoyment only.

Thanks poured forth
For what thus far hath blessed my wanderings,
thanks

Fervent but humble as the lips can breathe
Where gladness seems a duty—let me guard
Those seeds of expectation which the fruit
Already gathered in this favoured land
Enfolds within its core. The faith be mine,
That He who guides and governs all, approves
When gratitude, though disciplined to look
Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear a crown
Of earthly hope put on with trembling hand;
Nor is least pleased, we trust, when golden beams,
Reflected through the mists of age, from hours
Of innocent delight, remote or recent,
Shoot but a little way—'tis all they can—
Into the doubtful future. Who would keep
Power must resolve to cleave to it through life,
Else it deserts him, surely as he lives.
Saints would not grieve nor guardian angels frown
If one—while tossed, as was my lot to be,
In a frail bark urged by two slender oars
Over waves rough and deep, that, when they broke,
Dashed their white foam against the palace walls
Of Genoa the superb—should there be led
To meditate upon his own appointed tasks,
However humble in themselves, with thoughts
Raised and sustained by memory of Him
Who oftentimes within those narrow bounds
Rocked on the surge, there tried his spirit's strength.
And grasp of purpose, long ere sailed his ship
To lay a new world open.

Nor less prized
Be those impressions which incline the heart
To mild, to lowly, and to seeming weak,
Bend that way her desires. The dew, the storm—
The dew whose moisture fell in gentle drops
On the small hyssop destined to become
By Hebrew ordinance devoutly kept,
A purifying instrument—the storm
That shook on Lebanon the cedar's top,
And as it shook, enabling the blind roots
Further to force their way, endowed its trunk
With magnitude and strength fit to uphold
The glorious temple—did alike proceed
From the same gracious will, were both an offspring
Of bounty infinite.

Between Powers that aim
Higher to lift their lofty heads, impelled
By no profane ambition, Powers that thrive
By conflict, and their opposites, that trust
In lowliness—a mid-way tract there lies
Of thoughtful sentiment for every mind
Pregnant with good. Young, Middle-aged, and Old,
From century on to century, must have known
The emotion—may, more fitly were it said—
The blest tranquillity that sunk so deep
Into my spirit, when I paced, enclosed
In Pisa's Campo Santo, the smooth floor
Of its Arcades paved with sepulchral slabs,
And through each window's open fret-work looked
O'er the blank Area of sacred earth
Fetched from Mount Calvary, or haply delved
In precincts nearer to the Saviour's tomb,
By hands of men, humble as brave, who fought
For its deliverance—a capacious field
That to descendants of the dead it holds
And to all living mute memento breathes,
More touching far than aught which on the walls
Is pictured, or their epitaphs can speak,
Of the changed City's long-departed power,
Glory, and wealth, which, perilous as they are,
Here did not kill, but nourished, Piety.
And, high above that length of cloistral roof,
Peering in air and backed by azure sky,
To kindred contemplations ministers
The Baptistery's dome, and that which swells
From the Cathedral pile; and with the twain
Conjoined in prospect mutable or fixed
(As hurry on in eagerness the feet,
Or pause) the summit of the Leaning-tower.
Nor less remuneration waits on him
Who having left the Cemetery stands
In the Tower's shadow, of decline and fall
Admonished not without some sense of fear,
Fear that soon vanishes before the sight
Of splendor unexstinguished, pomp unscathed,
And beauty unimpaired. Grand in itself,
And for itself, the assemblage, grand and fair
To view, and for the mind's consentient eye
A type of age in man, upon its front
Bearing the world-acknowledged evidence
Of past exploits, nor fondly after more
Struggling against the stream of destiny,
But with its peaceful majesty content.
—Oh what a spectacle at every turn
The Place unfolds, from pavement skinned with moss,
Or grass-grown spaces, where the heaviest foot
Provokes no echoes, but must softly tread;
Where Solitude with Silence paired stops short
Of Desolation, and to Ruin's scythe
Decay submits not.

But where'er my steps
Shall wander, chiefly let me pull with care
Those images of genial beauty, oft
Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
But by reflexion made so, which do best
And filièst serve to crown with fragrant wreaths
Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine.
—How lovely robed in forenoon light and shade,

Each ministering to each, didest thou appear
Savona, Queen of territory fair
As aught that marvellous coast thro' all its length
Yields to the Stranger's eye. Remembrance holds
As a selected treasure thy one cliff,
That, while it wore for melancholy crest
A shattered Convent, yet rose proud to have
Clinging to its steep sides a thousand herbs
And shrubs, whose pleasant looks gave proof how
Kind
The breath of air can be where earth had else
Seemed churchless. And behold, both far and near,
Garden and field all decked with orange bloom,
And peach and citron, in Spring's mildest breeze
Expanding; and, along the smooth shore curved
Into a natural port, a tideless sea,
To that mild breeze with motion and with voice
Softly responsive; and, attuned to all
Those vernal charms of sight and sound, appeared
Smooth space of turf which from the guardian fort
Sloped seaward, turf whose tender April green,
In coolest climes too fugitive, might even here
Plead with the sovereign Sun for longer stay
Than his unmitigated beams allow,
Nor plead in vain, if beauty could preserve,
From mortal change, aught that is born on earth
Or doth on time depend.

While on the brink
Of that high Convent-crested cliff I stood,
Modest Savona! over all did brood
A pure poetic Spirit—as the breeze,
Mild—as the verdure, fresh—the sunshine, bright—
Thy gentle Chiansera!—not a stone,
Mural or level with the trodden floor,
In Church or Chapel, if my curious quest
Missed not the truth, retains a single name
Of young or old, warrior, or saint, or sage,
To whose dear memories his sepulchral verse
Paid simple tribute, such as might have flowed
From the clear spring of a plain English heart,
Say rather, one in native fellowship
With all who want not skill to couple grief
With praise, as genuine admiration prompts.
The grief, the praise, are severed from their dust,
Yet in his page the records of that worth
Survive, uninjured;—glory then to words,
Honour to word-preserving Arts, and hail
Ye kindred local influences that still,
If Hope's familiar whispers merit faith,
Await my steps when they the breezy height
Shall range of philosophic Tusculum;
Or Sabine vales explored inspire a wish
To meet the shade of Horace by the side
Of his Bandusian fount; or I invoke
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY.

His presence to point out the spot where once
He sate, and eulogized with earnest pen
Peace, leisure, freedom, moderate desires;
And all the immunities of rural life
Exulted, behind Vacuna's crumbling name.
Or let me loiter, soothed with what is given
Nor asking more, on that delicious Bay,
Parthenope's Domain—Virgilian haunt,
Illustrated with never-dying verse,
And, by the Poet's laurel-shaded tomb,
Age after age to Pilgrims from all lands
Endear'd.

And who—if not a man as cold
In heart as dull in brain—while pacing ground
Chosen by Rome's legendary Bards, high minds
Out of her early struggles well inspired
To localize heroic acts—could look
Upon the spots with undelighted eye,
Though even to their last syllable the Lay
And very names of those who gave them birth
Have perished!—Verily, to her utmost depth,
Imagination feels what Reason fears not
To recognize, the lasting virtue lodged
In those bold fictions that, by deeds assigned
To the Valerian, Fabian, Curian Race,
And others like in fame, created Powers
With attributes from History derived,
By Poesy irradiate, and yet grace,
Through marvellous felicity of skill,
With something more propitious to high aims
Than either, pent within her separate sphere,
Can oft with justice claim.

And not disdaining
Union with those primeval energies
To virtue consecrate, stoop ye from your height
Christian Traditions! at my Spirit's call
Descend, and, on the brow of ancient Rome
As she survives in ruin, manifest
Your glories mingled with the brightest hues
Of her memorial halo, fading, fading,
But never to be extinct while Earth endures.
O come, if undismournd by the prayer,
From all her Sanctuaries!—Open for my feet
Ye Catacombs, give to mine eyes a glimpse
Of the Devils, as, mid your glooms convened
For safety, they of yore enclosed the Cross
On knees that ceased from trembling, or intoned
Their orisons with voices half-suppressed,
But sometimes heard, or fancied to be heard,
Even at this hour.

And thou Mamertime prison,
Into that vault receive me from whose depth
Issues, revealed in no presumptuous vision,
Albeit lifting human to divine,
A Saint, the Church's Rock, the mystic Keys
Grasped in his hand; and lo! with upright sword
Prefiguring his own imminent doom,
The Apostle of the Gentiles; both prepared
To suffer pains with heathen scorn and hate
Inflicted,—blessed Men, for so to Heaven
They follow their dear Lord!

Time flows—nor winds,
Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course,
But many a benefit borne upon his breast
For human-kind sinks out of sight, is gone,
No one knows how; nor seldom is put forth
An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to reappear. The Stream
Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now
Walk in the light of day, pertain full surely
To a chilled age, most pitifully shut out
From that which is and actuates, by forms,
Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact
Minutely linked with diligence uninspired,
Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
By godlike insight. To this fate is doomed
Science, wide-spread and spreading still as be
Her conquests, in the world of sense made known.
So with the internal mind it fares; and so
With morals, trusting, in contempt or fear
Of vital principle's controlling law,
To her purblind guide Expediency; and so
Suffers religious faith. Elate with view
Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
The best that should keep pace with it, and must,
Else more and more the general mind will droop,
Even as if bent on perish. There lives
No faculty within us which the Soul
Can spare, and humblest earthly Wesl demands,
For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
Zealous co-operation of all means
Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire,
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.
By gross Utilities enslaved we need
More of ennobling impulse from the past,
If to the future aught of good must come
Sounder and therefore holier than the ends
Which, in the glibness of self-applause,
We covet as supreme. O grant the crown
That Wisdom wears, or take his treacherous staff
From Knowledge!—If the Muse, whom I have served
This day, be mistress of a single pearl
Fit to be placed in that pure diadem;
Then, not in vain, under these chestnut boughs
Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
To transports from the secondary founts
Flowing of time and place, and paid to both
Due homage; nor shall fruitlessly have striven,
By love of beauty moved, to sunshine in verse
Accordant meditations, which in times
Vexed and disorderd, as our own, may shed
Influence, at least among a scattered few,
To soberness of mind and peace of heart.
Friendly; as here to my repose hath been
This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood, the
Light
And murmur issuing from you pendent flood,
And all the varied landscape. Let us now
Rise, and to-morrow greet magnificent Rome.*

II.

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME.

I saw far off the dark top of a Pine
Look like a cloud—a slender stem the tie
That bound it to its native earth—poised high
Mid evening hues, along the horizon line,
Striving in peace each other to outshine.
But when I learned the Tree was living there,
Saved from the sordid axe by Beaumont's care,
Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
The rescued Pine-tree, with its sky so bright
And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts of home,
Death-parted friends, and days too swift in flight,
Supplanting the whole majesty of Rome
(Then first apparent from the Pincian Height)
Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting Dome†.

III.

AT ROME.

Is this, ye Gods, the Capitolian Hill!
No petty steep in truth the fearful Rock,
Tarpeian named of yore, and keeping still
That name, a local Phantom proud to mock
The Traveller's expectation!—Could our Will
Destroy the ideal Power within, 'twere done
Thro' what men see and touch, slaves wandering on,
Impelled by thirst of all but Heaven-taught skill.
Full oft, our wish obtained, deeply we sigh;
Yet not unrecompensed are they who learn
From that depression raised, to mount on high
With stronger wing, more clearly to discern
Eternal things; and, if need be, defy
Change, with a brow not insolent, though stern.

* See note. † See note.

IV.

AT ROME.—REGRESS.—IN ALLUSION TO NIERHUR
AND OTHER MODERN HISTORIANS.

Those old credulities, to nature dear,
Shall they no longer bloom upon the stock
Of History, stript naked as a rock
'Mid a dry desert! What is it we hear?
The glory of Infant Rome must disappear,
Her morning splendors vanish, and their place
Know them no more. If Truth, who veiled her face
With those bright beams yet hid it not, must steer
Henceforth a humbler course perplexed and slow;
One solace yet remains for us who came
Into this world in days when story lacked
Severe research, that in our hearts we know
How, for exciting youth's heroic flame,
Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.

V.

CONTINUED.

Complacent Fictions were they, yet the same
Involved a history of no doubtful sense,
History that proves by inward evidence
From what a precious source of truth it came.
Ne'er could the holiest Eulogist have dared
Such deeds to paint, such characters to frame,
But for coeval sympathy prepared
To greet with instant faith their loftiest claim.
None but a noble people could have loved
Flattery in Ancient Rome's pure-minded style;
Not in like sort the Runic Scald was moved;
He, nursed 'mid savage passions that defile
 Humanity, sang fests that well might call
For the blood-thirsty mad of Odin's riotous Hall.

VI.

PLEA FOR THE HISTORIAN.

Forbear to deem the Chronicler unwise,
Ungentle, or untouched by seamy truth,
Who, gathering up all that Time's envious tooth
Has spared of sound and grave realities,
Firmly rejects those dazzling flatteries,
Dear as they are to unsuspecting Youth,
That might have drawn down Clio from the skies
To vindicate the majesty of truth.

Such was her office while she walked with men,
A Muse, who, not unmindful of her Sire
All-ruling Jove, whate'er the theme might be
Revered her Mother, sage Mnemosyne,
And taught her faithful servants how the lyre
Should animate, but not mislead, the pen*.

* Quem virum—lyra—
—sumus celebres Clio?
VII.

AT ROME.

THAT—who have seen the noble Roman's scorn
Break forth in thought of laying down his head,
When the blank day is over, garreted
In his ancestral palace, where, from morn
To night, the decanted floors are worn
By feet of purse-proud strangers; they—who have
read
In one meek smile, beneath a peasant's shed,
How patiently the weight of wrong is borne;
They—who have heard some learned Patriot treat
Of freedom, with mind grasping the whole theme
From ancient Rome, downwards through that
bright dream
Of Commonwealths, each city a starlike seat
Of rival glory; they—fallen Italy—
Nor must, nor will, nor can, despair of Thee!

VIII.

NEAR ROME, IN SIGHT OF ST. PETER'S.

Long has the dew been dried on tree and lawn;
O'er man and beast a not unwelcome boon
Is shed, the languor of approaching noon;
To shady rest withdrawing or withdrawn
Mute are all creatures, as this couchant lawn,
Save insect-swarms that hum in air aloft,
Save that the Cock is crowing, a shrill note,
Startling and shrill as that which roused the dawn.
—Heard in that hour, or when, as now, the nerve
Shrinks from the note as from a mis-timed thing,
Oft for a holy warning may it serve,
Charged with remembrance of his sudden sting,
His bitter tears, whose name the Papal Chair
And you resplendent Church are proud to bear.

IX.

AT ALBANO.

Days passed—and Monte Calvo would not clear
His head from mist; and, as the wind sobbed through
Albano's dripping flex avenue,
My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
Found casual vent. She said, "Be of good cheer;
Our yesterday's procession did not sue
In vain; the sky will change to sunny blue,
Thanks to our Lady's grace."
I smiled to hear,
But not in scorn—the Matron's Faith may lack
The heavenly sanction needed to ensure
Fulfilment; but, we trust, her upward track
Stops not at this low point, nor wants the lure
Of flowers the Virgin without fear may own,
For by her Son's blest hand the seed was sown.

X.

NEAR ANIO'S stream, I spied a gentle Dove
Perched on an olive branch, and heard her cooing
'Mid new-born blossoms that soft airs were wooing,
While all things present told of joy and love.
But restless Fancy left that olive grove
To hail the exploratory Bird renewing
Hope for the few, who, at the world's undoing,
On the great flood were spared to live and move.
O bounteous Heaven! signs true as dove and bough
Brought to the ark are coming evermore,
Given though we seek them not, but, while we plough
This sea of life without a visible shore,
Do neither promise ask nor grace implore
In what alone is ours, the living Now.

XI.

FROM THE ALBAN HILLS, LOOKING TOWARDS ROME.

Forgive, illustrious Country! these deep sighs,
Heaved less for thy bright plains and hills bestrowed
With monuments decayed or overthrown,
For all that tottering stands or prostrate lies,
Than for like scenes in moral vision shown,
Ruin perceived for keener sympathies;
Faith crushed, yet proud of weeds, her gaudy crown;
Virtue laid low, and mouldering energies.
Yet why prolong this mournful strain?—Fallen
Power,
Thy fortunes, twice exalted, might provoke
Verse to glad notes prophetic of the hour
When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy double yoke,
And enter, with prompt aid from the Most High,
On the third stage of thy great destiny.

XII.

NEAR THE LAKE OF THREASMENE.

When here with Carthage Rome to conflict came,
An earthquake, mingling with the battle's shock,
Checked not its rage; unfelt the ground did rock,
Sword dropped not, javelin kept its deadly aim.—
Now all is sun-bright peace. Of that day's shame,
Or glory, not a vestige seems to endure,
Save in this Rill that took from blood the name*
Which yet it bears, sweet Stream! as crystal pure.
So may all trace and sign of deeds aloof
From the true guidance of humanity,
Thro' Time and Nature's influence, purify
Their spirit; or, unless they for reproof
Or warning serve, thus let them all, on ground
That gave them being, vanish to a sound.

* Sangwineetto.
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

XIII.
NEAR THE SAME LAKE.

For action born, existing to be tried,
Powers manifold we have that intervene
To stir the heart that would too closely screen
Her peace from images to pain allied.
What wonder if at midnight, by the side
Of Sangunetto or broad Thrasyneene,
The clang of arms is heard, and phantoms glide,
Unhappy ghosts in troops by moonlight seen;
And singly thine, O vanquished Chief! whose curse,
Unburied, lay hid under heaps of slain:
But who is He!—the Conqueror. Would he force
His way to Rome! Ah, no,—round hill and plain
Wandering, he haunts, at fancy's strong command,
This spot—his shadowy death-cup in his hand.

XIV.
THE CUCKOO AT LAVERNIA.

May 23rd, 1857.

Last—'twas the Cuckoo. 0 with what delight
Heard I that voice! and catch it now, though faint,
Far off and faint, and melting into air,
Yet not to be mistaken. Hark again!
Those louder cries give notice that the Bird,
Although invisible as Echo's self,
Is wheeling hitherward. Thanks, happy Creature,
For this unthought-of greeting!

While allured
From vale to hill, from hill to vale led on,
We have pursued, through various lands, a long
And pleasant course; flower after flower has blown,
Embellishing the ground that gave them birth,
With aspects novel to my sight; but still
Most fair, most welcome, when they drank the dew
In a sweet fellowship with kinds beloved,
For old remembrance sake. And oft—where Spring
Display'd her richest blossoms among files
Of orange-trees bedecked with glowing fruit
Ripe for the hand, or under a thick shade
Of Hec, or, if better suited to the hour,
The lightsome Olive's twinkling canopy—
Oft have I heard the Nightingale and Thrush
Blending as in a common English grove
Their love-songs; but, where'er my feet might roam,
Whate'er assemblages of new and old,
Strange and familiar, might beguile the way,
A gratulation from that vagrant Voice
Was wanting;—and most happily till now.

For see, Laverna! mark the far-famed Pile,
High on the brink of that precipitous rock,
Implanted like a Fortress, as in truth
It is, a Christian Fortress, garrisoned
In faith and hope, and dutiful obedience,
By a few Monks, a stern society,
Dead to the world and scorning earth-born joys.
Nay—though the hopes that drew, the fears that drove,
St. Francis, far from Man's resort, to abide
Among these sterile heights of Apeninine,
Bound him, nor, since he raised ye House, have ceased
To bind his spiritual progeny, with rules
Stringent as flesh can tolerate and live;
His milder Genius (thanks to the good God
That made us) over those severe restraints
Of mind, that dread heart-freezing discipline,
Deth sometimes here preeminate, and works
By unsought means for gracious purposes;
For earth through heaven, for heaven, by changeful earth,
Illustrated, and mutually endear'd.

Rapt though He were above the power of sense,
Familiarly, yet out of the cleansed heart
Of that once sinful Being overflowed
On sun, moon, stars, the nether elements,
And every shape of creature they sustain,
Divine affections; and with beast and bird
(Still'd from afar—such marvel story tells)—
By casual outbreak of his passionate words,
And from their own pursuits in field or grove
Drawn to his side by look or act of love
Humane, and virtue of his innocent life)
He went to hold companionship so free,
So pure, so fraught with knowledge and delight,
As to be likened in his Followers' minds
To that which our first Parents, ere the fall
From their high state darkened the Earth with fear,
Held with all Kinds in Eden's blissful bowers.

Then question not that, 'mid the austere Band,
Who breathe the air he breathed, tread where he trod,
Some true Partakers of his loving spirit
Do still survive, and, with those gentle hearts
Consorted, Others, in the power, the faith,
Of a baptized imagination, prompt
To catch from Nature's humblest monitors
Whate'er they bring of impulses sublime.

Thus sensitive must be the Monk, though pale
With fasts, with vigils worn, depressed by years,
Whom in a sunny glade I chanced to see,
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY.

Upon a pine-tree's storm-uprooted trunk,
Seated alone, with forehead sky-ward raised,
Hands clasped above the crossifix he wore
Appended to his bosom, and lips closed
By the joint pressure of his muting mood
And habit of his vow. That ancient Man—
Nor haply less the Brother whom I marked,
As we approached the Convent gate, aloft
Looking far forth from his aerial cell,
A young Ascetic—Poet, Hero, Sage,
He might have been, Lover belike he was—
If they received into a conscious ear
The notes whose first faint greeting startled me,
Whose sedulous iteration thrilled with joy
My heart—may have been moved like me to think,
Ah! not like me who walk in the world's ways,
On the great Prophet, styled the Voice of One
Crying amid the wilderness, and given;
Now that their snows must melt, their herbs and flowers
Revive, their obstinate winter pass away,
That awful name to thee, thee, simple Cuckoo,
Wanderings in solitude, and evermore
Foretelling and proclaiming, ere thou leave
This thy last haunt beneath Italian skies
To carry thy glad tidings over heights
Still lofiter, and to climes more near the Pole.

Voice of the Desert, fare-thee-well! sweet Bird!
If that substantial title please thee more,
Farewell!—but go thy way, no need hast thou
Of a good wish sent after thee; from bower
To bower as green, from sky to sky as clear,
Thee gentle breezes waft—or airs that meet
Thy course and sport around thee softly fan—
Till Night, descending upon hill and vale,
Grants to thy mission a brief term of silence,
And folds thy pinions up in last repose.

XV.
AT THE CONVENT OF CAMALDOLL.
Grieve for the Man who hither came bereft,
And seeking consolation from above;
Nor grieve the less that skill to him was left
To paint this picture of his lady-love:
Can she, a blessed saint, the work approve?
And O, good Brethren of the cowl, a thing
So fair, to which with peril he must cling,
Destroy in pity, or with care remove.
That bloom—those eyes—can they assist to bind
Thoughts that would stray from Heaven! The
To be;—by Faith, not sight, his soul must live;
Else will the enamoured Monk too surely find
How wide a space can part from inward peace
The most profound repose his cell can give.

XVI.
CONTINUED.
The world forsaken, all its busy cares
And stirring interests shunned with desperate flight,
All trust abandoned in the healing might
Of virtuous action; all that courage dares,
Labour accomplishes, or patience bears—
Those helps rejected, they, whose minds perceive
How subtly works man's weakness, sighs may heave
For such a One beset with cloisteral snares.
Father of Mercy! rectify his view,
If with his vows this object ill agree;
Shed over is thy grace, and thus subdue
Imperious passion in a heart set free—
That earthly love may to herself be true,
Give him a soul that cleaveth unto thee.

XVII.
AT THE EREMITE OR UPPER CONVENT OF CAMALDOLL.
What aim had they, the Pair of Monks, in size
Enormous, dragged, while side by side they sate,
By panting steers up to this convent gate?
How, with empurpled cheeks and pampered eyes,
Dare they confront the lean austerities
Of Brethren who, here fixed, on Jesu wait
In sackcloth, and God's anger deprecate
Through all that humbles flesh and mortifies?
Strange contrast!—verily the world of dreams,
Where mingle, as for mockery combined,
Things in their very essences at strife,
Shows not a sight incongruous as the extremes
That everywhere, before the thoughtfoul mind,
Meet on the solid ground of waking life.

XVIII.
AT VALLOMBROSA.
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where Etrurian shades
High over arch'd auburn wave.

Paradise Lost.
"VALLOMBROSA—I longed in thy shadeless wood
To slumber, reclin'd on the moss-covered floor!"
Fond wish that was granted at last, and the Flood,
That lulled me asleep bids me listen once more.

* See Note.  † See note.  ‡ See for the two first lines, "Stanzas composed in the Simpion Pass."
Its murmur how soft! as it falls down the steep,
Near that Cell—yea sequestred Retreat high in
air—
Where our Milton was wont lonely vigils to keep
For converse with God, sought through study and
prayer.

The Monks still repeat the tradition with pride,
And its truth who shall doubt? for his Spirit is
here;
In the cloud-piercing rocks doth her grandeur abide,
In the pines pointing heavenward her beauty
austere;
In the flower-bespangled meadows his genius we trace
Turned to humbler delights, in which youth might
confide,
That would yield him fit help while prefiguring that
Place
Where, if Sin had not entered, Love never had died.

When with life lengthened out came a desolate time,
And darkness and danger had compassed him round,
With a thought he would flee to these haunts of his
prime,
And here once again a kind shelter be found.
And let me believe that when nightly the Muse
Did waft him to Sion, the glorified hill,
Here also, on some favoured height, he would choose
To wander, and drink inspiration at will

Vallombrosa! of thee I first heard in the page
Of that holiest of Bard's, and the name for my mind
Had a musical charm, which the winter of age
And the changes it brings had no power to unbind.
And now, ye Miltonian shades! under you
I repose, nor am forced from sweet fancy to part,
While your leaves I behold and the brooks they
will strew,
And the realised vision is clasped to my heart.

Even so, and unblamed, we rejoice as we may
In Forms that must perish, frail objects of sense;
Unblamed—if the Soul be intent on the day
When the Being of Beings shall summon her hence.
For he and his only with wisdom is blest
Who, gathering true pleasures wherever they grow,
Looks up in all places, for joy or for rest,
To the Fountain whence Time and Eternity flow.

XIX.

AT FLORENCE.

Under the shadow of a stately Pile,
The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
Nor giving heed to that passed the while,
I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,
The laureled Dante's favourite seat. A throne,
In just esteem, it rivals; though no style
Be there of decoration to beguile
The mind, depressed by thought of greatness flown.
As a true man, who long had served the lyre,
I gazed with earnestness, and dared no more.
But in his breast the mighty Poet bore
A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.
Bold with the thought, in reverence I sat down,
And, for a moment, filled that empty Throne.

XX.

BEFORE THE PICTURE OF THE BAPTIST, BY RAFAEL,
in the Gallery at Florence.

The Baptist might have been ordain'd to cry
Forth from the towers of that huge Pile, wherein
His Father served Jehovah; but how win
Due audience, how for aught but scorn defy
The obstinate pride and wanton revelry
Of the Jerusalem below, her sin
And folly, if they with united din
Drown not at once mandate and prophecy!
Therefore the Voice spake from the Desert, thence
To Her, as to her opposite in peace,
Silence, and holiness, and innocence,
To Her and to all Lands its warning sent,
Crying with earnestness that might not cease,
"Make straight a highway for the Lord—repent!"

XXI.

AT FLORENCE.—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO.

Rapt above earth by power of one fair face,
Hers in whose sway alone my heart delights,
I mingle with the blest on those pure heights
Where Man, yet mortal, rarely finds a place.
With Him who made the Work that Work accords
So well, that by its help and through his grace
I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and words,
Clasping her beauty in my soul's embrace.
Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot turn,
I feel how in their presence doth abide
Light which to God is both the way and guide;
And, kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
My noble fire emits the joyful ray
That through the realms of glory shines for aye.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY.

XXII.
AT FLORENCE.—FROM M. ANGIOLO.

Eternal Lord! eased of a cumbersome load,
And loosened from the world, I turn to Thee;
Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm, and flee
To thy protection for a safe abode.
The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon the tree,
The meek, benign, and lanceanted face,
To a sincere repentance promise grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
With justice mark not Thou, O Light divine,
My fault, nor hear it with thy sacred ear;
Neither put forth that way thy arm severe;
Wash with thy blood my sins; thereto incline
More readily the more my years require
Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

XXIII.
AMONG THE RUINS OF A CONVENT IN THE APENNINES.

Ye Trees! whose slender roots entwine
Altars that piety neglects;
Whose infant arms enshroud the shrine
Which no devotion now respects;
If not a straggler from the herd
Here ruminate, nor shrouded bird,
Chanting her low-voiced hymn, take pride
In sighs that ye would grace or hide—
How sadly is your love misplaced,
Fair Trees, your bounty run to waste!
Ye too, wild Flowers! that no one heeds,
And ye—full often spurned as weeds—
In beauty clothing, or breathing sweetness
From fractured arch and mouldering wall—
Do but more touchingly recall
Man's headstrong violence and Time's fleetness,
Making the precipice ye adorn
Appear to sight still more forlorn.

XXIV.
IN LOMBARDY.

Sea, where his difficult way that Old Man wins
Bent by a load of Mulberry leaves!—most hard
Appears his lot, to the small Worm's compared,
For whom his toil with early day begins.
Acknowledging no task-master, at will
(As if her labour and her ease were twins)
She seems to work; at pleasure to lie still;—
And softly sleeps within the thread she spins.

So fare they—the Man serving as her Slave.
Ere long their fates do each to each conform:
Both pass into new being—but the Worm,
Transfigured, sinks into a hopeless grave;
His volant Spirit will, he trusts, ascend
To bliss unbounded, glory without end.

XXV.
AFTER LEAVING ITALY.

Fair Land! Thee all men greet with joy; how few,
Whose souls take pride in freedom, virtue, fame,
Part from thee without pity dyed in shame:
I could not—while from Venice we withdrew,
Led on till an Alpine strait confined our view
Within its depths, and to the shore we came
Of Lago Morte, dreary sight and name,
Which o'er sad thoughts a sadder colouring threw.
Italia! on the surface of thy spirit,
(Too aptly emblazoned by that torpid lake)
Shall a few partial breezes only creep!—
Be its depths quickened; what thou dost inherit
Of the world's hopes, dare to fulfill; awake,
Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like sleep!

XXVI.
CONTINUED.

As indignation mastered grief, my tongue
Spake bitter words; words that did ill agree
With those rich stores of Nature's imagery,
And divine Art, that fast to memory clung—
Thy gifts, magnificent Region, ever young
In the sun's eye, and in his sister's sight
How beautiful! how worthy to be sung
In strains of rapture, or subdued delight!
I feign not; witness that unwelcome shock
That followed the first sound of German speech,
Caught the far-winding barrier Alps among.
In that announcement, greeting seemed to mock
Parting; the casual word had power to reach
My heart, and filled that heart with conflict strong.

XXVII.
COMPOSED AT RYDAL ON MAY MORNING, 1838.

If with old love of you, dear Hills! I share
New love of many a rival image brought
From far, forgive the wanderings of my thought:
Nor art thou wronged, sweet May! when I compare
Thy present birth-morn with thy last, so fair,
So rich to me in favours. For my lot
Then was, within the famed Egerian Grot
To sit and muse, famed by its dewy air
Mingling with thy soft breath! That morning too,
Warblers I heard their joy unsomoning
Amid the sunny, shadowy, Colyseum;
Heard them, uncheck'd by sough of saddening hue,
For victories there won by flower-crowned Spring,
Chant in full choir their innocent Te Deum.

In the delight of moral prudence schooled,
How feelingly at home the Sovereign ruled;
Best of the good—in pagan faith allied
To more than Man, by virtue deified.

Memorial Pillar! 'mid the wrecks of Time
Preserve thy charge with confidence sublime—
The exultations, pomp's, and cares of Rome,
Whence half the breathing world received its doom;
Things that recoil from language; that, if shown
By apter pencil, from the light had flown.
A Pontiff, Trajan here the Gods implores,
There greets an Embassy from Indian shores;
Lo! he harangues his cohorts—there the storm
Of battle meets him in authentic form!
Unharnessed, naked, troops of Moorish horse
Sweep to the charge; more high, the Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed;—yet, high or low,
None bleed, and none lie prostrate but the foe;
In every Roman, through all turns of fate,
Is Roman dignity inviolate;
Spirit in him pre-eminent, who guides,
Supports, adorns, and over all presides;
Distinguished only by inherent state
From honoured Instruments that round him wait;
Rise as he may, his grandeur scorns the test
Of outward symbol, nor will deign to rest
On aught by which another is deprest.

—Alas! that One thus disciplined could toil
To enslave whole nations on their native soil;
So emulous of Macedonian fame,
That, when his age was measured with his aim,
He drooped, 'mid else unclouded victories,
And turned his eagles back with deep-drawn sighs:
O weakness of the Great! O folly of the Wise!

Where now the haughty Empire that was spread
With such fond hope! her very speech is dead;
Yet glorious Art the power of Time defies,
And Trajan still, through various enterprise,
Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the skies:
Still are we present with the imperial Chief,
Nor cease to gaze upon the bold Relief
Till Rome, to silent marble unconfined,
Becomes with all her years a vision of the Mind.
THE EGYPTIAN MAID;

or,

THE ROMANCE OF THE WATER LILY

[For the names and persons in the following poem, see "History of the renowned Prince Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table"; for the rest the Author is answerable; only it may be proper to add, that the Lotus, with the best of the Goddess appearing to rise out of the full-blown flower, was suggested by the beautiful work of ancient art, once included among the Tawney Marbles, and now in the British Museum.]

While Merlin paced the Cornish sands,
Forth-looking toward the rocks of Scilly,
The pleased Enchanter was aware
Of a bright Ship that seemed to hang in air,
Yet was she work of mortal hands,
And took from men her name—The Water Lily.

Soft was the wind, that landward blew;
And, as the Moon, o'er some dark hill ascendant,
Grows from a little edge of light
To a full orb, this Pinnace bright
Became, as nearer to the coast she drew,
More glorious, with spread sail and streaming pendant.

Upon this winged Shape so fair
Sage Merlin gazed with admiration:
Her lineaments, thought he, surpass
Aught that was ever shown in magic glass;
Was ever built with patient care;
Or, at a touch, produced by happiest transformation.

Now, though a Mechanist, whose skill
Shames the degenerate grasp of modern science,
Graze Merlin (and belike the more
For praisings occult and perils love)
Was subject to a freakish will
That sapped good thoughts, or scared them with defiance.

Provoked to envious spleen, he cast
An altered look upon the advancing Stranger
Whom he had hailed with joy, and cried,
"My Art shall help to tame her pride—"
Anon the breeze became a blast,
And the waves rose, and sky portended danger.

With thrilling word, and potent sign
Traced on the beach, his work the Sorcerer urges;
The clouds in blacker clouds are lost,
Like spiteful Fiends that vanish, crossed
By Fiends of aspect more malign;
And the winds roused the Deep with fiercer scourges.

But worthy of the name she bore
Was this Sea-flower, this buoyant Galley;
Supreme in loveliness and grace
Of motion, whether in the embrace
Of trusty anchorages, or scudding o'er
The main flood roughened into hill and valley.

Behold, how wantonly she laves
Her sides, the Wizard's craft confounding;
Like something out of Ocean sprung
To be for ever fresh and young,
Breasts the sea-flashes, and huge waves
Top-gallant high, rebounding and rebounding!

But Ocean under magic heaves,
And cannot spare the Thing he cherished:
Ah! what avails that she was fair,
Luminous, blithe, and debonair!
The storm has stripped her of her leaves;
The Lily floats no longer!—She hath perished.

Grieve for her,—she deserves no less;
So like, yet so unlike, a living Creature!
No heart had she, no busy brain;
Though loved, she could not love again;
Though pitied, felt her own distress;
Nor aught that troubles us, the fools of Nature.
Yet is there cause for gushing tears;
So richly was this Galley laden,
A fairer than herself she bore,
And, in her struggles, cast adish;
A lovely One, who nothing hears
Of wind or wave—a meek and guileless Maiden.

Into a cave had Merlin fled
From mischief, caused by spells himself had muttered;
And while, repentant all too late,
In moody posture there he sate,
He heard a voice, and saw, with half-raised head,
A Visitant by whom these words were uttered;

"On Christian service this frail Bark
Sailed," (hear me, Merlin!) "under high protection,
Though on her prow a sign of heathen power
Was carved—a Goddess with a Lily flower,
The old Egyptian's emblematic mark
Of joy immortal and of pure affection.

Her course was for the British strand;
Her freight, it was a Damseel peerless;
God reigns above, and Spirits strong
May gather to avenge this wrong
Done to the Princess, and her Land
Which she in duty left, sad but not cheerless.

And to Cæsar's loftiest tower
Soon will the Knights of Arthur's Table
A cry of lamentation send;
And all will weep who there attend,
To grace that Stranger's bridal hour,
For whom the sea was made unnavigable.

Shame! should a Child of royal line
Die through the blindness of thy malice!"
Thus to the Necromancer spake
Nina, the Lady of the Lake,
A gentle Sorceress, and benign,
Who ne'er embittered any good man's chalice.

"What boots," continued she, "to mourn!
To expiate thy sin endeavour:
From the bleak isle where she is laid,
Fetched by our art, the Egyptian Maid
May yet to Arthur's court be borne
Cold as she is, ere life be fled for ever.

My pearly Boat, a shining Light,
That brought me down that sunless river,
Will bear me on from wave to wave,
And back with her to this sea-cave;—
Then Merlin! for a rapid flight
Through air, to thee my Charge will I deliver.

The very swiftest of thy ears
Must, when my part is done, be ready;
Meanwhile, for further guidance, look
Into thy own prophetic book;
And, if that fail, consult the Stars
To learn thy course; farewell! be prompt and steady."

This scarcely spoken, she again
Was seated in her gleaming shallops,
That, o'er the yet-distempered Deep,
Pursued its way with bird-like sweep,
Or like a steed, without a rein,
Urged o'er the wilderness in sportive gallop.

Soon did the gentle Nina reach
That Isle without a house or haven;
Landling, she found not what she sought,
Nor saw of wreck or ruin aught
But a carved Lotus cast upon the beach
By the fierce waves, a flower in marble grave.

Sad reliques, but how fair the while!
For gently each from each retiring
With backward curve, the leaves revealed
The bosom half, and half concealed,
Of a Divinity, that seemed to smile
On Nina, as she passed, with hopeful greeting.

No quest was hers of vague desire,
Of tortured hope and purpose shaken;
Following the margin of a bay,
She spied the lonely Cast-away,
Unmarred, unstriped of her attire,
But with closed eyes,—of breath and bloom forsaken.

Then Nina, stooping down, embraced,
With tenderness and mild emotion,
The Damsel, in that trance embound;
And, while she raised her from the ground,
And in the pearly shallops placed,
Sleep fell upon the air, and stilled the ocean.

The turmoil hushed, celestial springs
Of music opened, and there came a blending
Of fragrances, undervailed from earth,
With glories that owed not to the sun their birth,
And that soft rustling of invisible wings
Which Angels make, on works of love descending.

And Nina heard a sweeter voice
Than if the Goddess of the flower had spoken:
"Thou hast achieved, fair Dame! what none
Less pure in spirit could have done;
Go, in thy enterprise rejoice!
Air, earth, sea, sky, and heaven, success betoken."
THE EGYPTIAN MAID.

So cheered, she left that Island bleak,
A bare rock of the Scilly cluster;
And, as they traversed the smooth brine,
The self-illumined Brigantine
Shed, on the Slumberer's cold wan cheek
And pallid brow, a melancholy lustré.

Fleet was their course, and when they came
To the dim cavern, whence the river
Issued into the salt-sea fixed,
Merlin, as fixed in thought he stood,
Was thus accosted by the Dame;
"Behold to thee my Charge I now deliver!
But where attends thy chariot—where?"—
Quoth Merlin, "Even as I was bidden,
So have I done; as trusty as thy barge
My vehicle shall prove—O precious Charge!
If this be sleep, how soft! If death, how fair!
Much have my books disclosed, but the end is
hidden."

He spake; and gliding into view
Forth from the grotto's dimmest chamber
Came two mute Swans, whose plumes of dusky white,
Changed, as the pair approached the light,
Drawing an ebon car, their hue
(Like clouds of sunset) into lucid amber.

Once more did gentle Nina lift
The Princess, passive to all changes;
The car received her—then up-went
Into the ethereal element
The Birds with progress smooth and swift
As thought, when through bright regions memory ranges.

Sage Merlin, at the Slumberer's side,
Instructs the Swans their way to measure;
And soon Caerleon's towers appeared,
And notes of minstrelsy were heard
From rich pavilions spreading wide,
For some high day of long-expected pleasure.

Awe-stricken stood both Knights and Dames
Ere on firm ground the car alighted;
Eftsoons astonishment was past,
For in that face they saw the last
Last lingering look of clay, that tames
All pride; by which all happiness is blighted.

Said Merlin, "Mighty King, fair Lords,
Away with feast and till and tournay!
Ye saw, throughout this royal House,
Ye heard, a rockling marvellous
Of turrets, and a clash of swords
Self-shaken, as I closed myairy journey.

Lo! by a destiny well known
To mortals, joy is turned to sorrow;
This is the wished-for Bride, the Maid
Of Egypt, from a rock conveyed
Where she by shipwreck had been thrown;
Ill sight! but grief may vanish ere the morrow."

"Though vast thy power, thy words are weak,"
Exclaimed the King, "a mockery hateful;
Dauntful Child, her lot how hard!
Is this her piety's reward?
Those watery locks, that bloodless cheek!
O winds without remorse! O shore ungrateful!
Rich robes are fretted by the moth;
Towers, temples, fall by stroke of thunder;
Will that, or deeper thoughts, abate
A Father's sorrow for her fate?
He will repent him of his trust;
His brain will burn, his stout heart split saunder.

Alas! and I have caused this woe;
For, when my prowess from invading Neighbours
Had freed his Realm, he plighted word
That he would turn to Christ our Lord,
And his dear Daughter on a Knight bestow
Whom I should choose for love and matchless labours.

Her birth was heathen; but a fence
Of holy Angels round her hovered:
A Lady added to my court
So fair, of such divine report
And worship, seemed a recompense
For fifty kingdoms by my sword recovered.

Ask not for whom, O Champions true!
She was reserved by me her life's betrayer;
She who was meant to be a bride
Is now a corse: then put aside
Vain thoughts, and speed ye, with observance due
Of Christian rites, in Christian ground to lay her:"

"The tomb," said Merlin, "may not close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose
To check this pious haste of erring duty.

My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping:
Here must a high attost be given,
What Bridegroom was for her ordained by
Heaven:
And in my glass significants there are
Of things that may to gladness turn this weeping.
For this, approaching, One by One,  
Thy Knights must touch the cold hand of the  
Virgin;  
So, for the favoured One, the Flower may bloom  
Once more: but, if unchangeable her doom,  
If life departed be for ever gone,  
Some blest assurance, from this cloud emerging,  
May teach him to bewail his loss;  
Not with a grief that, like a vapour, rises  
And melts; but grief devout that shall endure,  
And a perpetual growth secure  
Of purposes which no false thought shall cross,  
A harvest of high hopes and noble enterprises.”

“So be it,” said the King;—“anon,  
Here, where the Princess lies, begin the trial;  
Knights each in order as ye stand  
Step forth.”—To touch the pallid hand  
Sir Agravaine advanced; no sign he won  
From Heaven or earth;—Sir Kaye had like denial,  
Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away;  
Even for Sir Percival was no disclosure;  
Though he, devoutest of all Champions, ere  
He reached that ebon car, the bier  
Whereon diffused like snow the Damsel lay,  
Full thrice had crossed himself in meek composure.

Imagine (but ye Saints! who can!)  
How in still air the balance trembled—  
The wishes, peradventure the despises  
That overcame some not ungenerous Knights;  
And all the thoughts that lengthened out a span  
Of time to Lords and Ladies thus assembled.

What patient confidence was here!  
And there how many bosoms panted!  
While drawing toward the car Sir Gavaine, mailed  
For tournament, his beaver vailed,  
And softly touched; but, to his princely cheer  
And high expectancy, no sign was granted.

Next, disencumbered of his hary,  
Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,  
 Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ceased  
No change;—the fair Izonda he had wooed  
With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,  
From hope too distant, not to dread another.

Not so Sir Launcelot,—from Heaven’s grace  
A sign he craved, tided slave of vain contrition;  
The royal Guinevere looked passing glad  
When his touch failed.—Next came Sir Galahad;  
He paused, and stood entranced by that still face  
Whose features he had seen in noontide vision.

For late, as near a murmuring stream  
He rested ’mid an arbour green and shady,  
Nina, the good Enchantress, shed  
A light around his mossy bed;  
And, at her call, a waking dream  
Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian Lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he bowed,  
And stood, far-kenned by mantle furred with  
ermine,  
As o’er the insensate Body hung  
The enraptured, the beautiful, the young,  
Belief sank deep into the crowd  
That he the solemn issue would determine.

Nor deem it strange; the Youth had worn  
That very mantle on a day of glory,  
The day when he achieved that matchless feat,  
The marvel of the Perilous Seat,  
Which whose’er approached of strength was  
shorn,  
Though King or Knight the most renowned in story.

He touched with hesitating hand—  
And lo! those Birds, far-famed through Love’s dominions,  
The Swans, in triumph clap their wings;  
And their necks play, involved in rings,  
Like sinless snakes in Eden’s happy land;—  
“Mine is she,” cried the Knight;—again they clapped their pinions.

“Mine was she—mine she is, though dead,  
And to her name my soul shall cleave in sorrow;”  
Whereat, a tender twilight streak  
Of colour dawned upon the Damsel’s cheek;  
And her lips, quickening with uncertain red,  
Seemed from each other a faint warmth to borrow.

Deep was the awe, the rapture high,  
Of love emboldened, hope with dread entwining,  
When, to the month, relenting Death  
Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,  
Precursor to a timid sigh,  
To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.

In silence did King Arthur gaze  
Upon the signs that pass away or tarry;  
In silence watched the gentle strife  
Of Nature leading back to life;  
Then eased his soul at length by praise  
Of God, and Heaven’s pure Queen—the blissful  
Mary.
THE RIVER DUDDON.

Then said he, “Take her to thy heart,
Sir Galahad! a treasure, that God giveth,
Bound by indissoluble ties to thee
Through mortal change and immortality;
Be happy and unenvied, thou who art
A goodly Knight that hath no peer that liveth!”

Not long the Nuptials were delayed;
And sage tradition still rehareses
The pomp the glory of that hour
When toward the altar from her bower
King Arthur led the Egyptian Maid,
And Angels caroll'd these far-echoed verses—

Who shrinks not from alliance
Of evil with good Powers,
To God proclaims defiance,
And mocks whom he adores.

A Ship to Christ devoted
From the Land of Nile did go;
Alas! the bright Ship floated,
An Idol at her prow.

By magic domination,
The Heaven-permitted vent
Of purlin'd mortal passion,
Was wrought her punishment.

The Flower, the Form within it,
What served they in her need!
Her port she could not win it,
Nor from mishap be freed.

The tempest overcame her,
And she was seen no more;
But gently, gently blame her—
She cast a Pearl ashore.

The Maid to Jesu hearkened,
And kept to him her faith,
Till sense in death was darkened,
Or sleep akin to death.

But Angels round her pillow
Kept watch, a viewless band;
And, billow favouring billow,
She reached the destined strand.

Blest Pair! what'er befall you,
Your faith in Him approve
Who from frail earth can call you
To bowers of endless love!

1829.

THE RIVER DUDDON.

A SERIES OF SONNETS.

The River Duddon rises upon Wrynnose Fell, on the confines of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire; and, having served as a boundary to the two last counties for the space of about twenty-five miles, enters the Irish Sea, between the Isle of Walney and the Lordship of Millom.

TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH.

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1829.)

The Minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings;
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
Nor check, the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand!

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every Inmate’s claim:
The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And ’merry Christmas’ wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And is it given thee to rejoice:
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.
Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light
Which Nature and those rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread through ours!
For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds;
Whether the rich man’s sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowest of the poor.
How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
To hear—and sink again to sleep
Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self-complacent innocence;
The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o’er;
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more;
Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid.
Ah! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea’s zone

Glittering before the Thunderer’s sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared.
The ground where we were born and reared!
Hail, ancient Manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, Mountains old!
Bear with me, Brother! quench the thought
That slights this passion, or condemns;
If thee fond Fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames,
And Lambeth’s venerable towers,
To humber streams, and greener bowers.
Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments, to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly says
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.
Hence, while the imperial City’s din
Bents frequent on thy satiate ear,
A pleased attention I may win
To agitations less severe.
That neither overwhelm nor blow,
But fill the hollow vale with joy!

I.
Nor envying Latian shades—if yet they throw
A grateful coolness round that crystal Spring,
Blandusia, prattling as when long ago
The Sabine Bard was moved her praise to sing;
Careless of flowers that in perennial blow
Round the moist marge of Persian fountains cling;
Heedless of Alpine torrents thundering
Through ice-built arches radiant as heaven’s bow;
I seek the birth-place of a native Stream,—
All hail, ye mountains! hail, thou morning light!
Better to breathe at large on this clear height
Than toil in needless sleep from dream to dream:
Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free, and bright,
For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my theme!

II.
Child of the clouds! remote from every taint
Of servile industry thy lot is cast;
There are thehonours of the lofty waste;
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks;—to chant thy birth, thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-maint!

She guards thee, ruthless Power! who would not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison’s screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy lair*
Through paths and alleys roofed with darkest green;
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whitening shaft of hunter keen!

III.
How shall I paint thee!—Be this naked stone
My seat, while I give way to such intent;
Pleased could my verse, a speaking monument,
Make to the eyes of men thy features known.
But as of all those tripping lambs not one
Outruns his fellows, so hath Nature lent
To thy beginning nought that doth present
Peculiar ground for hope to build upon.
To dignify the spot that gives thee birth,
No sign of hoar Antiquity’s esteem
Appears, and none of modern Fortune’s care;
Yet thou thyself hast round thee shed a gleam
Of brilliant moss, instinct with freshness rare;
Prompt offering to thy Foster-mother, Earth!

* The deer alluded to is the Leagh, a gigantic species long since extinct.
IV.

Take, cradled Nursling of the mountain, take
This parting glance, no negligent adieu!
A Protean change seems wrought while I pursue
The curves, a loosely-scattered chain doth make;
Or rather thou appear'st a glittering snake,
Silent, and to the gazer's eye untrue,
Thrilling with sinuous lapse the rushes, through
Dwarf willows gliding, and by ferny brake.

Starts from a dizzy steep the undaunted Rill
Robed instantly in garb of snow-white foam;
And laughing dares the Adventurer, who hath clomb
So high, a rival purpose to fulfill;
Else let the dastard backward wend, and roam,
Seeking less bold achievement, where he will!

V.

Solo listener, Duddon! to the breeze that played
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound—
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a shade
For Thee, green alders have together wound
 Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.

And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey;
Whose ruddy children, by the mother’s eyes
Carelessly watched, sport through the summer day,
Thy pleased associates—light as endless May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

VI.

FLOWERS.

Ere yet our course was graced with social trees
It lacked not old remains of hawthorn bowers,
Where small birds warbled to their paramours;
And, earlier still, was heard the hum of bees;
I saw them ply their harmless robberies,
And caught the fragrance which the sundry flowers,
Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.

There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness;
The trembling eyebrow showed her sapphire blue,
The thyme her purple, like the blush of Even;
And if the breath of some to no cares
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view,
All kinds alike seemed favourites of Heaven.

VII.

"Change me, some God, into that breathing rose!"
The love-sick Stripling fancifully sighs,
The envied flower beholding, as it lies
On Laura’s breast, in exquisite repose;
Or he would pass into her bird, that throws
The darts of song from out its wiry cage;
Enraptured,—could he for himself engage
The thousandth part of what the Nymph bestows;
And what the little careless innocent
Ungraciously receives. Too daring choice!
There are whose calmer mind it would content
To be an uncalled floweret of the glen,
Fearless of plough and scythe; or darkling wren
That tunes on Duddon’s banks her slander voice.

VIII.

What aspect bore the Man who roved or fled,
First of his tribe, to this dark dell—who first
In this placid Current slaked his thirst?
What hopes came with him? what designs were spread
Along his path! His unprotected bed [nursed
What dreams encompassed! Was the intruder
In hideous usages, and rites accursed,
That thinned the living and disturbed the dead!
No voice replies;—both air and earth are mute;
And Thou, blue Streamlet, murmuring yield'st no more
Than a soft record, that, whatever fruit
Of ignorance thou might'st witness heretofore,
Thy function was to heal and to restore,
To soothe and cleanse, not madden and pollute!

IX.

THE STEPPING-STONES.

The struggling Rill insensibly is grown
Into a Brook of loud and stately march,
Crossest ever and anon by plank or arch;
And, for like use, lo! what might seem a zone
Chosen for ornament—stone matched with stone
In studied symmetry, with interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint. How swiftly have they flown,
Succession—still succeeding! Here the Child
Puts, when the high-swollen Flood runs fierce and wild,
His budding courage to the proof; and here
Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
And sure encroachments of infirmity,
Thinking how fast time runs, life's end how near!
X.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

Nor so that Pail whose youthful spirits dance
With prompt emotion, urging them to pass;
A sweet confusion checks the Shepherd-lass;
Blushing she eyes the dizzy flood as lance;
To stop ashamed—to too timid to advance;
She ventures once again—another pause!
His outstretched hand He tauntingly withdraws—
She sues for help with piteous utterance!
Chidden she chides again; the thrilling touch
Both feel, when he renew the wished-for aid:
Ah! if their fluttering hearts should stir too much,
Should beat too strongly, both may be betrayed.
The frolic Loves, who, from yon high rock, see
The struggle, clap their wings for victory!

XI.

THE FAERY CHASM.

No fiction was it of the antique age:
A sky-blue stone, within this sunless cleft,
Is of the very foot-marks unbered:
Which tiny Elves impressed—on that smooth stage
Dancing with all their brilliant equipage,
In secret revels—happily after theft;
Of some sweet Babe—Flower stolen, and coarse
Weed left
For the distracted Mother to assuage
Her grief with, as she might!—But, where, oh!
Is traceable a vestige of the notes
That ruled those dances wild in character?
Deep underground! Or in the upper air,
On the shrill wind of midnight! or where floats
O'er twilight fields the autumnal gossamer!

XII.

HINTS FOR THE FANCY.

On, loitering Muse—the swift Stream chides us—
Albeit his deep-worn channel doth immure
Objects immense portrayed in miniature,
Wild shapes for many a strange comparison!
Niagaras, Alpine passes, and anon
Abodes of Naiaids, calm abysses pure,
Bright liquid mansions, fashioned to endure
When the broad oak drops, a leafless skeleton,
And the solidities of mortal pride,
Palace and tower, are crumbled into dust!—
The Bard who walks with Duddon for his guide,
Shall find such toys of fancy thickly set:
Turn from the sight, enamoured Muse—we must;
And, if thou canst, leave them without regret!

XIII.

OPEN PROSPECT.

Hail to the fields—with Dwellings sprinkled o' er,
And one small hamlet, under a green hill
Clustering, with barn and byre, and spouting mill!
A glance suffices;—should we wish for more,
Gay June would scorn us. But when bleak winds roar
Through the stiff lance-like shoots of pollard ash,
Dread swell of sound! loud as the gusts that lash
The matted forests of Ontario's shore
By wasteful steel unsnitten—then would I
Turn into port; and, reckless of the gale,
Reckless of angry Duddon sweeping by,
While the warm hearth exalts the mantling ale,
Laugh with the generous household heartily
At all the merry pranks of Donnersdale!

XIV.

O MOUNTAIN Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot
Are privileged Inmates of deep solitude;
Nor would the nest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine:—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thou hast some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few;
And through this wilderness a passage cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue!

XV.

From this deep chasm, where quivering sunbeams play
Upon its loftiest crags, mine eyes behold
A gloomy niche, spacious, blank, and cold;
A conceave free from shrubs and mosses grey;
In semblance fresh, as if, with dire affray,
Some Statue, placed amid these regions old
For tutelary service, thence had rolled,
Startling the flight of timid Yesterday!
Was it by mortals sculptured!—weary slaves
Of slow endeavour! or abruptly cast
Into rude shape by fire, with roaring blast
Tempestuously let loose from central caves!
Or fashioned by the turbulence of waves,
Then, when o'er highest hills the Deluge pass'd!
THE RIVER DUDDON.

XVI.
AMERICAN TRADITION.
Such fruitless questions may not long beguile
Or plague the fancy 'mid the sculptured shows
Conspicuous yet where Oronoko flows;
There would the Indian answer with a smile
Aimed at the White Man's ignorance the while,
Of the Great Waters telling how they rose,
Covered the plains, and, wandering where they
Mounted through every intricate dimple,
[chose,
Triumphant.—Inundation wide and deep,
O'er which his Fathers urged, to ridge and steep
Else approachable, their buoyant way;
And carved, on mural cliff's undreaded side,
Sun, moon, and stars, and last of chase or prey;
Whatever they sought, shunned, loved, or defied*

XVII.
RETURN.
A dark plume fetch me from yon blasted yew,
Perched on whose top the Danish Raven croaks;
Aloft, the imperial Bird of Rome invokes
Departed ages, shedding where he flew
Loose fragments of wild wailing, that distressed
The clouds and thrill the chambers of the rocks;
And into silence hush the timorous flocks,
That, calmly couching while the nightly dew
Moistened each fleece, beneath the twinkling stars
Slept amid that lone Camp on Hardknott's height†,
Whose Guardians bent the knee to Jove and Mars;
Or, near that mystic Round of Druid frame
Tardily sinking by its proper weight
Deep into patient Earth, from whose smooth breast
it came!

XVIII.
SEATHWAITE CHAPEL.
Sacred Religion! 'mother of form and fear,'
Dread arbiter of mutable respect,
New rites ordaining when the old are wrecked,
Or cease to please the fickle worshipper;
Mother of Love! (that name best suits thee here)
Mother of Love! for this deep vale, protect
Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere
That seeks to stifle it— as in these days
When this low Pillar ‡ a Gospel Teacher knew,
Whose good works formed an endless redine:
A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse portraies;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise!

* See Humboldt's Personal Narrative.
† See Note.
‡ See Note.

XIX.
TRIBUTARY STREAM.
My frame hath often trembled with delight
When hope presented some far-distant good,
That seemed from heaven descending, like the flood
Of yon pure waters, from their aery height
Hurry, with lordly Duddon to unite;
Who, 'mid a world of images impregnt
On the calm depth of his transparent breast,
Appears to cherish most that Torrent white,
The fairest, softest, liveliest of them all!
And seldom hath ear listened to a tune
More hailing than the busy hum of Noon,
Sworn by that voice—whose murmur musical
Announces to the thirsty fields a boon
Dewy and fresh, till showers again shall fall.

XX.
THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE.
The old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entranacement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid those flowery plains;
The still repose, the liquid tape serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
Had beautified Elysium! But these chains
Will soon be broken;—a rough course remains,
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid mein,
Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many a shock
Given and received in mutual jealousy,
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high!

XXI.
WHENCE that low voice!—A whisper from the heart,
That told of days long past, when here I roved
With friends and kindred tenderly beloved;
Some who had early mandates to depart,
Yet are allowed to steal my path athwart
By Duddon's side; once more do we unite,
Once more beneath the kind Earth's tranquil light;
And anointed joys into new being start.
From her unworthy seat, the cloudy stall
Of Time, breaks forth triumphant Memory;
Her glistening tresses bound, yet light and free
As golden locks of bird, that rise and fall
On gales that breathe too gently to recall
Aught of the fading year's inclemency!
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

XXIII.

TRADITION.

E-LOST Maid, at some far-distant time,
To this hidden pool, whose depths surpass
Total clearness Titan's looking-glass;
Gazing, saw that Rose, which from the prime
Ives its name, reflected as the chime
Echo doth reverberate some sweet sound:
A starry treasure from the blue profound
As long as ravishe—I—shall she plunge, or climb
The humdred precipice, and seize the guest
Of April, smiling high in upper air!
Desperate alternative! what fiend could dare
To prompt the thought!—Upon the steep rock's
Breast
The lonely Primrose yet renew its bloom,
Untouched memento of her hapless doom!

XXIV.

SHEEP-WASHING.

Sad thoughts, return!—partake we their blithe
c Phóre.
Who gathered in betimes the unborn flock
To wash the flocks, where happily bands of rock
Checking the stream, make a pool smooth and clear.
As this we look on. Distant Mountains hear,
Hear and repeat, the turmoil that unites
Clamour of boys with innocent despites.
Of barking dogs, and bleatings from strange fear.
And what if Duddon's spotless flood receive
Unwelcome mixtures as the smooth noise
Thickens, the pastoral River will forgive
Such wrong; nor need we blame the licensed joys,
Though false to Nature's quiet equipage:
Frank are the sports, the stains are fugitive.

XXV.

THE RESTING-PLACE.

Mid Noons is past;—upon the sultry mood
No zephyr breathes, no cloud its shadow throws:
If we advance unstrengthened by repose,
Farewell the solace of the vagrant nook!
This Nook—will woodbine hung and straggling
Tempting recess as ever pilgrim chose.
Half grot, half arbour—proffers to enclose
Body and mind, from molestation freed,
In narrow compass—narrow as itself:
Or if the Fancy, too industrious Elf,
Be loth that we should breathe awhile exempt
From new incitements friendly to our task,
Here wants not stealthy prospect, that may tempt
Loose Idless to forego her shy mask.

XXVI.

RETURN. Content! for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams—unheard, unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their hold brooded—
Pure as the morning, fleeting, bittersweet, keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green;
Poured down the hills, a chorale multitude!
Nor have I tracked their course or scanty gains;
They taught me random cares and truant joys,
That shield from mischief and preserve from stains;
Vague minds, while men are growing out of boys;
Mature Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.

XXVII.

FALLEN, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly strewed in earth's mould.
Is that embattled House, whose massy Keep
Flung from you cliff a shadow large and cold.
There dwelt the gay, the bountiful, the bold;
Till nightly lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds—though winds were silent—struck a deep
And lastie terror through that ancient Hold.
Its line of Warriors fled;—they shriek when tried
By ghostly power;—but Time's unsparking hand
Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from out the

And now, if men with men in peace abide,
All other strength the weakest may withstand,
All worse assaults may safely be defied.
THE RIVER DUDDON.

JOURNEY RENEWED.

I rose while yet the cattle, heat-oppress,
Crowded together under rustling trees
Brushed by the current of the water-breeze;
And for their sakes, and love of all that rest,
On Duddon’s margin, in the sheltering nest;
For all the startled scaly tribes that slink
Into its coverts, and each fearless link
Of dancing insects forged upon his breast;
For these, and hopes and recollections worn
Close to the vital seat of human clay;
Glads meetings, tender partings, that upstay
The drooping mind of absence, by vows sworn
In his pure presence near the trysting thorn—I thanked the Leader of my onward way.

XXXIX.

No record tells of lance opposed to lance,
Horse charging horse, ’mid these retired domains;
Tells that their turf drank purple from the veins
Of heroes, fallen, or struggling to advance,
Till doubtful combat issued in a truce
Of victory, that struck through heart and reins
Even to the innerest seat of mortal pains,
And lighten’d o’er the pallid countenance.
Yet, to the loyal and the brave, who lie
In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
The passing Winds memorial tribute pay;
The Torrents chant their praise, inspiring scorn
Of power usurped; with proclamation high,
And glad acknowledgment, of lawful sway.

XXX.

Who swerves from innocence, who makes divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Receives not his loss; but walks with shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with remorse:
And oft-times he—who, yielding to the force
Of chance-temptation, ere his journey end,
From chosen comrade turns, or faithful friend—
In vain shall rue the broken intercourse.
Not so with such as loosely wear the chain
That binds them, pleasant River! to thy side:
Through the rough copse wheel thou with hasty stride;
I choose to saunter o’er the grassy plain,
Sure, when the separation has been tried,
That we, who part in love, shall meet again.

XXXI.

The Kirk of Ulpha to the pilgrim’s eye
Is welcome as a star, that doth present
Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
Of a black cloud diffused o’er half the sky:
Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
O’er the parched waste beside an Arab’s tent;
Or the Indian tree whose branches, downward bent,
Take root again, a boundless canopy.
How sweet were leisure! could it yield no more
Than ’mid that wave-washed Church-yard to recline,
From pastoral graves extracting thoughts divine;
Or there to pace, and mark the summits hoar
Of distant moon-lit mountains faintly shine,
Soothed by the unseen River’s gentle roar.

XXXII.

Nor hurried precipitous from steep to steep;
Linger in no more ’mid flower-enamelled lands
And blooming thickets; nor by rocky bands
Held; but in radiant progress toward the Deep
Where mightiest rivers into powerless sleep
Sink, and forget their nature—now expands
Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands
Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!
Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
Is opened round him:—hamlets, towers, and towns,
And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar;
In stately mien to sovereign Thames allied
Spreading his bosom under Kentish downs,
With commerce freighted, or triumphant war.

XXXIII.

CONCLUSION.

But here no cannon thunders to the gale;
Upon the wave no haughty pendants cast
A crimson splendour: lowly is the mast
That rises here, and humbly spread, the sail;
While, less disturbed than in the narrow Vale
Through which with strange vicissitudes he passed,
The Wanderer seeks that receptacle vast
Where all his unambitious functions fail.
And may thy Poet, cloud-born Stream! be free—
The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,
And each tumultuous working left behind
At seemly distance—to advance like Thee;
Prepared, in peace of heart, in calm of mind
And soul, to mingle with Eternity!
XXXIV.
AFTER-THOUGHT.
I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide:
The Form remains, the Function never dies;

While we, the brave, the mighty, and wise,
We Men, who in our man of youth did
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith’s transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE;
OR,
THE FATE OF THE NORTONS.

ADVERTISMENT.
During the Summer of 1807, I visited, for the first time, the beautiful country that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the Poem of the WDirn Doe, founded upon a Tradition connected with that place, was composed at the close of the same year.

DEDICATION.
In tilled shed with clustering roses gay,
And, Mary! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart’s desire.
Did we together read in Spenser’s Lay
How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o’er the earth.

Ah, then, Beloved! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For her, who, placed by sorrow’s thrilling dart,
Died meekly bear the pang unmurmured;
Meech as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led,—
And faithful, loyal in her innocence.
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
Till in the bosom of our rustic cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That bliss with mortal Man may not abide
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow
For us the voice of melody was mute.
—But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow,
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot.

Heaven’s breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancy innocent.
It soothed us—it beguiled us—then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose nery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel:
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low abond the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake.
All that she suffered for her dear Lord’s sake.

Then, too, this Song of mine once more could please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Alas! ascending, and descending deep.
Even to the inferior Kinds: whom forest-trees
Protect from heating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds:—fair Creatures!—to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheered us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And, of the recompense that conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging, example shows;
Needful when o’er wide realms the tempest breaks.
Needful amid life’s ordinary woes;
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bliss
A happy hour with holier happiness.
CANTO FIRST.

From Bolton’s old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun shines bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of crystal Wharfe,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the bidden brooks;
Path, or no path, what care they!
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton’s mouldering Priory.

What would they there!—Full fifty years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,

Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this mortal Strain a power may live,
Beloved Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

And irremovable gracious openings lie,
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine.

That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;
And in the shattered fabric’s heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A Chapel, like a wild-bird’s nest,
Closely embowered and trimly drest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the church-yard fills;—anon
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sat in the shade of the Prior’s Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard;—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel;
For ’tis the sunrise now of zeal;
Of a pure faith the vernal prime—
In great Eliza’s golden time.

A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
—When soft!—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through the gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the church-yard ground—
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your church-yard bed!
Ye living, tend your holy cares;
Ye multitude, pursue your prayers;
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go:
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit for one day given,
A pledge of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Leads through space of open day,
Where the emmanured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath:
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell,
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, reappearing, she no less
Sheds on the flowers that round her blow
A more than sunny liveliness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?

Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing?
Mourns she for lordly chamber's hearth
That to the sapling ash gives birth;
For dormitory's length laid bare
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
Or altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament?
—She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation press,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast;
As little she regards the sight
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
—But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves—with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And thus she fares, until at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gentle as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died,
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the crystal stream now flowing
With its softest summer sound:
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Concealed upon the dewy grass,
Pensively with downcast eyes.
—But now again the people raise
With awful cheer a voice of praise;
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng,
And quickly spread themselves abroad,
While each pursues his several road.
But some—a variegated band.
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung—
With mute obeisance gladly paid
Turn towards the spot, where, full in view,
The white Doe, to her service true,
Her sabbath couch has made.

It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

"Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm?"—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled, and blushed for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
"Now you have seen the famous Doe;
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath day;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath morning, foul or fair."

Bright was the Creature, as in dreams
The Boy had seen her, yes, more bright;
But is she truly what she seems?
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself, and doubts,—and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Concealed beside that lonely mound;
And why she dews loving to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child's inquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, spite of sober Truth that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,

There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported Sire—
Who in his boyhood often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And to his grave will go with scars,
Relics of long and distant wars—
That Old Man, studious to expound
The spectacle, is mounting high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Ailizra mourned
Her Son, and felt in her despair
The pang of unavailing prayer;
Her Son in Whart's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.

From which affliction—when the grace
Of God had in her heart found place—
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up, this stately Priory!
The Lady's work;—but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe:
Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright;
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;
And, through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a grisly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire,
A valiant man, and a name of dread
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury church
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent.
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Harsh thoughts with her high mood agree—
Who counts among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!
That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale;
He also hath his own conceit;
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary:
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature’s hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
’Twas said that She all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair;
And taught him signs, and showed him sights,
In Craven’s dens, on Cumberland heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey;
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden-field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland’s King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate,—
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden’s lowly quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton’s dear fraternity;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky;
Or, in their cells, with him did pry
For other lore,—by keen desire
Urged to close toil with chemic fire;
In quest belike of transmutations
Rich as the mine’s most bright creations.
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now(dispatched
And peace is none, for living or dead!

Ah, pensive Scholar, think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy hope!
Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yes, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see—they vanish one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By vague thoughts, lured by fancies wild;
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurs;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, Harp! thy murmurs may not cease—
A Spirit, with his angelic wings,
In soft and breezy-like visitings,
Has touched thee—and a Spirit’s hand:
A voice is with us—a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND.
The Harp in lowliness obeyed;
And first we sang of the green-wood shade
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The Friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light;
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For She it was—this Maid, who wrought
Mellody, with foreboding thought,
In vermell colours and in gold
An unblest work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold,—
Exciting in its imagery;
A Banner, fashioned to fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will;
For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such her Sire’s command)
The sacred Cross; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rufiel company!

It was the time when England’s Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a Sovereign dread;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLDSTONE.

But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy’s and in Neville’s right,
Two Earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea,
The rites of ancient piety
To be triumphantly restored,
By the stern justice of the sword!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had exprest
Memorials chosen to give life
And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
That Banner, waiting for the Call,
Stood quietly in Ryldstone-hall.

It came; and Francis Norton said,
"O Father! rise not in this fray—
The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name:
A just and gracious Queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on earth, and quiet in our land—
’Tis meet that I endure your scorn;
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for hand,
My Father, do I leash your knees;
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blameless ease;
For these my brethren’s sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!"

Tumultuous noises filled the hall;
And secretly could the Father hear
That name—pronounced with a dying fall—
The name of his only Daughter dear,
As on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glittered
Then did he seize the staff, and say:
"Thou, Richard, bear’st thy father’s name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand—
And never as true as thou, I see,
Will chace to this good cause and me."
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All followed him, a gallant band!

Thus, with his sons, when forth he came
The sight was hailed with loud acclamation
And din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horded and harnessed with him to ride—
A voice to which the hills replied:

But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, tottered, swam before his sight;
A phantasm like a dream of night!
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked, his languard eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth’s green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint—but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly,
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dinness of heart-agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily!

He saw her where in open view
She sat beneath the spreading yew—
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
"Might ever son command a sire,
The act were justified to-day."
This to himself—and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said—
"Gone are they—they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may."

She heard, but looked not up, nor spake;
And sorrow moved him to partake
Her silence; then his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.

"Gone are they, bravely, though misled;
With a dear Father at their head!
The Sons obey a natural lord;
The Father had given solemn word
Therewith he threw away the lance,
Which he had grasped in that strong trance;
Spurned it, like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.

"For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress;
In that thy very strength must lie.
—O Sister, I could prophesy!
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well:
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee, a woman, and thence weak:
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly:
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss.
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon:
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that! 
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortune without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall—
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger;
The hawk forget his perch; the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground:
The blast will sweep us all away—
One desolation, one decay!
And even this Creature!" which words saying,
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying;
Fair creature, and more white than snow!
Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came;
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone-hall.
—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf on a blasted tree;
If not in vain we breathed the breath.

* See the Old Ballad.—"The Rising of the North."
Together of a purer faith;
If hand in hand we have been led,
And thee, (O happy thought this day!) Not seldom foremost in the way;
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read;
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of real,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice;
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared;
If then art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth—
Be strong!—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:
A Soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!"

He ended,—or she heard no more;
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion’s silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the valley then pursued,
Alone, the armed Multitude.

CANTO THIRD.

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his band is near!
The watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word,—and the Earl’s descry,
Well-pleased, the armed Company
Marching down the banks ofWere.

Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to greet him on the plain—
"This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you; hill and dale
Have helped us; Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed—see
The best part of their Yeomanry!
—Stand forth, my Sons!—these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soever our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all!"—voice failed him here—
"My all save one, a Daughter dear!"—

Whom I have left, Love’s mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth. I had—but these are by my side,
These Eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe. With festive din
Lo! how the people are flocking in,—
Like hungry fowl to the feeder’s hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land."

He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms;
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence.—
"Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People’s right!"

The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said; "The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England’s Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind—
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
—Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope;
Even for our Altars—for the prize
In Heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold!"—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—"behold!" said he,
"The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be;
The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A Maid o’er whom the blessed Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued."
"Uplift the Standard!" was the cry
From all the listeners that stood round,
"Plant it,—by this we live or die."
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said; "The prayer which ye have heard,
Much injured Earls! by these preferred,
Is offered to the Saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly."
"Uplift it!" cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued
"Uplift it!" said Northumberland—
Whereat, from all the multitude
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
A voice of uttermost joy brake out:
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,
And Durham, the time-honoured Durham, did hear,
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred
by the shout!

Now was the North in arms—they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees
His Followers gathering in from Tees,
FromWere, and all the little rills
Concealed among the forked hills—
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all
Of Neville, at their Master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall!
Such strength that Earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed chivalry.
—Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,
And great the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons;—and, furthermore,
Horsemen and Foot of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty,
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State:
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire;
And Romish priest, in priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass,—and tore the book of prayer,—
And trod the bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward smooth and free
'They muster'd their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see;'

* From the old ballad.

The Choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for beauty and for worth
Like those eight Sons—who, in a ring,
(Ripe men, or blooming in life's spring)
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
On foot they girt their Father round;
And so will keep the appointed ground
Where'er their march: no steed will he
Henceforth bestride;—triumphantly,
He stands upon the grassy sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire;
Of him the most; and, sith to say,
No shape of man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to loftier height;
Magnific limbs of withered state;
A face to fear and venerate;
Eyes dark and strong; and on his head
Bright locks of silver hair, thick spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.

Who sees him!—thousands see, and One
With unparticipated gaze;
Who, 'mong those thousands, friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following whereaso'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As shepherds watch a lonely star;
Or mariners the distant light
That guides them through a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, ye hearty spot!
He takes alone his far-off stand,
With breast unsmiled, unwept hand.
Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed from hour to hour:
Yet sometimes in more humble guise,
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

Upon the turf-clad height he lies
Stretched, herdsman-like, as if to bask
In sunshine were his only task,
Or by his mantle’s help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is wakened by the sight,
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.

To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth
To quell the Rising of the North;
They march with Dudley at their head,
And, in seven days’ space, will to York be led!—
Can such a mighty Host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near!
The Earls upon each other gazed,
And Neville’s cheek grew pale with fear;
For, with a high and valiant name,
He bore a heart of timid frame;
And bold if both had been, yet they
* Against so many may not stay.*
Back therefore will they his to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees;
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Daere with his power
From Naworth come; and Howard’s aid
Be with them openly displayed.

While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The Standard trusting to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake:—“We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!—
How oft has strength, the strength of heaven,
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mirrored Thurston—what a Host
He conquered!—Saw we not the Plain
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved—while to battle moved
The Standard, on the Sacred Wain
That bore it, compassed round by a bold
Fraternity of Barons old;

And with those grey-haired champions stood,
Under the sainly ensigns three,
The infant Heir of Mowbray’s blood—
All confident of victory!—
Shall Percy blush, then, for his name!
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville’s Cross?
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand
Raised, as the Vision gave command,
Saint Cuthbert’s Relic—far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear;
While the Monks prayed in Maidon’s Bower
To God descending in his power.

Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue:—
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise:
We, we, the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold;
Be warned”—His zeal the Chiefs confounded,
But word was given, and the trumpet sounded:
Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne
This Banner raised with joyful pride,
This hope of all posterity,
By those dread symbols sanctified;
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun’s bright eye,
To the light clouds a mockery!

—“Even these poor eight of mine would stem—”
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake—“would stem, or quell, a force
Ten times their number, man and horse;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;
A Cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they.”
—So speaking, he his reverend head
Roused towards that Imagery once more:
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before:
A shock of intimations vain,
Dismay, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought:—
Oh wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light!
She would not, could not, disobey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept; I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jeun's sake,
This Cross in tears: by her, and One
Unworthier far we are undone—
Her recreant Brother—he prevailed
Over that tender Spirit—assailed
Too oft alas! by her whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid:
She first, in reason's dawn beguiled
Her docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!

While thus he brooded, music sweet
Of border tunes was played to cheer
The footsteps of a quick retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear,
Stung with sharp thoughts; and ere the last
From his distracted brain was cast,
Before his Father, Francis stood,
And spake in firm and earnest mood.

"Though here I bend a suppliant knee
In reverence, and unarmed, I bear
In your indignant thoughts my share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
So careless and disorderly.
I scorn your Chiefs—men who would lead,
And yet want courage at their need:
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?—
If—when they shrink, nor dare oppose
In open field their gathering foes,
(And fast, from this decisive day,
You multitude must melt away)
If now I ask a grace not claimed
While ground was left for hope; unblamed
Be an endeavour that can do
No injury to them or you.
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remain behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!"

"Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good"—but why declare,
At length, the issue of a prayer
Which love had prompted, yielding scope
Too free to one bright moment's hope!
Suffice it that the Son, who strove
With fruitless effort to allay
That passion, prudently gave way;
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love—
But calmly from the spot withdrew;
His best endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH.

'Tis night: in silence looking down,
The Moon, from cloudless ether, sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,
And Castle like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees:—
And southward far, with moor between,
Hill-top, and flood, and forest green,
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The smoke, and mounts in silver wreaths.
—The couris are hushed:—for timely sleep
The grey-hounds to their kennel creep;
The peacock in the broad ash tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud prosperity
Of colours manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the daylight;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower
The hall-clock in the clear moonshine
With glittering finger points at nine.

Ah! who could think that sadness here
Hath any sway: or pain, or fear!
A soft and hailing sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day;
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen:—and so!
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe—
The same who quietly was feeding
On the green herb, and nothing heedng,
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

When Francis, uttering to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade,
Involved whate'er by love was brought
Out of his heart, or crossed his thought,
Or chance presented to his eye,
In one sad sweep of destiny—
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;
Where now—within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And circle and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array—
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood,
Range unconfined as the wind,
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But see the consecrated Maid
Emerging from a cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
Like a patch of April snow—
Upon a bed of herbage green,
Lingerling in a woody glade
Or behind a rocky screen—
Lonely relic ! which, if seen
By the shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
Nor more regard doth she bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe
Now crouched at ease, though oft this day
Not perplexed nor free from pain,
When she had tried, and tried in vain,
Approaching in her gentle way,
To win some look of love, or gain
Encouragement to sport or play;
Attempts which still the heart-sick Maid
Rejected, or with slight repaid.

Yet Emily is soothed ;—the breeze
Came fraught with kindly sympathies.
As she approached ye rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine, spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revived a memory of those hours

When here, in this remote aleeve,
(While from the pendent woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly-anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
Yes, she is soothed :—an image faint,
And yet not faint—a presence bright
Returns to her—thus blessed Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.

"Tis flown—the Vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence;
"But oh! thou Angel from above,
Mute Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than ghosts are fabled to appear
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed, in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis ; nor forbear
To greet him with a voice, and say ;—
"If hope be a rejected stay,
'Do thou, my Christian Son, beware
'Of that most lamentable snare,
'The self-reliance of despair! "

Then from within the embowered retreat
Where she had found a grateful seat
Perturbed she issues. She will go!
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her Father's knees ;—ah, no!
She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her Brother laid;
His parting charge—but ill obeyed—
That interdicted all debate,
All prayer for this cause or for that;
All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
'Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure.
—She feels it, and her pangs are checked.
But now, as silently she paced
The turf, and thought by thought was chased,
Came One who, with sedate respect,
Approached, and, greeting her, thus spake ;
"An old man's privilege I take ;"
Dark is the time—a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you! point the way?"

"Rights have you, and may well be bold:
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship—strive—for his sake go—
Turn from us all the coming woe:
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.
On you, if room for mortal aid
Be left, is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will divine."

"Hope," said the old Man, "must abide
With all of us, whate’er betide.
In Craven’s Wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted men:
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave:
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!"

"Ah tempt me not!" she faintly sighed;
"I will not counsel nor exhort,
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befals;—be this your task—
This may be done;—’tis all I ask!"

She spake—and from the Lady’s sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight.
—The noble Francis—wise as brave,
Thought he, may want not skill to save
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field;
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard’s Towers,—
"Grant that the Moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight!"

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.—
The Moon may shine, but cannot be
Their guide in flight—already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made;—
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid!
Disastrous issue!—he had said
"This night yet faithless Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
—Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard’s aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That he is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick;—this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to our cause.
The breach is open,—on the wall,
This night, the Banner shall be planted!"
—"Twas done; his Sons were with him—all;
They belt him round with hearts unhaunted
And others follow;—Sire and Son
Leap down into the court,—"Tis won!—
They shout aloud—but Heaven decreed
That with their joyful shout should close
The triumph of a desperate deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back—the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;—
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
—A rescue for the Standard!" cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls!—
Confusion through the Camp spread wide:
Some fled; and some their fears detained:
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

CANTO FIFTH.

High on a point of rugged ground
Among the wastes of Ryestone Fell
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single—Norton Tower is its name—
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
Over path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent—
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet—
Had often heard the sound of glee
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

When the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery:
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Tower withdrew, and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall,
Was happiest, proudest, of them all!

But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;
'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,
Received the bitterness of woe:
For she had hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her brother's charge revered,
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea by her brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheered.

Beside the lonely watch-tower stood
That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship; rival hunters they,
And fellow warriors in their day;
To刘石 he the tidings brought;
Then on this height the Maid had sought,
And, gently as he could, had told
The end of that dire Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the Lady turned; "You said
That Francis lives, he is not dead!"
"Your noble brother hath been spared;
To take his life they have not dared;
On him and on his high endeavour
The light of praise shall shine for ever!
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty, seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last,
Their joy till every pang was past.

I witnessed when to York they came—
What, Lady, if their feet were tied;
They might deserve a good Man's blame;
But marks of infamy and shame—
These were their triumph, these their pride;
Nor wanted 'mid the pressing crowd
Deep feeling, that found utterance loud,
'Lo, Francis comes,' there were who cried,
'A Prisoner once, but now set free!
'Tis well, for he the worst defied
Through force of natural piety;
He rose not in this quarrel, he,
For concord's sake and England's good,
Suit to his Brothers often made
With tears, and of his Father prayed—
And when he had in vain withstood
Their purpose—then did he divide;
He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity,
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!

And so in Prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid,
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your distress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love;
And, in your service, making bold,
Entrance I gained to that strong-hold.

Your Father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned:
He was commanding and entreatling,
And said—'We need not stop, my Son;
Thoughts press, and time is hurrying on.'—
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

'Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green:
The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then—had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of Truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth;
To see her in her pomp arrayed—
This Banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest:
I would myself have hung it high,
Fit offering of glad victory!

A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being—bids me climb
Even to the last—one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore.

Hear then,' said he, 'while I impart,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.
The Banner strive thou to regain;
And, if the endeavor prove not vain,
Bear it—to whom if not to thee
Shall I this lonely thought consign?
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine;
To wither in the sun and breeze
Mid those decaying sanctuaries.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea offered up this noble Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son!
And left—but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouched, the tear unshe'd;
My wish is known, and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blast!

Then Francis answered—'Trust thy Son,
For, with God's will, it shall be done!'

The pledge obtained, the solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
One with profane and harsh intent
Placed there—that he might go before
And, with that ruthless Banner borne
Aloft in sign of taunting scorn,
Conduct them to their punishment:

So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained.
The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand;
And all the people that stood round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
—High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son—and they were led
Led on, and yielded up their breath;
Together died, a happy death—
But Francis, soon as he had braved
That insult, and the Banner saved,
Awith the unresisting tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore instantly his Charge away.'

These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to comfort or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
"Yes—God is rich in mercy," said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
"Yet, Lady! shines, through this black night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright;
Your Brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place."
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.

CANTO SIXTH.

Why comes not Francis?—From the doleful City
He fled,—and, in his flight, could hear
The death-sounds of the Minster-bell:
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell
For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!
For all—all dying in one hour!
—Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With the fleet motion of a dove;
Yes, like a heavenly messenger
Of speediest wing, should he appear.
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

Why comes he not!—for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on—nor heed.
The sorrow, through the villages,
Spread by triumphant cruelties
Of vengeance military force,
And punishment without remorse.
He marked not, heard not, as he fled;
All but the suffering heart was dead
For him abandoned to blank awe,
To vacancy, and horror strong:
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along—
It was the Banner in his hand!
He felt—and made a sudden stand.

He looked about like one betrayed:
What hath he done! what promise made!
Oh weak, weak moment! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the Bearer!—Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find, find any where, a right
To excuse him in his Country’s sight!
No; will not all men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange!
Here is it;—but how! when! must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see!

Such conflict long did he maintain,
Nor liberty nor rest could gain:
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong
Swayed the brave man to his wrong.
And how—unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will unquestionably shown—
How has the Banner clung so fast
To a pained, and unconscious hand;
Clung to the hand to which it passed
Without impediment! And why
But that Heaven’s purpose might be known
Doth now no hindrance meet his eye,
No intervention, to withstand
Fulfilment of a Father’s prayer
Breathed to a Son forgiven, and blest
When all resentments were at rest,
And life in death laid the heart bare!—
Then, like a spectre sweeping by,
Rushed through his mind the prophecy
Of utter desolation made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade:
He sighed, submitting will and power
To the stern embrace of that grasping hour.
“No choice is left, the deed is mine—
Dead are they, dead!—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine.”

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued;—and, at the dawn of day,
Attained a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment’s space
Made halt—but hark! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace!
He heard, and with misgiving mind.

—”Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the Band:
They come, by cruel Sussex sent;
Who, when the Norton’s hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Beshrew him, angry and ashamed.
How Francis, with the Banner claimed
As his own charge, had disappeared,
By all the standers-by reversed.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure, enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given,
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—”Behold the proof;”
They cried, “the Ensign in his hand!
He did not arm, he walked afoot!
For why!—to save his Father’s land;—
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!”

“/I am no Traitor,” Francis said,
“Though this unhappy freight I bear;
And must not part with. But beware;—
Err not, by hasty zeal misled,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!”
At this he from the beaten road
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
That like a place of vantage showed;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with warlike brow
He stood,—nor weaponless was now;
He from a Soldier's hand had matched
A spear,—and, so protected, watched
The Assailants, turning round and round;
But from behind with treacherous wound
A Spearman brought him to the ground.
The guardian lance, as Francis fell,
Dropped from him; but his other hand
The Banner clenched; till, from out the Band,
One, the most eager for the prize,
Rushed in; and—while, O grief to tell!
A glimmering sense still left, with eyes
Unclosed the noble Francis lay—
Seized it, as hunters seize their prey;
But not before the warm life-blood
Had tinged more deeply, as it flowed,
The wounds the broderied Banner showed.
Thy fatal work, O Maiden, innocent as good!

Proudly the Horsemen bore away
The Standard; and where Francis lay
There was he left alone, unwept,
And for two days unnoticed slept.
For at that time bewildering fear
Possessed the country, far and near;
But, on the third day, passing by
One of the Norton Tenantry
Espied the uncovered Corse; the Man
Shrunk as he recognised the face,
And to the nearest homesteads ran
And called the people to the place.
—How desolate is Rylistone-hall!
This was the instant thought of all;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be; to her they cannot bear
This weight of anguish and despair.
So, when upon sad thoughts had prest
Thoughts sadder still, they deemed it best
That, if the Priest should yield assent
And no one hinder their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;
And straightway buried he should be
In the Church-yard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they,—but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the Church-yard they are bound,

Bearing the body on a bier;
And psalms they sing—a holy sound
That hill and vale with sadness hear.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted;
She must behold!—so many gone,
Where is the solitary One?
And forth from Rylistone-hall stopped she,—
To seek her Brother forth she went;
And tremblingly her course she bent
Toward Bolton's ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the vale hath heard
The funeral dirge;—she sees the knot
Of people, sees them in one spot—
And darting like a wounded bird
She reached the graves, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth!

CANTO SEVENTH.

'Theirs there are
That touch each other to the quick—in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of.'

Thou Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor affliged head!
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her!—is a rifled tomb
Within the wilderness her seat!
Some island which the wild waves beat—
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock, low sunless dale,
Sea, desert, what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!

'Tis done;—despoil and desolation
O'er Rylistone's fair domain have blown;
Pools, terraces, and walks are sown
With weeds; the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown.
The lordly Mansion of its pride
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
Appears a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed.
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet bird’s carolling.
Behold her, like a virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of change and change, that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems
To o’ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
 Lose utterly the tender gleams,
Of gentleness and meek delight,
And loving-kindness ever bright:
Such is her sovereign mien,—her dress
(A vest with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely,—fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim’s humbleness.

And she hath wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;
Hath roamed in trouble and in grief.
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea like a ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father’s roof,
And put her fortune to proof;
The mighty sorrow hath been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so,—beneath a wondred tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower,
(‘Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For One, among those rushing deer,
A single One, in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily;
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant creature, silver-bright!

Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;
And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her, and more near—
Looked round—but saw no cause for fear;
So to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady’s face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!—
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears—
A flood of tears, that flowed apace,
Upon the happy Creature’s face.

Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven’s chosen care,
This was for you a precious greeting;
And may it prove a fruitful meeting!
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forgo
The Lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings!
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face;
And welcome, as a gift of grace,
The saddest thought the Creature brings!
That day, the first of a reunion
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening dew,
She from her sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board
Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylistone brook with Wharf is blended.

When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe stood there in sight.
She shrink'd:—with one frail shock of pain
Received and followed by a prayer;
She saw the Creature once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear;—
But, wherever she looked round,
All now was trouble-haunted ground;
And therefore now she deemed it good
Once more this restless neighbourhood
To leave.—Unwooded, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the vale,
Up to another cottage, hidden
In the deep fork of Amsdale;
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.
—Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheered, and fortified!
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed—
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes;
Who with a power like human reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire,—
From looks conceiving her desire;
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately breathed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,
Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindliest intercourse ensue.
—Oh! surely 'twas a gentle pleasing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They, like a nested pair, reposèd!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as whitest cloud on high
Floating through the azure sky.
—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
While they, side by side, were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
And with a deeper peace ended
The hour of moonlight solitude.

With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylistone back she came;
And, ranging through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old loves,
Undisturbed and undistressed,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful, melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened.

When the bells of Rylistone played
Their sabbath music:—'God us ope!'
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend which I ween
May on those holy bells be seen,
That legend and her Grandisire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same;
Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought,
The bells of Rylistone seemed to say,
While she sat listening in the shade,
With vocal music, 'God us ope;'
And all the hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side
Up would she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence look round her far and wide,
Her fate there measuring:—all is still;
The weak One hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed;
Here hath a milder doom prevailed;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left;
This one Associate that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him—for one, or all;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.

Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot;
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold—
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the timid Thrall
(A spotless Youngling white as foam)
Her youngest Brother brought it home;
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Bore it, or led, to Rylstone-hall
With heart brimful of pride and joy!

But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go;
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor feared she in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft she sate
Forlorn, but not disconsolate:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mete Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in its turn to meet
The recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;

Power which the voiceless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead,—
Dead—but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blest Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted towards her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly Friend;
There stopped; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied;
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.

Most glorious sunset! and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day—
In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear Mistress once held dear;
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this church-yard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,
And every sabbath here is found;
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

Finds entrance through your arch, where way
Lies open on the sabbath-day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault;
By plate of monumental brass
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave:
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive visitor is seen.
There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say—
"Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!"

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS.

IN SERIES.

PART I.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN, TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PAPAL DOMINION.

'A verse may catch a wandering Soul, that flies
Profounder Tracts, and by a blast surprise
Convert delight into a Sacrifice.'

I.

INTRODUCTION.

I, who accompanied with faithful pace
Cerulean Duddon from his cloud-fed spring,
And loved with spirit ruled by his to sing
Of mountain-quiet and boon nature's grace;
I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace
Of Liberty, and smote the plausible string
Till the checked torrent, proudly triumphing,
Won for herself a lasting resting-place;
Now seek upon the heights of Time the source
Of a Holy River, on whose banks are found
Sweet pastoral flowers, and laurels that have crowned
Full oft the unworthy brow of lawless force;
And, for delight of him who tracks its course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.

II.

CONJECTURES.

Is there be prophets on whose spirits rest
Past things, revealed like future, they can tell
What Powers, presiding o'er the sacred well
Of Christian Faith, this savage Island blessed
With its first bounty. Wandering through the west,
Did holy Paul* a while in Britain dwell,
And call the Fountain forth by miracle,
And with dread signs the nascent Stream invest!
Or He, whose bonds dropped off, whose prison doors
Flew open, by an Angel's voice unbarred!
Or some of humbler name, to these wild shores
Storm-driven; who, having seen the cup of woe
Pass from their Master, sojourned here to guard
The precious Current they had taught to flow?

* See Note.
III.
TREDIDATION OF THE DRUIDS.
Screams round the Arch-druid's brow the seamew*—white
As Menal's foam; and toward the mystic ring
Where Augurs stand, the Future questioning,
Slowly the coromant aims her heavy flight,
Portioning ruin to each baseful rite,
That, in the lapse of ages, hath crept o'er
Diluvian truths, and patriarchal lore.
Haughty the Bard: can these meek doctrines bliss
His transports! wither his heroic strains!
But all shall be fulfilled—the Julian spear
A way first opened; and, with Roman chains,
The tidings come of Jesus crucified;
They come—they spread—the weak, the suffering,
Receive the faith, and in the hope abide. [hear;

IV.
DRUIDICAL EXCOMMUNICATION.
Merce and Love have met thee on thy road,
Thou wretched Outcast, from the gift of fire
And food cut off by sacerdotal ire,
From every sympathy that Man bestowed!
Yet shall it claim our reverence, that to God,
Ancient of days! that to the eternal Sire,
These jealous Ministers of law aspire,
As to the one sole fount whence wisdom flowed,
Justice, and order. Tremblingly escaped,
As if with prescence of the coming storm,
That intimation when the stars were shaped;
And still, 'mid you thick woods, the primal truth
Glimmers through many a superstitious form
That fills the Soul with unwavering ruth.

V.
UNCERTAINTY.
Darkness surrounds us; seeking, we are lost
On Snowdon's wilds, amid Brigantian coves,
Or where the solitary shepherd roves
Along the plain of Sarum, by the ghost
Of Time and shadows of Traditon, crost;
And where the boatman of the Western Isles
Slackens his course—to mark these holy piles
Which yet survive on bleak Iona's coast.
Nor these, nor monuments of eldest name,
Nor Taliesin's unforgotten lays,
Nor characters of Greek or Roman fame,
To an unquestionable Source have led;
Enough—if eyes, that sought the fountain-head
In vain, upon the growing Rill may gaze.

VI.
PERSECUTION.
Lament! for Diocletian's fiery sword
Works busy as the lightning; but instinct
With malice ne'er to deadliest weapon linked,
Which God's ethereal store-houses afford:
Against the Followers of the incarnate Lord
It rages;—some are smitten in the field— [shield
Some pierced to the heart through the ineffectual
Of sacred home—with pomp are others gored
And dreadful respite. Thus was Alban tried,
England's first Martyr, whom no threats could shake;
Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,
And for the faith; nor shall his name forsake
That Hill, whose flowery platform seems to rise
By Nature decked for holiest sacrifice*.

VII.
RECOVERY.
As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds regain
Their cheerfulness, and basily retrum
Their nests, or chant a gratefully hymn
To the blue ether and bespangled plain;
Even so, in many a re-constructed fane,
Have the survivors of this Storm renewed
Their holy rites with vocal gratitude:
And solemn ceremonials they ordain
To celebrate their great deliverance;
Most feelingly instructed 'mid their fear—
That persecution, blind with rage extreme, [nance,
May not the less, through Heaven's mild count
Even in her own despite, both feed and cheer;
For all things are less dreadful than they seem.

VIII.
TEMPTATIONS FROM ROMAN REFINEMENTS.
Watch, and be firm! for, soul-subduing vice,
Heart-killing luxury, on your steps await.
Fair houses, baths, and banquets delicate,
And temples flashing, bright as polar ice,
Their radiance through the woods—may yet suffice
To sap your hardy virtue, and abate
Your love of Him upon whose forehead sate
The crown of thorns; whose life-blood flowed the
price
Of your redemption. Shun the insidious arts
That Rome provides, less dreading from her crown
Than from her wily praise, her peaceful gown,
Language, and letters—these, though fondly viewed
As humanising graces, are but parts
And instruments of deadliest servitude!

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* This water-fowl was, among the Druids, an emblem of those traditions connected with the deluge that made an
important part of their mysteries. The Coromant was a
bird of bad omen. * See Note.
IX.

DISSENSIONS.

That heresies should strike (if truth be scanned
Presumptuously) their roots both wide and deep,
Is natural as dreams to feverish sleep.
Lo! Discord at the altar dares to stand
Uplifting toward high Heaven her fiery brand,
A cherished Priestess of the new-baptized!
But chastisement shall follow peace despised.
The Fiendish cloud darkens the enervate land
By Rome abandoned; vain are suppliant cries,
And prayers that would undo her forced farewell;
For she returns not.—Awed by her own knell,
She casts the Britons upon strange Allies,
Soon to become more dreaded enemies
Than heartless misery called them to repel.

X.

STRUGGLE OF THE BRITONS AGAINST THE BARBARIANS.

Rise!—they have risen: of brave Aurelin ask
How they have scourged old foes, perfidious friends:
The Spirit of Caractacus descends
Upon the Patriots, animates their task;—
Amazement runs before the towering casque
Of Arthur, bearing through the stormy field
The virgin sculptured on his Christian shield;—
Stretched in the sunny light of victory bask
The Host that followed Urien as he strode
O'er heaps of slain—from Cambrian wood and Druids descend, auxiliaries of the Cross; [moss
Bards, nursed on blue Penlimmon's still abode,
Rush on the fight, to harps preferring swords,
And everlasting deeds to burning words!

XI.

SAXON CONQUEST.

No want cause the panic-striking aid
Of hallelujahs * tost from hill to hill—
For instant victory. But Heaven's high will
Permits a second and a darker shade
Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed,
The Relics of the sword flee to the mountains:
O wretched Land! whose tears have flowed like fountains;
Whose arts and honours in the dust are laid
By men yet scarcely conscious of a care
For other monuments than those of Earth;
Who, as the fields and woods have given them birth,
Will build their savage fortunes only there;
Content, if so, and barrow, and the girth
Of long-drawn rampart, witness what they were.

* See Note.

XII.

MONASTERY OF OLD BANGOR *.

The oppression of the tumult—wrath and scorn—
The tribulation—and the gleaming blades—
Such is the impious spirit that pervades
The song of Thalesin;—Ours shall mourn [turn
The unarm'd Host who by their prayers would
The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard the store
Of Aboriginal and Roman lore,
And Christian monuments, that now must burn
To senseless ashes. Mark! how all things swerve
From their known course, or vanish like a dream;
Another language spreads from east to west;
Only perchance some melancholy Stream
And some indignant Hills old names preserve,
When laws, and creeds, and people all are lost!

XIII.

CASUAL INCITEMENT.

A BRIGHT-HAIRED company of youthful slaves,
Beautiful strangers, stand within the pale
Of a sad market, ranged for public sale,
Where Tiber's stream the immortal City laves:
Anglo by name; and not an Angel waves
His wing who could seem lovelier to man's eye
Than they appear to holy Gregory;
Who, having learnt that name, salvation craves
For them, and for their Land. The earnest Sire,
His questions urging, feels, in slender ties
Of chiming sound, commanding sympathies;
De-Ireans—he would save them from God's Ire;
Subjects of Saxon Ælla—they shall sing
Glad Halle-lujahs to the eternal King!

XIV.

GLAD TIDINGS.

For ever hallowed be this morning fair,
Blest be the unconscious shore on which ye tread,
And blest the silver Cross, which ye, instead
Of martial banner, in procession bear;
The Cross preceding Him who floats in air,
The pictured Saviour!—By Augustin led,
They come—and onward travel without dread,
Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer—
Sung for themselves, and those whom they would
free!
Rich conquest waits them;—the tempestuous sea
Of Ignorance, that ran so rough and high
And heeded not the voice of clashing swords,
These good men humble by a few bare words,
And calm with fear of God's divinity.

* See Note.
ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS.

XV.

PUBLISHER.

But, to remote Northumbria’s royal Hall,
Where thoughtful Edwin, trained in the school
Of sorrow, still maintains a heathen rule,
Who comes with functions apostolical!
Mark him, of shoulders curved, and stature tall,
Black hair, and vivid eye, and mengre cheek,
His prominent feature like an eagle’s beak;
A Man whose aspect doth at once appeal
And strike with reverence. The Monarch hears
Toward the pure truths this Delegate propounds,
Repeatedly his own deep mind he sounds
With careful hesitation, then convenes
A synod of his Councillors—give ear,
And what a pensive Saga doth utter, hear!

XVI.

PERSUASION.

"Man’s life is like a Sparrow, mighty King!
That—while at banquet with your Chiefs you sit
Housed near a blazing fire—is seen to fly
Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,
Here did it enter; there, on hasty wing,
Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;
But when once it came we know not, nor behold
Whither it goes. Even such, that transient Thing,
The human Soul; not utterly unknown
While in the Body lodged, her warm abode;
But from what world She came, what woe or weal
On her departure waits, no tongue hath shown;
This mystery if the Stranger can reveal,
His be a welcome cordially bestowed!"

XVII.

CONVERSION.

Prompt transformation works the novel Lore;
The Council closed, the Priest in full career
Rides forth, an armed man, and hurles a spear
To desecrate the Fame which heretofore
He served in folly. Woden falls, and Thor
Is overturned; the mace, in battle heaved
(No might they dream) till victory was achieved,
Drops, and the God himself is seen no more.
Temple and Altar sink, to hide their shame
Amid oblivious weeds. "O come to me,
Ye heavy laden!" such the inviting voice
Heard near fresh streams; and thousands, who
rejoice
In the new Rite—the pledge of sanctity,
Shall, by regenerate life, the promise claim.

XVIII.

APOLLODY.

Nor scorn the aid which Fancy oft doth lend
The Soul’s eternal interests to promote:
Death, darkness, danger, are our natural lot;
And evil Spirits may our walk attend
For aught the wisest know or comprehend;
Then be good Spirits free to breathe a note
Of elevation; let their odours float
Around these Converts; and their glories blend,
The midnight stars outshining, or the blaze
Of the noon-day. Nor doubt that golden cords
Of good works, mingling with the visions, raise
The Soul to purer worlds: and echo the line
Shall draw, the limits of the power define,
That even imperfect faith to man affords.

XIX.

PRIMITIVE SAXON CLERGY.

How beautiful your presence, how benign,
Servants of God! who not a thought will share
With the vain world; who, outwardly as bare
As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign
That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine!
Such Priest, when service worthy of his care
Has called him forth to breathe the common air,
Might seem a saintly Image from its shrine
Descended:—happy are the eyes that meet
The Apparition; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low-bowed necks entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand;
Whence grace, through which the heart can understand,
And vows, that bind the will, in silence made.

XX.

OTHER INFLUENCES.

Ah, when the Body, round which in love we hung,
Is chilled by death, does mutual service fail?
Is tender pity then of no avail?
Are intercessions of the fervent tongue
A waste of hope!—From this sad source have
Rites that console the Spirit, under grief [sprung
Which ill can break more rational relief:
Hence, prayers are shaped amiss, and dirges sung
For Souls whose doom is fixed! The way is smooth
For Power that travels with the human heart:
Confession ministers the pang to soothe
In him who at the ghost of guilt doth start.
Ye holy Men, so earnest in your care,
Of your own mighty instruments beware!
XXI.

SECLUSION.

LANCE, shield, and sword relinquished—at his side
A beak-roll, in his hand a chapleted book,
Or staff more harmless than a shepherd's crook,
The war-worn Chieftain quits the world—to hide
His thin autumnal locks where Monks abide
In cloistered privacy. But not to dwell
In soft repose he comes. Within his cell,
Round the decaying trunk of human pride,
At morn, and eve, and midnight's silent hour,
Do penitential cogitations cling;
Like ivy, round some ancient elm, they twine
In gnarly folds and strictures serpentine;
Yet, while they strangle, a fair growth they bring,
For recompence—their own perennial bower.

XXII.

CONTINUED.

METHINKS that to some vacant hermitage
My feet would rather turn—to some dry nook
 Scooped out of living rock, and near a brook
Hurled down a mountain-cove from stage to stage,
Yet tempering, for my sight, its bustling rage
In the soft heaven of a translucent pool;
Thence creeping under sylvan arches cool,
Fit haunt of shapes whose glorious equipage
Would elevate my dreams. A beechen bowl,
A maple dish, my furniture should be;
Cripe, yellow leaves my bed; the hooting owl
My night-watch: nor should e'er the crested fowl
From thorp or vill his matins sound for me,
Tired of the world and all its industry.

XXIII.

REPROOF.

But what if One, through grove or flowery mead,
Indulging thus at will the creeping feet
Of a voluptuous indolence, should meet
Thy hovering Shade, O venerable Bede!
The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
Of Learning, where thou heard'st the billows beat
On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
Perpetual industry. Sublime Recuse!
The recrement soul, that dares to shun the debt
Imposed on human kind, must first forget
Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use
Of a long life; and, in the hour of death,
The last dear service of thy passing breath *!

* He expired dictating the last words of a translation
  of St. John's Gospel.

XXIV.

SAXON MONASTERIES, AND LIGHTS AND SHADES OF
THE RELIGION.

By such examples moved to unbought pains,
The people work like congregated bees;
Eager to build the quiet Fortresses
Where Piety, as they believe, obtains
From Heaven a general blessing; timely rains
Or needful sunshine; prosperous enterprise,
Justice and peace:—hold faith! yet also rise
The sacred Structures for less doubtful gains.
The Sensual think with reverence of the palms
Which the chaste Volaries seek, beyond the grave;
If penance be redeemable, thence alms
Flow to the poor, and freedom to the slave;
And if full oft the Sanctuary save
Lives black with guilt, ferocity it calms.

XXV.

MISSIONS AND TRAVELS.

Nor sedentary all: there are who roam
To scatter seeds of life on barbarous shores;
Or quit with zealous step their knee-worn floors
To seek the general mart of Christendom;
Whence they, like richly-laden merchants, come
def To their beloved cells:—or shall we say
That, like the Red-cross Knight, they urge their way,
To lead in memorable triumph home
Truth, their immortal Una! Babylon,
Learned and wise, hath perished utterly,
Nor leaves her Speech one word to aid the sigh
That would lament her:—Memphis, Tyre, are gone
With all their Arts,—but classic lore glides on
By these Religious saved for all posterity.

XXVI.

ALFRED.

BEHOLD a pupil of the monkish gown,
The pious ALFRED, King to Justice dear!
Lord of the harp and liberating spear;
Mirror of Princes! Indigent Renown
Might range the starry ether for a crown
Equal to his deserts, who, like the year,
Pours forth his bounty, like the day doth cheer,
And awes like night with mercy-tempered frown.
Ease from this noble miser of his time
No moment steals; pain narrows not his cares*.
Though small his kingdom as a spark or gum,
Of Alfred boasts remote Jerusalem,
And Christian India, through her wide-spread clime
In sacred converse gifts with Alfred shares.

* See Note.
XXVII.
HIS DESCENDANTS.
When thy great soul was freed from mortal chains,
Daring of England! many a bitter shower
Fell on thy tomb; but emulate power
Flowed in thy line through degenerate veins.
The Race of Alfred coveted glorious pains
When dangers threaten, dangers ever new!
Black tempests bursting, blacker still in view!
But manly sovereignty its hold retains;
The root sincere, the branches bold to strive
With the fierce tempest, while, within the round
Of their protection, gentle virtues thrive;
As oft, mid some green plot of open ground,
Wide as the oak extends its dewy gleam,
The fostered hyacinths spread their purple bloom.

XXVIII.
INFLUENCE ABUSED.
Urged by Ambition, who with subtlest skill
Changes her means, the Enthusiast as a dupe
Shall soar, and as a hypocrite can stoop,
And turn the instruments of good to ill,
Moulding the credulous people to his will.
Such Dunstan:—from its Benedictine coop
Issues the master Mind, at whose fell swoop
The chaste affections tremble to fulfill
Their purposes. Behold, pre-signified,
The Might of spiritual sway! his thoughts, his dreams,
Do in the supernatural world abide:
So vaunt a throng of Followers, filled with pride
In what they see of virtues pushed to extremes;
And sorceries of talent misapplied.

XXIX.
DANISH CONQUESTS.
Woe to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey*
! Dissension, checking arms that would restrain
The incessant Rovers of the northern main,
Helps to restore and spread a Pagan sway:
But Gospel-truth is potent to allay
Fierceness and rage; and soon the cruel Dane
Feels, through the influence of her gentle reign,
His native superstitions melt away.
Thus, often, when thick gloom the east overshrouds,
The full-orbed Moon, slow-climbing, doth appear
Silently to consume the heavy clouds;
How no one can resolve; but every eye
Around her sees, while air is hushed, a clear
And widening circuit of ethereal sky.

* See Note.

XXX.
CANUTE.
A PLEASANT music floats along the Mere,
From Monks in Ely chanting service high,
While-as Canute the King is rowing by:
[hear,
"My Oarsmen," quoth the mighty King, "draw
That we the sweet song of the Monks may hear!"
He listens (all past conquests and all schemes
Of future vanishing like empty dreams)
Heart-touched, and haply not without a tear.
The Royal Minstrel, ere the choir is still,
While his free Barge skims the smooth flood along,
Gives to that rapture an accordant Rhyme*.
O suffering Earth! be thankful; sternest clime
And rudest age are subject to the thrill
Of heaven-descended Piety and Song.

XXXI.
THE NORMAN CONQUEST.
The woman-hearted Confessor prepares
The evanescence of the Saxon line.
Hark! 'tis the tolling Curfew!—the stars shine;
But of the lights that cherish household cares
And festive gladness, burns not one that dares
To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine,
Emblem and instrument, from Thames to Tyne,
Of force that daunts, and cunning that endures!
Yet as the terrors of the lordly bell,
That quench, from hut to palace, lamps and fires,
Touch not the tapers of the sacred quires;
Even so a thralldom, studious to expel
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,
To Creed or Ritual brings no fatal change.

XXXII.
COLDLY we spake. The Saxons, overpowered
By wrong triumphant through its own excess,
From fields laid waste, from house and home
devoured
By flames, look up to heaven and crave redress
From God's eternal justice. Pitiless
Though men be, there are angels that can feel
For wounds that death alone has power to heal,
For penitent guilt, and innocent distress.
And has a Champion risen in arms to try
His Country's virtue, fought, and breathes no more;
Him in their hearts the people canonize;
And far above his minc's most precious ore
The least small pittance of bare mould they prize
Scooped from the sacred earth where his dear relics lie.

* Which is still extant.
XXXIII.

THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT.

"And shall," the Pontiff asks, "profaneness flow
From Nazareth—source of Christian piety,
From Bethlehem, from the Mounts of Agony
And glorified Ascension! Warriors, go,
With prayers and blessings we your path will sow;
Like Moses hold our hands erect, till ye
Have chased far off by righteous victory
These sons of Amalek, or laid them low!"—
"God willeth it," the whole assembly cry;
Shout which the enraptured multitude astounds!
The Council roof and Clermont’s towers reply:
"God willeth it," from hill to hill rebounds,
And, in awe-stricken Countries far and nigh,
Through ‘Nature’s hollow arch’ that voice resounds*.

XXXIV.

CRUSADES.

The turbanned Race are poured in thickening swarms
Along the west; though driven from Aquitaine,
The Crescent glitters on the towers of Spain;
And soft Italia feels renewed alarms;
The semitar, that yields not to the charms
Of ease, the narrow Bosphorus will disdain;
Nor long (that crossed) would Greedan hills detain
Their tents, and check the current of their arms.
Then blame not those who, by the mightiest lever
Known to the moral world, Imagination,
Upheave, so seems it, from her natural station
All Christendom:—they sweep along (was never
So huge a host!)—to tear from the Unbeliever
The precious Tomb, their haven of salvation.

XXXV.

RICHARD I.

REDOUTED King, of courage leonine,
I mark thee, Richard! urgent to equip
Thy warlike person with the staff and scrip;
I watch thee sailing o’er the midland brine;
In conquered Cyprus see thy Bride decline
Her blushing cheek, love-vows upon her lip,
And see love-emblems streaming from thy ship,
As thence she holds her way to Palestine.
My Song, a fearless homager, would attend
Thy thundering battle-axe as it cleaves the press
Of war, but duty summons her away
To tell—how, finding in the rash distress
Of those Enthusiasts a subservient friend,
To giddier heights hath clomb the Papal sway.

* The decision of this council was believed to be instantly known in remote parts of Europe.

XXXVI.

AN INTERLECT.

Realms quake by turns; proud Arbiter of grace,
The Church, by mandate shadowing forth the power
She arrogates o’er heaven’s eternal door,
Closes the gates of every sacred place.
Straight from the sun and painted air’s embrace
All sacred things are covered: cheerful morn
Grows sad as night—no seemly garb is worn,
Nor is a face allowed to meet a face
With natural smiles of greeting. Bells are dumb;
Ditches are graves—funereal rites denied;
And in the church-yard he must take his bride
Who dares be wedded! Fancies thickly come
Into the pensive heart ill fortified,
And comfortless despair the soul benumb.

XXXVII.

PAPAL ABUSES.

As with the Stream our voyage we pursue,
The gross materials of this world present
A marvellous study of wild accident;
Uncouth proximities of old and new;
And bold transfigurations, more untrue
(As might be deemed) to disciplined intent
Than aught the sky’s fantastic element,
When most fantastic, offers to the view.
Saw we not Henry sequestred at Becket’s shrine?
Lo! John self-stripped of his insignia:—crown,
Sceptre and manile, sword and ring, laid down
At a proud Legate’s feet! The spears that line
Baronial halls, the opprobrious insult feel;
And angry Ocean roars a vain appeal.

XXXVIII.

SCENE IN VENICE.

BLACK Demons hovering o’er his mitred head,
To Cesar’s Successor the Pontiff spake;
"Ere I absolve thee, stoop! that on thy neck
"Levelled with earth this foot of mine may tread."
Then he, who to the altar had been led,
He, whose strong arm the Orient could not check,
He, who had held the Souldan at his beck,
Stopt, of all glory disenchanted,
And even the common dignity of man!—
Amazement strikes the crowd: while many turn
Their eyes away in sorrow, others burn
With scorn, invoking a vindictive ban
From outraged Nature; but the sense of most
In abject sympathy with power is lost.
XXXIX.

PAPAL DOMINION.

UNLESS to Peter's Chair the viewless wind
Must come and ask permission when to blow,
What further empire would it have! for now
A ghostly Domination, unconfined
As that by dreaming Bards to Love assigned,
Sits there in sober truth—to raise the low,
Perplex the wise, the strong to overthrow;
Through earth and heaven to bind and to unbind!
—Resist—the thunder railes thee!—crouch—rebuff
Shall be thy recompence! from land to land
The ancient thrones of Christendom are stuff
For occupation of a magic wand,
And 'tis the Pope that wields it:—whether rough
Or smooth his front, our world is in his hand!

—

PART II.

TO THE CLOSE OF THE TROUBLES IN THE REIGN OF

CHARLES I.

I.

How soon—alas! did Man, created pure—
By Angels guarded, deviate from the line
Prescribed to duty:—woeful forfeiture
He made by wilful breach of law divine.
With like perverseness did the Church abjure
Obedience to her Lord, and haste to twine
Mid Heaven-born flowers that shall for aye endure,
Weeds on whose front the world had fixed her sign.
O Man,—if with thy trials thus it fares,
If good can smooth the way to evil choice,
From all rash censure be the mind kept free;
He only judges right who weighs, compares,
And, in the sternest sentence which his voice
Pronounces, ne'er abandons Charity.

II.

From false assumption rose, and fondly hail'd
By superstition, spread the Papal power;
Yet do not deem the Autocracy prevail'd
Thus only, even in error's darkest hour. [tower
She daunts, forth-thundering from her spiritual
Brute rapine, or with gentle lure she tames,
Justice and Peace through Her uphold their claims;
And Chastity finds many a sheltering bower.
Realm there is none that if controul'd or sway'd
By her commands partakes not, in degree,
Of good, o'er manners arts and arms, diffused:
Yes, to thy domination, Roman See,
Tho' miserably, oft monstrously, abused
By blind ambition, be this tribute paid.

III.

CISTERNIAN MONASTERY.

“HERE Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,
More promptly rises, walks with stricter heed,
More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains withal
“A brighter crown.””—On yon Cisterian wall
That confident assurance may be read;
And, to like shelter, from the world have fled
Increasing multitudes. The potent call
Doubtless shall cheat full oft the heart's desires;
Yet, while the rugged Age on plant knee
Vows to rapt Fancy humble fealty,
A gentler life spreads round the holy spires;
Where'er they rise, the sylvan waste retire,
And airy harvests crown the fertile lea.

IV.

DEPLORABLE his lot who tills the ground,
His whole life long tills it, with heartless toil
Of villain-service, passing with the soil
To each new Master, like a steer or hound,
Or like a rooted tree, or stone earth-bound;
But mark how gladly, through their own domains,
The Monks relax or break these iron chains;
While Mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound
Echoed in Heaven, cries out, “Ye Chiefs, abate
These legalized oppressions! Man—whose name
And nature God disdained not; Man—whose soul
Christ died for—cannot forfeit his high claim
To live and move exempt from all control
Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate!”

V.

MONKS AND SCHOOLMEN.

Record we too, with just and faithful pen,
That many hooded Cenobites there are,
Who in their private cells have yet a care
Of public quiet; unambitious Men,
Counsellors for the world, of piercing ken;
Whose fervent exhortations from afar
Move Princes to their duty, peace or war;
And oft-times in the most forbidding den
Of solitude, with love of science strong,
How patiently the yoke of thought they bear!
How subtly glide its finest threads along!
Spirits that crowed the intellectual sphere
With many boundaries, as the astronomer
With orb and cycle girds the starry thron.

* See Note.
VI.
OTHER BENEFITS.
And, not in vain embodied to the sight,
Religion finds even in the stern retreat
Of feudal sway her own appropriate seat;
From the collegiate pomp on Windsor’s height
Down to the humbler altar, which the Knight
And his Retainers of the embattled hall
Seek in domestic oratory small,
For prayer in stillness, or the chanted rite;
Then chiefly dear, when fees are planted round,
Who teach the intrepid guardians of the place—
Hourly exposed to death, with famine worn,
And suffering under many a perilous wound—
How sad would be their daring, if forlorn
Of offices dispensing heavenly grace!

VII.
CONTINUED.
And what melodious sounds at times prevail!
And, ever and anon, how bright a gleam
Pours on the surface of the turbid Stream!
What heartfult fragrance mingles with the gale
That swells the bosom of our passing sail!
For where, but on this River’s margin, blow
Those flowers of chivalry, to bind the brow
Of hardness with wreaths that shall not fail!—
Fair Court of Edward! wonder of the world!
I see a matchless blazonry unfurled
Of wisdom, magnanimity, and love;
And meekness tempering honourable pride;
The lamb is couching by the lion’s side,
And near the flame-eyed eagle sits the dove.

VIII.
CRUSADEaRS.
Fare we the sails, and pass with tardy oars
Through these bright regions, casting many a glance
Upon the dream-like issues—the romance
Of many-coloured life that Fortune pours
Round the Crusaders, till on distant shores
Their labours end; or they return to lie,
The vew performed, in cross-legged effigy,
Devently stretched upon their chanzel floors.
Am I deceived! or is their requiem chanted
By voices never mute when Heaven unites
Her inmost, softest, tenderest harmonies;
Requiem which Earth takes up with voice undaunted,
When she would tell how Brave, and Good, and Wise,
For their high guerdon not in vain have panted!

IX.
As faith thus sanctified the warrior’s crest
While from the Papal Unity there came,
What feebler means had fail’d to give, one aim
Diffused thro’ all the regions of the West;
So does her Unity its power attest
By works of Art, that shed, on the outward frame
Of worship, glory and grace, which who shall blame
That ever looked to heaven for final rest?
Hail countless Temples! that so well befit
Your ministry; that, as ye rise and take
Form spirit and character from holy writ;
Give to devotion, wheresoe’er awake,
Finions of high and higher sweep, and make
The unconverted soul with awe submit.

X.
Wherea long and deeply hath been fixed the root
In the blest soil of gospel truth, the Tree,
(Blighted or seathd tho’ many branches be,
Put forth to winder, many a hopeful shoot)
Can never cease to bear celestial fruit.
Witness the Church that oft times, with effect
Dear to the saints, strives earnestly to eject
Her bane, her vital energies recruit.
Lamenting, do not hopelessly repine
When such good work is doomed to be undone,
The conquest lost that were so hardly won;—
All promises vouchsafed by Heaven will shine
In light confirmed while years their course shall run,
Confirmed alike in progress and decline.

XI.
TRANSUBSTANTIATION.
Enough! for see, with dim association
The tapers burn; the odorous incense feeds
A greedy flame; the pompous mass proceeds;
The Priest bestows the appointed consecration;
And, while the Hour is raised, its elevation
An awe and supernatural horror breeds;
And all the people bow their heads, like reeds
To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.
This Valdo brooks not. On the banks of Rhone
He taught, till persecution chased him hence,
To adore the Invisible, and Him alone.
Nor are his Followers loth to seek defence,
Mid woods and wilds, on Nature’s craggy throne,
From rites that trample upon soul and sense.
XII.
THE VAUDOIS.

But whence came they who for the Saviour Lord
Have long bourn witness as the Scriptures teach—
Ages ere Valdo raised his voice to preach
In Gallic ears the unadulterate Word,
Their fugitive Progenitors explored
Subalpine vales, in quest of safe retreats
Where that pure Church survives, though summer
heats
Open a passage to the Romish sword,
Far as it dares to follow. Herbs self-sown,
And fruitage gathered from the chestnut wood,
Nourish the sufferers there; and mists, that brood
O'er charms with new-fallen obstacles bestrown,
Protect them; and the eternal snow that daunts
Aliens, is God's good winter for their haunts.

XIII.

PRAISED be the Rivers, from their mountain springs
Shouting to Freedom, "Plant thy banners here!"
To harassed Piety, "Dismiss thy fear,
And in our caverns smooth thy ruffled wings!"
Nor be unheeded their final lingering—
Silent, but not to high-souled Passion's ear—
'Mid reedy fens wide-spread and marshes drear,
Their own creation. Such glad welcomings
As P3 was heard to give where Venice rose
Hailed from aloft those Heirs of truth divine
Who near his fountains sought obscure repose,
Yet came prepared as glorious lights to shine,
Should that be needed for their sacred Charge;
Blest Prisoners They, whose spirits were at large!

XIV.

WALDENSEES.

Those had given earliest notice, as the dark
Springs from the ground the morn to gratulate;
Or rather rose the day to antedate,
By striking out a solitary spark,
[dark.]
When all the world with midnight gloom was
Then followed the Waldensian bands, whom Hate
In vain endeavours to exterminate,
Whom Obscenity pursues with hideous bark*:
But they resist not—and the sacred fire
Rekindled thus, from deus and savage woods
Moves, handed on with never-ceasing care,
Through courts, through camps, o'er liminary floods;
Nor lacks this sea-girt Isle a timely share
Of the new Flame, not suffer'd to expire.

* See Note.

XV.

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY TO HENRY V.

WHAT beast in wilderness or cultured field
"The lively beauty of the leopard shows!
What flower in meadow-ground or garden grows
"That to the towering lily doth not yield!
"Let both meet only on thy royal shield!
"Goft forth, great King! claim what thy birth bestows;
"Conquer the Gallic lily which thy foes
"Dare to usurp—thou hast a sword to wield,
"And Heaven will crown the right."—The mitred

Sire
Thus spake—and lo! a Fleet, for Gaul address,
Ploughs her bold course across the wondering seas;
For, south to say, ambition, in the breast
Of youthful heroes, is no sullen fire,
But one that leaps to meet the fanning breeze.

XVI.

WARS OF YORK AND LANCASTER.

Thus is the storm abated by the craft
Of a shrewd Councilor, eager to protect [checked,
The Church, whose power hath recently been
Whose monstrous riches threatened. So the shaft
Of victory mounts high, and blood is quaffed
In fields that rival Creasy and Poictiers—
Pride to be washed away by bitter tears!
For deep as hell itself, the avenging draught
Of civil slaughter. Yet, while temporal power
Is by these shocks exhausted, spiritual truth
Maintains the else endangered gift of life;
Proceeds from infancy to lusty youth;
And, under cover of this woeful strife,
Gathers unblighted strength from hour to hour.

XVII.

WYCLIFFE.

Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wycliffe disdained:
Yes, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels near; [hear
Forthwith, that ancient Voice which Streams can
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind)—
"As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt bear
Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
"Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
Into main Ocean they, this deed secure
"An emblem yields to friends and enemies
"How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
"By truth, shall spread, throughout the world
dispersed."
XVIII.

CORRUPTIONS OF THE HIGHER CLERGY.

"Woe to you, Prelates! rioting in ease
And cumbersome wealth—the shame of your estate;
You, on whose progress dazzling trains await
Of pompous horses; whom vain titles please;
Who will be served by others on their knees,
Yet will yourselves to God no service pay;
Pastors who neither take nor point the way
To Heaven; for, either lost in vanities
You have no skill to teach, or if you know
And speak the word—" Alas! of fearful things
'Tis the most fearful when the people's eye
Abuse hath cleared from vain imaginings;
And taught the general voice to prophesy
Of Justice armed, and Pride to be laid low.

XIX.

ABUSE OF MONASTIC POWER.

And what is Penance with her knotted thong;
Mortification with the shirt of hair,
Wan cheek, and knees indurated with prayer,
Vigils, and fastings rigorous as long;
If cloistered Avarice scruple not to wrong
The pious, humble, useful Secular,
And rob the people of his daily care,
Scorning that world whose blindness makes her strong!
Inversion strange! that, unto One who lives
For self, and struggles with himself alone,
The slightest share of heavenly favour gives;
That to a Monk allotls, both in the esteem
Of God and man, place higher than to him
Who on the good of others builds his own!

XX.

MONASTIC VOLUPTUOUSNESS.

Yet more—round many a Convent’s blazing fire
Unshallowed threads of revelry are spun;
There Venus sits disguised like a Nun,—
While Bacchus, clothed in semblance of a Friar,
Pours out his choicest beverage high and higher
Sparkling, until it cannot choose but run
Over the bowl, whose silver lip hath won
An instant kiss of masterful desire—
To stay the precious waste. Through every brain
The domination of the sprightly juice
Spreads high conceits to madding Fancy dear,
Till the arched roof, with resolute abuse
Of its grave echoes, swells a choral strain,
Whose votive burthen is—"Our Kingdom’s here!"

XXI.

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES.

Threats come which no submission may assuage
No sacrifice avert, no power dispute;
The tapers shall be quenched, the bellfries mute,
And, ‘mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
The warbling wreath shall find a leafy cage;
The gadding brahmlle hang her purple fruit;
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.
The owl of evening and the woodland fox
For their abode the shrines of Waltham choose;
Froud Glastonbury can no more refuse
To smop her head before these desperate shocks—
She whose high pomp displaced, as story tells,
Arinashean Joseph’s wattled cells.

XXII.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

The lovely Nun (submissive, but more meek
Through saintly habit than from effort due
To unrelenting mandates that pursue
With equal warmth the steps of strong and weak)
Goes forth—unveiling timidly a cheek
Suffused with blushes of celestial hue,
While through the Convent’s gate to open view
Softly she glides, another home to seek.
Not Iris, issuing from her cloudy shrine,
An Apparition more divinely bright!
Not more attractive to the dazzled sight
Those watery glories, on the stormy brine
Poured forth, while summer suns at distance shine,
And the green vales lie hushed in sober light!

XXIII.

CONTINUED.

Yet many a Novice of the cloistered shade,
And many chained by vows, with eager glee
The warrant hail, exulting to be free;
Like ships before whose keels, full long engayed
In polar ice, precipitous winds have made
Unlooked-for outlet to an open sea,
Their liquid world, for bold discovery,
In all her quarters temptingly displayed!
Hope guides the young; but when the old must pass
The threshold, whither shall they turn to find
The hospitality—the alms (alsah!)
Alms may be needed which that House bestowed!
Can they, in faith and worship, train the mind
To keep this new and questionable road?
XXIV.
SAINTS.
Ye, too, must fly before a chasing hand,
Angels and Saints, in every hamlet mourn'd!
Ah! if the old idolatry be spurn'd,
Let not your radiant Shapes desert the Land:
Her adoration was not your demand,
The fond heart proffer'd it—the servile heart;
And therefore are ye summoned to depart,
Michael, and thou, St. George, whose flaming brand
The Dragon quelled; and valiant Margaret
Whose rival sword a like Opponent slew:
And rapt Cecilia, seraph-haunted Queen
Of harmony; and weeping Magdalene,
Who in the penitential desert met
Gales sweet as those that over Eden blew!

XXV.
THE VIRGIN.
Mother! whose virgin bosom was unrost
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean toss'd;
Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
As to a visible Power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in Thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrestrial!

XXVI.
APOLOGY.
Not utterly unworthy to endure
Was the supremacy of crafty Rome;
Age after age to the arch of Christendom
Aerial keystone haughtily secure;
Supremacy from Heaven transmitted pure,
As many hold; and, therefore, to the tomb
Pass, some through fire—and by the scaffold some—
Like saintly Fisher, and unbending More.
'Lightly for both the bosom's lord did sit
'Upon his throne;' unsoftened, undismay'd
By sault that mingled with the tragic scene
Of pity or fear; and More's gay genius played
With the insensate sword of native wit,
Than the bare axe more luminous and keen.
XXX.

THE POET AT ISSUE.

For what contend the wise—for nothing less
Than that the Soul, freed from the bonds of Sense,
And to her God restored by evidence
Of things not seen, drawn forth from their recess,
Root there, and not in forms, her holiness:—
For Faith, which to the Patriarchs did dispense
Sure guidance, ere a ceremonial fence
Was needful round men thirsting to transgress:—
For Faith, more perfect still, with which the Lord
Of all, himself a Spirit, in the youth
Of Christian aspiration, deigned to fill
The temples of their hearts who, with his word
Informed, were resolute to do his will,
And worship him in spirit and in truth,

XXXI.

EDWARD VI.

'Sweet is the holiness of Youth'—so felt
Time-honoured Chaucer speaking through that Lay
By which the Prioress beguiled the way,
And many a Pilgrim's rugged heart did melt.
Hast thou, loved Bard! whose spirit often dwelt
In the clear land of vision, but foreseen
King, child, and seraph, blended in the men
Of pious Edward kneeling as he knelt
In meek and simple infancy, what joy
For universal Christendom had thrilled
Thy heart! what hopes inspired thy genius, skilled
(O great Precursor, genuine morning Star)
The lucid shafts of reason to employ,
Piercing the Papal darkness from afar!

XXXII.

EDWARD SINGING THE WARRANT FOR THE
EXECUTION OF JOHN OF KENT.

The tears of man in various measure gush
From various sources; gently overflow
From blissful transport some—from clefts of woe
Some with ungovernable impulse rush;
And some, coeval with the earliest blush
Of infant passion, scarcely dare to show
Their pearly lustre—coming but to go;
And some break forth when others' sorrows crush
The sympathising heart. Nor these, nor yet
The noblest drops to admiration known,
To gratitude, to injuries forgiven—
Claim Heaven's regard like waters that have wet
The innocent eyes of youthful Monarchs driven
To pen the mandates, nature doth disown.

XXXIII.

REVIVAL OF POPE

The saintly Youth has ceased to rule, disrowned
By unrelenting Death. 0 People keen
For change, to whom the new looks always green!
Rejoicing did they cast upon the ground
Their Gods of wood and stone; and, at the sound
Of counter-proclamation, now are seen,
(Proud triumph is it for a fallen Queen!) 0
Lifting them up, the worship to confound
Of the Most High. Again do they invoke
The Creature, to the Creature glory give;
Again with frankincense the altars smoke
Like those the Heavens served; and mass is sung;
And prayer, man's rational prerogative,
Runs through blind channels of an unknown tongue.

XXXIV.

LATIMER AND RIDLEY.

How fast the Marian death-list is unrolled!
See Latimer and Ridley in the might
Of Faith stand coupled for a common flight!
One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)
Transfigured *, from this kindling hath foretold
A torch of inextinguishable light;
The Other gains a confidence as bold;
And thus they foil their enemy's despite.
The penal instruments, the shows of crime,
Are glorified while this once-mitred pair
Of saintly Friends the 'murtherer's chain partake,
Corded, and burning at the social stake:*
Earth never witnessed object more sublime
In constancy, in fellowship more fair!

XXXV.

CRANNER.

Outstretched flame-ward his upbraided hand
(O God of mercy, may no earthly Seat
Of judgment such presumptuous doom repeat!) 0
Amid the shuddering throng doth Cranmer stand;
Firm as the stake to which with iron band
His frame is tied; firm from the naked feet
To the bare head. The victory is complete;
The shrouded Body to the Soul's command
Answers with more than Indian fortitude,
Through all her nerves with finer sense enlaced,
Till breath departs in blissful aspiration:
Thus, 'mid the ghastly ruins of the fire,
Behold the unalterable heart entire,
Emblem of faith untouched, miraculous attesta—

* See Note.
† For the belief in this fact, see the contemporary Historians.
XXXVI.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE TROUBLES OF THE REFORMATION.

Aid, glorious Martyrs, from your fields of light,
Our mortal ken! Inspire a perfect trust
(While we look round) that Heaven’s decrees are
Which few can hold committed to a fight
That shows, or’s on its better side, the might
Of proud Self-will, Rapacity, and Lust,
Of clouds enveloped of pelagic dust,
Which showers of blood seem rather to incite
Than to allay. Anathemas are hurled
From both sides; veteran thunders (the brute test
Of truth) are met by fulminations new—
Tartarean flags are caught at, and unfurled—
Friends strike at friends—the flying shall pursue—
And Victory sickens, ignorant where to rest!

XXXVII.

ENGLISH REFORMERS IN EXILE.

Scattering, like birds escaped the Fowler’s net,
Some seek with timely flight a foreign strand;
Most happy, re-assembled in a land
By dauntless Luther freed, could they forget
Their Country’s woes. But scarcely have they met,
Partners in faith, and brethren in distress,
Free to pour forth their common thankfulness,
Ere hope declines—Their union is best
With speculative notions rashly sown,
Whence thickly-sprouting growth of poisonous
weeds;
Their forms are broken staves; their passions,
That master them. How enviable blest
[seeds
Is he who can, by help of grace, enthrone
The peace of God within his single breast!

XXXVIII.

ELIZABETH.

Hail, Virgin Queen! o’er many an envious bar
Triumphant, snatched from many a treacherous
All hail, sage Lady, whom a grateful Isle
[wile! Hath blest, respiring from that dismal war
Stilled by thy voice! But quickly from afar
Defiance breathes with more malignant aim;
And alien storms with home-bred forments claim
Portentous fellowship. Her silver ear,
By sleepless prudence ruled, glides slowly on;
Unhurt by violence, from menaced taint
Emerging pure, and seemingly more bright
Ah! wherefore yields it to a foul constraint
Black as the clouds its beams dispersed, while shone,
By men and angels blest, the glorious light!

XXXIX.

EMINENT REFORMERS.

Methinks that I could trip o’er heaviest soil,
Light as a buoyant bark from wave to wave,
Were mine the trusty staff that J e w e l gave
To youthful Hooker, in familiar style
The gift exalting, and with playful smile:
For thus equipped, and bearing on his head
The Donor’s farewell blessing, can he dread
Tempest, or length of way, or weight of toil—
More sweet than odours caught by him who sails
Near spic’ry shores of Arabia the blest,
A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,
The freight of holy feeling which we meet,
In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales
From fields where good men walk, or bowers
Wherein they rest.

XL.

THE SAME.

Holy and heavenly Spirits as they are,
Spotless in life, and eloquent as wise,
With what entire affection do they prize
[care
Their Church reformed! labouring with earnest
To battle all that may her strength impair;
That Church, the unperverted Gospel’s seat;
In their affections a divine retreat; [prayer!—
Source of their liveliest hope, and tenderest
The truth exploring with an equal mind,
In doctrine and communion they have sought
Firmly between the two extremes to steer;
But theirs the wise man’s ordinary lot,
To trace right courses for the stubborn blind,
And prophesy to ears that will not hear.

XLI.

DISTRACTIONS.

Men, who have ceased to reverence, soon defy
Their forefathers; lo! sects are formed, and split
With morbid restlessness;—the ecstatic fit
Spreads wide; though special mysteries multiply,
The Saints must govern, is their common cry;
And so they labour, deeming Holy Writ
Disgraced by aught that seems content to sit
Beneath the roof of settled Modesty.
The Romanist exults; fresh hope he draws
From the confusion, craftily incites
The overweening, personates the mad—
To heap disgust upon the worthier Cause:
Totters the Throne; the new-born Church is sad
For every wave against her peace unites.

* See Note.
XLII.

GUNPOWDER PLOT.

Fear hath a hundred eyes that all agree
To plague her beauteous heart; and there is one
(Nor liest that!) which holds communion
With things that were not, yet were meant to be.
Aghast within its gloomy cavity
That eye (which sees as if fulfilled and done
Crimes that might stop the motion of the sun)
Beholds the horrible catastrophe
Of an assembled Senate unredeemed
From subterraneous treason's darkling power:
Merciless act of sorrow infinite!
Worse than the product of that dismal night,
When gushing, copious as a thunder-shower,
The blood of Huguenots through Paris streamed.

XLIII.

ILLUSTRATION.

THE JUNGFRAU AND THE FALL OF THE RHINE NEAR SCHAFHACKEN.

The Virgin Mountain*, wearing like a Queen
A brilliant crown of everlasting snow,
Sheds ruin from her sides; and men below
Wonder that aught of aspect so serene
Can link with desolation. Smooth and green,
And seeming, at a little distance, slow,
The waters of the Rhine; but on they go
Fretting and whitening, keener and more keen;
Till madness seizes on the whole wide Flood,
Turned to a fearful Thing whose nostrils breathe
Blasts of tempestuous smoke—whereewith he tries
To hide himself, but only magnifies;
And doth in more conspicuous torment writhe,
Deafening the region in his ireful mood.

XLIV.

TROUBLES OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

Even such the contrast that, where'er we move,
To the mind's eye Religion doth present;
Now with her own deep quietness content;
Then, like the mountain, thundering from above
Against the ancient pine-trees of the grove
And the Land's humblest comforts. Now her
Recalls the transformation of the flood,
Whose rage the gentle skies in vain reprove,
Earth cannot check. O terrible excess
Of headstrong will! Can this be Piety?
No—some fierce Maniac hath usurped her name;
And scourges England struggling to be free:
Her peace destroyed! her hopes a wilderness!
Her blessings cursed—her glory turned to shame!

* The Jung-frau.

XLV.

LAUD *.

Prejudged by foes determined not to spare,
An old weak Man for vengeance thrown aside,
Land, ' in the painful art of dying' tried,
(Like a poor bird entangled in a snare
Whose heart still flutters, though his wings forbear
To stir in useless struggle) hath relied
On hope that conscious innocence supplied,
And in his prison breathes celestial air.
Why tarries then thy chariot? Wherefore stay,
O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant wheels,
Which thou prepar'st, full often, to convey
(What time a State with madding faction reeks)
The Saint or Patriot to the world that heals
All wounds, all perturbations doth alloy!

XLVI.

AFFLICTIONS OF ENGLAND.

Hear! could'tst thou venture, on thy boldest string,
The faintest note to echo which the blast
Caught from the hand of Moses as it pass'd
O'er Sinai's top, or from the Shepherd-king,
Early awake, by Silo's brook, to sing
Of dread Jehovah; then, should wood and waste
Hear also of that name, and mercy cast
Off to the mountains, like a covering
Of which the Lord was weary. Weep, oh! weep,
Weep with the good, beholding King and Priest
Despised by that stern God to whom they raise
Their suppliant hands; but holy is the feast
He keepeth; like the firmament his ways:
His statutes like the chambers of the deep.

PART III.

FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

I.

I saw the figure of a lovely Maid
Seated alone beneath a darksome tree,
Whose fondly-overhanging canopy
Set off her brightness with a pleasing shade.
No Spirit was she; that my heart betrayed,
For she was one I loved exceedingly;
But while I gazed in tender reverie
(Or was it sleep that with my Fancy played?)
The bright corporeal presence—form and face—
Remaining still distinct grew thin and rare,
Like sunny mist— at length the golden hair,
Shape, limbs, and heavenly features, keeping pace
Each with the other in a lingering race
Of dissolution, melted into air.

* See Note.
II.

PATRIOTIC SYMPATHIES.

LAST night, without a voice, that Vision spake
Fear to my Soul, and sadness which might seem
Wholly disavowed from our present theme;
Yet, my beloved Country! I partake
Of kindred agitation for thy sake;
Thus, too, dost visit oft my midnight dream;
Thy glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that Morning is awake.
If aught impair thy beauty or destroy,
Or but forebode destruction, I deplore
With filial love the sad vicissitude;
If thou hast fallen, and righteous Heaven restore
The prostrate, then my spring-time is renewed,
And sorrow bartered for exceeding joy.

III.

CHARLES THE SECOND.

Who comes—with rapture greeted, and caress'd
With frantic love—his kingdom to regain!
Him Virtue's Nurse, Adversity, in vain
Received, and fostered in her iron breast:
For all she taught of hardiest and of best,
Or would have taught, by discipline of pain
And long privation, now dissolve remain,
Or is remembered only to give zest
To wantoness.—Away, Cireen revels!
But for what gain! if England soon must sink
Into a gulf which all distinction levels—
That bigotry may swallow the good name,
And, with that draught, the life-blood: misery,
shame,
By Poets loathed; from which Historians shrink!

IV.

LATITUDINARIANISM.

Yea Truth is keenly sought for, and the wind
Charged with rich words poured out in thought's defence;
Whether the Church inspire that eloquence,
Or a Platonian Piety confined
To the sole temple of the inward mind;
And One there is who builds immortal lays,
Though doomed to tread in solitary ways,
Darkness before and danger's voice behind;
Yet not alone, nor helpless to repel
Sad thoughts; for from above the starry sphere
Come secrets, whispered nightly to his ear;
And the pure spirit of celestial light
Shines through his soul—'that he may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.'

V.

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES.

THERE are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
Dropped from an Angel's wing. With moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity
In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen:
O could we copy their mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die!
Methinks their very names shine still and bright;
Apart—like glow-worms on a summer night;
Or lonely tapers when from far they fling
A guiding ray; or seen—like stars on high,
Satellites burning in a leaden ring
Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

VI.

CLERICAL INTEGRITY.

NOR shall the eternal roll of praise reject
Those Unconforming; whom one rigorous day
Drives from their Cures, a voluntary prey
To poverty, and grief, and disrespect,
And some to want—as if by tempests wrecked
On a wild coast; how destitute! did they
Feel not that Conscience never can betray,
That peace of mind is Virtue's sure effect.
Their altars they forgo, their homes they quit,
Fields which they love, and paths they daily tread,
And cast the future upon Providence;
As men the dictate of whose inward sense
Outweighs the world; whom self-denouncing wit
Lures not from what they deem the cause of God.

VII.

PERSECUTION OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS.

WHEN Alpine Vales threw forth a suppliant cry,
The majesty of England interposed [closed;
And the sword stopped; the bleeding wounds were
And Faith preserved her ancient purity.
How little boots that preceded of good,
Scorned or forgotten, Thou canst testify,
For England's shame, O Sister Realm! from wood,
Mountain, and moor, and crowded street, where lie
The headless martyrs of the Covenant,
Slain by Compatriot-protestants that draw
From councils senseless as intolerant
Their warrant. Bodies fall by wild sword-law;
But who would force the Soul, titls with a straw
Against a Champion cas'd in adamant.
VIII.

ACQUITAL OF THE BISHOPS.

A voice, from long-expecting thousands sent,
Shatters the air, and troubles tower and spire;
For Justice hath absolved the innocent,
And Tyranny is balked of her desire:
Up, down, the busy Thames—rapid as fire
Coursing a train of gunpowder—it went,
And transport finds in every street a vent,
Till the whole City rings like one vast quire.
The Fathers urge the People to be still, [vain!
With outstretched hands and earnest speech—In
Yea, many, haply wont to entertain
Small reverence for the mitre's offices,
And to Religion's self no friendly will,
A Prelate's blessing ask on bended knees.

IX.

WILLIAM THE THIRD.

Calm as an under-current, strong to draw
Millions of waves into itself, and run,
From sea to sea, impervious to the sun
And ploughing storm, the spirit of Nassau
Swerves not, (how blest if by religious awe
Swayed, and thereby enabled to contend,
With the wide world's commotions) from its end
Swerves not—diverted by a casual law.
Had mortal action e'er a nobler scope?
The Hero comes to liberate, not defy;
And, while he marches on with stedfast hope,
Conqueror beloved! expected anxiously!
The vacillating Bondman of the Pope
Shrinks from the verdict of his stedfast eye.

X.

OBLIGATIONS OF CIVIL TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

UNGRAVATEFUL Country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have bled!
How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
And Russell's milder blood the scaffold wet;
But these had fallen for profitless regret
Had not thy holy Church her champions bred,
And claims from other worlds inspired
The star of Liberty to rise. Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humble franchises support,
However hardly won or justly dear:
What came from heaven to heaven by nature clings,
And, if disinterested, its course is short.

XI.

SACHEREREL.

A sudden conflict rises from the swell
Of a proud slavery met by tonets strained
In Liberty's behalf. Fears, true or feigned,
Spread through all ranks; and lo! the Sentinel
Who lowest rang his pulpit 'harum bell,
Stands at the Bar, absolved by female eyes
Mingling their glances with grave flatteries
Lavished on Him—that England may rebel
Against her ancient virtue. Hour and Low,
Watch-words of Party, on all tongues are rife;
As if a Church, though sprung from heavens, must
To opposites and fierce extremes her life,—[owe
Not to the golden mean, and quiet flow
Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife.

XII.

DOWN a swift Stream, thus far, a bold design
Have we pursued, with livelier stir of heart
Than his who sees, borne forward by the Rhine,
The living landscapes greet him, and depart;
Sees spires fast sinking—up again to start!
And strives the towers to number, that recline
O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon line
Striding with shattered crests his eye athwart.
So have we hurried on with troubled pleasure:
Henceforth, as on the bosom of a stream
That slackens, and spreads wide a watery gleam,
We, nothing loth a lingering course to measure,
May gather up our thoughts, and mark at leisure
How widely spread the interests of our theme.

XIII.

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA.

1.—THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

Well worthy to be magnified are they
Who, with sad hearts, of friends and country took
A last farewell, their loved abodes forsook,
And hallowed ground in which their fathers lay;
Then to the new-found World explored their way,
That so a Church, unforced, uncalled to brook
Rival restraints, within some sheltering nook
Her Lord might worship and his word obey
In freedom. Men they were who could not bend;
Blest Pilgrims, surely, as they took for guide
A will by sovereign Conscience sanctified;
Blest while their Spirits from the woods ascend
Along a Galaxy that knows no end,
But in His glory who for Sinners died.
XIV.

II. CONTINUED.

From Rite and Ordinance abused they fled
To Wilds where both were utterly unknown;
But not to them had Providence foreshown
What benefits are missed, what evils bred,
In worship neither raised nor limited
Save by Self-will. Lo! from that distant shore,
For Rite and Ordinance, Piety is led
Back to the Land those Pilgrims left of yore,
Led by her own free choice. So Truth and Love
By Conscience governed do their steps retrace.—
Fathers! your Virtues, such the power of grace,
Their spirit, in your Children, thus approve.
Transcendent over time, unbound by place,
Concord and Charity in circles move.

XV.

III. CONCLUDED.—AMERICAN EPISCOPACY.

Patriots informed with Apostolic light
Were they, who, when their Country had been freed,
Bowing with reverence to the ancient creed,
Fixed on the frame of England’s Church their sight,
And strove in filial love to reunite
What force had severed. Thence they fetched the seed
Of Christian unity, and won a meed
Of praise from Heaven. To Thee, O sainctly White,
Patriarch of a wide-spreading family,
Remostest lands and unborn times shall turn,
Whether they would restore or build—to Thee,
As one who rightly taught how zeal should burn,
As one who drew from out Faith’s holiest urn
The purest stream of patient Energy.

XVI.

Bishops and Priests, blessed are ye, if deep
(As yours above all offices is high)
Deep in your hearts the sense of duty lie;
Charged as ye are by Christ to feed and keep
From wolves your portion of his chosen sheep:
Labouring as ever in your Master’s sight,
Making your hardest task your best delight,
What perfect glory ye in Heaven shall reap!
—
But, in the solemn Office which ye sought
And undertook premonished, if unsound
Your practice prove, faithless though in thought,
Bishops and Priests, think what a gulf profound
Awaits you then, if they were rightly taught
Who framed the Ordinance by your lives disowned!

XVII.

PLACES OF WORSHIP.

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up in love;
As to the deep fair ships which though they move
Seem fixed, to eyes that watch them from afar;
As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals,
Whose fruit around the sun-burnt Native falls
Of roving tired or desert war—
Such to this British Isle her Christian Fanes,
Each linked to each for kindred services;
Her Spires, her Steeple-towers with glittering vanes
Far-kenned, her Chapels lurking among trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace which a busy world disdains.

XVIII.

PASTORAL CHARACTER.

A genial hearth, a hospitable board,
And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion, where, his flock among,
The learned Pastor dwells, their watchful Lord.
Though meek and patient as a sheathed sword;
Though pride’s least lurking thought appear a wrong
To human kind; though peace be on his tongue,
Gentleness in his heart—can earth afford
Such genuine state, pre-eminence so free,
As when, arrayed in Christ’s authority,
He from the pulpit lifts his awful hand;
Conjures, implores, and labours all he can
For re-subjecting to divine command
The stubborn spirit of rebellious man!

XIX.

THE LITURGY.

Yes, if the intensities of hope and fear
Attract us still, and passionate exercise
Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies
Distinct with signs, through which in set career,
As through a zodiac, moves the ritual year
Of England’s Church; stupendous mysteries!
Which whose travels in her bosom eyes,
As he approaches them, with solemn cheer.
Upon that circle traced from sacred story
We only dare to cast a transient glance,
Trusting in hope that Others may advance
With mind intent upon the King of Glory,
From his mild advent till his countenance
Shall dissipate the seas and mountains hoary.
XX.

BAPTISM.

Dear be the Church, that, watching o’er the needs
Of Infancy, provides a timely shower
Whose virtue changes to a Christian Flower
A Growth from sinful Nature’s bed of weeds! —
Filiest beneath the sacred roof proceeds
The ministration; while parental Love
Look’s on, and Grace descendeth from above
As the high service plagues now, now pleads.
There should vain thoughts outspread their wings
To meet the coming hours of festal mirth; [and fly
The tombs—which hear and answer that brief cry,
The Infant’s notice of his second birth—
Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy
With what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth.

XXI.

SPONSORS.

Father! to God himself we cannot give
A holier name! then lightly do not bear
Both names conjoined, but of thy spiritual care
Be duly mindful: still more sensitive
Do Thou, in truth a second Mother, strive
Against disheartening custom, that by Thee
Watched, and with love and pious industry
Tended at need, the adopted Plant may thrive
For everlasting bloom. Benign and pure
This Ordinance, whether loss it would supply,
Prevent omission, help deficiency,
Or seek to make assurance doubly sure.
Shame if the consecrated Vow be found
An idle form, the Word an empty sound!

XXII.

CATECHISING.

From Little down to Least, in due degree,
Around the Pastor, each in new-wrought vest,
Each with a vernal posy at his breast,
We stood, a trembling, earnest Company!
With low soft murmur, like a distant bee,
Some spoke, by thought-perplexing fears betrayed;
And some a bold unerring answer made:
How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,
Beloved Mother! Thou whose happy hand
Had bound the flowers I wore, with faithful tie:—
Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible command
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-appear:
O lost too early for the frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!

XXIII.

CONFIRMATION.

The Young-ones gathered in from hill and dale,
With holiday delight on every brow:
’Tis passed away; far other thoughts prevail;
For they are taking the baptismal Vow
Upon their conscious selves; their own lips speak
The solemn promise. Strongest sinews fail,
And many a blooming, many a lovely, cheek
Under the holy fear of God turns pale;
While on each head his lawn-robed Servant lays
An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
The Covenant. The Omnipotent will raise
Their feeble Souls; and bear with His regrets,
Who, looking round the fair assemblage, feels
That ere the Sun goes down their childhood sets.

XXIV.

CONFIRMATION CONTINUED.

I saw a Mother’s eye intensely bent
Upon a Maiden trembling as she knelt;
In and for whom the pious Mother felt
Things that we judge of by a light too faint:
Tell, if ye may, some star-crowned Muse, or Saint!
Tell what rushed in, from what she was relieved—
Then, when her Child the hallowing touch received,
And such vibration through the Mother went
That tears burst forth amain. Did gleams appear!
Opened a vision of that blissful place
Where dwells a Sister-child? And was power given
Part of her lost One’s glory back to trace
Even to this Rite? For thus She knelt, and, ere
The summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.

XXV.

SACRAMENT.

By chain yet stronger must the Soul be tied:
One duty more, last stage of this ascent;
Brings to thy food, mysterious Sacrament!
The Offspring, haply at the Parent’s side;
But not till They, with all that do abide
In Heaven, have lifted up their hearts to land
And magnify the glorious name of God,
Fountain of grace, whose Son for sinners died.
Ye, who have duly weighed the summons, pause
No longer; ye, whom to the saving rite
The Altar calls; come early under laws
That can secure for you a path of light
Through gloomiest shade; put on (nor dread its weight)
Armour divine, and conquer in your cause!
ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS.

XXVI.
THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.
The Vested Priest before the Altar stands;  
Approach, come gladly, ye prepared, in sight  
Of God and chosen friends, your truth to plight  
With the symbolic ring, and willing hands  
Solemnly joined. Now sanctify the bands  
O Father!—to the Espoused thy blessing give,  
That mutually assisted they may live  
Obedient, as here taught, to thy commands.  
So prays the Church, to consecrate a Vow  
"The which would endless matrimony make;"  
Union that shadows forth and doth partake  
A mystery potent human love to endow [sake;  
With heavenly, each more prized for the other's  
Weep not, meek Bride! uplift thy timid brow.

XXVII.
THANKSGIVING AFTER CHILDBIRTH.
Woman! the Power that left his throne on high,  
And deigned to wear the robe of flesh we wear,  
The Power that thro' the straits of Infancy  
Did pass dependant on maternal care,  
His own humanity with Thee will share,  
Pleased with the thanks that in his People's eye  
Thou offerest up for safe Delivery  
From Chilbirth's perilous throes. And should the  
Heir  
Of thy fond hopes hereafter walk inclined  
To courses fit to make a mother rue  
That ever he was born, a glance of mind  
Cast upon this observance may renew  
A better will; and, in the imagined view  
Of thee thus kneeling, safety he may find.

XXVIII.
VISITATION OF THE SICK.
The Sabbath bells renew the inviting peal;  
Glad music! yet there be that, worn with pain  
And sickness, listen where they long have lain,  
In sadness listen. With maternal zeal  
Inspired, the Church sends ministers to kneel  
Beside the afflicted; to sustain with prayer,  
And soothe the heart confession hath laid bare—  
That pardon, from God's throne, may set its seal  
On a true Penitent. When breath departs  
From one disburthened so, so comforted,  
His Spirit Angels greet; and ours be hope  
That, if the Sufferer rise from his sick-bed,  
Hence he will gain a firmer mind, to cope  
With a bad world, and foil the Tempter's arts.

XXIX.
THE COMMINATION SERVICE.
Shun not this Rite, neglected, yea abhorred,  
By some of unreflecting mind, as calling  
Man to curse man, (thought monstrous and appalling,)  
Go thou and hear the threatenings of the Lord:  
Listening within his Temple see his sword  
Unsheathed in wrath to strike the offender's head,  
Thy own, if sorrow for thy sin be dead,  
Guilt unrepeint, pardon unimplored.  
Two aspects bears Truth needful for salvation;  
Who knows not that!—yet would this delicate age  
Look only on the Gospel's brighter page;  
Let light and dark duly our thoughts employ;  
So shall the fearful words of Commination  
Yield timely fruit of peace and love and joy.

XXX.
FORMS OF PRAYER AT SEA.
To kneeling Worshippers no earthly floor  
Gives holier invitation than the deck  
Of a storm-shattered Vessel saved from Wreck  
(When all that Man could do avail'd no more)  
By him who raised the Tempest and restrains:  
Happy the crew who this have felt, and pour  
Forth for his mercy, as the Church ordains,  
Solemn thanksgiving. Nor will they implore  
In vain who, for a rightful cause, give breath  
To words the Church prescribes aiding the lip  
For the heart's sake, ere ship with hostile ship  
Encounters, armed for work of pain and death.  
Suppliants! the God to whom your cause ye trust  
Will listen, and ye know that He is just.

XXXI.
FUNERAL SERVICE.
From the Baptismal hour, thro' weal and woe,  
The Church extends her care to thought and deed;  
Nor quits the Body when the Soul is freed,  
The mortal weight cast off to be laid low.  
Blest Rite for him who hears in faith, "I know  
That my Redeemer liveth,"—hears each word  
That follows—striking on some kindred chord  
Deep in the thankful heart;—yet tears will flow.  
Man is as grass that springeth up at morn,  
Grows green, and is cut down and withereth  
Ere nightfall—truth that well may claim a sigh,  
Its natural echo; but hope comes reborn  
At Jesu's bidding. We rejoice, "O Death  
Where is thy Sting!—O Grave where is thy Victory!"
XXXII.
RURAL CEREMONY.*

Closing the sacred Book which long has fed
Our meditations, give we to a day
Of annual joy one tributary lay;
This day, when, forth by rustic music led,
The village Children, while the sky is red
With evening lights, advance in long array
 gay,
Through the still church-yard, each with garland
That, carried sceptre-like, o’er tops the head
Of the proud Bearer. To the wide church-door,
Charged with those offerings which their fathers bore
For decoration in the Papal time,
The innocent Procession softly moves:—
The Spirit of Laud is pleased in heaven’s pure clime,
And Hooker’s voice the spectacle approves!

XXXIII.
REGRETS.

Would that our scrupulous Sires had dared to leave
Less scanty measure of those gracious rites
And usages, whose due return invites
A stir of mind too natural to deceive;
Giving to Memory help when she would weave
A crown for Hope!—I dread the boasted lights
That all too often are but fiery blights,
Killing the bud o’er which in vain we grieve.
Go, seek, when Christmas snows discomfort bring,
The counter Spirit found in some gay church
Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch
In which the linnet or the thrush might sing,
Merry and loud and safe from prying search,
Strains offered only to the genial Spring.

XXXIV.
MUTABILITY.

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical, but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-ancious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shunt that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

* See Note.

XXXV.
OLD ABRETS.

Monastic Domes! following my downward way,
Untouched by due regret I marked your fall!
Now, ruin, beauty, ancient stillness, all
Dispose to judgments temperate as we lay
On our past selves in life’s declining day:
For as, by discipline of Time made wise,
We learn to tolerate the infirmities
And faults of others—generally as he may,
So with our own the mild Instructor deals,
Teaching us to forget them or forgive.
Perversely curious, then, for hidden ill
Why should we break Time’s charitable seals?
Once ye were holy, ye are holy still;
Your spirit freely let me drink, and live!

XXXVI.
EMIGRANT FRENCH CLERGY.

Even while I speak, the sacred roofs of France
Are shattered into dust; and self-exiled
From altars threatened, levelled, or defiled,
Wander the Ministers of God, as chance
Opens a way for life, or conscience
Of faith invites. More welcome to no land
The fugitives than to the British strand,
Where priest and layman with the vigilance
Of true compassion greet them. Creed and test
Vanish before the unreserved embrace
Of catholic humanity:—distrest
They came, and, while the moral tempest roars
Throughout the Country they have left, our shores
Give to their Faith a fearless resting-place.

XXXVII.
CONGRATULATION.

Thus all things lead to Charity, secured
By them who blessed the soft and happy gale
That landward urged the great Deliverer’s sail,
Till in the sunny bay his fleet was moored!
Propitious hour! had we, like them, endured
Sore stress of apprehension *, with a mind
Sickened by injuries, dreading worse designed,
From month to month trembling and unassured,
How had we then rejoiced! But we have felt,
As a loved substance, their futurity:
Good, which they dared not hope for, we have seen;
A State whose generous will through earth is dealt;
A State—which, balancing herself between
Licence and slavish order, dares be free.

* See Note.
XXXVIII.
NEW CHURCHES.

But liberty, and triumph on the Main,
And laureled armies, not to be withstood—
What serve they if, on transitory good
Intent, and sciolous of abject pain,
The State (ah, surely not preserved in vain !)
Forbear to shape due channels which the Flood
Of sacred truth may enter—till it brood
O'er the wide realm, as o'er the Egyptian plain
The all-sustaining Nile. No more—time
Is conscious of her want; through England's bounds,
In rival haste, the wished-for Temples rise!
I hear their sabbath bells' harmonious chime
Float on the breeze—the heaviest of all sounds
That vale or hill prolongs or multiplies!

XXXIX.
CHURCH TO BE ERECTED.

Be this the chosen site; the virgin sod,
Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,
Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive
The corner-stone from hands that build to God.
You reverence hawthorns, hardened to the rod
Of winter storms, yet budding cheerfully;
Those forest oaks of Druid memory,
Shall long survive, to shelter the Abode
Of genuine Faith. Where, haply, 'mid this band
Of daisies, shepherds sat of yore and wove
May-garlands, there let the holy altar stand
For kneeling adoration;—while—above,
Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic Dove,
That shall protect from blasphemy the Land.

XL.
CONTINUED.

Mine ear has rung, my spirit sunk subdued,
Sharing the strong emotion of the crowd,
When each pale brow to dread hosannas bowed
While clouds of incense mounting veiled the roof,
That gimmered like a pine-tree dimly viewed
Through Alpine vapours. Such appalling rite
Our Church prepares not, trusting to the might
Of simple truth with grace divine imbued;
Yet will we not conceal the precious Cross,
Like men ashamed: the Sun with his first smile
Shall greet that symbol crowning the low File:
And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn
Shall woefully embrace it; and green moss
Creep round its arms through centuries unborn.

XLI.
NEW CHURCH-YARD.

The encircling ground, in native turf arrayed,
Is now by solemn consecration given
To social interests, and to favouring Heaven,
And where the rugged colts their gambols play,
And wild deer bounded through the forest glade,
Unchecked as when by merry Outlaw driven,
Shall hymns of praise resound at morn and even;
And soon, full soon, the lonely Sexton's spade
Shall wound the tender sod. Encirclement small,
But infinite its grasp of weal and woe!

Hopes, fears, in never-ending ebb and flow—
The spousal trembling, and the 'dust to dust,'
The prayers, the contrite struggle, and the trust
That to the Almighty Father looks through all.

XLII.
CATHEDRALS, ETC.

Open your gates, ye everlasting Pies!
Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared;
Not loth we quit the newly-hallowed sward
And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous aisles
To kneel, or thrird your intricate defiles,
Or down the nave to pace in motion slow;
Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
And mount, at every step, with living wiles
Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the will
By a bright ladder to the world above.
Open your gates, ye Monuments of love
Divine! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill!
Thou, stately York! and Ye, whose splendours cheer
Isis and Cain, to patient Science dear!

XLIII.
INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Linger—in—wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.
XLIV.

THE SAME.

What awful perspective! while from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their Portraiture, their stone-work glittering,
dyed
In the soft checkers of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or King, orainted Eremite,
Whoever ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!—
But, from the arms of silence—list! O list!
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in maze strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

XLV.

CONTINUED.

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly’s dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops; or let my path
Lead to that younger File, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity’s embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England’s overflowing Dead.

XLVI.

EXACULATION.

Glory to God! and to the Power who came
In filial duty, clothed with love divine,
That made his human tabernacle shine
Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame;
Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name
From roseate hues, far kenned at morn and even,
In hours of peace, or when the storm is driven
Along the nether region’s rugged frame!
Earth prompts—Heaven urges; let us seek the
light,
Studios of that pure intercourse begun
When first our infant brows their lustre won;
So, like the Mountain, may we grow more bright
From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
At the approach of all-involving night.

XLVII.

CONCLUSION.

Why sleeps the future, as a snake enrolled,
Coil within coil, at noon-tide! For the Word
Yields, if with unpremeditated faith explored,
Power at whose touch the sluggard shall unfold
His drowsy rings. Look forth!—that Stream
behold,
That Stream upon whose bosom we have passed
Floating at ease while nations have effaced
Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold
Long lines of mighty Kings—look forth, my Soul!
(Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)
The living Waters, less and less by guilt
Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,
Till they have reached the eternal City—built
For the perfected Spirits of the just!
YARROW REVISITED, AND OTHER POEMS,
COMPOSED (TWO EXCEPTED) DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, AND ON THE ENGLISH BORDER,
IN THE AUTUMN OF 1811.

TO
SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.,
AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS,
THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

RYDEAL MOUNT, DEC. 11, 1836.

L

[The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott, and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title Yarrow Revisited will stand in no need of explanation, for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.]

The gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or sought, a 'winsome Marrow,'
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle boughs, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly,—
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;
If, then, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvius's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorrento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!
O! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
With Strength, her venturesous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must require Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer!
Yes, what were mighty Nature's self!
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us!

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections;
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark enter'd;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timely was mounted
By the 'last Minstrel,' (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

II.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM
ABROSESDORD, FOR NAPLES.

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe
strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.

Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers in nobler rhyme
Than sceptred king or laureled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Waiting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

III.

A PLACE OF BURIAL IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND.

Part fenced by man, part by a rugged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-yard lies;
The heart's best couching-place for fearless sleep;
Which moonlit elves, far seen by evelalous eyes,
Enter in dance. Of church, or sabbath ties,
No vestige now remains; yet thither creep
Bereft Ones, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked skies.

Proud tomb is none; but rudeely-sculptured knights,
By humble choice of plain old times, are seen
Level with earth, among the hillecks green:
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring thickets ring
With jubilant from the choirs of spring!
IV.
ON THE SITE OF A MANSE IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND.

Say, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills—
Among the happiest-looking homes of men
Scatter’d all Britain over, through deep glen,
On airy upland, and by forest rills,
And o’er wide plains cheered by the lark that trills
His sky-born warblings—does o’er meet your ken
More fit to animate the Poet’s pen,
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the Abode
Of the good Priest: who, faithful through all hours
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and flowers,
Enjoys the walks his predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers.

V.
COMPOSED IN ROSLIN CHAPEL, DURING A STORM.

The wind is now thy organis—\(\text{a chank}^1\)
(We know not whence) ministers for a bell
To mark some change of service. As the swell
Of music reached its height, and even when sank
The notes, in prelude, Roslin! to a blank
Of silence, how it thrilled thy sumptuous roof,
Pillars, and arches,—not in vain time-proof,
Though Christian rites be wanting! From what bank
Came those live herbs! by what hand were they
\(\text{bown}^2\)\(\text{[unknwn]}^3\)?
Where dew falls not, where rain-drops seem
Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche \(\text{grown}\),
Share with their sculptured fellows, that, green,
Copy their beauty more and more, and preach,
Though mute, of all things blending into one.

VI.
THE TROSSACHS.

There’s not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confession for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it ‘mid Nature’s old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October’s workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

VII.
THE PIBROCH’S NOTE, DISCOURTENANCED OR MUTE;
The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy;
The target mouldering like ungathered fruit;
The smoking steam-boat eager in pursuit,
As eagerly pursued; the umbrella spread
To weather-fend the Celtic herdsman’s head—
All speak of manners withering to the root,
And of old honours, too, and passions high:
Then may we ask, though pleased that thought
Among the conquests of civility, should range
Survives imagination—to the change
Superior! Help to virtue does she give?
If not, O Mortals, better cease to live!

VIII.
COMPOSED IN THE GLEN OF LOCH ETIVE.

“Thus Land of Rainbows spanning glens whose walls,
Rock-built, are hung with rainbow-coloured veils—
Of far-stretched Mores whose salt flood never rests—
Of tuneful Caves and playful Waterfalls—
Of Mountains varying momentarily their crests—
Proud be this Land! whose poorest huts are halls
Where Fancy entertains becoming guests;
While native song the heroic Past recals.”
Thus, in the net of her own wishes caught,
The Muse exclaimed; but Story now must hide
Her trophies, Fancy crouch; the course of pride
Has been diverted, other lessons taught,
That make the Patriot-spirit bow her head
Where the all-conquering Roman feared to tread.

IX.
EAGLES.

COMPOSED AT DUNOLLIE CASTLE IN THE BAY OF ORAN.

DISHONOURED Rock and Ruin! that, by law
Tyrannts, keep the Bird of Jove embarr’d
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared.
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last I saw
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck with awe
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a consort paired,
From a bold headland, their loved sery’s guard,
Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.
Such was this Prisoner once; and, when his plumes
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,
Then, for a moment, he, in spirit, resumes
His rank ‘mong freeborn creatures that live free,
His power, his beauty, and his majesty.
X.

IN THE SOUND OF MULL.

Tradition, be thou mute! Oblivion, throw
Thy veil in mercy o'er the records, hung
Round strath and mountain, stamped by the ancient
On rock and ruin darkening as we go.—[tongue
Spots where a word, ghost-like, survives to show
What crimes from hate, or desperate love, have sprung;
From honour misconceived, or fancied wrong,
What feuds, not quenched but fed by mutual woe.
Yet, though a wild vindictive Race, untamed
By civil arts and labours of the pen,
Could gentleness be scorned by those fierce Men,
Who, to spread wide the reverence they claimed
For patriarchal occupations, named
Yon towering Peaks, 'Shepherds of Etive Glen*!'

XI.

SUGGESTED AT TYNDBRIN IN A STORM.

Enough of garlands, of the Arcadian crook,
And all that Greece and Italy have sung
Of Swains reposing myrtle groves among!
Ours couch on naked rocks,—will cross a brook
Swirl with chill rains, nor ever cast a look
This way or that, or give it even a thought
More than by smoothest pathway may be brought
Into a vacant mind. Can written book
Teach what they learn! Up, hardy Mountaineer!
And guide the Bard, ambitious to be One
Of Nature's privy council, as thou art,
On cloud-sequestered heights, that see and hear
To what dread Powers He delegates his part
On earth, who works in the heaven of heavens,
alone.

XII.

THE EARTH OF BREADALBANE'S RUINED MANSION,
AND FAMILY BURIAL-PLACE, NEAR KILFIN.

Well sang the Bard who called the gravee, in strains
Thoughtful and sad, the 'narrow house.' No style
Of fond sepulchral flattery can beguile
Grief of her sting; nor cheat, where detains
The sleeping dust, stern Death. How reconcile
With truth, or with each other, decked remains
Of a once warm Abode, and that new Pile,
For the departed, built with curious pains
And mausoleum pomp! Yet here they stand
Together,—mid trim walks and arful bowers,
To be looked down upon by ancient hills,
That, for the living and the dead, demand
And prompt a harmony of genuine powers;
Concord that elevates the mind, and stills.

* In Gaelic, Beasaidh Rithe.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1831.

Ere the mock Saint, Columba, bore
Glad tidings to Iona’s shore,
No common light of nature blessed
The mountain region of the west,
A land where gentle manners ruled
O'er men in dauntless virtues schooled,
That raised, for centuries, a bar
Impervious to the tide of war:
Yet peaceful Arts did entrance gain
Where haughty Force had striven in vain;
And, 'mid the works of skilful hands,
By wanderers brought from foreign lands
And various elims, was not unknown
The clasp that fixed the Roman Gown;
The Fibula, whose shape, I ween,
Still in the Highland Broach is seen,
The silver Broach of massy frame,
Worn at the breast of some grave Dame
On road or path, or at the door
Of thatch or thatched but on heathy moor:
But delicate of yore its mould,
And the material finest gold;
As might beseeem the fairest Fair,
Whether she graced a royal chair,
Or shed, within a vaulted hall,
No fancied lustre on the wall
Where shields of mighty heroes hung,
While Fingal heard what Ossian sung.

The heroic Age expired—it slept
Deep in its tomb— the bramble crept
O'er Fingal's hearth; the grassy sod
Grew on the floors his sons had trod:
Malvina! where art thou? Their state
The noblest-born must abdicate;
The fairest, while with fire and sword
Come Spoliers—hordes impelling hordes,
Must walk the sorrowing mountains, drest
By ruder hands in homelier vest.
Yet still the female bosom lent,
And loved to borrow, ornament;
Still was its inner world a place
Reached by the dew of heavenly grace;
Still pity to this last retreat
Clove fondly; to his favourite seat
Love wound his way by soft approach,
Beneath a masnier Highland Broach.

When alternations came of rage
Yet fiercer, in a darker age;
And feuds, where, clan encountering clan,
The weaker perished to a man;
For maid and mother, when despair
Might else have triumphed, baffling prayer,
One small possession lacked not power,
Provided in a calmer hour,
To meet such need as might befall—
Roof, raiment, bread, or burial:
For woman, even of tears bereft,
The hidden silver Broach was left.

As generations come and go
Their arts, their customs, ebb and flow;
Fate, fortune, sweep strong powers away,
And feeble, of themselves, decay;
What poor abodes the heir-loom hide,
In which the castle once took pride!
Tokens, once kept as boasted wealth,
If saved at all, are saved by stealth.
Lo! ships, from seas by nature barred,
Mount along ways by man prepared;
And in far-stretching vales, whose streams
Seek other seas, their canvass gleams.
Lo! busy towns spring up on coasts
Thronged yesterday by airy ghosts;
Soon, like a lingering star forlorn
Among the novelties of morn,
While young delights on old encroach,
Will vanish the last Highland Broach.

But when, from out their viewless bed,
Like vapours, years have rolled and spread;
And this poor verse, and worship lay’d,
Shall yield no light of love or praise;
Then, by the spade, or cleaving plough,
Or torrent from the mountain’s brow,
Or whirlwind, reckless what his might
Entombs, or forces into light;
Blind Chance, a volunteer ally,
That oft befriends Antiquity,
And clears Oblivion from reproach,
May render back the Highland Broach.

* How much the Broach is sometimes prized by persons in humble stations may be gathered from an occurrence mentioned to me by a female friend. She had had an opportunity of bestowing a poor old woman in her own hut, who, wishing to make a return, said to her daughter, in Erse, in a tone of plaintive earnestness: "I would give anything I have, but I hope she does not wish for my Broach"! And, uttering these words, she put her hand upon the Broach which fastened her kerchief, and which, she imagined, had attracted the eye of her benefactress.
XVI.

THE BROWNIE.

[ Upon a small island not far from the head of Loch Lomond, are some remains of an ancient building, which was for several years the abode of a solitary individual, one of the last survivors of the clan of Macfarlane, once powerful in that neighbourhood. Passing along the shore opposite this island in the year 1814, the Author learned these particulars, and that this person then living there had acquired the appellation of 'The Brownie.' See "The Brownie's Cell," p. 231, to which the following is a sequel.]

'How disappeared he!' Ask the newt and toad;
Ask of his fellow men, and they will tell
How he was found, cold as an icicle,
Under an arch of that forlorn abode;
Where he, unpropped, and by the gathering flood
Of years hemm'd round, had dwelt; prepared to try
Privation's worst extremities, and die
With no one near save the omnipresent God.
Verily so to live was an awful choice—
A choice that wears the aspect of a doom;
But in the mould of mercy all is cast
For Souls familiar with the eternal Voice;
And this forgotten Taper to the last
Drove from itself, we trust, all frightful gloom.

XVII.

TO THE PLANET VENUS, AN EVENING STALL.

COMPOSED AT LOCH LOMOND.

Though joy attend Thee orient at the birth
Of dawn, it cheers the lofty spirit most
To watch thy course when Day-light, fled from earth,
In the grey sky hath left his lingering Ghost,
Perplexed as if between a splendour lost
And splendour slowly mustering. Since the Sun,
The absolute, the world-absorbing One,
Relinquished half his empire to the host
Emboldened by thy guidance, holy Star,
Holy as princeley, who that looks on thee
Teaching, as now, in thy humility
The mountain borders of this seat of care,
Can question that thy countenance is bright,
Celestial Power, as much with love as light!

XVIII.

BOTHWELL CASTLE.

(Passed unseen, on account of stormy weather.)

Imured in Bothwell's towers, at times the Brave
(So beautiful is Clyde) forgot to mourn
The liberty they lost at Bannockburn.
Once on those steeps I roamed at large, and have

In mind the landscape, as if still in sight;
The river glides, the woods before me wave;
Then why repine that now in vain I crave
Needless renewal of an old delight!
Better to thank a dear and long-past day
For joy its sunny hours were free to give
Than blame the present, that our wish hath creast.
Memory, like sleep, hath powers which dreams obey,
Dreams, vivid dreams, that are not fugitive:
How little that she cherishes is lost!

XIX.

PICTURE OF DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN, AT HAMILTON PALACE.

Amid a fertile region green with wood
And fresh with rivers, well did it become
The ducal Owner, in his palace-home
To naturalise this tawny Lion brood;
Children of Art, that claim strange brotherhood
(Couched in their den) with those that roam at large
Over the burning wilderness, and charge
The wind with terror while they rear for food.
Satiate are these; and stilled to eye and ear;
Hence, while we gaze, a more enduring fear!
Yet is the Prophet calm, nor would the cave
Daunt him—if his Companions, now be-drowsed
Outstretched and listless, were by hunger roused:
Man placed him here, and God, he knows, can save.

XX.

THE AVON.

(A FEEDER OF THE ANNAN.)

Avon—a precious, an immortal name!
Yet is it one that other rivulets bear
Like this unheard-of, and their channels wear
Like this contended, though unknown to Fame:
For great and sacred is the modest claim
Of Streams to Nature's love, where'er they flow;
And ne'er did Genius slight them, as they go,
Tree, flower, and green herb, feeding without blame.
But Praise can waste her voice on work of tears,
Anguish, and death: full oft where innocent blood
Has mixed its current with the limpid flood,
Her heaven-offending trophies Glory roars:
Never for like distinction may the good
Shrink from thy name, pure Rill, with unpleased ears.
XXII.

SUGGESTED BY A VIEW FROM AN EMINENCE IN INGLEWOOD FOREST.

The forest huge of ancient Caledon
Is but a name, no more is Inglewood,
That swept from hill to hill, from flood to flood:
On her last thorn the nightly moon has shine;
Yet still, though unappropos Wild be none,
Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell might reign:
With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive again,
To kill for merry feast their venison.

Nor wants the holy Abbot's gliding Shade
His church with monumental wreck bestrown;
The feudal Warrior-chief, a Ghost unlay'd,
Hath still his castle, though a skeleton,
That he may watch by night, and lessons con
Of power that perishes, and rights that fade.

HART'S-HORN TREE, NEAR PENRITH.

Here stood an Oak, that long had borne affixed
To his huge trunk, or, with more subtle art,
Among its withering topmost branches mixed,
The palmest antlers of a hunted Hart,
Whom the Dog Hercules pursued—his part
Each desperately sustaining, till at last
Both sank and died, the life-veins of the chased
And chaser bursting here with one dire smart.

Mutual the victory, mutual the defeat!
High was the trophy hung with pitiless pride;
Say, rather, with that generous sympathy
That wants not, even in rudest breasts, a seat;
And, for this feeling's sake, let no one chide
Verse that would guard thy memory, HART'S-HORN TREE*!

XXIII.

FANCY AND TRADITION.

The Lovers took within this ancient grove
Their last embrace; beside those crystal springs
The Hermit saw the Angel spread his wings
For instant flight; the Sage in yon aloe
Sate musing; on that hill the Bard would rove,
Not mute, where now the linnet only sings:
Thus every where to truth Tradition clings,
Or Fancy localises Powers we love.

Were only History licensed to take note
Of things gone by, her meagre monuments
Would ill suffice for persons and events:
There is an ampler page for man to quote,
A reader book of manifold contents,
Studied alike in palace and in cot.

* See Note.

XXIV.

COUNTESS' PILLAR.

[On the roadside between Penrith and Appleby, there stands a pillar with the following inscription:—]

'This pillar was erected, in the year 1636, by Anne Countess Dowager of Pembroke, &c. for a memorial of her last parting with her pious mother, Margaret Countess Dowager of Cumberland, on the 24th of April, 1616: in memory whereof she hath left an annuity of 4l. to be distributed to the poor of the parish of Brougham, every 24th day of April for ever, upon the stone table placed hard by. Laus Deo!]

While the Poor gather round, till the end of time
May this bright flower of Charity display
Its bloom, unfolding at the appointed day;
Flower than the loveliest of the vernal prime
Lovelier—transplanted from heaven's purest clime!
Charity never failth: * on that creed,
More than on written testament or deed,
The pious Lady built with hope sublime.
Aims on this stone to be dealt out, for ever!
LAUS DED.' Many a Stranger passing by
Has with that Pirating mixed a fillial sigh,
Blest its humane Memorial's fond endeavour;
And, fastening on those lines an eye tear-glazed,
Has ended, though no Clerk, with 'God be praised!'

XXV.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES.

(From the Roman Station at Old Penrith.)

How profitless the relics that we call
Troubling the last holds of ambitious Rome,
Unless they chasten fancies that presume
Too high, or idle agitations half!

Of the world's flatteries if the brain be full,
To have no seat for thought were better doom,
Like this old helmet, or the eyesless skull
Of him who gloried in its nodding plume.

Heaven out of view, our wishes what are they!
Our fond regrets tenacious in their grasp!
The Sage's theory! the Poet's lay!—
Mere Fables without a robe to clasp;
Obsolete lamps, whose light no time recalls;
Urns without ashes, tearsless lacrymals!

XXVI.

APOLOGY,

FOR THE FOREGOING POEMS.

No more: the end is sudden and abrupt,
Abrupt—as without preconceived design
Was the beginning; yet the several Lays
Have moved in order, to each other bound
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

By a continuous and acknowledged tie
Though unapparent—like those Shapes distinct
That yet survive ensculptured on the walls
Of palaces, or temples, 'mid the wreck
Of famed Persepolis; each following each,
As might beseeam a stately embassy,
In set array; these bearing in their hands
Ensign of civil power, weapon of war,
Or gift to be presented at the throne
Of the Great King; and others, as they go
In priestly vest, with holy offerings charged,
Or leading victims drest for sacrifice.
Nor will the Power we serve, that sacred Power,
The Spirit of humanity, disdain
A ministration humble but sincere,
That from a threshold loved by every Muse
Its impulse took—that sorrow-stricken door,

Whence, as a current from its fountain-head,
Our thoughts have issued, and our feelings flowed,
Receiving, willingly or not, fresh strength
From kindred sources; while around us sighed
(Life's three first seasons having passed away)
Leaf-scattering winds; and hoar-frost sprinklings fell
(Foretaste of winter) on the moorland heights;
And every day brought with it tidings new
Of rash change, ominous for the public weal.
Hence, if dejection has too oft encroached
Upon that sweet and tender melancholy
Which may itself be cherished and caressed
More than enough; a fault so natural
(Even with the young, the hopeful, or the gay)
For prompt forgiveness will not sue in vain.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

I.

Calm is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
Day's grateful warmth, tho' moist with falling dew.
Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
Look up a second time, and, one by one,
You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
And wonder how they could elude the sight!
The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers:
Nor does the village Church-clock's iron tone
The time's and season's influence disown;
Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
In drowsy sequence—how unlike the sound
That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
On fireside listeners, doubting what they hear!
The shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
Had closed his door before the day was done,
And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
And joins his little children in their sleep.
The bat, hurled forth where trees the lane o'ershade,
Flits and reflits along the close arcade;
The busy dun-lark chases the white moth
With burnings note, which Industry and Sloth
Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
A stream is heard—I see it not, but know
By its soft music whence the waters flow:

Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
One boat was there, but it will touch the shore
With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
Might give to serious thought a moment's sway,
As a last token of man's toilsome day!

II.

ON A HIGH PART OF THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND.

Easter Sunday, April 7.

THE AUTHOR'S SIXTY-THIRD BIRTH-DAY.

The Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
Look round!—of all the clouds not one is moving;
'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
Silent, and stedfast as the vaulted sky,
The boundless plain of waters seems to lie—
Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
No; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
Whispering how meek and gentle he can be!
EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

Thou Power supreme! who, arming to rebuke
Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
Of ocean roused into his fiercest mood,
Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
For the brief course that must for me remain;
Teach me with quick-cared spirit to rejoice
In admonitions of thy softest voice!
Whatever the path these mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear,
Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!

III.

(by the sea-side.)

The sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;
Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives,
Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion! soon will it be hald,
And by the tide alone the water swayed.
Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings mild
Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
The soothing recumbence, the welcome change.
Where now the ships that drove before the blast,
Threatened by angry breakers as they passed;
And by a train of flying clouds bemocked;
Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked.
As on a bed of death! Some lodge in peace,
Saved by His care who bade the tempest cease;
And some, too heedless of past danger, court
Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off port;
But near, or hanging sea and sky between,
Not one of all those winged powers is seen.
Seem in her course, nor would this quiet heard;
Yet oh! how gladly would the air be stirred
By some acknowledgment of thanks and praise,
Soft in its temper as those vesper rays
Sung to the Virgin while accordant ears
Urged the slow bark along Calabrian shores;
A sea-born service through the mountains felt
Till into one loved vision all things melt:
Or like those hymns that soothe with graver sound.
The gully coast of Norway iron-bound;
And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise
With punctual care, Lutheran harmonies.
Hush, not a voice is here! but why repine,
Now when the star of eve comes forth to shine
On British waters with that look benign!
Ye mariners, that plough your onward way,
Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,
May silent thanks at least to God be given
With a full heart; ' our thoughts are heard in heaven'!

IV.

Not in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing-times of that poor slave
Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's cave—
Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,
Which practiced talent readily affords,
Prove that her hand has touched responsive chords;
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move
With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craving for passion's sake;
Untaught that meekness is the cherished bent
Of all the truly great and all the innocent.

But who is innocent! By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
To all that Earth from pensive hearts is stealing,
And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo—
Care may be respite, but not repose;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field.
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts cease,
Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the Soul's deliverance;
To the discontented Intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.

V.

(by the side of Rydal mere.)

The linnet's warble, sinking towards a close,
Hints to the thrush 'tis time for their repose;
The shrill-voiced thrush is heedless, and again
The monitor revives his own sweet strain;
But both will soon be mastered, and the copse
Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding star dismisses to rest
The throng of rooks, that now, from twig or nest,
(After a steady flight on home-bound wings,
And a last game of lazy hoverings
Around their ancient grove) with cawing noise
Disturb the liquid music's equipoise.

O Nightingale! Who ever heard thy song
Might here be moved, till Fancy grows so strong
That listening sense is pardonly cheated
Where wood or stream by thee was never greeted.
Surely, from fairest spots of favoured lands,
Were not some gifts withheld by jealous hands,
This hour of deepening darkness here would be
As a fresh morning for new harmony;
And lays as prompt would hail the dawn of Night:
A dawn she has both beautiful and bright,
When the East kindles with the full moon's light;
Not like the rising sun's impatient gaze
Dazzling the mountains, but an overflow
Of solemn splendour, in mutation slow.

Wanderer by spring with gradual progress led,
For away profusely felt as widely spread;
To king, to peasant, to rough sailor, dear,
And to the soldier's trumped-wearied ear;
How welcome wouldst thou be to this green Vale
Fairer than Tempe! Yet, sweet Nightingale!
From the warm breeze that bears thee on, alight
At will, and stay thy migratory flight;
Build, at thy choice, or sing, by pool or fount,
Who shall complain, or call thee to account?
The wisest, happiest, of our kind are they
That ever walk content with Nature's way,
God's goodness—measuring bounty as it may;
For whom the gravest thought of what they miss,
Chastening the fulness of a present bliss,
Is with that wholesome office satisfied,
While unrepining sadness is allied
In thankful bosoms to a modest pride.

VI.

Soft as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere
Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
And motionless; and, to the gazer's eye,
Deepest than ocean, in the immensity
Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!
But, from the process in that still retreat,
Turn to minutest changes at our feet;
Observe how dewy Twilight has withdrawn
The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,
And has restored to view its tender gem.
That, while the sun rode high, was let last
Their dazzling sheen.
—An emblem this of what the sober heart
Can do for minds disposed to feel in poor:
Thus oft, when we in vain have wish'd to say
The petty pleasures of the garish sky,
Meeke eye abhors up the whole surging vast
(Unashamed dwarfs each glittering at his feet)
And leaves the disremembered spirit free
To reassemble a staid simplicity.

'Tis well—but what are lessons of this at all
When wisdom stands in need of nature's grove?
Why do good thoughts, invoked or not, forego
Like Angels from their bowers, our virtue's friend?
If yet To-morrow, unbelied, may say,
"I come to open out, for fresh display,
The elasic vanities of yesterday!"

VII.

Tur leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill
And sky that danced among those leaves, were
Rest smooths the way for sleep; in field and vale
Soft shades and dews have shed the drowsy power
On drooping eyelid and the closing brow;
Sound is there none at which the slumbered heart
Might leap, the weakest nerve of supersensual
Save when the Owlet's unexpected Voice
Pierces the ethereal vault; and (mid the fret
Of unsubstantial imagery, the dress,
From the hushed vale's realities, tradition
To the still lake) the imaginative Bird
Seems, 'mid inverted mountains, not abstain
Grave Creature!—whether, while the sun
Shines bright
On thy wings opened wide for smoother flight,
Thou art discovered in a roofless tower,
Rising from what may once have been a bower;
Or spied where thou sittest moping in thy name
At the dim centre of a churchyard yea;
Or, from a lifted crag or ivy top
Deep in a forest, thy secure abode,
Thou giv'st, for pastime's sake, by shrilling grace
A puzzling notice of thy whereabouts;
May the night never come, nor day be seen
When I shall hear thy voice or mock thy song.
In classic ages men perceived a soul
Of sapience in thy aspect, headless Owl!
Thee Athens reverenced in the studious grove;
And, near the golden sceptre grasped by Jove,
His Eagle's favourite perch, while round him sate
The Gods revolving the decrees of Fate.
Thou, too, wert present at Minerva's side:
—Hark to that second larum!—far and wide
The elements have heard, and rock and cave replied.

VIII.

[This *impromptu* appeared, many years ago, among the
Author's poems, from which, in subsequent editions, it
was excluded. It is reprinted, at the request of the
Friend in whose presence the lines were thrown off.]

The sun has long been set,
The stars are out by twoes and threes,
The little birds are piping yet
Among the bushes and trees;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,
And a sound of water that gushes,
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.

Who would 'go parading'
In London, 'and masquerading,'
On such a night of June
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses!
On such a night as this is!

IX.

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY
SplenDor AND BEAUTY.

Had this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endured with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is it—ah no, but what can be!
Time was when field and watery cave
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vesper in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if indubitably repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme!

II.

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beany radiance, that imbues,
What'er it strikes, with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purporeal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, nor can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread!

III.

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
You busy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heaven-ward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may atone his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!
POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

iv.

Such hues from their celestial urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.

This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.

Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From Then if I would serve:

Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored;

My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth!

—'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And night approaches with her shades.

Note.—The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze;—in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode, entitled 'Intimations of Immortality,' pervade the last stanzas of the foregoing Poem.

xiv.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SHORE.

What mischief cleaves to unclouded regret,
How fancy sickens by vague hopes bested;
And fruitless wishes eat the heart away,
The Sailor knows; he best, whose lot is cast
On the relentless sea that holds him fast
On chance dependent, and the fickle star
Of power, through long and melancholy war.
Or sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
Daily to think on old familiar doors,
Hearts loved in childhood, and ancestral floors;
Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
To ruminate on that delightful home
Which with the dear Betrothed was to come;
Or came and was and is, yet meets the eye
Never but in the world of memory;
Or in a dream recalled, whose smoothest range
Is crossed by knowledge, or by dread, of change;

And if not so, whose perfect joy makes sleep
A thing too bright for breathing man to keep.
Hail to the virtues which that perilous life
Extracts from Nature's elemental strife;
And welcome glory won in battles fought
As bravely as the foe was keenly sought.
But to each gallant Captain and his crew
A less imperious sympathy is due,
Such as my verse now yields, while moonbeams play
On the mute sea in this unruffled bay;
Such as will promptly flow from every breast,
Where good men, disappointed in the quest
Of wealth and power and honours, long for rest;
Or, having known the splendours of success,
Sigh for the obscurities of happiness.

xi.

The Crescent-moon, the Star of Love,
Glories of evening, as ye there are seen
With but a span of sky between—
Speak one of you, my doubts remove,
Which is the attendant Page and which the Queen?

xii.

TO THE MOON.

(COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SHORE.—ON THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND.)

Wanderer! that stoop'st so low, and com'st so near
To human life's unsettled atmosphere;
Who lov'st with Night and Silence to partake,
So might it seem, the cares of them that wake;
And, through the cottage-lattice softly peeping,
Doth shield from harm the humblest of the sleeping;

What pleasure once encompassed those sweet names
Which yet in thy behalf the Poet claims,
An idolizing dreamer as of yore!—
I slight them all; and, on this sea-beast shore
Sole-sitting, only can to thoughts attend
That bid me hail thee as the Sailor's Friend;
So call thee for heaven's grace through thee made
known

By confidence supplied and mercy shown,
When not a twinkling star or beacon's light
Abates the perils of a stormy night;
And for less obvious benefits, that find
Their way, with thy pure help, to heart and mind;
Both for the adventurer starting in life's prime;
And veteran ranging round from clime to clime,
EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

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LONG-BAFFLED HOPES SLOW FEVER IN HIS VEINS,
And wounds and weakness oft his labour's sole
remains.

The aspiring Mountains and the winding Streams,
Empress of Night! are gladdened by thy beams;
A look of thine the wilderness pervades,
And penetrates the forest's inmost shades;
Thou, chequering peaceably the minister's gloom,
Guilt of the pale Mourner to the lost one's tomb;
Canst reach the Prisoner—to his grated cell
Welcome, though silent and intangible!—
And lives there one, of all that come and go
On the great waters toiling to and fro,
One, who has watched thee at some quiet hour
Enthroned aloft in undisputed power,
Or crossed by vapoury streaks and clouds that move
Catching the lustre they in part reprove—
Nor sometimes felt a fitness in thy sway
To call up thoughts that shun the glare of day,
And make the happy happier than the gay!

Yes, LOVELY MOON! if thou so mildly bright
Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
To fiercest mood the phrenzy-stricken brain,
Let me a compensating faith maintain;
That there's a sensitive, tender, part
Which thou canst touch in every human heart,
For healing and composure.—But, as least
And mightiest billows ever have confessed
Thy domination; as the whole vast Sea
Feels through her lowest depths thy sovereignty;
So shines that countenance with especial grace
On them who urge the keel her plaine to trace
Furrowing its way right onward. The most rude,
Cut off from home and country, may have stood—
Even till long gazing hath bedimmed his eye,
Or the mute rapture ended in a sigh—
Touched by accordance of thy placid cheer,
With some internal lights to memory dear,
Or fancies stealing forth to soothe the breast
Tired with its daily share of earth's unrest,—
Genteel awakenings, visitations meek;
A kindly influence whereof few will speak,
Though it can wet with tears the hardest cheek.

And when thy beauty in the shadowy cave
Is hidden, buried in its monthly grave;
Then, while the Sailor, mid an open sea
Swept by a favouring wind that leaves thought free,
Paces the deck—no star perhaps in sight,
And nothing save the moving ship's own light
To cheer the long dark hours of vacant night—

OFT WITH HIS MUSINGS DOES THY IMAGE BLEND,
In his mind's eye thy crescent horns ascend,
And thou art still, O Moon, that SAINT'S FRIEND!

1833.

XIII.

TO THE MOON.

(By the.)

QUEEN OF THE STARS!—SO GENTLE, SO BENEIGN,
That ancient Fable did to thee assign,
When darkness creeping o'er thy silver brow
Warned thee these upper regions to forego,
Alternate empire in the shades below—
A Bard, who, lately near the wide-spread sea
Traversed by gleaning ships, looked up to thee
With grateful thoughts, doth now thy rising hail
From the close confines of a shadowy vale
Glory of night, conspicuous yet serene,
Nor less attractive when by glimpses seen
Through cloudy umbrage, well might that fair face
And all those attributes of modest grace,
In days when FANCY wrought unchecked by fear,
Down to the green earth fetch thee from thy sphere,
To sit in leafy woods by fountains clear!

O still belov'd (for thine, meek POWER, are charms
That fascinate the very BAKE in arms,
While he, uplifted towards thee, laugheth outright,
Spreading his little palms in his glad Mother's sight)
O still belov'd, once worshipped! Time, that frowns
In his destructive flight on earthly crowns,
Sparest thy mild splendour; still those far-shot beams
Tremble on dancing waves and rippling streams
With stainless touch, as chaste as when thy praise
Was sung by Virgin-choirs in festal lays;
And through dark trials still dost thou explore
Thy way for increase punctual as of yore,
When teeming Matrons—yielding to rude faith
In mysteries of birth and life and death
And painful struggle and deliverance—prayed
Of thee to visit them with lenient aid.
What though the rites be swept away, the fanes
Extinct that echoed to the votive strains;
Yet thy mild aspect does not, cannot, cease
Love to promote and purity and peace;
And Fancy, unrefined, even yet may trace
Faint types of suffering in thy beamless face.

Then, silent Monitress! let us—not blind
To worlds unthought of till the searching mind
Of Science laid them open to mankind—
Told, how, the voiceless heavens declare
God's glory; and acknowledging thy share
In that same charge, let me—without offence
To sought of highest, holiest, influence—
Receive whatever good 's given thee to disperse.
May sage and simple, catching with one eye
The moral intimations of the sky,
Learn from the course, where'er their own he taken,
"To look on tempest, and be never shaken;"
To keep with faithful step the appointed way
Eclipsing or eclipsed, by night or day,
And from example of thy monthly range
Gently to break decline and fatal change;
Moc, patient, steadfast, and with lesser scope,
Than thy revival yields, for gladness sake?  

POEMS,

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR, IN THE SUMMER OF 1833.

[Having been prevented by the lateness of the season, in 1833, from visiting Staffa and Iona, the author made these the principal objects of a short tour in the summer of 1833, of which the following series of poems is a Memorial. The course pursued was down the Cumberland river Derwent, and to Whitehaven; thence (by the Isle of Man, where a few days were passed) up the Firth of Clyde to Greenock, thence to Oban, Staffa, Iona; and back towards England, by Loch Awe, Inverary, Loch Gelt-head, Greenock, and through parts of Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and Dumfriesshire to Carlisle, and thence up the river Eden, and homewards by Ulswater.]

I.

Anstey, Rydalian Laurels! that have grown
And spread as if ye knew that days might come
When ye would shelter in a happy home,
On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown
To see the God; but, haunting your green shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
Ground-flowers, beneath your guardianship, self born.

Farewell! no Minstrels now with harp new-strung
For summer wandering quit their household bowers;
Yet not for this wants Poesy a tongue
To cheer the Itinerant on whom she pours
Her spirit, while he crosses lonely moors,
Or muses sits forsaken halls among.

II.

Why should the Enthusiast, journeying through this Isle
Repine as if his hour were come too late!
Not unprotected in her mouldering state,
Antiquity salutes him with a smile,
Mild fruitful fields that ring with joyous toil,
And pleasure-grounds where Taste, refined Co-mate

Of Truth and Beauty, strives to imitate,
Far as she may, primeval Nature's style.
Fair Land! by Time's parental love made free,
By Social Order's watchful arms embraced;
With unexamined union meet in thee,
For eye and mind, the present and the past;
With golden prospect for futurity,
If that be reverence which ought to last.

III.

They called Thee Merry England, in old time;
A happy people won for thee that name
With envy heard in many a distant clime;
And, spite of change, for me thou keep'st the same
Endearing title, a responsive chime
To the heart's fond belief; though some there are
Whose sterner judgments deem that word a snare
For insatiable Fancy, like the lime
Which foolish birds are caught with. Can, I ask,
This face of rural beauty be a mask
For discontent, and poverty, and crime;
These spreading towns a cloak for lawless will!—
Forbid it, Heaven!—and Merry England still
Shall be thy rightful name, in prose and rhyme!
IV.

TO THE RIVER GRESTA, NEAR KESWICK.

GRESTA, what fearful listening! when huge stones Rumble along thy bed, block after block: Or, whirling with reiterated shock, Combat, while darkness aggravates the groans: But if thou (like Cocytus from theombs Heard on his rueful margin) thence wert named The Mourner, thy true nature was defamed, And the habitual murmur that tones For thy worst rage, forgotten. Oft as Spring Decks, on thy sinuous banks, her thousand thrones, Seats of glad instinct and love’s caressing, The concert, for the happy, then may vie With liveliest peals of birth-day harmony: To a grieved heart, the notes are benisons.

V.

TO THE RIVER DEWERT.

Among the mountains were we nursed, loved Stream! Thou near the eagle’s nest—within brief sail, I, of his bold wing floating on the gale, Where thy deep voice could call me! Faint the Of human life when first allowed to gleam [beam On mortal notice.—Glory of the vale, Such thy meek outset, with a crown, though frail, Kept in perpetual verdure by the stream Of thy soft breath!—Less vivid wreath entwined Nemesean victor’s brow: less bright was worn, Meed of some Roman chief—in triumph borne With captives chained; and shedding from his car The sunset splendours of a finished war Upon the proud enslavers of mankind!

VI.

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKERMOUTH.

(Where the Author was born, and his Father’s remains are laid.) A point of life between my Parents’ dust, And yours, my buried Little-ones! am I; And to those graves looking habitually In kindred quiet I repose my trust. Death to the innocent is more than just, And, to the sinner, mercifully bent; So may I hope, if truly I repent And meekly bear the ills which bear I must: And You, my Offspring! that do still remain, Yet may outstrip me in the appointed race, If e’er, through fault of mine, in mutual pain We breathed together for a moment’s space, The wrong, by love provoked, let love arraign, And only love keep in your hearts a place.

VII.

ADDRESS FROM THE SPIRIT OF COCKERMOUTH CASTLE.

“Thou look’st upon me, and dost fondly think, Poet! that, stricken as both are by years, We, differing once so much, are now Compeers, Prepared, when each has stood his time, to sink Into the dust. Erewhile a stern link United us; when thou, in boyish play, Entering my dungeon, didst become a prey To soul-appalling darkness. Not a blink Of light was there;—and thus did I, thy Tutor, Make thy young thoughts acquainted with the grave; While thou wert chasing the wing’d butterfly Through my green courts; or climbing, a bold suitor, Up to the flowers whose golden progeny Still round my shattered brow in beauty wave.”

VIII.

NUN’S WELL, BRIGHAM.

The cattle crowding round this beverage clear To slake their thirst, with reckless foals have trod The encircling turf into a barren cind; Through which the waters creep, then disappear, Born to be lost in Dewert flowing near; Yes, o’er the brink, and round the lime-stone cell Of the pure spring (they call it the “Nun’s Well,” Name that first struck by chance my startled ear) A tender Spirit broods—the pensive Shade Of ritual honours to this Fountain paid By hooded Votaries with saintly cheer; Albeit oft the Virgin-mother mild Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled Into the shedding of “too soft a tear.”

IX.

TO A FRIEND.

(ON THE BANKS OF THE DERWENT.)

Paston and Patriot!—at whose bidding rise These modest walls, amid a flock that need, For one who comes to watch them and to feed, A fixed Abode—keep down pressageful sighs. Threats, which the unthinking only can despise, Perplex the Church; but be thou firm,—be true To thy first hope, and this good work pursue, Poor as thou art. A welcome sacrifice Dost Thou prepare, whose sign will be the smoke Of thy new hearth; and sooner shall its wreaths, Mounting while earth hermornring incense breathes, From wandering fiends of air receive a yoke, And straightway cease to aspire, than God disdain This humble tribute as ill-timed or vain.
X.

MANY QUEENS OF MIND.
[ADAPTED FROM THE SOAMES OF THE SUNSET, WIGNERSON.]  

Dear to the Loos’d, and to the Queen ev’ry word,
The Queen drew back the simple that she wore;
And to the strong, that on the Cambrid shone
Her headless hailed, hour touchingingly she bowed;
And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darting,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The gleams that did the loveliness enhance)
She smiled; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prehensive to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the uncomplained block of Rotheringay!

XI.

STANZAS SUGGESTED IN A STEAM-SHOT OFF SAINT BEES’ HEADS, ON THE COAST OF CUMBRIAN.

1st Life were slumber on a bed of down,
Toil unvisited, vicissitude unknown,
Sad were our lot: no hunter of the hare
Exults like him whose javelin from the hair
Has rushed the lion; no one plucks the rose,
Whose proffered beauty in safe shelter blows
‘Mid a trim garden’s summer luxuries,
With joy like his who climbs, on hands and knees,
For some rare plant, yon Headland of St. Bees.

This independence upon ear and sail,
This new indifference to breeze or gale,
This straight-lined progress, furrowing a flat lea,
And regular as if locked in certainty—
Depress the hours. Up, Spirit of the storm!
That Courage may find something to perform;
That Fortitude, whose blood dissolves to freeze
At Danger’s bidding, may confront the seas,
Firm as the towering Headlands of St. Bees.

Dread cliff of Harthay! that wild wish may sleep,
Bold as if men and creatures of the Deep
Breathed the same element; too many wrecks
Have struck thy sides, too many ghastly decks
Hast thou looked down upon, that such a thought
Should here be welcome, and in verse enounced:
With thy stern aspect better far agrees
Utterance of thanks that we have past with ease,
As millions thus shall do, the Headlands of St. Bees.

Yet, while each useful Art augments her store,
What hosts the gain? Nature should lose more?
And Wisdom, as she holds a Christian place
In man’s intelligence subdued by grace?
When Bega sought of pure the Cambrian coast,
Tempestuous winds her holy errand crossed;
She knew in prayer—she waves their wrath upon:
And, from her own well weighed in Heaven’s decree,
Rose, where she touched the strand, the Chantry
Of St. Bees.

‘Crass of heart were they, bloody of hand,’
Who in those Wilde were struggling for command;
The strong were merciless, without hope the weak;
Till this bright Stranger came, fair as day-break,
And as a crag, true that darts its length
Of bony lustre from a tower of strength;
Guiding the mariner through troubled seas,
And cheering off his peaceful reveries,
Like the fixed Light that crowns yon Headland of
St. Bees.

To aid the Votaries, miracles believed
Wrought in men’s minds, like miracles achieved;
So piteous took root; and Song might tell
What humanizing virtues near her cell
Sprung up, and spread their fragrances wide around;
How savage bosoms melted at the sound
Of gospel-truth enchained in harmonies
Wafted o’er waves, or creeping through close trees,
From her religious Mansion of St. Bees.

When her sweet Voice, that instrument of love,
Was glorified, and took its place, above
The silent stars, among the angelic quire,
Her chaste blazed with sacreligious fire,
And perished utterly; but her good deeds
Had sown the spot, that witnessed them, with seeds
Which lay in earth expectant, till a breeze
With quickening impulse answered their mute pleas,
And lo! a statue pile, the Abbey of St. Bees.

There are the naked cloathed, the hungry fed;
And Charity extendereth to the dead
Her intercessions made for the soul’s rest
Of tardy penitents; or for the best
Among the good (when love might else have slept,
Sickened, or died) in pious memory kept.
Thanks to the austere and simple Devotees,
Who, to that service bound by venial fees,
Keep watch before the altars of St. Bees.

Are not, in sooth, their Requiems sacred ties
Woven out of passion’s sharpest agonies,
Subdued, composed, and formalized by art,
To fix a wiser sorrow in the heart!
The prayer for them whose hour is past away
Says to the Living, profit while ye may!
A little part, and that the worst, he sees
Who thinks that priestly cunning holds the keys
That best unlock the secrets of St. Bees.

Conscience, the timid being's inmost light,
Hope of the dawn and solace of the night,
Cheers these Rechuses with a steady ray
In many an hour when judgment goes astray.
Ah! scorn not hastily their rule who try
Earth to despise, and flesh to mortify;
Consume with zeal, in winged cestasies
Of prayer and praise forget their rosaries,
Nor hear the loudest surges of St. Bees.

Yet none so prompt to succour and protect
The forlorn traveller, or sailor wrecked
On the bare coast; nor do they grudge the boon
Which staff and cockle hat and shallop shew
Claim for the pilgrim: and, though chidings sharp
May sometimes greet the strolling minstrel's harp,
It is not then when, swept with sportive ease,
It charms a feast-day throng of all degrees,
Brightening the archway of revered St. Bees.

How did the cliffs and echoing hills rejoice
What time the Benedictine Brethren's voice,
Imploring, or commanding with meet pride,
Summoned the Chiefs to lay their feuds aside,
And under one blest ensign serve the Lord
In Palestine. Advance, indignant Sword!
Flaming till thou from Panym hands release
That Tomb, dread centre of all sanctities
Nursed in the quiet Abbey of St. Bees.

But look we now to them whose minds from far
Follow the fortunes which they may not share.
While in Judea Fancy loves to roam,
She helps to make a Holy-land at home:
The Star of Bethlehem from its sphere invites
To sound the crystal depth of maiden rights;
And wedded Life, through scriptural mysteries,
Heavenward ascends with all her charities,
Taught by the hooded Collibates of St. Bees.

Nor be it e'er forgotten how by skill
Of cloistered Architects, free their souls to fill
With love of God, throughout the Land were raised
Churches, on whose symbolic beauty gazed
Peasant and mail-clad Chief with pious awe;
As at this day men seeing what they saw,
Or the bare wreck of faith's solemnities,
Aspire to more than earthly destinies;
Witness yon File that greets us from St. Bees.

Yet more; around those Churches, gathered Towns
Safe from the feudal Castle's haughty frowns;
Peaceful abodes, where Justice might uphold
Her scales with even hand, and culture mould
The heart to pity, train the mind in care
For rules of life, sound as the Time could bear.
Nor dost thou fail, theo' abject love of ease,
Or hindrance raised by scordid purposes,
To bear thy part in this good work, St. Bees.

Who with the ploughshare cleave the barren moors,
And to green meadows change the swampy shores!
Thimmed the rank woods; and for the cheerful
grange
Made room where wolf and boar were used to range!
Who taught, and showed by deeds, that gentler chains
Should bind the vassal to his lord's domains!
The thoughtful monks, intent their God to please,
For Christ's dear sake, by human sympathies
Poured from the bosom of thy Church, St. Bees!

But all availed not; by a mandate given
Through lawless will the Brotherhood was driven
Forth from their cells; their ancient House laid low
In Reformation's sweeping overthrow.
But now once more the local Heart revives,
The inextinguishable Spirit strives.
Oh may that Power who hushed the stormy seas,
And cleared a way for the first Votaries,
Prosper the new-born College of St. Bees!

Alas! the Genius of our age, from Schools
Less humble, draws her lessons, aims, and rules.
To Prowess guided by her insight keen
Matter and Spirit are as one Machine;
Bosom! Idolatress of formal skill
She in her own would merge the eternal will:
Better, if Reason's triumphs match with these,
Her flight before the bold credulities
That furthered the first teaching of St. Bees.*

* See Excursion, seventieth part; and Ecclesiastical
Sketches, second part, near the beginning.
XII.

IN THE CHANNEL, BETWEEN THE COAST OF CUMBERRAND AND THE ISLE OF MAN.

Ranging the heights of Scawfell or Black-comb,
In his lone course the Shepherd oft will pause,
And strive to fathom the mysterious laws
By which the clouds, arrayed in light or gloom,
On Mona settle, and the shapes assume
Of all her peaks and ridges. What he draws
From sense, faith, reason, fancy, of the cause,
He will take with him to the silent tomb.
Or, by his fire, a child upon his knee,
Haply the unsought Philosopher may speak
Of the strange sight, nor hide his theory
That satisfies the simple and the meek,
Best in their pious ignorance, though weak
To cope with Sages undeniably free.

XIII.

AT SEA OFF THE ISLE OF MAN.

Bold words affirmed, in days when faith was strong
And doubts and scruples seldom teased the brain,
That no adventurer’s bark had power to gain
These shores if he approached them bent on wrong;
For, suddenly up-conjured from the Main,
Mists rose to hide the Land—that search, though long
And eager, might be still pursued in vain.
O Fancy, what an age was that for song!
That age, when not by love inanimato,
As men believed, the waters were impelled,
The air controlled, the stars their courses held;
But element and orb on acts did wait
Of Powers ensued with visible form, instinct
With will, and to their work by passion linked.

XIV.

DESIRE we past illusions to recall?
To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide
Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn aside?
No,—let this Age, high as she may, instail
In her esteem the thirst that wrought man’s fall,
The universe is infinitely wide;
And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,
Can nowhere move unversed by some new wall
Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,
Imaginative Faith! canst overlap,
In progress toward the fount of Love,—the throne
Of Power whose ministers the records keep
Of periods fixed, and laws established, less
Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

XV.

ON ENTERING DOUGLAS BAY, ISLE OF MAN.

*Digges leide virum Mona vetat mox.*
The feudal Keep, the bastions of Cohorn,
Even when they rose to check or to repel
Tides of aggressive war, oft served as well
Greedy ambition, armed to treat with scorn
Just limits; but ye Tower, whose smiles adorn
This perilous bay, stands clear of all offence;
Blust work it is of love and innocence,
A Tower of refuge built for the else forlorn.
Spare it, ye waves, and lift the mariner,
Struggling for life, into its saving arms!
Spare, too, the human helpers! Do they stir
"Mid your fierce shock like men afraid to die?
No; their dread service nerves the heart it warms,
And they are led by noble Hillary".

XVI.

BY THE SEA-SHORE, ISLE OF MAN.

Why stand we gazing on the sparkling Brine,
With wonder smite by its transparency,
And all-enraptured with its purity—
Because the unstained, the clear, the crystalline,
Have ever in them something of benign;
Whether in gem, in water, or in sky,
A sleeping infant’s brow, or wakeful eye
Of a young maiden, only not divine.
Scarce the hand forbears to dip its palm
For beverage drawn as from a mountain-well.
Temptation centres in the liquid Calm;
Our daily raiment seems no obstacle
To instantaneous plunging in, deep Sea!
And revelling in long embrace with thee†

XVII.

ISLE OF MAN.

A YOUTH too certain of his power to wade
On the smooth bottom of this clear bright sea,
To sight so shallow, with a bather’s glee
Leapt from this rock, and but for timely aid
He, by the alluring element betrayed,
Had perished. Then might Sea-nymphs (and with
Of self-reproach) have chanted elegies  [sighs
Bewailing his sad fate, when he was laid
In peaceful earth: for, doubtless, he was frank,
Utterly in himself devoid of guile;
Knew not the double-dealing of a smile;
Nor aught that makes men’s promises a blank,
Or deadly snare; and He survives to bless
The Power that saved him in his strange distress.

* See Note.
† The sea-water on the coast of the Isle of Man is singularly pure and beautiful.
SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR, 1833.

XVIII.

ISLE OF MAN.

Died pangs of grief for lenient time too keen,
Grief that devouring waves had caused—or guilt
Which they had witnessed, sway the man who built
This Homestead, placed where nothing could be seen,
Nought heard, of ocean troubled or serene!
A tired Ship-soldier on paternal land,
That o'er the channel holds august command,
The dwelling raised,—a veteran Marine.
He, in disgust, turned from the neighbouring sea.
To shun the memory of a lifeless state
That hung between two callings. May no strife
More hurtful here beset him, doomed though free,
Self-doomed, to worse inaction, till his eye
Shrink from the daily sight of earth and sky!

XIX.

BY A RETIRED MARINER.

(A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.)

From early youth I ploughed the restless Main,
My mind as restless as apt to change;
Through every clime and ocean did I range,
In hope at length a competence to gain;
For poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.
Year after year I strove, but strove in vain,
And hardships manifold did I endure,
For Fortune on me never deign'd to smile;
Yet I at last a resting-place have found,
With just enough life's comforts to procure,
In a snug Cove on this our favoured Isle,
A peaceful spot where Nature's gifts abound;
Then sure I have no reason to complain,
Though poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.

XX.

AT BALA-SALA, ISLE OF MAN.

(SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.)

Broken in fortune, but in mind entire
And sound in principle, I seek repose
Where ancient trees this convent-pile enclose,*
In ruin beautiful. When vain desire
Intrudes on peace, I pray the eternal Sire
To cast a soul-soothing shade on me,
A grey-haired, pensive, thankful Refugee;
A shade—but with some sparks of heavenly fire
Once to these cells vouchsafed. And when I note
The old Tower's brow yellowed as with the beams
Of sunset ever there, albeit streams
Of stormy weather-stains that semblance wrought,
I thank the silent Monitor, and say
"Shine so, my aged brow, at all hours of the day!"

XXI.

TYNWALD HILL.

Once on the top of Tynwald's formal mound
(Still marked with green turf circles narrowing
Stages above stage) would sit this Island's King,
The laws to promulgate, enrol'd and crowned;
While, compassing the little mount around,
Degrees and Orders stood, each under each:
Now, like to things within fate's easiest reach,
The power is merged, the pomp a grave has found.
Off with you cloud, old Snaefell! that thine eye
Over three Realms may take its widest range;
And let, for them, thy fountains utter strange
Voices, thy winds break forth in prophecy,
If the whole State must suffer mortal change,
Like Mona's miniature of sovereignty.

XXII.

RESPOND who will,—I heard a voice exclaim,
"Though fierce the assault, and shatter'd the defence,
It cannot be that Britain's social frame,
The glorious work of time and providence,
Before a flying season's rash pretence,
Should fall; that She, whose virtue put to shame,
When Europe prostrate lay, the Conqueror's aim,
Should perish, self-subverted. Black and dense
The cloud is; but brings that a day of doom
To Liberty! Her sun is up the while,
That orb whose beams round Saxon Alfred shone:
Then laugh, ye innocent Vales! ye Streams, sweep on,
Nor let one billow of our heaven-blest Isle
Toss in the flaming wind a humbler plumes."  

XXIII.

IN THE Firth of Clyde, AILSA CRAG.

DURING AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, JULY 17.

Since risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
Appeared the Crag of Ailsa, ne'er did morn
With gleaming lights more gracefully adorn
His sides, or wreath with mist his forehead high:
Now, faintly darkening with the sun's eclipse,
Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
Towering above the sea and little ships;
For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
Each for her haven; with her freight of Care,
Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom looks
Into the secret of to-morrow's fate;
Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth of books,
Or aught that watchful Love to Nature owes
For her mute Power, its'ed Forms, or transient Shows.

* Bushen Abbey.
XXIV.
ON THE Firth OF CLYDE.
(IN A STREAM-BOAT.)

AHRAN! a single-crested Teneriffa,
A St. Helena next—in shape and hue,
Varying her crowded peaks and ridges blue;
Who but must covet a cloud-seat, or skiff
Built for the air, or winged Hippogriff?
That he might fly, where no one could pursue,
From this dull dullness and her soty crew;
And, as a God, light on thy topmost cliff.
Impotent wish! which reason would despise
If the mind knew no union of extremes,
No natural bond between the holdest schemes
Ambition frames, and heart-inimitables.
Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,
And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.

XXV.
ON REVISITING DUNOULLY CASTLE.
[See former series, p. 387.]

The captive Bird was gone;—to cliff or moor
Percival crowns, flown, delivered by the storm;
Or he had pined, and sunk to feed the worm:
Him found we not: but, climbing a tall tower,
There saw, impaled with rude fidelity
Of art mosaic, in a roofless floor,
An Eagle with stretched wings, but beamless eye—
An Eagle that could neither wall nor soar.
Effigy of the Vanished—(shall I dare
To call thee so?) or symbol of fierce deeds
And of the towering courage which past times
Rejoiced in—take, whate'er thou be, a share,
Not undeserved, of the memorial rhymes
That animate my way where'er it leads!

XXVI.
THE DUNOULLY EAGLE.

Nor to the clouds, not to the cliff, he flew;
But when a storm, on sea or mountain bred,
Came and delivered him, alone he sped
Into the castle-dungeon's darkest maw.
Now, near his master's house in open view
He dwells, and bears indignant tempests howl,
Kennelled and chained. Ye tame domestic fowl,
Beware of him! Thou, saucy cockatoo,
Look to thy plumage and thy life!—The roe,
Fleet as the west wind, is for him no quarry;
Balanced in ether he will never tarry,
Eyeing the sea's blue depths. Poor Bird! even so
Doth man of brother man a creature make
That clings to slavery for its own sad sake.

XXVII.
WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF MACPHERSON'S
OSSIAN.

Oft have I caught, upon a fitful breeze,
Fragments of far-off melodies,
With ear not coveting the whole,
A part so charmed the pensive soul:
While a dark storm before my sight
Was yielding, on a mountain height
Loose vapours have I watched, that won
Prismatic colours from the sun;
Nor felt a wish that heaven would show
The image of its perfect bow.
What need, then, of these finished Strains?
Away with counterfeit Remains!
An abbey in its lone recess,
A temple of the wilderness,
Wrecks though they be, announce with feeling
The majesty of honest dealing.
Spirit of Ossian! if imbodd
In language thou may'st yet be found,
If aught (intrusted to the pen
Or floating on the tongues of men,
Albeit shattered and impaired)
Subsist thy dignity to guard,
In concert with memorial claim
Of old grey stone, and high-born name
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave,
Let Truth, stern arbitress of all,
Interpret that Original,
And for presumptuous wrongs alone;—
Authentic words be given, or none!

Time is not blind;—yet He, who spares
Pyramid pointing to the stars,
Hath preyed with ruthless appetite
On all that marked the primal flight
Of the poeticPassage
Into the land of mystery.
No tongue is able to rehearse
One measure, Orpheus! of thy verse;
Musees, stationed with his lyre
Supreme among the Elysian quire,
Is, for the dwellers upon earth,
Mute as a dark eye morning's birth.
Why grieve for these, though past away
The music, and extinct the lay!
When thousands, by severer doom,
Full early to the silent tomb
Have sunk, at Nature's call; or strayed
From hope and promise, self-betrayed;
SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR, 1833.

The garland withering on their brows;
Stung with remorse for broken vows;
Frantic—else how might they rejoice!
And friendless, by their own sad choice!

Hail, Harps of mightier grasp! on you
I chiefly call, the chosen Few,
Who cast not off the acknowledged guide,
Who faltered not, nor turned aside;
Whose lofty genius could survive
Privation, under sorrow thrive;
In whom the fiery Muse revered
The symbol of a snow-white beard,
Becloved with meditative tears
Dropped from the lenient cloud of years.

Brothers in soul! though distant times
Produced you nursed in various climes,
Ye, when the orb of life had waned,
A plenitude of love retained:
Hence, while in you each sad regret
By corresponding hope was met,
Ye lingered among human kind,
Sweet voices for the passing wind;
Departing sunbeams, loth to stop,
Though smiling on the last hill top!
Such to the tender-hearted maid
Even ere her joys begin to fade;
Such, haply, to the rugged chief
By fortune crushed, or tamed by grief;
Appears, on Morven's lonely shore,
Dim-gleaming through imperfect lore,
The Son of Fingal; such was blind
Masonic of ample mind;
Such Milton, to the fountain head
Of glory by Urania led!

XXX.

CAVE OF STAFFA.

Ye shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims
In every cell of Fingal's mystic Grot,
Where are ye? Driven or venturing to the spot,
Our fathers glimpses caught of your thin Frames,
And, by your mien and bearing, knew your names;
And they could hear his ghostly song who trod
Earth, till the flesh lay on him like a load,
While he struck his desolate harp without hopes or
Vanished ye are, but subject to recall;
Why keep we else the instincts whose dread law
Ruled here of yore, till what men felt they saw,
Not by black arts but magic natural!
If eyes be still sworn vassals of belief,
You light shapes forth a Bard, that shade a Chief.

XXXI.

FLOWERS ON THE TOP OF THE PILLARS AT THE
ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE.

Hope smiled when your nativity was cast,
Children of Summer! Ye fresh Flowers that brave
What Summer here escapes not, the fierce wave,
And whole artillery of the western blast,
Battering the Temple's front, its long-drawn nave
Smiling, as if each moment were their last.
But ye, bright Flowers, on frieze and architrave
Survive, and once again the Pile stands fast:
Calm as the Universe, from specular towers
Of heaven contemplated by Spirits pure
With mute astonishment, it stands sustained
Through every part in symmetry, to endure,
Unhurt, the assault of Time with all his hours,
As the supreme Artificer ordained.
XXXIII.

IONA.

How sad a welcome! To each voyager
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.
Yet is yeon neat trim church a grateful speck
Of novelty amid the sacred wreck
Strewn far and wide. Think, proud Philosopher!
Fallen though she be, this Glory of the west,
Still on her sons, the beams of mercy shine;
And hope, perhaps, more heavenly bright than
A grace by thee unsought and unpossess’d, [thine,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine
Shall gild their passage to eternal rest.’

XXXIV.

THE BLACK STONES OF IONA.

[See Martin’s Voyage among the Western Isles.]

Here on their knees men swore: the stones were black,
Black in the people’s minds and words, yet they
Were at that time, as now, in colour grey.
But what is colour, if upon the rack
Of conscience souls are placed by deeds that lack
Concord with oaths! What differ night and day
Then, when before the Perjured on his way
Hell opens, and the heavens in vengeance crack
Above his head uplifted in vain prayer
To Saint, or Fiend, or to the Godhead whom
He had insulted—Peasant, King, or Thane!
Fly where the culprit may, guilt meets a doom;
And, from invisible worlds at need laid bare,
Come links for social order’s awful chain.

XXXV.

HOMeward we turn. Isle of Columba’s Cell,
Where Christian piety’s soul-cheering spark
(Kindled from Heaven between the light and dark
Of time) shone like the morning-star, farewell!—
And fare thee well, to Fancy visible,
Remote St. Kilda, lone and loved sea-mark
For many a voyage made in her swift bark,
When with more hues than in the rainbow dwell
Thou a mysterious intercourse dost hold,
Extracting from clear skies and air serene,
And out of sun-bright waves, a lucid veil,
That thickens, spreads, and, mingling with fold with fold,
Makes known, when thou no longer canst be seen,
Thy whereabouts, to warn the approaching sail.

XXXVI.

GREENOCK.

Per me si va nella Città dolente.

W’s have not passed into a doleful City,
We who were led to-day down a grim dell,
By some too boldly named ‘the Jaws of Hell’;
Where be the wretched ones, the sights for pity!
These crowded streets resound no plaintive ditty:
As from the hive where bees in summer dwell,
Sorrow seems here excluded; and that knell,
It neither damps the gay, nor checks the witty.
Alas! too busy Rival of old Tyre, [thrones;
Whose merchants Princes were, whose decks were
Soon may the punctual sea in vain respiré
To serve thy need, in union with that Clyde
Whose nursing current brawls o’er mossy stones,
The poor, the lonely, herdman’s joy and pride.

XXXVII.

‘There!’ said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
‘Is Mosgiel Farm; and that’s the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy.” Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath ‘the random field of clod or stone’
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark’s nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.
XXXVIII.

THE RIVER EDEN, CUMBERLAND.

Eden! till now thy beauty had I viewed
By glimpses only, and confess with shame
That verse of mine, whate'er its varying mood,
Repeats but once the sound of thy sweet name:
Yet fetched from Paradise that honour came,
Rightfully borne; for Nature gives thee flowers
That have no rivals among British bowers;
And thy bold rocks are worthy of their fame.
Measuring thy course, fair Stream! at length I pay
To my life's neighbour dues of neighbourhood;
But I have traced thee on thy winding way
With pleasure sometimes by this thought restrained
For things far off we toil, while many a good
Not sought, because too near, is never gained.

XXXIX.

MONUMENT OF MRS. HOWARD,
(by Nollekens.)

IN WETHERAL CHURCH, NEAR CONY, ON THE BANKS OF THE EDEN.

Stretched on the dying Mother's lap, lies dead
Her new-born Babe; 'tis ending of bright hope!
But Sculpture here, with the divinest scope
Of luminous faith, heavenward hath raised that head
So patiently; and through one hand has spread
A touch so tender for the insensate Child—
(Earth's lingering love to parting reconciled,
Brief parting, for the spirit is all but fled)—
That we, who contemplate the turns of life
Through this still medium, are consoled and cheered;
Feel with the Mother, think the severed Wife
Is less to be lamented than revered;
And own that Art, triumphant over strife
And pain, hath powers to Eternity endeared.

XL.

SUGGESTED BY THE FORDINGGO.

TRANQUILLITY! the sovereign aim wert thou
In heathen schools of philosophic lore;
Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore
The Tragic Muse thee served with thoughtful vow;
And what of hope Elysium could allow
Was fondly seized by Sculpture, to restore
Peace to the Mourner. But when He who wore
The crown of thorns around his bleeding brow
Warmed our sad being with celestial light,
Then Arts which still had drawn a softening grace
From shadowy fountains of the Infinite,
Communed with that Idea face to face:
And move around it now as planets run,
Each in its orbit round the central Sun.

XLII.

NUNNERY.

The floods are roused, and will not soon be weary;
Down from the Pennine Alps* how fiercely sweeps
Craulkin, the stately Eden's tributary!
He ravens, or through some moody passage creeps
Plotting new mischief—out again he leaps
Into broad light, and sends, through regions airy,
That voice which soothes the Nuns while on the steeps.
They knelt in prayer, or sang to blissful Mary.
That union ceased: then, clearing easy walks
Through crags, and smoothing paths betwixt with danger,
Came studious Taste; and many a pensive stranger
Dreams on the banks, and to the river talks.
What change shall happen next to Nunnery Dell?
Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell!

XLIII.

STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS.

Motions and Means, on land and sea at war
With old poetic feeling, not for this,
Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!
Nor shall your presence, howso' er it mar
The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
To the Mind's gaining that prophetic sense
Of future change, that point of vision, whence
May be discovered what in soul ye are.
In spite of all that beauty may disown
In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace
Her lawful offspring in Man's art; and Time,
Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

XLIII.

THE MONUMENT COMMONLY CALLED LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS, NEAR THE RIVER EDEN.

A weight of awe, not easy to be borne,
Fell suddenly upon my Spirit—cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
When first I saw that family forlorn.
Speak Thou, whose many strength and stature scorn
The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed
Apart, to overlook the circle vast—
Speak, Giant-mother! tell it to the Morn
While she dispels the cumbrous shades of Night;
Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud;
At whose behest uprise on British ground
That Sisterhood, in hieroglyphic round
Forth-shadowing, some have deemed, the infinite
The inviolable God, that tames the proud†!

* The chain of Crossfell. † See Note.
XLIV.
LOWTHORNE.

Lowther! in thy majestic Pile are seen
Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord
With the baronial castle's sterner mien;
Union significant of God adored,
And charters won and guarded by the sword
Of ancient honour; whence that goodly state
Of polity which wise men venerate,
And will maintain, if God his help afford.
Hourly the democratic torrent swells;
For airy promises and hopes suborned * [scorned.]
The strength of backward-looking thoughts is
Fain if ye must, ye Towers and Pinnacles,
With what ye symbolise; authentic Story
Will say, Ye disappeared with England's Glory!

XLV.
TO THE EARL OF LONSDALE.

'Magistratus indicat virum.'

Lonsdale! it were unworthy of a Guest,
Whose heart with gratitude to thee inclines,
If he should speak, by fancy toned, of signs
On thy Abode harmoniously impress,
Yet be unmoved with wishes to attest
How in thy mind and moral frame agree
Fortitude, and that Christian Charity
Which, filling, consecrates the human breast.
And if the Motto on thy 'senteon teach
With truth, 'This MAGISTRACY SHOWS THE MAN';
That searching test thy public course has stood;
As will be owned alike by bad and good,
Soon as the measuring of life's little span
Shall place thy virtues out of Envy's reach*.

XLVI.
THE SOMNAMBULIST.

List, ye who pass by Ly*lph's Tower†
At eve; how softly then
Doth Aira-force, that torrent howerous,
Speak from the woody glen!
Fit music for a solemn vale!
And holier seems the ground
To him who catches on the gale
The spirit of a mournful tale,
Embodied in the sound.

Not far from that fair site whereon
The Pleasure-house is reared,
As story says, in antique days
A stern-brow'd house appeared;
Foil to a Jewel rich in light
There set, and guarded well;
Cage for a Bird of plumage bright,
Sweet-voiced, nor wishing for a flight
Beyond her native dell.

To win this bright Bird from her cage,
To make this Gem their own,
Came Barons bold, with store of gold,
And Knights of high renown;
But one She prized, and only one;
Sir Eglamore was he;
Full happy season, when was known,
Ye Dales and Hills! to you alone
Their mutual loyalty—

Known chiefly, Aira! to thy glen,
Thy brook, and bowers of holly;
Where Passion caught what Nature taught,
That all but love is folly;
Where Fact with Fancy stopped to play;
Doubt came not, nor regret—
To trouble hours that winged their way,
As if through an immortal day
Whose sun could never set.

But in old times Love dwelt not long
Sequester'd with repose;
Best throve the fire of chaste desire,
Fanned by the breath of foes.
"A conquering lance is beauty's test,
"And proves the Lover true?"
So spake Sir Eglamore, and pressed
The drooping Emma to his breast,
And looked a blind adieu.

They parted—Well with him it fared
Through wide-spread regions errant;
A knight of proof in love's behalf,
The thirst of fame his warrant:
And She her happiness can build
On woman's quiet hours;
Though faint, compared with spear and shield,
The solace beads and masses yield,
And needlework and flowers.

Yet blest was Emma when she heard
Her Champion's praise recounted;
Though brain would swim, and eyes grow dim,
And high her blushes mounted;

* See Note.
† A pleasure-house built by the late Duke of Norfolk upon the banks of Ullswater. Porca is the word used in the Lake District for Water-fall.
Or when a bold hero lay,
She warbled from full heart;
Delightful blossoms for the May
Of absence! but they will not stay,
Born only to depart.

Hope wanes with her, while lustre fills
Whatever path he chooses;
As if his orb, that owns no curb,
Received the light hers loses.

He comes not back; an ampler space
Requires for nobler deeds;
He ranges on from place to place,
Till of his doings is no trace,
But what her fancy breeds.

His fame may spread, but in the past
Her spirit finds its centre;
Clear sight She has of what he was,
And that would now content her.

"Still is he my devoted Knight?"
The tear in answer flows;
Month falls on month with heavier weight;
Day sickness round her, and the night
Is empty of repose.

In sleep She sometimes walked abroad,
Deep sighs with quick words blending,
Like that pale Queen whose hands are seen
With fancied spots contending;
But she is innocent of blood,—
The moon is not more pure
That shines aloft, while through the wood
She thirs her way, the sounding Flood
Her melancholy lure!

While 'mid the fern-brake sleeps the doe,
And owls alone are waking,
In white arrayed, glides on the Maid
The downward pathway taking,
That leads her to the torrent's side
And to a holly bower;
By whom on this still night descried?
By whom in that lone place espied?
By thee, Sir Eglamore!

A wandering Ghost, so thinks the Knight,
His coming step has thwarted,
Beneath the boughs that heard their vows,
Within whose shade they parted.
Hush, hush, the busy Sleeper see!
Perplexed her fingers seem,
As if they from the holly tree
Green twigs would pluck, as rapidly
Flung from her to the stream.

What means the Spectre? Why intent
To violate the Tree,
Thought Eglamore, by which I swore
Unfading constancy!
Here am I, and to-morrow's sun,
To her I left, shall prove
That bliss is ne'er so surely won
As when a circuit has been run
Of valour, truth, and love.

So from the spot whereon he stood,
He moved with stealthy pace;
And, drawing nigh, with his living eye,
He recognised the face;
And whispers caught, and speeches small,
Some to the green-leaved tree,
Some muttered to the torrent-fall—
"Reap on, and bring him with thy call;
"I heard, and so may He!"

Soul-shattered was the Knight, nor knew
If Emma's Ghost it were,
Or boding Shade, or if the Maid
Her very self stood there.
He touched; what followed who shall tell!
The soft touch snapped the thread
Of slumber—shrieking back she fell,
And the Stream whirled her down the dell
Along its foaming bed.

In plunged the Knight!—when on firm ground
The rescued Maiden lay,
Her eyes grew bright with blissful light,
Confusion passed away;
She heard, ere to the throne of grace
Her faithful Spirit flew,
His voice—hebald his speaking face;
And, dying, from his own embrace,
She felt that he was true.

So was he reconciled to life:
Brief words may speak the rest;
Within the dell he built a cell,
And there was Sorrow's guest;
In hermit's weeds repose he found,
From vain temptations free;
Beside the torrent dwelling—bound
By one deep heart-controlling sound,
And awed to piety.

Wild-stream of Airc, hold thy course,
Nor fear memorial lays,
Where clouds that spread in solemn shade,
Are edged with golden rays!
Dear art thou to the light of heaven,
Though minister of sorrow;
Sweet is thy voice at pensive even;
And thou, in lovers’ hearts forgiven,
Shalt take thy place with Yarrow!

(Your casual glance oft meeting) this bright cord,
What witchery, for pure gifts of inward seeing,
Lurks in it, Memory’s Helper, Fancy’s Lord,
For precious tremblings in your bosom found!

XLVII.

TO CORDELIA M———,
HALLSTEAD, ULLSWATER.

Nor in the mines beyond the western main,
You say, Cordelia, was the metal sought,
Which a fine skill, of Indian growth, has wrought
Into this flexible yet faithful Chain;
Nor is it silver of romantic Spain
But from our loved Helvellyn’s depths was brought,
Our own domestic mountain. Thing and thought
Mix strangely; trifles light, and partly vain,
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler being:
Yes, Lady, while about your neck is wound

XLVIII.

Most sweet it is with unsilphed eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate’er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind’s internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

I.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,  
Thus for the length of half a day,  
Why, William, sit you thus alone,  
And dream your time away!"

Where are your books!—that light bequeathed  
To Beings else forlorn and blind!  
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed  
From dead men to their kind.

You look round on your Mother Earth,  
As if she for no purpose bore you;  
As if you were her first-born birth,  
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,  
When life was sweet, I knew not why,  
To me my good friend Matthew spake,  
And thus I made reply

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;  
We cannot bid the ear be still;  
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,  
Against or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are Powers  
Which of themselves our minds impress;  
That we can feed this mind of ours  
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sun  
Of things for ever speaking,  
That nothing of itself will come,  
But we must still be seeking!

—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,  
Conversing as I may,  
I sit upon this old grey stone,  
And dream my time away."

II.

THE TABLES TURNED.

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;  
Or surely you'll grow double;  
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;  
Why all this toil and trouble!

The sun, above the mountain's head,  
A freshening lustre mellow  
Through all the long green fields has spread,  
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music! on my life,  
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throatle sings!  
He, too, is no mean preacher:  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,  
Our minds and hearts to bless—  
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;  
Our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—  
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;  
Close up those barren leaves;  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives.

1796.
VOICES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

I hear a thousand invited voices,
While in a grove I was reclined.
In the warm heart, when passionthymes
Spring and songminges in the mind.

To her fair voice the Nature sung,
The sun was king through me unseen:
And much I vowed my heart to some
Whose was the made of man.

Through primrose fields, in that green hour,
The primrose climbed on violets;
And thus my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The winds around me hopped and played,
Their measure I cannot measure;—
But the sea moons which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The, bidding wings spread out their fan,
To catch the lucy air;
And I went thence, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If the belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

TO MY SISTER.

It is the first mid day of March:
Each molecule dances there;
The restlessness sings from the willow branch;
That sounds beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister, 'tis a wish of mine,
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning work resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend, will daze
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.
And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness. 1796.

VI.

SIMON LEE,
THE OLD HUNSMAN;
WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED.

Is the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glees
When Echo banded, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

But, oh the heavy change!—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see!
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swollen and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it;
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.
"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your foot," to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.
The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

VII.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY,
ON ONE OF THE COLDEST DAYS OF THE CENTURY.
The Reader must be apprised, that the Stoves in North-Germany generally have the impression of a galloping horse upon them, this being part of the Brunswick Arms.

A PLAGUE on your languages, German and Norse!
Let me have the song of the kettle;
And the tongues and the poker, instead of that horse
That gallops away with such fury and force
On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

See that Fly—a disconsolate creature! perhaps
A child of the field or the grove;
And, sorrow for him! the dull treacherous heat
Has seduced the poor fool from his winter retreat,
And he creeps to the edge of my stove.

Alas! how he fumbles about the domains
Which this comfortless oven environ!
He cannot find out in what track he must crawl,
Now back to the tiles, then in search of the wall,
And now on the brink of the iron.

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller bemazed:
The best of his skill he has tried;
His fiddlers, methinks, I can see him put forth
To the east and the west, to the south and the north;
But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

His spindles sink under him, foot, leg, and thigh!
His eyesight and hearing are lost.
Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws;
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky graze
Are glued to his sides by the frost.

No brother, no mate has he near him—while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love;
As blest and as glad, in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodchina were hanging above.

Yet, God is my witness, thou small helpless Thing!
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer come up from the south, and with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou shouldst sound
through the clouds.
And back to the forests again!

VIII.

A POET'S EPIGRAPH.
Art thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred!
First learn to love one living man;
Thee may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou!—draw not nigh!
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer!
A rosy Man, right proud to see!
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff!
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou! one, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave!

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace;
Thy ever-dwinding soul, away!
A Moralist perchance appears;  
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:  
And he has neither eyes nor ears;  
Himself his world, and his own God;  

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling  
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;  
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,  
An intellectual All-in-all!  

Shut close the door; press down the latch;  
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;  
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch  
Near this unprofitable dust.  

But who is He, with modest looks,  
And clad in homely russet brown!  
The murmurs near the running brooks  
A music sweeter than their own.  

He is retired as noontide dew,  
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;  
And you must love him, ere to you  
He will seem worthy of your love.  

The outward shows of sky and earth,  
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;  
And impulses of deeper birth  
Have come to him in solitude.  

In common things that round us lie  
Some random truths he can impart,—  
The harvest of a quiet eye  
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.  

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,  
Hath been an idler in the land;  
Contented if he might enjoy  
The things which others understand.  

—Come hither in thy hour of strength;  
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!  
Here stretch thy body at full length;  
Or build thy house upon this grave.  

X.  

TO THE DAISY.  

But that Flower! whose home is everywhere,  
Bold in maternal Nature's care,  
And all the long year through the heir  
Of joy or sorrow.  

Methinks that there abides in thee  
Some concord with humanity,  
Given to no other flower I see  
The forest thorough!  

Is it that Man is soon deprest!  
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,  
Does little on his memory rest,  
Or on his reason,  
And Thou would'st teach him how to find  
A shelter under every wind,  
A hope for times that are unkind  
And every season!  

Thou wander'st the wide world about,  
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,  
With friends to greet thee, or without,  
Yet pleased and willing;  
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,  
And all things suffering from all,  
Thy function apostical  
In peace fulfilling.  

IX.  

MATTHEW.  

In the School of—— is a tablet, on which are inscribed,  
in gilt letters, the Names of the several persons who have  
been School-masters there since the foundation of the School,  
with the time at which they entered upon and  
quitted their office. Opposite to one of these Names  
the Author wrote the following lines.  

If Nature, for a favourite child,  
In thee hath tempered so her clay,  
That every hour thy heart runs wild,  
Yet never once doth go astray,  

Read o'er these lines; and then review  
This tablet, that thus humbly rears  
In such diversity of hue  
Its history of two hundred years.  

—When through this little wreck of fame,  
Cipher and syllable! thine eye  
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,  
Pause with no common sympathy.  

And, if a sleeping tear should wake,  
Then be it neither checked nor stayed:  
For Matthew a request I make  
Which for himself he had not made.
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

Poor Matthew, all his frolicks o'er,  
Is silent as a standing pool;  
Far from the chimney's merry roar,  
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs  
Of one tired out with fun and madness;  
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes  
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup  
Of still and serious thought went round,  
It seemed as if he drank it up—  
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould!  
Thou happy Soul! and can it be  
That these two words of glittering gold  
Are all that must remain of thee!  

X.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS.

We walked along, while bright and red  
Uprose the morning sun;  
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,  
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,  
With hair of glittering grey;  
As blithe a man as you could see  
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,  
And by the steaming rills,  
We travelled merrily, to pass  
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun,  
Then, from thy breast what thought,  
Beneath so beautiful a sun,  
So sad a sigh has brought!"

A second time did Matthew stop;  
And fixing still his eye  
Upon the eastern mountain-top,  
To me he made reply:

"You cloud with that long purple cleft  
Brings fresh into my mind  
A day like this which I have left  
Full thirty years behind.

And just above you slope of corn  
Such colours, and no other,  
Were in the sky, that April morn,  
Of this the very brother.

With rod and line I sued the sport  
Which that sweet season gave,  
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short  
Beside my daughter's grave.

Nine summers had she scarcely seen,  
The pride of all the vale;  
And then she sang,—she would have been  
A very nightingale.

Six feet in earth my Emma lay;  
And yet I loved her more,  
For so it seemed, than till that day  
I e'er had loved before.

And, turning from her grave, I met,  
Beside the churchyard yew,  
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet  
With points of morning dew.

A basket on her head she bare;  
Her brow was smooth and white;  
To see a child so very fair,  
It was a pure delight!

No fountain from its rocky cave  
E'er tripped with foot so free;  
She seemed as happy as a wave  
That dances on the sea.

There came from me a sigh of pain  
Which I could ill confine;  
I looked at her, and looked again:  
And did not wish her mine!"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,  
Methinks, I see him stand,  
As at that moment, with a bough  
Of wilding in his hand.

XII.

THE FOUNTAIN.

A CONVERSATION.

We talked with open heart, and tongue  
Affectionate and true,  
A pair of friends, though I was young,  
And Matthew seventy-two.
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew!" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon ;

Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee :

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do they wage
A foolish strife ; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And, often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains :

And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

XIII.

PERSONAL TALK.

I am not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.
II.

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And its of slyly mate do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so: yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true! Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III.

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right valuable I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

XIV.

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND.

(AN AGRICULTURIST.)

COMPOSED WHILE WE WERE LAUGHING TOGETHER IN HIS PLEASURE-GROUND.

Spade! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emerson's side,
Thou art a tool of honour in my hands;
I press thee, through the yielding soil, with pride.

Rare master hast thou been thy lot to know;
Long hast Thou served a man to reason true;
Whose life combines the best of high and low,
The labouring many and the resting few;

Health, meekness, ardour, quietness secure,
And industry of body and of mind;
And elegant enjoyments, that are pure
As nature is;—too pure to be refined.

Here often hast Thou heard the Poet sing
In concord with his river murmuring by;
Or in some silent field, while timid spring
Is yet uncheered by other minstrelsy.

Who shall inherit Thee when death has laid
Low in the darksome cell thine own dear lord?
That man will have a trophy, humble Spade!
A trophy nobler than a conqueror's sword.

If he be one that feels, with skill to part
False praise from true, or, greater from the less,
Thou hast he welcome to his hand and heart,
Thou monument of peaceful happiness!

He will not dread with Thee a toilsome day—
Thou his loved servant, his inspiring mate!
And, when thou art past service, worn away,
No dull oblivious shall hide thy fate.

His thrift thy uselessness will never scorn;
An heirloom in his cottage wilt thou be:—
High will he hang thee up, well pleased to adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of Thee!

1804.
XV.

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

Lo! where the Moon along the sky
Sails with her happy destiny;
Oft is she hid from mortal eye
Or dimly seen,
But when the clouds unumber fly
How bright her mien!

Far different we—a froward race,
Thousands though rich in Fortune’s grace
With cherished solemness of pace
Their way pursue,
Ingrates who wear a smileless face
The whole year through.

If kindred humours o’er would make
My spirit drop for drooping’s sake,
From Fancy following in thy wake,
Bright ship of heaven!
A counter impulse let me take
And be forgiven.

Better fate have Prince and Swallow—
See them cleaving to the sport!
Music has no heart to follow,
Little Music, she stops short.
She hath neither wish nor heart,
Hers is now another part:
A loving creature she, and brave!
And fondly strives her struggling friend to save.

From the brink her paws she stretches,
Very hands as you would say!
And afflicting moans she fetches,
As he breaks the ice away.
For herself she hath no fears,—
Him alone she sees and hears,—
Makes efforts with complaints; nor gives o’er
Until her fellow sinks to re-appear no more.

XVI.

INCIDENT
CHARACTERISTIC OF A FAVOURITE DOG.

On his morning rounds the Master
Goes to learn how all things fare;
Searches pasture after pasture,
Sheep and cattle eyes with care;
And, for silence as for talk,
He hath comrades in his walk;
Four dogs, each pair of different breed,
Distinguished two for scent, and two for speed.

Sce a hare before him started!
—Off they fly in earnest chase;
Every dog is eager-hearted,
All the four are in the race:
And the hare whom they pursue,
Knows from instinct what to do;
Her hope is near: no turn she makes;
But, like an arrow, to the river takes.

Deep the river was, and trusted
Thiny by a one night’s frost;
But the nimble Hare hath trusted
To the ice, and safely crest;
She hath crest, and without heed
All are following at full speed,
When, lo! the ice, so thinly spread,
Breaks—and the greyhound, Darr, is over-head!

Lurk here, without a record of thy worth,
Beneath a covering of the common earth!
It is not from unwillingness to praise,
Or want of love, that here no Stone we raise;
More thou deserv’st; but this man gives to man,
Brother to brother, this is all we can.
Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee dear
Shall find thee through all changes of the year:
This Oak points out thy grave; the silent tree
Will gladly stand a monument of thee.

We grieved for thee, and wished thy end were past;
And willingly have laid thee here at last:
For thou hast lived till every thing that cheers
In thee had yielded to the weight of years;
Extreme old age had wasted thee away,
And left thee but a glimmering of the day;
Thy ears were dead, and feeble were thy knees,—
I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
It came, and we were glad; yet tears were shed;
Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead;
Not only for a thousand thoughts that were,
Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share;
But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
Found scarcely any where in like degree!
For love, that comes wherever life and sense
Are given by God, in thee was most intense;
A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind:
Yes, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
A soul of love, love’s intellectual law:
Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame;
Our tears from passion and from reason came,
And, therefore, shalt thou be an honored name!

1805.

XVIII.

FIDELITY.

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts—and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The Dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December’s snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn* below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven’s croak,
In symphony austere:
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

1803.

XIX.

ODE TO DUTY.

* Jam non consilio bonus, sed more co perductus, ut non tantum recte facere posse, sed nisi recte facere non posse.

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm’st the weary strife of frail humanity!
There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth;
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not;
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fall, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead’s most benignant grace;
Nor know we any thing so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself command
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

Charles Lamb

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature’s highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skillful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—*Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,

1803.
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresees;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus enticed as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-hiss leans
To homely pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, whereas’er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
’Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation’s eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toreador or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surprised:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven’s applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

1806.

XXI.
THE FORCE OF PRAYER *;
OR,
THE FOUNDOING OF BOLTON PRIORY.
A TRADITION.

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
With these dark words begins my Tale;
And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
When Prayer is of no avail!

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer "Endless sorrow!"
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer’s words,
And from the look of the Falconer’s eye;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

—Young Romilly through Barden woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon back or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is called Tan-Straw,
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across Tan Straw?

He sprang in glee—for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep!—
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled by a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless corpse.

Now there is stillness in the vale,
And long, unspeaking, sorrow:
Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the Lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death;—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother’s sorrow.

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branch
And the root of this did
Was in her husband’s
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, "Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory!"

The stately Priory was reared;
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matusin joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at even-song.

And the Lady prayed in heaviness
That looked not for relief!
But slowly did her succour come,
And patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend!

Her darling Alfred, might have spoken;
To cheer the remnant of his host
When he was driven from coast to coast,
Distressed and harassed, but with mind unbroken:

"My faithful followers, lo! the tide is spent
That rose, and steadily advanced to fill
The shores and channels, working Nature's will
Among the many streams that backward went,
And in the sluggish pools where ships are pent:
And now, his task performed, the flood stands still,
At the green base of many an inland hill,
In placid beauty and sublime content!
Such the repose that sage and hero find;
Such measured rest the sedulous and good
Of humbler name; whose souls do, like the flood
Of Ocean, press right on; or gently wind,
Neither to be diverted nor withstood,
Until they reach the bounds by Heaven assigned."

XXII.

A FACT, AND AN IMAGINATION;

The Danish Conqueror, on his royal chair,
Mustered a face of haughty sovereignty,
To aid a covert purpose, cried—"O ye
Approaching Waters of the deep, that share
With this green isle my fortunes, come not where
Your Master's throne is set."—Dear was the Sea;
Her waves rolled on, respecting his decree
Less than they heed a breath of wanton air.
—Then Canute, rising from the invaded throne,
Said to his servile Couriers,—"Poor the reach,
The undisguised extent, of mortal sway!
He only is a King, and he alone
Deserves the name (this truth the billows preach)
Whose everlasting laws, sea, earth, and heaven,
obeys."

This just reproof the prosperous Dane
Drew from the influx of the main,
For some whose rugged northern mouths would strain
At oriental flattery;
And Canute (fact more worthy to be known)
From that time forth did for his brows disown
The ostentatious symbol of a crown;
Esteeming earthly royalty
Contemptible as vain.

Now hear what one of elder days,
Rich theme of England's fondest praise,
For pastime plunge—into the 'abrupt abys,'
Where ravens spread their plumy vans, at ease!

And yet more gladly thee would I conduct
Through woods and spacious forests,—to behold
There, how the Original of human art,
Heaven-prompted Nature, measures and erects
Her temples, fearless for the stately work,
Though waves, to every breeze, its high-arched roof,
And storms the pillars rock. But we such schools
Of reverential awe will chiefly seek
In the still summer noon, while beams of light,
Reposing here, and in the aisles beyond
Traceably gliding through the dusk, recall
To mind the living presences of nuns;
A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the gloom
Of those terrestrial fabrics, where they serve,
To Christ, the Sun of righteousness, espoused.

Now also shall the page of classic lore,
To these glad eyes from bondage freed, again
Lie open; and the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield
To heights more glorious still, and into shades
More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of my care!
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love.

ODE TO LYCORIS.

May, 1817.

An age hath been when Earth was proud
Of lustre too intense
To be sustained; and Mortals bow'd
The front in self-defence.
Who then, if Ocean's crescent gleamed,
Or Cupid's sparkling arrow streamed
While on the wing the Urchin played,
Could fearlessly approach the shade?
—Enough for one soft vernal day,
If It, a bard of obiling time,
And nurtured in a fickle clime,
May haunt this hermit bay;
Whose amorous water multiplies
The fitting baleyan's vivid dye's;
And smooths her liquid breast—to show
These swan-like specks of mountain snow,
White as the pair that slid along the plains
Of heaven, when Venus held the reins!

In youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owlet's wing;
Then, Twilight is preferred to Dawn,
And Autumn to the Spring.
Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect
To our own prodigal excess
Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (If such name befit
Thee, thee my life's celestial sign!)
When Nature marks the year's decline,
Be ours to welcome it;
Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns;
Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze;
Pleased when the sullen winds resound the knell
Of the resplendent miracle.

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris! life requires an art
To which our souls must bond:
A skill—to balance and supply;
And, ere the flowing fount be dry,
As soon it must, a sense to sip,
Or drink, with no fastidious lip.
Then welcome, above all, the Guest
Whose smiles, diffused o'er land and sea,
Seem to recall the Deity
Of youth into the breast:
May pensive Autumn ne'er present
A claim to her disparagement!
While blossoms and the budding spray
Inspire us in our own decay;
Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
Be hopeful Spring the favourite of the Soul!

TO THE SAME.

Enough of climbing toil!—Ambition treads
Here, as 'mid basier scenes, ground steep and rough,
Or slippery even to peril! and each step,
As we for most uncertain recumence
Mount toward the empire of the fickle clouds,
Each weary step, dwarfing the world below,
Induces, for its old familiar sights,
Unacceptable feelings of contempt,
With wonder mixed—that Man could e'er be tied,
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

In anxious bondage, to such nice array
And formal fellowship of petty things!
—Oh! 'tis the heart that magnifies this life,
Making a truth and beauty of her own;
And moss-grown alleys, circumscribing shades,
And gurgling rills, assist her in the work
More efficaciously than realms outspread,
As in a map, before the adventurer's gaze—
Ocean and Earth contending for regard.

The embraugous woods are left—how far beneath!
But lo! where darkness seems to guard the mouth
Of you wild cave, whose jagged brows are fringed
With flaxed threads of ivy, in the still
And sultry air, depending motionless.
Yet cool the space within, and not unecheered
(As whose enters shall ere long perceive)
By stealthy influx of the timid day
Mingling with night, such twilight to compose
As Numa loved; then, in the Egerian grot,
From the sage Nymph appearing at his wish,
He gained what'er a regal mind might ask,
Or need, of counsel breathed through lips divine.

Long as the heat shall rage, let that dim cave
Protect us, there deciphering as we may
Diluvian records; or the sights of Earth
Interpreting; or counting for old Time
His minutes, by reiterated drops,
Audible tears, from some invisible source
That deepens upon fancy—more and more
Drawn toward the centre whence those sighs creep
To awe the lightness of humanity. [forth
Or, shutting up thyself within thyself,
There let me see thee sink into a mood
Of gentler thought, protracted till thine eye
Be calm as water when the winds are gone,
And not one can tell whither. Dearest Friend!
We too have known such happy hours together
That, were power granted to replace them (fetched
From out the pensive shadows where they lie)
In the first warmth of their original sunshine,
Loth should I be to use it: passing sweet
Are the domains of tender memory!

XXVI.
September, 1819.
The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
Are hung, as if with golden shields,
Bright trophies of the sun!
Like a fair sister of the sky,
Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
The mountains looking on.

And, sooth to say, you vocal grove,
Albeit uninspired by love,
By love untouct to ring,
May well afford to mortal ear
An impulse more profoundly dear
Than music of the Spring.

For that from turbulence and heat
Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
In nature's struggling frame,
Some region of impatient life:
And jealousy, and quivering strife,
Therein a portion claim.

This, this is holy—while I hear
These vespers of another year,
This hymn of thanks and praise,
My spirit seems to mount above
The anxieties of human love,
And earth's precarious days.

But list!—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony:
There lives Who can provide
For all his creatures; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.

XXVII.
UPON THE SAME OCCASION.

Departing summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumined,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely red-breast pays!
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough—
Fall, rose garlands, from my head!
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow!
Yet will I temperately rejoice;
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undissonant themes;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than varial ecstasies,
And passion’s feverish dreams.

For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like Demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muse smiles;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To ennoble and delile.

Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent plains
In Britain’s earliest dawn;
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn!

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Aeschus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong;
Woe! woe to Tyrants! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By winged Love inscribed, to assuage
The pangs of vain pursuit;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion awayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculean lore,
What rapture! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloriéd to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold?
Can haughty Time be just!

As aptly, also, might be given
A Pencil to her hand;
That, softening objects, sometimes even
Outstrips the heart’s demand;
That smooths forgone distress, the lines
Of lingering care subdus,
Long-vanished happiness refines,
And clothes in brighter hues;
Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

O! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an image of the past
Should fear that pencil’s touch!
Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene;
With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

This Lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves—to strive
In dance, amid a press
Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
Of Worldlings revelling in the fields
Of strenuous idleness;
Less quick the stir when tide and breeze
Encounter, and to narrow seas
Forbid a moment’s rest;
The medley less when boreal Lights
Glance to and fro, like airy Sprites
To feasts of arms address!

Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the steadfast hours,
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers.
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

XXX.

HUMANITY.

[The Rocking-stones, alluded to in the beginning of the following verses, are supposed to have been used, by our British ancestors, both for judicial and religious purposes. Such stones are not uncommonly found, at this day, both in Great Britain and in Ireland.]

What though the Accused, upon his own appeal
To righteous Gods when man has ceased to feel,
Or at a doubting Judge's stern command,
Before the Stone of Power no longer stand—
To take his sentence from the balanced Block,
As, at his touch, it rocks, or seems to rock;
Though, in the depths of sunless groves, no more
The Druid-priest the hallowed Oak adore;
Yet, for the Initiate, rocks and whispering trees
Do still perform mysterious offices!
And functions dwell in beast and bird that sway
The reasoning mind, or with the fancy play,
Inviting, at all seasons, ears and eyes
To watch for undeceptive auguries—
Not uninspired appear their simplest ways;
Their voices mount symbolical of praise—
To mix with hymns that Spirits make and bear;
And to fallen man their innocence is dear.
Enraptured Art draws from those sacred springs
Streams that reflect the poetry of things!
Where Christian Martyrs stand in hues portrayed,
That, might a wish avail, would never fade,
Borne in their hands the lily and the palm
Shed round the altar a celestial calm;
There, too, behold the lamb and guiltless dove
Prest in the tenderness of virgin love
To saintly bosoms!—Glorious is the blending
Of right affections climbing or descending
Along a scale of light and life, with cares
Alternate; carrying holy thoughts and prayers
Up to the sovereign seat of the Most High;
Descending to the worm in charity;
Like those good Angels whom a dream of night
Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob's sight
All, while he slept, treading the pendent stairs
Earthward or heavenward, radiant messengers,
That, with a perfect will in one accord
Of strict obedienc, serve the Almighty Lord;
And with untired humility forebore
To speed their errand by the wings they wore.

What a fair world were ours for verse to paint,
If Power could live at ease with self-restraint!
Opinion bow before the naked sense
Of the great Vision,—faith in Providence;

Merciful over all his creatures, just
To the least particle of sentient dust;
But, fixing by immutable decrees,
Seedtime and harvest for his purposes!
Then would be closed the restless oblique eye
That looks for evil like a treacherous spy;
Disputes would then relax, like stormy winds
That into breezes sink; impetuous minds
By discipline endeavour to grow meek
As Truth herself, whom they profess to seek.
Then Genius, shunning fellowship with Pride,
Would braid his golden locks at Wisdom's side;
Love ebb and flow untroubled by caprice;
And not alone harak tyranny would cease,
But unoffending creatures find release
From qualified oppression, whose defence
Rests on a hollow plea of recompence;
Thought-tempered wrongs, for each humane respect
Oft worse to bear, or deadlier in effect.
Witness those glances of indignant scorn
From some high-minded Slave, impelled to spurn
The kindness that would make him less forlorn;
Or, if the soul to bondage be subdued,
His look of pitiab gratitude!

Alas for thee, bright Galaxy of Isles,
Whose day departs in pomp, returns with smiles—
To greet the flowers and fruitage of a land,
As the sun mounts, by sea-born breezes fanned;
A land whose azure mountain-tops are seats
For Gods in council, whose green vales, retreats
Fit for the shades of heroes, mingling there
To breathe Elysian peace in upper air.

Though cold as winter, gloomy as the grave,
Stone-walls a prisoner make, but not a slave.
Shall man assume a property in man!
Lay on the moral will a withering ban!
Shame that our laws at distance still protect
Enormities, which they at home reject!
'Slaves cannot breathe in England!'—yet that boast
Is but a mockery! when from coast to coast,
Though fettered slave be none, her floors and soil
Groan underneath a weight of slavish toil,
For the poor Many, measured out by rules
Fetch'd with cupidity from heartless schools,
That to an Idol, falsely called 'the Wealth
Of Nations,' sacrifice a People's health,
Body and mind and soul; a thirst so keen
Is ever urging on the vast machine
Of sleepless Labour, 'mid whose dizzy wheels
The Power least prized is that which thinks and feels.
Then, for the pastimes of this delicate age,
And all the heavy or light vassalage
Which for their sakes we fasten, as may suit
Our varying moods, on human kind or brute,
'Twere well in little, as in great, to pause,
Lest Fancy trifle with eternal laws.
Not from his fellows only man may learn
Rights to compare and duties to discern!
All creatures and all objects, in degree,
Are friends and patrons of humanity.
There are to whom the garden, grove, and field,
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;
Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power could give.

1829.

XXXI.

THOUGHT ON THE SEASONS.

Flattered with promise of escape
From every hurtful blast,
Spring takes, O sprightly May! thy shape,
Her loveliest and her last.

Less fair is summer riding high
In fierce solstitial power,
Less fair than when a lenient sky
Brings on her parting hour.

When earth repays with golden sheaves
The labours of the plough,
And ripening fruits and forest leaves
All brighten on the bough;

What pensive beauty autumn shows,
Before she bears the sound
Of winter rushing in, to close
The emblematic round!

Such be our Spring, our Summer such;
So may our Autumn blend
With hoary Winter, and Life teach,
Through heaven-born hope, her end!

1839.

XXXII.

TO ———

UPON THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST-BORN CHILD, MARCH, 1833.

'Tum perro puer, ut servis projectus ab undis
Navita, nutus humi jacet, s. et ——— LOCUTUS.

LIKE a shipwreck'd Sailor tossed
By rough waves on a perilous coast,
Lies the Babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness,
Flung by labouring nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth.
Can its eyes beseech —— no more
Than the hands are free to implore:
Voice but serves for one brief cry:
Plaint was it! or prophecy
Of sorrow that will surely come!
Omen of man's grievous doom!

But, O Mother! by the close
Duly granted to thy throws;
By the silent thanks, now tending
Incense-like to Heaven, descending
Now to mingle and to move
With the gush of earthly love,
As a debt to that frail Creature,
Instrument of struggling Nature
For the blissful calm, the peace
Known but to this one release—
Can the pitying spirit doubt
That for human-kind springs out
From the penalty a sense
Of more than mortal remonquence!

As a floating summer cloud,
Though of gorgeous drapery proud,
To the sun-burnt traveller,
Or the stooping labourer,
Oft-times makes its bounty known
By its shadow round him thrown;
So, by chequerings of sad cheer,
Heavenly Guardians, brooding near,
Of their presence tell — too bright
Haply for corporal sight!
Ministers of grace divine
Feelingly their brows incline
O'er this seeming Castaway
Breathing, in the light of day,
Something like the faintest breath
That has power to battle death—
Beautiful, while very weakness
Captivates like passive meekness.
And, sweet Mother! under warrant
Of the universal Parent,
Who repays in season due
Them who have, like thee, been true
To the filial chain let down
From his everlasting throne,
Angels hovering round thy couch,
With their softest whispers vouch,
That—whatever griefs may fret,
Cares entangle, sins betise,
This thy First-born, and with tears
Stain her cheek in future years—
Heavenly succour, not denied
To the babe, whate'er betide,
Will to the woman be supplied!

Mother! blest be thy calm ease;
Blest the starry promises,—
And the firmament benign
Hallowed be it, where they shine!
Yes, for them whose souls have scope
Ample for a winged hope,
And can earthward bend an ear
For needful listening, pledge is here,
That, if thy new-born Charge shall tread
In thy footsteps, and be led
By that other Guide, whose light
Of many virtues, mildly bright,
Gave him first the wished-for part
In thy gentle virgin heart;
Then, amid the storms of life
Presignified by that dread strife
Whence ye have escaped together,
She may look for serene weather;
In all trials sure to find
Comfort for a faithful mind;
Kindlier issues, holier rest,
Than even now await her rest,
Conscious Nursling, to thy breast!

XXXIII.

THE WARNING.

A SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING.

Last, the winds of March are blowing;
Her ground-flowers shrink, afraid of showing
Their meek heads to the nipping air,
Which ye feel not, happy pair!
Sink into a kindly sleep.
We, meanwhile, our hope will keep;
And if Time leagued with adverse Change
(Too busy fear!) shall cross its range,
Whatever check they bring,
Anxious duty hindering,
To like hope our prayers will cling.

Thus, while the ruminating spirit feeds
Upon the events of home as life proceeds,
Affections pure and holy in their source
Gain a fresh impulse, run a livelier course;
Hopes that within the Father's heart prevail,
Are in the experienced Grand sire's slow to fail;
And if the harp pleased his gay youth, it rings
To his grave touch with no unready strings,
While thoughts press on, and feelings overflow,
And quick words round him fall like flakes of snow.

Thanks to the Powers that yet maintain their sway,
And have renewed the tributary Lay.
Truths of the heart floc in with eager pace,
And Fancy greets them with a fond embrace;
Swift as the rising sun his beams extends
She shoots the tidings forth to distant friends;
Their gifts she hails (deemed precious, as they prove
For the unconscious Babe so prompt a love!)—
But from this peaceful centre of delight
Vague sympathies have urged her to take flight:
Rapt into upper regions, like the bee
That sucks from mountain heath her honey fec;
Or, like the warbling lark intent to shroud
His head in sunbeams or a bowery cloud,
She soars—and here and there her pinions rest
On proud towers, like this humble cottage, blest
With a new visitant, an infant guest—
Towers where red streamers flout the breezy sky
In pomp foreseen by her creative eye,
When feasts shall crowd the hall, and steeple bells
Glad proclamation make, and heights and dells
Catch the blithe music as it sinks and swells,
And harboured ships, whose pride is on the sea,
Shall hoist their topmost flags in sign of glee,
Honouring the hope of noble ancestry.

But who (though neither reckoning ills assigned
By Nature, nor reviewing in the mind
The track that was, and is, and must be, worn
With weary feet by all of woman born)—
Shall now by such a gift with joy be moved,
Nor feel the fulness of that joy reprieved?
Not He, whose last faint memory will command
The truth that Britain was his native land;
Whose infant soul was tutored to confide
In the cleansed faith for which her martyrs died;
Whose hoary ear the voice of her renown
With rapture thrilled; whose Youth revered the crown
Of Saxon liberty that Alfred wore,
Alfred, dear Babe, thy great Preceptor!
—Not He, who from her mellowed practice drew
His social sense of just, and fair, and true;
And saw, thereafter, on the soil of France
Rash Polity begin her maniac dance,
Foundations broken up, the deeps run wild,
Nor grieved to see (himself not unbeguiled)—
Woke from the dream, the dreamer to upbrai'd,
And learn how sanguine expectations fade
When novel trusts by folly are betrayed,—
To see Presumption, turning pale, refrain
From further havoc, but repent in vain,—
Good aims lie down, and perish in the road
Where guilt had urged them on with ceaseless goad,
Proofs thickening round her that on public ends
Domestic virtue vitally depends,
That civic strife can turn the happiest heart
Into a grievous sore of self-tormenting earth.

Can such a One, dear Babe! though glad and proud
To welcome thee, repel the fears that crowd
Into his English breast, and spare to quake
Less for his own than for thy innocent sake!
Too late—or, should the providence of God
Lead, through dark ways by sin and sorrow trod,
Justice and peace to a secure abode,
Too soon—thou com'rt into this breathing world;
Ensigns of mimic outrage are unfurled,
Who shall preserve or prop the tottering Realm?
What hand suffice to govern the state-helm?
If, in the aims of men, the surest test
Of good or bad (whate'er be sought for or profest)
Lie in the means required, or ways ordained,
For compassing the end, else never gained;
Yet governors and govern'd both are blind
To this plain truth, or fling it to the wind;
If to expedience principle must bow;
Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent
Now;
If cowardly concession still must feed
The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede;
Nor turn aside, unless to shape a way
For domination at some ripened day;
If generous Loyalty must stand in awe
Of subtle Treason, in his mask of law,
Or with braavo insolent and hard,
Provoking punishment, to win reward;
If office help the factious to conspire,
And they who should extingush, fan the fire—
Then, will the sceptre be a straw, the crown
Sit loosely, like the thistle's crest of down;
To be blown off at will, by Power that spares it
In cunning patience, from the head that wears it.

Lost people, trained to theoretic feud!
Lost above all, ye labouring multitude!
Bewildered whether ye, by slanderous tongues
Deceived, mistake calamities for wrongs;
And over fancied usurpations brood,
Oft snapping at revenge in sullen mood;
Or, from long stress of real injuries fly
To desperation for a remedy;
In bursts of outrage spread your judgments wide,
And to your wrath cry out, "Be thou our guide;"
Or, bound by oaths, come forth to tread earth's floor
In marshalled thousands, darkening street and moor
With the worst shape mock-patience ever wore;
Or, to the giddy top of self-esteem
By Flatterers carried, mount into a dream
Of boundless suffrage, at whose sage behest
Justice shall rule, disorder be supprest,
And every man sit down as Plenty's Guest!
—O for a bridle bitted with remorse
To stop your Leaders in their headstrong course!
Oh may the Almighty scatter with his grace
These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
By paths no human wisdom can foretrace!
May He pour round you, from worlds far above
Man's feverish passions, his pure light of love,
That quietly restores the natural men
To hope, and makes truth willing to be seen!
Else shall your blood-stained hands in frenzy reap
Fields gaily sown when promises were cheap.—
Why is the Past belied with wicked art,
The Future made to play so false a part,
Among a people famed for strength of mind,
Foremost in freedom, noblest of mankind!
We act as if we joyed in the sad tune
Storms make in rising, valued in the moon
Nought but her changes. Thus, ungrateful Nation!
If thou persist, and, scorning moderation,
Spread for thyself the snares of tribulation,
Whom, then, shall meekness guard! What saving skill
Lie in forbearance, strength in standing still!
—Soon shall the widow (for the speed of Time
Nought equals when the hours are winged with crime)
Widow, or wife, implore on tremulous knee,
From him who judged her lord, a like decree;
The skies will weep o'er old men desolate:
Ye little-ones! Earth shudders at your fate,
Outcasts and homeless orphans——.
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

But turn, my Soul, and from the sleeping pair
Learn thou the beauty of omniscient care!
Be strong in faith, bid anxious thoughts lie still;
Seek for the good and cherish it—the ill
Oppose, or bear with a submissive will.

XXXIV.
Ir this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track;
If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back;
Woe to the purblind crew who fill
The heart with each day’s care;
Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear!

XXXV.
The LABOURER’S NOON-DAY HYMN.

Up to the throne of God is borne
The voice of praise at early morn,
And he accepts the punctual hymn
Sung as the light of day grows dim.

Nor will he turn his ear aside
From holy offerings at noonside.
Then here reposing let us raise
A song of gratitude and praise.

What though our burthen be not light
We need not toil from morn to night;
The respite of the mid-day hour
Is in the thankful Creature’s power.

Blest are the moments, doubly blest,
That, drawn from this one hour of rest,
Are with a ready heart bestowed
Upon the service of our God!

Each field is then a hallowed spot,
An altar is in each man’s cot,
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads.

Look up to Heaven! the industrious Sun
Already half his race hath run;
He cannot halt nor go astray,
But our immortal Spirits may.

Lord! since his rising in the East,
If we have faltered or transgressed,
Guide, from thy love’s abundant source,
What yet remains of this day’s course:
Help with thy grace, through life’s short day,
Our upward and our downward way;
And glorify for us the west,
When we shall sink to final rest.

XXXVI.

ODE,

WHILE from the purpled east departs
The star that led the dawn,
Bliño Flora from her couch upstarts,
For May is on the lawn.
A quickening hope, a freshening glee,
Foreran the expected Power,
Whose first-drawn breath, from bush and tree,
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway,
Tempers the year’s extremes;
Who scattereth lustres o’er noon-day,
Like morning’s dewy gleams;
While mellow warble, sprightly trill,
The tremulous heart excite;
And hums the balmy air to still
The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power! when youths and maids
At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth, in forest glades
Thy birth to solemnize.
Though mute the song—to grace the rite
Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o’er the slight;
Man changes, but not Thou!

Thy feathered Lieges hill and wings
In love’s disport employ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
Awake to silent joy:
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
Where the slim wild deer roves;
And served in depths where fiends haunt
Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
Instinctive homage pay;
Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath
To honour thee, sweet May!
Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
Behold a smokless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot-nursing dares
To open a bright eye.

And if, on this thy natal morn,
The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
Of song and dance and game;
Still from the village-green a vow
Aspires to thee address,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
Or love within the breast.

Yes! where Love nestles thou canst teach
The soul to love the more;
Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
That never loved before.
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide,
In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre! weak words refuse
The service to prolong!
To you exulting thrush the Muse
Entrusts the imperfect song;
His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
The sovereignty of May.

Earth, sea, thy presence feel—nor less,
If you eternal blue
With its soft smile the truth express,
The heavens have felt it too.
The inmost heart of man if glad
Partakes a livelier cheer;
And eyes that cannot but be sad
Let fall a brightened tear.

Since thy return, through days and weeks
Of hope that grew by stealth,
How many wan and faded cheeks
Have kindled into health!
The Old, by thee revived, have said,
"Another year is ours?"
And wayworn Wanderers, poorly fed,
Have smiled upon thy flowers.

Who tripping lisper a merry song
Amid his playful peers!
The tender Infant who was long
A prisoner of fond fears;
But now, when every sharp-edged blast
Is quiet in its sheath,
His Mother leaves him free to taste
Earth's sweetness in thy breast.

Thy help is with the weed that creeps
Along the humblest ground;
No cliff so bare but on its steeps
Thy favours may be found;
But most on some peculiar nook
That our own hands have drest,
Thou and thy truant are proud to look,
And seem to love it best.

And yet how pleased we wander forth
When May is whispering, "Come!"
"Choose from the bowers of virgin earth"
"The happiest for your home;"
"Heaven's bounteous love through me is spread"
"From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
"Drops on the mouldering turret's head,
"And on your turf-clad graves!"

Such greeting heard, away with sighs
For lilies that must fade,
Or 'tis that primrose as it dies
Forsaken' in the shade!
Vernal frictions and desires
Are linked in endless chase;
While, as one kindly growth retires,
Another takes its place.
And what if thou, sweet May, hast known
Mishap by worm and blight;
If expectations newly blown
Have perished in thy sight;
If loves and joys, while up they sprung,
Were caught as in a snare;
Such is the lot of all the young,
However bright and fair.

Lo! Streams that April could not check
Are patient of thy rule;
Gurgling in foamy water-break,
Lingering in glassy pool:
By thee, thee only, could be sent
Such gentle mists as glides,
Curling with unconfirmed intent,
On that green mountain's side.

How delicate the leafy veil
Through which you house of God
Gleams 'mid the peace of this deep dale
By few but shepherds trod!
And lowly huts, near beaten ways,
No sooner stand attained
In thy fresh wreaths, than they for praise
Seek forth, and are admired.

Season of fancy and of hope,
Permit not for one hour,
A blossom from thy crown to drop,
Nor add to it a flower!
Keep, lovely May, as if by touch
Of self-restraining art,
This modest charm of not too much,
Part seen, imagined part!

With emblematic purity attired
In a white vest, white as her marble neck
Is, and the pillar of the throat would be
But for the shadow by the drooping chin
Cast into that recess—the tender shade
The shade and light, both there and every where,
And through the very atmosphere she breathes,
Broad, clear, and toned harmoniously, with skill
That might from nature have been learnt in the hour
When the lone shepherd sees the morning spread
Upon the mountains. Look at her, whose'er
Thou be that, kindling with a poet's soul,
Hast loved the painter's true Promethean craft
Intensely—from Imagination take
The treasure,—what mine eyes behold see thou,
Even though the Atlantic ocean roll between.

A silver line, that runs from brow to crown
And in the middle parts the braided hair,
Just serves to show how delicate a soil
The golden harvest grows in; and those eyes,
Soft and capacious as a cloudless sky
Whose azure depth their colour emulates,
Must needs be conversant with upward looks,
Prayer's voiceless service; but now, seeking nought
And shunning nought, their own peculiar life
Of motion they renounce, and with the head
Partake its inclination towards earth
In humble grace, and quiet pensiveness
Caught at the point where it stops short of sadness.

Offspring of soul-bewitching Art, make me
Thy confidant! say, whence derived that air
Of calm abstraction! Can the ruling thought
Be with some lover far away, or one
Crossed by misfortune, or of doubted faith!
Inapt conjecture! Childhood here, a moon
Crescent in simple loveliness serene,
Has but approached the gates of womanhood,
Not entered them; her heart is yet unpierced
By the blind Archer-god; her fancy free:
The fount of feeling, if unsought elsewhere,
Will not be found.

Her right hand, as it lies
Across the slender wrist of the left arm
Upon her lap reposing, holds—but mark
How slackly, for the absent mind permits
No firmer grasp—a little wild-flower, joined
As in a posy, with a few pale ears
Of yellowing corn, the same that overtopped
And in their common birthplace sheltered it
'Till they were plucked together; a blue flower
Called by the thrifty husbandman a weed;
But Ceres, in her garland, might have worn
That ornament, unblamed. The floweret, held
In scarcely conscious fingers, was, she knows,
(Her Father told her so) in youth's gay dawn
Her Mother's favourite; and the orphan Girl,
In her own dawn—a dawn less gay and bright,
Loves it, while there in solitary peace
She sits, for that departed Mother's sake.
—Not from a source less sacred is derived
(Surely I do err) that pensive air
Of calm abstraction through the face diffused
And the whole person.

Words have something told
More than the pencil can, and verily
More than is needed, but the precious Art
Forgives their interference—Art divine,
That both creates and fixes, in despite
Of Death and Time, the marvels it hath wrought.

Strange contrasts have we in this world of ours!
That posture, and the look of filial love
Thinking of past and gone, with what is left
Dearly united, might be swept away
From this fair Portrait's fleshy Archetype,
Even by an innocent fancy's slightest freak
Banished, nor ever, haply, be restored
To their lost place, or meet in harmony
So exquisite; but here do they abide,
Enshrined for ages. Is not then the Art
Godlike, a humble branch of the divine,
In visible quest of immortality,
Stretched forth with trembling hope!—In every
realm,
From high Gibraltar to Siberian plains,
Thousands, in each variety of tongue
That Europe knows, would echo this appeal;
One above all, a Monk who waits on God
In the magnific Convent built by yore
To sanctify the Escorial palace. He—
Guiding, from cell to cell and room to room,
A British Painter (eminent for truth
In character, and depth of feeling, shown
By labours that have touched the hearts of kings,
And are endeared to simple cottagers)—
Came, in that service, to a glorious work,
Our Lord's Last Supper, beautiful as when first
The appropriate Picture, fresh from Titian's hand,
Graced the Refectory: and there, while both
Stood with eyes fixed upon that masterpiece,
The hoary Father in the Stranger's ear
Breathed out these words:—"Here daily do we sit,
Thanks given to God for daily bread, and here
Pondering the mischief of these restless times,
And thinking of my Brethren, dead, dispersed,
Or changed and changing, I not seldom gaze
Upon this solemn Company unmoved
By shock of circumstance, or lapse of years,
Until I cannot but believe that they—
They are in truth the Substance, we the Shadow."

So spake the mild Jeronymite, his griefs
Melting away within him like a dream
Ere he had ceased to gaze, perhaps to speak;
And I, grown old, but in a happier land,
Domestic Portrait! have to verse consigned
In thy calm presence those heart-moving words:
Words that can soothe, more than they agitate;
Whose spirit, like the angel that went down
Into Bethesda's pool, with healing virtue
Infuses the fount in the human breast
Which by the visitation was disturbed.
——But why this stealing tear! Companion mine,
On thee I look, not sorrowing; fare thee well,
My Song's Inspirer, once again farewell!*

XXXIX.

THE FOREGOING SUBJECT RESUMED.

Among a grave fraternity of Monks,
For One, but surely not for One alone,
Triumphs, in that great work, the Painter's skil,
Humbling the body, to exalt the soul;
Yet representing, amid wreck and wrong
And dissolution and decay, the warm
Andbreathing life of flesh, as if already
Clothed with impassive majesty, and grace
With no mere earnest of a heritage
Assigned to it in future worlds. Them, too,
With thy memorial flower, mock Portraiture!
From whose serene companionship I passed
Pursued by thoughts that haunt me still; thou
also—
Though but a simple object, into light
Called forth by those affections that endure
The private hearth; though keeping thy sole seat
In singleness, and little tried by time,
Creation, as it were, of yesterday—
With a congenial function art endowed
For each and all of us, together joined
In course of nature under a low roof

* The pile of buildings, composing the palace and convent of San Lorenzo, has, in common usage, lost its proper name in that of the Escorial, a village at the foot of the hill upon which the splendid edifice, built by Philip the Second, stands. It need scarcely be added, that Wilkie is the painter alluded to.
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

By charities and duties that proceed
Out of the bosom of a wiser vow.
To a like salutary sense of awe
Or sacred wonder, growing with the power
Of meditation that attempts to weigh,
In faithful scales, things and their opposites,
Can thy enduring quiet gently raise
A household small and sensitive,—whose love,
Dependent as in part its blessings are
Upon frail ties dissolving or dissolved.
On earth, will be revived, we trust, in heaven.*

1834.

XL.

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little Flowers were born to live,
Conscious of half the pleasure which they give;
That to this mountain-daisy’s self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone!
And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the Sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount?

So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade;
And were the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight!

Fond fancies! whereas’er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean, or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy;
All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled,
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

* In the class entitled “Musings,” in Mr. Southerby’s Minor Poems, is one upon his own miniature Picture, taken in childhood, and another upon a landscape painted by Gaspar Poussin. It is possible that every word of the above verses, though similar in subject, might have been written had the author been unacquainted with those beautiful effusions of poetic sentiment. But, for his own satisfaction, he must be allowed thus publicly to acknowledge the pleasure those two Poems of his Friend have given him, and the grateful influence they have upon his mind as often as he reads them, or thinks of them.

XLI.

UPON SEEING A COLOURED DRAWING OF THE BIRD
OF PARADISE IN AN ALBUM.

Who rashly strove thy Image to portray?
Thou buoyant minion of the tropic air;
How could he think of the live creature—gay
With a divinity of colours, drest
In all her brightness, from the dancing crest
Far as the last gleam of the filmy train
Extended and extending to sustain
The motions that it grace—and forbear
To drop his pencil! Flowers of every clime
Depicted on these pages smile at time;
And gorgeous insects copied with nice care
Are here, and likenesses of many a shell
Tossed ashore by restless waves,
Or in the diver’s grasp fetched up from caves
Where sea-nymphs might be proud to dwell:
But whose rash hand (again I ask) could dare
Mid casual tokens and promiscuous shows,
To circumscribe this Shape in fixed repose;
Could imitate for indolent survey,
Perhaps for touch profane,
Images that might catch, but cannot keep, a stain;
And, with cloud-streaks lightest and loftiest, share
The sun’s first greeting, his last farewell ray!

Resplendent Wanderer! followed with glad eyes
Where’er her course; mysterious Bird!
To whom, by wondering Fancy stirred,
Eastern Islanders have given
A holy name—the Bird of Heaven!
And even a title higher still,
The Bird of God! whose blessed will
She seems performing as she flies
Over the earth and through the skies
In never-wearied search of Paradise—
Region that crowns her beauty with the name
She hears for as—for us how blest,
How happy at all seasons, could like aim
Uphold our Spirits urged to kindred flight
On wings that fear no glance of God’s pure sight,
No tempest from his breath, their promised rest
Seeking with indefatigable quest
Above a world that deems itself most wise
When most enslaved by gross realities!

1835.
SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER.

I.

COMPOSED AFTER READING A NEWSPAPER OF THE DAY.

"People! your chains are severing link by link; Soon shall the Rich be levelled down—the Poor Meet them half way." Vain boast! for These, the more
They thus would rise, must low and lower sink Till, by repentance stung, they fear to think; While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
And mix the poison, they themselves must drink. Mistrust thyself, vain Country! cease to cry, "Knowledge will save me from the threatened woe."
For, if than other rash ones more thou know, Yet on presumptuous wing as far would fly Above thy knowledge as they dared to go, Thou wilt provoke a heavier penalty.

"By us with hope encountered, be upset;— "For once I burst my bands, and cry, applaud!"
Then whispered she, "The Bill is carrying out!"
They heard, and, starting up, the Brood of Night Clapped hands, and shook with glee their matted locks;
All Powers and Places that abhor the light Joined in the transport, echoed back their shout, Hurrah for ———, hugging his Ballot-box!

II.

UPON THE LATE GENERAL FAST.

March, 1832.

Reluctant call it was; the rite delayed;
And in the Senate some there were who doffed
The last of their humanity, and scoffed
At providential judgments, undismayed
By their own daring. But the People prayed
As with one voice; their flinty heart grew soft
With penitential sorrow, and aloft
Their spirit mounted, crying, "God us aid!"
Oh that with aspirations more intense,
Chastised by self-abasement more profound,
This People, once so happy, so renowned
For liberty, would seek from God defence
Against far heavier ill, the pestilence
Of revolution, impiously unbound!

III.

Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud,
Falsehood and Treachery, in close council met,
Deep under ground, in Pluto's cabinet,
"The frost of England's pride will soon be thawed;"
"Hooded the open brow that overawed
Our schemes; the faith and honour, never yet

BLUST Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Eye Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolve, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties;—prompt to move, but firm to wait,—
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found;
That, for the functions of an ancient State—
Strong by her charters, free because inbound,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate—
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound.

IV.

IN ALLUSION TO VARIOUS RECENT HISTORIES AND NOTICES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Portentous change when History can appear
As the cool Advocate of foul device;
Reckless audacity extol, and jeer
At consequences perplexed with scruples nice!
They who bewail not, must abhor, the sneer
Born of Conceit, Power's blind Idolater:
Or haply sprung from vaunting Cowardice
Betrayed by mockery of holy fear.
Hath it not long been said the wrath of Man
Works not the righteousness of God! Oh bend,
Bend, ye Perverse! to judgments from on High,
Laws that lay under Heaven's perpetual ban
All principles of action that transcend
The sacred limits of humanity.
SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER.

VI.
CONTINUED.

Who ponders National events shall find
An awful balancing of loss and gain,
Joy based on sorrow, good with ill combined,
And proud deliverance issuing out of pain
And direful thrones ; as if the All-ruling Mind,
With whose perfection it consists to ordain
Volcanic burst, earthquake, and hurricane,
Dealt in like sort with feeble human kind
By laws immutable. But woe for him
Who thus deceived shall lend an eager hand
To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
And Truth, whose eye guilt only can make dim ;
And Will, whose office, by divine command,
Is to control and check disordered Powers !

VII.

CONCLUDED.

Long-favoured England! be not thou misled
By monstrous theories of alien growth,
Lost alien frenzy seize thee, waxing wroth,
Self-aminten till thy garments streaked with red
With thy own blood, which tears in torrents shed
Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy truth
Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
Or wan despair,—the ghost of false hope fled
Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
My Country! if such warning be held dear,
Then shall a Veteran’s heart be thrilled with joy,
One who would gather from eternal truth,
For time and season, rules that work to cheer—
Not scourge, to save the People—not destroy.

VIII.

Men of the Western World! in Fates’ dark book
Whence these opprobrious leaves of dire portent?
Think ye your British Ancestors forsook
Their native Land, for outrage provident;
From unsubmitive necks the bridle shook
To give, in their Descendants, freer vent
And wider range to passions turbulent,
To mutual tyranny a deadlier look?
Nay, said a voice, soft as the south wind’s breath,
Dive through the stormy surface of the flood
To the great current flowing underneath ;
Explore the countless springs of silent good ;
So shall the truth be better understood,
And thy grieved Spirit brighten strong in faith.

IX.

TO THE PENNSYLVANIANS.

Days undisturbed by luxury or sloth,
Firm self-denial, manners grave and staid,
Rights equal, laws with cheerfulness obeyed,
Words that require no sanction from an oath,
And simple honesty a common growth—
This high repute, with bounteous Nature’s aid,
Won confidence, now ruthlessly betrayed
At will, your power the measure of your truth!—
All who revere the memory of Penn
Grieve for the land on whose wild woods his name
Was fondly grafted with a virtuous aim,
Renounced, abandoned by degenerate Men
For state-dishonour black as ever came
To upper air from Mammon’s loathsome den.

X.

AT BOLOGNA, IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE
INSURRECTIONS, 1837.

Ah why deceive ourselves! by no mere fit
Of sudden passion roused shall men attain
True freedom where for ages they have lain
Bound in a dark abominable pit,
With life’s best sinews more and more unknit.
Here, there, a band of few who loathe the chain
May rise to break it: effort worse than vain
For thee, O great Italian nation, split
Into those jarring factions.—Let thy scope
Be one fixed mind for all; thy rights approve
To thy own conscience gradually renewed;
Learn to make Time the father of wise Hope;
Then trust thy cause to the arm of Fortitude,
The light of Knowledge, and the warmth of Love.

XI.

CONTINUED.

II.

Hard task! exclaim the undisciplined, to lean
On Patience coupled with such slow endeavour,
That long-lived servitude must last for ever.
Perish the grovelling few, who, prest between
Wrongs and the terror of redress, would wear
Millions from glorious aims. Our chains to sever
Let us break forth in tempest now or never!—
What, is there then no space for golden mean
And gradual progress!—Twilight leads to day,
And, even within the burning zones of earth,
The harshest sunrise yields a temperate ray;
The softest breeze to fairest flowers gives birth:
Think not that Prudence dwells in dark abodes,
She scans the future with the eye of gods.
SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER.

xii.

CONCLUDED.

As leaves are to the tree whereon they grow
And wither, every human generation
Is to the Being of a mighty nation,
Locked in our world's embrace through weal and woe;
Thought that should teach the zealot to forego
Rash schemes, to abjure all selfish agitation,
And seek through noiseless pains and moderation
The unblemished good they only can bestow.
Alas! with most, who weigh futurity
Against time present, passion holds the scales:
Hence equal ignorance of both prevails,
And nations sink; or, struggling to be free,
Are doomed to flounder on, like wounded whales
Tossed on the bosom of a stormy sea.

In the true filial bosom's immost fold
For ever.—The Spirit of Alfred, at the head
Of all who for her rights watch'd, toil'd and bled,
Knows that this prophecy is not too bold.
What—how! shall she submit in will and deed
To Beardless Boys—an imitative race,
The servus popus of a Gallic breed!
Dear Mother! if thou must thy steps retract,
Go where at least meek Innocency dwells;
Let Babes and Sucklings be thy oracles.

xiii.

Young England—what is then become of Old
Of dear Old England! Think they she is dead,
Dead to the very name! Presumption fed
On empty air! That name will keep its hold.

Feel for the wrongs to universal ken
Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies;
And seek the Sufferer in his darkest den,
Whether conducted to the spot by sighs
And moanings, or he dwells (as if the wren
Taught him concealment) hidden from all eyes
In silence and the awful modesties
Of sorrow;—feel for all, as brother Men!
Rest not in hope want's icy chain to thaw
By casual boons and formal charities;
Learn to be just, just through impartial law;
Far as ye may, erect and equalise;
And, what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice!
SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH.

IN SERIES.

I.
Suggested by the View of Lancaster Castle
(On the Road from the South).
This Spot—at once unfolding sight so fair
Of sea and land, with yon grey towers that still
Rise up as if to lord it over air—
Might soothe in human breasts the sense of ill,
Or charm it out of memory; yes, might fill
The heart with joy and gratitude to God
For all his bounties upon man bestowed:
Why hears it then the name of "Weeping Hill"?
Thousands, as toward you old Lancastrian Towers,
A prison's crown, along this way they past
For lingering durance or quick death with shame,
From this bare eminence thereon have cast
Their first look—blinded as tears fell in showers
Shed on their chains; and hence that doleful name.

II.
Tenderly do we feel by Nature's law
For worst offenders: though the heart will heave
With indignation, deeply moved we grieve,
In after thought, for Him who stood in awe
Neither of God nor man, and only saw,
Lost wretch, a horrible device enthroned
On proud temptations, till the victim groaned
Under the steel his hand had dared to draw.
But O, restrain compassion, if its course,
As oft befals, prevent or turn aside
Judgments and aims and acts whose higher source
Is sympathy with the unforewarned, who died
Blameless—with them that shuddered o'er his grave,
And all who from the law firm safety crave.

III.
The Roman Consul doomed his sons to die
Who had betrayed their country. The stern word
Afforded (may it through all time afford)
A theme for praise and admiration high.
Upon the surface of humanity
He rested not; its depths his mind explored;
He felt; but his parental bosom's lord
Was Duty,—Duty calmed his agony.
And some, we know, when they by wilful act
A single human life have wrongly taken,
Pass sentence on themselves, confess the fact,
And, to stave for it, with soul unshaken
Kneel at the feet of Justice, and, for faith
Broken with all mankind, solicit death.

IV.
Is Death, when evil against good has fought
With such fell mastery that a man may dare
By deeds the blackest purpose to lay bare!
Is Death, for one to that condition brought,
For him, or any one, the thing that ought
To be most dreaded! Lawgivers, beware,
Lest, capital pains remitting till ye spare
The murderer, ye, by sanction to that thought
Seemingly given, debase the general mind;
Tempt the vague will tried standards to disown,
Nor only palpable restraints unbind,
But upon Honour's head disturb the crown,
Whose absolute rule permits not to withstand
In the weak love of life his least command.

V.
Nor to the object specially designed,
Howe'er momentous in itself it be,
Good to promote or curb depravity,
Is the wise Legislator's view confined.
His Spirit, when most severe, is oft most kind;
As all Authority in earth depends
On Love and Fear, their several powers he blends,
Copying with awe the one Paternal mind.
Uncaught by processes in show humane,
He feels how far the act would derogate
From even the humblest functions of the State;
If she, self-shorn of Majesty, ordain
That never more shall hang upon her breath
The last alternative of Life or Death.
SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH.

VI.
Yea brood of conscience—Spectres! that frequent
The bad Man’s restless walk, and haunt his bed—
Fieuds in your aspect, yet beneficent
In act, as hovering Angels when they spread
Their wings to guard the unconscious Innocent—
Slow be the Statutes of the land to share
A laxity that could not but impair
Your power to punish crime, and so prevent.
And ye, Beliefs! coiled serpent-like about
The adage on all tongues, “Murder will out,”
How shall your ancient warnings work for good
In the full might they hitherto have shown,
If for deliberate shedding of man’s blood
Survive not Judgment that requires his own?

VII.
Before the world had past her time of youth
While polity and discipline were weak,
The precept eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,
Came forth—a light, though but as of day-break,
Strong as could then be borne. A Master meek
Proscribed the spirit fostered by that rule,
Patience his law, long-suffering his school,
And love the end, which all through peace must seek.
But lamentably do they err who strain
His mandates, given rash impulse to controul
And keep vindictive thristings from the soul,
So far that, if consistent in their scheme,
They must forbid the State to inflict a pain,
Making of social order a mere dream.

VIII.
Fit retribution, by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State’s embrace,
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants well-measured terrors in the road
Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and broad,
And, the main fear once doomed to banishment,
Fare often then, bad ushering worse event,
Blood would be spilt that in his dark abode
Crime might lie better hid. And, should the change
Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
And, guilt escaping, passion then might plead
In angry spirits for her old free range,
And the “wild justice of revenge” prevail.

IX.
Trost to give timely warning and deter
Is one great aim of penalty, extend
Thy mental vision further and ascend
Far higher, else full surely shalt thou err.
What is a State? The wise beheld in her
A creature born of time, that keeps one eye
Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
To which her judgments reverently defer.
Speaking through Law’s dispassionate voice the State
Endures her conscience with external life
And being, to preclude or quell the strife
Of individual will, to elevate
The grovelling mind, the erring to recal,
And fortify the moral sense of all.

X.
Our bodily life, some plead, that life the shrine
Of an immortal spirit, is a gift
So sacred, so informed with light divine,
That no tribunal, though most wise to sit
Deed and intent, should turn the Being adrift
Into that world where penitential tear
May not avail, nor prayer have for God’s ear
A voice—that world whose veil no hand can lift
For earthly sight. “Eternity and Time.”
They urge, “have interwoven claims and rights
Not to be jeopardised through foulest crime:
The sentence rule by mercy’s heaven-born lights.”
Even so; but measuring not by finite sense
Infinite Power, perfect Intelligence.

XI.
Ah, think how one compelled for life to abide
Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the heart
Out of his own humanity, and part
With every hope that mutual cares provide;
And, should a less unnatural doom confide
In life-long exile on a savage coast,
Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer pride.
Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and pure,
Sanctions the forfeiture that Law demands,
Leaving the final issue in His hands
Whose goodness knows no change, whose love is sure,
Who sees, foresees; who cannot judge amiss,
And waifs at will the contrite soul to bliss.
SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH.

XII.

See the Condemned alone within his cell
And prostrate at some moment when remorse
Stings to the quick, and, with resistless force,
Assaults the pride she strove in vain to quell.
Then mark him, him who could so long rebel,
The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
Softens his heart, till from his eyes owntwell
Tears of salvation. Welcome death! while Heaven
Does in this change exceedingly rejoice;
While yet the solemn heed the State hath given
Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's voice
In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
On old temptations, might for ever blast.

XIII.

CONCLUSION.

Yes, though He well may tremble at the sound
Of his own voice, who from the judgment-seat
Sends the pale Convict to his last retreat
In death; though Listeners shudder all around,
They know the dread requital's source profound;
Nor is, they feel, its wisdom obsolete—
(Would that it were!) the sacrifice unmeet
For Christian Faith. But hopeful signs abound;
The social rights of man breathe purer air;
Religion deepens her preventive care;
Then, moved by needless fear of past abuse,
Strike not from Law's firm hand that awful rod,
But leave it thence to drop for lack of use:
Oh, speed the blessed hour, Almighty God!

XIV.

APOLOGY.

The formal World relaxes her cold chain
For One who speaks in numbers; ampler scope
His utterance finds; and, conscious of the gain,
Imagination works with bolder hope
The cause of grateful reason to sustain;
And, serving Truth, the heart more strongly beats
Against all barriers which his labour meets
In lofty place, or humble Life's domain.
Enough;—before us lay a painful road,
And guidance have I sought in dulcous love
From Wisdom's heavenly Father. Hence hath flowed
Patience, with trust that, whatsoever the way
Each takes in this high matter, all may move
Cheered with the prospect of a brighter day.

1849
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

1.

EPISTLE
TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BARON
FROM THE SOUTH-WEST COAST OF CUMBRIA.—1611.
Far from our home by Grasmere's quiet Lake,
From the Vale's penses which all her fields partake,
Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore
We sojourn stunned by Ocean's ceaseless roar;
While, day by day, grim neighbour! huge Black Comb
Prowns deepening visibly his native gloom,
Unless, perchance rejecting in despite
What on the Plain we have of warmth and light,
In his own storms he hides himself from sight.
Rough is the time; and thoughts, that would be free
From heaviness, oft fly, dear Friend, to thee;
Turn from a spot where neither sheltered road
Nor hedge-row screen invites my steps abroad;
Where one poor Plane-tree, having as it might
Attained a stature twice a tall man's height,
Hopeless of further growth, and brown and sere
Through half the summer, stands with top cut sheer,
Like an unsitting weathercock which proves
How cold the quarter that the wind best loves,
Or like a Centinel that, evermore
Darkening the window, ill defends the door
Of this unfinished house—a Fortress bare,
Where strength has been the Builder's only care;
Whose rugged walls may still for years demand
The final polish of the Plasterer's hand.
—This Dwelling's Inmate more than three weeks' space
And oft a Prisoner in the cheerless place,
—of whose touch the fiddle would complain,
Whose breath would labour at the flute in vain,
In music all reversed, nor blessed with skill
A bridge to copy, or to paint a mill,
Tired of my books, a scanty company!
And tired of listening to the boisterous sea—
Face between door and window muttering rhyme,
An old resource to cheat a froward time!
Though these dull hours (mine is it, or their shame?)
Would tempt me to renounce that humble aim.
—But if there be a Muse who, free to take
Her seat upon Olympus, doth forsake
Those heights (like Phoebus when his golden locks
He veiled, attendant on Theseusian flocks)
And, in disguise, a Milkmaid with her pail
Trips down the pathways of some winding dale;
Or, like a Mermaid, warbles on the shores
To fishers mending nets beside their doors;
Or, Pilgrim-like, on forest most secluded,
Gives plaintive ditties to the howling wind,
Or listens to its play among the boughs
Above her head and so forgets her vows—
If such a Visitant of Earth there be
And she would deign this day to smile on me
And aid my verse, content with local bounds
Of natural beauty and life's daily rounds,
Thoughts, chances, sights, or doings, which we tell
Without reserve to those whom we love well—
Then haply, Beaumont! words in current clear
Will flow, and on a welcome page appear
Duly before thy sight, unless they perish here.

What shall I treat of? News from Mona's Isle! Such have we, but unvaried in its style;
No tales of Ramsgate fresh landed, whence
And wherefore fugitive or on what pretence;
Of feasts, or scandal, eddying like the wind
Most restlessly alive when most confined.
Ask not of me, whose tongue can best appraise
The mighty tumults of the House or Kers;
The last year's cup whose Ram or Heifer gained,
What slopes are planted, or what mosses drained:
An eye of fancy only can I cast
On that proud pageant now at hand or past,
When full five hundred boats in trim array,
With nets and sails outspread and streamers gay,
And chanted hymns and stiller voice of prayer,
For the old Manx-harvest to the Deep repair,
Soon as the herring-shools at distance shine
Like beds of moonlight shifting on the brine.

Mona from our Abode is daily seen,
But with a wilderness of waves between;
And by conjecture only can we speak
Of aught transacted there in bay or creek;
No tidings reach us thence from town or field,
Only faint news her mountain sunbeams yield,
And some we gather from the misty air,
And in that grisly object recoignize
The Curate's Dog—his long-tryed friend, for they,
As well we knew, together had grown grey.
The Master died, his drooping servant's grief
Found at the Widow's feet some sad relief;
Yet still he lived in pining discontent,
Sadness which no indulgence could prevent;
Hence whole day wanderings, broken nightly sleeps
And lonesome watch that out of doors he keeps;
Not oftentimes, I trust, as we, poor brute!
Espied him on his legs sustained, blank, mute,
And of all visible motion destitute,
So that the very heaving of his breath
Seemed stopt, though by some other power than
death.
Long as we gazed upon the form and face,
A mild domestic pity kept its place,
Unscar'd by thronging fancies of strange hue
That haunted us in spite of what we knew.
Even now I sometimes think of him as lost
In second-sight appearances, or crost
By spectral shapes of guilt, or to the ground,
On which he stood, by spells unnatural bound,
Like a gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait
In days of old romance at Archimago's gate.

Advancing Summer, Nature's law fulfilled;
The choristers in every grove had still'd;
But we, we lacked not music of our own,
For lightsome Fanny had thus early thrown,
Mid the gay prattle of those infant tongues,
Some notes prelusive, from the round of songs
With which, more zealous than the liveliest bird
That in wild Arden's brakes was ever heard,
Her work and her work's partners she can cheer,
The whole day long, and all days of the year.

Thus gladdened from our own dear Vale we pass
And soon approach Diana's Looking-glass!
To Lougbrigg-tarn, round clear and bright as
heaven,
Such name Italian fancy would have given,
Ere on its banks the few grey cabins rose
That yet disturb not its concealed repose
More than the feeblest wind that idly blows.

Ah, Beaumont! when an opening in the road
Stopped me at once by charm of what it showed,
The encircling region vividly express
Within the mirror's depth, a world at rest—
Sky streaked with purple, grove and craggy bield *
And the smooth green of many a pendent field,

* A word common in the country, signifying shelter, as in Scotland.
And, quieted and soothed, a torrent small,
A little daring would be waterfall,
One chimney smoking and its aureole wreath,
Associate all in the calm Pool beneath,
With here and there a faint imperfect gleam
Of water-lilies veiled in misty steam—
What wonder at this hour of stillness deep,
A shadowy line ‘tween wakefulness and sleep,
When Nature’s self, amid such blending, seems
To render visible her own soft dreams,
If, mixed with what appeared of rock, lawn, wood,
Fondly embossed in the tranquil flood,
A glimpse I caught of that Abode, by Thee
Designed to rise in humble privacy,
A lowly Dwelling, here to be outspread,
Like a small Hamlet, with its bashful head
Half hid in native trees. Alas, ’tis not,
Nor ever was; I sighed, and left the spot
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
Of unexperienced joys that might have been;
Of neighbourhood and intermingling arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.
But time, irrevocable, time is flown,
And let us utter thanks for blessings won
And reap—what hath been, and what is, our own.

Not far we travelled ere a shout of glee,
Startling us all, dispersed my reverie;
Such shout as many a sportive echo meeting
Oft-times from Alpine chalets sends a greeting.
Whence the blithe hail! beheld a Peasant stand
On high, a kirkch拭 waving in her hand!
Not unexpected that by early day
Our little Band would thrud this mountain way,
Before her cottage on the bright hill side
She hath advanced with hope to be descried.
Right gladly answering signals we displayed,
Moving along a tract of morning shade,
And vocal wishes sent of like good will
To our kind Friend high on the sunny hill—
Luminous region, fair as if the prime
Were tempting all asir to look aloft or climb;
Only the centre of the shining cot
With door left open makes a gloomy spot,
Emblem of those dark corners sometimes found
Within the happiest breast on earthly ground.

Rich prospect left behind of stream and vale,
And mountain-tops, a barren ridge we scale;
Descend and reach, in Yeowdale’s depths, a plain
With haycocks studded, striped with yellowing grain—
An area level as a Lake and spread

Under a rock too steep for man to tread,
Where sheltered from the north and bleak northwest
Aloft the Raven hangs a visible nest,
Fearless of all assaults that would her brood molest.
Hot sunbeams fill the steaming vale; but hark!
At our approach, a jealous watch-dog’s bark,
Noise that brings forth no liveried Page of state,
But the whole household, that our coming wait.
With Young and Old warm greetings we exchange,
And join us smiles, and toward the lovely Grange
Press forward by the tawny dogs unscared.
Entering, we find the morning meal prepared:
So down we sit, though not till each had cast
Pleased looks around the delicate repast—
Rich cream, and snow-white eggs fresh from the nest,
With amber honey from the mountain’s breast;
Strawberries from lane or woodland, offering wild
Of children’s industry, in hillocks piled;
Cakes for the nonce, and butter fit to lie
Upon a lordly dish; frank hospitality
Where simple art with bounteous nature vied,
And cottage comfort shunned not seemly pride.

Kind Hostess! Handmaid also of the feast,
If thou be lovelier than the kindling East,
Words by thy presence unrestrained may speak
Of a perpetual dawn from brow and cheek
Instinct with light whose sweetest promise lies,
Never retiring, in thy large dark eyes,
Dark but to every gentle feeling true,
As if their lustre flowed from ether’s purest blue.

Let me not ask what tears may have been wept
By those bright eyes, what weary vigils kept,
Beside that hearth what sighs may have been heaved
For wounds inflicted, nor what toil relieved
By fortitude and patience, and the grace
Of heaven in pity visiting the place.
Not unadvisedly those secret springs
I leave unsearched: enough that memory clings,
Here as elsewhere, to notices that make
Their own significance for hearts awake,
To rural incidents, whose genial powers
Filled with delight three summer morning hours.

More could my pen report of grave or gay
That through our gipsy travel cheered the way;
But, bursting forth above the waves, the Sun
Laughs at my pains, and seems to say, “Be done.”
Yet, Beaumont, thou wilt not, I trust, reprove
This humble offering made by Truth to Love,
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Nur chide the Muse that stooped to break a spell
Which might have else been on me yet:—

FAREWELL.

UPON PERUSING THE FOREGOING EPISTLE THIRTY YEARS AFTER ITS COMPOSITION.

Soon did the Almighty Giver of all rest
Take those dear young Ones to a fearless nest;
And in Death's arms has long reposed the Friend
For whom this simple Register was penned.
Thanks to the moth that spared it for our eyes;
And Strangers even the slighted Scroll may prize,
Moved by the touch of kindred sympathies.
For—save the calm, repentance sheds o'er strife
Raised by remembrances of misuseed life,
The light from past endeavours purely will'd
And by Heaven's favour happily fulfilled;
Save hope that we, yet bound to Earth, may share
The joys of the Departed—what so fair
As blameless pleasures, not without some tears,
Reviewed through Love's transparent veil of years!

Note,—LOUGHBRIG TARN, alluded to in the foregoing Epiistle, resembles, though much smaller in compass, the Lake Nemi, or Speculum Divus, as it is often called, not only in its clear waters and circular form, and the beauty immediately surrounding it, but also as being overlooked by the eminence of Langdale Pikes as Lake Nemi is by that of Monte Calvo. Since this Epiistle was written Loughrigg Tarn has lost much of its beauty by the felling of many natural clumps of wood, relics of the old forest, particularly upon the farm called "The Oaks," from the abundance of that tree which grew there.

It is to be regretted, upon public grounds, that Sir George Beaumont did not carry into effect his intention of constructing here a Summer Retreat in the style I have described; as his taste would have set an example how buildings, with all the accommodations modern society requires, might be introduced even into the most sequestered parts of this country without injuring their native character. The design was not abandoned from failure of inclination on his part, but in consequence of local uneasiness which need not be particularised.

II.

GOLD AND SILVER FISHES IN A VASE.

The soaring lark is blest as proud
When at heaven's gate she sings;
The roving bee proclaims aloud
Her flight by vocal wings;
While Ye, in lasting durance pent,
Your silent lives employ
For something more than dull content,
Though haply less than joy.

Yet might your glassy prison seem
A place where joy is known,
Where golden flash and silver gleam
Have meanings of their own;
While, high and low, and all about,
Your notions, glittering Elves!
Ye weave—no danger from without,
And peace among yourselves.

Type of a sunny human breast
Is your transparent cell;
Where Fear is but a transient guest,
No sullen Humours dwell;
Where, sensitive of every ray
That smites this tiny sea,
Your scaly panoplies repay
The loan with usury.

How beautiful!—Yet none knows why
This ever-graceful change,
Renewed—newed incessantly—
Within your quiet range.
Is it that ye with conscious skill
For mutual pleasure glide;
And sometimes, not without your will,
Are dwarfed, or magnified?

Fauns, Genii of gigantic size!
And now, in twilight dim,
Clustering like constellated eyes,
In wings of Cherubim,
When the fierce orbs abate their glare:—
Whate'er your forms express,
Whate'er ye seem, whate'er ye are—
All leads to gentleness.

Cold though your nature be, 'tis pure;
Your birthright is a fence
From all that haughtier kinds endure
Through tyranny of sense.
Ah! not alone by colours bright
Are Ye to heaven allied,
When, like essential Forms of light,
Ye mingle, or divide.

For day-dreams soft as e'er beguiled
Day-thoughts while limbs repose;
For moonlight fascinations mild,
Your gift, ere shutters close—
Accept, mute Captives! thanks and praise;
And may this tribute prove
That gentle admirations raise
Delight resembling love.
III.

LIBERTY.

(SEQUEL TO THE ABOVE.)

[ADDRESS TO A FRIEND; THE GOLD AND SILVER FIRES HAVING BEEN REMOVED TO A POOL IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND OF EYAL MOUNT.]

"The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made for themselves, under whatever form it be of government. The liberty of a private man, in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and of his country. Of the latter we are here to discourse."—Cowley.

Toss breathing Tokens of your kind regard,
(Suspect not, Anna, that their fate is hard;)
Not soon does aught to which mild fancies cling
In lonely spots, become a slighted thing;
Those silent Inmates now no longer share,
Nor do they need, our hospitable care,
Removed in kindness from their glassy Cell
To the fresh waters of a living Well—
An elfin pool so sheltered that its rest
No winds disturb; the mirror of whose breast
Is smooth as clear, save where with dimples small
A fly may settle, or a blossom fall.
—There swins, of blazing sun and beating shower
Fearless (but how obscured!) the golden Power,
That from his balie prison used to cast
Gleams by the richest jewel unsurpass'd;
And near him, darkling like a sullen Gnome,
The silver Tenant of the crystal dome;
Discover'd both from all the mysteries
Of hue and altering shape that charmed all eyes.
Also! they pined, they languished while they shone;
And, if not so, what matters beauty gone
And admiration lost, by change of place
That brings to the inward creature no disgrace!
But if the change restore his birthright, then,
Whate'er the difference, boundless is the gain.
Who can divine what impulses from God
Reach the caged lark, within a town-abode,
From his poor inch or two of daisied sod!
O yield him back his privilege!—No sea
Swells like the bosom of a man set free;
A wilderness is rich with liberty.
Roll on, ye spouting whales, who die or keep
Your independence in the fathomless Deep!
Spread, tiny nautilus, the living sail;
Dive, at thy choice, or brace the freshening gale!
If unreproved the ambitious eagle mount
Sunward to seek the daylight in its fount,
Bays, gulfs, and ocean's Indian width, shall be,
Till the world perishes, a field for thee!

While musing here I sit in shadow cool,
And watch these mute Companions, in the pool,
(Among reflected boughs of leafy trees)
By glimpses caught—disporting at their ease,
Enlivened, brace'd, by handy luxuries,
I ask what warrant fixed them (like a spell
Of witchcraft fix'd them) in the crystal cell;
To wheel with languid motion round and round,
Beautiful, yet in meurful durance bound.
Their peace, perhaps, our lightest footfall marred;
On their quick sense our sweetest music jarred;
And whither could they dart, if seiz'd with fear?
No sheltering stone, no tangled root was near.
When fire or taper ceased to cheer the room,
They wove away the night in starless gloom;
And, when the sun first dawned upon the streams,
How faint their portion of his vital beams!
Thus, and unable to complain, they fared,
While not one joy of ours by them was shared.

Is there a cherished bird (I venture now
To snatch a sprig from Chaucer's reverend brow)—
Is there a brilliant fondling of the cage,
Though sure of plaudits on his costly stage,
Though fed with dainties from the snow-white hand
Of a kind mistress, fairest of the land,
But gladly would escape; and, if need were,
Scatter the colours from the plumage that bear
The emancipated captive through blithe air
Into strange woods, where he at large may live
On best or worst which they and Nature give?
The beetle loves his unpretending track,
The snail the house he carries on his back;
The far-fetched worm with pleasure would disown
The bed we give him, though of softest down;
A noble instinct; in all kinds the same,
All ranks! What Sovereign, worthy of the name,
If doomed to breathe against his lawful will
An element that flattens him—to kill,
But would rejoice to barter outward show
For the least boon that freedom can bestow!

But most the Bard is true to inborn right,
Lark of the dawn, and Philomel of night,
Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
For the dear blessings of a lowly couch;
A natural meal—days, months, from Nature's hand;
Time, place, and business, all at his command!—
Who bents to happier duties, who more wise
Than the industrious Poet, taught to prize,
Above all grandeur, a pure life uncrossed
By cares in which simplicity is lost!
That life—the flowery path that winds by stealth—
Which Horace needed for his spirit's health;
Sighed for, in heart and genius, overcome
By noise and strife, and questions wearisome,
And the vain splendours of Imperial Rome!—
Let easy mirth his social hours inspire,
And fiction animate his sportive lyre,
Attuned to verse that, crowning light Distress
With garlands, cheants her into happiness;
Give me the humblest note of those sad strains
Drawn forth by pressure of his gilded chains,
As a chance-sunbeam from his memory fell
Upon the Sabine farm he loved so well;
Or when the prattle of Blustoria's spring
Haunted his ear—he only listening—
He proud to please, above all rivals, fit
To win the palm of gaiety and wit;
He, not with, involuntarily dread,
Shrinking from each new favour to be shed,
By the world's Ruler, on his honoured head!

In a deep vision's intellectual scene,
Such earnest longings and regrets as keen
Depressed the melancholy Cowley, laid
Under a fancied yew-tree's luckless shade;
A doleful bower for penitential song,
Where Man and Muse complained of mutual wrong;
While Cam's ideal current glided by,
And antique towers nodded their foreheads high,
Citadels dear to studious privacy.
But Fortune, who had long been used to sport
With this tried Servant of a thankless Court,
Relenting met his wishes; and to you
The remnant of his days at least was true;
You, whom, though long deserted, he loved best;
You, Muses, books, fields, liberty, and rest!

Far happier they who, fixing hope and aim
On the humanities of peaceful fame,
Enter betimes with more than martial fire
The generous course, aspire, and still aspire;
Upheld by warnings heedful not too late
Stiff the contradictions of their fate,
And to one purpose cleave, their Being's godlike mate!

Thus, gifted Friend, but with the placid brow
That woman ne'er should forfeit, keep thy vow;
With modest scorn reject whose'er would blind
The ethereal eyesight, cramp the winged mind!
Then, with a blessing granted from above
To every act, word, thought, and look of love,
Life's book for thee may lie unsealed, till age
Shall with a thankful tear bedrop its latest page.*

IV.

POOR ROBIN.*

Now when the primrose makes a splendid show,
And lilies face the March-winds in full blow,
And humber growths as moved with one desire
Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,
Poor Robin is yet flowerless; but how gay
With his red stalks upon this sunny day!
And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads, content
With a hard bed and scanty nourishment,
Mixed with the green, some shine not lacking power
To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower;
And flowers they well might seem to passers-by
If looked at only with a careless eye;
Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit
The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.

But while a thousand pleasures come unsought,
Why fix upon his wealth or want a thought?
Is the string touched in prelude to a lay
Of pretty fancies that would round him play
When all the world acknowledged evil sway!
Or does it suit our humour to commend
Poor Robin as a sure and crafty friend,
Whose practice teaches, spite of names to show
Bright colours whether they deceive or no!—
Nay, we would simply praise the free good-will
With which, though slighted, he, on naked hill
Or in warm valley, seeks his past to fill;
Cheerful alike if bare of flowers as now,
Or when his tiny gems shall deck his brow:
Yet more, we wish that men by men despised,
And such as lift their foreheads overprized,
Should sometimes think, where'er they chance to spy
This child of Nature's own humility,

nor were the verses ever seen by the Individual for whom they were intended. She accompanied her husband, the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, to India, and died of cholera, at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years, on her way from Shalapore to Bombay, deeply lamented by all who knew her.

Her enthusiasm was ardent, her plea steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the difficult path of life to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performance, given to the world under her maiden name, Jewsbury, was modest and humble, and, indeed, far below their merits; as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers, with a hope to discover what they are best fitted for. In one quality, viz., quickness in the motions of her mind, she had, within the range of the Author's acquaintance, no equal.

* The small wild Geranium known by that name.
What recompense is kept in store or left
For all that seem neglected or bereft;
With what nice care equivalents are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand of Heaven.

MARSH. 1840

V.

THE GLEANER.
(SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE.)

That happy gleam of vernal eyes,
Those locks from summer’s golden skies,
That o’er thy brow are shed;
That cheek—a kindling of the morn,
That lip—a rose-bed from the thorn,
I saw; and Fancy sped
To scenes Arcadian, whispering, through soft air,
Of bliss that grows without a care,
And happiness that never dies—
(How can it where love never dies?)
Whispering of promise, where no blight
Can reach the innocent delight;
Where pity, to the mind conveyed
In pleasure, is the darkest shade,
That Time, unwinkled grandsire, flings
From his smoothly gliding wings.

What mortal form, what earthly face
Inspired the pencil, lines to trace,
And mingle colours, that should breed
Such rapture, nor want power to feed;
For had thy charge been idle flowers,
Fair Damsel! o’er my captive mind,
To truth and sober reason blind,
’Mid that soft air, those long-lost bowers,
The sweet illusion might have hung, for hours.

Thanks to this tell-tale sheaf of corn,
That touchingly bespeaks thee born
Life’s daily tasks with them to share
Who, whether from their lowly bed
They rise, or rest the weary head,
Ponder the blessing they entreat
From Heaven, and feel what they repeat,
While they give utterance to the prayer
That asks for daily bread.

VI.

TO A REDBREAST—(IN SICKNESS).

Stay, little cheerful Robin! stay,
And at my casement sing,
Though it should prove a farewell lay
And this our parting spring.

Though I, alas! may ne’er enjoy
The promise in thy song;
A charm, that thought can not destroy,
Doth to thy strain belong.

Methinks that in my dying hour
Thy song would still be dear,
And with a more than earthly power
My passing Spirit cheer.

Then, little Bird, this boon confer,
Come, and my requiem sing,
Nor fail to be the harbinger
Of everlasting Spring.

S. H.

VII.

FLOATING ISLAND.

These lines are by the Author of the Address to the Wind, &c. published heretofore along with my Poems.
The above to a Redbreast are by a deceased female Relative.

HARMONIOUS Powers with Nature work
On sky, earth, river, lake and sea;
Sunshine and cloud, whirlwind and breeze,
All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth
(By throbbing waves long undermined)
Loosed from its hold; how, no one knew,
But all might see it float, obedient to the wind;

Might see it, from the mossy shore
Dissevered, float upon the Lake,
Float with its crest of trees adorned
On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety, there they find;
There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;
There insects live their lives, and die;
A peopled world it is; in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons’ space
This little Island may survive;
But Nature, though we mark her not,
Will take away, may cease to give.
PERCHANCE WHEN YOU ARE WANDERING FORTH.

Upon some vacant sunny day,
Without an object, hope, or fear,
Thicker your eyes may turn—the Isle is passed away;

Buried beneath the glittering Lake,
Its place no longer to be found;
Yet the lost fragments shall remain
To fertilize some other ground.

B. W.

EMBLEM OF THOUGHTS TOO EAGER TO ADVANCE.

While I salute my joys, thoughts sad or stern;
Shades of past bliss, or phantoms that, to gain
Their fill of promised lustre, wait in vain.

So changes mortal Life with fleeting years;
A mournful change, should Reason fail to bring
The timely insight that can temper fears,
And from vanitas remove its sting;

While Faith aspires to seats in that domain
Where joys are perfect—neither wax nor wane.

B. W.

TO THE LADY FLEMING.

ON SEEING THE FOUNDATION PREPARING FOR THE ERECTION OF NTAL CHAPEL, WESTMORELAND.

BLESS this Isle—our native Land;
Where battlement and moated gate
Are objects only for the hand
Of hoary Time to decorate;
Where shady hamlet, town that breathes
Its busy smoke in social wreaths,
No rampart's stern defence require,
Nought but the heaven-directed spire,
And steeple tower (with pealing bells
Far-heard)—our only citadels

O LADY! from a noble line
Of chieftains sprung, who sturdily bore
The spear, yet gave to works divine
A bounteous help in days of yore,
(As records mouldering in the Dell
Of Nightshade* haply yet may tell;) the
Thee kindred aspirations moved
To build, within a vale beloved,
For Him upon whose high behests
All peace depends, all safety rests.

HOW FONDLY WILL THE WOODS EMBRACE
This daughter of thy pious care,
Lifting her front with modest grace
To make a fair recess more fair;
And to exalt the passing hour;
Or soothe it with a healing power
Drawn from the Sacrifice fulfilled,
Before this rugged soil was tilled,
Or human habitation rose
To interrupt the deep repose!

* Bekams Ghylly—or the dell of Nightshade—in which stands St. Mary's Abbey in Low Furness.
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

IV.
Well may the villagers rejoice!
Nor heat, nor cold, nor weary ways,
Will be a hindrance to the voice
That would unite in prayer and praise;
More duly shall wild wandering Youth
Receive the curb of sacred truth,
Shall tottering Age, bent earthward, hear
The Promise, with uplifted ear;
And all shall welcome the new ray
Imparted to their sabbath-day.

V.
Nor deem the Poet’s hope misplaced,
His fancy cheated—that can see
A shade upon the future cast,
Of time’s pathetic sanctity;
Can hear the monitory clock
Sound o’er the lake with gentle shock
At evening, when the ground beneath
Is ruffled o’er with cells of death;
Where happy generations lie,
Here tutored for eternity.

VI.
Lives there a man whose sole delights
Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that heathers or slightst
What every natural heart enjoys?
Who never caught a noon-tide dream
From murmur of a running stream;
Could strip, for saught the prospect yields
To him, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
In which the sun his setting shrivs.

VII.
A soul so pitiable forlorn,
If such do on this earth abide,
May season apathy with scorn,
May turn indifference to pride;
And still be not unblest—compared
With him who grovels, self-debarred
From all that lies within the scope
Of holy faith and christian hope;
Or, shipwreck’d, kindles on the coast
False fires, that others may be lost.

VIII.
Alas! that such perverted zeal
Should spread on Britain’s favoured ground!
That public order, private seal,
Should e’er have felt or feared a wound
From champions of the desperate law
Which from their own blind hearts they draw;
Who tempt their reason to deny
God, whom their passions dare defy,
And boast that they alone are free
Who reach this dire extremity

IX.
But turn we from these ‘bold bad men’
The way, mild Lady! that hath led
Down to their ‘dark opprobrious den’
Is all too rough for Thee to tread.
Softly as morning vapours glide
Down Rydal-cove from Fairfield’s side,
Should move the tenor of his song
Who means to charity no wrong;
Whose offering gladly would accord
With this day’s work, in thought and word.

X.
Heaven prosper it! may peace, and love,
And hope, and consolation, fall,
Through its meek influence, from above,
And penetrate the hearts of all;
All who, around the hallowed Fane,
Shall sojourn in this fair domain;
Grateful to Thee, while service pure,
And ancient ordinance, shall endure,
For opportunity bestowed
To kneel together, and adore their God!

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Oh! gather whensoever ye safely may
The help which slackening Piety requires;
Nor deem that he perform must go astray
Who treads upon the footmarks of his leisure.

Our churches, invariably perhaps, stand east and west,
but why is by few persons exactly known; nor, that
the degree of deviation from due east often noticeable
in the ancient ones was determined, in each particular
case, by the point in the horizon, at which the sun rose
upon the day of the saint to whom the church was
dedicated. These observances of our ancestors, and
the causes of them, are the subject of the following
stanzas.

WHEN in the antique age of bow and spear
And feudal rapine clothed with iron mail,
Came ministers of peace, intent to rear
The Mother Church in ye sequestered vale;
Then, to her Patron Saint a previous rite
Resounded with deep swell and solemn close,
Through unremitting vigils of the night,
Till from his couch the wished-for Sun uprose.
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

He rose, and straight—from by divine command,
They, who had waited for that sign to trace
Their work's foundation, gave with careful hand
To the high altar its determined place;

Mindful of Him who in the Orient born
There lived, and on the cross his life resigned,
And who, from out the regions of the morn,
Issuing in pomp, shall come to judge mankind.

So taught their creed;—nor failed the eastern sky,
Mid these more awful feelings, to infuse
The sweet and natural hopes that shall not die,
Long as the sun his gladsome course renewes.

For us hath such prelusive vigil ceased;
Yet still we plant, like men of elder days
Our christian altar faithful to the east,
Whence the tall window drinks the morning rays;

That obvious emblem giving to the eye
Of meek devotion, which erewhile it gave,
That symbol of the day-spring from on high,
Triumphant o'er the darkness of the grave.

On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land,
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day;
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee!

"Fear not," quickly answered Hubert;
"As I am thy Father's son,
What thou askest, noble Brother,
With God's favour shall be done." So were both right well content:
Forth they from the Castle went,
And at the head of their Array
To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies
Were a line for valour famed)
And where'er their strokes alighted,
There the Saracens were tamed.
Whence, then, could it come—the thought—
By what evil spirit brought!
Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
His Brother's life, for Lands' and Castle's sake?

"Sir!" the Ruffians said to Hubert,
"Deep he lies in Jordan flood."
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
"Take your earnings."—Oh! that I
Could have seen my Brother die!
It was a pang that vexed him then;
And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months passed on, and no Sir Eustace!
Nor of him were tidings heard.
Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
Back again to England steer'd.
To his Castle Hubert sped;
Nothing has he now to dread.
But silent and by stealth he came,
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time,
Night or day, at even or morn;
No one's eye had seen him enter,
No one's ear had heard the Horn.
But bold Hubert lives in glee:
Months and years went smilingly;
With plenty was his table spread;
And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.
Likewise he had sons and daughters;
And, as good men do, he sate
At his board by these surrounded,
Flourishing in fair estate.
And while thus in open day
Once he sate, as old books say,
A blast was uttered from the Horn,
Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.
'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace!
He is come to claim his right;
Ancient castle, woods, and mountains
Hear the challenge with delight.
Hubert! though the blast be blown
He is helpless and alone:
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!
And there he may be lodged, and thou be Lord.
Speak!—astounded Hubert cannot;
And, if power to speak he had,
All are damned, all the household
Smitten to the heart, and sad.
'Tis Sir Eustace; if it be
Living man, it must be he!
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,
And by a postern-gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:
To his Brother then he came,
Made confession, asked forgiveness,
Asked it by a brother's name,
And by all the saints in heaven;
And of Eustace was forgiven:
Then in a convent went to hide
His melancholy head, and there he died.

But Sir Eustace, whom good angels
Had preserved from murderers' hands,
And from Pagan chains had rescued,
Lived with honour on his lands.
Sons he had, saw sons of theirs:
And through ages, heirs of heirs,
A long posterity renowned,
Sounded the Horn which they alone could sound.

Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smoother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he!
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling:
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And heary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage;
But she, poor Woman! housed alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the comly Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead:
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her! where'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scattered many a lusty splinter,
And many a rotten bough about.

XII.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL.
A TRUE STORY.

On! what's the matter! what's the matter! What is 't that ails young Harry Gill! That overmore his teeth they chatter, Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Yet never had she, well or sick,  
As every man who knew her says,  
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,  
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the fret was past enduring,  
And made her poor old bones to ache,  
Could any thing be more alluring  
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?  
And now, and then, it must be said,  
When her old bones were cold and chill,  
She left her fire, or left her bed,  
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected  
This trespass of old Goody Blake;  
And vowed that she should be detected—  
That he on her would vengeance take.  
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,  
And to the fields his road would take;  
And there, at night, in frost and snow,  
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,  
Thus looking out did Harry stand:  
The moon was full and shining clearly,  
And crisp with frost the stubble land.  
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—  
Again—on tip-toe down the hill  
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;  
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill!

Right glad was he when he beheld her:  
Stick after stick did Goody pull:  
He stood behind a bush of elder,  
Till she had filled her apron full.  
When with her load she turned about,  
The by-way back again to take;  
He started forward, with a shout,  
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,  
And by the arm he held her fast,  
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,  
And cried, "I've caught you then at last!"  
Then Goody, who had nothing said,  
Her bundle from her lap let fall;  
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed  
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand upearing,  
While Harry held her by the arm—  
"God! who art never out of hearing,  
O may he never more be warm!"

The cold, cold moon above her head,  
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;  
Young Harry heard what she had said:  
And ley cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow  
That he was cold and very chill:  
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,  
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!  
That day he wore a riding-coat,  
But not a whit the warmer he:  
Another was on Thursday brought,  
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,  
And blankets were about him pinned;  
Yet still his jaws and teeth they chatter,  
Like a loose easement in the wind.  
And Harry's flesh it fell away;  
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,  
That, live as long as live he may,  
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,  
A-bed or up, to young or old;  
But ever to himself he mutters,  
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."  
A-bed or up, by night or day;  
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.  
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,  
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

XIII.

PRELUDE,
PREPENDED TO THE VOLUME ENTITLED "POEMS CHIEFLY OF EARLY AND LATE YEARS."

Is desultory walk through orchard grounds,  
Or some deep chestnut grove, oft have I passed  
The while a Thrush, urged rather than restrained  
By gusts of vernal storm, attuned his song  
To his own genial instincts; and was heard  
(Though not without some plaintive tones between)  
To utter, above showers of blossom swept  
From tossing boughs, the promise of a calm,  
Which the unsheltered traveller might receive  
With thankful spirit. The descent, and the wind  
That seemed to play with it in love or scorn,  
Encouraged and endeared the strain of words  
That haply flowed from me, by fits of silence  
Impelled to livelier pace. But now, my Book!  
Charged with those lays, and others of like mood,
Or loftier pitch if higher rose the theme,
Go, single—yet aspiring to be joined
With thy Forerunners that through many a year
Have faithfully prepared each other’s way—
Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
When and wherever, in this changeful world,
Power hath been given to please for higher ends
Than pleasure only; gladdening to prepare
For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,
Calming to raise; and, by a sapient Art
Diffused through all the mysteries of our Being,
Softening the toils and pains that have not ceased
To cast their shadows on our mother Earth
Since the primeval doom. Such is the grace
Which, though unused for, fails not to descend
With heavenly inspiration; such the aim
That Reason dictates; and, as even the wish
Has virtue in it, why should hope to me
Be wanting that sometimes, where fanfied ills
Harass the mind and strip from off the bowers
Of private life their natural pleasantness,
A Voice—devoted to the love whose seeds
Are sown in every human breast, to beauty
Lodged within compass of the humbllest sight,
To cheerful intercourse with wood and field,
And sympathy with man’s substantial griefs—
Will not be heard in vain? And in those days
When unforeseen distress spreads far and wide
Among a People mournfully cast down,
Or into anger roused by venal words
In recklessness flung out to overturn
The judgment, and divert the general heart
From mutual good—some strain of thine, my Book!
Caught at propitious intervals, may win
Listeners who not unwillingly admit
Kindly emotion tending to console
And reconcile; and both with young and old
Exalt the sense of thoughtful gratitude
For benefits that still survive, by faith
In progress, under laws divine, maintained.

BYZAL MOUNT.
March 26, 1843.

xv.

TO A CHILD.

WRITTEN IN HER ALBUM.

Small service is true service while it lasts:
Of humblest Friends, bright Creature! scorn not one:
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the Sun.

LADY! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard,
Among the Favored, favoured not the least)
Left, 'mid the Records of this Book inscribed,
Deliberate traces, registers of thought
And feeling, suited to the place and time
That gave them birth:—months passed, and still
this hand,
That had not been too timid to imprint
Words which the virtues of thy Lord inspire,
Was yet not bold enough to write of thee.
And why that scrupulous reserve? In sooth
The blameless cause lay in the Theme itself.
Flowers are there many that delight to strive
With the sharp wind, and seem to court the shower.
Yet are by nature careless of the sun
Whether he shine on them or not; and some,
Where'er he moves along the unclouded sky,
Turn a broad front full on his glittering beams:
Others do rather from their notice shrink,
Loving the dewy shade,—a humble hand,
Modest and sweet, a progeny of earth,
Congenial with thy mind and character,
High-born Augusta!

Witness Towers, and Groves!
And Thou, wild Stream, that giv'st the honored name
Of Lowther to this ancient Line, bear witness
From thy most secret haunts; and ye Parterres,
Which She is pleased and proud to call her own,
Witness how oft upon my noble Friend
Mute offerings, tribute from an inward sense
Of admiration and respectful love,
Have waited—till the affections could no more
Endure that silence, and broke out in song,
Snatches of music taken up and dropped
Like those self-soothing, those under, notes
Trilled by the redbreast, when autumnal leaves
Are thin upon the bough. Mine, only mine,
The pleasure was, and no one heard the praise,
Checked, in the moment of its issue, checked
And reproached, by a fancied blush
From the pure qualities that called it forth.

Thus Virtue lives debarred from Virtue's need;
Thus, Lady, is retiredness a veil
That, while it only spreads a softening charm
O'er features looked at by discerning eyes,
Hides half their beauty from the common gaze.

1844.
And thus, even on the exposed and breezy hill
Of lofty station, female goodness walks,
When side by side with lunar gentleness,
As in a cloister. Yet the grateful Poor
(Such the immunities of low estate,
Plain Nature’s enviable privilege,
Her sacred recompence for many wants)
Open their hearts before Thee, pouring out
All that they think and feel, with tears of joy;
And benedictions not unheard in heaven.
And friend in the ear of friend, where speech is free
To follow truth, is eloquent as they.

Then let the Book receive in these prompt lines
A just memorial; and thine eyes consent
To read that they, who mark thy course, behold
A life declining with the golden light
Of summer, in the season of sere leaves;
See cheerfulness undamped by stealing Time;
See studied kindness flow with easy stream,
Illustrated with inborn courtesy;
And an habitual disregard of self
Balanced by vigilance for others’ weal.

And shall the Verse not tell of lighter gifts
With these ennobling attributes conjoined
And blended, in peculiar harmony,
By Youth’s surviving spirit! What agile grace!
A nymph-like liberty, in nymph-like form,
Beheld with wonder; whether floor or path
Thou tread; or sweep—borne on the managed steed—
Fleet as the shadows, over down or field,
Driven by strong winds at play among the clouds.

Yet one word more—one farewell word—a wish
Which came, but it has passed into a prayer—
That, as thy sun in brightness is declining,
So—at an hour yet distant for their sakes
Whose tender love, here faltering on the way
Of a diviner love, will be forgiven—
So may it set in peace, to rise again
For everlasting glory won by faith.

XVI.

GRACE DARLING.

Among the dwellers in the silent fields
The natural heart is touched, and public way
And crowded street resound with ballad strains,
Inspired by one whose very name bespeaks
Favour divine, exalting human love;

Whom, since her birth on bleak Northumbria’s coast,
Known unto few but prized as far as known,
A single Act endears to high and low
Through the whole land—to Manhood, moved in spite
Of the world’s freezing cares—to generous Youth—
To Infancy, that lips her praise—to Age
Whose eye reflects it, glistening through a tear
Of tremulous admiration. Such true fame
Awaits her now; but, verily, good deeds
Do no imperishable record find
Save in the rolls of heaven, where hers may live
A theme for angels, when they celebrate
The high-souled virtues which forgetful earth
Has witness’d. Oh! that winds and waves could speak
Of things which their united power called forth
From the pure depths of her humanity!
A Maiden gentle, yet, at duty’s call,
Firm and unflinching, as the Lighthouse reared
On the Island-rock, her lonely dwelling-place;
Or like the invincible Rock itself that braves,
Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert’s cell.

All night the storm had raged, nor ceased, nor paused,
When, as day broke, the Maid, through misty air,
Espies far off a Wreck, amid the surf,
Beating on one of those disastrous isles—
Half of a Vessel, half—no more; the rest
Had vanished, swallowed up with all that there
Had for the common safety striven in vain,
Or thither thronged for refuge. With quick glance
Daughter and Sire through optic-glass discern,
Clinging about the remnant of this Ship,
Creatures—how precious in the Maiden’s sight! For whom, belike, the old Man grieves still more
Than for their fellow-sufferers engulfed
Where every parting agony is hushed,
And hope and fear mix not in further strife.
"But courage, Father! let us out to sea—
A few may yet be saved.” The Daughter’s words,
Her earnest tone, and look beaming with faith,
Dispel the Father’s doubts: nor do they lack
The noble-minded Mother’s helping hand
To launch the boat; and with her blessing cheered,
And inwardly sustained by silent prayer,
Together they put forth, Father and Child!
Each grasps an oar, and struggling on they go—
Rivals in effort; and, alike intent
Here to elude and there surmount, they watch
The billows lengthening, mutually crossed
And shattered, and re-gathering their might;
As if the tumult, by the Almighty's will
Were, in the conscious sea, roused and prolonged
That woman's fortitude—so tried, so proved—
May brighten more and more!

True to the mark,
They stem the current of that portentous surge,
Their arms still strengthening with the strengthening heart,
Though danger, as the Wreck is near'd, becomes
More imminent. Not unseen do they approach;
And rapture, with varieties of fear
Incessantly conflicting, thrills the frames
Of those who, in that damnable energy,
Foretaste deliverance; but the least perturbed
Can scarcely trust his eyes, when he perceives
That of the pair—tossed on the waves to bring
Hope to the hopeless, to the dying, life—
One is a Woman, a poor earthly sister,
Or, be the Visitant other than she seems,
A guardian Spirit sent from pitting Heaven,
In woman's shape. But why prolong the tale,
Casting weak words amid a host of thoughts
Armed to repel them? Every hazard faced
And difficulty mastered, with resolve
That no one breathing should be left to perish,
This last remainder of the crew are all
Placed in the little boat, then o'er the deep
Are safely borne, landed upon the beach,
And, in fulfillment of God's mercy, lodged
Within the sheltering Lighthouse.—Shout, ye Waves!
Send forth a song of triumph. Waves and Winds,
Exult in this deliverance wrought through faith
In Him whose Providence your rage hath served!
Ye screaming Sea-mews, in the concert join!
And would that some immortal Voice—a Voice
Fitted to all that gratitude
Breathes out from floor or couch, through pallid lips
Of the survivors—to the clouds might bear—
Blended with praise of that parental love,
Beneath whose watchful eye the Maidens grew
Fions and pure, modest and yet so brave,
Though young so wise, though meek so resolute—
Might carry to the clouds and to the stars,
Yes, to celestial Choirs, Grace Darling's name!

XVII.

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE.

PART I.

Enough of rose-lid lips, and eyes
Like harebells bathed in dew,
Of cheek that with carnation vies,
And veins of violet hue;
Earth wants not beauty that may scorn
A likening to frail flowers;
Yes, to the stars, if they were born
For seasons and for hours.

Through Moscow's gates, with gold unbarred,
Stepped One at dead of night,
Whom such high beauty could not guard
From meditated blight;
By stealth she passed, and fled as fast
As doth the hunted fawn,
Nor stopped, till in the dappling east
Appeared unwelcome dawn.

Seven days she lurked in brake and field,
Seven nights her course renewed,
Sustained by what her scrips might yield,
Or berries of the wood;
At length, in darkness travelling on,
When sober doors were shut,
The haven of her hope she won,
Her Foster-mother's hut.

"To put your love to dangerous proof
I come," said she, "from far;
For I have left my Father's roof,
In terror of the Czar."

No answer did the Matron give,
No second look she cast,
But hung upon the Fugitive,
Embracing and embraced.

She led the Lady to a seat
Beside the glistening fire,
Bathed duteously her wayworn feet,
Prevented each desire:—
The cricket chirped, the house-dog dozed,
And on that simple bed,
Where she in childhood had reposed,
Now rests her weary head.
When she, whose couch had been the sod,
Whose curtain, pine or thorn,
Had breathed a sigh of thanks to God,
Who comforts the forlorn;
While over her the Matron bent
Sleep sealed her eyes, and stole
Feeling from limbs with travel spent,
And trouble from the soul.

Refreshed, the Wanderer rose at morn,
And soon again was light
In those unworthy vestments worn
Through long and perilous flight;
And "O beloved Nurse," she said,
"My thanks with silent tears
Have unto Heaven and You been paid;
Now listen to my fears!"

"Have you forgot?"—and here she smiled—
"The babbling futilities
You lavished on me when a child
Disporting round your knees!
I was your lambkin, and your bird,
Your star, your gem, your flower;
Light words, that were more lightly heard
In many a cloudless hour!

"The blossom you so fondly praised
Is come to bitter fruit;
A mighty One upon me gazed;
I spurned his lawless suit,
And must be hidden from his wrath:
You, Foster-father dear,
Will guide me in my forward path;
I may not tarry here!"

"I cannot bring to utter woe
Your proved fidelity."—
"Dear Child, sweet Mistress, say not so!
For you we both would die."
"Nay, nay, I come with semblance feigned
And cheek embrowned by art;
Yet, being inwardly unstained,
With courage will depart."

"But whither would you, could you, flee?
A poor Man's counsel take;
The Holy Virgin gives to me
A thought for your dear sake;
Rest, shielded by our Lady's grace,
And soon shall you be led
Forth to a safe abiding-place,
Where never foot doth tread."

PART II

The dwelling of this faithful pair
In a straggling village stood,
For One who breathed unquiet air
A dangerous neighbourhood;
But wide around lay forest ground
With thicksets rough and blind;
And pine-trees made a heavy shade
Impervious to the wind.

And there, sequestered from the sight,
Was spread a treacherous swamp,
On which the noonday sun shed light
As from a lonely lamp;
And midway in the unsafe morass,
A single Island rose
Of firm dry ground, with healthful grass
Adorned, and shady boughs.

The Woodman knew, for such the craft
This Russian vassal plied,
That never fowler's gun, nor shaft
Of archer, there was tried;
A sanctuary seemed the spot
From all intrusion free;
And there he planned an artful Cot
For perfect secrecy.

With earnest pains uncheck'd by dread
Of Power's far-stretching hand,
The holy good Man his labour sped
At nature's pure command;
Heart-soothed, and busy as a wren,
While, in a hollow moor,
She moul'd her sight-ending den
Above a murmuring brook.

His task accomplished to his mind,
The twin ere break of day
Creep forth, and through the forest wind
Their solitary way;
Few words they speak, nor dare to slack
Their pace from mile to mile,
Till they have crossed the quaking marsh,
And reached the lonely Isle.

The sun above the pine-trees showed
A bright and cheerful face;
And has looked for her abode,
The promised hiding-place;
She sought in vain, the Woodman smiled;
No threshold could be seen,
Nor roof, nor window—all seemed wild
As it had ever been.
Advancing, you might guess an hour,  
The front with such nice care  
Is masked, 'if house it be or bower,'  
But in they entered are;  
As shaggy as were wall and roof  
With branches intertwined,  
So smooth was all within, air-proof,  
And delicately lined:  

And hearth was there, and maple dish,  
And cups in seamedy rows,  
And couch—all ready to a wish  
For nurture or repose;  
And Heaven doth to her virtue grant  
That here she may abide  
In solitude, with every want  
By cautious love supplied.

No queen, before a shouting crowd,  
Led on in bridal state,  
E'er struggled with a heart so proud,  
Entering her palace gate;  
Rejoiced to bid the world farewell,  
No saintly anchoress  
E'er took possession of her cell  
With deeper thankfulness.

"Father of all, upon thy care  
And mercy am I thrown;  
Be thou my safeguard!"—such her prayer  
When she was left alone,  
Kneeling amid the wilderness  
When joy had passed away,  
And smiles, fond efforts of distress  
To hide what they betray!

The prayer is heard, the Saints have seen,  
Diffused through form and face,  
Resolves devotedly serene;  
That monumental grace  
Of Faith, which doth all passions tame  
That Reason should control;  
And shows in the untroubled frame  
A statue of the soul.

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PART III.

"Tis sung in ancient minstrelsy  
That Phoebus wont to wear  
The leaves of any pleasant tree  
Around his golden hair;  

Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit  
Of his imperious love,  
At her own prayer transformed, took root,  
A laurel in the grove.

Then did the Penitent adorn  
His brow with laurel green;  
And 'mid his bright locks never shorn  
No meainer leaf was seen;  
And poets sage, through every age,  
About their temples wound  
The bay; and conquerors thanked the Gods,  
With laurel chaplets crowned.

Into the mists of falling Time  
So far runs back the praise  
Of Beauty, that disdain to climb  
Along forbidden ways;  
That scorns temptation; power defies  
Where mutual love is not;  
And to the tomb for rescue flies  
When life would be a blot.

To this fair Votress, a fate  
More mild doth Heaven ordain  
Upon her Island desolate;  
And words, not breathed in vain,  
Might tell what intercourse she found,  
Her silence to endear;  
What birds she tamed, what flowers the ground  
Sent forth her peace to cheer.

To one mute Presence, above all,  
Her soothed affections clung,  
A picture on the cabin wall  
By Russian usage hung—  
The Mother-maid, whose countenance bright  
With love abridged the day;  
And, communed with by taper light,  
Chased spectral fears away.

And oft, as either Guardian came,  
The joy in that retreat  
Might any common friendship shame,  
So high their hearts would beat;  
And to the lone Recluse, what'er  
They brought, each visiting  
Was like the crowding of the year  
With a new burst of spring.

But, when she of her Parents thought,  
The pang was hard to bear;  
And, if with all things not enwrought,  
That trouble still is near.
Before her flight she had not dared
Their constancy to prove,
Too much the heroine Daughter feared
The weakness of their love.

Dark is the past to them, and dark
The future still must be,
Till pitying Saints conduct her bark
Into a safer sea—
Or gentle Nature close her eyes,
And set her Spirit free
From the altar of this sacrifice,
In vestal purity.

Yet, when above the forest-glooms
The white swans southward passed,
High as the pitch of their swift plumes
Her fancy rode the blast;
And bore her toward the fields of France
Her Father’s native land,
To mingle in the rustic dance,
The happiest of the band!

Of those beloved fields she oft
Had heard her Father tell
In phrase that now with echoes soft
Haunted her lonely cell;
She saw the hereditary bowers,
She heard the ancestral stream;
The Kremlin and its haughty towers
Forgotten like a dream!

PART IV.

The ever-changing Moon had traced
Twelve times her monthly round,
When through the unfrequented Waste
Was heard a startling sound;
A shout thrice sent from one who chased
At speed a wounded deer,
Bounding through branches interlaced,
And where the wood was clear.

The fainting creature took the marsh,
And toward the Island fled,
While plovers screamed with tumult harsh
Above his antlered head;
This, Ina saw; and, pale with fear,
Shrunk to her citadel;
The desperate deer rushed on, and near
The tangled covert fell.

Across the marsh, the game in view,
The Hunter followed fast,
Nor paused, till o’er the stag he blew
A death-proclaiming blast;
Then, resting on her upright mind,
Came forth the Maid—“In me
Behold,” she said, “a stricken Hind
Pursued by destiny!”

“From your deportment, Sir! I deem
That you have worn a sword,
And will not hold in light esteem
A suffering woman’s word;
There is my covert, there perchance
I might have lain concealed,
My fortunes hid, my countenance
Not even to you revealed.

“Tears might be shed, and I might pray,
Crouching and terrified,
That what has been unveiled to day,
You would in mystery hide;
But I will not defile with dust
The knee that bends to adore
The God in heaven;—attend, be just;
This ask I, and no more!

“I speak not of the winter’s cold,
For summer’s heat exchanged,
While I have lodged in this rough hold,
From social life estranged;
Nor yet of trouble and alarms:
High Heaven is my defence;
And every season has soft arms
For injured Innocence.

“From Moscow to the Wilderness
It was my choice to come,
Lest virtue should be harbourless,
And honour want a home;
And happy were I, if the Czar
Retain his lawless will,
To end life here like this poor deer,
Or a lamb on a green hill.”

“Are you the Maid,” the Stranger cried,
“From Gallic parents sprung,
Whose vanishing was rumoured wide,
Sad theme for every tongue;
Who foiled an Emperor’s eager quest!
You, Lady, forced to wear
These rude habiliments, and rest
Your head in this dark lair!”
But wonder, pity, soon were quelled;
And in her face and mien
The soul's pure brightness he beheld
Without a veil between:
He loved, he hoped,—a holy flame
Kindled 'mid rapturous tears;
The passion of a moment came
As on the wings of years.

"Such bounty is no gift of chance,"
Exclaimed he; "righteous Heaven,
Preparing your deliverance,
To me the charge hath given.
The Czar full oft in words and deeds
Is stormy and self-willed;
But, when the Lady Catherine pleads,
His violence is stilled.

"Leave open to my wish the course,
And I to her will go;
From that humane and heavenly source,
Good, only good, can flow."
Painless sanction given, the Cavalier
Was eager to depart,
Though question followed question, dear
To the Maiden's filial heart.

Light was his step,—his hopes, more light,
Kept pace with his desires;
And the fifth morning gave him sight
Of Moscow's glittering spires.

He sued:—heart-smitten by the wrong,
To the lorn Fugitive
The Emperor sent a pledge as strong
As sovereign power could give.

O more than mighty change! If e'er
Amazement rose to pain,
And joy's excess produced a fear
Of something void and vain;
'Twas when the Parents, who had mourned
So long the lost as dead,
Beheld their only Child returned,
The household floor to tread.

Soon gratitude gave way to love
Within the Maiden's breast:
Delivered and Deliverer move
In bridal garments drest;
Meek Catherine had her own reward;
The Czar bestowed a dower;
And universal Moscow shared
The triumph of that hour.

Flowers strew'd the ground; the nuptial feast
Was held with costly state;
And there, 'mid many a noble guest,
The Foster-parents sat;
Encouraged by the imperial eye,
They shrink'd not into shade;
Great was their bliss, the honour high
To them and nature paid!

1830.
INSCRIPTIONS.

I.

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEPORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE BEAumont, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE.

1808.

The embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.

One woed the silent Art with studious pains:
These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindliest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury!

And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renowned
When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field;

And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakespear's self-approved,
Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.

But by an industry that wrought in love;
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To aid the work, what time those walks and bowers
Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely hours.

III.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., AND IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN,
PLACED BY HIM AT THE TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE, IN THE SAME GROUNDS.

Ye Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle—
That may recall to mind that awful Pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.

—There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,
Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear:
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this fruit tribute to his memory;
From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed; attached to him in heart;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

IV.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEPORTON.

Beneath you eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
To honourable Men of various worth:
Inscriptions.

There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child;
There, under shade of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of sighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the baskined stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unallowed lie;
They perish;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne’er decays.

1808.

V.

Written with a Pencil upon a Stone in the
Wall of the House (An Out-house), on the
Island at Grasmere.

Reve is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintained
Proportions more harmonious, and approached
To closer fellowship with ideal grace.
But take it in good part,—ah! the poor
Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great City; never, upon leaves
Of red Morocco folio saw displayed,
In long succession, pre-existing ghosts
Of Beauties yet unborn—the rustic Lodge
Antique, and Cottage with verandah graced,
Nor lacking, for fit company, alcove,
Green-house, shell-grot, and moss-lined hermitage.
Thou seest a homely Pile, yet to these walls
The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-born lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and withered fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts,
Among the mountains) and beneath this roof
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the
Sheep,
Panting beneath the burden of their wool,
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own Household: nor, while from his bed
He looks, through the open door-place, toward the
lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep—
Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!

1813.

VI.

Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the
Side of the Mountain of Black Comb.
Stay, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence,—from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terra-cuous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance: lonely task,
Week after week pursued!—To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature’s processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvas Dwelling, colours, lines,
And the whole surface of the out-spread map,
Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreatened, unproclaimed—
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sat alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain’s silent top!

1814.

VII.

Written with a Slate Pencil upon a Stone, the
Largest of a Heap Lying Near a Disreputable
Quarry, upon One of the Islands at Rydal.

Stranger! this hillock of mis-shapen stones
Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem’st, the Cairn
Of some old British Chief: ’tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having learned
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot
At any hour he chose, the prudent Knight
INSCRIPTIONS.

Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinished task.
The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of that intended Pile, which would have been
Some quaint old plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the limet and the thrust,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
Bred in this vale, to which he appertained
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
And for the outrage which he had devised
Entire forgiveness!—But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An inmate of these mountains,—if, disturbed
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements
Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
In snow-white splendour,—think again; and, taught
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone.

The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,
Shall be frequent these precincts; locked no more
In earnest converse with beloved Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,
As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered! But, if Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning—favoured more
Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets—the Exile would consign
This Walk, his loved possession, to the care
Of those pure Minds that reverence the Muse.

INSCRIPTIONS SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR
A HERMIT’S CELL.

VIII.

In these fair vales hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth’s suit been spared;
And from the builder’s hand this Stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard;
So let it rest; and time will come
When here the tender-hearted
May heave a gentle sigh for him,
As one of the departed.

IX.

The nasey Ways, carried across these heights
By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.
How venture then to hope that Time will spare
This humble Walk! Yet on the mountain’s side
A Poor’s hand first shaped it; and the steps
Of that same Bard—repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies
Through the vicissitudes of many a year—
Forbade the weeds to creep o’er its grey line.
No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
What are fears but voices airy!
Whispering harm where harm is not;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot!

What is glory!—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare!
What is pride!—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship!—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palely-shaken head.

What is truth!—a staff rejected;
Duty!—an unwelcome clog;
Joy!—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller’s eye it shone:
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone;

Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.
What is youth!—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)  
Age!—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace!—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing-knell!

XI.
INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK.

PAUSE, Traveller! whose’er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler’s bleat;
Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o’er the russet heath,
Uphold a Monument as fair
As church or abbey furnisheth.

Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble, white, like ether, pure;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honoured with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed;
And, ever as the sun shone forth,
The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
Fell the whole Fabric to the ground;
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around!

XII.

Hast thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts!—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

XIII.
NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE.

TROUBLED long with warring notions
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul’s emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and waver
On the waves of discontent?

Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well;
Rains, that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine tranquillity!

XIV.

Nor seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn;
Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding Bark, untrue;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.
INSCRIPTIONS.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify!

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on supplicant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstacy!

—

XV.

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON
ST. HERBERT'S ISLAND, DERWENT-WATER.

If thou in the dear love of some one Friend
Hast been so happy that thou know'st what thoughts
Will sometimes in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot; and, Stranger! not unmoved
Will thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell,
Here stood his threshold; here was spread the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
After long exercise in social cares
And offices humane, intent to adore

The Deity, with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things,
In utter solitude.—But he had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man loved
As his own soul. And, when with eye upraised
To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Peeled to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle and thought
Of his Companion, he would pray that both
(Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled)
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So prayed he:—as our chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit numbered his last day
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved Friend,
Those holy Men both died in the same hour.

XVI.

ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM.

Behold an emblem of our human mind
Crowded with thoughts that need a settled home,
Yet, like to eddying balls of foam
Within this whirlpool, they each other chase
Round and round, and neither find
An outlet nor a resting-place!
Stranger, if such disquietude be thine,
Fall on thy knees and sue for help divine.
THE PRIORESS' TALE.

Call up him who left half told.
The story of Cambuscan hold.

In the following Poem no further deviation from the original has been made than was necessary for the fluent reading and instant understanding of the Author: so much, however, is the language altered since Chaucer's time, especially in pronunciation, that much was to be removed, and its place supplied with as little incongruity as possible. The ancient accent has been retained in a few conjunctions, as also and alway, from a conviction that such sprinklings of antiquity would be admitted, by persons of taste, to have a graceful accordance with the subject. The fierce bigotry of the Prioress forms a fine back-ground for her tender-hearted sympathies with the Mother and Child; and the mode in which the story is told amply atones for the extravagance of the miracle.

"O Lord, our Lord! how wondrously," (quoth she) "Thy name in this large world is spread abroad! For not alone by men of dignity Thy worship is performed and precious land; But by the mouths of children, gracious God! Thy goodness is set forth; they when they lie Upon the breast thy name do glorify.

Therefore in praise, the worthiest that I may, Jesu of thee, and the white Lilly-flower Which did thee bear, and is a Maid for aye, To tell a story I will use my power; Not that I may increase her honour's dower, For she herself is honour, and the root Of goodness, next her Son, our soul's best boot.

O Mother Maid! O Maid and Mother free! O bush unburnt! burning in Moses' sight! That down dider rash from the Deity, Through humbleness, the spirit that did alight Upon thy heart, whence, through that glory's might, Conceivd was the Father's sapience, Help me to tell it in thy reverence.

Lady! thy goodness, thy magnificence, Thy virtue, and thy great humility, Surpass all science and all utterance; For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee Thou goest before in thy benignity, The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer, To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

My knowledge is so weak, O blissful Queen! To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness, That I the weight of it may not sustain; But as a child of twelvemonths old or less, That laboureth his language to express, Even so fare I; and therefore, I thee pray, Guide thou my song which I of thee shall say.

There was in Asia, in a mighty town, 'Mong Christian folk, a street where Jews might be, Assigned to them and given them for their own By a great Lord, for gain and usury, Hateful to Christ and to his company; And through this street who list might ride and wend; Free was it, and unbarred at either end.

A little school of Christian people stood Down at the farther end, in which there were A nest of children come of Christian blood, That learned in that school from year to year Such sort of doctrine as men used there, That is to say, to sing and read also, As little children in their childhood do.

Among these children was a Widow's son, A little scholar, scarcely seven years old, Who day by day unto this school hath gone, And eke, when he the image did behold Of Jesus' Mother, as he had been told, This Child was wont to kneel adown and say Ave Maria, as he goeth by the way.
II.
This Widow thus her little Son hath taught
Our Missal Lady, Jesu's Mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgot it not;
For simple infant hath a ready ear.
Sweet is the holiness of youth: and hence,
Calling to mind this matter when I may,
Saint Nicholas in my presence standeth aye,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

X.
This little Child, while in the school he sat
His Primer coming with an earnest cheer,
The whilst the rest their anthem-book repeat
The Alma Redemptoris did he hear;
And as he durst he drew him near and near,
And hearkened to the words and to the note,
Till the first verse he learned it all by rote.

XI.
This Latin knew he nothing what it said,
For he too tender was of age to know;
But to his comrade he repaired, and prayed
That he the meaning of this song would show,
And unto him declare why men sing so;
This oftentimes, that he might be at ease,
This child did him beseech on his bare knees.

XII.
His Schoolfellow, who elder was than he,
Answered him thus:—'This song, I have heard say,
Was fashioned for our blissful Lady free;
Her to salute, and also her to pray
To be our help upon our dying day:
If there is more in this, I know it not;
Song do I learn, small grammar I have got.'

'And is this song fashioned in reverence
Of Jesu's Mother? ' said this Innocent;
' Now, certes, I will use my diligence
To con it all ere Christmas-tide be spent;
Although I for my Primer shall be shent,
And shall be beaten three times in an hour,
Our Lady I will praise with all my power.'

XIV.
His Schoolfellow, whom he had so besought,
As they went homeward taught him privily
And then he sang it well and fearlessly,
From word to word according to the note:
Twice in a day it passed through his throat;
Homeward and schoolward wheresoe'er he went,
On Jesu's Mother fixed was his intent.

XV.
Through all the Jewry (this before said I)
This little Child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O Alma Redemptoris! high and low:
The sweetness of Christ's Mother pierced so
His heart, that her to praise, to her to pray,
He cannot stop his singing by the way.

XVI.
The Serpent, Satan, our first foe, that hath
His wasp's nest in Jew's heart, upswept—'O woe,
O Hebrew people!' said he in his wrath,
'Is it an honest thing! Shall this be so!
That such a Boy where'er he lists shall go
In your despite, and sing his hymns and saws,
Which is against the reverence of our laws!'

From that day forward have the Jews conspired
Out of the world this Innocent to chase;
And to this end a Homicide they hired,
That in an alley had a privy place,
And, as the Child 'gan to the school to pace,
This cruel Jew him seized, and held him fast
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.

XVII.
I say that him into a pit they threw.
A loathsome pit, wheresoever scents exhale;
O cursed folk! away, ye Herods now!
What may your ill intentions you avail?
Murder will out; certes it will not fail;
Know, that the honour of high God may spread,
The blood cries out on your accurst deed.

XVIII.
O Martyr 'stablished in virginity!
Now may'st thou sing for aye before the throne,
Following the Lamb celestial,' quoth she,
"Of which the great Evangelist, Saint John,
In Patmos wrote, who smith of them that go
Before the Lamb singing continually,
That never fleshly woman they did know.

XIX.
Now this poor widow waiteth all that night
After her little Child, and he came not:
For which, by earliest glimpse of morning light,
With face all pale with dread and busy thought,
She at the School and elsewhere him hath sought,
Until thus far she learned, that he had been
In the Jews' street, and there he last was seen.
With Mother's pity in her breast enclosed
She goeth, as she were half out of her mind,
To every place wherein she hath supposed
By likelihood her little Son to find;
And ever on Christ's Mother meek and kind
She cried, till to the Jewry she was brought,
And him among the accursed Jews she sought.

She asketh, and she piteously doth pray
To every Jew that dwelleth in that place
To tell her if her child had passed that way;
They all said—Nay; but Jesus of his grace
Gave to her thought, that in a little space
She for her Son in that same spot did cry
Where he was cast into a pit hard by.

O thou great God that dost perform thy hand
By mouths of innocents, lo! here thy might;
This gem of chastity, this emerald
And eke of martyrdom this ruby bright,
There, where with mangled throat he lay upright,
The Alma Redemptoris gan to sing
So loud, that with his voice the place did ring.

The Christian folk that through the Jewry went
Come to the spot in wonder at the thing;
And hastily they for the Provost sent;
Immediately he came, not tarrying,
And praiseth Christ that is our heavenly King,
And eke his Mother, honour of mankind:
Which done, he bade that they the Jews should bind.

This Child with piteous lamentation then
Was taken up, singing his song alway;
And with procession great and pomp of men
To the next Abbey him they bare away;
His Mother swooning by the body lay:
And scarcely could the people that were near
Remove this second Rachel from the bier.

Torment and shameful death to every one
This Provost doth for those bad Jews prepare
That of this murder wist, and that anon:
Such wickedness his judgments cannot spare;
Who will do evil, evil shall he bear;
Then therefore with wild horses did he draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

Upon his bier this Innocent doth lie
Before the altar while the Mass doth last:
The Abbot with his convent's company
Then sped themselves to bury him full fast;
And, when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this Child when sprinkled was the water,
And sang, O Alma Redemptoris Mater!

This Abbot, for he was a holy man,
As all Monks are, or surely ought to be,
In supplication to the Child began
Thus saying, 'O dear Child! I summon thee
In virtue of the holy Trinity
Tell me the cause why thou dost sing this hymn,
Since that thy throat is cut, as it doth seem.'

'My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,'
Said this young Child, 'and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea many hours ago;
But Jesus Christ, as in the books ye find,
Wilt that his glory last, and be in mind;
And, for the worship of his Mother dear,
Yet may I sing, O Alma! loud and clear.

'This well of mercy, Jesus's Mother sweet,
After my knowledge I have loved alway;
And in the hour when I my death did meet
To me she came, and thus to me did say,
"Thou in thy dying sing this holy lay;"
As ye have heard; and soon as I had sung
Methought she laid a grain upon my tongue.

'Wherefore I sing, nor can from song refrain,
In honour of that blissful Maiden free,
Till from my tongue off-taken is the grain;
And after that thus said she unto me;
"My little Child, then will I come for thee
Soon as the grain from off thy tongue they take:
Be not dismayed, I will not thee forsake!''

This holy Monk, this Abbot—him mean I,
Touched then his tongue, and took away the grain;
And he gave up the ghost full peacefully;
And, when the Abbot had this wonder seen,
His salt tears trickled down like showers of rain;
And on his face he dropped upon the ground,
And still he lay as if he had been bound.
XXXIII.
Eke the whole Convent on the pavement lay,
Weeping and praising Jesu's Mother dear;
And after that they rose, and took their way,
And lifted up this Martyr from the bier,
And in a tomb of precious marble clear
Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet.—
Where'er he be, God grant us him to meet!

XXXIV.
Young Hew of Lincoln! in like sort laid low
By cursed Jews,—thing well and widely known,
For it was done a little while ago—
Pray also thou for us, while here we tarry
Weak sinful folk, that God, with pitying eye,
In mercy would his mercy multiply
On us, for reverence of his Mother Mary!''

II.
THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

I.
The God of Love—ah, benedictis!
How mighty and how great a Lord is he!
For he of low hearts can make high, of high
He can make low, and unto death bring nigh;
And hard hearts he can make them kind and free.

Within a little time, as hath been found,
He can make sick folk whole and fresh and sound:
Them who are whole in body and in mind,
He can make sick,—blind can he and unbind
All that he will have bound, or have unbound.

To tell his might my wit may not suffice;
Foolish men he can make them out of wise;
For he may do all that he will devise;
Loose livers he can make abate their vice,
And proud hearts can make tremble in a trice.

In brief, the whole of what he will, he may;
Against him dare not any wight say nay;
To humble or afflict whomsoever he will,
To gladden or to grieve, he hath like skill;
But most his might he sheds on the eve of May.

For every true heart, gentle heart and free,
That with him is, or thinketh so to be,
Now against May shall have some stirring—whether
To joy, or be it to some mourning; never
At other time, methinks, in like degree.

For now when they may hear the small birds' song,
And see the budding leaves the branches throng,
This unto their remembrance doth bring
All kinds of pleasure mix'd with sorrowing;
And longing of sweet thoughts that ever long.

And of that longing heaviness doth come,
Whence oft great sickness grows of heart and home;
Sick are they all for lack of their desire;
And thus in May their hearts are set on fire,
So that they burn forth in great martyrdom.

In sooth, I speak from feeling, what though now
Old am I, and to genial pleasure slow;
Yet have I felt of sickness through the May,
Both hot and cold, and heart-aches every day,—
How hard, alas! to bear, I only know.

Such shaking doth the fever in me keep
Through all this May that I have little sleep;
And also 'tis not likely unto me,
That any living heart should sleepy be
In which Love's dart its fiery point doth steep.

But tossing lately on a sleepless bed,
I of a token thought which Lovers need;
How among them it was a common tale,
That it was good to hear the Nightingale,
Ere the vile Cuckoo's note be uttered.

And then I thought anon as it was day,
I gladly would go somewhere to essay
If I perchance a Nightingale might hear,
For yet had I heard none, of all that year,
And it was then the third night of the May.

And soon as I a glimpse of day espied,
No longer would I in my bed abide,
But straightway to a wood that was hard by,
Forth did I go, alone and fearlessly,
And held the pathway down by a brook-side.
Till to a lawn I came all white and green,  
I in so fair a one had never been.  
The ground was green, with daisy powdered o'er;  
Tall were the flowers, the grove a lofty cover,  
All green and white; and nothing else was seen.

xiv.

There sat I down among the fair fresh flowers,  
And saw the birds come tripping from their bowers,  
Where they had rested them all night; and they,  
Who were so joyful at the light of day,  
Began to honour May with all their powers.

xv.

Well did they know that service all by rote,  
And there was many and many a lovely note,  
Some, singing loud, as if they had complained;  
Some with their notes another manner feigned;  
And some did sing all out with the full throat.

xvi.

They pruned themselves, and made themselves right  
Dancing and leaping light upon the spray; [guy,  
And ever two and two together were,  
The same as they had chosen for the year,  
Upon Saint Valentine's returning day.

xvii.

Meanwhile the stream, whose bank I sat upon,  
Was making such a noise as it ran on  
 Accordant to the sweet Birds’ harmony;  
Methought that it was the best melody  
Which ever to man’s ear a passage won.

xviii.

And for delight, but how I never wot,  
I in a slumber and a swoon was caught,  
Not all asleep and yet not waking wholly;  
And as I lay, the Cuckoo, bird unholy,  
Broke silence, or I heard him in my thought.

xix.

And that was right upon a tree fast by,  
And who was then ill satisfied but I!  
Now, God, quoth I, that died upon the rood,  
From thee and thy base throat, keep all that’s good,  
Full little joy have I now of thy cry.

xx.

And, as I with the Cuckoo thus ‘gan chide,  
In the next bush that was me fast beside,  
I heard the lusty Nightingale so sing,  
That her clear voice made a loud rioting,  
Echoing thorough all the green wood wide.

Ah! good sweet Nightingale! for my heart’s cheer,  
Hence hast thou stay’d a little while too long;  
For we have had the sorry Cuckoo here,  
And she hath been before thee with her song;  
Evil light on her! she hath done me wrong.

But hear you now a wondrous thing, I pray;  
As long as in that swooning-fit I lay,  
Methought I wist right well what these birds meant,  
And had good knowing both of their intent,  
And of their speech, and all that they would say.

The Nightingale thus in my hearing spake:—  
Good Cuckoo, seek some other bush or brake,  
And, prithee, let us that can sing dwell here;  
For every wight escheveth thy song to hear,  
Such uncouth singing verily dost thou make.

What! quoth she then, what is’t that ails thee now!  
It seems to me I sing as well as thou;  
For mine’s a song that is both true and plain,—  
Although I cannot quaver so in vain  
As thou dost in thy throat, I wot not how.

All men may understanding have of me,  
But, Nightingale, so may they not of thee;  
For thou hast many a foolish and quaint cry:—  
Thou say’st Oss, Oss, then how may I  
Have knowledge, I thee pray, what this may be?

Ah, fool! quoth she, wist thou not what it is!  
Oft as I say Oss, Oss, I wis,  
Then mean I, that I should be wonderous fain  
That shamefully they one and all were slain,  
Whoever against Love mean aught amiss.

And also would I that they all were dead,  
Who do not think in love their life to lead;  
For who is loth the God of Love to obey,  
Is only fit to die, I dare well say,  
And for that cause Oss I cry; take heed!

Ay, quoth the Cuckoo, that is a quaint law,  
That all must love or die; but I withdraw,  
And take my leave of all such company,  
For mine intent it neither is to die,  
Nor ever while I live Love’s yoke to draw.
THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

For lovers of all folk that be alive,
The most disquiet have and least do thrive;
Most feeling have of sorrow woe and care,
And the least welfare cometh to their share;
What need is there against the truth to strive?

What! quoth she, thou art all out of thy mind,
That in thy chirfulness a cause canst find
To speak of Love’s true Servants in this mood;
For in this world no service is so good
To every wight that gentle is of kind.

For thereof comes all goodness and all worth;
All gentleness and honour thence come forth;
Thence worship comes, content and true heart’s pleasure,
And full-assured trust, joy without measure,
And jollity, fresh cheerfulness, and mirth;

And bounty, lowliness, and courtesy,
And seemliness, and faithful company,
And dread of shame that will not do amiss;
For he that faithfully Love’s servant is,
Rather than be disgraced, would chuse to die.

And that the very truth it is which I
Now say—In such belief I’ll live and die;
And Cuckoo, do thou so, by my advice.
Then, quoth she, let me never hope for bliss,
If with that counsel I do e’er comply.

Good Nightingale! thou speakest wondrous fair,
Yet for all that, the truth is found elsewhere;
For Love in young folk is but rage, I wis;
And Love in old folk a great dotage is;
Who most it useth, him ‘twill most impair.

For thereof come all contraries to gladness;
Thence sickness comes, and overwhelming sadness,
Mistrust and jealousy, despite, debate,
Dishonour, shame, envy, importunate,
Pride, anger, mischief, poverty, and madness.

Loving is aye an office of despair,
And one thing is therein which is not fair;
For whose gets of love a little bliss,
Unless it alway stay with him, I wis.
He may full soon go with an old man’s hair.

And, therefore, Nightingale! do thou keep nigh,
For trust me well, in spite of thy quaint cry,
If long time from thy mate thou be, or far,
Thou’lt be as others that forsaken are;
Then shalt thou raise a clamour as do I.

Fie, quoth she, on thy name, Bird ill beseech’d!
The God of Love afflict thee with all teen,
For thou art worse than mad a thousand fold;
For many a one hath virtues manifold,
Who had been nought, if Love had never been.

For evermore his servants Love amendeth,
And he from every blemish them defendeth;
And maketh them to burn, as in a fire,
In loyalty, and worshipful desire,
And, when it liketh him, joy enough them sendeth.

Thou Nightingale! the Cuckoo said, be still,
For Love no reason hath but his own will—
For to th’ untrue he oft gives ease and joy;
True lovers doth so bitterly annoy,
He lets them perish through that grievous ill.

With such a master would I never be*;
For he, in sooth, is blind, and may not see,
And knows not when he hurts and when he heals;
Within this court full seldom Truth avails,
So diverse in his wilfulness is he—

Then of the Nightingale did I take note,
How from her inmost heart a sigh she brought,
And said, Alas! that ever I was born,
Not one word have I now, I am so forlorn.—
And with that word, she into tears burst out.

Alas, alas! my very heart will break,
Quoth she, to hear this churlish bird thus speak
Of Love, and of his holy services;
Now, God of Love! thou help me in some wise,
That vengeance on this Cuckoo I may wreak.

And so methought I started up anon,
And to the brook I ran and got a stone,
Which at the Cuckoo hardly I cast,
And he for dread did fly away full fast;
And glad, in sooth, was I when he was gone.

* From a manuscript in the Bodleian, as are also stanzas 44 and 45, which are necessary to complete the sense.
XLV.
And as he flew, the Cuckoo ever and aye,
Kept crying, "Farewell!—farewell, Popinjay!"
As if in scornful mockery of me;
And on I hunted him from tree to tree,
Till he was far, all out of sight, away.

XLVI.
Then straightway came the Nightingale to me,
And said, Forsooth, my friend, do I thank thee,
That thou wert near to rescue me; and now,
Unto the God of Love I make a vow,
That all this May I will thy songstress be.

XLVII.
Well satisfied, I thanked her, and she said,
By this mishap no longer be dismayed,
Though thou the Cuckoo heard, ere thou heard'st me;
Yet if I live it shall amended be,
When next May comes, if I am not afraid.

XLVIII.
And one thing will I counsel thee also,
The Cuckoo trust not thou, nor his Love's saw;
All that she said is an outrageous lie.
Nay, nothing shall me bring thereto, quoth I,
For Love, and it hath done me mighty woe.

XLIX.
Yes, hath it! use, quoth she, this medicine;
This May-time, every day before thou dine,
Go look on the fresh daisy; then say I,
Although for pain thou may'st be like to die,
Thou wilt be eased, and less wilt droop and pine.

L.
And mind always that thou be good and true,
And I will sing one song, of many new,
For love of thee, as loud as I may cry;
And then did she begin this song full high,
"Beashrew all them that are in love untrue."

LI.
And soon as she had sang it to the end,
Now farewell, quoth she, for I hence must wend;
And, God of Love, that can right well and may,
Send unto thee as mickle joy this day,
As ever he to Lover yet did send.

LII.
Thus takes the Nightingale her leave of me;
I pray to God with her always to be,
And joy of love to send her evermore;
And shield us from the Cuckoo and her lore,
For there is not so false a bird as she.

LIII.
Forth then she flew, the gentle Nightingale,
To all the Birds that lodged within that dale,
And gathered each and all into one place;
And them besought to hear her doleful case,
And thus it was that she began her tale.

LIV.
The Cuckoo—'tis not well that I shoulde hide
How she and I did each the other chide,
And without ceasing, since it was daylight;
And now I pray you all to do me right
Of that false Bird whom Love can not abide.

LV.
Then spake one Bird, and full ascent all gave;
This matter asketh counsel good as grave,
For birds we are—all here together brought;
And, in good sooth, the Cuckoo here is not;
And therefore we a Parliament will have.

LVI.
And thereat shall the Eagle be our Lord,
And other Peers whose names are on record;
A summons to the Cuckoo shall be sent,
And judgment there be given; or that intent
Failing, we finally shall make accord.

LVII.
And all this shall be done, without a nay,
The morrow after Saint Valentine's day,
Under a maple that is well beseen,
Before the chamber-window of the Queen,
At Woodstock, on the meadow green and gay.

LVIII.
She thank'd them; and then her leave she took,
And flew into a hawthorn by that brook;
And there she sate and sung—upon that tree—
"For term of life Love shall have hold of me"—
So loudly, that I with that song awoke.

Unlearned Book and rude, as well I know,
For beauty thou hast none, nor eloquence,
Who did on thee the hardiness bestow
To appear before my Lady! but a sense
Thou surely hast of her benevolence,
Wherewith her hourly bearing proof doth give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

Alas, poor Book! for thy unworthiness,
To show to her some pleasant meanings writ
In winning words, since through her gentleness
Thee she accepts as for her service fit!
Oh! it repenteth me I have neither wit
Nor leisure unto thee more worth to give;
For of all good she is the best alive.
TROILUS AND CRESIDA.

Beseech her weekly with all lowliness,
Though I be far from her I reverence,
To think upon my truth and steadfastness,
And to abridge my sorrow’s violence,
Caused by the wish, as knows your sapience,
She of her liking proof to me would give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

L’envoy.

Pleasure’s Aurora, Day of gladesomeness!
Luna by night, with heavenly influence
Illumined! root of beauty and goodliness,
Write, and allay, by your beneficence,
My sighs breathed forth in silence,—comfort give!
Since of all good, you are the best alive.

Explicit.

III.

TROILUS AND CRESIDA.

Next morning Troilus began to clear
His eyes from sleep, at the first break of day,
And unto Pandarus, his own Brother dear,
For love of God, full piteously did say,
We must the Palace see of Cresida;
For since we yet may have no other feast,
Let us behold her Palace at the least!

And therewithal to cover his intent
A cause he found into the Town to go,
And they right forth to Cresida’s Palace went;
But, Lord, this simple Troilus was woe,
Him thought his sorrowful heart would break in two;
For when he saw her doors fast bolted all,
Well nigh for sorrow down he ‘gan to fall.

Therewith when this true Lover ‘gan behold,
How shut was every window of the place,
Like frost he thought his heart was icy cold;
For which, with changed, pale, and deadly face,
Without word uttered, forth he ‘gan to pace;
And on his purpose bent so fast to ride,
That no wight his continuance spies.

Then said he thus,—O Palace desolate!
O house of houses, once so richly dign’d!
O Palace empty and desolate!
Thou lamp of which extinguished is the light;
O Palace whilom day that now art night,
Thou ought’st to fall and I to die; since she
Is gone who held us both in sovereignity.

O, of all houses once the crown’d boast!
Palace illumined with the sun of bliss;
O ring of which the ruby now is lost,
O cause of woe, that cause has been of bliss:
Yet, since I may no better, would I kiss
Thy cold doors; but I dare not for this rout;
Farewell, thou shrine of which the Saint is out!

Therewith he cast on Pandarus an eye,
With changed face, and piteous to behold;
And when he might his time aright espy,
Aye as he rode, to Pandarus he told
Both his new sorrow and his joys of old,
So piteously, and with so dead a hue,
That every wight might on his sorrow rue.

Forth from the spot he rideth up and down,
And everything to his remembrance
Came as he rode by places of the town
Where he had felt such perfect pleasure once
Lo, yonder saw I mine own Lady dance,
And in that Temple she with her bright eyes,
My Lady dear, first bound me captive-wise.

And yonder with joy-smiten heart have I
Heard my own Cresid’s laugh; and once at play
I yonder saw her eke full blissfully;
And yonder once she unto me ‘gan say—
Now, my sweet Troilus, love me well, I pray!
And there so graciously did me behold,
That hers unto the death my heart I hold.

And at the corner of that self-same house
Heard I my most beloved Lady dear,
So womanly, with voice melodious
Singing so well, so goodly, and so clear,
That in my soul methinks I yet do hear
The blissful sound; and in that very place
My Lady first me took unto her grace.

O blissful God of Love! then thus he cried,
When I the process have in memory,
How thou hast wearied me on every side,
Men thence a book might make, a history?
What need to seek a conquest over me,
Since I am wholly at thy will? what joy
Hast thou thy own liege subjects to destroy!

Dread Lord! so fearful when provoked, thine ire
Well hast thou wreaked on me by pain and grief;
Now mercy, Lord! thou know’st well I desire
Thy grace above all pleasures first and chief;
And live and die I will in thy belief;
For which I ask for guerdon but one boon,
That Cresida again thou send me soon.
Constrain her heart as quickly to return,  
As thou dost mine with longing her to see,  
Then know I well that she would not sojourn.  
Now, blissful Lord, so cruel do not be  
Unto the blood of Troy, I pray of thee,  
As Juno was unto the Thesan blood,  
From whence to Thebes came griefs in multitude.

And after this he to the gate did go  
Whence Creusid rode, as if in haste she was;  
And up and down there went, and to and fro,  
And to himself full oft he said, alas!  
From hence my hope, and solace forth did pass.  
O would the blissful God now for his joy,  
I might her see again coming to Troy!

And up to yonder hill was I her guide;  
Alas, and there I took of her my leave;  
Yonder I saw her to her Father ride,  
For very grief of which my heart shall cleave;—  
And hither home I came when it was eve;  
And here I dwell an outcast from all joy,  
And shall, unless I see her soon in Troy.

And of himself did he imagine oft,  
That he was lighted, pale, and waxen less  
Than he was wont; and that in whispers soft  
Men said, what may it be, can no one guess  
Why Troilus hath all this heaviness?  
All which he of himself concocted wholly  
Out of his weakness and his melancholy.

Another time he took into his head,  
That every wight, who in the way passed by,  
Had of him ruth, and fancied that they said,  
I am right sorry Troilus will die:  
And thus a day or two drove wearily;  
As ye have heard; such life 'gan he to lead  
As one that standeth betwixt hope and dread.

For which it pleased him in his songs to show  
The occasion of his woe, as best he might;  
And made a fitting song, of words but few,  
Somewhat his woeful heart to make more light;  
And when he was removed from all men's sight,  
With a soft night voice, he of his Lady dear,  
That absent was, 'gan sing as ye may hear.

O star, of which I lost have all the light,  
With a sore heart well ought I to bewail,  
That ever dark in torment, night by night,  
Toward my death with wind I steer and sail;

For which upon the tenth night if thou fail  
With thy bright beams to guide me but one hair,  
My ship and me Charybdis will devour.

As soon as he this song had thus sung through,  
He fell again into his sorrows old;  
And every night, as was his wont to do,  
Troilus stood the bright moon to behold;  
And all his trouble to the moon he told,  
And said; I wis, when thou art horn'd asea,  
I shall be glad if all the world be true.

Thy horns were old as now upon that morrow,  
When hence did journey my bright Lady dear,  
That cause is of my torment and my sorrow;  
For which, oh, gentle Luna, bright and clear,  
For love of God, run fast above thy sphere;  
For when thy horns begin once more to spring,  
Then shall she come, that with her bliss may bring

The day is more, and longer every night  
Than they were wont to be—for he thought so;  
And that the sun did take his course not right,  
By longer way than he was wont to go;  
And said, I am in constant dread I trow,  
That Philemon his son is yet alive,  
His too fond father's car amiss to drive.

Upon the walls fast also would he walk,  
To the end that he the Grecian host might see;  
And ever thus he to himself would talk:—  
Lo! yonder is my own bright Lady free;  
Or yonder is it that the tents must be;  
And thence does come this air which is so sweet,  
That in my soul I feel the joy of it.

And certainly this wind, that more and more  
By moments thus increaseth in my face,  
Is of my Lady's sighs heavy and sore;  
I prove it thus; for in no other space  
Of all this town, save only in this place,  
Feel I a wind, that soundeth so like pain;  
It saith, Alas, why severed are we twain?

A weary while in pain he tosseth thus,  
Till fully past and gone was the ninth night;  
And ever at his side stood Pandarus,  
Who busily made use of all his might  
To comfort him, and make his heart more light;  
Giving him always hope, that she the morrow  
Of the tenth day will come, and end his sorrow.
I.

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR.

The class of Beggars, to which the Old Man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I saw an aged Beggar in my walk; And he was seated, by the highway side, On a low structure of rude masonry Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they Who lead their horses down the steep rough road May thence remount at ease. The aged Man Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone That overlays the pile; and, from a bag All white with flour, the dale of village dams, He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one; And scanned them with a fixed and serious look Of idle computation. In the sun, Upon the second step of that small pile, Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills, He sat, and ate his food in solitude: And ever, scattered from his palsied hand, That, still attempting to prevent the waste, Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds, Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal, Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known; and then He was so old, he seems not older now; He travels on, a solitary Man, So helpless in appearance, that for him The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack And careless hand his alms upon the ground, But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so, But still, when he has given his horse the rein, Watches the aged Begggar with a look Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends The toll-gate, when in summer at her door She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees The aged beggar coming, quits her work, And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.

The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake The aged Begggar in the woody lane, Shouts to him from behind; and, if thus warned The old man does not change his course, the boy Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside, And passes gently by, without a curse Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man; His age has no companion. On the ground His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along, They move along the ground; and, evermore, Instead of common and habitual sight Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale, And the blue sky, one little span of earth Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day, Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground, He plies his weary journey; seeing still, And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw, Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track, The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left Impressed on the white road,—in the same line, At distance still the same. Poor Traveller! His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet Disturb the summer dust; he is so still In look and motion, that the cottage cures, Ere he has passed the door, will turn away, Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls, The vacant and the busy, maids and youths, Andurchins newly breeched—all pass him by; Him even the slow-paced waggons leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! ye Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye Who have a broom still ready in your hands To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud, Heart-swelt, while in your pride ye contemplate Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not A burthen of the earth: "Tis Nature's law That none, the meanest of created things, Of forms created the most vile and brute, The dullest or mostnoxious, should exist Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good, A life and soul, to every mode of being Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That half of all can ought—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to—sink, howe’er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin;
Without offence to God cast out of view;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
Worn out and worthless. While from door to door,
This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where’er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.
Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred,—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transient thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And *tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.
Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumberers peace
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul!
No—man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, unjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never House, misnamed of Industry,
Make him a captive!—for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE.

Few are his pleasures; if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, where and when he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die!

1798.

II.

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE.

'Tis not for the unfeeling, the falsely refined,
The squeamish in taste, and the narrow of mind,
And the small critic wielding his delicate pen,
That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old men.

He dwells in the centre of London's wide Town;
His staff is a sceptre—his grey hairs a crown;
And his bright eyes look brighter, set off by the streak
Of the unfaded rose that still blooms on his cheek.

'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—'mid the joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom, when a boy;
That countenance there fashioned, which, spite of a stain
That his life hath received, to the last will remain.

A Farmer he was; and his house far and near
Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer:
How oft have I heard in sweet Tilsbury Vale
Of the silver-rimmed horn whence he dealt his mild ale!

Yet Adam was far as the farthest from ruin,
His fields seemed to know what their Master was doing;
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow, and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as he.

Yet Adam prized little the feast and the bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his soul:
He strayed through the fields like an indolent wight,
The quiet of nature was Adam's delight.

For Adam was simple in thought; and the poor,
Familiar with him, made an inn of his door:
He gave them the best that he had; or, to say
What less may mislead you, they took it away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive on his farm:
The Genius of plenty preserved him from harm:
At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,
His means are run out,—he must beg, or must borrow.

To the neighbours he went—all were free with their money;
For his hive had so long been replenished with honey,
That they dreamt not of death;—he continued his rounds,
Knocked here—and knocked there, pounds still
Adding to pounds.

He paid what he could with his ill-gotten pelf,
And something, it might be, reserved for himself:
Then (what is too true) without hinting a word,
Turned his back on the country—and off like a bird.

You lift up your eyes!—but I guess that you frame
A judgment too harsh of the sin and the shame;
In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the ease of his heart.

To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his grey hairs he went from the brook and the green;
And there, with small wealth but his legs and his hands,
As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as need was, did old Adam assume,—
Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter, and groom;
But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk in his mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green and is stout;
Twice as fast as before does his blood run about;
You would say that each hair of his beard was alive,
And his fingers are busy as bees in a hive.

For he's not like an Old Man that leisurely goes
About work that he knows, in a track that he knows;
But often his mind is compelled to demur,
And you guess that the more then his body must stir.
In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
Like one whose own country’s far over the sea;
And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue;
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
And tears of fifteen will come into his eyes.

What’s a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats!
Yet he watches the clouds that pass over the streets;
With a look of such earnestness often will stand,
You might think he’d twelve reapers at work in the Strand.

Where proud Covent-garden, in desolate hours
Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruits and her flowers,
Old Adam will smile at the pains that have made
Poor winter look fine in such strange masquerade.

Mid coaches and chariots, a wagon of straw,
Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw;
With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
And his hearing is touched with the sounds of a dream.

Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way,
Thrusts his hands in a waggon, and smells at the hay;
He thinks of the fields he so often bath mown,
And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.

But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to repair,—
If you pass by at morning, you’ll meet with him there.
The breath of the cows you may see him inhale,
And his heart all the while is in Tilbury Vale.

Now farewell, old Adam! when low thou art laid,
May one blade of grass spring up on thy head;
And I hope that thy grave, wherever it be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal’s Favourite—then, worse truth,
A Miser’s Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

III.

THE SMALL CELANDINE.

There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

IV.

THE TWO THIEVES;
or,

THE LAST STAGE OF Avarice.

O now that the genius of Bewick were mine,
And the skill which he learned on the banks of the Tyne,
Then the Muses might deal with me just as they chose,
For I’d take my last leave both of verse and of prose.

What feats would I work with my magical hand!
Book-learning and books should be banished the land:
And, for hunger and thirst and such troublesome calls,
Every ale-house should then have a feast on its walls.

The traveller would hang his wet clothes on a chair;
Let them smoke, let them burn, not a straw would he care!

For the Prodigal Son, Joseph’s Dream and his sheaves,
Oh, what would they be to my tale of two Thieves!
The One, yet unbreathed, is not three birthdays old,
His Grand sire that age more than thirty times told;
There are ninety good seasons of fair and foul
weather
Between them, and both go a-pilfering together.

With chips is the carpenter strewing his floor!
Is a cart-load of turf at an old woman’s door!
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide!
And his Grandson’s as busy at work by his side.

Old Daniel begins; he stops short—and his eye,
Through the lost look of dotage, is cunning and sly;
’Tis a look which at this time is hardly his own,
But tells a plain tale of the days that are flown.

He once had a heart which was moved by the wires
Of manifold pleasures and many desires;
And what if he cherished his purse! ’Twas no more
Than treading a path trod by thousands before.

’Twas a path trod by thousands; but Daniel is one
Who went something farther than others have gone,
And now with old Daniel you see how it fares;
You see to what end he has brought his grey hairs.

The pair sally forth hand in hand: ere the sun
Has peered o’er the beeches, their work is begun;
And yet, into whatever sin they may fall,
This child but half knows it, and that not at all.

They hunt through the streets with deliberate tread,
And each, in his turn, becomes leader or led;
And, wherever they carry their plots and their wiles,
Every face in the village is dimpled with smiles.

Neither checked by the rich nor the needy they roam;
For the grey-bearded Sire has a daughter at home,
Who will gladly repair all the damage that’s done;
And three, were it asked, would be rendered for one.

Old Man! whom so oft I with pity have eyed,
I love thee, and love the sweet Boy at thy side:
Long yet may’st thou live! for a teacher we see
That lifts up the veil of our nature in thee.

v.

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY.

The little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression: every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.
I.

Wert not, beloved Friends! nor let the air
For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
Have I been taken; this is genuine life
And this alone—the life which now I live
In peace eternal; where desire and joy
Together move in fellowship without end—
Francesco Coni willed that, after death,
His tombstone thus should speak for him. And surely
Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
Long to continue in this world; a world
That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
To good, whereof itself is destitute.

II.

Perhaps some needful service of the State
Drew Titus from the depth of studious bowers,
And doomed him to contend in faithless courts,
Where gold determines between right and wrong.
Yet did at length his loyalty of heart,
And his pure native genius, lead him back
To wait upon the bright and gracious Muses,
Whom he had early loved. And not in vain
Such course he held! Bologna's learned schools
Were gladdened by the Sage's voice, and hung
With fondness on those sweet Nestorian strains.
There pleasure crowned his days; and all his thoughts
A roseate fragrance breathed. *—O human life,
That never art secure from dolorous change!
Behold a high injunction suddenly
To Arno's side hath brought him, and he charmed
A Tuscan audience: but fell soon was called
To the perpetual silence of the grave.
Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
A Champion steadfast and invincible,
To quell the rage of literary War!

* Ivi vives gladio e i suoi pensieri
Erao tutt'esso.
The Translator had not skill to come nearer to his original.

III.

O Thou who movest onward with a mind
Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste!
'Twill be no fruitless moment. I was born
Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicated
To sacred studies; and the Roman Shepherd
Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
Well did I watch, much laboured, nor had power
To escape from many and strange indignities;
Was smitten by the great ones of the world,
But did not fall; for Virtue braves all shocks,
Upon herself resting immovably.
I me did a kindlier fortune then invite
To serve the glorious Henry, King of France,
And in his hands I saw a high reward
Stretched out for my acceptance,—but Death came.
Now, Reader, learn from this my fate, how false,
How treacherous to her promise, is the world;
And trust in God—to whose eternal doom
Must bend the sceptred Potentates of earth.

IV.

There never breathed a man who, when his life
Was closing, might not of that life relate
Tolls long and hard.—The warrior will report
Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
And blast of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
Could represent the countenance horrible
Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
Over the well-steered galleys did I rule:—
From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic pillars,
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft
Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough sea's pride
Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow.
What noble pomp and frequent have not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learned that one poor moment can suffice
To equalise the lofty and the low.

We sail the sea of life—a Calm One finds,
And One a Tempest—and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.

If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birth-place, and I sprang
Of noble parents: seventy years and three
Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

V.

There is it that Ambrosio Salinero
With an untoward fate was long involved
In odious litigation; and full long,
Fate harder still! had he to endure assaults
Of maccing malady. And true it is
That not the less a frank courageous heart
And buoyant spirit triumphed over pain;
And he was strong to follow in the steps
Of the fair Muses. Not a covert path
Leads to the dear Parnassian forest's shade,
That might from him be hidden; not a track
Mounts to pellucid Hippocrene, but he
Had traced its windings. —This Savona knows,
Yet no sepulchral honors to her Son
She paid, for in our age the heart is ruled
Only by gold. And now a simple stone
Inscribed with this memorial here is raised
By his bereft, his lonely, Chisabrea.
Think not, O Passenger! who readst the lines
That an exceeding love hath dazzled me;
No—he was One whose memory ought to spread
Where'er Pernassus bears an honoured name,
And live as long as its pure stream shall flow.

VI.

Destined to war from very infancy
Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
In Malta the white symbol of the Cross:
Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
Hazard or toil; among the sands was seen
Of Libya; and not seldom, on the banks
Of wide Hungarian Danube, 'twas my lot
To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
That stripped of arms I to my end am brought
On the soft downs of my paternal home.
Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
To blush for me. Thou, loving not nor hilt
In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
How fleeting and how frail is human life!

VII.

O flower of all that springs from gentle blood,
And all that generous nurture breeds to make
Youth amiable; O friend so true of soul
To fair Aglaia; by what envy moved,
Lelius! has death cut short thy brilliant day
In its sweet opening! and what dire mishap
Has from Savona torn her best delight?
For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease to mourn;
And, should the out-pourings of her eyes suffice not
For her heart's grief, she will entreat Sebeto
Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to death,
In the chase arms of thy beloved Love!
What profit riches? what does youth avail?
Dust are our hopes;—I, weeping bitterly,
Penning these sad lines, nor can forbear to pray
That every gentle Spirit his/her led
May read them not without some bitter tears.

VIII.

Nor without heavy grief of heart did He
On whom the duty fell (for at that time
The father sojourned in a distant land)
Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
A brother's Child, most tenderly beloved!
FRANCESCO was the name the Youth had borne,
Pozzobonelli his illustrious house;
And, when beneath this stone the Corso was laid,
The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
Alas! the twentieth April of his life
Had scarcely flowered: and at this early time,
By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
That greatly cheered his country: to his kin
He promised comfort; and the flattering thoughts
His friends had in their fondness entertained,*
He suffered not to languish or decay.
Now is there not good reason to break forth
Into a passionate lament! —O Soul!
Short while a Pilgrim in our earthly world,
Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air;
And round this earthy tomb let roses rise,
An everlasting spring! in memory
Of that delightful fragrance which was once
From thy mild manners quietly exhaled.

* In justice to the Author, I subjoin the original:—
Non lasciava languuire i bel pensieri.
IX.

PAUSE, courteous Spirit!—Ballad suppleth
That Thou, with no reluctant voice, for him
Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
This to the dead by sacred right belongs;
All else is nothing.—Did occasion suit
To tell his world, the marble of this tomb
Would ill suffice: for Plato’s lore sublime,
And all the wisdom of the Stagyrite,
Enriched and beautified his studious mind:
With Archimedes also he conversed
As with a chosen friend; nor did he leave
Those laureat wreaths unengarded which the
Nymphs
Twine near their loved Perseus.—Finally,
Himself above—each lower thought uplifting,
His ears he closed to listen to the songs
Which Sion’s Kings did consecrate of old;
And his Perseus found on Lebanon.
A blessed Man! who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep;
But truly did His life live his. Urbino,
Take pride in him!—O Passenger, farewell!

I.

By a blest Husband guided, Mary came
From nearest kindred, Vernon her new name;
She came, though meek of soul, in seemly pride
Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
O dread reverse! if aught be so, which proves
That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
And troubles that were each a step to Heaven:
Two Babes were laid in earth before she died;
A third now slumbers at the Mother’s side;
Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles afford
A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.

Reader! if to thy bosom cling the pain
Of recent sorrow combated in vain;
Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
Time still intent on his insidious part,
Lulling the mourner’s best good thoughts asleep,
Pilfering regrets we would, but cannot, keep;
Bear with Him—judge Him gently who makes known
His bitter loss by this memorial Stone;
And pray that in his faithful breast the grace
Of resignation find a hallowed place.

II.

Six months to six years added he remained
Upon this sinful earth, by sin unstained:
O blessed Lord! whose mercy then removed
A Child whom every eye that looked on loved;
Support us, teach us calmly to resign
What we possessed, and now is wholly thine!

III.

CENOTAPH.

In affectionate remembrance of Frances Fermor, whose
remains are deposited in the church of Claines, near Worceter, this stone is erected by her sister, Dame Margaret,
wife of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., who, feeling not less
than the love of a brother for the deceased, commends
this memorial to the care of his heirs and successors in the
possession of this place.

By vain affections unenthralled,
Though resolute when duty called
To meet the world’s broad eye,
Pure as the holiest cloistered nun
That ever feared the tempting sun,
Did Fermor live and die.

This Tablet, hallowed by her name,
One heart-relieving tear may claim;
But if the pensive gloom
Of fond regret be still thy choice,
Exalt thy spirit, hear the voice
Of Jesus from her tomb!

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

IV.

EPITAPH

IN THE CHAPEL-YARD OF LANGDALE, WESTMORELAND.

By playful smiles, (alas! too oft
A sad heart’s sunshine) by a soft
And gentle nature, and a free
Yet modest hand of charity,
Through life was Owen Lloyd endeared
To young and old; and how revered
Had been that pious spirit, a shade
Of humble mourners testified,
When, after pains dispensed to prove
The measure of God’s chastening love,
Here, brought from far, his corse found rest,—
Fulfilment of his own request:—
Urged less for this Yew's shade, though he
Planted with such fond hope the tree;
Less for the love of stream and rock,
Dear as they were, than that his Flock,
When they no more their Pastor's voice
Could hear to guide them in their choice
Through good and evil, help might have,
Admonished, from his silent grave,
Of righteousness, of sins forgiven,
For peace on earth and bliss in heaven.

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE
VILLAGE SCHOOL OF——.

1792.

I come, ye little noisy Crew,
Not long your pastime to prevent;
I heard the blessing which to you
Our common Friend and Father sent.
I kissed his cheek before he died;
And when his breath was fled,
I raised, while kneeling by his side,
His hand:—it dropped like lead.
Your hands, dear Little-ones, do all
That can be done, will never fall
Like his till they are dead.
By night or day blow foul or fair,
Ne'er will the best of all your train
Play with the locks of his white hair,
Or stand between his knees again.

Here did he sit confined for hours;
But he could see the woods and plains,
Could hear the wind and mark the showers
Come streaming down the streaming panes.
Now stretched beneath his grass-green mound
He rests a prisoner of the ground.
He loved the breathing air,
He loved the sun, but if it rise
Or set, to him where now he lies,
Brings not a moment's care.
Alas! what idle words; but take
The Dirge which for our Master's sake
And yours, love prompted me to make.
The rhymes so homely in attire
With learned ears may ill agree,
But chanted by your Orphan Quire
Will make a touching melody.

DIRGE.

Mourn, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone;
Thou Angler, by the silent flood;
And mourn when thou art all alone,
Thou Woodman, in the distant wood!

Thou one blind Sailor, rich in joy
Though blind, thy times in sadness hum;
And mourn, thou poor half-witted Boy!
Born deaf, and living deaf and dumb.

Thou drooping sick Man, bless the Guide
Who check'd or turn'd thy headstrong youth,
As he before had sanctified
Thy infancy with heavenly truth.

Ye Striplings, light of heart and gay,
Bold settlers on some foreign shore,
Give, when your thoughts are turned this way,
A sigh to him whom we deplore.

For us who here in funeral strain
With one accord our voices raise,
Let sorrow overcharged with pain
Be lost in thankfulness and praise.

And when our hearts shall feel a sting
From ill we meet or good we miss,
May touches of his memory bring
Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

BY THE SIDE OF THE GRAVE SOME YEARS AF TER.

Long time his pulse hath ceased to beat;
But benefits, his gift, we trace—
Expressed in every eye we meet
Round this dear Vale, his native place.

To stately Hall and Cottage rude
Flowed from his life what still they hold,
Light pleasures, every day, renewed;
And blessings half a century old.

Oh true of heart, of spirit gay,
Thy faults, where not already gone
From memory, prolong their stay
For charity's sweet sake alone.

Such solace find we for our loss;
And what beyond this thought we crave
Comes in the promise from the Cross,
Shining upon thy happy grave.*

* See upon the subject of the three foregoing pieces the Fountain, &c. &c., pages 365, 366.
ELEGIAIC STANZAS,
SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEFFER CASTLE, IN A STORM,
PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee;
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Where'er I looked, thy image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentleness of all gentle things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanised my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will never be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been
Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rude sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling wave.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind;
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, are here before me here,—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

TO THE DAISY.

Sweet Flower! belike one day to have
A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more:
But He, who was on land, at sea,
My Brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,
Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah! hopeful, hopeful was the day
When to that Ship he bent his way,
To govern and to guide:
His wish was gained: a little time
Would bring him back in manhood's prime
And free for life, these hills to climb;
With all his wants supplied.

And full of hope day followed day
While that stout Ship at anchor lay
Beside the shores of Wight;
The May had then made all things green;
And, floating there, in pomp serene,
That Ship was joyous to be seen,
His pride and his delight!
Yet then, when called ashore, he sought
The tender peace of rural thought:
In more than happy mood
To your abodes, bright daisy flowers!
He then would steal at leisure hours,
And loved you glittering in your bowers,
A starry multitude.

But hark the word!—the ship is gone;—
Returns from her long course:—anon
Sets sail:—in season due,
Once more on English earth they stand:
But, when a third time from the land
They parted, sorrow was at hand
For Him and for his crew.

Ill-fated Vessel!—ghostly shock!
—At length delivered from the rock,
The deep she hath regained;
And through the stormy night they steer;
Labouring for life, in hope and fear,
To reach a safer shore—how near,
Yet not to be attained!

"Silence!" the brave Commander cried;
To that calm word a shriek replied,
It was the last death-shriek.
—A few (my soul oft sees that sight)
Survive upon the tall mast's height;
But one dear remnant of the night—
For Him in vain I seek.

Six weeks beneath the moving sea
He lay in slumber quietly;
Unforced by wind or wave
To quit the Ship for which he died,
(All claims of duty satisfied)
And there they found him at her side;
And bore him to the grave.

Vain service! yet not vainly done
For this, if other end were none,
That He, who had been cast
Upon a way of life unmeet
For such a gentle Soul and sweet,
Should find an undisturbed retreat
Near what he loved, at last—

That neighbourhood of grove and field
To Him a resting-place should yield,
A meek man and a brave!
The birds shall sing and ocean make
A mournful murmur for his sake;
And Thou, sweet Flower, shalt sleep and wake
Upon his senseless grave. 1805.

VIII.

ELEGIACT VERSES,

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN WORDSWORTH,
COMMANDER OF THE R. I. COMPANY'S SHIP THE BELL OF
ASSERFORD, IN WHICH HE PERISHED BY CALAMITOUS
SHIPWRECK, FEB. 6TH, 1805.

Composed near the Mountain track, that leads from Grasmere through Grisdale Hawn, where it descends towards Patterdale.

1805.

I.

The Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
That instant, startled by the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow:
Lord of the air, he took his flight;
Oh! could he on that woeful night
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
For one poor moment's space to Thee,
And all who struggled with the Sea,
When safety was so near.

II.

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I spoke (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power
That meets me in this unknown Flower,
Affecting type of him I mourn!
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn.

III.

Here did we stop; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found.
Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
Our home and his, his heart's delight,
His quiet heart's selected home.
But time before him melts away,
And he hath feeling of a day
Of blessedness to come.

IV.

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
In sorrow, but for higher trust,
How miserably deep!
All vanished in a single word,
A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard.
EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAIC PIECES.

Seas—Ship—drowned—Shipwreck—so it came, The morn, the brave, the good, was gone; He who had been our living John Was nothing but a name.

v.
That was indeed a parting! oh, Glad am I, glad that it is past; For there were some on whom it cast Unutterable woe. But they as well as I have gains;— From many a humble source, to pains Like these, there comes a mild release; Even here I feel it, even this Plant Is in its beauty ministrant To comfort and to peace.

vi.
He would have loved thy modest grace, Meek Flower! To Him I would have said, "It grows upon its native bed Beside our Parting-place; There, cleaving to the ground, it lies With multitude of purple eyes, Spangling a cushion green like moss; But we will see it, joyful tide! Some day, to see it in its pride, The mountain will we cross."

—Brother and friend, if verse of mine Have power to make thy virtues known, Here let a monumental Stone Stand—sacred as a Shrine; And to the few who pass this way, Traveller or Shepherd, let it say, Long as these mighty rocks endure,— Oh do not Thou too fondly brood, Although deserving of all good, On any earthly hope, however pure!*

IX.
LINES

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up With which she speaks when storms are gone, A mighty unison of streams! Of all her Voices, One!*

Loud is the Vale!—this inland Depth In peace is roaring like the Sea; Yon star upon the mountain-top Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain depress, Importunate and heavy load! The Comforter hath found me here, Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad— Wait the fulfilment of their fear; For he must die who is their stay, Their glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth To breathless Nature's dark abyss; But when the great and good depart What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth, Doth yet again to God return!— Such ebb and flow must ever be, Then wherefore should we mourn!*

X.

INVOCATION TO THE EARTH.

FEBRUARY, 1816.

I.
"Rust, rest, perturbed Earth! O rest, thou deft Mother of Mankind!" A Spirit sang in tones more plaintive than the wind: From regions where no evil thing has birth I come—thy stains to wash away, Thy cherished letters to unbind, And open thy sad eyes upon a milder day. The Heavens are thronged with martyrs that have risen From out thy noisome prison; The penal caverns groan With tens of thousands rent from off the tree Of hopeful life—by battle's whirlwind blown Into the deserts of Eternity. Unpitied havoc! Victims unalmented! But not on high, where madness is resented, And murder causes some sad tears to flow, Though, from the widely-sweeping blow, The choirs of Angels spread, triumphantly augmented.*

* Importun e grave salma. MICHAEL ANGelo.
EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAIC PIECES.

We pay a high and holy debt;
No tears of passionate regret
Shall stain this votive lay;
Ill-worthly, Beaumont! were the grief
That flings itself on wild relief
When Saints have passed away.

Sad doom, at Sorrow’s shrine to kneel,
For ever covetous to feel,
And impotent to bear!
Such once was hers—to think and think
On severed love, and only sink
From anguish to despair!

But nature to its innest part
Faith had refined; and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given:
Calm as the dew-drop’s, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose’s breast
Till it exahes to Heaven.

Was ever Spirit that could bend
So graciously!—that could descend,
Another’s need to suit,
So promptly from her lofty throne!—
In works of love, in these alone,
How restless, how minute!

Pale was her hue; yet mortal cheek
Ne’er kindled with a livelier streak
When aught had suffered wrong,—
When aught that breathed had felt a wound;
Such look the Oppressor might confound,
However proud and strong.

But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things;
Her quiet is secure;
No thorns can pierce her tender feet,
Whose life was, like the violet, sweet,
As climbing jasmine, pure—

As snowdrop on an infant’s grave,
Or lily heaving with the wave
That feeds it and defends;
As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
The mountain top, or breathed the mist
That from the vale ascends.

Thou takest not away, O Death!
Thou striketh—absence perished,
Indifference is no more;
The future brightens on our sight;
For on the past hath fallen a light
That tempts us to adore.

XI.

LINES
WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF IN A COPY OF THE AUTHOR’S
POEM “THE EXCURSION,” UPON HEARING OF THE DEATH
OF THE LATE VICAR OF KENDAL.

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
Did I deliver this unfinished Song;
Yet for one happy issue;—and I look
With self-congratulation on the Book
Which pious, learned, Meredith saw and read;—
Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed;
He conned the new-born Lay with grateful heart—
Foreboding not how soon he must depart;
Unwitting that to him the joy was given
Which good men take with them from earth to heaven.

XII.

ELEGIAIC STANZAS.
(Addressed to Sir G. H. R. Upon the Death of his
Sister-in-Law.)

Oh for a dirge! But why complain!
Ask rather a triumphal strain
When Eremus’s race is run;
A garland of immortal boughs
To twine around the Christian’s brows,
Whose glorious work is done.
ELEGIAE MUSINGS


In those grounds stands the Parish Church, wherein is a mural monument bearing an inscription which, in deference to the earnest request of the deceased, is confined to name, dates, and those words—"Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!"

With copious elegy in prose or rhyme
Graven on the tomb we struggle against Time,
Alas, how feebly! but our feelings rise
And still we struggle when a good man dies:
Such offering Beaumont dreaded and forbade,
A spirit meek in self-abasement clad.
Yet here at least, though few have numbered days
That shunned so modestly the light of praise,
His graceful manners, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve;
That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife;
Those rare accomplishments, and varied powers,
 Might have their record among sylvan bowers.
Oh, fed for ever! vanished like a blast
That shook the leaves in myriads as it passed—
Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
From all its spirit-moving imagery,
Intensely studied with a painter’s eye,
A poet's heart; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine—
Oh! severed, too abruptly, from delights
That all the seasons shared with equal rights—
Rapt in the grace of undisputed age,
From soul-felt music, and the treasured page
Lit by that evening lamp which loved to shed
Its mellow lustre round thy honoured head;
While Friends beheld thee give with eye, voice,
mien.

More than theatric force to Shakespeare's scene—
If thou hast heard me—if thy Spirit know
Aught of these bowers and whence their pleasures flow;
If things in our remembrance hold so dear,
And thoughts and projects fondly cherished here,
To thy exalted nature only seem
Time’s vanities, light fragments of earth’s dream—
Rebuke us not!—The mandate is obeyed
That said, "Let praise be mute where I am laid;"

The holier deprecation, given in trust
To the cold marble, waits upon thy dust;
Yet have we found how slowly genuine grief
From silent admiration wins relief.
Too long abashed thy Name is like a rose
That doth 'within itself its sweetness lose;'
A drooping daisy changed into a cup
In which her bright-eyed beauty is shut up.
Within these groves, where still are fittingly
Shades of the Past, oft noticed with a sigh,
Shall stand a votive Tablet, haply free,
When towers and temples fall, to speak of Thee!
If sculptured emblems of our mortal doom
Recal not there the wisdom of the Tomb,
Green ivy risen from out the cheerful earth,
Will fringe the lettered stone; and herbs spring forth,
Whose fragrance, by soft dews and rain unbound,
Shall penetrate the heart without a wound;
While truth and love their purposes fulfil,
Commemorating genius, talent, skill,
That could not be concealed where Thou wert known;
Thy virtues He must judge, and He alone,
The God upon whose mercy they are thrown.

Nov. 1833.

WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLES LAMB.

To a good Man of most dear memory
This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
From the great city where he first drew breath,
Was reared and taught; and humbly earned his bread,
To the strict labours of the merchant's desk
By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
Tesse, and the thought of time so spent depress,
His spirit, but the remembrance was high;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire
Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air;
And when the precious hours of leisure came,
Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
With a keen eye, and overflowing heart:
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
Humour and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
Had been derived the name he bore—a name,
Wherever christian altars have been raised,
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,
Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
Many and strange, that hung about his life;
Still, at the centre of his being, lodged
A soul by resignation sanctified:
And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in him,
Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
O, he was good, if 'er a good Man lived!

* * * * *

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
Though but a doubtful hope, that they might serve
Fidly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is
missed;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain:
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorn of the fields, my Friend,
But more in show than truth; and from the fields,
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers 'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blooming flowers;
And taking up a voice shall speak (thro' still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-liit lamp
From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.

* * * * *

And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine,
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branches, might have hung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister—'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she lives, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;
In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanising, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
More than sufficient recompence!

Her love
(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?)
Was as the love of mothers; and when years,
Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part
Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,
Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And season's difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they—such thro' life they might have been
In union, in partition only such;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High;
Yet, thro' all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, O silent and invisible Friend!
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother) may be both alike
Disarmed of power to unsettle present good
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.

O gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness; but happier far
Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
Your dead loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but holds
His sojourn in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the blest world where parting is unknown.

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh!

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-born Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead∗.

Nov. 1835.

INSCRIPTION
FOR A MONUMENT IN CROUCHWAITE CHURCH, IN THE VALE OF EDWOICK.

Ye vale and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you,
His eyes have closed! And ye, lov'd books, no more
Shall Southerly feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown,
Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's weal,
Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Inform'd his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest.
His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top; but he to heaven was vouch'd
Through his industrious life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.

∗ See Note.
ODE.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.
See page 54.

I.
The time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream;
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II.
The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, wheresoe'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III.
Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV.
Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are calling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V.
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that riseth with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whomso it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.
Barb fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother’s mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homesely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.
Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years’ Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where ‘mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother’s kisses,
With light upon him from his father’s eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor coms another part;
Filling from time to time his ‘humorous stage’
With all the Persons, down to palisied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII.
Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul’s immensity;
Then best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, readst the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o’er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being’s height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife!
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX.
O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.
Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
THE EXCURSION.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.

Oft, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!  
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;  
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,  
Besides swift-flowing Lanthor's current clear.

—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear  
Before thee, Lonsdale, and this Work present,  
A token (may it prove a monument!)  
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.

Gladly would I have waited till my task  
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,  
And Hope fell oft fallacious as a dream:  
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask  
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem  
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,  
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814.

The Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which The Excursion is a part, derives its Title of The Recluse.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author’s Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, the Recluse; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author’s mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the
THE EXCURSION.

same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of The Recluse will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author’s own person; and that in the intermediate part (The Excursion) the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author’s intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the mean time the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of The Recluse, may be acceptable as a kind of Prospectus of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

‘On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life, Ening in solitude, I oft perceive Fair trains of imagery before me rise, Accompanied by feelings of delight Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed; And I am conscious of affecting thoughts And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh The good and evil of our mortal state. —To these emotions, whensoever they come, Whether from breath of outward circumstance, Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself— I would give utterance in numerous verse. Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope, And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith; Of blessed consolations in distress; Of moral strength, and intellectual Power; Of joy in widest commonly spread; Of the individual Mind that keeps her own Inviolate retirement, subject there To Conscience only, and the law supreme Of that Intelligence which governs all— I sing—’tis audience let me find though few!”

So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard— In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven! For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil. All strength—all terror, single or in bands, That ever was put forth in personal form— Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir Of shouting Angels, and the emperyal thrones— I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not The darkest pit of lowest Erebus, Nor sight of blinders vacancy, scooped out By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe As fall upon us often when we look Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man— My haunt, and the main region of my song. —Beauty—a living Presence of the earth, Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms Which craft of delicate Spirits hath compose From earth’s materials—waits upon my steps; Pitchs her tents before me as I move, An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old Sought in the Atlantic main—why should they be A history only of departed things? Or a mere fiction of what never was? For the discerning intellect of Man, When wedded to this goodly universe In love and holy passion, shall find these A simple produce of the common day. —I, long before the blissful hour arrives, Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse Of this grand consummation—and, by words Which speak of nothing more than what we are, Would I arouse the sensus from their sleep Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims How exquisitely the individual Mind (And the progressive powers perhaps no less Of the whole species) to the external World Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too— Theme this but little heard of among men— The external World is fitted to the Mind; And the creation (by no lower name Can it be called) which they with blended might Accomplish:—this is our high argument. —Such grateful haunts foreseeing, if I oft Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes And fellowships of men, and see ill sights Of madding passions mutually inflamed; Must hear Humanity in fields and groves Pipes solitary anguish; or must hang Breeding above the fierce confederate storm Of sorrow, barnacled everywore Within the walls of cities—may these sounds Have their authentic comment; that even these Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!— Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspirst The human Soul of universal earth, Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess A metropolitan temple in the hearts Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow A gift of genuine insight; that my Song With star-like virtue in its place may shine, Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere,—And if with this
I mix more lovely matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision; when and where, and how he lived,--
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illuminations—may my life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners:—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unflagging love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

BOOK FIRST.

THE WANDERER.

ARGUMENT.

A summer morning—The Author reaches a ruined Cot
tage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered
Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of
life he gives an account.—The Wanderer, while rest
ning under the shade of the Trees that surround the
Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high:
Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,
In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed;
To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
By power of that impending covert, thrown,
To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy.
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
With languid steps that by the slippery turf
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm dispense
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
The wished-for port to which my course was bound.
Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,
Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other!—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought; a Man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
And stationed in the pale blue way, with face
Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded, to the figure of the man
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained
Unrecognised; but, stricken by the sight,
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly; and now
He by appointment waited for me here,
Under the covert of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends: amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew;
And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singly out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we rambled through the woods:
We sate—we walked; he pleased me with report
Of things which he had seen; and often touched
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turned inward; or at my request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds;
Feeling the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care

THE EXCURSION.
THE WANDERER.

Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of
drought.
Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
How precious when in riper days I learned
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
In the plain presence of his dignity!

Oh! many are the Poets that are sown
By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
The vision and the faculty divine;
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
(Which, in the docile season of their youth,
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
Or haply by a temper too severe,
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
All but a scattered few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within,
And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; else surely this Man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
His observations, and the thoughts his mind
Had dealt with—I will here record in verse:
Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
The high and tender Muse shall accept
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
Pure lives were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
In summer, tended cattle on the hills;
But, through the inclement and the perilous days
Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Remote from view of city spire, or sound
Of minster clock! From that bleak tenement
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travelled through the wood, with no one near
To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
So vividly great objects that they lay
Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
On all things which the moving seasons brought
To feed such appetite—nor this alone
Appeased his yearning:—in the after-day
Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying!

Thus informed,
He had small need of books; for many a tale
Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourished Imagination in her growth,
And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
By which she is made quick to recognise
The moral properties and scope of things.
But eagerly he read, and read again,
Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied;
The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
THE EXCURSION.

With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
Triumphantly displayed in records left
Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour!
And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
A struggling volume, torn and incomplete,
That left half-told the preternatural tale,
Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
Strange and uncoath; dire faces, figures dire,
Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
Could never be forgotten!

In his heart,
Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
Or by the silent looks of happy things,
Or flowing from the universal face
Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
Of Nature, and already was prepared,
By his intense conceptions, to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes possessed.

O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he feel his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:
There littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there the spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe—she saw.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works thro' patience; thence he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to the nearest town
He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton. Love of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His School-master supplied; books that explain
The purer elements of truth involved
In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
(especially perceived where nature droops
And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
Busy in solitude and poverty.
These occupations oftentimes deceived
The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
In pensive idleness. What could he do,
Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
With blind endeavours! Yet, still uppermost,
Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that from her sweet influence
Might tend to weaken. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
THE WANDERER

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Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest;
Yet do such Travellers find their own delight;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times;
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the Pedlar’s toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led
By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease:—to him it offered
Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.
—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed
Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
Foreboding evil. From his native hills
He wandered far; much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; Chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That, ’mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
The better portion of his time; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
 ’mid the bounties of the year, the peace
And Liberty of nature; there he kept
In solitude and solitary thought
His mind in a just equipoise of love.
Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
By partial bondage. In his steady course,
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.
Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
And constant disposition of his thoughts
To sympathy with man, he was alive
To all that was enjoyed where’er he went,
And all that was endured; for, in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could afford to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life.
For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
He had observed the progress and decay

His trianges—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag
That is the eagle’s birth-place, or some peak
Familiar with forgotten years, that shows
Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
The history of many a winter storm,
Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus before his eighteenth year was told.
Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
With still increasing weight; he was o’erpowered
By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul
Communicating with the glorious universe.
Full often wished he that the winds might rage
When they were silent: far more fondly now
Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
That live in darkness. From his intellect
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose; and, failing oft to win
The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun
Varies its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of holy life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach
A village-school—but wandering thoughts were then
A misery to him; and the Youth resigned
A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own steadiest clounds) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
THE EXCURSION.

Of many minds, of minds and bodies too; 
The history of many families; 
How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown 
By passion or mischance, or such misrule 
Among the unthinking masters of the earth 
As makes the nations groan.

This active course 
He followed till provision for his wants 
Had been obtained,—the Wanderer then resolved 
To pass the remnant of his days, untasked 
With needless services, from hardship free. 
His calling laid aside, he lived at ease: 
But still he loved to pace the public roads 
And the wild paths; and, by the summer's warmth 
Invited, often would he leave his home 
And journey far, revisiting the scenes 
That to his memory were most endeared. 
—Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamp'd 
By worldly-mindedness or anxious care; 
Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed 
By knowledge gathered up from day to day; 
Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those 
With whom from childhood he grew up, had held 
The strong hand of her purity; and still 
Had watched him with an unrelenting eye. 
This he remembered in his ripen age 
With gratitude, and reverential thoughts. 
But by the native vigour of his mind, 
By his habitual wanderings out of doors, 
By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works, 
Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth, 
He had imbued of fear or darker thought 
Was melted all away; so true was this, 
That sometimes his religion seemed to me 
Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods; 
Who to the model of his own pure heart 
Shaped his belief, as grace divine inspired, 
And human reason dictated with awe. 
—And surely never did there live on earth 
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports 
And teasing ways of children vexed not him; 
Indulgent listener was he to the tongue 
Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale, 
To his fraternal sympathy addressed, 
Obtain reluctant hearing. 

Plain his garb; 
Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared 
For sabbath duties; yet he was a man 
Whom no one could have passed without remark. 
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs 
And his whole figure breathed intelligence. 
Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek

Into a narrower circle of deep red, 
But had not tamed his eye; that, under brows 
Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought 
From years of youth; which, like a Being made 
Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill 
To blend with knowledge of the years to come, 
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of life 
Who now, with no appendage but a staff, 
The prized memorial of relinquished toils, 
Upon that cottage-bench repos'd his limbs, 
Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay, 
His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut, 
The shadows of the breezy elves above 
Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound 
Of my approaching steps, and in the shade 
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space. 
At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat 
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim 
Had newly scoop'd a running stream. He rose, 
And ere our lively greeting into peace 
Had settle'd, "'Tis," said I, "a burning day: 
My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems, 
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word, 
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb 
The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out 
Upon the public way. It was a plot 
Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds 
Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed, 
The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips, 
Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems, 
In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erheap 
The broken wall. I looked around, and there, 
Where two tall hedge-rows of thick elder boughs 
Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well 
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy fern. 
My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerful spot 
Withdrawing, straightforward to the shade returned 
Where sat the old Man on the cottage-bench; 
And, while, beside him, with uncovered head, 
I yet was standing, freely to respire, 
And cool my temples in the fanning air, 
Thus did he speak. "I see around me here 
Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend, 
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved 
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth 
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon 
Even of the good is no memorial left. 
—The Poets, in their elegies and songs 
Lamenting the departed, call the groves, 
They call upon the hills and streams to mourn, 
And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,
THE WANDERER.

In these their invocations, with a voice
Obdient to the strong creative power
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness; and they ministered
To human comfort. Stoop down to drink,
Upon the slimy foot-stone I copied
The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the elements:
There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts!
Forgive them;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring; and no one came
But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

I speak," continued he, "of One whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost.

In the dark hedges. So their days were spent.
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the heart!
A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter rainment, saw
The hardships of that season: many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile,
Abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,
When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long; and, when his strength returned,
He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow: shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift
Sought daily bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children—happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks!

A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them; or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not; his good humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work—and to the town.
Would turn without an errand his slack steps;
Or wander here and there among the fields,
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue: at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
And 'twas a woful thing to see the ends
Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
'Made my heart bleed.'"

At this the Wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air;
Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek!
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity,
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
And, feeding on disputes, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts!'"

He spoke with somewhat of a solemn tone:
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale
Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins.
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round
Upon that tranquil Ruiz, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.

He replied,
"A It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never marked
By reason, barren of all future good.

But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
A power to virtue friendly; we're not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form. But without further bidding
I will proceed.

While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote;
And when these lofty elms once more appeared
What pleasant expectations lured me on
'O'er the flat Common!—With quick step I reached
The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
A little while; then turned her head away
Speechless, and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then—'O Sir!'
I cannot tell how she pronounced my name:—
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spoke
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
He left his house: two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremulously
She opened—found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold. 'I shuddered at the sight,'
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere that day
When I stood mid the long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent
With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
—'He left me thus,—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power..."
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—"Twas the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools.
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the "trotting brooks" and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing fresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowning round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
O'er paths they used to deck: carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
The cumbersome bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour
Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps;
A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought
He said that she was used to ramble far,—
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
The longer I remained, more desolate:
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms; the cottage-clock struck
eight;—
I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
"It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I've wandered much of late;
And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
Of my best prayers to bring me back again.'
While on the board she spread our evening meal,
She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child;
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed.—'Tis I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my tears
Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope! said she, 'that God
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'

It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman:—so familiarly
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One
By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward cast;
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act,
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sat together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give:
She thanked me for my wish—but for my hope
It seemed she did not thank me.

I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping: she had learned
No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
In person and appearance; but her house
Bespeake a sleepy hand of negligence;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chance to fall. Her infant babe
Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief,
And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass:
No ridges there appeared of clear black mold,
No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part were gnawed away
Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
—Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' When to the House
We had returned together, she inquired
If I had any hope—but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place; his Sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and
Gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my Friend,
That in your arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
THE WANDERER.

A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by you gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully:
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first zipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh hands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fart rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,—
In sickness she remained; and here she died;
Last human tenant of these ruined walls!"

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
From that low bench, rising instinctively
I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had told.
I stood, and leaning over the garden wall
Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it seemed
To comfort me while with a brother's love
I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
Then towards the cottage I returned; and traced
Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
That secret spirit of humanity
Which, 'mid the calm obliviou tendencies
Of nature, 'mid her plants, and herbs, and flowers,
And silent overgrowings, still survived.
The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
"My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Nor more would she have craved as due to One
Who, in her worst distress, had oftimes felt
The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with
soul
Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye?
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those woods, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,
And walked along my road in happiness."

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench: and now we felt,
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty clumps,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff;
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
A village- inn,—our evening resting-place.
BOOK SECOND.

THE SOLITARY.

ARGUMENT.
The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat—Sound of singing from below—a funeral procession—Descent into the Valley—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley—Meeting with the Wanderer's Friend, the Solitary—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage—The cottage entered—Description of the Solitary's apartment—Repast there—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afforded him—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind—Leave the house.

Is days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheered with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armed knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook;—beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the next,
Humbly in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.

Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walked—protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side;
His dear companion whereasoe'er he went
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honoured race
Drew happier, loftier, more empassioned thoughts
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
Of these our unimaginative days;
Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
Accoutred with his harthon and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
Looked on this guide with reverential love?
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey, under favourable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
Which nature's various objects might inspire;
And in the silence of his face I read
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestica, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind, he loved them all:
Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
To happy contemplation soothed his walk;
How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
Its course of suffering in the public road,
Sad contrast! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
Greeted us all day long; we took our seats
By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
The welcome of an Inmate from afar,
And I at once forgot, I was a Stranger.
—Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
Huts where his charity was blest; his voice
Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot;
Or thanering resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it; with a soul perplexed,
And finding in herself no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men—
To him appeal was made as to a judge;
Who, with an understanding heart, allayed
The perturbation; listened to the plea;
Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
Now as his choice directed, now as mine;
Or both, with equal readiness of will,
Our course submitting to the changeable breeze
Of accident. But when the rising sun
Had three times called us to renew our walk,
My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
As if the thoughts were but a moment old,
Claimed absolute dominion for the day.
We started—and he led me toward the hills,
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
Before us, mountains stern and desolate;
But, in the majesty of distance, now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aerial softness clad,
And beautified with morning's purple beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment:—but how faint
Compared with ours! who, pacing side by side,
Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
That we beheld; and lend the listening sense
To every grateful sound of earth and air;
Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our thoughts
Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey long,
By this dark hill protected from thy beams!
Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish;
But quickly from among our morning thoughts
'Twas chased away: for, toward the western side
Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
We saw a throng of people—wherefore met!
Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield
Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual Wake,
Which the bright season favours.—Tabor and pipe
In purpose join to hasten or reprove
The laggard Rustic; and repaie with bonos
Of merriment a party-coloured knot,
Already formed upon the village-green.
—Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight
That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
Of morning, aided by exalting dew,
With gladsome influence could re-animate
The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, "The music and the sprightly scene
Invite us; shall we quit our road, and join
These festive matins?"—He replied, "Not loth
To linger I would here with you partake,
Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
The simple pastimes of the day and place.
By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
The turf of your large pasture will be skimmed;
There, too, the Inky Wrestlers shall contend:
But know we not that he, who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day,
Unites full oft the pleasures of the day;
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow, when purposes are lightly changed!
A length of journey yet remains untraced:
Let us proceed." Then, pointing with his staff
Raised toward those cragg'ry summits, his intent
He thus imparted:—

"In a spot that lies
Among you mountain fastnesses concealed,
You will receive, before the hour of noon,
Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,
From sight of One who lives secluded there,
Lonesome and lost: of whom, and whose past life,
(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
More faithfully collected from himself)
This brief communication shall suffice.

Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage
Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant,
Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,
Blossoms of piety and innocence.
Such grateful promises his youth displayed:
And, having shown in study forward zeal,
He to the Ministry was duly called;
And straight, incited by a curious mind
Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge
Of Chaplain to a military troop
Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched
In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
This office filling, yet by native power
And force of native inclination made
An intellectual ruler in the haunts
Of social vanity, he walked the world,
Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety;
Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed
Where Fortune led—and Fortune, who oft proves
The careless wanderer’s friend, to him made known
A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised;
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win.

For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
His office he relinquished; and retired
From the world’s notice to a rural home.
Youth’s season yet with him was scarcely past,
And she was in youth’s prime. How free their love,
How full their joy! ‘Till, pitiable doom!
In the short course of one undreaded year,
Death blasted all. Death suddenly o’erthrew
Two lovely Children—all that they possessed!
The Mother followed:—miscarried bare
The one Survivor stood; he wept, he prayed
For his dismissal, day and night, compelled
To hold communion with the grave, and face
With pain the regions of eternity.
An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish; and, indifferent to delight,
To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he; so he might have died.

But now,
To the wide world’s astonishment, appeared
A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France!
Her voice of social transport reached even him!
He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
To the great City, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights every day from a new world of hope.
Thither his popular talents he transferred;
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained
The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
Intoxicating service! I might say
A happy service; for he was sincere
As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

That righteous cause (such power hath freedom)
bound,
For one hostility, in friendly league,
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves;
Was served by rival advocates that came

From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seemed to animate them all:
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her discernment; not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
An overweening trust was raised; and fear
Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
The strongest did not easily escape;
And He, what wonder! took a mortal taint.
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them whom he had laid
In earth’s dark chambers, with a Christian’s hope?
An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind; and hence
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced;
Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls;
But, for disciples of the inner school,
Old freedom was old servitude, and they
The wearest whose opinions stooped the least.
To known restraints; and who most boldly drew
Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
That, in the light of false philosophy,
Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
Widening its circle as the storms advance.

His sacred function was at length renounced;
And every day and every place enjoyed
The unshackled layman’s natural liberty;
Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
I do not wish to wrong him; though the course
Of private life licentiously displayed
Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
Upon the insolent aspiring brow
Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,
‘Mid much abasement, what he had received
From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
And mortal sickness on her face appeared,
He coloured objects to his own desire
As with a lover’s passion. Yet his moods
Of pain were keen as those of better men,
Nay keener, as his fortiety was less;
And he continued, when worse days were gone,
To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal.
THE SOLITARY.

That shewed like happiness. But, in despite
Of all this outside bravery, within,
He neither felt encouragement nor hope:
For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
Were wanting; and simplicity of life;
And reverence for himself; and, last and best,
Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of Him
Before whose sight the troubles of this world
Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

The glory of the times fading away—
The splendor, which had given a festival air
To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled
From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited
All joy in human nature; was consumed,
And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
And fruitless indignation; galled by pride;
Made desperate by contempt of men who throwed
Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
Without desert, what he desired; weak men,
Too weak even for his envy or his hate!
Tormented thus, after a wandering course
Of discontent, and inwardly oppressed
With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sat down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not
Its own voluptuousness;—on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from 'a world
Not moving to his mind.'"

These serious words
Closed the preparatory notices
That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile
The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.
Diverging now (as if his quest had been
Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall
Of water, or some lofty eminence,
Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
We scaled, without a track to case our steps,
A steep ascent; and reached a dreary plain,
With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
Before us; savage region! which I paced
Dispirited: when, all at once, behold!
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains; even as if the spot
Had been from closest time by wish of theirs
So placed, to be shut out from all the world!  
Urns-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close;
A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more!
It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want: the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland hause.
—There crows the cock, single in his domain:
The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighbouring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hilly tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here!
Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
Upon a bed of heath;—full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
Among the mountains; never one like this;
So kensome, and so perfectly secure;
Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
With the few needful things that life requires.
—In rugged arms how softly does it lie,
How tenderly protected!  Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness: were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
It could not be more quiet: peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private; years that pass
Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay
In silence musing by my Comrade's side,
He also silent; when from out the heart
Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
Or several voices in one solemn sound,
Was heard ascending; mournful, deep, and slow
The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge!
We listened, looking down upon the hut,
But seeing no one: meanwhile from below
The strain continued, spiritual as before;
And now distinctly could I recognise
These words:—"Shall in the grave thylove be known,
In death thy faithfulness?"—"God rest his soul!"
Said the old man, abruptly breaking silence,—
"He is departed, and finds peace at last!"

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
THE EXCURSION.

Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
They shaped their course along the sloping side
Of that small valley, singing as they moved;
A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, and all decently attired!
Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
 Ended; and, from the stillness that ensued
Recovering, to my Friend I said, "You speak,
Most thought, with apprehension that these rites
Are paid to Him upon whose sky retreat
This day we purposed to intrude."—"I did so,
But let us hence, that we may learn the truth:
Perhaps it is not he but some one else
For whom this pious service is performed;
Some other tenant of the solitude."

So, to a steep and difficult descent
Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
Where passage could be won; and, as the last
Of the mate train, behind the heathy top
Of that off-sloping outlet, disappeared,
I, more impatient in my downward course,
Had landed upon easy ground; and there
Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold
An object that enticed my steps aside!
A narrow, winding, entry opened out
Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
Enclosed between an upright mass of rock:
And one old moss-grown wall;—a cool recess,
And fanciful! For where the rock and wall
Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
By thrusting two rude staves into the wall
And overlaying them with mountain sods;
To weather-fend a little turf-built seat
Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread
The burning sunshine, or a transient shower;
But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands!
Whose skill had throned the floor with a proud show
Of baby-houses, curiously arranged;
Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,
Who, entering, round him threw a careless glance,
Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,
"Lo! what is here!" and, stooping down, drew forth
A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss
And wreck of party-coloured earthen-ware,
Aply disposed, had lent its help to raise
One of those petty structures. "His it must be!"

Exclaimed the Wanderer, "I cannot but he his,
And he is gone!" The book, which in my hand
Had opened of itself (for it was sworn
With searching lamp, and seemingly had lain
To the injurious elements exposed
From week to week,) I found to be a work
In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
His famous Optimist. "Unhappy Man!"
Exclaimed my Friend; "here then has been to him
Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place
Within how deep a shelter! He had fits,
Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
And loved the haunts of children: here, no doubt,
Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple sports,
Or sate companionless; and here the book,
Left and forgotten in his careless way,
Must by the cottage-children have been found:
Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work!
To what old purpose have the darlings turned
This sad memorial of their hapless friend!"

"Me?" said I, "most doth it surprise, to find
Such book in such a place!"—"A book it is,"
He answered, "to the Person suited well,
Though little suited to surrounding things:
'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had been
To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,
With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!—
Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
As from these intimations I forebode,
Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
And least of all for him who is no more."

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand;
And he continued, glancing on the leaves
An eye of scorn:—"The lover," said he, "doomed
To love when hope hath failed him—whom no depth
Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
And that is joy to him. When change of times
Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
The faithful servant, who must hide his head
Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may
A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
And he too hath his comforter. How poor,
Beyond all poverty how destitute,
Must that Man have been left, who, hither driven,
Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
No dearer relique, and no better stay,
Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
Impure conceits discharging from a heart
Hardened by impious pride!—I did not fear
To tax you with this journey;"—mildly said
THE SOLITARY.

My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
Into the presence of the cheerful light—
"For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
From moving spectacles;—but let us on."

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
I followed, till he made a sudden stand:
For full in view, approaching through a gate
That opened from the enclosure of green fields
Into the rough uncultivated ground,
Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead!
I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,
That it could be no other; a pale face,
A meagre person, tall, and in a garb
Not rustic—dull and faded like himself!
He saw us not, though distant but few steps;
For he was busy, dealing, from a store
Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
Of red ripe currants; gift by which he strove,
With intermixture of endearing words,
To soothe a Child, who walked beside him, weeping
As if disconsolate. "They to the grave.
Are bearing him, my Little-one," he said,
"To the dark pit; but he will feel no pain;
His body is at rest, his soul in heaven."

More might have followed—but my honoured
Friend
Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
And cordial greeting. Vivid was the light
That flashed and sparkled from the other's eyes;
He was all fire: no shadow on his brow
Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.
Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,
An eager grasp; and many moments' space—
When the first glow of pleasure was no more,
And, of the sad appearance which at once
Had vanished, much was come and coming back—
An amiable smile retained the life
Which it had unexpectedly received,
Upon his hollow cheek. "How kind," he said,
"Nor could your coming have been better timed;
For this, you see, is in our narrow world
A day of sorrow. I have here a charge."
And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child—
"A little mourner, whom it is my task
To comfort;—but how came ye—if you track
(Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
Ye could not miss the funeral train—they yet
Have scarcely disappeared." "This blooming
Child,"
Said the old Man, "is of an age to weep.

At any grave or solemn spectacle,
Iuly distressed or overpowered with awe,
He knows not wherefore;—but the boy to-day,
Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears; you also
Must have sustained a loss." "The hand of Death,
He answered, "has been here; but could not well
Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
Upon myself."—The other left these words
Unnoticed, thus continuing.—
"From yon crag,
Down whose steep sides we dropped into the vale,
We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard any where; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life,
In that one moment when the corpse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency;
Then from the threshold moves a song of peace,
And confidential yearnings, 'towards its home,
Its final home on earth. What traveller—who—
(How far soever a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
A mute procession on the houseless road;
Or passing by some single tenement
Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise
The monitory voice! But most of all
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne
Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood;
Yes, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
In silent grief their un民办 heads,
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,
And that most awful scripture which declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed!
—Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,
And son and father also side by side,
Rise from that posture;—and in concert move,
On the green turf following the vested Priest,
Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
From which they do not shrink, and which under
They faint not, but advance towards the open grave
Step after step—together, with their firm
Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,
He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
The most serene, with most unsanctified eye—
Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow
mourned!"

"That poor Man taken hence to-day," replied
The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
Which did not please me, "must be deemed, I fear,
Of the unblest; for he will surely sink
Into his mother earth without such pomp
Of grief, depart without occasion given
By him for such array of fortune.

Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark!
This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
And I shall miss him; scanty tribute 'tis,
This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
If love were his sole claim upon their care,
Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
Without a hand to gather it."

At this
I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
"Can it be thus among so small a band
As ye must needs be here! in such a place
I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight
Of a departing cloud."—"Twas not for love"
Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—

"That I came hither; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here,
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve." Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign Companion,—"Pity 'tis
That fortune did not guide you to this house
A few days earlier; then would you have seen
What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
Are made of; an ungracious matter this!
Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance too
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterred
By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by riggared age enriched
In what she most doth value, love of God
And his frail creature Man—but ye shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
Without refreshment!"

Quickly had he spoken,
And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot;
And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,

Had almost a forbidding nakedness;
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetle-wing rock
We had looked down upon it. All within,
As left by the departed company,
Was silent; save the solitary clock
That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound.—
Following our Guide, we climb the cottage-stairs
And reach a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner entered than our Host
Said gaily, "This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
I love it better than a small his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best."

So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
He went about his hospitable task.
My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired Friend,
As if to thank him; he returned that look,
Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck
Had we about us! scattered was the floor,
And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
With books, maps, fossils, withered plants and flowers,
And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some
Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
And shattered telescope, together linked
By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
And instruments of music, some half-made,
Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls.
But speedily the promise was fulfilled;
A feast before us, and a courteous Host
Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
By which it had been bleached, 'spread the board;
And was itself half-covered with a store
Of dainties,—eaten bread, curd, cheese, and cream;
And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
Butter that had imbissed from mountain-flowers
A golden huse, delicate as their own
Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.
Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
Our table, small parade of garden fruits,
And whortle-berries from the mountain side.
The Child, who long ere this had stillled his sobs,
Was now a help to his late comforter,
And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.

In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sat—
The Solitary.

Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not, ever so moan, forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this.
"Those lusty twins," exclaimed our host, "if here
It were your lot to dwell, would soon become
Your prized companions—Many are the notes
Which, in its tumefy course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing
shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm
Rides high; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
In mighty current; theirs, too, in the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer tone; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice;--the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unpleasing to sick hearts
And idle spirits:—there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day,
Rests his substantial orb;—between those heights
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there:—alone
Here do I sit and watch.—"

A fall of voices,
Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
Had scarcely closed this high-sounding strain of
rapture
Ere with invading smile the Wanderer said:
"Now for the tale with which you threatened us!"
"In truth the threat escaped me unawares:
Should the tale tire you, let this challenge stand
For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
As to your eyes and thoughts we must have seemed
When ye looked down upon us from the crag,
Islanders mid a stormy mountain sea,
We are not so—perpetually we touch
Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world;
And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
Relinquished, lived dependent for his bread
Upon the laws of public charity.

The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
As might from that occasion be distilled,
Opened, as she before had done for me,
Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner;
The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
Which appetite required—a blind dull mock
Such as she had, the kines of his rest!
This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
Ill borne in earlier life; but his was now
The still contentedness of seventy years.
Calm did he sit under the wide-spread tree
Of his old age; and yet less calm and meek,
Winnily meek or venerably calm,
Than slow and torpid; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were,
For spendthrift feasts, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old Man, for I pitied him!
A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes;
Mild, inoffensive, ready in his way.
And helpful to his utmost power; and there
Our housewife knew full well what she possessed!
He was her vassal of all labour, tilled
Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine;
And, one among the orderly array
Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
Maintained his place; or heedfully pursued
His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child
Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that performed
Substantial service. Mark me now, and learn
For what reward!—The moon her monthly round
Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—
Voice to a rueful treble humanized,
And features in deportable dismay.
I treat the matter lightly, but, alas!
It is most serious: persevering rain
Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain tops
Were hidden, and black vapours coursed their sides;
This had I seen, and saw; but, till she spoke,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
Who at her bidding, early and alone,
Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland turf
For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.
'Inhuman!'—said I, 'was an old Man's life
Not worth the trouble of a thought!—alas!
This notice comes too late.' With joy I saw
Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
We saluted forth together; found the tents
Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower,
And fears for our own safety drove us home.

I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
The moment I was seated here alone,
Honour my little cell with some few tears
Which anger and resentment could not dry.
All night the storm endured; and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,
With morning we renewed our quest; the wind
Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain:
'Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin—almost without walls
And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
The penants of these lonely valleys used
To meet for worship on that central height)—
We there espied the object of our search,
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
To battle, as he might, the watery storm;
And there we found him breathing peaceably,
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.

So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen.
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendor—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terraces upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!

By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecey folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—I
Saw not, but I felt that it was there,
That which I see was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude; my heart
Swelled in my breast.—'I have been dead,' I cried,
'And now I live! Oh! wherefore do I live?'
And with that pang I prayed to be no more!—
—but I forget our Charge, as utterly
I then forgot him: there I stood and gazed:
The apparition faded not away,
And I descended.

Having reached the house,
I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
And in serene possession of himself,
Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam
Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.
Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
Was glad to find her conscience set at ease;
And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life.
But, though he seemed at first to have received
No harm, and uncomplaining as before
Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
Soon showed itself: he lingered three short weeks;
And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.
DESPONDENCY.

ARGUMENT.

Images in the Valley.—Another Recess in it entered and described.—Wanderer’s sensations.—Solitary’s excited by the same objects.—Contrast between these.—Despondency of the Solitary gently reprieved.—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary’s past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length.—His domestic felicity.—Afflictions.—Dejection.—Roused by the French Revolution.—Disappointment and disgust.—Voyage to America.—Disappointment and disgust pursue him.—His return.—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage-threshold we had passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the conceave of a blue
And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our Host,
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gathered,—” Ye have left my cell,—but see
How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you —how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight?”
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed;
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired Friend

My grey-haired Friend said courteously—” Nay, nay,
You have regaled us as a hermit ought;
Now let us forth into the sun!”—Our Host
Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

From which she draws her meagre sustenance.
Where in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source;
Fleeble it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot (herbs,
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness.”—A quick turn
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
Proved that such hope was vain:—for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused
O’er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred;—And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detained?
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicircle of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoined, a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth:
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun,
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered. But no breeze did now
Find entrance:—high or low appeared no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

"Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!"—Praise to this effect
Broke from the happy old Man's reverend lip;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
"In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have deceived the wealth which is your own.
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heartless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birth-place! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
That in these show a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of Man,
But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.
—Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
With timid lapse;—and lo! while in this strait
I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through; but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide;
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might
tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.
—Hail Contemplation! from the stately towers,
Reared by the industrious hand of human art
To lift thee high above the misty air
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast;
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
To which thou mayst resort for holier peace,—
From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead;
Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity!"

A pause ensued; and with minuter care
We scanned the various features of the scene:
And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
With courteous voice thus spake—
"I should have grieved
Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,
If from my poor retirement ye had gone
Leaving this nook unvisited: but, in sooth,
Your unexpected presence had so roused
My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise;
And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say!—disdained, the game that lurks
At my own door. The shapes before our eyes
And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed
The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unchewn stone,
From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the name
Of Pompey's pillar; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
And her blind helper Chance, do then suffice
To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge Pile (from some abyss
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round
Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high
Above the sandy desert, in the sight
Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say
That an appearance which hath raised your minds
To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me
Fraught rather with depression than delight,
Though shame it were, could I not look around,
By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier in my judgment, even than you
With your bright transports fairly may be deemed
The wandering Herbalist,—who, clear alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
Upon these uncouth Forms a slight regard
Of transitory interest, and peeps round
For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won:
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound
By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
Departs, intent upon his onward quest—
Nor is that Fellow-traveler, so deem I,
Less to be envied, you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left
Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank
Heaven!
This covert book reports not of his hand
He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature
With her first growths, detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barbarous name,
And hurried on; or from the fragments picks
His specimen, if but haply interveined
With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before!
Intrusted safely each to his pursuit,
Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
Range; if it please them, speed from elms to elms;
The mind is full—and free from pain their pastime.

"Then," said I, interposing, "One is near,
Who cannot but possess in your esteem
Place worthier still of envy. May I name
Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy!
Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
Him, as we entered from the open glen,
You might have noticed, busily engaged,
Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
Raised for enabling this penurious stream
To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
For his delight—the happiest he of all!"

"Far happiest," answered the desponding Man,
"If, such as now he is, he might remain!
Ah! what avails imagination high
Or question deep! what profits all that earth,
Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put forth
Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
Far as she finds a yielding element
In past or future; far as she can go
Through time or space—if neither in the one,
Nor in the other region, nor in aught
That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
Words of assurance can be heard; if nowhere
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave!"

"Is this," the grey-haired Wanderer mildly said,
"The voice, which we so lately overheard,
To that same child, addressing tenderly
The consolations of a hopeful mind?
'His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.'
These were your words; and, verily, methinks
Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar."—
The Other, not displeased,
Promptly replied—"My notion is the same.
And I, without reluctance, could decline
All act of inquisition whence we rise,
And what, when breath hath ceased, we may be-

Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
Our origin, what matters it! In lack
Of worthier explanation, say at once
With the American (a thought which suits
The place where now we stand) that certain men
Leapt out together from a rocky cave;
And these were the first parents of mankind:
Or, if a different image be recalled
By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
Of insects chirping out their careless lives
On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
As sound—blithe race! whose mantles were bedecked
With golden grasshoppers, in sign that they
Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from the soil
Whereon their endless generations dwelt.
But stop!—these theoretic fancies jar
On serious minds: then, as the Hindoos draw
Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount,
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
That our existence winds her stately course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed,
Like Niger, in impenetrable sands
And utter darkness: thought which may be faced,
Though comfortless!—
Not of myself I speak;
Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,
By philosophic discipline prepared
For calm subjection to acknowledged law;
Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
Such palms I boast not;—no! to me, who find,
Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
(Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
That scarcely seem to have belonged to me)
If I must take my choice between the pair
That rule alternately the weary hours,
Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking; death than sleep:
Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
Though under covert of the wormy ground!

Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
That in more genial times, when I was free
To explore the destiny of human kind
(Not as an intellectual game pursued
With curious subtlety, from wish to cheat
Irksome sensations; but by love of truth
Urged on, or haply by intense delight
In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed)
I did not rank with those (too dull or nice,
For to my judgment such they then appeared,
Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
An object whereunto their souls are tied
In discontented wedlock; nor did ever,
From me, those dark impervious shades, that hang
Upon the region whither we are bound,
Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
On wings, angelic Spirits! I could muse
O'er what from eldest time we have been told
Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
And with the imagination rest content,
Not wishing more; repining not to tread
The little sinuous path of earthly care,
By flowers embellished, and by springs refreshed.
—'Tis Blow winds of autumn!—let your chilling breath
Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
The shady forest of its green attire,—
And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
'The gentle brooks!—Your desolating sway,
'Sheds,' I exclaimed, 'no sadness upon me,
And no disorder in your rage I find.
'That dignity, what beauty, in this change
From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
Alternate and revolving! How benign,
How rich in animation and delight,
How bountiful these elements—compared
With aught, as more desirable and fair,
Devised by fancy for the golden age;
Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
In Arcady, beneath unaltered skies,
'Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
Night hushed as night, and day serene as day!'—
But why this tedious record!—Age, we know,
Is gargulous; and solitude is apt
To anticipate the privilege of Age.
From far ye come; and surely with a hope
Of better entertainment:—let us hence!'

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more loth
To be diverted from our present theme,
I said, 'My thoughts, agree ing, Sir, with yours,
Would push this censure farther;—for, if smiles
Of scornful pity be the just reward
Of Poesy thus courteously employed
In framing models to improve the scheme
Of Man's existence, and recast the world,
Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull!
Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts
Establish sounder titles of esteem
For her, who (all too timid and reserved
For onset, for resistance too inert,
Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
Placed, among flowery gardens curtained round
With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,'
I cried, 'more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of stern quiet, closed
The Stoic's heart against the vain approach
Of admiration, and all sense of joy!'

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
Accorded little with his present mind;
I ceased, and he resumed,—'Ah! gentle Sir,
Slight, if you will, the means; but spare to slight
The end of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear; and cherished peaceful days
For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief good,
And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
Through a long course of later ages, drove,
The hermit to his cell in forest wide;
Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
Fast anchored in the desert!—Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
And unavenged, defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
Love with despair, or grief in agony;—
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed
For independent happiness, craving peace,
The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
But for its absolute self; a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear;
That hath been, is, and shall be evermore!—
Such the reward he sought; and wrought life,
There, where on few external things his heart
Was set, and those his own; or, if not his,
Subsisting under nature's stedfast law.

What other yearning was the master tie
Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Afrail, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship!—What but this,
The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:
The life where hope and memory are as one;
Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
Save by the simplest toil of human hands
Or seasons' difference; the immortal Soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation in that quietness!—
Such was their scheme: and though the wished for end
By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained
By none, they for the attempt, and pains employed,
Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
From the unqualified disdain, that once
Would have been cast upon them by my voice
 Delivering her decisions from the seat
Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
To overweening faith; and is inflamed,
By courage, to demand from real life
The test of act and suffering, to provoke
Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
That mine was a condition which required
Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
Without vicissitude; which, if the like
Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
I might have even been tempted to despise.
But no—for the serene was also bright;
Enkindled happiness with joy o'erflowing,
With joy, and—oh! that memory should survive
To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's boon,
Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign;
Abused, as all possessions are abused
That are not prized according to their worth.
And yet, what worth! what good is given to men,
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven!
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?—
None! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
In solitude: and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake:—This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat;
And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
Of this same life, compelling us to grieve
That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
Oh! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
A course of days composing happy months,
And they as happy years; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope:
For Mutability is Nature's bane;
And slighted Hope will be avenged; and, when
Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not;
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony!!

This was the bitter language of the heart:
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
Though decomposed and vehement, were such
As skill and graceful nature might suggest
To a proficient of the tragic scene
Standing before the multitude, beset
With dark events. Desirous to divert
Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
We signified a wish to leave that place
Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
That seemed for self-examination made;
Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
Hidden from all men's view. To our attempt
He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
And on that couch inviting us to rest,
Full on that tender-hearted Man he turned
A serious eye, and his speech thus renewed.

"You never saw, your eyes did never look
On the bright form of Her whom once I loved:—
Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you; else, honoured Friend!
Your heart had borne a pitiable share
Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
That I remember, and can weep no more.—
Striped as I am of all the golden fruit
Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assailed;
Yet would I not be of such wintry barrenness
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches,—lively thoughts
Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue
Too much of frailty hath already dropped;
But that too much demands still more.

You know,
Revered Compatriot,—and to you, kind Sir,
(Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come
Following the guidance of these welcome feet
To our secluded vale) it may be told—
That my demerits did not sue in vain
To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair
Bride—
In the devotedness of youthful love,
Preferring me to parents, and the choir
Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights
(Resolved with sadness gently weighing down
Her trembling expectations, but no more
Than did to her due honour, and to me
Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
Where the salt sea innocously breaks,
And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
On Devon’s leafy shores;—a sheltered hold,
In a soft clime encouraging the soil
To a luxuriant bounty!—As our steps
Approach the embowered abode,—our chosen seat—
See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,
The uncendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
Before the threshold stands to welcome us!
While, in the flowering myrtle’s neighbourhood,
Not overlooked but courting no regard,
Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
Gave modest inclination to the mind
How willingly their aid they would unite
With the green myrtle, to endear the hours
Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
—Wild were the walks upon those lonely Downs,
Track leading into track; how marked, how worn
Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse,
Winding away its never ending line
On their smooth surface, evidence was none:
But, there, lay open to our daily haunt,
A range of unappropriated earth,
Where youth’s ambitious feet might move at large;
Whence, unmolested wanderers, we behold
The shining giver of the day diffuse
His brightness o’er a tract of sea and land
Gay as our spirits, free as our desires;
As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those heights
We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan copses;
Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
‘That all the grove and all the day was ours.’

O happy time! still happier was at hand;
For Nature called my Partner to resign
Her share in the pure freedom of that life,
Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
To my heart’s wish, my tender Mate became
The thankful captive of maternal bonds;
And those wild paths were left to me alone.
There could I meditate on follies past;
And, like a weary voyager escaped
From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt,
And self-indulgence,—without shame pursued.
There, undisturbed, could think of and could thank
Her whose submissive spirit was to me
Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
That earthly Providence, whose guiding love
Within a port of rest had lodged me safe;
Safe from temptation, and from danger far!
Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed
To an Authority enthroned above
The reach of sight; from whom, as from their
source,
Proceed all visible ministers of good
That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared!
These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
And spirit—interrupted and relieved
By observations transient as the glance
Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup
DESPOENCY.

It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—
Endeared my wanderings; and the mother’s kiss
And infant’s smile awaited my return.

In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
Companions daily, often all day long;
Not placed by fortune within easy reach
Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
Beyond the allowance of our own fire-side,
The twin within our happy cottage home,
Inmates, and heirs of our united love;
Grace mutually by difference of sex,
And with no wider interval of time
Between their several births than served for one
To establish something of a leader’s sway;
Yet left them joined by sympathy in age;
Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
On these two pillars reared as in air
Our solitude.

It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my words
Attentive audience. But, oh! gentle Friends,
As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
Give back faint echo from the historian’s page;
So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,
Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice
Which those most blissful days reverberate.
What special record can, or need, be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
But all within the sphere of little things;
Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
And precious interests! Smoothly did our life
Advance, swerving not from the path prescribed;
Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
The worst effects that our condition saw
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
And in their progress imperceptible;
Not wished for; sometimes noticed with a sigh,
(Whate’er of good or lovely they might bring)
Signs of regret, for the familiar good
And loneliness endeared which they removed.

Seven years of occupation undisturbed
Established seemingly a right to hold
That happiness; and use and habit gave
To what an alien spirit had acquired
A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
I lived and breathed; most grateful—if to enjoy
Without repining or desire for more,
For different lot, or change to higher sphere,
(Only except some impulses of pride
With no determined object, though upheld
By theories with suitable support)—
Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
Be proof of gratitude for what we have;
Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
From some dark seat of fatal power was urged
A claim that shattered all—Our blooming girl,
Caught in the grip of death, with such brief time
To struggle in as scarcely would allow
Her cheek to change its colour, was conveyed
From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions
Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
Of living man, though longing to pursue.
—With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
With what short interval of time between,
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
Our happy life’s only remaining stay—
The brother followed; and was seen no more!

Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blew fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
The Mother now remained; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
This second visitation had no power
To shake; but only to bind up and seal;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven’s determinations, ever just.
The eminence wherein her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense
The space that severed us! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven’s ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far
(And that is intercourse, and union, too!)
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss.—O heavy change!
Dimness o’er this clear luminary crept
Insensibly;—the immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflex; her pure glory,
As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,
Yet obstinately cherishing itself:
And, so consumed, she melted from my arms;
And left me, on this earth, disconsolate!

What followed cannot be reviewed in thought;
Much less, retracted in words. If she, of life
Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,
Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
Infirm, dependent, and now destitute!
I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
That which is veiled from waking thought;
Enchanted
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer; to the grave I quake
Imploredly;—looked up, and asked the Heavens
If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
Of the departed spirit—what shade
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed; and life was put
To inquisition, long and profitless!
By pain of heart—now checked—and now impelled—
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way!
And from those transports, and those toils abstruse,
Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost;—existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found.

From that abstraction I was roused,—and how!
Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For, lo! the dread Bastile,
With all the chambers in its horrid towers,
Fell to the ground;—by violence overthrown
Of indignation; and with shouts that drowned
The crash it made in falling! From the wreck
A golden palmce rose, or seemed to rise,
The appointed seat of equitable law
And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
I felt: the transformation I perceived,
As marvellously seized as in that moment
When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
Glory—beyond all glory ever seen,
Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
In every grove were ringing, 'War shall cease;

Thus was I reconverted to the world;
Society became my glittering bride,
And airy hopes my children.—From the depths
Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused herself in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things;
As they exist, in mutable array,
Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air
Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
I left not uninvoked; and, in still groves,
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
Of thanks and expectation, in accord
With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
Returned,—a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind:
—With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem:
I felt their invitation; and resumed
A long-suspended office in the House
Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy;
The admiration winning of the crowd;
The help desiring of the pure devout.

Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed!
But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell
How rapidly the zealots of the cause
Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared;
Some, tired of honest service; these, outdone,
Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
And the more faithful were compelled to exclaim,
As Brutus did to Virtue, ' Liberty,

'Such recantation had for me no charm,
Nor would I bend to it; who should have grieved
At aught, however fair, that bore the mien
Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
Why then conceal, that, when the simply good
In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
Other support, not scrupulous whence it came;
And, by what compromise it stood, not nice!
DESPONDENCY.

Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched, and qualities determined.—Among men so charactereed did I maintain a strife hopeful, and still more hopeful every hour; but, in the process, I began to feel that, if the emancipation of the world were missed, I should at least secure my own, and be in part compensated. For rights, widely—inevitably usurped upon, I spake with vehement; and promptly seized all that Abstraction furnished for my needs or purposes; nor scrupled to proclaim, and propagate, by liberty of life, those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced, or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course, for its own sake; but farthest from the walk which I had trod in happiness and peace, was most inviting to a troubled mind; that, in a struggling and distempered world, saw a seductive image of herself. Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man is still the sport! Here Nature was my guide, the Nature of the dissolute; but thee, O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled at others’ tears in pity; and in scorn at those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew from my unguarded heart. The tranquil shores of Britain circumscribed me; else, perhaps I might have been entangled among deeds, which, now, as infamous, I should abhor—despise, as senseless: for my spirit relished strangely the exasperation of that land, which turned an angry beak against the down of her own breast; confounded into hope of disencumbering thus her fretful wings.

But all was quiet by iron bonds of military sway. The shifting aims, the moral interests, the creative might, the varied functions and high attributes of civil action, yielded to a power formal, and odious, and contemptible. In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change; the weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced; and, from the impulse of a just disdain, once more did I retire into myself. There feeling no contentment, I resolved to fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore, remote from Europe; from her blasted hopes; her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

Fresh blew the wind, when o’er the Atlantic Main the ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew; and who among them but an Exile, freed from discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit among the busy-employed, not more with obligation charged, with service taxed, than the loose pendant—to the idle wind. Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye powers of soul and sense mysteriously allied, O, never let the Wretched, if a choice be left him, trust the freight of his distress to a long voyage on the silent deep! For, like a plague, will memory break out; and, in the blank and solitude of things, upon his spirit, with a fever’s strength will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have felt who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips the vengeful Furies. Beautiful regards were turned on me—the face of her I loved; the Wife and Mother pitifully fixing tender reproaches, insupportable! Where now that boasted liberty? No welcome from unknown objects I received; and those, known and familiar, which the vaulted sky did, in the placid clearness of the night, disclose, had accusations to prefer against my peace. Within the cabin stood that volume—as a compass for the soul—revered among the nations. I implored its guidance; but the infallible support of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused to one by storms annoyed and adverse winds? Perplexed with currents; of his weakness sick; of vain endeavours tired; and by his own, and by his nature’s ignorance, dismayed!

Long-wished-for sight, the Western World appeared; and, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore indignantly—resolved to be a man, who, having o’er the past no power, would live no longer in subjection to the past, with abject mind—from a tyrannic lord inviting penance, fruitlessly endured: so, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared some boundary, which his followers may not cross in prosecution of their deadly chase, resuming I looked round. How bright the sun, the breeze how soft! Can any thing produced in the old world compare, thought I, for power and majesty with this gigantic stream; sprung from the desert! And behold a city fresh, youthful, and aspiring! What are those to me, or to them! As much at least as he desires that they should be, whom winds and waves have wafted to this distant shore, in the condition of a damaged seed.
Pouring above his head its radiance down
Upon a living and rejoicing world!

So, westward, to'rd the unviolated woods
I bent my way; and, roaming far and wide,
Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird;
And, while the melancholy Muecaswiss
(The sportive bird’s companion in the grove)
Repeated, o’er and o’er, his plaintive cry,
I sympathised at leisure with the sound;
But that pure archetype of human greatness,
I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
A creature, squalid, venegful, and impure;
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

Enough is told! Here am I—ye have heard
What evidence I seek, and pain’d seek;
What from my fellow-beings I require,
And either they have not to give, or I
Lack virtue to receive; what I myself,
Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost.
Nor can regain. How languidly I look
Upon this visible fabric of the world,
May be divined—perhaps it hath been said:—
But spare your pity, if there be in me
Aught that deserves respect: for I exist,
Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenour
Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
Whoe’er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
In some still passage of its course, and seen,
Within the depths of its capacious breast,
Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky;
And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
And conglomated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars; that, by their onward lapse,
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
A softened roar, or murmure; and the sound
Though soothing, and the little floating isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
With the same pensive office; and make known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath passed; and quickly,
That respite o’er, like traverson and toils
Must he again encounter.—Such a stream
Is human Life; and so the Spirit fares
In the best quiet to her course allowed;
And such is mine,—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach
The unfathomable gulf, where all is still!“
BOOK FOURTH.

DESpondency Corrected.

ARGUMENT.
State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative.—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction—Wanderer’s ejaculation—Acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith—Hence immoderate sorrow—Exhortation—How received—Wanderer applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary’s mind—Disappointment from the French Revolution—States grounds of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions—Knowledge the source of tranquillity—Rural Solitude favourable to knowledge of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended; exhortation to bodily exertion and communion with Nature—Mortal Solitude pitiable—Superstition better than apathy—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society—The various modes of Religion prevented it—Illustrated in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief—Solitary interposes—Wanderer points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humane ranks of society, illustrated from present and past times—These principles tend to recall exploded superstitions and popery—Wanderer rebate this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous littleness of certain modern Philosophers.—Recommends other lights and guides—Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself; Solitary asks how—Reply—Personal appeal—Exhortation to activity of body renewed—How to commune with Nature—Wanderer concludes with a legitimate union of the Imagination, affections, understanding, and reason—Effect of his discourse—Evening: Return to the Cottage.

Here closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
In pain commenced, and ended without peace:
Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains
Of native feeling, grateful to our minds;
And yielding surely some relief to his,
While we sat listening with compassion due.
A pause of silence followed; then, with voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved,
The Wanderer said:—

“One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only; an assured belief
That the processions of our fate, however
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish for not where the seat

Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme
For time and for eternity; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonour of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world!
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine!”

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven:—“How beautiful this dome of sky;
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful! Shall the Soul,
Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these?—Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice:
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness!
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for thy presence: therefore, am I bound
To worship, here, and every where—as one
Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace
The particle divine remained unquenched;
And, ’mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
From paradise transplanted: wintry age
Impends; the frost will gather round my heart;
If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead!

—Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
Perpetual sabbath; come, disease and want;
And sad exclusion through decay of sense;
But leave me unblasted trust in thee—
And let thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things—
Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content!”
And what are things eternal!—powers depart,"
The grey-haired Wanderer stedfastly replied,
Answering the question which himself had asked,
"Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat:
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists;—immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms,
Which an abstract intelligence supplies;
Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.
Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
Do, with united urgency, require,
What more that may not perish!—Thou, dread source,
Prime, self-existing cause and end of all
That in the scale of being fill their place;
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained:—thou, who didst wrap the cloud
Of infancy around us, that thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity awhile
Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed;
Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense
And reason's stedfast rule—thou, thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
Which thou includest, as the sea her waves:
For adoration thou endure'st; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will;
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!
This universe shall pass away—a work
Glorious! because the shadow of thy might,
A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
No more shall stray where meditation leads,
By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
Loved haunts like these; the unimprisoned Mind
May yet have scope to range among her own,
Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
Still, it may be allowed me to remember
What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
The sun rise up, from distant climes returned
Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring the day
His bounteous gift! or saw him toward the deep
Sink, with a reitme of flaming clouds
Attended; then, my spirit was entranced

With joy exalted to beatitude;
The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

Those fervent raptures are for ever flown;
And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
Change manifold, for better or for worse:
Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags,
Through sinful choice; or dread necessity
On human nature from above imposed.
'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise; but, to converse with heaven—
This is not easy:—to relinquish all
We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
And stand in freedom loosed from this world,
I deem not arduous; but must needs confess
That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
Conceptions equal to the soul's desires;
And the most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
—Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic energy from earth
Rises; but, having reached the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
From this infirmity of mortal kind
Sorrow proceedes, which else were not; at least,
If grief be something hallowed and ordained,
If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,
Is it enabled to maintain its hold
In that excess which conscience disapproves.
For who could sink and settle to that point
Of selfishness; so senseless who could be
As long and perseveringly to mourn
For any object of his love, removed
From this unstable world, if he could fix
A satisfying view upon that state
Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,
Which reason promises, and holy writ
Ensures to all believers!—Yet mistrust
Is of such incapacity, methinks,
No natural branch; despondency far less;
And, least of all, is absolute despair.
—And, if there be whose tender frames have drooped
Even to the dust; apparently, through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
An agonizing sorrow to transmute;
Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld
When wanted most; a confidence impaired
So pitably, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
To realize the vision, with intense
And over-constant yearning;—there—there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To ecstasy; and, all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires.
I, speaking now from such disorder free,
Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts:
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,
That finds no limits but her own pure will.

Here then we rest; not fearing for our creed
The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
To unsettle or perplex it: yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
That, though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas! the endowment of immortal power
Is matched unequally with custom, time,
And dominoing faculties of sense
In all: in most with superadded foes,
Idle temptations; open vanities,
Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world;
And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains!—To seek
Those helps for his occasions ever near
Who lacks not will to use them; vows, renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought;
Vigils of contemplation; praise; and prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law

Of conscience—conscience reverence and obeyed,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.
—Endeavour thus to live; these rules regard;
These helps solicit: and a steadfast seat
Shall then be yours among the happy few
Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away;
With only such degree of sadness left
As may support longings of pure desire;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave."

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage
Poured forth his aspirations, and announced
His judgments, near that lonely house we paced
A plot of green-award, seemingly preserved
By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
And from encroachment of encircling heath:
Small space! but, for reiterated steps,
Smooth and commodious; as a stately deck
Which to and fro the mariner is used
To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
Stillness prevailed around us: and the voice
That spake was capable to lift the soul
Toward regions yet more tranquil. But, methought,
That he, whose fixed despondency had given
Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
Was less upraised in spirit than abashed;
Shrinking from admonition, like a man
Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
The Sage continued:—

"For that other loss,
The loss of confidence in social man,
By the unexpected transports of our age
Carried so high, that every thought, which looked
Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause
Could e'er for such exalted confidence
Exist; so, none is now for fixed despair:
The two extremes are equally disowned
By reason: if, with sharp recoil, from one
You have been driven far as its opposite,
Between them seek the point whereon to build
Sound expectations. So doth he advise
Who shared at first the illusion; but was soon
Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields;
Nor unreproved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world:

"Vain-glory! what new powers
On you your progenitors, what gifts, withheld
Fit recompense of new desert! what claim
Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
For you should undergo a sudden change;
And the weak functions of one busy day,
Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
What all the slowly-moving years of time,
With their united force, have left undone!
By nature's gradual processes be taught;
By story be confounded! Ye aspire
Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit,
Which, to your overweening spirits, yields
Hope of a flight celestial, will produce
Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
Shall not the less, though late, be justified."

Such timely warning," said the Wanderer, "gave
That visionary voice; and, at this day,
When a Tartarian darkness overspreads
The groaning nations; when the impious rule,
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies; more strict
Affiance in each other; faith more firm
In their unshallowed principles; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsol'd, I wait—in hope
To see the moment, when the righteous cause
Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her; in which Virtue
Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights; aspiring
By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
That spirit only can redeem mankind;
And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
Then shall our triumph be complete as theirs.
Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise
Have still the keeping of their proper peace;
Are guardians of their own tranquility.
They act, or they recede, observe, and feel;
Knowing the heart of man is set to be
The centre of this world, about the which
Those revolutions of disturbances
Still roll; where all the aspects of misery
Predominate; whose strong effects are such
As he must bear, being powerless to redress;
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man!"*

Happy is he who lives to understand,
Not human nature only, but explores
All natures,—to the end that he may find
The law that governs each; and where begins
The union, the partition where, that makes
Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;
The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things;
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man,
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love;
For knowledge is delight; and such delight
Breeds love; yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore;
If that be not indeed the highest love!"

"Yes," said I, tempted here to interpose,
"The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart; and he
Is a still happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unft, descends;
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,
As individual objects of regard,
Upon his care, from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean praise of rural life
And solitude, that they do favour most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
These pure sensations; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city; or the barren seas
Are not unft; and much might recommend,
How much they might inspire and endure,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat!"

"Yes," said the Sage, resuming the discourse
Again directed to his downcast Friend,
"If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
Of man, offended, liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renewed,
To mark their placid state, who never heard

* Daniel.
Of a command which they have power to break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:
These, with a soothed or elevated heart,
May we behold; their knowledge register;
Observe their ways; and, free from envy, find
Complacency there—but wherefore this to you?
I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
Into a 'feathery bunch,' feeds at your hand:
A box, perchance, is from your easement hung
For the small wren to build in—not in vain,
The barriers disregarding that surround
This deep abiding place, before your sight.
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly; and soars,
Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers,
Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,
When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
This shaded valley leaves; and leaves the dark
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
A proud communication with the sun.
Low sunk beneath the horizon!—List!—I heard,
From you huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth
As if the visible mountain made the cry.
Again!"—The effect upon the soul was such
As he expressed: from the mountain's heart
The solemn voice appeared to issue, stanting
The blank air—for the region all around
Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
Save for that single ery, the unanswer'd blear
Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,
The plaintive spirit of the solitude!
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in such place
Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
But soon his thoughts returned upon themselves,
And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.

"Ah! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
Too easily, despise or overlook
The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void—but there
The little flower her vanity shall check;
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride!

These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome walk
In the cold ground; and to the emmet gives
Her foresight, and intelligence that makes
The tiny creatures strong by social league;
Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
Their labour, covered, as a lake with waves;
Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of life.
Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
Creatures that in communities exist,
Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beam,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy!
More obviously the self-same influence rules
The feathered kinds; the fieldfare's pensive flock,
The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
Hovering above these inland solitudes,
By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
Up through the trenches of the long-drawn vales
Their voyage was begun; nor is its power
Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
That seek you pool, and there prolong their stay
In silent congress; or together roused
Take flight; while with their clang the air resounds.
And, over all, in that ethereal vault,
Is the mute company of changeable clouds;
Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm;
The mild assemblage of the starry heavens;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord!

How beautiful is Nature! he shall find
Who seeks not; and to him, who hath not asked,
Large measure shall be dealt. Three sabbath-days
Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights;
And what a marvellous and heavenly show
Was suddenly revealed!—the swains moved on,
And heeded not: you lingered, you perceived
And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
There is a luxury in self-dispraise;
And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
You judge unhappily: distempered nerves
Infest the thoughts: the languor of the frame
Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell;
Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from heaven
Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a watch
Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
Dully reflected in a lonely pool.

Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
That run not parallel to nature's course.
Rise with the lark! your matins shall obtain
Grace, be their composition what it may,
If but with these performed; climb once again,
Climb every day, those ramparts; meet the breeze
Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
That from your garden thither soars, to feed
On new-blown heath; let you commanding rock
Be your frequent watch-tower; roll the stone
In thunder down the mountains; with all your might
Chase the wild goat; and if the bold red deer
Fly to those harbours, driven by hound and horn
Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit;
So, wearied to your heart shall you return,
And sink at evening into sound repose."

The Solitary lifted toward the hills
A kindling eye;—accordant feelings rushed
Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth:
"Oh! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
To have a body (this our vital frame
With shrinking sensibility imbued,
And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
And to the elements surrender it
As if it were a spirit!—How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untired faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies;
And haps sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,

"Rage on ye elements! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
With this commotion (ruminous though it be)
From day to night, from night to day, prolonged!"

"Yes," said the Wanderer, taking from my lips
The strain of transport, "whoso'er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught to own
The tranquilizing power of time, shall wake,
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the sports which once be glorified in.

Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry's hills,
The streams far distant of your native glens;
Yet is their form and image here expressed
With brotherly resemblance. Turn your steps
Wherever fancy leads; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the same
As those with which your soul in youth was moved,
But by the great Artificer endowed
With no inferior power. You dwell alone;
You walk, you live, you speculate alone;
Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
With no incurious eye; and books are yours,
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
Preserved from age to age; more precious far
Than that accumulated store of gold
And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.
These hoards of truth you can unlock at will:
And music waits upon your skilful touch,
Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these
heights
Hears, and forgets his purpose;—furnished thus,
How can you droop, if willing to be upraised?

A piteous lot it were to flee from Man—
Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed
And unenlivened; who exists whole years
Apart from benefits received or done
'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd;
Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
Of a quick fancy, and an active heart,
That, for the day's consumption, books may yield
Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct.
His morbid humour, with delight supplied
Or solace, varying as the seasons change.
—Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts of ease
And easy contemplation; gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades
And shady groves in studied contrast—each,
For recreation, leading into each:
These may be range, if willing to partake
Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
And course of service Truth requires from those
Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of nature stirring in his soul,
Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse ‘the dreadful appetite of death’?
If tired with systems, each in its degree
Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
Let him build systems of his own, and smile
At the fond work, demolished with a touch;
If unreligious, let him be at once
Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
A pupil in the many-chambered school,
Where superstition weaves her airy dreams.

Life’s autumn past, I stand on winter’s verge;
And daily lose what I desire to keep;
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditional sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch: and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies crossed my way:—
To this would rather bend than see and hear
The repetitions wearisome of sense,
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;
Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
On outward things, with formal inference ends;
Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research;
Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat
Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell,
On its own axis restlessly revolving,
Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth.

Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe’er he moved,
Alone or mates, solitude was not.
He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and Angels to his sight appeared
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
With winged Messengers; who daily brought
To his small island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure heights
(Whether of actual vision, sensible
To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
Communications spiritually maintained,
And intuitions moral and divine)
Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned
That flowing years repealed not: and distress
And grief spread wide; but Man escaped the doom
Of destitution;—solitude was not.
—Jehovah—shapeless Power above all Powers,
Single and one, the omnipresent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven;
On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark;
Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
Between the Cherubim—on the chosen Race
Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
Judgments, that filled the land from age to age
With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear;
And with amazement smote;—thereby to assert
His scorned, or unacknowledged, sovereignty.
And when the One, ineffable of name,
Of nature indivisible, withdrew
From mortal adoration or regard,
Not then was Deity engulfed; nor Man,
The rational creature, left, to feel the weight
Of his own reason, without sense or thought
Of higher reason and a purer will,
To benefit and bless, through mightier power:—
Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
And roofs of temples built by human hands—
To loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,
Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
A sensitive existence, and a God,
With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise:
Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
For influence undefined a personal shape;
And, from the plain, with toil immense, upreared
Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest; upon that height
Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook
Winding Euphrates, and the city vast.
The Excursion.

Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretch'd,
With grove and field and garden interspers'd;
Their town, and fooleful region for support
Against the pressure of beguiling war.

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Look'd on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye. The planetary Five
With a submissive reverence they beheld;
Watch'd, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
—The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
In set rotation passing to and fro,
Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorned
With answering constellations, under earth,
Removed from all approach of living sight
But present to the dead; who, so they deemed,
Like those celestial messengers beheld
All accidents, and judged were of all.

The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
Under a cope of sky more variable,
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigiously brought,
From the surrounding countries, at the choice
Of all adventurers. With univailed skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of art, this palpable array of sense,
On every side encountered; in despite
Of all the gross fictions chant'd in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a spirit hung,
Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplify'd by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed

And armed warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.
—"Tako, running river, take these locks of mine"—
Thus would the Votary say—this severed hair,
"My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my beloved child's return.
Thy banks, Cepheus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the crystal lympht
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields!"—
And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired;
That hath been, is, and where it was and is
There shall endure,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays;
And countless generations of mankind
Depart; and leave no vestige where they trod.

We live by admiration, hope, and love;
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.
But what is error?—"Answer he who can!"
The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed:
"Love, hope, and admiration—are they not
Mad Fancy's favourite vessels? Does not Fancy
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,
Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
Imagination's light when reason's fails,
The unguarded taper where the guarded faints?
—Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
What error is; and, of our errors, which
Both most debase the mind: the genuine seats
Of power, where are they? Who shall regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?"

"Methinks," persuasively the Sage replied,
"That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
To dignify the humblest state.—Your voice
Hath, in my hearing, often testified
That poor men's children, they, and they alone,
By their condition taught, can understand
The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
How feelingly religion may be learned
In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din
Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
At every moment—and, with strength, increase
Of fury; or, while snow is at the door,
Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
Fearful; but resignation tempers fear,
And piety is sweet to infant minds.
—The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine carves,
On the green turf, a dial—to divide
The silent hours; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
Throughout a long and lonely summer’s day
His round of pastoral duties, is not left
With less intelligence for moral things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
Experience daily fixing his regards
On nature’s wants, he knows how few they are,
And where they lie, how answered and appeared.
This knowledge ample recom pense affords
For manifold privations; he refers
His notions to this standard; on this rock
Rests his desires; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
Imagination—not permitted here
To waste her powers, as in the worldling’s mind,
On spongy pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And praiseworthy to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girdled by a zone
That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
Acknowledges, then, that whether by the side
Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,
Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred
(Take from him what you will upon the score
Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
For noble purposes of mind: his heart
Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
And those illusions, which excite the scorn
Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
Are they not mainly outward ministers
Of inward conscience! with whose service charged
They came and go, appeared and disappear,
Diversifying evil purposes, remorse
Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
Or pride of heart abating: and, whence er
For less important ends those phantoms move,
Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths,
Filling a space, else vacant, to exalt
The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers!

Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
The face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.
—In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer’s day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A bearded Youth, who touched a golden hilt,
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:
And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller
slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fountain, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gilding space, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat’s depending beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamey Deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd’s awe-inspiring God!

The strain was aptly chosen; and I could mark
Its kindly influence, o’er the yielding brow
Of our Companion, gradually diffused;
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
Detains; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaimed:—

"Tis well you speak
At a safe distance from our native land,
And from the mansions where our youth was
taught.
The true descendants of those godly men
Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
That harboured them,—the souls retaining yet
The churchly features of that after-race
Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,
In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
Or what their scruples construed to be such—
How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
Uprooted; would re-consecrate our wells
To good Saint Fillan and to fair Saint Anne;
And from long banishment recall Saint Giles,
To watch again with tutelary love
O'er stately Edinborough crowned on crags!
A blessed restoration, to behold
The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
Once more parading through her crowded streets
Now simply guarded by the sober powers
Of science, and philosophy, and sense!"

This answer followed.—"You have turned my thoughts
Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose
Against idolatry with warlike mind,
And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food;
Why!—for this very reason that they felt,
And did acknowledge, whereas 'er they moved,
A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
But still a high dependence, a divine
Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
That through the desert rang. Though favoured less,
Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.
Beyond their own poor natures and above
They looked; were humbly thankful for the good
Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
Bestowed; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
They fortified with reverence for the Gods;
And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave.

Now, shall our great Discoverers," he exclaimed,
Raising his voice triumphantly, "obtain
From sense and reason less than these obtained,
Though far misled! Shall men for whom our age
Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
To explore the world without and world within,
Be joyless as the blind! Ambitious spirits—
Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
The planets in the hollow of their hand;
And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
Have solved the elements, or analysed
The thinking principle—shall they in fact
Prove a degraded Race! and what awaits
Renown, if their presumption make them such!
Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off yet be unreared;
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnexion dead and spiritless;
And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while littleness
May yet become more little; wages thus
An impious warfare with the very life
Of our own souls!

And if indeed there be
An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
Our dark foundations rest, could he design
That this magnificent effect of power,
The earth we tread, the sky that we behold
By day, and all the pomp which night reveals;
That these—and that superior mystery
Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
And the dread soul within it—should exist
Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
Probed, vexed, and criticised?—Accuse me not
Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,
If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
And offered, far as fruitlet would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men
Swayed by such motives, to such ends employed;
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence;
That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly!

Nor higher place can be assigned to him
And his companions—the laughing Sage of France.—
Crowned was he, if my memory do not err,
With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
And benefits his wisdom had conferred;
His stooping body tottered with wreaths of flowers
Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
Than Spring o’er twines about a mouldering tree;
Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
And most frivolous people. Him I mean
Who penned, to ridicule confiding faith,
This sorry Legend; which by chance we found
Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
Among more innocent rubbish."—Speaking thus,
With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
We had espied the book, he drew it forth;
And courteously, as if the act removed,
At once, all traces from the good Man’s heart
Of unbending aversion or contempt,
Restored it to its owner. "Gentle Friend,"
Hereewith he grasped the Solitary’s hand,
"You have known lights and guides better than these.
Ah! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself,
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
Of passion: whatso’er be felt or feared,
From higher judgment seats make no appeal
To lower: can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
By each new upset notion! In the ports
Of levity no refuge can be found,
No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
He, who by wiltful disesteem of life
And proud insensibility to hope,
Affronte the eye of Solitude, shall learn
That her mild nature can be terrible;
That neither she nor Silence lack the power
To avenge their own insulted majesty.

O blest seclusion! when the mind admits
The law of duty; and can therefore move
Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
Linked in entire composure with her choice;
When youth’s presumptuousness is mollified down,
And manhood’s vain anxiety dismissed;
When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
In sober plenty; when the spirit stoops
To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
Of unregreft enjoyment; and is pleased
To muse, and be saluted by the air
Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights!
Who, when such good can be obtained, would strive
To reconcile his manhood to a couch
Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
For fixed annoyance; and full oft beset
With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,
The vapoury phantoms of futurity!

Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy embrace, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glories as her own,
Yes, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In man’s celestial spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feels
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair.

The Solitary by these words was touched
With manifest emotion, and exclaimed;
"But how begin! and whence!—"The Mind is free—"
Resolve," the haughty Moralist would say,
"This single act is all that we demand."
Alas! such wisdom bids a creature fly
Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
His natural wings!—To friendship let him turn
For succour; but perhaps he sits alone
On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat
That holds but him, and can contain no more!
Religion tells of amity sublime
Which no condition can preclude; of One
Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs:
But is that bounty absolute!—His gifts,
Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service! Can his love extend
To hearts that own not him? Will showers of grace,
When in the sky no promise may be seen,
Fall to refresh a parched and withered land?
Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer’s feet!"

In rueful tone,
With some impatience in his mien, he spake:
Back to my mind rushed all that had been urged
To calm the Sufferer when his story closed;
I looked for counsel as unbending now;
But a discriminating sympathy
Stood to this apt reply:—

"As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned,
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all—
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
Lies open: we have heard from you a voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colours of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the imaginative Will uphold:
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior Faculty that moulds,
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing!

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monody expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought;
Devout above the meaning of your will.
—Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power

Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night’s approach bring down the unclouded sky,
To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here,—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers,—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams: and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the conclave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered!

But descending
From those imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,
ACKNOWLEDGE that to Nature’s humbler power
Your cherished selflessness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
Where on the labours of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
Sprinkled;—be our Companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life;
While, free as air, o’er printless sands we march,
Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
Where living things, and things inanimate,
Do speak, at Heaven’s command, to eye and ear,
And speak to social reason’s inner sense,
With inarticulate language.

For, the Man—
Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no discontent,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down;
A holy tenderness pervades his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks:
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

And further; by contemplating these Forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.
Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms; and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge; and, with the will, confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliary to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burden of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name:
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and insatiate, no more shall hang
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's coercive power.
—So build we up the Being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things,
We shall be wise performce; and, while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
Shall move unwavering, even as if impelled
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul.

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,
Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,
Such as, remote, mid savage wilderness,
An Indian Chief discharges from his breast
Into the hearing of assembled tribes,
In open circle seated round, and hushed
As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak:
The words he uttered shall not pass away
Dispersed, like music that the wind takes up
By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten;
No—they sank into me, the bounteous gift
Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
Gracing his doctrine with authority
Which hostile spirits silently allow;
Of one accustomed to desires that feed
On fruitage gathered from the tree of life;
To hopes on knowledge and experience built;
Of one in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition; whence the Soul,
Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
He had become invisible,—a pomp
Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
Over the mountain sides, in contrast bold
With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest;
A dispensation of his evening power.
—Adown the path that from the glen had led
The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
Were seen descending:—forth to greet them ran
Our little Page: the rustic pair approach;
And in the Matron’s countenance may be read
Plain indication that the words, which told
How that neglected Pensioner was sent
Before his time into a quiet grave,
Had done to her humanity no wrong:
But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
With ostentations zeal.—Along the floor

Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
A grateful couch was spread for our repose;
Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay,
Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by sound
Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

BOOK FIFTH.

THE PASTOR.

ARGUMENT.
Farewell to the Valley—Reflections—A large and populous Vale described.—The Pastor’s Dwelling, and some account of him—Church and Monuments.—The Solitary musings, and where—Roused—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind—Lefty tone of the Wanderer’s discourse of yesterday adverted to—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life—Apology for the Rite—Inconsistency of the best men—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind—General complaint of a falling-off in the value of life after the time of youth—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive—Pastor approaches—Appeal made to him—His answer—Wanderer in sympathy with him—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error.—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose—Pastor consents—Mountain cottage—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard—Graves of unbaptized Infants—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality.

"Farewell, deep Valley, with thy one rude House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attractive seat!
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and day’s pure cheerfulness, but veiled
From human observation, as if yet
Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
Impenetrable shade; once more farewell,
Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
By Nature destined from the birth of things
For quietness profound!"

Upon the side

Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale
Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
Lingerling behind my comrades, thus I breathed
A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
Again I halted with reverted eyes;
The chain that would not slacken, was at length
Snap!—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, is it by change of place
To seek that comfort which the mind denies;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
Wisely; and by such tenure do we hold,
Frail life’s possessions, that even they whose fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint
Might, by the promise that is here, be won
To steal from active duties, and embrace
Obscurity, and undisputed repose.

—Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered times,
Should be allowed a privilege to have
Her anchorites, like piety of old;
Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
Living to God and nature, and content
With that communion. Consecrated be
The spots where such abide! But happier still
The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers
Discovered or invented; or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,
In lucid order; so that, when his course
Is run, some faithful enologist may say,
He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
His unobtrusive merit; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings; fervent thanks
THE PASTOR.

For my own peaceful lot and happy choice;
A choice that from the passions of the world
Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat;
Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious thought;
With the ever-welcome company of books;
With virtuous friendship’s soul-sustaining aid,
And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.

Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. "Nay," the old Man said,
"The fragrant air its coolness still retains;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
The dewy grass; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour."
He yielded, though reluctant; for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert; as a bilow, leaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend; and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream’s bank, and every where, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots;
Some scattered o’er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

"As in some happy valley of the Alps,"
Said I, "once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth,
A popular equality reigns here,
Save for you stately House beneath whose roof
A rural lord might dwell."—"No feudal pomp,
Of power," replied the Wanderer, "to that House
Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,
The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
The father of his people. Such is he;
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed
To me some portion of a kind regard;
And something also of his inner mind
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
As he is known to all.

The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning’s solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academical bowers. He loved the spot—
Who does not love his native soil?—he prized
The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppress
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought;
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishment as well besees
His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
And one a turreted manorial hall
Adorns, in which the good Man’s ancestors
Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his own judicious pains,
The Vicar’s dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice; statelier than could else
Have been bestowed, through course of common
chance,
On an unhealthy mountain Benefice."

This said, oft pausing, we pursued our way;
Nor reached the village-churchyard till the sun
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
Stood open; and we entered. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air,
A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.
Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massive; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless undergrowths, in some thick wood,
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
The Excursion.

Each also crowned with winged heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
By immemorial privilege allowed;
Though with the Emaeanture’s special sanctity
But ill accorded. An heraldic shiel,
Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
Imbued the altar-window; fixed aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
Yet undiscoloured. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined;
And marble monuments were here displayed
Thronging the walls; and on the floor beneath
Sequestred stones appeared, with emblems graven
And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
And shining effigies of brass inlaid.

The tribute by these various records claimed,
Duly we paid, each after each, and read
The ordinary chronicle of birth,
Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,
Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,
Not easily deciphered, told of one
Whose course of earthly honour was begun
In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
His royal state to show, and prove his strength
In tournament, upon the fields of France.
Another tablet registered the death,
And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
Near this brave Knight his Father lay entombed;
And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read,—how in his manhood’s earlier day
He, ‘mid the afflictions of intestine war
And rightful government subverted, found
One only solace—that he had espoused
A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
For her benign perfections; and yet more
Endeared to him, for this, that, in her state
Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven’s regard,
She with a numerous issue filled his house,
Who thrive, like plants, uninjured by the storm
That laid their country waste. No need to speak
Of less particular notices assigned
To Youth or Maiden gone before their time,
And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old;
Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
In modest panegyric.

“Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
Death’s hireling, who scope out his neighbour’s grave,
Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
All unconcerned as he would bind a sheep,
Or plant a tree. And did you hear his voice?
I was abruptly summoned by the sound
From some affecting images and thoughts,
Which then were silent; but brave utterance now.

Much,” he continued, with dejected look,
“Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase
Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
For future states of being; and the wings
Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
Hovered above our destiny on earth:
But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul
In sober contrast with reality,
And man’s substantial life. If this mute earth
Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,
THE PASTOR.

We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,
To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
That which is done accords with what is known
To reason, and by conscience is enjoined;
How idly, how perversely, life’s whole course,
To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
Or of the end stops short, proposed to all
At her aspiring outset.

Mark the babe
Not long accustomed to this breathing world;
One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
With tiny finger—to let fall a tear;
And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
The outward functions of intelligent man;
A grave proficient in amusive feats
Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
His expectations, and announce his claims
To that inheritance which millions own
That they were ever born to! In due time
A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
When they, who for this Minor hold in trust
Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage
Of mere humanity, present their Charge,
For this occasion daintily adorned,
At the baptismal font. And when the pure
And consecrating element hath cleansed
The original stain, the child is there received
Into the second ark, Christ’s church, with trust
That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
Over the billows of this troubled world
To the fair land of everlasting life.
Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
Are all renounced; high as the thought of man
Can carry virtue, virtue is professed;
A dedication made, a promise given
For due provision to control and guide,
And unremitting progress to ensure
In holiness and truth.”

“You cannot blame,”
Here interposing fervently I said,
“Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
Fearfully low; nor will your judgment scorn
Those services, whereby the attempt is made
To lift the creature toward that eminence
On which, now fallen, crevihile in majesty
He stood; or if not so, whose top seruee
At least he feels ‘tis given him to descry;
Not without aspirations, evermore
Returning, and injunctions from within
Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost,
May be, through pains and persevering hope,
Recovered; or, if hitherto unknown,
Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained.”

“I blame them not,” he calmly answered—“no;
The outward ritual and established forms
With which communities of men invest
These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
To which the lips give public utterance
Are both a natural process; and by me
Shall pass unscorched; though the issue prove,
Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh!
If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,
As the lost Angel by a human voice
Hath mournfully pronounced, them, in my mind,
Far better not to move at all than move
By impulse sent from such illustrious power,—
That finds and cannot fasten down; that grasps
And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps;
That tempers, emboldens—for a time sustains,
And then betrays; accuses and inflicts
Remorseless punishment; and so reverts
The inevitable circle: better far
Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
By foresight or remembrance, undisturbed!

Philosophy! and thou more vaunted name
Religion! with thy stately retinae,
Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world
Choose for your emblems whatsoever ye find
Of safest guidance or of firmest trust—
The torch, the star, the anchor; nor except
The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
The generations of mankind have knelt
Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
And through that conflict seeking rest—of you,
High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
Here standing, with the unvoyagable sky
In faint reflection of infinitude
Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
A subterraneous magazine of bones,
In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
Where are your triumphs! your dominion where?
And in what age admitted and confirmed!
—Not for a happy land do I enquire,
Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
To your serene authorities conform;
But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
Have ye withdrawn from passion’s crooked ways,
Inspired, and thoroughly fortified!—If the heart
Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever fix'd,
For one day's little compass, has preserved
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire
Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear?

"If this be so,
And Man," said I, "be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiable infirm; then, he who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true; and surely not misplaced:
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such
thoughts
Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnized complicacies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance. Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves;
A light of duty shines on every day
For all; and yet how few are warmed or cheered!
How few who mingle with their fellow-men
And still remain self-governed, and apart,
Like this our honoured Friend; and thence acquire
Right to expect his vigorous decline,
That promises to the end a blest old age!"

"Yet," with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed
The Solitary, "in the life of man,
If to the poetry of common speech
Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
A true reflection of the circling year,
With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
Yet where is glowing Summer's long rich day,
That ought to follow faithfully expressed?
And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
Where is she imagined in what favoured clime
Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
—Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
In man's autumnal season is set forth
With a resemblance not to be denied,
And that contains him; bowers that bear no more
The voice of gladness, less and less supply
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;
And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
Foretelling aged Winter's desolate sway.

How gay the habitations that bedeck
This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within;
Embosomed happiness, and placid love;
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all
Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-regards,
And notice forced upon inquisitive ears;
These, if these only, acting in despite
Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced
On humble life, forbid the judging mind
To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
From foul temptations, and by constant care
Of a good shepherd tended as themselves
Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot
With little mitigation. They escape,
Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt; feel not
The tedium of fantastic idleness:
Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale;
That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
Old things repeated with diminished grace;
And all the laboured novelties at best
Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
Ervine the want and weakness whence they spring."

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
The reverend Pastor toward the church-yard gate
Approached; and, with a mild respectful air
Of native cordiality, our Friend
Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed.
Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
That he, who now upon the mossy wall
Sat by my side, had vanished, if a wish
Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
Or the least penetrable hiding-place
In his own valley's rocky guardianship.
—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased:
Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
By circumstance, with intermixture fine
Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
One might be likened: flourishing appeared,
Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
The other—like a stately sycamore,
That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honied shade.

A general greeting was exchanged; and soon
The Pastor learned that his approach had given
A welcome interruption to discourse
Grave, and in truth too often sad.—"Is Man
A child of hope? Do generations press
On generations, without progress made?
Hails the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
Perforce! Are we a creature in whom good
Preponderates, or evil? Doth the will
Acknowledgement reason's law? A living power
Is virtue, or no better than a name,
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound!
So that the only substance which remains,
(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run)
Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust!
—Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
Here are the points," the Wanderer said," on which
Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir! the light
Of your experience to dispel this gloom:
By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
That frets, or languishes, be stillled and cheered."

"Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
"Angels may weigh and fathom: they perceive,
With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is; but, for ourselves,
That speculative height we may not reach.
The good and evil are our own; and we
Are that which we would contemplate from far.
Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue's self; like virtue is best
With snares; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these: through these alone
Are capable to notice or discern
Or to record; we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.
—Look forth, or each man dive into himself;
What sees he but a creature too perturbed;
That is transported to excess; that yearns,
Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
Batons on spleen, or moulders in despair!
Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed;

Thus darkness and delusion round our path
Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
Within the very faculty of sight.

Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason's law, can strictest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those truths,
Which unassisted reason's utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through which
The very multitude are free to range,
We safely may affirm that human life
Is either fair and tempeing, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view;
Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
Hath gained his noon tide height, this churchyard,
filled
With mounds transversely lying side by side
From east to west, before you will appear
An unillumined, blank, and dreary, plain,
With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
Look, from the quarter whence the lord of light,
Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave
Have gently exercised a melting power;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the pall
That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,
Vanished or hidden; and the whole domain,
To some, too lightly minded, might appear
A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.
—This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
Is to that other state more apposite,
Death and its two-fold aspect! wintry—one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out;
The other, which the ray divine hath touched,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring."

"We see, then, as we feel," the Wanderer thus
With a complacent animation spoke,
"And in your judgment, Sir! the mind's repose
On evidence is not to be ensured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth
THE EXCURSION.

Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
And which, once built, retains a steadfast shape
And undisturbed proportions; but a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere
I re-salute those sentiments confirmed
By your authority. But how acquire
The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument; the passive will
MEEK to admit: the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
To keep and cherish! how shall man unite
With self-forgetting tenderness of heart
An earth-despising dignity of soul!
Wise in that union, and without it blind!"

"The way," said I, "to court, if not obtain
The ingenious mind, apt to be set aright;
This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large; and by what exercise
From visible nature, or the inner self
Power may be trained, and renovation brought
To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance!
The natural roof of that dark house in which
His soul is pent! How little can be known—
This is the wise man's sigh; how far we err—
This is the good man's not unfrequent pang!
And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason's least ambitious course;
Such do I mean who, perplexed by doubts,
And uninitiated by a wish to look
Into high objects farther than they may,
Face to and fro, from morn till even-tide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil
For daily bread."

"Yes," buoyantly exclaimed
The pale Recluse—"praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade; praise to the simple crook,
And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity;
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honour; which, encaisyed by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart!
—Inglorious implements of craft and till,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance; you would I extol,
Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content.
—Would I had never renounced it!"

A slight flush
Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
"That which we feel we utter; as we think
So have we argued; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
You," to the Pastor turning thus he spoke,
"Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help! The mine of real life
Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains
Fruitless as those of airy alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long
Watched both the outward course and inner heart:
Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
He is who cultivates you hanging field;
What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
For morn and evening service, with her pail,
To that green pasture; place before our sight
The family who dwell within you house
Fenced round with glittering laurel; or in that
Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
And have the dead around us, take from them
Your instances; for they are both best known,
And by frail man most equitably judged.
Epitomise the life; pronounce, you can,
Authentic epitaphs on some of these
Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet:
So, by your records, may our doubts be solved;
And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind;
And look upon the dust of man with awe."

The Priest replied—"An office you impose
For which peculiar requisites are mine;
Yet much, I feel, is wanting—the task
Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
That they whom death has hidden from our sight
Are worthiest of the mind's regard; with these
The future cannot contradict the past:
Mortality's last exercise and proof
THE PASTOR.

Is undergone; the transit made that shows
The very Soul, revealed as she departs.
Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
One picture from the living.

You behold,
High on the breast of you dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness, a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;
And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sunbeam;
But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
And that attractive brightness is its own.
The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
For opportunity presented, hence
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
And ocean, and look down upon the works,
The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'midst you green fields;
And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground,
High on that mountain where they long have dwelt
A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waved over the chimney top;
A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,
Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and contrived, to clude
The eye of roving plunderer—for their need
Suffices; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong South-west
In anger blowing from the distant sea.
—Alone within her solitary hut;
There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
Until the expected hour at which her Mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault returns;
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock
Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair:

But true humility descends from heaven;
And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them;
Abundant recompense for every want.
—Swoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these!
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
For the mind's government, or temper's peace;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity!

"Much was I pleased," the grey-haired Wanderer said,
"When to those shining fields our notice first
You turned; and yet more pleased have from your
lips
Gathered this fair report of them who dwell
In that retirement; whither, by such course
Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
A tired way-faring man, once I was brought
While traversing alone you mountain pass.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,
So hazardous that feet and hands became
Guioles better than mine eyes—until a light
High in the gloom appeared, too high, methought,
For human habitation; but I longed
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I looked with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp,
And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting now—
Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
It is no light-fire of the naked hills,
Thought I—some friendly covert must be near.
With this persuasion thitherward my steps
I turn, and reach at last the guiding light;
Joy to myself! but to the heart of her
Who there was standing on the open hill,
(The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath praised)
Alarm and disappointment! The alarm
Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I came,
And by what help had gained those distant fields.
Drawn from her cottage, on that airy height,
Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband home,
By that unwearied signal, kenned afar;
An anxious duty! which the lofty site,
Traversed but by a few irregular paths,
Imposes, whereas'entoward chance
Detains him after his accustomed hour
Till night lies black upon the ground. 'But come,
Come,' said the Matron, 'to our poor abode;
Those dark rocks hide it! Enter, I beheld
A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
Sate down; and to her office, with leave asked,
The Dame returned.

Or ere that glowing pile
Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
Her Helpmate following. Hospitable fare,
Frank conversation, made the evening’s treat:
Need a bewildered traveller wish for more?
But more was given; I studied as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's form, and face
Not less than beautiful; an open brow
Of undisturbed humanity; a cheek
Suffused with something of a feminine hue;
Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard;
But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
Expression slowly varying, that evinced
A tardy apprehension. From a fount
Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
But honoured once, those features and that mien
May have descended, though I see them here.
In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
This pleasing fancy cherished and upheld
By sundry recollections of such fall
From high to low, ascent from low to high,
As books record, and even the careless mind
Cannot but notice among men and things
Went with me to the place of my repose.

Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
I yet had risen too late to interchange
A morning salutation with my Host,
Gone forth already to the far-off seat
Of his day's work. 'Three dark mid-winter months
Pass,' said the Matron, 'and I never see,
Save when the sabbath brings its kind release,
My Helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we gain
the bread
For which we pray; and for the wants provide
Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.
Companions have I many; many friends,
Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood,
And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read;

'With him can talk; nor blush to waste a word
On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.
And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds
Care not for me, he lingers round my door.
And makes me pastime when our tempers suit—
But, above all, my thoughts are my support,
My comfort—would that they were oftener fixed
On what, for guidance in the way that leads
To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer taught.'
The Matron ended—nor could I forbear
To exclaim—'O happy! yielding to the law
Of these privations, richer in the main!—
While thankless thousands are oppressed and clogged
By ease and leisure; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor;
While tens of thousands falter in their path,
And sink, through utter want of cheering light;
For you the hours of labour do not flag;
For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every sabbath-day its golden sun.'

"Yes!" said the Solitary with a smile
That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
"The untutored bird may found, and so construct,
And with such soft materials line, her nest
Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,
That the thorns wound her not; they only guard.
Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
Shares with her species, nature's grace sometimes
Upon the individual doth confer,
Among her higher creatures born and trained
To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
Of the ostentations world—a swelling stage
With empty actions and vain passions stuffed,
And from the private struggles of mankind
Hoping far less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and believed—
I love to hear of those, who, not contending
Nor summoned to contend for virtue's prize,
Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
Best with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
A few small crofts of stone-encumbered ground;
Masses of every shape and size, that lay
Scattered about under the moulder ing walls
Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
As if the moon had showered them down in spite.
But he repined not. Though the plough was scarred
By these obstructions, 'round the shady stones
A fertilising moisture,' said the Swan,
Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding dews
And damps, through all the droughty summer day
From out their substance issuing, maintain
Herbage that never falls: no grass springs up
So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine!
But thinly sown these natures; rare, at least,
The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed
Perhaps you lose souls cover, the poor Pensioner
Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell
Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
If living now, could otherwise report
Of rustic loneliness: that grey-haired Orphan—
So call him, for humanity to him
No parent was—feelingly could have told,
In life, in death, what solitude can breed
Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;
Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure.
—But your compliance, Sir! with my request
My words too long have hindered.”

Undeterred,
Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
In no ungracious opposition, given
To the confiding spirit of his own
Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,
Around him looking; “Where shall I begin!
Who shall be first selected from my flock
Gathered together in their peaceful fold!”
He paused—and having lifted up his eyes
To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
Upon the earth beneath his feet; and spake:

“To a mysteriously-united pair
This place is consecrate; to Death and Life,
And to the best affections that proceed
From their conjunction; consecrate to faith
In him who bled for man upon the cross;
Hallowed to revelation; and no less
To reason’s mandates; and the hopes divine
Of pure imagination—above all,
To charity, and love, that have provided,
Within these precincts, a capacious bed
And receptacle, open to the good
And evil, to the just and the unjust;
In which they find an equal resting-place:
Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
Within the bosom of you crystal Lake,
And end their journey in the same repose!

And blest are they who sleep; and we that know,
While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
That all beneath us by the wings are covered
Of motherly humanity, outspread
And gathering all within their tender shade,
Though loth and slow to come! A battle-field,
In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
With this compared, makes a strange spectacle!
A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old
Wandering about in miserable search
Of friends or kindred, whom the angry sea
Restores not to their prayer! Ah! who would think
That all the scattered subjects which compose
Earth’s melancholy vision through the space
Of all her climes—these wretched, these depraved,
To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
From the delights of charity cut off,
To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest;
Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
Were of one species with the sheltered few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot,
This file of infants; some that never breathed
The vital air; others, which, though allowed
That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit
Administration of the holy rite
That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
These that in trembling hope are laid apart;
And the besprinkled nursing, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast
That feeds him; and the tottering little-one
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek;
The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy; the bold
Youth
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid
Smitten while all the promises of life
Are opening round her; those of middle age,
Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,
And more secure, by very weight of all
That, for support, rests on them; the decayed
And bursthensome; and lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summoned and the longest spared—
Are here deposited, with tribute paid
Various, but unto each some tribute paid;
As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
Society were touched with kind concern,
And gentle 'Nature grieved, that one should die?'
Or, if the change demanded no regret,
Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

And whence that tribute! wherefore these regards!
Not from the naked Heart alone of Man
(Though claiming high distinction upon earth
As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
His own peculiar utterance for distress
Or gladness)—No, the philosophic Priest
Continued, 'tis not in the vital seat
Of feeling to produce them, without aid
From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;
With her two faculties of eye and ear,
The one by which a creature, whom his sins
Have rendered prone, can upward look to heaven;
The other that empowers him to perceive
The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
Whispering those truths in stillness, which the
Word,
To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.

Not without such assistance could the use
Of these benign observances prevail:
Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus maintained;
And by the care prospective of our wise
Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks
The fluctuation and decay of things,
Embodied and established these high truths
In solemn institutions—men convinced
That life is love and immortality,
The being one, and one the element.
There lies the channel, and original bed,
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man's affections—else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of present reason; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perversive.
The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy."

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

ARGUMENT.
Poet's Address to the State and Church of England—The
Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the
Church—He begins his Narrative with an instance of
unrequited Love—Anguish of mind subdued, and how
The lonely Miner—An instance of perseverance—
Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents,
Irresolution, and weakness—Solitary, applying this
covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some
Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end
his days here—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of
the harmonizing influence of Solitude upon two men of
opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in
public life—The rule by which Peace may be obtained
expressed, and where—Solitary hints at an overpowering
Fatality—Answer of the Pastor—What subjects he
will exclude from his Narrative—Conversation upon
this—Instance of an unsuccessful character, a Female,
and why given—Contrasted with this, a week sufferer,
from unguarded and betrayed love—Instance of heavier
guilt, and its consequences to the Offender—With this
instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted
one of a Widow, evidencing his faithful affection
as his deceased wife by his care of their female
Children.

Hail to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
An English Sovereign's brow! and to the throne
Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love;
Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
—Hail to the State of England! And conjoin
With this a salutation as devout,
Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;
Founded in truth; by blood of Martyrdom
Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom reared
In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
Decent and unapproved. The voice, that greets
The majesty of both, shall pray for both;
That, mutually protected and sustained,
They may endure long as the sea surrounds
This favoured Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains!
Besporent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
And spires whose silent finger points to heaven;
Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
Of the dense air, which town or city breeds
To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
That true succession fail of English hearts,
Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive
What in those holy structures ye possess
Of ornamental interest, and the charm
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
And human charity, and social love.
—Thus never shall the indignities of time
Approach their reverend graces, unopposed ;
Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
Their fair proportions; nor the blinder rage
Of bigot zeal madly to overturn ;
And, if the desolating hand of war
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
Upon the thronged abodes of busy men
(Deprecated, and ever prone to fill the mind
Exclusively with transitory things)
An air and men of dignified pursuit ;
Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
Of those pure altars worthy; ministers
Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain
Superior, insensible of pride,
And by ambitious longings undisturbed;
Men, whose delight is where their duty leads
Or fixes them; whose least distinguished day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
Which makes the sabbath lovely in the sight
Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
—and, as on earth it is the doom of truth
To be perpetually attacked by foes
Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
For her defence, replenished with a band
Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
Thoroughly disciplined; nor (if in course
Of the revolving world's disturbances
Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert!
To meet such trial) from their spiritual aires
Degenerate; who, constrained to wield the sword
Of dissipation, shrunk not, though assailed
With hostile din, and combating in sight
Of angry umpires, partial and unjust;
And did, thereof, have their hands in fire,
So to declare the conscience satisfied:
Nor for their bodies would accept release;
But, blessing God and praising him, bequeathed
With their last breaths, from out the smouldering flame,
The faith which they by diligence had earned,
Or, through illuminating grace, received,
For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
O high example, constancy divine!

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
And from the sanctity of elder times
Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom,
If multiplied, and in their stations set,
Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
Spread true religion and her genuine fruits)
Before me stood that day; on holy ground
Fraught with the relics of mortality,
Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
To lofty raised; and to the highest, last;
The head and mighty paramount of truths,—
Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
Announced, as a preparatory act
Of reverence done to the spirit of the place,
The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground;
Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe,
But with a mild and social cheerfulness;
Then to the Solitary turned, and spoke.

"At morn or evo, in your retired domain,
Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers;
Too delicate employ, as would appear,
For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
From nature's kindliness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labour bred."

The Solitary answered: "Such a Form
Full well I recollect. We often crossed
Each other's path; but, as the Intruder seemed
Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
And I as willingly did cherish mine,
We met, and passed, like shadows. I have heard,
From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
By unrequited love, he sealed the rocks,
Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
To cure his malady!"

The Vicar smiled,—
"Alas! before to-morrow's sun goes down
His habitation will be here: for him
That open grave is destined." "Died he then
Of pain and grief!" the Solitary asked,
"Do not believe it; never could that be!"

"He loved," the Vicar answered, "deeply loved,
Loved fondly, truly, fervently: and dared
At length to tell his love, but sued in vain;
Rejected, yea repelled: and, if with scorn
Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
A high-prized plume which female Beauty wears
In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
To cheat the world, or from herself to hide
Humiliation, when no longer free.

That he could brook, and glory in;—but when
The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
Was welded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;
Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour!
Lost was she, lost; nor could the Sufferer say
That in the act of preference he had been
Unjustly dealt with; but the Maid was gone!
Had vanished from his prospects and desires;
Not by translation to the heavenly choir
Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no!
She lives another’s wishes to complete,—
‘Joy be her lot, and happiness,’ he cried,
‘His lot and hers, as misery must be mine!’

Such was that strong concussion; but the Man
Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge oak
By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
The stedfast quiet natural to a mind
Of composition gentle and sedate,
And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
O’er which enchanted by science he had loved
To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
With keener appetite (if that might be)
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within the heart no outward sign appeared
Till a betraying slenkness was seen
To finge his cheek; and through his frame it crept
With slow mutation unconceivable;
Such universal change as autumn makes
In the fair body of a leafy grove
Discoloured, then divested.

‘Tis affirmed
By poets skilled in nature’s secret ways
That Love will not submit to be controlled
By mastery,—and the good Man lacked not friends
Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,
A mind in all heart-mysteries universed.

‘Go to the hills,’ said one, ‘remit a while’
‘This baneful diligence:—at early morn
Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods;
And, leaving it to others to toil,
By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
Do you, for your own benefit, construct
A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow

‘Where health abides, and cheerfulness, and peace;
The attempt was made;—tis needless to report
How hopelessly; but innocence is strong,
And an entire simplicity of mind
A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven;
That opens, for such sufferers, relief
Within the soul, fountains of grace divine;
And doth commend their weakness and disease
To Nature’s care, assisted in her office
By all the elements that round her wait
To generate, to preserve, and to restore;
And by her beautiful array of forms
Shedding sweet influence from above; or pure
Delight exalting from the ground they tread.’

‘Impute it not to impatience, if,’ exclaimed
The Wanderer, ‘I infer that he was healed
By perseverance in the course prescribed.’

‘You do not err: the powers, that had been lost
By slow degrees, were gradually regained;
The fluttering nerves composed; the beating heart
In rest established; and the jarring thoughts
To harmony restored.—But you dark mould
Will cover him, in the fulness of his strength,
Hastily smitten by a fever’s force;
Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
Time to look back with tenderness on her
Whom he had loved in passion; and to send
Some farewell words—with one, but one, request;
That, from his dying hand, she would accept
Of his possessions that which most he prized
A book, upon whose leaves some chosen plants,
By his own hand disposed with nicest care,
In undecaying beauty were preserved;
Mute register, to him, of time and place,
And various fluctuations in the breast;
To her, a monument of faithful love
Composed, and in tranquillity retained!

Close to his destined habitation, lies
One who achieved a humbler victory,
Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is
High in these mountains, that nurtured a band
Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore: they tried, were foiled—
And all desisted, all, save him alone.
He, taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands,
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work
Unseconed, unconstrained; then, as time
Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found
No recompense, derided; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind;
THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

By others dreaded as the luckless thrill
Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
By various mockery of sight and sound;
Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.

But when the lord of seasons had matured
The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
The mountain's entrails offered to his view
And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.

Not with more transport did Columbus greet
A world, his rich discovery! But our Swain,
A very hero till his point was gained,
Proved all unable to support the weight
Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
With an unsettled liberty of thought,
Wishes and endless schemes; by daylight walked
Giddy and restless; ever and anon
Quaff'd in his gratitude immoderate cups;
And truly might be said to die of joy!

He vanished; but conspicuous to this day
The path remains that linked his cottage-door
To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting track,
Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
Worn by his daily visits to and from
The darksome centre of a constant hope.

This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
Shall cause tofade, till ages pass away;
And it is named, in memory of the event,
The Path of Perseverance."

"Thou from whom
Man has his strength," exclaimed the Wanderer,
"oh!
Do thou direct it! To the virtuous grant
The penetrative eye which can perceive
In this blind world the guiding vein of hope;
That, like this Labourer, such may dig their way,
"Unshaken, uneduced, unterrified;
Grant to the wise his firmness of resolve!"

"That prayer were not superfluous," said the
Priest,
"Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
Within the bosom of her awful pile,
Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
Wherever laid, who living fell below
Their virtue's humbler mark; a sigh of pain
If to the opposite extreme they sank,
How would you pity her who yonder rests;
Him, farther off; the pair, who here are laid;
But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould
Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
Recalls!

He lived not till his locks were nipped
By seasonable frost of age; nor died
Before his temples, prematurely forced
To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
Gave obvious instance of the sad effect
Produced, when thoughtless Folly hath usurped
The natural crown that sage Experience wears.
Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
Or could perform; a zealous actor, hired
Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn
Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
Such was he; yet, as if within his frame
Two several souls alternately had lodged,
Two sets of manners could the Youth put on;
And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird
That withkes and chatters in her wiry cage,
Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and still
As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,
That flutters on the bough lighter than he;
And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
More winningly reserved! If ye inquire
How such consummate elegance was bred
Amid these wilds, this answer may suffice;
'Twas Nature's will; who sometimes undertakes,
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.

Hence, for this Favourite—lavishly endowed
With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
While both, embellishing each other, stood
Yet farther recommended by the charm
Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
Fair expectations; nor, when to the world's
Capacious field forth went the Adventurer, there
Were he and his attainments overlooked,
Or scantly rewarded; but all hopes,
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
Like blighted buds; or clouds that mimicked land
Before the sailor's eye; or diamond drops
That sparkling decked the morning grass; or sough
That was attractive, and hath ceased to be!

Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed,
Who, by humiliation undeterred,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his Father's gates.—Whence came he!—
clothed
In tattered garb, from hovels where abides
Necessity, the stationary host
Of vagrant poverty; from rifled barns
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl’s prey; from these bare haunts, to which
He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health,
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
In strength, in power reft, he renewed
His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
Thrice sank as willingly. For he—whose nerves
Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
In glittering balls—was able to derive
No less enjoyment from an abject choice.
Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
Than this fallen Spirit? in those dreary holds
His talents lending to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
To laughter multiplied in louder peals
By his malicious wit; then, all enchained
With mute astonishment, themselves to see
In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
As by the very presence of the Fiend
Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,
For knavish purposes! The city, too,
(With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
Hired minstrel of voluptuous blanishment;
Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
—Such the too frequent tenour of his breast
In ears that relished the report;—but all
Was from his Parents happily concealed;
Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
They also were permitted to receive
His last, repentant breath; and closed his eyes,
No more to open on that irksome world
Where he had long existed in the state
Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
Though from another sprung, different in kind:
Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
Distracted in propensity; content
With neither element of good or ill;
And yet in both rejoicing; man unllest
Of contradictions infinite the slave,
Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him
One with himself, and one with them that sleep."

"'Tis strange," observed the Solitary, "strange
It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
That in a land where charity provides
For all that can no longer feed themselves,
A man like this should choose to bring his shame
To the parental door; and with his sighs
Infest the air which he had freely breathed
In happy infancy. He could not pine,
Through lack of converse; no—he must have food
Abundant exercise for thought and speech;
In his individual being, self-reviewed,
Self-catechised, self-punished. Some there are
Who, drawing near their final home, and much
And daily longing that the same were reached,
Would rather shun than seek the fellowship
Of kindred wond. —Such haply here are laid!"

"Yes," said the Priest, "the Genius of our hills—
Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
Round his domain, desirous not alone
To keep his own, but also to exclude
All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
Even by his studied depth of privacy,
The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
In place from outward molestation free,
Helps to internal ease. Of many such
Could I discourse; but as their stay was brief,
So their departure only left behind
Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace
Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair
Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
Meeting as strangers, in a petty town
Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
Of this far-winding vale, remained as friends
True to their choice; and gave their bones in trust
To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
With unescutcheoned privacy interred
Far from the family vault.—A Chiefman one
By right of birth; within whose spotless breast
The fire of ancient Caledonia burned:
He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan; and, fighting at their head,
With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent
Culloden’s fatal overthrow. Escaped
From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
He fled; and when the lengthen hand of time
Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,
For his obscure condition, an obscure
Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

The other, born in Britain’s southern tract,
Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
There, where they placed them who in conscience
prized
THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

The new succession, as a line of kings
Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
Against the dire assaults of rapacity
And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
On the distempered flood of public life,
And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
Or late, a perilous mastor. He—who oft,
Beneath the battlements and stately trees
That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
Had moralised on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
Heaved from the heart in fortune’s bitterness,
When he had crushed a plentiful estate
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain’s senate. Fruitless was the attempt:
And while the up roar of that desperate strife
Confined yet to vibrate on his ear,
The vanquished Whig, under a borrowed name,
(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
That he was glad to lose) slunk from the world
To the deep shade of those untravelled Wilds;
In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
Two doughty champions; flaring Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
That losses and vexations, less severe
Than those which they had severally sustained,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
My reverend Father tell that, ’mid the calm
Of that small town encountering thus, they filled,
Daily, its bowing-green with harmless strife;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church;
And vexed the market-place. But in the breasts
Of these opponents gradually was wrought
With little change of general sentiment,
Such leaning towards each other, that their days
By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
Those very bickerings made them love it more.

A favourite boundary to their lengthened walks
This Church-yard was. And, whether they had come
Treading their path in sympathy and linked
In social converse, or by some short space
Discerningly parted to preserve the peace,
One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway
Over both minds, when they awhile had marked
The visible quiet of this holy ground,
And breathed its soothing air;—the spirit of hope
And saintly magnanimity; that—spurning
The field of selfish difference and dispute,
And every care which transitory things,
Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
Which else the Christian virtue might have claimed.

There live who yet remember here to have seen
Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place.
But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay,
They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a dial, that might stand
For public use preserved, and thus survive
As their own private monument: for this
Was the particular spot, in which they wished
(And Heavens was pleased to accomplish the desire)
That, undivided, their remains should lie.
So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was raised
Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
That to the decorated pillar lead,
A work of art more sumptuous than might seem
To suit this place; yet built in no proud scorn
Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
To ensure for it respectful guardianship.
Around the margin of the plate, whereas
The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
Winds an inscriptive legend.”—At these words
Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched:
"Time flies; it is his melancholy task
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And re-produce the trouble he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace,
Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirmed!"

"Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse,”
Exclaimed the Sceptic, “and the strain of thought
Accords with nature’s language;—the soft voice
Of you white torrent falling down the rocks
Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not lost
Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine, the more are we required
To feel for those among our fellow-men,
Who, offering no obedience to the world,
Are yet made desperate by "too quick a sense
Of constant infidelity," cut off
From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
Their life’s appointed prison; not more free
Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
With nothing better, in the chill night air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say
why
That ancient story of Prometheus chained
To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus;
The vulture, the inexhaustible repast
Drawn from his vitals! Say what meant the woes
By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes!
Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's flock of native grey
For robes with regal purple tinged; convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance; and here the tragic Muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest in answer, "these be
terms
Which a divine philosophy rejoints,
We, whose established and unfailing trust
Is in controlling Providence, admit
That, through all stations, human life abounds
With mysteries—for, if Faith were left untried,
How could the might, that lurks within her, then
Be shown! her glorious excellence—that ranks
Among the first of Powers and Virtues—proved!
Our system is not fashioned to preclude
That sympathy which ye for others ask;
And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes
And strange disasters; but I pass them by,
Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in peace.
—Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
By the deformities of brutish vice:
For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face
And a coarse outside of repulsive life
And unaffected manners might at once
Be recognised by all—"Ah! do not think,"
The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed,
"Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain,
(Gain shall I call it)—gain of what!—for whom!)
Should breathe a word tending to violate
Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
In slight of that forbearance and reserve
Which common human-heartedness inspires,
And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

"True," said the Solitary, "be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity.
Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced;
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilent swamps,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake."

"Small risk," said I,
"Of such illusion do we here incur;
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth;
No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
Or of remembrance even, desired or not.
Green is the Church-yard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers. These Dalesmen trust
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral record, and the silent heart;
Depositories faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaph: for, if those fail,
What boots the sculptured tomb! And who can blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence; if, from such source,
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
And general humility in death?
Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring
From disregard of time's destructive power,
As only capable to prey on things
Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone
In courting notice; and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth;
Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
And sufferings weekly borne—I, for my part,
Though with the silence pleased that here prevails,
Among those fair recitals also range,
Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
And, in the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,
THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

Of overpowering light,—While yet a child,
She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,
Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished
With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking
To be admired, than coveted and loved.
Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
Over her comrades; else their simple sports,
Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.
—Oh! pang of sorrowful regret for those
Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,
That they have lived for harsher servitude,
Whether in soul, in body, or estate!
Such doom was hers; yet nothing could subdue
Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface
Those brighter images by books impressd
Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
That occupy their places, and, though oft
Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.

Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
Began in honour, gradually obtained
Rule over her, and vexed her daily life;
An unremitting, avarious thirst;
And a strange thraldom of maternal love,
That held her spirit, in its own despite,
Bound,—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,
Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame con-
cealed—
To a poor disolute Son, her only child.
—Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
To shake the burden off? Ah! there was felt,
Indignantly, the weakness of her sex.
She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve;
The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart
Closed by degrees to charity; heaven's blessing
Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust
In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.

Thus all was re-established, and a pile
Constructed, that sufficed for every end,
Save the contentment of the builder’s mind;
A mind by nature indisposed to aught
So placid, so inactive, as content;
A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.
Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
To the agitation of a brook that runs
Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost

It was no momentary happiness
To have one Enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or defraction is not heard;
Which maling may not enter; where the traces
Of evil inclinations are unknown;
Where love and pity tenderly unite
With resignation; and no jarring tone
Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
Of amity and gratitude."  

"Thus sanctioned,"
The Pastor said, "I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature's unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And
when
I speak of such among my flock as swerved
Or fell, those only shall be singled out
Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
To such will we restrict our notice, else
Better my tongue were mute.

And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For, strength to persevere and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel—
These elements of virtue, that declare
The native grandeur of the human soul—
Are oft-times not unprofitably shewn
In the perverseness of a selfish course:
Truth every day exemplified, no less
In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream
Than in fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
Or 'mid the factions senate unappalled
Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,
As merciless prescription ebbs and flows.

There," said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
"A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
And saturnine; her head not raised to hold
Converse with heaven, nor yet deprist towards
earth,
But in projection carried, as she walked
For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare

To a poor disolute Son, her only child.
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Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
To shake the burden off? Ah! there was felt,
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Save the contentment of the builder's mind;
A mind by nature indisposed to aught
So placid, so inactive, as content;
A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.
Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
To the agitation of a brook that runs
Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
In silent pools, now in strong eddies channeled;
But never to be charmed to gentleness;
Its best attainments fit of such repose
As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming.

A sudden illness seized her in the strength
Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
To Providence submissive, so she thought;
But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
To anger, by the malady that gripped
Her prostrate frame with unremitting power,
As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb!
She prayed, she moaned;—her husband's sister
watched
Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs;
And yet the very sound of that kind foot
Was anguish to her ears! 'And must she rule,'
This was the death-doomed Woman heard to say
In bitterness, 'And must she rule and reign,
Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone!
'Tend what I tended, calling it her own!'
Enough:—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,
While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
I well remember, while I passed her door
Alone, with loitering step, and upward eye
Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
Roused me, her voice; it said, 'That glorious star
In its untroubled element will shine
'As now it shines, when we are hid in earth
'And safe from all our sorrows.' With a sigh
She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
By faith in glory that shall far transcend
Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine
Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
Was into meekness softened and subdued;
Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
With resignation sink into the grave;
And her uncharitable acts, I trust,
And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
Tho', in this Vale, remembered with deep awe."

The Vicar paused; and toward a seat advanced,
A long stone-seat, fixed in the Church-yard wall;
Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part
Offering a sunny resting-place to them
Who seek the House of worship, while the belfry
Yet rings with all their voices, or before
The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
Beneath the shade we all sate down; and there
His office, uninvited, he resumed.

"As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
Screened by its parent, so that little mound
Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth rest;
The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.
If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
A natural dignity on humblest rank;
If gaudsome spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained
The spotless ether of a maiden life;
If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
More holy in the sight of God or Man;
Then, o'er that mound, a sanctity shall brood
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod!
There, by her innocent Baby's precious grave,
And on the very turf that roofs her own,
The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.
Now she is not;—the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears
Is silent; nor is any vestige left
Of the path worn by mournful tread of her
Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed
 Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
Upon the mountains gowned with morning dew,
In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.
—Serious and thoughtful was her mind; and yet,
By reconciliation exquisite and rare,
The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl
Were such as might have quickened and inspired
A Titan's hand, address to picture forth
Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard
Startling the golden hills.

A wide-spread elm
Stands in our valley, named the Joyful Tree;
From dateless usage which our peasants hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,
Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the ground
So deify, and the nicest maiden's locks
Less gracefully were braided;—but this praise,
Methinks, would better suit another place.

She loved, and fondly deemed herself beloved.
—The road is dim, the current unperceived,
The weakness painful and most pitiful,
By which a virous woman, in pure youth,
May be delivered to distress and shame.

Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,
Among her equals, round The Joyful Tree,
She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.

It was the season of unfolding leaves,
Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
And small birds singing happily to mates
Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power
Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe
notes
Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch,
While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
—'Ah why,' said Ellen, gazing to herself,
'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge;
And nature that is kind in woman's breast,
And reason that in man is wise and good,
And fear of him who is a righteous judge;
Why do not these prevail for human life,
To keep two hearts together, that began
Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
O come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature,
One of God's simple children that yet know not
The universal Parent, how he sings
As if he wished the firmament of heaven
Should listen, and give back to him the voice
Of his triumphant constancy and love;
The proclamation that he makes, how far
His darkness doth transcend our flicker light!'

Such was the tender passage, not by me
Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been
Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
To the blank margin of a Valentine,
Bedrooped with tears. 'Twill please you to be told
That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meek resource:
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
And find a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, under friendly veil
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
By the last lingering help of the open sky
Until dark night dismissed her to her bed!
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despeiced love.

A kindlier passion opened on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
She gazed as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promises, where a grief
Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy
Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
Amid a perilous waste that all night long
Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,
When he beholds the first pale speck serene
Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed,
And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this hour,'
Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spoke,
'There was a stony region in my heart;
But He, at whose command the parched rock
Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream,
Hath softened that obduracy, and made
Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I breathe
The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake
My Infant! and for that good Mother dear,
Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in vain—
Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain.'
She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled;
And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew;
The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved
They soon were proud of; tended it and nursed;
A soothing comforter, although forlorn;
Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands;
Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by
With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

Through four months' space the Infant drew its food
From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and crossed
The fond affection. She no more could bear
By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means: so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And undertook with dutiful content
A foster-mother's office.

'Tis, perchance,
Unknown to you that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality
Is by domestic service unimpaired;
Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
From sense of degradation, not the less
The ungenteel mind can easily find means
To impose severe restraints and laws unjust,
Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel:
For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
Of such excitement and divided thought
As with her office would but ill accord)
The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
Forbade her all communion with her own:
Week after week, the mandate they enforced.
—So near! yet not allowed, upon that sight
To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
But worse affliction must be borne—for worse;
For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease
Begun and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die; as Ellen now exclaimed,
Her own—deserted child!—Once, only once,
She saw it in that mortal malady;
And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
Permission to attend its obsequies.
She reached the house, last of the funeral train;
And some one, as she entered, having chanced
To urge unhinkingly their prompt departure,
'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
Of anger never seen in her before,
'Nay, ye must wait my time!' and down she sate,
And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat.
Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
Until at length her soul was satisfied.

You see the Infant's Grave; and to this spot,
The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
On whatsoever errand, urged her steps:
Hither she came; here stood, and sometimes knelt
In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene!
So call her; for not only she bewailed
A mother's loss, but mourned in bitterness
Her own transgression; penitent sincere
As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye!

—At length the parents of the foster-child,
Noting that in despite of their commands
She still renewed and could not but renew
Those visitations, ceased to send her forth;
Or, to the garden's narrow bounds, confined.
I failed not to remind them that they erred;
For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
Thus wronged in woman's breast: in vain I pleaded—
But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped,
And the flower drooped; as every eye could see,
It hung its head in mortal languishment.
—Aided by this appearance, I at length
Prevailed; and, from those bonds released, she went
Home to her mother's house.

The Youth was fled;
The rash betrayer could not face the shame
Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused;
And little would his presence, or proof given
Of a relenting soul, have now availed;
For, like a shadow, he was passed away
From Ellen's thoughts; had perished to her mind.
For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
Save only those which to their common shame,
And to his moral being appertained:
Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
A heavenly comfort; there she recognised
An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need;
There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge;
That work a summer flood with hasty swell
Had swept away; and now her Spirit longed
For its last flight to heaven's security.
—The bodily frame wandered from day to day;
Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
And much she read; and brooded feelingly
Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As a spiritual confidant and friend,
Her heart she opened; and no pains were spared
To mitigate, as gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.
Meek Saint! through patience glorified on earth!
In whom, as by her lovely heareth she sate,
The ghastly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine!
May I not mention—that, within those walls,
In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation joined with me in prayer
For her soul's good!—Nor was that office vain.
—Much did she suffer: but, if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and said,
'He who afflicts me knows what I can bear;
And, when I fall, and can endure no more,
Will mercifully take me to himself.'
So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Wherein injury cannot be—and here is laid
The mortal Body by her Infant's side.'

The Vicar ceased; and downcast looks made known
That each had listened with his utmost heart.
For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
Or less benign than that which I had felt
When seated near my venerable Friend,
Under those shady elms, from him I heard
The story that retraced the slow decline
Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath
With the neglected house to which she clung.
—I noted that the Solitary's cheek
Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though sad,
More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wanderer sate:
Thanks to his pure imaginative soul
Capacious and serene; his blameless life
His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
Of human kind! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying:

'Is it not true
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.
This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
With such, in their affliction.—Ellen's fate,
Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
Of one who died within this vale, by doom
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
Whereo, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
Of Wilfred Armathwaite?'

The Vicar answered,

'In that green nook, close by the Church-yard wall,
Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign
Of sweetness where dire anguish had been known,
Of recompense after deep offence—
There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
For the smooth gloatings of the indulgent world;
Nor need the windings of his devious course
Be here retraced;—enough that, by misstep
And venial error, robbed of competence,
And her obsequious shadow, peace of mind,
He craved a substitute in troubled joy;
Against his conscience rose in arms, and, braving
Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.'

That which he had been weak enough to do
Was misery in remembrance; he was stung,
Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles
Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad;
Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
Asked comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
His flock he slighted: his paternal fields
Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
To fly—but whither! And this gracious Church,
That wears a look so full of peace and hope
And love, benignant mother of the vale,
How fair amid her brood of cottages!
She was to him a sickness and reproach
Much to the last remained unknown: but this
Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died;
Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
He could not find forgiveness in himself;
Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

Here rests a Mother. But from her I turn
And from her grave. —Behold,—upon that ridge,
That, stretching boldly from the mountain side,
Carries into the centre of the vale
Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where she dwelt;
And where yet dwells her faithful Partner, left
(Full eight years past) the solitary prop
Of many helpless Children. I begin
With words that might be prelude to a tale
Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel
No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
See daily in that happy family.

—Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
Not one of all the band, a full-blowed flower.
Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
Now, by experience taught, he stands assured,
That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
Of what he seems to take; or gives it back,
Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer;
He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
Which our endeavours have refused to till,
And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
Even were the object nearer to our sight,
Would seem in no distinction to surpass
The rudest habitations. Ye might think
That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
Out of the living rock, to be adorned
By nature only; but, if thither led,
Ye would discover, then, a studious work
Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

Brought from the woods the honeysuckle twines
Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place,
A plant no longer wild; the cultured rose
There blossoms, strong in health, and will be soon
Roof-high; the wild pink crowns the garden-wall,
And with the flowers are intermingled stones
Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of the hills.
These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
A hardy Girl continues to provide;
Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
All that a boy could do, but with delight
More keen and prouder daring; yet hath she,
Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
For her own flowers and favourite herbs, a space,
By sacred charter, holden for her use.
—These, and whatever else the garden bears
Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
I freely gather; and my leisure draws
A not unfrequent pastime from the hum

Of bees around their range of sheltered hives
Busy in that enclosure; while the still,
That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
To the pure course of human life which there.
Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
Of night is falling round my steps, then most
This Dwelling charms me; often I stop short,
(Who could refrain!) and feed by stealth my sight
With prospect of the company within,
Laid open through the blazing window:—there
I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
Spinning again, as if to overtake
The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
That skill in this or other household work,
Which, from her Father's honoured hand, herself,
While she was yet a little-one, had learned.
Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are gay;
And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
—Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be deemed,
The Wife, from whose consolatory grave
I turned, that ye in mind might witness where,
And how, her Spirit yet survives on earth!

BOOK SEVENTH.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

CONTINUED.

ARGUMENT.

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind
—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart—Clergyman and his Family—Fortunate influence of change of situation—Activity in extreme old age—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue—Lamentations over mis-directed applause—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man—Elevated character of a blind man—Reflection upon Blindness—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees—A female Infant's Grave—Joy at her Birth—Sorrow at her Departure—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his untimely death—Excitation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture—Solitary how affected—Monument of a Knight—Traditions concerning him—Perception of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society—Hunts at his own past Calling—Thanks the Pastor.

While thus from theme to theme the Historian passed,
The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours;
When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
(What time the splendour of the setting sun
Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmannau)
A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
To pastoral melody or warlike air,
Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
By some accomplished Master, while he sat
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes,
Tender or blithe; now, as the varying mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honoured chief
Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassioned notes
Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;  
But to a higher mark than song can reach,  
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream  
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,  
A consciousness remained that it had left,  
Deposited upon the silent shore  
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,  
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

"These grassy heaps lie amicably close,"  
Said I, "like surges heaving in the wind  
Along the surface of a mountain pool:  
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold  
Five graves, and only five, that rise together  
Unsocially sequestered, and encroaching  
On the smooth play-ground of the village-school!"

The Vicar answered,—"No disdainful pride  
In them who rest beneath, nor any cause  
Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped  
To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.  
—Once more look forth, and follow with your sight  
The length of road that from your mountain's base  
Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line  
Is lost within a little tuft of trees;  
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits  
The cultivated fields; and up the heathy waste,  
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,  
Led towards an easy outlet of the vale.  
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,  
By which the road is hidden, also hides  
A cottage from our view; though I discern  
(Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees  
The smokeless chimney-top.——  
All unembowered
And naked stood that lovely Parsonage  
(For such in truth it is, and appertains  
To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)  
When hither came its last Inhabitant.  
Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads  
By which our northern wilks could then be crossed;  
And into most of those secluded vales  
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.  
So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived  
With store of household goods, in panniers slung  
On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,  
And on the back of more ignoble beast;  
That, with like barthelm of effects most prized  
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.  
Young was I then, a school-boy of eight years;  
But still, methinks, I see them as they passed  
In order, drawing toward their wished-for home.  
—Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass  
Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
Each in his basket nodding drowsily;  
Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,  
Which told it was the pleasant month of June;  
And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,  
A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,  
And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,  
Even from Northumbrian hills; yet theirs had been  
A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered  
By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest;  
And fresh put on, and arch word dropped—to swell  
The cloud of fancy and unceasing surprise  
That gathered round the slowly-moving train.  
——Whence do they come? and with what errand charged?  
Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe  
Who pitch their tents under the green-wood tree?  
Or Strollers are they, furnished to enact  
Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the Wood,  
And, by that whiskered tabby's aid, set forth  
The lucky venture of sage Whittington,  
When the next village hears the sound announc'd  
By blast of trumpet! Plenteous was the growth  
Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen  
On many a staring countenance portrayed  
Of poor or burgher, as they marched along.  
And more than once their steadiness of face  
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied  
To their inventive humour, by stern looks,  
And questions in authoritative tone,  
From some staid guardian of the public peace,  
Checking the sober steed on which he rode,  
In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still,  
By notice indirect, or blunt demand  
From traveller halting in his own despite,  
A simple curiosity to ease:  
Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered  
Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,  
With unalloyed glee, in hoary age.

A Priest he was by function; but his course  
From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon,  
(The hour of life to which he then was brought)  
Had been irregular, I might say, wild;  
By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care  
Too little checked. An active, ardent mind;  
A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme  
To cheat the sadness of a rainy day;  
Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games;  
A generous spirit, and a body strong  
To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl;  
Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights  
Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall.
The Excursion.

Of country squires; or at the statelier board
Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp
Withdrawn,—to while away the summer hours
In condescension among rural guests.

With these high comrades he had revelled long,
Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim
Abandoning and all his lofty friends,
For a life’s stay (slender it was, but sure)
He turned to this secluded chapelry;
That had been offered to his doubtful choice
By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
They found the cottage, their allotted home;
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the Cure not long had been endowed:
And far remote the chapel stood,—remote,
And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
Shaded and shelterless, by driving showers
Frequented, and beset with howling winds.
Yet cause was none, what’er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
Or the necessity that fixed him here;
Apart from old temptations, and constrained
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
The sick in body, or distress in mind;
And, by as salutary change, compelled
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day
With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged,
Or the wild brooks; from which he now returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal
Of his own board, where sat his gentle Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little household farm;
Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefit. Yet not the less
Thiers was a hospitable board, and thiers
A charitable door.

So days and years
Passed on;—the inside of that rugged house
Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron’s care,
And gradually enriched with things of price,
Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
What, though no soft and costly sofa there
Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,
Yet were the windows of the low abode
By shutters weather-funded, which at once
Repelled the storm and deadened its loud rear.
There snow-white curtains hung in decent folds;
Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain plants,
That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
Were nicely braided; and composed a work
Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
Lay at the threshold and the inner doors;
And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
But tinted daintily with floral hues,
For seemliness and warmth, on festive days,
Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
With which the parlour-floor, in simplest guise
Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.

Those pleasing works the Housewife’s skill produced:
Meanwhile the undisturbed Master’s hand
Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
To rear for food, for shelter, and delight;
A thriving covert! And when wishes, formed
In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
Restored me to my native valley, here
To end my days; well pleased was I to see
The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-side,
Screen’d from assault of every bitter blast;
While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
Danced in the breeze, cheesquering its mossy roof.
Time, which had thus afforded willing help
To beautify with nature’s fairest growths
This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
Upon its Master’s frame, a wintry grace;
The comingness of unfeebled age.

But how could I say, gently! for he still
Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm,
A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
Anger and indignation. Still he loved
The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
Of long-past banquettings with high-born friends:
Then, from those killing fits of vain delight
Uprosed by recollected injury, railed
At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
In bitterness, and with a threatening eye
Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
—Those transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

She, far behind him in the race of years,
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound.
Him might we liken to the setting sun
As seen not seldom on some gusty day,
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unsmelled light;
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb;
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this;
I better love to sprinkle on the sod
That now divides the pair, or rather say,
That still unites them, praises, like heaven’s dew,
Without reserve descending upon both.

Our very first in eminence of years
This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale!
And, to his unmolested mansion, death
Had never come, through space of forty years;
Sparing both old and young in that abode.
Suddenly then they disappeared: not twice
Had summer scorched the fields; not twice had fallen,
On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed,
And the long-privileged house left empty—swept
As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.
A happy consummation! an accord
Sweet, perfect, to be wished for! save that here
Was something which to mortal sense might sound
Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
The oldest, he was taken last, survived
When the meek Partner of his age, his Son,
His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

*All gone, all vanished! he deprived and bare,
How will he face the remnant of his life?
What will become of him?* we said, and mused
In sad conjectures.—Shall we meet him now
Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
Striving to entertain the lonely hours
With music? (for he had not ceased to touch
The harp or violin which himself had framed,
For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
What titles will he keep? will he remain
Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
A planter, and a reaper from the seed?
A man of hope and forward-looking mind
*Even to the last!*—Such was he, unsubdued.
But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
Of open projects, and his inward heard
Of unsummed griefs, too many and too keen,
Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For solitude solace on the summer grasses,
The warm lap of his mother earth: and so,
Their lenient term of separation past,
That family (whose graves you there behold)
By yet a higher privilege once more
Were gathered to each other.”

Calm of mind
And silence waited on these closing words;
Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
Lest in those passages of life were some
That might have touched the sick heart of his Friend
Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
His own firm spirit in degree deepest
By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
Thus silence broke:—*Behold a thoughtless Man*
From vice and premature decay preserved
By useful habits, to a fitter soil
Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
Amid the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
With each repeating its allotted prayer
And thus divides and thus relieves the time;
Smooth task, with his compared, whose mind could string,
Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
Of keen domestic anguish; and beguile
A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed;
Till gentlest death released him.

Far from us
Be the desire—too curiously to ask
How much of this is but the blind result
Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
And what to higher powers is justly due.
But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring vale
A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground; whose gifts of nature lie
Retired from notice, lost in attributes
Of reason, honourably effaced by debts
Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe,
And conquests over her dominion gained,
To which her frowardness must needs submit.
In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
Against all trials; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day;
Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
And resolution competent to take
Out of the bosom of simplicity
All that her holy customs recommend,
And the best ages of the world prescribe.
—Preaching, administering, in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
Of worldly intercourse between man and man,
And in his humble dwelling, he appears
A labourer, with moral virtue crowned,
With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned.”

“Doubt can be none,” the Pastor said, “for whom
This portraiture is sketched. The great, the good,
The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
Honour assumed or given: and him, the Wonderful,
Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
Deservedly have styled.—From his abode
In a dependent chancelry that lies
Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
Which in its soul he lovingly embraced,
And, having once espoused, would never quit;
Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
That lovely, great, good Man. A simple stone
May cover him; and by its help, perchance,
A century shall bear his name pronounced,
With images attendant on the sound;
Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
In utter night; and of his course remain
No cognizable vestiges, no more
Than of this breath, which shapes itself in words
To speak of him, and instantly dissolves.”

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which round his theme
Still linger’d, after a brief pause, resumed;
“Noise is there not enough in doleful war,
But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
To multiply and aggravate the din!
Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
And, in requited passion, all too much
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
But that the minstrel of the rural shade
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
The perturbation in the suffering breast,
And propagate its kind, far as he may!
—Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate
The good man’s purposes and deeds; retrace
His struggles, his disconsolures, deploring,
His triumphs hail, and glorify his end;
That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
Through fancy’s heat redounding in the brain,
And like the soft infections of the heart,
By charm of measured words may spread o’er field,
Hamlet, and town; and piety survive
Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;
Not for reproof, but high and warm delight,
And grave encouragement, by song inspired!
—Vain thought! but wherefore murmur or repine?
The memory of the just survives in heaven:
And, without sorrow, will the ground receive
That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best
Of what lies here confines us to degrees
In excellence less difficult to reach,
And milder worth: nor need we travel far
From those to whom our last regards were paid,
For such example.

Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches toward me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath
A plain blue stone, a gentle Daleman lies,
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;
And this deep mountain-valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cotager from sleep
With startling summons; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of you lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture: evemore
Were all things silent, wheresoe’er he moved.
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he dutiously pursued the round
Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side
Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the joyous reapers. For himself,
All-watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not: neither field nor flock he owned:
No wish for wealth had place within his mind;
Nor husband’s love, nor father’s hope or care.

Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, nature in manhood, he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him; but he remained well pleased,
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family;
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
—Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
That pressed upon his brother’s house; for books
Were ready comrades whom he could not tire;
Of whose society the blameless Man
Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
Even to old age, with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours; refreshed his thoughts;
Beyond its natural elevation raised
His introverted spirit; and bestowed
Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
The stormy day, each had its own resource;
The song of the muse, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of just men
Made perfect, and from injury secure.
—Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint:
And they, who were about him, did not fail
In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized
His gentle manners: and his peaceful smiles,
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
Were met with answering sympathy and love.

At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature: and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
—Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
—And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good Man’s living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;
And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things!
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
We all too thankfully participate,
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained;
Ask of the channeled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined course.
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
Straight toward some precipice’s airy brink!
But, timely warned, He would have stayed his steps,
Protected, say enlightened, by his ear;
And on the very edge of vacancy
Not more endangered than a man whose eye
Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret blooms
Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
Nor in the woods, that could from him conceal
Its birth-place; none whose figure did not live
Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind;
The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
Lodged in her bosom; and, by science led,
His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
—Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
But each instinct with spirit; and the frame
Of the whole countenance alive with thought,
Fancy, and understanding; while the voice
Discoursed of natural or moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
Absorbed, and tender pity overawed.”

“A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle,” the Wanderer said,
“Being like these present! But proof abounds
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, therefore, cease to be.
And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft their recompense may win;
But for remoter purposes of love
And charity: nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth;
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
By man’s imperishable spirit, quelled.
Upto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flowed
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre;
And wisdom married to immortal verse!

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret,—whose lineaments would next
Have been portrayed, I guess not; but it chanced
That, near the quiet church-yard where we sate,
A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

"Here," said the Pastor, "do we muse, and mourn:
The waste of death; and lo! the giant oak
Stretched on his bier—that massey timber wain;
Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team."

He was a peasant of the lowest class:
Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
Of winter cannot thin; the fresh air lodged
Within his cheek, as light within a cloud;
And he returned our greeting with a smile.
When he had passed, the Solitary spake;
"A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows; with a face
Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
His gestures note,—and hark! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks."

The Pastor answered. "You have read him well.
Year after year is added to his store
With silent increase: summers, winters—past,
Past or to come; yes, boldly might I say,
Ten summers and ten winters of a space
That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix.
The obligation of an anxious mind,
A pride in having, or a fear to lose;
Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
By any one more thought of than by him
Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord!
Yet is the creature rational, endowed
With foresight; bears, too, every sabbath day,
The christian promise with attentive ear;
Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
Reject the incense offered up by him,
Though of the kind which beasts and birds present
In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
From trepidation and repining free.

How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
Less worthy, less religious even, than his!

This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
Is paid without reluctance; but in truth,"
(Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile)
"I feel at times a motion of despite
Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
In works of havoc; taking from these vales,
One after one, their proudest ornaments.
Full oft his deings leave me to deplore
Tall ash-trees, sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
In the dry crannies of the pendant rocks;
Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
A veil of glory for the ascending moon;
And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damped,
And on whose forehead inaccessible
The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
Launched into Morecambe-bay, to him hath owed
Her strong timber-timbers, and the mast that bears
The loftiest of her pendants; He, from park
Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
That whirls (how slow itself!) ten thousand spindles:
And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
The trunk and body of its marvellous strength,
If his undaunted enterprise had failed
Among the mountain coves.

You household fr, a guardian planted to fence off the blast,
But towering high the roof above, as if
Its humble destination were forgot—
That sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade, as in a stately tent
On all sides open to the flaming breeze,
A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
The fleece-encumbered flock—the Jovial Elm,
Around whose trunk the maidens dance in May—
And the Lord's Oak—would plead their several
In vain, if he were master of their fate; [rights
His sentence to the axe would doom them all.
But, green in age and lusty as he is,
And promising to keep his hold on earth
Less, as might seem, in rivalry with men
Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
His own appointed hour will come at last;
And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world,
This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

Now from the living pass we once again;
From Age," the Priest continued, "turn your thoughts;
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From Age, that often unalumted drops,
And mark that daisied hillock, three spans long!
—Seven lusty Sons safe daily round the board
Of Gold-rill side; and, when the hope had ceased
Of other progeny, a Daughter then
Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole;
And so acknowledged with a tremendous joy
Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm
With which by nature every mother’s soul
Is stricken in the moment when her thrones
Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
Which tells her that a living child is born;
And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
That the dread storm is weathered by them both.

The Father—him at this unlooked-for gift
A bolder transport seizes. From the side
Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,
Day after day the gladness is diffused
To all that come, almost to all that pass;
Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
From cups replenished by his joyous hand.

—Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
Each by the thoughts best suited to his years:
But most of all and with most thankful mind
The hoary grand sire felt himself enriched;
A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
To fill the total measure of his soul!
—From the low tenement, his own abode,
Whither, as to a little private cell,
He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,
To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
Once every day he duteously repaired
To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe;
For in that female infant’s name he heard
The silent name of his departed wife;
Heart-stirring music! hourly heard that name;
Full bless he was, ‘Another Margaret Green,’
Oft did he say, ‘was come to Gold-rill side.’

Oh! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
Itself had been unlooked-for; oh! dire stroke
Of desolating anguish for them all!
—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
And, by some friendly finger’s help upstayed,
Range round the garden walk, while she perchance
Was catching at some novelty of spring,
Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season
The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction; whence, all unforewarned,
The household lost their pride and soul’s delight.
—But time hath power to soften all regrets,
And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
Fall not to spring from either Parent’s eye
Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
Yet this departed Little-one, too long
The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
In what may now be called a peaceful bed.

On a bright day—so calm and bright, it seemed
To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-fair—
These mountains echoed to an unknown sound;
A volkly, thrice repeated o’er the Corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave,
Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
Sparse, burning sun of midsummer, those sols,
That they may knit together, and therewith
Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!
Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.
Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved,
To me as precious as my own!—Green herbs
May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less impossibly of thee;
—The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;
Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts,
Thy image disappear!

The Mountain-ash
No eye can overlook, when mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring’s richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,
By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this Youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts.
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature’s hand
Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form:
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade
Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame
May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)
So, through a simple rustic garb’s disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar’s genius shone;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quiet
Whistled from the Stripling's arm! If touched by
him,
The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
Alas! in prospect of the shooting field!
The indefatigable fox had learned
To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration would he lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loth to assault the majesty he loved:
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The falcon glee'd,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe.
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,
Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Meere,
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim,
And lived by his forbearance.

From the coast
Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his threats;
Our Country marked the preparation vast
Of hostile forces; and she called—with voice
That filled her plains, that reached her utmost shores,
And in remotest vales was heard—to arms!
—Then, for the first time, here you might have seen
The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet changed,
That flashed unearthly through the woods and fields.
Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,
And girt with shining weapons, weekly marched,
From this lone valley, to a central spot
Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
Of the surrounding district, they might learn
The rudiments of war; ten—hardy, strong,
And valiant; but young Oswald, like a chief
And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
From their shy solitude, to face the world,
With a gay confidence and seemly pride;
Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
Like Youth released from labour, and yet bound
To most laborious service, though to them
A festival of unremembered ease;
The inner spirit keeping holiday,
Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,
Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
Now pointing this way, and now that.—'Here flows,'
Thus would he say, 'The Rhine, that famous stream!
Eastward, the Danube toward that inland sea,
A mightier river, winds from realms to realms;
And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back
Bespotted—with immemorial ideas:
Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk; observe
His capital city! There, along a tract
Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged;
Nor left unstatused those calm fields
On which the sons of mighty Germany
Were taught a base submission.—Here behold
A nother race, the Swiss, and their land,
'Vesels deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
And mountains white with everlasting snow!'
—And, surely, he, that spake with kindling brow,
Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
Have fought and perished for Helvetia's rights—
Ah, not in vain!—or those who, in old time,
For work of happier issue, to the side
Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts,
When he had risen alone! No braver Youth
Descended from Judean heights, to march
With righteous Joshua; nor appeared in arms
When grove was fell'd, and altar was cast down,
And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
And strong in hatred of idolatry.'

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
Moved toward the grave;—instinctively his steps
We followed; and my voice with joy exclaimed:
"Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
A might of which they dream not. Oh! the curse,
To be the awaker of divinest thoughts,
Father and founder of exalted deeds;
And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
The liberal donor of capacities
More than hero! this to be, nor yet
Have sense of one companions' wish, nor yet
Deserve the least return of human thanks;
Winning no recompense but deadly hate
With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn!'"

When this involuntary strain had ceased,
The Pastor said: "So Providence is served;
The forking weapon of the skies can send
Illumination into deep, dark holes,
Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
Ye Thrones that have defied remove, and cast
Pity away, soon shall ye quake with fear/
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
Europe, through all her habitable bounds,
Is thirsting for their overthrow, who yet
Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
By horror of their impious rites, preserved;
Are still permitted to extend their pride,
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
Darkening the sun.

But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping and expecting all,'
This hallowed grave demands, where rests in peace
A humble champion of the better cause;
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
No higher name; in whom our country showed,
As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
England, the ancient and the free, appeared
In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
—No more of this, lest I offend his dust:
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

One day—a summer's day of annual pomp
And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
His steeds had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn; and, from that toil
Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng convened
To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire [space
Seized him, that self-same night; and through the
Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrung,
Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,
From some commanding eminence had looked
Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
A glittering spectacle; but every face
Was pallid: seldom hath that eye been moist
With tears, that wept not then; nor were the few,
Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
In this sad service, less disturbed than we.
They started at the tributary peal
Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
Through the still air, the closing of the Grave;
And distant mountains echoed with a sound
Of lamentation, never heard before!"

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend
Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye;
And, when that eloquence was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending, and supporting his pure heart
With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turned aside;
Whether through manly instinct to conceal
Tender emotions spreading from the heart
To his worn cheek; or with uneasy shame
For those cold humours of habitual spleen
That, fondly seeking in disguise of man
SOLACE AND SELF-EXCUSE, had sometimes urged
To self-abuse a not inelegant tongue.
—Right toward the sacred Edifice his steps
Had been directed; and we saw him now
Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
Or rather seemed to have grown into the side
Of the rude pile; as oft-times trunks of trees,
Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,
Are seen incorporate with the living rock—
To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous smile
Exclaimed—
"The sagest Antiquarian's eye
That task would foil;" then, letting fall his voice
While he advanced, thus spake: "Tradition tells
That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired,
And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.
'Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
Unknown and unknown. A pleasing thought
I somewhat entertain, that haply bound
To Scotland's court in service of his Queen,
Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
Of England's realm, this vale he might have seen
With transient observation; and thence caught
An image fair, which, brightening in his soul
When joy of war and pride of chivalry
Languished beneath accumulated years,
Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
To make that paradise his chosen home
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned.

Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief may rest
Upon unexplained story fondly traced
From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and borne
Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked
With brocaded housings. And the lofty Steed—
His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe,
By those untravelled Dalemen. With less pride,
Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior dwelt;
And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone;
And, through improvidence or want of love
For ancient worth and honourable things,
The spear and shield are vanished, which the
Knight
Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial! and his family name
Borne by yeon clustering cottages, that spring
From out the ruins of his stately lodge:
These, and the name and title at full length,—
Sir Alfred Lithing, with appropriate words
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
That in the steeple hang, his pious gift."

"So falls, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
"All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,
Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms
Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!
Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own. The man himself
Departs; and soon is spent the line of those
Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
Fraternities and orders—heapin high
New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
And placing trust in privilege confirmed
And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
Of Desolation, aimed: to slow decline
These yield, and these to sudden overthrow:
Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The vast
Frame
Of social nature changes evermore
Her organs and her members with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at need,—
And by this law the mighty whole subsists:
With an ascent and progress in the main;
Yet, oh! how disproportioned to the hopes
And expectations of self-flattering minds!

The courteous Knight, whose bones are here
interred,
Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
For strife and ferment in the minds of men;
Whence alteration in the forms of things,
Various and vast. A memorable age!
Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
In long procession calm and beautiful.
He who had seen his own bright order fade,
And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and shield,
Her temper changed, and bowed to other laws)
Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile;
And shook their tenants out into the fields,
Like wild beasts without home! Their hour was
come;
But why no softening thought of gratitude,
No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt?
Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help,
Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
Fittest allied to anger and revenge.
But Human-kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability; and airy hopes,
Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
Those meditations of the soul that feed
The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
Break from the maddened nations at the sight
Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect
Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

Even," said the Wanderer, "as that courteous
Knight,
Bound by his vow to labour for redress
THE PARSONAGE.

BOOK EIGHTH.

—Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier
To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
For the pathetic records which his voice
Hath here delivered; words of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes;
To hope and love; to confident repose
In God; and reverence for the dust of Man."

The individual known and understood;
And such as my best judgment could select
From what the place afforded, have been given;
Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
To his might well be likened, who unlocks
A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—draws
His treasures forth, soliciting regard
To this, and this, as worship than the last,
Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased
More than the exhibitor himself, becomes
Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
—But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,
And there—"

At this the Solitary shrunk
With backward will; but, wanting not address
That inward motion to disguise, he said
To his Comapatriot, smiling as he spake;
—"The peaceable remains of this good Knight
Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
If consciousness could reach him where he lies
That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
Deploring changes past, or dreading change
Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With the gross aims and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Fitted, and, where they are not known, despoiled.

Yet, by the good Knight’s leave, the two estates
Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,
Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these;
Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
Carrying relief for nature’s simple wants.
—What though no higher recompense be sought
Than honest maintenance, by ilksome toil
Full oft procured, yet may they claim respect,
Among the intelligent, for what this course
Enables them to be and to perform.
Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
While solitude permits the mind to feel;
Instructs, and prompts her to supply defects
By the division of her inward self.
For grateful converse: and to these poor men
Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)
Is bountiful—go wheresoe’er they may;
Kind nature’s various wealth is all their own.
Versed in the characters of men; and bound,
By ties of daily interest, to maintain
Conciliatory manners and smooth speech:
Such have been, and still are in their degree,
Examples efficacious to refine
Rude intercourse; apt agents to expel,
By importation of unlooked-for arts,
Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;
Raising, through just gradation, savage life
To rustic, and the rustic to urban.
—Within their moving magazines is lodged
Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
Affections seated in the mother’s breast,
And in the lover’s fancy; and to feed
The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
—By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
Counsel is given; contention they appease
With gentle language; in remotest wilds,
Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring;
Could the proud quest of chivalry do more!”

“Happy,” rejoined the Wanderer, “they who gain
A panegyric from your generous tongue!
But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
A new and unforeseen creation rise
From out the labours of a peaceful Land
Wielding her potent engine to frame
And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rests not night or day,
Industrious to destroy! With fruitless pains
Might one like me now visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe’er he came—
Among the tenantry of thorp’ and vill;
Or struggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of flashy lane,

(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place)
Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain’s farthest gles. The Earth has lost
Her waters, Air her breezes; and the soil
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
Glistening along the low and woody dale;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty sides,
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenmed from far.

Meanwhile, at social Industry’s command,
How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
Where not a habitation stood before,
Abodes of men irregularly massed
Like trees in forests, spread through spacious tracts,
O’er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
And, wheresoe’er the traveller turns his steps,
He sees the barren wilderness erased,
Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild Directress of the plough
Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
—Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the shores
Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the world
With the world’s choicest produce. Hence that sun
Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,
Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
That animating spectacle of sails
That, through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,
Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
Of thunder daunting those who would approach
With hostile purposes the blessed Isle,
Truth’s consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
And Heaven’s good providence, preserved from taint!
With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look; and there behold
Such outrage done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself;
Yes, to avenge her violated rights,
For England's bane.—When soothing darkness spreads
O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed
His recollections, "and the punctual star;
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed;
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord;
Then, in full many a region, once like this
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light
Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes
Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge;
And at the appointed hour a bell is heard,
Of harsher import than the curfew-knell
That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—
A local summons to unceasing toil!
Disorged are now the ministers of day;
And, as they issue from the illuminated pile,
A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—
And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
Mother and little children, boys and girls,
Eater, and each the wonted task resumes
Within this temple, where is offered up
To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
Our ancestors, within the still domain
Of vast cathedral or conventual church,
Their vigil kept; where tapers day and night
On the dim altar burned continually,
In token that the House was evermore
Watching to God. Religious men were they;
Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
Above this transitory world, allow
That there should pass a moment of the year,
When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

Triumph who will in these profane rites
Which we, a generation self-extolled,
As zealously perform! I cannot share
His proud complacency;—yet do I exult,
Casting reserve away, exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
Over the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed; almost a soul
Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
That, by the thinking mind, have been compelled
To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.

For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come
When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thespes,
Tyrre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
Palmyra, central in the desert, fell;
And the Arts died by which they had been raised.
—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
Upon the grave of vanished Syracuse,
And feelingly the Sage shall make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
On mere material instruments;—how weak
Those arts, and high inventions, if unprop'd
By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness!"

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had fallen,
I said, "And, did in truth those vaunted Arts
Possess such privilege, how could we escape
Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,
And would preserve as things above all price,
The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate
Oh! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer;
That made the very thought of country-life
A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd?
Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest! and where the winning grace
Of all the lighter ornaments attached
To time and season, as the year rolled round!"

"Fled!" was the Wanderer's passionate response,
"Fled utterly? or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year—a month—
May bring; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet tempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires,
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name.)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man's heart!
Lo! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in dispatch of each day's little growth
Of household occupation; no nice arts
Of needle-work; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind;
Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command!

The Father, if perchance he still retain
His old employments, goes to field or wood,
No longer led or followed by the Sons;
Idlers perchance they were,—but in his sight;
Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth;
'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
Ne'er to return! That birthright now is lost.
Economists will tell you that the State
Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
And false as monstrous! Can the mother thrive
By the destruction of her innocent sons
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant Being in itself, and makes
Its very spring a season of decay!
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul deprist, dejected—even to love
Of her close tasks, and long captivity.

Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
He is a slave to whom release comes not,
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and tears through the ancient woods;
Or when the sun is shining in the east,
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments! no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, a blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean Being! One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear
Sublime from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
So joyful in its motions, is become
Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs its functions; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,
Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
—Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
On such foundations!"

"Hope is none for him!"
The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,
"And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
If there were not, before those arts appeared,
These structures rose, commingling old and young.
And uripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
If there were not, then, in our far-famed Isle,
Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
As abject, as degraded! At this day,
Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair
Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear;
Or wearing, (shall we say?) in that white growth
An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
Or fierceness, wreathed around their sun-burnt brows,
By savage Nature! Shrivelled are their lips;
Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet.
On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
Are leagues to strike dismay; but outstretched hand
And whining voice denote them suppliants
THE PARSONAGE.

For the least boon that pity can bestow,
Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found;
And with their parents occupy the skirts
Of furze-clad commons; such are born and reared
At the mine’s mouth under impending rocks;
Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave;
Or where their ancestors erected huts,
For the convenience of unlawful gain,
In forest purlieus; and the like are bred,
All England through, where nooks and slips of
ground
Purlieus, in times less jealous than our own,
From the green margin of the public way,
A residence afford them, ‘mid the bloom
And gaiety of cultivated fields.
Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
Do I remember oft-times to have seen
‘Mid Buxton’s dreary heights. In earnest watch,
Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand;
Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,
An unceaseful fact exhibit, and are gone
Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
—Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
And, on the freight of merry passengers
Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;
And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
Wild pursuivants! until their breath is lost,
Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
—But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
Those, bred to little pleasure in themselves,
Are profitless to others.

Turn we then
To Britons born and bred within the pale
Of civil polity, and early trained
To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
The bread they eat. A sample should I give
Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
‘Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
Impart new gladness to the morning air!’
Forgive me if I venture to suspect
That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints;
Beneath a lumberous frock, that to the knees
Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
Fellows to those that lustily upheld
The wooden stools for everlasting use,
Whereon our fathers sat. And mark his brow:
Under whose shaggy canopy are set
Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy stare—
Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange—
Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
A look or motion of intelligence

From infant-crowning of the Christ-cross-row,
Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
—What kindly warmth from touch of fostering
hand,
What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e’er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice!
This torpor is no pitiable work
Of modern ingenuity; no town
Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
To which (and who can tell where or how soon?)
He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce:
His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,
The cartier’s whip that on his shoulder rests
In air high-towering with a boorish pump,
The sceptre of his sway; his country’s name,
Her equal rights, her churches and her schools—
What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
For tens of thousands uninformed as he!
In brief, what liberty of mind is here!”

This ardent sally pleased the mild good Man,
To whom the appeal couched in its closing words
Was pointedly addressed; and to the thoughts
That, in assent or opposition, rose
Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
Prompt utterance; but the Vicar interposed
With invitation urgently renewed.
—We followed, taking as he led, a path
Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,
Whose flexible boughs low bending with a weight
Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
That gave them nourishment. When frosty winds
Howl from the north, what kindly warmth, methought,
Is here—how grateful this impervious screen!
—Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk: a careful hand
Had marked the line, and strewn its surface o’er
With pure cerulean gravel, from the heights
Fetch’d by a neighbouring brook.—Across the vale
The stately fence accompanied our steps;
And thus the pathway, by perennial green
Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor’s mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
With feminine allurement soft and fair,
The mansion’s self displayed;—a reverend pile
With bold projections and recesses deep;
| Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood | That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, apparel |
| Fronting the noon-day sun. We paused to admire | This goodly Matron, shining in the beams |
| The pillared porch, elaborately embossed; | Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board |
| The low wide windows with their multitudes old; | Was spread, and we partook a plain repast. |
| The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone; | Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled |
| And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose, | The mid-day hours with desultory talk; |
| By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers | From trivial themes to general argument |
| And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned: | Passing, as accident or fancy led, |
| Profusion bright! and every flower assuming | Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose |
| A more than natural vividness of hue, | And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve |
| From unaffected contrast with the gloom | Dropping from every mind, the Solitary |
| Of sober cypress, and the darker foil | Resumed the manners of his happier days; |
| Of yew, in which survived some traces, here | And in the various conversations bore |
| Not unbecoming, of grotesque device | A willing, nay, at times, a forward part; |
| And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof | Yet with the grace of one who in the world |
| Rose the slim sash and massy sycamore, | Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now |
| BLENDING their diverse foliage with the green | Occasion given him to display his skill, |
| Of ivy, flourishing thick, that clasped | Upon the steadfast ‘vantage-ground of truth. |
| The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight | He gazed, with admiration unsuppressed, |
| For wren and redbreast.—where they sit and sing | Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale, |
| Their slender ditties when the trees are bare. | Seen, from the shady room in which we sat, |
| Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else | In softened perspective; and more than once |
| Were incomplete) a relic of old times | Praised the consummate harmony serene |
| Happily spared, a little Gothic niche | Of gravity and elegance, diffused |
| Of nicest workmanship; that once had held | Around the mansion and its whole domain; |
| The sculptured image of some patron-saint, | Not, doubtless, without help of female taste |
| Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down | And female care,—“A blessed lot is yours!” |
| On all who entered those religious doors. | The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh |

  But lo! where from the rocky garden-mount
  Crowned by its antique summer-house—descends,
  Light as the silver sown, a radiant Girl;
  For she had recognised her honoured friend,
  The Wanderer ever welcome! A prompt kiss
  The gladsome Child bestows at his request;
  And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
  Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
  And with a prettier restless hand of love.
  —We enter—by the Lady of the place
  Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port:
  A lofty stature unimpressed by time,
  Whose visitation had not wholly spared
  The finer lineaments of form and face;
  To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
  And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
  Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
  On homeward voyage, what—if wind and wave,
  And hardships undergone in various climes,
  Have caused her to abate the virgin pride,
  And that full trim of inexperienced hope
  With which she left her haven—not for this,
  Should the sun strike her, and the impartial breeze
  Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
  Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
A splendid sight, together thus exposed; 
     Dead—but not sullied or deformed by death, 
That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But O, the animation in the miem 
Of those two boys! yea in the very words 
With which the young narrator was inspired, 
When, as our questions led, he told at large 
Of that day’s prowess! Him might I compare, 
His looks, tones, gestures, eager eloquence, 
To a bold brook that splits for better speed, 
And at the self-same moment, works its way 
Through many channels, ever and anon 
Parted and re-united: his compeer 
To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight 
As beautiful—as grateful to the mind. 
—But to what object shall the lovely Girl 
Be likened? She whose countenance and air 
Unite the gracious qualities of both, 
Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his vivid eye 
Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I knew, 
Was full; and had, I doubted not, returned, 
Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile 
Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys 
Withdraw, on summons to their well-earned meal; 
And He—to whom all tongues resigned their rights 
With willingness, to whom the general ear 
Listened with reader patience than to strain 
Of music, lute or harp, a long delight 
That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as One 
Who from truth’s central point serene views 
The compass of his argument—began 
Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

BOOK NINTH.

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE.

ARGUMENT.
Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul—How lively this principle is in Childhood—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted—Those not to be looked for generally but under a just government—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument—The condition of multitudes deploréd—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer’s opinions set in a clearer light—Truth placed within reach of the humblest—Equality—Happy state of the two Boys again adverted to—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government—Glorious effects of this foretold—Walk to the Lake—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—In the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him—The change ascribed to Christianity—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead—Gratitude to the Almighty—Return over the Lake—Parting with the Solitary—Under what circumstances.

"To every Form of being is assigned,"
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
"An active Principle: how’e’er removed From sense and observation, it subsists In all things, in all natures; in the stars Of azure heaven, the unending clouds, In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks, The moving waters, and the invisible air. Whate’er exists hath properties that spread Beyond itself, communicating good, A simple blessing, or with evil mixed; Spirit that knows no insalubrious spot, No chasm, no solitude; from link to link It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds. This is the freedom of the universe; Unfolded still the more, more visible, The more we know; and yet is reverence least, And least respected in the human Mind, Its most apparent home. The food of hope Is meditated action; robbed of this Her sole support, she languishes and dies. We perish also; for we live by hope And by desire; we see by the glad light And breathe the sweet air of futurity; And so we live, or else we have no life. To-morrow—may perchance this very hour (For every moment hath its own to-morrow !) Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick With present triumph, will be sure to find A field before them freshened with the dew Of other expectations;—in which course Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
THE EXCURSION.

A like glad impulse; and so moves the man
‘Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
Or so he ought to move. Ah! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walls
Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour; thence can hear
Reverberations; and a choral song,
Commingling with the incense that ascends,
Undaunted, toward the imperishable heavens,
From her own lonely altar!

Do not think
That good and wise ever will be allowed,
Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly is it said
That Man descends into the Vale of years;
Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of Ages,
As of a final Embrace; though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which ‘tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power,
A throne, that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those
High peaks, that bound the vale where now we
are,
Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,
With all the shapes over their surface spread:
But, while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems
All unsubstantiated,—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below,
Ascending! For on that superior height
Who sits, is disencumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, ’mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmuring of the leaves
Many and idle, visits not his ear;
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these),
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the Soul, that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterred.

And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss;
But for some favour, suited to our need!

What more than that the severing should ensure
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course;
Then only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all;
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.
For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
And Reason’s sway predominates; even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual’s bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler’s grace, partake
Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
Or implement, a passive thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right or interest in the end;
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil? Hence an after-call
For chastisement, and custom, and bonds,
And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
Was Man created; but to obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. And ‘tis known
That when we stand upon our native soil,
Unbowed by such objects as oppress
Our active powers, those powers themselves become
Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
They sweep distemper from the busy day,
And make the chalice of the big round year
Run o’er with gladness; whence the Being moves
In beauty through the world; and all who see
Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood.”
Discourse of the Wanderer, &c.

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what force
Of language shall a feeling heart express
Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
We look for health from seeds that have been sown
In sickness, and for increase in a power
That works by extinction! On themselves
They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts.
To know what they must do; their wisdom is
To look into the eyes of others, thence
To be instructed what they must avoid:
Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
How with most quiet and most silent death,
With the least taint and injury to the air
The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The Sage rejoined, "I thank you—you have spared
My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
A wide compassion which with you I share.
When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
A little one, subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel;
Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;
The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
Of this unhappy lot, in early youth
We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
Shared, though in mild and merciful degree:
Yet was the mind to hinderances exposed,
Through which I struggled, not without distress
And sometimes injury, like a lamb enthralled
Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that breaks
Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
Though with her plumes impaired. If they, whose
souls
Should open while they range the richer fields
Of merry England, are obstructed less
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her soil,
Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
Which it sustained. But no one takes delight
In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
A bondage lurking under shape of good,—

Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
But all too fondly followed and too far;—
To victims, which the merciful can see
Nor think that they are victims—turned to wrongs,
By women, who have children of their own,
Beheld without compassion, yea with praise!
I spake of mischief by the wise diffused
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
The healthier, the surer, we become;
Deception which a moment may destroy!
Lastly, I mourned for those whom I had seen
Corrupted and cast down, on favoured ground,
Where circumstance and nature had combined
To shelter innocence, and cherish love;
Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of mind;
Thus would have lived, or never have been born.

Alas! what differs more than man from man!
And whence that difference? whence but from himself?
For see the universal Race endowed
With the same upright form!—The sun is fixed,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Fixed, within reach of every human eye;
The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears;
The verdant field refreshes fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will;
Conscience to guide and check; and death to be
Forespoken, immortality conceived
By all,—a blissful immortality,
To them whose holiness on earth shall make
The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be deemed
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;
Hard to be won, and only by a few;
Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low; for proudly graced—
Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference between man and man.

Then let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts
Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
Of blooming Boys (whom we behold even now)
Blest in their several and their common lot!
A few short hours of each returning day
The thriving prisoners of their village-school:
And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy;
To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
Idle—but no delay, no harm, no loss;
For every genial power of heaven and earth,
Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
Obsequiously doth take upon herself
To labour for them; bringing each in turn
The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
Beauty, or strength! Such privilege is theirs,
Granted alike in the outset of their course
To both; and, if that partnership must cease,
I grieve not," to the Pastor here he turned,
"Much as I glory in that child of yours,
Ripine not for his cottage-comrade, whom
Belike no higher destiny awaits
Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled;
The wish for liberty to live—content
With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace of
mind,
Within the bosom of his native vale.
At least, whatever fate the noon of life
Reserves for either, sure it is that both
Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn;
Whether regarded as a jocund time,
That in itself may terminate, or lead
In course of nature to a sober eye.
Both have been fairly dealt with; looking back
They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind."

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
Some weighty matter; then, with fervent voice
And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

"O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizeing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to teach
Those who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture sustained; or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the help
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free!
This sacred right, the lying babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven’s will,
For the protection of his innocence;
And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
To impious use,—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to reach the State’s parental ear;
Who, if indeed she own a mother’s heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
The unquestionable good—which, England, safe
From interference of external force,
May grant at leisure; without risk incurred
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
Others shall e’er be able to undo.

Look! and behold, from Calpe’s sunburnt cliffs
To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
Laws overturned; and territory split,
Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
Remains entire and indivisible:
And, if that ignorance were removed, which breeds
Within the compass of their several shores
Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
Might still preserve the beautiful repose
Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.
—The discipline of slavery is unknown
Among us,—hence the more do we require
The discipline of virtue; order else
Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
Thus, duties rising out of good possession
And prudent caution needful to avert
Impending evil, equally require
That the whole people should be taught and trained.
So shall licentiousness and black resolve
Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
Their place; and genuine piety descend,
Like an inheritance, from age to age.

With such foundations laid, avast the fear
Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
To the prevention of all healthful growth
Through mutual injury! Rather in the law
Of increase and the mandate from above
Rejoice!—and ye have special cause for joy.
—For, as the element of air affords
An easy passage to the industrious bees
Fraught with their bounties; and a way so smooth
For those ordained to take their sounding flight
From the throned hive, and settle where they list
In fresh abodes—their labour to renew;
So the wide waters, open to the power,
The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth;
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favours hope
Or bold adventure; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward.

Yes," he continued, kindling as he spake,
"Change wide, and deep, and silently performed,
This Land shall witness; and as days roll on,
Earth's universal frame shall feel the effect;
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanised society; and bloom
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrances,
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
From culture, unexclusively bestowed
On Albion's noble Race in freedom born,
Expect these mighty issues: from the pains
And faithful care of unambitious schools
Instructing simple childhood's ready ear:
Thence look for these magnificent results!
—Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers;
Ah! sleep not there in shame! Shall Wisdom's voice
From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree!
Trust not to partial care a general good;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian plague
Of darkness, stretched o'er guilty Europe, makes
The brightness more conspicuous that invests
The happy Island where ye think and act;
Now, when destitution is a prime pursuit,
Show to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given."

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
"Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
Upon this flowery slope; and see,—beyond—
The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue;
As if preparing for the peace of evening.
How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
Under a sheltering tree."—Upon this hint
We rose together: all were pleased; but most
The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed with joy.
Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanished—eager to impart the scheme
To her loved brother and his shy companion.
—Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
And down the vale along the streamlet's edge
Pursued our way, a broken company,
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The l麦ty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A two-fold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful,
Beneath him, shewed his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world:
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!

"Ah! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it!"

These few words
The Lady whispered, while we stood and gazed
Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,
"I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.
How pure his spirit! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude!
While he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in you quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sunbeam's gift, whose peace
The suffranguce only of a breath of air!"

More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard
Sent from the joyned hearts of those two Boys,
Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after us.
With caution we embarked; and now the pair
For prouder service were addict; but each,
Wishful to leave an opening for my choice,
Dropped the light oar as eager hand had seized.
Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
Their place I took—and for a grateful office
Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere!
A Youth, I practised this delightful art;
Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars
Free from obstruction; and the boat advanced
Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
That, disentangled from the shudy boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
With correspondent wings the abyss of air.

"Observe," the Vicar said, "you rocky isle
With birch-trees fringed; my hand shall guide
The helm,
While thitherward we shape our course; or while
We seek that other, on the western shore;
Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
Supporting gracefully a massy dome
Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep."

"Turn where we may," said I, "we cannot err
In this delicious region."—Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us; change of place,
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.

—Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised,
And unsought pleasures springing up by chance;
As if some friendly Genius had ordained
That, as the day thus far had been enriched
By acquisition of sincere delight,
The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast—served by our young companions
With rival earnestness and kindred glee.
Launched from our hands the smooth stone
Skimmed the lake;
With shouts we raised the echoes;—stillier sounds
The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
To be repeated thence, but gently sank
Into our hearts; and charmed the peaceful flood.
Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
From land and water; lilies of each hue—
Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
And court the wind; and leaves of that shy plant,
(Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did the place
And season yield; but, as we re-embarked,
Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
"The fire, that burned so bright to our wish,
Where is it now?—Deserted on the beach—
Dying, or dead! nor shall the fuming breeze
Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
Whose ends are gained? Behold an emblem here
Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys!
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude!"

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves; then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer; or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeples on which the careless goat
Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls;
And thus the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursued its voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill's side; and, as we clomb,
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
O'er the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake, in compass seen—far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved
From all intrusion of the restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
And choice of moss-clad stones, wherein we couched
Or sat reclined; admiring quietly
The general aspect of the scene; but each
Not seldom over anxious to make known
His own discoveries, or to favourite points
Directing notice, merely from a wish
To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
That rapturous moment never shall I forget
When these particular interests were effaced
From every mind!—Already had the sun,
Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attained his western bound; but rays of light—
Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain tops or veiled
By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide;
And multitudes of little floating clouds,

Through their ethereal texture pierced—are we,
Who saw, of change were conscious—had become
Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised—
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open side
We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
On the refugent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed:

"Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought,
Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
The radiant Cherubim;—accept the thanks
Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
Presume to offer; we, who—from the breast
Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of thy face—
Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in thy presence stand
Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty streamed forth
From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal stain.
—Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
Time's weary course! Or if, by thy decree,
The consummation that will come by stealth
Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
As it is written in thy holy book,
Throughout all lands: let every nation hear
The high behest, and every heart obey;
Both for the love of purity, and hope
Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise,
To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.
—Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
The guides appointed, and the ransom paid.
Alas! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

So fare the many; and the thoughtful few,
Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
Shall it endure?—Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed;
And the kind never perish? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And never to fail? Shall that best day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studios of mutual benefit; and be,
Whom Morn awakens, among dews and flowers
Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
Be happy in himself?—The law of faith
Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve!
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart!
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the hope accomplished; and thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

Once," and with mild demeanour, as he spake,
On us the venerable Pastor turned
His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
"Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of your mountain-cove,
To those inventions of corrupted man
Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there—
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
Of those terrific Idols some received
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease
Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere

Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
Flung from the body of devouring fires,
To Taranis erected on the heights
By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
Exultingly, in view of open day
And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
Or to Andates, female Power! who gave
(For so they fancied) glorious victory.
—A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright
The appearances of things! From such, how changed
The existing worship; and with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest!
So wide the difference, a willing mind
Might almost think, at this affecting hour,
That paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again: and to a happy few,
In its original beauty, here restored.

Whence but from thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil; as if one extreme
Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in your reverend Pile,
Called to such office by the peaceful sound
Of sabbath bells; and ye, who sleep in earth,
All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls!
For you, in presence of this little band
Gathered together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works; and him, who is endowed
With searest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Conscious of that abundant favour showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth
We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.
These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or heaved; the roaring waters, and the still—
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifices,
They know if I be silent, mourn or even:
For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent; and thought is praise to him,
Audible praise, to thee, omniscent Mind,  
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!”

This vesper-service closed, without delay,  
From that exalted station to the plain  
Descending, we pursued our homeward course,  
In mute composition, o'er the shadowy lake,  
Under a faded sky. No trace remained  
Of those celestial splendours; grey the vault—  
Pure, cloudless, ether; and the star of eve  
Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared  
Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and some  
Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth  
In twinkling lustre; ere the boat attained  
Her mooring-place; where, to the sheltering tree,  
Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,  
With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced  
The dewy fields; but ere the Vicar's door  
Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps;  
Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed  
A farewell salutation; and, the like  
Receiving, took the slender path that leads  
To the one cottage in the lonely dell:

But turned not without welcome promise made  
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits  
Of yet another summer's day, not loth  
To wander with us through the fertile vales,  
And o'er the mountain-wastes. “Another sun,”  
Said he, “shall shine upon us, ere we part;  
Another sun, and peradventure more;  
If time, with free consent, be yours to give,  
And season favours.”

To enfeebled Power,  
From this communion with uninjured Minds,  
What renovation had been brought; and what  
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,  
Dejected, and habitually disposed  
To seek, in degradation of the Kind,  
Excuse and solace for her own defects;  
How far those erring notions were reformed;  
And whether aught, of tendency as good  
And pure, from further intercourse ensued;  
This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,  
Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts  
Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—  
My future labours may not leave untold.
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Page 16.

'And, hovering, round it often did a swan fly.'

From a short MS. poem read to me when an undergraduate, by my schoolfellow and friend, Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.

Page 24.

'The Borderers.'

This Dramatic Piece, as noticed in its title-page, was composed in 1785-6. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unread among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly it has been revised with some care; but, as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters; above all, in respect to the two leading Persons of the Drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart, and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the Revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of this process, and it was whilst that knowledge was fresh upon my memory, that the Tragedy of 'The Borderers' was composed.

Page 64.

'The Norman boy.'

'Among ancient Trees there are few, I believe, at least in France, so worthy of attention as an Oak which may be seen in the 'Pays de Caux,' about a league from Yvetot, close to the church, and in the burial-ground of Alonville. The height of this Tree does not answer to its girth; the trunk, from the roots to the summit, forms a complete cone; and the inside of this cone is hollow throughout the whole of its height. Such is the Oak of Alonville, in its state of nature. The hand of Man, however, has endeavored to impress upon it a character still more interesting, by adding a religious feeling to the respect which its age naturally inspires. The lower part of its hollow trunk has been transformed into a Chapel of six or seven feet in diameter, carefully wainscotted and paved, and an open iron gate guards the humble Sanctuary. Leading to it there is a staircase, which twists round the body of the Tree. At certain seasons of the year divine service is performed in this Chapel. The summit has been broken off many years, but there is a surface at the top of the trunk, of the diameter of a very large tree, and from it rises a pointed roof, covered with slates, in the form of a steeple, which is surmounted with an iron Cross, that rises in a picturesque manner from the middle of the leaves, like an ancient Hermitage above the surrounding Wood. Over the entrance to the Chapel an inscription appears, which informs us it was erected by the Abbé du Djéret, Curate of Alonville in the year 1695; and over a door is another, dedicating it 'To Our Lady of Peace.'

Vide 14 No. Saturday Magazine.

Page 117.

'To the Daisy.'

This Poem, and two others to the same flower, were written in the year 1802; which is mentioned, because in some of the ideas, though not in the manner in which those ideas are connected, and likewise even in some of the expressions, there is a resemblance to passages in a Poem (lately published) of Mr. Montgomery's, entitled, a Field Flower. This being said, Mr. Montgomery will not think any apology due to him; I cannot, however, help addressing him in the words of the Father of English Poets.

'Though it happe me to refer unto--
That ye han in your freshe songis saeld,
Forberith me, and beth not ill aaped,
Sibh that ye se I doe it in the honour
Of Love, and cleis in service of the Flour.'

1807.

Page 129.

'The Seven Sisters.'

The Story of this Poem is from the German of Frederica Brun.

Page 131.

'The Waggoner.'

Several years after the event that forms the subject of the Poem, in company with my friend, the late Mr. Coleridge, I happened to fall in with the person to whom the name of Benjamin is given. Upon our expressing regret that we had not, for a long time, seen upon the road either him or his waggon, he said to me--'They could not do without me; and as to the man who was put in my place, no good could come out of him; he was a man of no ideas.' The fact of my discarded her's getting the horses out of a great difficulty with a word, as related in the poem, was told me by an eye-witness.
NOTES.

Page 156.

After the line, 'Can any mortal cog come to her,' followed in the MS. an incident which has been kept back. Part of the suppressed verses shall here be given as a gratification of private feeling, which the well-disposed reader will find no difficulty in excusing. They are now printed for the first time.

* * *

But Benjamin, in his vexation,
Possesses inward consolation;
He knows his ground, and hopes to find
A spot with all things to his mind.
An upright mural block of stone,
Mist with pure water trickling down.
A slender spring, but Kind to man
It is, a true Samaritan.

Close to the highway, pouring out
Its offering from a chink or spout;
Whence all, how'er arareth, or dropping
With toil, may drink, and without stooping.

Cries Benjamin, 'Where is it, where?
Voice it hath none, but must be near.'

- A star, declining towards the west,
Upon the watery surface threw
Its image tremulously impress,
That just marked out the object and withdrew.

Right welcome service!

* * *

ROCK OF NAMES.

Light is the strain, but not unjust
To thee, and thy memorial trust
That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness;
Tokens, as year hath followed year
How changed, alas, in character!
For they were grave on thy smooth breast
By hands of those my soul loved best;
Mieck women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopful grave;
Their hands and mien, when side by side
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,
We worked until the Jothis took
Shapes that defied a scornful look;
Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing.
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
 Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! 0 thought of gain.
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as said
With a staid heart but playful head;
And fail not Thou, loved Rock! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asea.'
NOTES.

Page 158.

'Earth helped him with the cry of blood.'

This line is from "The Battle of Bosworth Field," by Sir John Beaumont (brother to the Dramatist), whose poems are written with much spirit, elegance, and harmony; and have deservedly been reprinted lately in Chalmers' Collection of English Poets.

Page 159.

'And both the wading Fish that swim
Through Boswell-Tarn, &c.'

It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal Fish, inhabitants of this Tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld—Blenecartha, mentioned before, is the old and proper name of the mountain vulgarly called Saddletick.

Page 159.

'Armour rusting in his Halls
On the blood of Clifford falls.'

The martial character of the Cliffords is well known to the readers of English history; but it may not be improper here to say, by way of comment on these lines and what follows, that besides several others who perished in the same manner, the four immediate Predecessors of the Person in whose bearing this is supposed to be spoken, all died in the Field.

Page 160.

'Dies.'

This poem began with the following stanza, which has been displaced on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject, and as rather prologuing, than preparing for, the due effect of the allusion to the genius of Plato:—

Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
O'er bronless water, on Locarno's lake,
Bears him on while proudly sailing
He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:
Behold! the manly spirit of reservoir
Fashions his neck into a guilty curve;
An arch throws back between luxuriant wings
Of whistnut garniture, like fest-trees boughs
To which, on some unruffled morning, elings
A flaky weight of winter's purest snows!
—Behold!—as with a gushing impulse heaves
That downy prow, and softly cleaves
The mirror of the crystal flood,
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
And peevish rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate
Or rival, save the Queen of night
Showering down a silver light,
From heaven, upon her chosen Favourie!

Page 168.

'Living hill'

—'while the living hill
Heaved with convulsive threes, and all was still.'

DR. PAINE.

Page 173.

'The Wishing-gate.'

'In the Vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate.'

Having been told, upon what I thought good authority, that this gate had been destroyed, and the opening, where it hung, walled up, I gave vent immediately to my feelings in these stanzas. But going to the place some time after, I found, with much delight, my old favourite unmolested.

Page 197.

'Something less than joy, but more than dull content.'

COURTESY OF WINCHELSEA.

Page 211.

'Wild Redbreast,' &c.

This Sonnet, as Poetry, explains itself; yet the scene of the incident having been a wild wood, it may be doubted, as a point of natural history, whether the bird was aware that his attentions were bestowed upon a human, or even a living creature. But a Redbreast will perch upon the foot of a gardener at work, and alight on the handle of the spade when his hand is half upon it—this I have seen. And under my own roof I have witnessed affecting instances of the creature's friendly visits to the chambers of sick persons, as described in the verses to the Redbreast, page 156. One of these welcome intruders used frequently to roost upon a nail in the wall, from which a picture had hung, and was ready, as morning came, to pipe his song in the hearing of the Invalid, who had been long confined to her room. These attachments to a particular person, when marked and continued, used to be reckoned ominous; but the invocation is passing away.

Page 218.

The following is extracted from the journal of my fellow-traveller, to which, as persons acquainted with my poems will know I have been obliged on other occasions:—

'Dumfries, August, 1809.

'On our way to the churchyard where Burns is buried, we were accompanied by a bookseller, who showed us the outside of Burns's house, where he had lived the last three years of his life, and where he died. It has a mean appearance, and is in a bye-situation; the front whitewashed; dirty about the doors, as most Scotch houses are; flowering plants in the window. Went to visit his grave; he lies in a corner of the churchyard, and his second son, Francis Wallace, beside him. There is no stone to mark the spot; but a hundred guineas have been collected to be expended upon some sort of monument. 'There,' said the bookseller, pointing to a pompous monument, 'lies Mr. — (I have forgotten the name)—a remarkably clever man; he was an attorney, and scarcely ever lost a cause he undertook. Burns made many a lampoon upon him, and there they rest as you see.' We looked at Burns's grave with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own poet's epitaph:—

'Is there a man, &c.'

'The churchyard is full of grave-stones and expensive monuments, in all sorts of fantastic shapes—obelisk-wise, pillar-wise, &c. When our guide had left us we turned again to Burns's grave, and afterwards went to his house, wishing to inquire after Mrs. Burns, who was gone to spend some time by the sea-shore with her children. We spoke to the maid-servant at the door, who invited us forward, and we sat down in the parlour.
The walls were coloured with a blue wash; on one side of the fire was a mahogany desk; opposite the windows was a clock, which Burns mentions, in one of his letters, having received as a present. The house was cleanly neat in the inside, the stones of stone scoured white, the kitchen on the right side of the passage, the parlour on the left. In the room where the parlour is now was situated the Dining Room, where he was received by Mrs. Burns, who was now in great sorrow for the death of Wallace. She said that Mrs. B.'s youngest son was now at Christ's Hospital. We were glad to leave Dumfries, where we could think of little but poor Burns, and his moving about on that unprofitable ground. In our road to Brownhill, the next stage, we passed Ellisland, at a little distance on our right—his farm-house. Our pleasure in looking round would have been still greater, if the road had led us nearer the spot.

I cannot take leave of this country which we passed through to-day, without mentioning that we saw the Cumberland mountains within half a mile of Ellisland. Burns's house, the last view we had of them. Drayton has prettily described the connexion which this neighbourhood has with ours, when he makes Skiddaw say—'

Scruffl, from the sky
That Annandale doth crown, with a most amorous eye
Saintes me every day, or at my pride looks grim,
Oft threatening me with clouds, as I oft threaten him.'

'These lines came to my brother's memory, as well as to the Cumberland saying,—

'If Skiddaw hath a cap
Scruffl wots well of that.'

'We talked of Burns, and of the prospect he must have had, perhaps from his own door, of Skiddaw and his companions; indulging ourselves in the fancy that we might have been personally known to each other, and he have looked upon those objects with more pleasure for our sakes.'

Page 236.

'Jocose! as from Caubus soutllward.'
(See Dedication to Descriptive Sketches.)

This excellent Person, one of my earliest and dearest friends, died in the year 1830. We were under-graduates together of the same year, at the same college; and companions in many a delightful ramble through his own romantic Country of North Wales. Much of the latter part of his life he passed in comparative solitude; which I know was often cheered by remembrance of your youthful adventures, and of the beautiful regions which, at home and abroad, we had visited together. Our long friendship was never subject to a moment's interruption,—and, while revising these volumes for the last time, I have been so often reminded of my loss, with a not unpleasant sadness, that I trust the Reader will excuse this passing mention of a Man who well deserves from me something more than so brief a notice. Let me only add, that during the middle part of his life he resided many years as Incumbent of the Living at a Parsonage in Oxfordshire, which is the subject of the 7th of the "Miscellaneous Sonnets," Part 8.


In this and a succeeding Sonnet on the same subject, let me be understood as a Poet availing himself of the situation which the King of Sweden occupied; and of the principles avowed in his manifestos; as laying hold of these advantages for the purpose of embodying moral truths. This remark might, perhaps, as well have been suppressed; for to those who may be in sympathy with the course of these Poems, it will be superfluous; and will, I fear, be thrown away upon that other class, whose beclouded vision of the intuited despotic despot hereafter placed in contrast with him, is the most melancholy evidence of degradation in British feeling and intellect which the times have furnished.

Page 240. Sonnet xxvii.

'Danger which they fear, and honour which they understand not.'

Words in Lord Brooke's Life of Sir F. Sidney.

Page 244.

'Saragossa.'

In this Sonnet I am under some obligations to one of an Italian author, to which I cannot refer.

Page 248.

The event is thus recorded in the Journals of the day:—'When the Austrians took Hockenheim, in one part of the engagement they got to the brow of the hill, whence they had their first view of the Rhine. The Rhine instantly halted—not a gun was fired—not a voice heard: they stood gaz in the river with those feelings which the events of the last fifteen years at once called up. Prince Schwarzenberg rode up to know the cause of this sudden stop; they then gave three cheers, rushed after the enemy, and drove them into the water.'

Page 252.

'Thanksgiving Ode.'

Wholly unworthy of touching upon the momentous subject here treated would that Poet be, before whose eyes the present distresses under which this kingdom is labouring could interpose a veil sufficiently thick to hide, or even to obscure, the splendour of this great moral triumph. If I have given way to exultation, unchecked by these distresses, it might be sufficient to protect me from a charge of insensibility, should I state my own belief that the sufferings will be transitory. Upon the wisdom of a very large majority of the British nation rested that generosity which poured out the treasures of this country for the deliverance of Europe: in the same national wisdom we are basking in time of prosperity, an energy not inferior to that which has been displayed in war, they confide, who encourage a firm hope, that the cup of our wealth will be gradually replenished. There will, doubtless, be no few ready to indulge in regret and reproachings; and to feed a morbid satisfaction, by aggravating these burtined in imagination; in order that calamity so confidently prophesied, as it has not the shape which their sagacity allotted to it, may appear as grievous as possible under another. But the body of the nation will not quarrel with the gain, because it might have been purchased at a less price: and, acknowledging in these sufferings, which they feel, to have been in a great degree unavoidable, a consecration of their noble efforts, they will vigorously apply themselves to remedy the evil.

Now is it at the expense of rational patriotism, or in disregard of sound philosophy, that I have given vent to feelings tending to encourage a martial spirit in the bosoms of my countrymen, at a time when there is a general outcry against the prevalence of these dispositions. The British army, both by its skill and valour in the field, and by the discipline which rendered it, to the inhabitants of the several countries where its operations were carried on, a protection from the violence of their own troops, has performed services that will not allow the language of gratitude and admiration to be suppressed or restrained (whatever be the temper of the
NOTES.

public mind) through a scrupulous dread lest the tribute due to the past should prove an injurious incentive for the future. Every man deserving the name of Briton adds his voice to the chorus which extols the exploits of his countrymen, with a consciousness, at times overpowering the effort, that they transcend all praise.—But this particular sentiment, thus irresistibly excited, is not sufficient. The nation would err grievously, if she suffered the abuse which other states have made of military power to prevent her from perceiving that no people ever was or can be, independent, free, or secure, much less great, in any same application of the word, without a cultivation of military virtues. Nor let it be overlooked, that the benefits derivable from these sources are placed within the reach of Great Britain, under conditions peculiarly favourable. The same insular position, which, by rendering territorial incorporation impossible, utterly precludes the desire of conquest under the most seductive shape it can assume, enables her to rely, for her defence against foreign foes, chiefly upon a species of armed force from which her own liberties have nothing to fear. Such are the privileges of her situation; and, by permitting, invite her to give way to the courageous instincts of human nature, and to strengthen and refine them by culture.

But some more than insatiable that a design exists to subvert the civil character of the English people by unconstitutional applications and unnecessary increase of military power. The advisers and abettors of such a design, were it possible that it should exist, would be guilty of the most heinous crime, which, upon this planet, can be committed. Trusting that this apprehension arises from the delusive influences of an honourable jealousy, let me hope that the martial qualities which I venerate will be fostered by adherence to those good old usages which experience has sanctioned; and by availing ourselves of the new means of indisputable promise: particularly by applying, in its utmost possible extent, that system of tuition whose master-spring is a habit of gradually enlightened subordination;—by imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind, among all classes of the community, may love, admire, and be prepared and accomplished to defend, that country under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded, and its riches acquired;—by just dealing towards all orders of the state, so that, no members of it being trampled upon, courage may everywhere continue to rest immovably upon its ancient English foundation, personal self-respect;—by adequate rewards, and permanent honours, conferred upon the deserving;—by encouraging athletic exercises and manly sports among the peasantry of the country; and by especial care to provide and support institutions, in which, during a time of peace, a reasonable proportion of the youth of the country may be instructed in military science.

I have only to add, that I should feel little satisfaction in giving to the world these limited attempts to celebrate the virtues of my country, if I did not encourage a hope that a subject, which it has fallen within my province to treat only in the mass, will by other poets be illustrated in that detail which its importance calls for, and which will allow opportunities to give the merited applause to persons as well as to things.

This ode was given along with other pieces, now interspersed through this volume.

Page 253.

'Discipline the rule whereof is passion.'

—LORD BYRON.

Page 255. Sonnet I.

If in this Sonnet I should seem to have borne a little too hard upon the personal appearance of the worthy

Poissards of Calais, let me take shelter under the authority of my lamented friend, the late Sir George Beaumont. His, a most accurate observer, used to say of them, that their features and countenances seemed to have conformed to those of the creatures they dealt in; at all events the resemblance was striking.

Page 255.

'Bruges.'

This is not the first poetical tribute which in our times has been paid to this beautiful city. Mr. Southey, in the "Poet's Pilgrimage" speaks of it in lines which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting with my own.

'Time hath not wronged her, nor hath ruin sought Rudely her splendid structures to destroy,
Save in those recent days, with evil fraught, Which mutability, in drunken joy
Triumphant, and from all restraint released,
Let loose her fierce and many-headed beast.

But for the scars in that unhappy rage
Inflicted, firm she stands and undaunted;
Like our first Sire, a beautiful old age
Is hers in venerable arrays arrayed;
And yet, to her, benignant stars may bring
What fate denies to man,—a second spring.

When I may read of tilts in days of old,
And tournaments graced by Chieftains of renown,
Fair dames, grave citizens, and warriors bold,
If fancy would portray some stately town,
Which for such pomp fit theatre should be,
Fair Bruges, I shall then remember thee.'

In this city are many vestiges of the splendour of the Burgundian Duke, and the long black mantle universally worn by the females is probably a remnant of the old Spanish connection, which, if I do not much deceive myself, is traceable in the grave deportment of its inhabitants. Bruges is comparatively little disturbed by that curious contest, or rather conflict, of Flemish with French propensities in matters of taste, so conspicuous through other parts of Flanders. The hotel to which we drove at Ghent furnished an odd instance. In the passages were paintings and statues over the antique, of Hebe and Apollo; and in the garden, a little pond, about a yard and a half in diameter, with a weeping willow bending over it, and under the shade of that tree, in the centre of the pond a wooden painted statue of a Dutch or Flemish boar, looking ineffectually tender upon his mistress, and embracing her. A living duck, tethered at the feet of the sculptured lovers, alternately tormented a miserable eel and itself with endeavours to escape from its bonds and prison. Had we chosen to espay the hostess of the hotel in this quaint rural retreat, the exhibition would have been complete. She was a true Flemish figure, in the dress of the days of Hulbein; her symbol of office, a weighty bunch of keys, pendent from her portly waist. In Bruges, the modern taste in costume, architecture, &c., has got the mastery; in Ghent there is a struggle; but in Bruges old images are still paramount, and an air of monastic life among the quiet goings-on of a thinly-peopled city is inexpresseably soothing; a pensive grace seems to be cast over all, even the very children.—Extract from Journal.
in the very middle of the wall, a breach of 300 feet wide has been beaten down by the famous Roland, and we may have a good idea of what the mountaineers call the 'Breche de Roland.'—Raymond's Epenesses.

Page 257.
'Misere Domine.'

See the beautiful Song in Mr. Coleridge's Tragedy, 'The Remorse.' Why is the harp of Quantock silent?

Page 257.
'Not, like his great Compeers, indigually
Dost Danube spring to life!'

Before this quarter of the Black Forest was inhabited, the source of the Danube might have suggested some of those sublime images which Armstrong has so finely described; at present, the contrast is most striking. The Spring appears in a capacious stone Basin in front of a Ducal palace, with a pleasure-ground opposite; then, passing under the pavement, takes the form of a little, clear, bright, black, vigorous rill, barely wide enough to tempt the agility of a child five years old to leap over it,—and entering the garden, it joins, after a course of a few hundred yards, a stream much more considerable than itself. The copiousness of the spring at Donau-chapen must have procured for it the honour of being named the Source of the Danube.

Page 257.
"The Stahnbach" is a narrow Stream, which, after a long course on the heights, comes to the sharp edge of a somewhat overhanging precipice, overleaps it with a bound, and, after a fall of 300 feet, forms again a rivulet. The vocal powers of these musical Beggars may seem to be exaggerated; but this wild and savage air was utterly unlike any sounds I had ever heard; the notes reached me from a distance, and on what occasion they were sung I could not guess, only they seemed to belong in some way or other, to the Waterfall—and reminded me of religious services chanted to Streams and Fountains in Pagan times. Mr. Southey has thus accurately characterized the peculiarities of this music: 'While we were at the Waterfall, some half-score peasants, chiefy women and girls, assembled just out of reach of the Spring, and set up—surely, the wildest chorus that ever was heard by human ears,—a song not of articulate sounds, but in which the voice was used as a mere instrument of music, more flexible than any with which art could produce—sweet, powerful, and thrilling beyond description.'—See Notes to "A Tale of Paraguay."

Page 259.
'Engelberg.'
The Convent whose site was pointed out, according to tradition, in this manner, is seated at its base. The architecture of the building is unimpressive, but the situation is worthy of the honour which the imagination of the mountaineers has conferred upon it.

Page 267.
'Though searching dams and many an empty sawHave marred this work;'

This picture of the Last Supper has not only been grievously injured by time, but the greatest part of it, if not the whole, is said to have been retouched, or painted over again. These niceties may be left to connoisseurs, —I speak of it as I felt. The copy exhibited in London some years ago, and the engraving by Merthen, are both admirable; but in the original is a power which neither of those works has attained, or even approached.

Page 268.
'Of figures human and divine,'

The Statues ranged round the spire and along the roof of the Cathedral of Milan, have been found fault with by persons whose exclusive taste is unfortunate for themselves. It is true that the same expense and labour, judiciously directed to purposes more strictly architectural, might have much heightened the general effect of the building; for, seen from the ground, the Statues appear diminutive. But the coup-d'oeil, from the best point of view, which is half way up the spire, must strike an unprejudiced person with admiration; and surely the selection and arrangement of the Figures is exquisitely fitted to support the religion of the country in the imaginations and feelings of the spectator. It was with great pleasure that I saw, during the two ascents which we made, several children, of different ages, tripping up and down the slender spire, and pausing to look around them, with feelings much more animated than could have been derived from these or the finest works of art, if placed within easy reach. —Remember also that you have the Alps on one side, and on the other the Apenines, with the plain of Lombardy between!

Page 268.
'Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a living Stream,
The glacial pillars join in solemn praise.'

This Procession is a part of the sacramental service performed once a month. In the valley of Engelberg we had the good fortune to be present at the Grand Festival of the Virgin—but the Procession on that day, though consisting of upwards of 1000 persons, assembled from all the branches of the sequestered valley, was much less striking (notwithstanding the solemnity of the surrounding scenery): it wanted both the simplicity of the other and the accompaniment of the Glacier-columns, whose sisterly resemblance to the moving Figures gave it a most beautiful and solemn peculiarity.

Page 269. Somet xxx.
Near the town of Bouligne, and overhanging the beach, are the remains of a tower which bears the name of Caligula, who here terminated his western expedition, of which these sea-shells were the boasted spoils. And at no great distance from these ruins, Buonnaparte, standing upon a mound of earth, harangued his 'Army of England,' reminding them of the exploits of Caesar, and pointing towards the white cliffs, upon which their standards were to float. He recommended also a subscription to be raised among the Soldiery to erect on that ground, in memory of the foundation of the 'Legion of Honour,' a Column—which was not completed at the time we were there.

Page 268.
'Ve mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To roverse;'

This is a most grateful sight for an Englishman returning to his native land. Every where one misses in the cultivated grounds abroad, the animated and soothing accompaniment of animals ranging and selecting their own food at will.

Page 268.
'For as St. Maurice, from you eastern Forks,' Les Fourches, the point at which the two chains of mountains part, that inclose the Valais, which terminates at St. Maurice.
Sarnen, one of the two capitals of the Canton of Unterwalden; the spot here alluded to is close to the town, and is called the Landenberg, from the tyrant of that name, whose chateau formerly stood there. On the 1st of January, 1898, the great day which the confederated Heroes had chosen for the deliverance of their country, all the castles of the Governors were taken by force or stratagem; and the Tyrants themselves conducted, with their creatures, to the frontiers, after having witnessed the destruction of their strong-holds. From that time the Landenberg has been the place where the Legislators of this division of the Canton assemble. The site, which is well described by Ebel, is one of the most beautiful in Switzerland.

The bridges of Lucerne are roofed, and open at the sides, so that the passenger has, at the same time, the benefit of shade, and a view of the magnificent country. The pictures are attached to the railings; those from Schiniger's History, on the Cathedral-bridge, amount, according to my notes, to 246. Subjects from the Old Testament face the passenger as he goes towards the Cathedral, and those from the New as he returns. The pictures on these bridges, as well as those in most other parts of Switzerland, are not to be spoken of as works of art; but they are instruments admirably answering the purpose for which they were designed.

These words were quoted to me from "Yarrow Unvisited," by Sir Walter Scott, when I visited him at Abbotsford, a day or two before his departure for Italy; and the affecting condition in which he was when he locked upon Rome from the Janicule Mount, was reported to me by a lady who had the honour of conducting him thither.

If any English reader should be desirous of knowing how far I am justified in thus describing the epitaphs of Chibberon, he will find translated specimens of them in this Volume, under the head of "Epitaphs and Elegiac Pieces."

It would be ungentlemanly not to advert to the religious movement that, since the composition of these verses in 1857, has made itself felt, more or less strongly, throughout the English Church—a movement that takes, for its first principle, a devout deference to the voice of Christian antiquity. It is not my office to pass judgment on questions of theological detail; but my own repugnance to the spirit and system of Romanism has been so repeatedly and, I trust, feelingly expressed, that I shall not be suspected of a leaning that way, if I do not join in the grave charge, thrown out, perhaps in the heat of controversy, against the learned and pious men to whose labours I allude. I speak apart from controversy; but, with faith in the moral temper which would elevate the present by doing reverence to the past, I would draw cheerful auguries for the English Church from this movement, as likely to restore among us a tone of piety more earnest and real, than that produced by the mere formalities of the understanding, refusing, in a degree, which I cannot but lament, that its own temper and judgment shall be controlled by those of antiquity.

Within a couple of hours of my arrival at Rome, I saw from Monte Pincio, the Pine tree as described in the sonnet; and, while expressing admiration at the beauty of its appearance, I was told by an acquaintance of my fellow-traveller, who happened to join us at the moment, that a price had been paid for it by the late Sir G. Beaumont, upon condition that the proprietor should not act upon his known intention of cutting it down.

This famous sanctuary was the original establishment of Saint Romuald, (or Romuald, as our ancestors Saxonised the name) in the 11th century, the ground (campo) being given by a Count Maldo. The Camaldolese, however, have spread wide as a branch of Benedictines, and may therefore be classed among the gentle-ness of the monastic orders. The society comprehends two orders, monks and hermits; symbolized by their rules, two doves drinking out of the same cup. The monastery in which the monks here reside, is beautifully situated, but a large unattractive edifice, not unlike a factory. The hermitage is placed in a loffer and wilder region of the forest. It comprehends between 20 and 20 distinct residences, each including for its single hermit an enclosed piece of ground and three very small apartments. There are days of indulgence when the hermit may quit his cell, and when old age arrives, he descends from the mountain and takes his abode among the monks.

My companion had in the year 1831, fallen in with the monk, the subject of these two sonnets, who showed him his abode among the hermits. It is from him that I received the following particulars. He was then about 40 years of age, but his appearance was that of an older man. He had been a painter by profession, but on taking orders changed his name from Santi to Raffaello, perhaps with an unconcealed reference as well to the great Sanzio d'Urbino as to the archangel. He assured my friend that he had been 13 years in the hermitage and had never known melancholy or ennui. In the little rec-cess for study and prayer, there was a small collection of books. "I read only," said he, "books of asceticism and mystical theology." On being asked the names of the most famous mystics, he enumerated Scaramelli, San Giovanni della Croce, St. Domenico the Areopagite (supposing the work which bears his name to be really his), and with peculiar emphasis Rizzardi di San Vittore. The works of Saint Theresia are also in high repute among ascetics. These names may interest some of my readers.

We heard that Raffaello was then living in the con-vent; my friend sought in vain to renew his acquaint-ance with him. It was probably a day of seclusion. The reader will perceive that these sonnets were sup-posed to be written when he was a young man.

In justice to the Benedictines of Camaldoli, by whom strangers are so hospitably entertained, I feel obliged to notice, that I saw among them no other figures at all resembling in size and complexness the Monks described in this Sonnet. What was their office, or the motive which brought them to this place of mortification, which they could not have approached without being carried in
this or some other way, a feeling of delicacy prevented
me from inquiring. An account has before been given
of the hermitage they were about to enter. It was visited
by us towards the end of the month of May; yet snow
was lying thick under the pine-trees, within a few yards
of the gate.

Page 277.

"At VAlombrosa."

The name of Milton is pleasantly connected with Val-
ombsra in many ways. The pride with which the Monk,
without any previous question from me, pointed out his
residence, I shall not readily forget. It may be proper
here to defend the Poet from a charge which has been
brought against him, in respect to the passage in "Par-
dise Lost," where this place is mentioned. It is said,
that he has erred in speaking of the trees there being deci-
ducous, whereas they are, in fact, pines. The fault-
facors are themselves mistaken: the native woods of the
region of Valombrosa are deciduous, and spread to a
great extent; those near the convent are, indeed, mostly
pines; but there are masses of trees planted, within a few
steps of each other, and thus composing large tracts of
wood; plots of which are periodically cut down. The
appearance of those narrow avenues, upon steep slopes
open to the sky, on account of the height which the trees
attain by being forced to grow upwards, is often very
impressive. My guide, a boy of about fourteen years old,
pointed this out to me in several places.

Page 280.

"More high the Diavco force,
To hoof and finger wild."—

Here and infra, see Forsyth.

Page 286.

"The River Duddon."

A Poet, whose works are not yet known as they des-
serve to be, thus enters upon his description of the
"Ruins of Rome."

"The rising Sun
Flames on the ruins in the purer air
Towering aloft!"

and ends thus—

"The setting Sun displays
His visible great round, between your towers.
As through two shady cliffs."

Mr. Crowe, in his excellent loco-descriptive Poem,
"Lawesdon Hill," is still more expeditious, finishing the
whole on a May-morning, before breakfast.

"To-morrow for severer thought, but now
To breakfast, and keep festival to-day."

No one believes, or is desired to believe, that those
Poems were actually composed within such limits of
time; nor was the main reason why a prose statement
should acquaint the Reader with the plain fact, to the
disturbance of poetic credibility. But, in the present
case, I am compelled to mention, that the above series of
Sonnets was the growth of many years;—the one which
stands the 14th was the first produced; and others were
added upon occasional visits to the Stream, or as recal-
clections of the scenes upon its banks awakened a wish
to describe them. In this manner I had proceeded in-
sensibly, without perceiving that I was trespassing upon
ground pre-occupied, at least as far as intention went,
by Mr. Coleridge; who, more than twenty years ago,
used to speak of writing a rural Poem, to be entitled
"The Brook," of which he has given a sketch in a recent
publication. But a particular subject, cannot, I think,
much interfere with a general one; and I have been
further kept from executing upon any rights. Mr. C.
may still wish to exercise, by the restriction which its
france of the Sonnet imposed upon me, narrowing un-
avoidably the range of thought, and precluding, though
not without its advantages, many graces to which a few
movement of verse would naturally have led.

May I not venture, then, to hope, that, instead of
being a hindrance, by anticipation of any part of the
subject, these Sonnets may remind Mr. Coleridge of his
own more comprehensive design, and induce him to fulfil
it—There is a sympathy in streams,—"one callith
another;" and I would gladly believe, that "The
Brook" will, ere long, murmur in concert with "The
Duddon." But, asking pardon for this fancy, I need
not scruple to say, that those verses must indeed be ill-
fated which can enter upon such pleasant walks of
nature, without receiving and giving inspiration. The
power of waters over the minds of Poets has been
acknowledged from the earliest ages;—through the
"Flumina anem Sylviaque infringus" of Virgil, down to
the sublime apostrophes to the great rivers of the earth,
by Armstrong, and the simple ejaculation of Burns,
(chosen, if I recollect right, by Mr. Coleridge, as a motto
for his embryo "Brook.""

"The Muse nee Poet ever finds her,
Till by himself he learned to wonder,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
And 'tis I think lang."

Page 288.

"There bloom'd the strawberry of the wilderness,
"The trembling eye-bright showed her amythyst blue."

These two lines are in a great measure taken from
"The Beauties of Spring, a Juvenile Poem," by the Rev.
Joseph Sympton. He was a native of Cumberland, and
was educated in the vale of Gramercy, and at Hawks-
bred school; his poems are little known, but they con-
tain passages of splendid description; and the versifi-
cation of his "Vision of Alfred" is harmonious and
animated. In describing the motions of the Skewies,
which constitute the strange machinery of his Poem, he uses
the following illustrative simile:—

"—"Gleaning from their plumes
A changeable light the azure vault illumines;
Less varying hues beneath the Poles adorn
The streamy glories of the Boreal morn,
That waivering to and fro their radiance shed
On Rothalia's gulf with glassy ice overspread,
Where the lone native, as he homeward glides,
On polished sandals o'er the imprisoned tides,
And still the balance of his frame preserves,
Wheeled on alternate foot in lengthening curves,
Sees at a glance, above him and below.
Two rival hearseas with equal splendour glow,
Sphered in the centre of the world he sees;
For all around with soft effulgence gleams;
Stars, moons, and meteor, ray opposed to ray,
And solemn midnight pours the blaze of day."

He was a man of ardent feeling, and his faculties of
mind, particularly his memory, were extraordinary.
Brief notices of his life ought to find a place in the
History of Westmoreland.

Page 289. Sonnets XVII. & XVIII.

The Eagles require a large domain for its support;
but several pairs, not many years ago, were constantly
resident in this country, building their nests in the stumps
of Borrowdale, Wastdale, Ennerdale, and on the eastern
side of Helvellyn. Often have I heard angliers speak of
the grandeur of their appearance, as they hovered over
Red Tarn, in one of the cores of this mountain. The
NOTES.

bird frequently returns, but is always destroyed. Not long since, one visited Rydal lake, and remained some hours near its banks; the consternation which it occasioned among the different species of fowl, particularly the herons, was expressed by loud screams. The heron is also naturally afraid of the eagle.—There were several Roman statues among these mountains; the most considerable seems to have been in a meadow at the head of Windermere, established, undoubtedly, as a check over the Passes of Kirkstone, Dunmail-raise, and of Hardknott and Wrynose. On the margin of Rydal lake, a coin of Trajan was discovered very lately. —The Roman Fort here alluded to, called by the country people "Harisdot Castle," is most impressively situated half-way down the hill on the right of the road that descends from Hardknott to Eskdale. It has escaped the notice of most antiquarians, and is but slightly mentioned by Lysons.—The Druidical Circle is about half a mile to the left of the road at the base of the vale of Duddon; the country people call it "Swansea Church." The reader who may have been interested in the foregoing Sonnets, (which together may be considered as a Poem,) will not be displeased to find in this place a prose account of the Duddon, extracted from Green's comprehensive Guide to the Lakes, lately published. —The road leading from Coniston to Broughton is over high ground, and commands a view of the River Duddon: which, at high water, is a grand sight, having the beautiful and fertile lands of Lancashire and Cumberland stretching each way from its margin. In this extensive view, the face of nature is displayed in a wonderful variety of hill and dale; wooded grounds and buildings; amongst the latter Broughton Tower, seated on the crown of a hill, rising elegantly from the valley, is an object of extraordinary interest. Fertility on each side is gradually diminished, and lost in the superior heights of Blackburn, in Cumberland, and the high lands between Kirkby and Ulverston.

The road from Broughton to Seathwaite is on the banks of the Duddon, and on its Lancashire side it is of various elevations. The river is an amusing companion, one while brawling and tumbling over rocky precipices, until the agitated water becomes again calm by arriving at a smoother and less precipitous bed, but its course is soon again ruffled, and the current thrown into every variety of foam which the rocky channel of a river can give to water.—


After all, the traveller would be most gratified who should approach this beautiful Stream, neither at its source, as is done in the Sonnets, nor from its termination; but from Coniston over Walna Scar; first descending into a little circular valley, a collateral compartment of the long winding vale through which flows the Duddon. This recess, towards the close of September, when the after-grace of the meadows is still of a fresh green, with the leaves of many of the trees faded, but perhaps none fallen, is truly enchanting. At a point elevated enough to show the various objects in the valley, and not so high as to diminish their importance, the stranger will insensibly halt. On the foreground, a little below the most favourable station, a rude foot-bridge is thrown over the bed of the noisy brook foaming by the bank. Rossett and crewe hills, of bold and varied outline, surround the level valley, which is sprinkled with grey rocks plumbed with birch trees. A few homesteads are interspersed, in some places peeping out from among the rocks like hermitages, whose site has been chosen for the benefit of sunshine as well as shelter; in other instances, the dwelling-house, barn, and bye, continue together a cruciform structure, which, with its embowering trees, and the ivy clothing part of the walls and roof like a fleece, call to mind the remains of an ancient monastery. Time, in most cases, and nature everywhere, have given a sanctity to the humble works of man, that are scattered over this peaceful retirement. Hence a harmony of tone and colour, a consummation and perfection of beauty, which would have been marred had aim or purpose interfered with the course of convenience, utility, or necessity. This uninvitied region stands in no need of the veil of twilight to soften or disguise its features. As it glists in the morning sunshine, it would fill the spectator's heart with gladness and beauty. Looking from our chosen station, he would feel an impatience to rove among its pathways, to be greeted by the milkmaid, to wander from house to house, exchanging 'good-mornours' as he passed the open doors; but, at evening, when the sun is set, and a pearly light gleams from the western quarter of the sky, with an answering light from the smooth surface of the meadows; when the trees are dusky, but each kind still distinguishable; when the cool air has condensed the blue smoke rising from the cottage chimneys; when the dark mossy stones seem to sleep in the bed of the foaming brook; then, he would be unwilling to move forward, not less from a reluctance to relinquish what he beholds, than from an apprehension of disturbing, by his approach, the quietness beneath him. Issuing from the plain of this valley, the brook descends in a rapid torrent passing by the church-yard of Seathwaite. The traveller is thus conducted at once into the midst of the wild and beautiful scenery which gave occasion to the Sonnets from the 14th to the 26th inclusive. From the point where the Duddon breaks joins the Duddon, is a view upwards, into the pass through which the river makes its way into the plain of Donnerdale. The perpendicular rock on the right bears the ancient British name of Tyn Pen; the one opposite is called Walla-Sarrow Crag, a name that occurs in other places to designate rocks of the same character. The ascent aspect of the scene is well marked by the expression of a stranger, who strolled while dinner was preparing, and at his return, being asked by his host, "What way had he been wandering?" replied, "As far as it is finished." The bed of the Duddon is here strewn with large fragments of rocks fallen from aloft; which, as Mr. Green truly says, are happily adapted to the many-shaped waterfalls, or rather waterbreaks, for none of them are high, displayed in the short space of half a mile. That there is some hazard in frequenting these desolate places, I myself have had proof; for one night an immense mass of rock fell upon the very spot where, with a friend, I had lingered the day before. 'The concussion,' says Mr. Green, speaking of the event, (for he also, in the practice of his art, on that day sat exposed for a still longer time to the same peril,) 'was heard not without alarm by the neighbouring shepherds.' But to return to Seathwaite Church-yard: it contains the following inscription:—

"In memory of the Reverend Robert Walker, who died the 25th of June, 1802, in the 94th year of his age, and 67th of his curacy at Seathwaite. Also, of Anne his wife, who died the 26th of January, in the 93d year of her age."

In the parish-register of Seathwaite Chapel, is this notice:

"Buried, June 28, 1834, the Rev. Robert Walker. He was curate of Seathwaite sixty-six years. He was a man singular for his temperance, industry, and integrity." This Individual is the Pastor alluded to, in the eighteenth Sonnet, as a worthy companion of the country parson of Chaucer, &c. In the seventh book of the Excursion, an abstract of his character is given, beginning—

"A Priest abides before whose life such doubts fall to the ground; and some account of his life, for it is worthy of being recorded, will not be out of place here."
MEMOIR OF THE REV. ROBERT WALKER.

In the year 1790, Robert Walker was born at Under-crag, in Seathwaite; he was the youngest of twelve children. His eldest brother, who inherited the small family estate, died at Under-crag, aged ninety-four, being twenty-four years older than the subject of this Memoir, who was born of the same mother. Robert was a sickly infant; and, through his boyhood and youth, continuing to be of delicate frame and tender health, it was deemed best, according to the country phrase, to teach him a scholar; for it was not likely that he would be able to earn a livelihood by bodily labour. At that period few of these dales were furnished with schoolhouses; the children being taught to read and write in the chapel; and in the same consecrated building, where he officiated for so many years both as preacher and schoolmaster, he himself received the rudiments of his education. In his youth he became schoolmaster at Loweswater; not being called upon, probably, in that situation to teach more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. But, by the assistance of a Gentleman in the neighbourhood, he acquired, at leisure hours, a knowledge of the classics, and became qualified for taking holy orders. Upon his ordination, he had the offer of two curacies: the one, Torver, in the vale of Coniston, the other, Seathwaite, in his native vale. The value of each was the same, six, five pounds per annum: but the cure of Seathwaite having a cottage attached to it, as he wished to marry, he chose it in preference. The young person on whom his affections were fixed, though in the condition of a domestic servant, had given promise, by her serious and modest deportment, and by her virtuous dispositions, that she was worthy to become the helpmate of a man entering upon a plan of life such as he had marked out for himself. By her frugality she had stored up a small sum of money, with which they began housekeeping. In 1793 or 1794, he entered upon his curacy; and, nineteen years afterwards, his situation is thus described, in some letters to be found in the Annual Register for 1790, from which the following is extracted:—

To Mr. ——.

Seathwaite, July 20, 1794.

'Twas the other day upon a party of pleasure, about five or six miles from this place, where I met with a very striking object, and of a nature not very common. Going into a clergyman's house (of whom I had frequently heard), I found him sitting at the head of a long square table, such as is commonly used in this country by the lower class of people, dressed in a coarse blue frock, trimmed with black horn buttons; a checkered skirt, a leather strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron, and a pair of great wooden-soled shoes plated with iron to preserve them (what we call clots in these parts), with a child upon his knee, eating his breakfast; his wife, and the remainder of his children, were some of them employed in waiting upon each other, the rest in teasing and spinning wool, at which trade he is a great proficient; and moreover, when it is made ready for sale, will lay it, by sixteen or thirty-two pounds' weight, upon his back, and on foot, seven or eight miles, will carry it to the market, even in the depth of winter. I was not much surprised at all this, as you may possibly be, having heard a great deal of it related before. But I must confess myself astonished with the alacrity and the good humour that appeared both in the clergyman and his wife, and more so at the sense and ingenuity of the clergyman himself.'

Then follows a letter from another person, dated 1795, from which an extract shall be given.

By his frugality and good management, he keeps the wolf from the door, as we say; and if he advances a little in the world, it is owing more to his own care, than to anything else he has to rely upon. I don't find his inclination is running after further preferment. He is settled among the people, that are happy among themselves; and live in the greatest unanimity and friendship with them; and, I believe, the minister and people are exceedingly satisfied with each other; and indeed how they should be dissatisfied when they have a person of so much worth and probity for their pastor! A man who, for his candour and meekness, his sober, chaste, and virtue conversation, his soundness in principle and practice, is an ornament to his profession, and an honour to the country he is in; and bear with me if I say, the plainness of his dress, the sanctity of his manners, the simplicity of his doctrine, and the vehemence of his expression, have a sort of resemblance to the pure practice of primitive Christianity.'

We will now give his own account of himself, to be found in the same place.

FROM THE REV. ROBERT WALKER.

'Sir,—Your late account communicated to me by Mr. C—is, and I should have returned an immediate answer, but the hand of Providence, then laying heavy upon an ailing friend, has not been in the enjoyment, since taken from me a promising girl, which the disconsolation too pensively laments the loss of; though we have yet eight living, all beautiful, hopeful children, whose names and ages are as follows: Zachariah, aged almost eighteen years; Elizabeth, sixteen years and ten months; Mary, fifteen; Moses, thirteen years and three months; Sarah, ten years and three months; Mabel, eight years and three months; William Tyson, three years and eight months; and Anne Esther, one year and three months; besides Anna, who died two years and six months ago, and was then aged between nine and ten; and Eleanor, who died the 34th inst., January, aged six years and ten months. Zachariah, the eldest child, is now learning the trade of tailor, and has two years and a half of his apprenticeship to serve. The annual income of my chapel, as near as I can compute it, may amount to about 17L, of which is paid in cash, &c., 5l. from the bounty of Queen Anne, and 5l. from W. P., Est., of P—, out of the annual rents, he being lord of the manor, and 5l. from the several inhabitants of L——settled upon the tenements as a rent-charge; the house and garden I value at 4l. yearly, and not worth more; and I believe the surplus fees and voluntary contributions, one year with another, may be worth 5l.; but as the inhabitants are few in number, and the fees very low, this last-mentioned sum consists merely in free-will offerings.

I am situated greatly to my satisfaction with regard to the conduct and behaviour of my auditory, who not only live in the happy ignorance of the follies and vices of the age, but in mutual peace and goodwill with one another, and are seemingly (I hope really too) sincere Christians, and sound members of the established church, not one disserter of any denomination being amongst them all. I got to the value of 40l. for my wife's fortune, but had no real estate of my own, being the youngest son of twelve children, born of obscure parents; and, though my income has been but small, and my family large, yet, by a providential blessing upon my own diligent endeavours, the kindness of friends, and a cheap country to live in, we have always had the necessaries of life. By what I have written (which is a true and exact account, to the best of my knowledge,) I hope you will not think your favour to me an unworthy one, or an unworthy Doctor Stratford's effects, quite misapplied, for which I must ever gratefully own myself.

'Sir,

Year much obliged and most obedient humble Servant,

R. W., Curate of St——.

To Mr. C., of Lancaster.'
NOTES.

About the time when this letter was written, the Bishop of Chester recommended the scheme of joining the curacy of Ulpha to the contiguous one of Seathwaite, and the nomination was offered to Mr. Walker; but an unexpected difficulty arising, Mr. W., in a letter to the Bishop, (a copy of which, in his own beautiful handwriting, now lies before me,) thus expresses himself. "If he, meaning the person in whom the difficulty originated, had suggested any such objection before, I should utterly have declined any attempt to the curacy of Ulpha; but I was always apprehensive it might be disagreeable to my auditory at Seathwaite, as they have been always accustomed to double duty, and the inhabitants of Ulpha despair of being able to support a schoolmaster who is not curate there also; which suppressed all thoughts in me of serving them both." And in a second letter to the Bishop he writes:—

"MY LORD,—I have the favour of yours of the 1st instant, and am exceedingly obliged on account of the Ulpha affair: if that curacy should lapse into your Lordship's hands, I would beg leave rather to decline than embrace it; for the chapel of Seathwaite and Ulpha, annexed together, would be apt to cause a general discontent among the inhabitants of both places; by either thinking themselves slighted, being only served alternately, or neglected in the duty, or attributing it to covetousness in me; all which occasions of murmuring I would willingly avoid. In concluding my former letter, he expresses a similar sentiment upon the same occasion, desiring, if it be possible, however, as much as in me lies, to live peaceably with all men."

The year following, the curacy of Seathwaite was again augmented; and, to effect this augmentation, fifty pounds a year had been advanced by himself; and, in 1769, lands were purchased with eight hundred pounds. Scanty as was his income, the frequent offer of much better benefices could not tempt Mr. W. to quit a situation where he had been so long happy, with a consciousness of being useful. Among his papers I find the following copy of a letter, dated 1776, twenty years after his refusal of the curacy of Ulpha, which will show what exertions had been made for one of his sons.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

Our remote situation here makes it difficult to get the necessary information for transacting business regularly; such is the reason of my giving your Grace the present trouble.

The bearer (my son) is desirous of offering himself candidate for dean's orders at your Grace's ensuing ordination; the first, on the 35th instant, so that his papers could not be transmitted in due time. As he is now fully at age, and I have afforded him education to the utmost of my ability, it would give me great satisfaction (if your Grace would take him, and find him qualified) to have him ordained. His constitution has been tender for some years; he entered the college of Dublin, but his health would not permit him to continue there, or I would have supported him much longer. He has been with me at home above a year, in which time he has gained great strength of body, sufficient, I hope, to enable him for performing the function. Divine Providence, assisted by liberal benefactors, has blessed my endeavours, from a small income, to rear a numerous family; and as my time of life renders me now unfit for much future expectancy from this world, I should be glad to see my son settled in a promising way to acquire an honest livelihood for himself. His behaviour, so far in life, has been irreproachable; and I hope he will not degenerate, in principles or practice, from the precepts and patterns of an indulgent parent. Your Grace's favourite reception of this, from a distant corner of the diocese, and an obscure place, will excite filial gratitude, and a due use shall be made of the obligation vouchsafed thereby to — Your Grace's very dutiful and most obedient Servant,

Robert Walker."
one on which wool is spun, the spinner stopping to and fro. Thus, was the wheel constantly in readiness to prevent the waste of a moment's time. Nor was his industry with the pen, when occasion called for it, less eager. Invited with extensive management of public and private affairs, he acted, in his rustic neighbourhood, as scribe, writing out petitions, deeds of conveyance, wills, covenants, &c., with pecuniary gain to himself, and to the great benefit of his employers. These labours (at all times considerable) at one period of the year, viz., between Christmas and Candlemas, when money transactions are settled in this country, were often so intense, that he passed great part of the night, and sometimes whole nights, at his desk. His garden also was tilled by his own hand; he had a right of pasturage upon the mountains for a few sheep and a couple of cows, which required his attendance; with this pastoral occupation, he joined the labours of husbandry upon a small scale, renting two or three acres in addition to his own less than one acre of glade; and the humblest drudgery which the cultivation of these fields required was performed by himself.

He also assisted his neighbours in haymaking and shearing. In the performance of this latter service he was eminently dexterous. They, in their turn, complimented him with the present of a horse or cow, or a small ox, as a recompense for his particular service than as a general acknowledgment. The Sabbath was in a strict sense kept holy; the Sunday evenings being devoted to reading the Scripture and family prayer. The principal festivities appointed by the Church were also duly observed; but through every other day in the week, through every week in the year, he was incessantly employed in the several offices of his calling. He was not allowed a moment for recreation, except upon a Saturday afternoon, when he indulged himself with a Newspaper, or sometimes with a Magazine. The frugality and temperance established in his house, were as admirable as the industry. Nothing to which the name of luxury could be given was there known; in the latter part of his life, indeed, when tea had been brought into almost general use, it was provided for visitors, and for such of his own family as returned occasionally to his roof, and had been accustomed to this refreshment elsewhere; but neither he nor his wife ever partook of it. The rainment worn by his family was comely and decent, but as simple as their diet; the home-spun materials were made up into apparel by their own hands. At the time of the decease of this thrifty pair, their cottage contained a large store of woolen and linen cloth, woven from thread of their own spinning. And it is remarkable that the pew in the church in which the family used to sit, remains nearly lined with woolen cloth spun by the pastor's own hands. It is the only pew in the church so distinguished; and I know of no other instance of a congregation of the delicate accommod inations of modern times. The fuel of the house, like that of their neighbours, consisted of peat, procured from the mosses by their own labour. The light by which, in the winter evenings, their work was performed, were of their own manufacture, such as still continue to be used in these cottages; they are made of the pith of rushes dipped in any unctuous substance that the house affords. White candles, as tallow candles are here called, were reserved to honour the Christmas festivals, and were perhaps produced upon no other occasions. Once a month, during the proper season, a sheep was drawn from their small mountain flock, and killed for the use of the family; and, as the year advanced towards the close of the year, was salted and dried for winter provision: the hide was tanned to furnish them with shoes.—By these various resources, this country parson reared a numerous family, not only preserving them, as he affectionately says, 'from wanting the necessaries of life;' but affording them an untainted education, and the means of raising themselves in society. In this they were constantly assisted by the effects of their father's example, his precepts, and injunctions; he was aware that truth-speaking, as a moral virtue, is best secured by inculcating attention to accuracy of report even on trivial occasions; and so rigid were the rules of honesty by which he endeavoured to bring up his family, that if one of them had chanced to find in the lanes or fields anything of the least use or value without being able to ascertain to whom it belonged, he always insisted upon the child's carrying it back to the place from which it had been brought.

No one it might be thought could, as has been described, convert his body into a machine, as it were, of industry for the humblest uses, and keep his thoughts so frequently bent upon secular concerns, without grievous injury to the more precious parts of his nature. How could the powers of intellect thrive, or its graces be displayed, in the midst of circumstances apparently so unfavourable, and where, to the direct cultivation of the mind, so small a portion of time was allotted? But, in this extraordinary man, things in their natural course were reconciled. His conversation was remarkable, not only for being chaste and pure, but for the degree in which it was founded upon the scriptures, and the manner in which it was presented. His discourse was correct, simple, and animated. Nor did his affections suffer more than his intellect; he was tenderly attached to all the members of his family; he constantly engaged in their affairs, and, as he never seemed to feel empty away,—the stranger was fed and refreshed in passing that unfrequented vale—she was visited; and the feelings of humanity found further exercise among the distresses and embarrassments in the worldly estate of his neighbours, with which his talents for business made him acquainted; and the disinterestedness, impartiality, and uprightness which he maintained in the management of all affairs confided to him, were virtues seldom separated in his own conscience from religious obligation. Nor could such conduct fail to remind those who witnessed it of a spirit nobler than law or custom: they felt convictions which, but for such intercourse, could not have been afforded, that, as in the practice of their pastor, there was no guile, so in his faith there was nothing hollow; and we are warranted in believing, that upon those occasions, selflessness, obstinacy, and discord would often give way before the breathings of his good-will and saintly integrity. It may be presumed also—while his humble congregation were listening to the moral precepts which he delivered from the pulpit, and to the Christian exhortations that they should love their neighbours as themselves, and do as they would be done unto—that peculiar efficacy was given to the preacher's labours by recollections in the minds of his congregation, that they were called upon to do no more this descend, than his own actions were daily setting before their eyes.

The afternoon service in the church was less numerously attended than the morning, but there was a more serious auditory; the lesson from the New Testament on those occasions, was accompanied by Burritt's Commentaries. These lessons he read with impassioned emphasis, frequently drawing tears from his hearers, and leaving a lasting impression upon their minds. His devotional feelings and the powers of his own mind were further exercised, along with those of his family, in perusing the Scriptures: not only on the Sunday evenings, but on every other evening, while the rest of the household were at work, some one of the children, and in her turn the servant, for the sake of practice in reading, or for instruction, read the Bible aloud; and in this manner the words that have so pene trance me through the weary years, were not only read, but heard by me continually. That no common importance was attached to the observance of religious ordinances by his family, appears from the following account of his eldest grandson, which I am tempted to insert at length, as it is characteristic, and somewhat curious. 'There is a small chapel in the county palatine of Lancaster, where
a certain clergyman has regularly officiated above sixty years, and a few months ago administered the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in the same, to a decent number of devout communicants. After the clergyman had received himself, the first company out of the assembly who approached the altar, and knelled down to be partakers of the sacred elements, consisted of the parson’s wife; to whom he had been married upwards of sixty years; one son and his wife; four daughters, each with her husband; whose ages, all added together, amount to above 714 years. The several and respective distances from the place of each of their abodes, to the chapel where they all communicated, will measure more than 1000 English miles. Though the narration will appear surprising, it is without doubt a fact that the same persons, exactly four years before, met at the same place, and all joined in performance of the same venerable duty.”

He was indeed most zealously attached to the doctrine and frame of the Established Church. We have seen him congratulating himself that he had no dissenters in his cure of any denomination. Some allowance must be made for the state of opinion when his first religious impressions were received, before the reader will acquit him of bigotry, when I mention, that at the time of the augmentation of the cure, he refused to invest part of the money in the purchase of an estate offered to him upon advantageous terms, because the proprietor was a Quaker—whether from scrupulous apprehension that a blessing would not attend a contract framed for the benefit of the church between persons in religious sympathies with each other; or, as a seeker of peace, he was afraid of the uncooperating disposition which at one time was too frequently conspicuous in that sect. Of this an instance had fallen under his own notice; for, while he taught school at Loweswater, certain persons of that denomination had refused to pay annual interest due under the title of Church-stock; a great hardship upon the incumbent, for the curacy of Loweswater was then scarcely less poor than that of Seathwaite. To what degree this prejudice of his was blameable need not be determined:—certain it is, that he was not only desirous, as he himself says, to live in peace, but love with all men. He was placable, and charitable in his judgments; and, however correct in conduct and rigorous to himself, he was ever ready to forgive the trespasses of others, and to soften the censures that was cast upon their frailties. It would be unpardonable to omit that, in the maintenance of his virtues, he received due support from the partner of his long life. She was equally strict, in attending to her share of their joint cares, nor less diligent in her appropriate occupations. A person who had been some time their servant in the latter part of their lives, concluded the paragogy of her mistress by saying to me, “She was no less excellent than her husband; she was good in the house, good in the family, and good in every thing.” He survived for a short time this virtuous companion. When she died, he ordered that her body should be borne to the grave by three of her daughters and one grand-daughter; and, when the corpse was lifted from the threshold, he insisted upon lending his aid, and feeling about, for he was then almost blind, took hold of a napkin fixed to the coffin; and, as a bearer of the body, entered the chapel, a few steps from the lowly parsonage.

What a contrast does the life of this obscurity-seated, and, in point of worldly wealth, poorly-repaid Churchman, present to that of a Cardinal Wolsey! "O 'tis a burthen, Cromwell, 'tis a burthen Too heavy for a man who hopes for heaven!"

Mr. Walker’s charity being of that kind which seeketh not her own, he would rather forego his rights than distress for dues which the parties liable refused, as a point of conscience, to pay.

We have been dwelling upon images of peace in the moral world, that have brought us again to the quiet enclosure of consecrated ground, in which this venerable pair lie interred. The winding brook, that rolls close by the church-yard, without disturbing feeling or meditation, is now unfortunately laid bare; but not long ago it participated, with the chapel, the shade of some stately ash-trees, which will not spring again. While the spectator from this spot is looking round upon the girdle of rocky mountains that encomposes the vale,—masses of rock, out of which monuments for all men that ever existed might have been hewn—it would surprise him to be told, as with truth he might be, that the plain blue slab dedicated to the memory of this aged pair is a production of a quarry in North Wales. It was sent as a mark of respect by one of their descendants from the vale of Tintern, a region almost as beautiful as that in which it now lies!

Upon the Seathwaite Brook, at a small distance from the parsonage, has been erected a mill for spinning yarn; it is a mean and disagreeable object, though not unimportant to the spectator, as calling to mind the momentous change wrought by such inventions in the frame of society—changes which have proved especially unfavourable to these mountain solitudes. So much had been effected by those new powers, before the subject of the preceding biographical sketch closed his life, that their operation could not escape his notice, and doubtless excited touching reflections upon the comparatively insignificant results of his own pastoral industry. But Robert Walker was not a man of times and circumstances: had he lived at a later period, the principle of duty would have produced application as unremitting; the same energy of character would have been displayed, though in many instances with widely-different effects.

With pleasure I amuse, as illustrative and confirmatory of the above account, extracts from a paper in the Christian Remembrancer, October, 1818: it bears an assumed signature, but is known to be the work of the Rev. Robert Bambford, vicar of Bishopton, in the county of Durham; a great-grandson of Mr. Walker, whose worth it commemorates, by a record not the less valuable for being written in very early youth.

"His house was a nursery of virtue. All the inmates were industrious, and cleanly, and happy. Sobriety, meanness, quiescence, characterised the whole family. No railing, no ill-nature, no indulgence of passion were permitted. Every child, however young, had its appointed engagements; every hand was busy. Knitting, spinning, reading, writing, mending clothes, making shoes, were by the different children constantly performing. The father himself sitting among them, and guiding their thoughts, was engaged in the same occupations."

"He sate up late, and rose early; when the family were at rest, he retired to his chamber, in which he was built on the roof of his house. He had skated it, and fitted it up with shelves for his books, his stock of cloth, wearing apparel, and his utensils. There many cold winter’s night, without fire, while the roof was glazed with ice, did he remain reading or writing till the day dawned. He taught the children in the chapel, for there was no schoolhouse. Yet in that cold, damp place he never had a fire. He used to send the children in parties either to his own fire at home, or make them run up the mountain side."

"It may be further mentioned, that he was a passionate admirer of Nature; she was his mother, and he was a doting child. While engaged on the mountains, it was his greatest pleasure to view the rising sun; and in tranquil evenings, as it slid behind the hills, he blessed its departure. He was skilled in fossils and plants; a constant observer of the stars and winds: the atmosphere was his delight. He made many experiments on its nature and properties. In summer he used to
gather a multitude of flies and insects, and, by his
enthralling description, amuse and instruct his chil-
dren. They shone in his daily employments, and
derived many sentiments of love and benevolence from
his observations on the works and productions of nature.
Whether they were following him in the field, or sur-
rounding him to school, he took every opportunity of
storing their minds with useful information. — Nor was
the circle of his influence confined to Beauchamp.
Many a distant mother had told her child of Mr. Walker,
and begged him to be as good a man.

"Once, when I was very young, I had the pleasure of
seeing and hearing that venerable old man in his 90th
year, and even then, the calmness, the force, the percep-
tivity of his person, sanctified and adored by the wis-
dom of grey hairs, and the authority of virtue, had such
an effect upon my mind, that I never see a hoary-headed
clergyman, without remembering Mr. Walker."

He allowed no dissenter or methodist to interfere in
the instruction of the souls committed to his care: and
so successful were his exertions, that he had not one dis-
server of any denomination whatever in the whole parish.
—Even in the days of religious controversies, yet
when age had silvered his head, and virtuous piety had
secured to his appearance reverence and silent honour,
no one, however determined in his hatred of apostolic
descendants, could have listened to his discourses on eccl.

estasitical history and ancient times, without thinking,
that one of the beloved apostles had returned to
mortality, and in that vale of peace had come to exjmlify
the beauty of holiness in the life and character of
Mr. Walker.

"Unto the sickness of his wife, a few months previous
to her death, his health and spirits and faculties were
unimpaired. But this misfortune gave him such a
shock, that his constitution gradually declined. His
senses, except sight, still preserved their powers. He
never walked with steadiness after his wife's death.
His voice faltered: he always looked at the seat she had
used. He could not pass her tomb without tears. He
became, when alone, sad and melancholy, though still
among his friends kind and good-humoured. He went to
bed about 11 o'clock the night before his death. As
his custom was, he went, tottering and leaning upon his
daughter's arm, to examine the heavens, and meditate
a few moments in the open air. "How clear the moon
shines to-night!" He said these words, sighed, and laid
down. At six the next morning he was found a corpse.
Many a tear, and many a heavy heart, and many a
gracious blessing followed him to the grave."

Having mentioned in this narrative the vale of Lowes-
water as a place where Mr. Walker taught school, I will
add a few memoranda from its parish register, respect-
ing a person apparently of desires as moderate, with
whom he must have been intimate during his residence
there.

"Let him that would, ascend the tottering seat
Of cytryute grandeur, and become as great
As are his mounting wishes; but for me,
Let sweet repose and rest my portion be.

HONOUR, the idol which the most adore,
Receives no homage from my knee;
Content in privacy I value more
Than all uneasy dignity."

"Henry Forest came to Loweswater, 1760, being 25
years of age."

"This curacy was twice augmented by Queen Anne's
Bounty. The first payment, with great difficulty, was
paid to Mr. John Curwen of London, on the 9th of May,
1724, deposited by me, Henry Forest, Curate of Lowes-
water. It said 9th of May, ye said Mr. Curwen went to
the office, and carryed his papers. This by the Providence
of God, came by lost to this poor place.

Hence teacher H. Forest."

In another place he remarks, that the sycamore-trees
were planted in the church-yard in 1710. He
died in 1741, having been curator thirty-seven years.
It is not improbable that H. Forest was the gentleman
who assisted Robert Walker in his classical studies at
Loweswater.

To this parish register is prefixed a motto, of which the
following verses are a part:

"Insidullt viti, tacito num tempora grossa
Diffugium, subloque solem convertitur annus.
Utendum set astute, sito pede praestet actum."

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"We feel that we are greater than we know."
"And feel that I am happier than I know."

MILTON.

The allusion to the Greek Poet will be obvious to the
classical reader.

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"The White Doe of Rylstone."

The Poem of the White Doe of Rylstone is founded
on a local tradition, and on the Ballad in Percy's Collec-
tion, entitled, "The Rising of the North." The tradition
is as follows:—"About this time, not long after the Dis-
solution, 'a White Doe,' say the aged people of the
neighbourhood, 'long continued to make a weekly pil-
gramme from Rylstone over the fells of Bolton, and was
constantly found in the Abbey Church-yard during divine
service; after the close of which she returned home as
regularly as the rest of the congregation.'—The Warrin-
ker's History of the Deanery of Craven.—Rylstone was
the property and residence of the Normans, distinguished
in that ill-advanced and unfortunate intersection; which
led me to connect with this tradition the principal cir-
cumstances of their fate, as recorded in the Ballad.

"Bolton Priory," says Dr. Whittaker in his excellent
book, The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of
Craven, 'stands upon a beautiful curvature of the Wharf,
on a level sufficiently elevated to protect it from insula-
tions, and low enough for every purpose of picturesque
effect.

"Opposite to the East window of the Priory Church,
the river washes the foot of a rock nearly perpendicular,
and of the richest purple, where several of the mineral
beds, which break out, instead of maintaining their
usual inclination to the horizon, are twisted by some in-
novatable process into undulating and spiral lines.
To the South all is soft and delicious; the eye repose
upon a few rich pastures, a moderate reach of the river,
sufficently tranquil to form a mirror to the sun, and the
bounding hills beyond, neither too near nor too lofty to
exclude, even in winter, any portion of his rays.

"But, after all, the glories of Bolton are on the North.
Whatever the most fastidious taste could require to con-
stitute a perfect landscape, is not only found here, but in
its proper place. In front, and immediately under the
eye, is a smooth expanse of park-like enclosure, spotted
with native elm, ash, &c. of the finest growth: on the
right a skirting oak wood, with jutting points of grey
rock; on the left a rising copse. Still forward, are seen
the aged groves of Bolton Park, the growth of centuries;
and farther yet, the barren and rocky distances of Sizers-
seat and Harden Fell contrasted with the warmth, fer-
tility, and luxuriant foliage of the valley below.

"About half a mile above Bolton the valley closes, and
either side of the Wharf is overhung by solemn woods, from which huge perpendicular masses of grey rock jut out at intervals.

"This sequestered scene was almost inaccessible till of late, that ridings have been cut on both sides of the river, and the most interesting points laid open by judicious thinnings in the woods. Here a tributary stream rushes from a waterfall, and bursts through a woody glen to mingle its waters with the Wharf; there the Wharf itself is nearly lost in a deep cleft in the rock, and next becomes a horned flood enclosing a woody island—sometimes it reposes for a moment, and then resumes its native character, lively, irregular, and impetuous.

"The cleft mentioned above is the tremendous Strain. This chasm, being incapable of receiving the winter floods, has formed on either side a broad strand of naked glistening falls rock-hewn, or 'pits of the Linn,' which bear witness to the restless impetuosity of so many Northern torrents. But, if here Wharf is lost to the eye, it amply repays another sense by its deep and solemn roar, like 'the Voice of the angry Spirit of the Waters,' heard far above and beneath, amidst the silence of the surrounding woods.

"The terminating object of the landscape is the remains of Barden Tower, interesting from their form and situation, and still more so from the recollections which they excite."

Page 293.

"Action is transitory.—"

This and the five lines that follow were either read or recited by me, more than thirty years since, to the late Mr. Hazlett, who quoted some expressions in them (imperfectly remembered) in a work of his published several years ago.

Page 293.

"From Bolton's old monastic Tower."

"It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament: but the Poem, according to the imagination of the Poet, is composed in Queen Elizabeth's time. 'Formerly,' says Dr. Whitaker, 'over the Transept was a tower. This is proved not only from the mention of bolts at the Dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward, in some building of superior height to the ridge.'"

Page 293.

"A Chapel, like a wild bird's nest."

"The Nave of the Church having been reserved at the Dissolution, for the use of the Saxon Curze, is still a parochial Chapel; and, at this day, is as well kept as the nearest English Cathedral."

Page 293.

"Who sits in the shade of the Prior's Oak?"

"At a small distance from the great gateway stood the Prior's Oak, which was felled about the year 1729, and sold for 70L. According to the price of wood at that time, it could scarcely have contained less than 1600 feet of timber."

Page 295.

"When Lady Alice mourned."

The detail of this tradition may be found in Dr. Whitaker's book, and in a Poem of this Collection, "The Force of Prayer."

Page 295.

"Pass, pass who will, you chantry door;"

"At the East end of the North aisle of Bolton Priory Church, is a chantry belonging to Bethemly Hall, and a vault, where, according to tradition, the Claphams' (who inherited this estate, by the female line, from the Manvers) were interred upright." John de Clapham, of whom this fabulous act is recorded, was a man of great note in his time: 'he was a vehement partisan of the house of Lancaster, in whom the spirit of his chief-tains, the Cliffords, seemed to survive."

Page 296.

"Who loved the Shepherd Lord to meet?"

In this Volume of Poems, will be found one entitled, "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors." To that Poem is annexed an account of this personage, chiefly extracted from Bures and Nicholson's History of Cumberland and Westmoreland. It gives me pleasure to add these further particulars concerning him, from Dr. Whitaker, who says he 'retired to the solitude of Barden, where he seems to have enlarged the tower out of a common keeper's lodge, and where he found a retreat equally favourable to taste, to instruction, and to devotion. The narrow limits of his residence show that he had learned to despise the pomp of greatness, and that a small train of servants could suffice him, who had lived to the age of thirty a servant himself. I think this nobleman resided here almost entirely when in Yorkshire, for all his charters which I have seen are dated at Barden. 'His early habits, and the want of those artificial measures of time which even shepherds now possess, had given him a turn for observing the motions of the heavenly bodies; and, having purchased such an apparatus as could then be procured, he amused and informed himself by those pursuits, with the aid of the Canons of Bolton, some of whom are said to have been well versed in what was then known of the science. 'I suspect this nobleman to have sometimes occupied in a more visionary pursuit, and probably in the same company. 'For, from the family evidences, I have met with two MSS. on the subject of Alchemy, which, from the character, spelling, &c., may almost certainly be referred to the reign of Henry the Seventh. If these were originally deposited with the MSS. of the Cliffords, it might have been for the use of this nobleman. If they were brought from Bolton at the Dissolution, they must have been the work of those Canons whom he almost exclusively conversed with. 'In these peaceful employments Lord Clifford spent the whole reign of Henry the Seventh, and the first years of his son. But in the year 1513, when almost sixty years old, he was appointed to a principal command over the army which fought at Flodden, and showed that the military genius of the family had neither been chilled in him by age, nor extinguished by habits of peace. 'He survived the battle of Flodden ten years, and died April 23rd, 1523, aged about 70. I shall endeavour to appropriate to him a tomb, vault, and chantry, in the choir of the church of Bolton, as I should be sorry to believe that he was deposited, when dead, at a distance from the place which in his lifetime he loved so well. 'By his last will he appointed his body to be interred at Shap, if he died in Westmoreland; or at Bolton, if he died in Yorkshire. 'With respect to the Canons of Bolton, Dr. Whitaker shows from MSS. that not only alchemy but astronomy was a favourite pursuit with them."
to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmorland. See Dr. Percy's account.

Page 391.

"Of usired Thornton—what a Host He conquered!"

See the Historians for the account of this memorable battle, usually denominated the Battle of the Standard.

Page 391.

"In that other day of Neville's Cross!"

"In the night before the battle of Durham was stricken and begun, the 17th day of October, anno 1646, there did appear to John Foster, then Prior of the abbey of Durham, a Vision, commanding him to take the holy Corporal-cloth, wherewith St. Cuthbert did cover the chalice when he used to say mass, and to put the same to the church, like to a banner-cloth upon the point of a spear, and the next morning to go and repair to a place on the west side of the city of Durham, called the Red Hill, by the topmost window of the Minster's tower, and there to remain and abide till the end of the battle. To which vision, the Prior obeying, and taking the same for a revelation the power and grace and mercy by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, did accordingly the next morning, with the monks of the said abbey, repair to the said Red Hill, and there most devoutly humbling and prostrating themselves in prayer for the victory in the said battle: a great multitude of the Scots running and pressing by them, with intention to have spoiled them, yet had no power to commit any violence under such holy persons, so occupied in prayer, being protected and defended by the mighty Providences of Almighty God, and by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, and the presence of the holy relique. And, after many conflicts and warlike exploits they had and done between the English men and the King of Scots and his company, the said battle ended, and the victory was obtained, to the great overthrow and confusion of the Scots, their enemies: And then the said Prior and monks accompanied with Ralph Lord Nevill, and John Nevill his son, and the Lord Percy, and many other nobles of England, returned home and went to the abbey church, there joining in hearty prayer and thanksgiving to God and Holy St. Cuthbert for the victory achieved that day."

This battle was afterwards called the Battle of Neville's Cross from the following circumstances:—

"On the west side of the city of Durham, where two roads pass each other, a most notable, famous, and glorious cross of stone-work was erected and set up to the honour of God for the victory there obtained in the field of battle, and known by the name of Nevill's Cross, and built at the sole cost of the Lord Ralph Nevill, one of the most excellent and chief persons in the said battle. The Reliquary of St. Cuthbert afterwards became of great importance in military events. For soon after this battle, says the same author, 'The prior caused a goodly and sumptuous banner to be made,' (which is then described at great length,) and in the midst of the same banner-cloth was the said holy relique and corporal-cloth enclosed, &c. &c., and so sumptuously finished, and absolutely perfected, this banner was dedicated to Holy St. Cuthbert of intent and purpose that for the future it should be carried to any battle, as occasion should serve; and was never carried and showed at any battle but by the special grace of God Almighty, and the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, it brought home victory: which banner-cloth, after the dissolution of the abbey, fell into the possession of Dean Whitington, whose wife, called Catharine, being a French woman, (as is most credibly reported by eye-witnesses,) did most inconsiderably burn the same in her fire, to the open contempt and disgrace of all ancient and goody reliques."

Extracted from a book entitled "Durham Cathedral, as it stood before the Dissolution of the Monastery." It appears, from the old metrical History, that the above-mentioned banner was carried by the Earl of Surrey to Flodden Field.

Page 394.

"An edifice of warlike fame
Blends single—Norton Tower its name."

It is so called to this day, and is thus described by Dr. Whitaker:—"Rylstone Fell yet exhibits a monument of the old warfare between the Nortons and Cliffords. On a point of very high ground, commanding an immense prospect, and protected by two deep ravines, are the remains of a square tower, expressly said by Doderer to have been built by Richard Norton. The walls are of strong masonry, about seven feet thick, and have been three stories high. Branches have been industriously made in all the sides, almost to the ground, to render it untenable."

But Norton Tower was probably a sort of pleasure-house in summer, as there are, adjoining to it, several large mounds, (two of them are pretty entire,) of which no other account can be given than that they were built for large companies of archers.

The place is savagely wild, and admirably adapted to the uses of a watch tower."

Page 398.

"deepoll and devotion
Over Rylstone's fair domain have flown;"

"After the attainder of Richard Norton, his estates were forfeited to the crown, where they remained till the 2nd or 3rd of James; they were then granted to Francis Earl of Cumberland. From an accurate survey made at that time, several particulars have been extracted by Dr. W. It appears that the mansion-house was then in decay. Immediately adjoining is a close, called the Virey, so called, undoubtedly, from the French Vier, or modern Latte Vivarum; for there are near the house large remains of a pleasure-ground, such as were introduced in the earlier part of Elizabeth's time, with topiary works, fish-ponds, an island, &c. The whole township was ranged by an ancient forest and thirty red deer, the property of the Lord, which, together with the wood, had, after the attainder of Mr. Norton, been committed to Sir Stephen Tempest. The wood, it seems, had been abandoned to depredations, before which time it appears that the neighbourhood must have exhibited a forest-like and sylvan scene. In this survey among the old tenants, is mentioned one Richard Kitchin, butler to Mr. Norton, who rose in rebellion with his master, and was executed at Ripon."

Page 398.

"In the deep fork of Amerdale;"

"At the extremity of the parish of Bursall, the valley of Wharfe forks off into two great branches, one of which retains the name of Whordale, to the source of the river; the other is usually called Littondale, but more ancienly and properly, Amerdale. Dernbrook, which runs along an obscure valley from the N.W., is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concealment."—

Dr. Whitaker.

Page 398.

"When the Bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabboth music—God us ait?"

On one of the bells of Rylstone church, which seems coeval with the building of the tower, is this cypher, 'E. N.' for John Norton, and the motto, 'God us ait?"
NOTES.

Page 532. "The grassy rock-encircled mound" Which is thus described by Dr. Whitaker: "On the plain summit of the hill are the foundations of a strong wall stretching from the S.W. to the N.E. corner of the tower, and to the edge of a very deep glen. From this glen, a ditch, several hundred yards long, runs south to another deep and rugged ravine. On the N. and W. where the banks are very steep, no wall or mound is discoverable, paling being the only fence that could stand on such ground.

"From the Minisledry of the Scottish Border, it appears that such ponds for deer, sheep, &c. were far from being uncommon in the south of Scotland. The principle of them was something like that of a wire mouse-trap. On the declivity of a steep hill, the bottom and surface of which were so flat as to be impassable, a wall was constructed nearly level with the surface on the outside, yet so high within, that without wings it was impossible to escape in the opposite direction. Care was probably taken that these enclosures should contain better feed than the neighbouring parks or forests; and whoever is acquainted with the habits of these sequacious animals, will easily conceive, that if the leader was once tempted to descend into the snare, a herd would follow."

I cannot conclude without recommending, to the notice of all lovers of beautiful scenery, Bolton Abbey and its neighbourhood. This enchanting spot belongs to the Duke of Devonshire; and the superintendence of it has for some years been entrusted to the Rev. William Carr, who has most skilfully opened out its features; and, in whatever he has added has done justice to the place, by working with an invisible hand of art in the very spirit of nature.

Page 533. "Ecclesiastical Sonnets."

During the month of December, 1829, I accompanied a much-beloved and honoured Friend in a walk through different parts of his estate, with a view to fix upon the site of a new Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season,—our feelings were in harmony with the chastening influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this series were produced as a private memorial of that morning's occupation.

The Catholic Question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course; and it struck me that certain points in the Ecclesiastical History of our Country might advantageously be presented to view in verse. Accordingly, I took up the subject, and what I now offer to the reader was the result.

When this work was far advanced, I was agreeably surprised to find that my friend, Mr. Southey, had been engaged with similar views, writing a concise History of the Church in England. If our Productions, thus unintentionally coinciding, shall be found to illustrate each other, it will prove a high gratification to me, which I am sure my friend will participate.

Rydal Mount, January 24, 1827.

W. WORDSWORTH.

Page 534. "Did holy Paul," &c. Stillingfleet adduces many arguments in support of this opinion, but they are unconvincing. The latter part of this Sonnet refers to a favourite notion of Roman Catholic writers, that Joseph of Arimathea and his companions brought Christianity into Britain, and built a rude church at Glastonbury; allied to hereafter, in a passage upon the dissolution of monasteries.

Page 535. "That hill, which, loves the platform," &c. This hill at St. Alban's must have been an object of great interest to the imagination of the venerable Bede, who thus describes it, with a delicate feeling, delightful to meet with in that rude age, traces of which are frequent in his works:—"Varis herbarum floribus depictus in usquequaque vestitus, in quo nihil repente arundin, nihil praecepis, nihil abruptum, quae lateribus longi latique deductum in medium sequis natura complanat, dignum videbatur eum pro insitb sibi specie venustatis jarn olim redens, qui beat martyr misuro dicaretur."

Page 536. "Nunc vultis annus the pasio-striking art Of hallecbioke" Alluding to the victory gained under Germanus.—See Bede.

Page 537. "By men yet scarcely cousins of a care For other monasteries than those of Earth;" The last six lines of this Sonnet are chiefly from the prose of Daniel; and here I will state (though to the Readers whom this Poem will chiefly interest it is unnecessary) that my obligations to other prose writers are frequent,—obligations which, even if I had not a pleasure in counting, it would have been presumptuous to shun, in treating an historical subject. I must, however, particularise Fuller, to whom I am indebted in the Sonnet upon Weelishe and in other instances. And upon the accipital of the Seven Bishops I have done little more than versify a lively description of that event in the MS. Memoirs of the first Lord Lonsdale.

Page 538. Sonnet xii. "Edseforth reached the convvent of Bangor, he percieved the Monks, twelve hundred in number, offering prayers for the success of their countrymen: 'if they are praying against us,' he exclaimed, 'they are fighting against us'; and he ordered them to be first attacked: they were destroyed; and, appalled by their fate, the courage of Brocnaill wavered, and he fled from the field in dismay. Thus abandoned by their leader, his army soon gave way, and Edseforth obtained a decisive conquest. Ancient Bangor itself soon fell into his hands, and was demolished; the noble monastery was levelled to the ground; its library, which is mentioned as a large one, the collection of ages, the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons, was consumed; half ruined walls, gates, and rubbish were all that remained of the magnificent edifice.

The account Bede gives of this remarkable event, sug-
gests a most striking warning against National and Religious prejudices.

Page 515. Sonnet xvi.

The person of Paulinus is thus described by Bede, from the memory of an eye-witness:—‘Longa stature, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facile medullent, nasso adnusco, pertinem, venerabiles simul et terribilis aspectus.’

Page 515.

‘Man’s life is like a Sparrow.’

See the original of this speech in Bede.—The Conversion of Edwin, as related by him, is highly interesting—and the breaking up of this Council accompanied with an event so striking and characteristic, that I am tempted to give it at length in a translation. ’Who, exclaimed the King, when the Council was ended, shall first descend the altars and the temples? I, answered the Chief Priest; for who more fit than myself, through the wisdom which the true God hath given me, to destroy, for the good example of others, what in foolishness I worshiped! Immediately, casting away vains superstition, he besought the King to grant him what the laws did not allow to a priest, arms and a courser (equum emissarium); which mounting, and furnished with a sword and lance he proceeded to destroy the Isols. The crowd, seeing this, thought him mad—he however, halted not, but, approaching, he profaned the temple, casting against it the lance which he had held in his hand, and, exulting in acknowledgment of the worship of the true God, he ordered his companions to pull down the temple, with all its enclosures. The place is shown where those Isols formerly stood, not far from York, at the source of the river Derwent, and is at this day called Gormund Gamah, ubi pontifica ipsa, inscripta Deo verso, palluit ac destructit eas, quas vocavisse aras.’ The last expression is a pleasing proof that the venerable monk of Wearmouth was familiar with the poetry of Virgil.

Page 515.

‘such the buzzing voice Heard near fresh streams.’

The early propagators of Christianity were accustomed to preach near rivers, for the convenience of baptism.

Page 515. Sonnet xix.

Having spoken of the zeal, disinterestedness, and temerity of the clergy of those times, Bede thus proceeds:—‘Unde et in magna erat veneratione tempore illo religiosum habitus, uta ubi ubique chlorosis alpines, aut monachus adventaret, guideruber ab omnibus tanguam Dei famulos excipieretur, Etiarum si in itinere permens invenirentur, accurrabant, et flexa servire, vel manu signari, vel oris lillas se beneficii, guideruber. Verba quaque horum exhortatoria diligentia auditum prebebant, Lib. ii. cap. 26.’

Page 516.

‘The people made like congregated bees.’

See, in Turner’s History, vol. iii. p. 228, the account of the erection of Ramsey Monastery. Penances were removable by the performance of acts of charity and benevolence.

Page 516.

‘pains narrow not his care.’

Through the whole of his life, Alfred was subject to grievous maladies.

Page 517.

‘Woe to the Crown that doth the Court obey!’

The violent measures carried on under the influence of Dunstan, for strengthening the Benedictine Order, were a leading cause of the second series of Danish invasions.—See Turner.

Page 519.

‘Here Men more purely Live,’ &c.

‘Bonum est nos hic esse, quis homo vivit purius, caditarius, surgit velesus, incidit caelius, quiescit securus, metitur felicius, pugnatur utilius, pensamur copiosius.’

Bernard. ‘This sentence,’ says Dr. Whitaker, ‘is usually inscribed in some conspicuous part of the Christian house.’

Page 521.

‘Whom Obleopur purum with hideshow barks!’

The list of foul names bestowed upon those few creatures is long and curious—and, as it, alas! too natural, most of the opprobrious apppellations are drawn from circumstances into which they were forced by their persecutors, who even consolidated their miseries into one reproachful term, calling them Paternarians, or Paturias, from patis, to suffer.

Page 522.

‘And the green lizard, and the gilded nest

Land unsolicited lives, and die of age.’

These two lines are adopted from a MS., written about the year 1370, which accidentally fell into my possession. The close of the preceding Sonnet on monastic voluptuousness is taken from the same source, as is the verse, ‘Where Venus sits,’ &c., and the line, ‘Once ye were holy, ye are still holy,’ in a subsequent Sonnet.

Page 524.

‘One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)

Transformed,’ &c.

‘M. Latimer suffered his keeper very quietly to pull off his hose, and his other array, which to looke unto was very simple: and being stripped into his shroude, he seemed as comely a person to them that were present, as one should lightly see: and whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked sills (weak) old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold. * * * Then they brought a faggotte, kindled with fire, and laid them downe at doctor Ridley’s feete. To whom M. Latimer spoke in this manner, ‘Be of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man: wee shall this day light such a candie by God’s grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out.’—Fox’s Acts, &c.

Similar alterations in the outward figure and deportment of persons brought to like trial were not uncommon. See note to the above passage in Dr. Wordsworth’s Ecclesiastical Biography, for an example in an humble Welsh fisherman.

Page 525.

‘The gift earthling, and with playful mirth.’

‘On foot they went, and took Salisbury in their way, purposely to see the good Bishop, who made Mr. Hooker sit at his own table; which Mr. Hooker boasted of with much joy and gratitude when he saw his mother and friends; and at the Bishop’s parting with him, the Bishop gave him good counsel and his benediction, but forgot to give him money; which when the Bishop had considered, he sent a servant in all haste to call Richard back to
NOTES.

him, and at Richard's return, the Bishop said to him, 'Richard, I sent for you back to lend you a horse which hath carried me many a mile, and I thank God with much ease;' and presently delivered into his hand a walking-staff, with which he professed he had travelled through many parts of Germany; and he said, 'Richard, I do not give, but lend you my horse; be sure you be honest, and bring my horse back to me, at your return this way to Oxford. And I do now give you ten groats to bear your charges to Exeter; and here is ten groats more, which I charge you to deliver to your mother, and tell her I send her a Bishop's benediction with it, and beg the continuance of her prayers for me. And if you bring my horse back to me, I will give you ten groats more to carry you on foot to the college; and so God bless you, good Richard.'—See Watson's Life of Richard Hooker.

Page 325.

—'craffyly lecites
The overzeesing, personates the wust.'

A common device in religious and political conflicts.
—See Strype in support of this instance.

Page 326.

'Laud,'
In this age a word cannot be said in praise of Laud, or even in compassion for his fate, without incurring a charge of bigotry; but fearless of such imputation, I concur with Hume, 'that it is sufficient for his vindication to observe that his errors were the most excusable of all those which prevailed during that zealous period.' A key to the right understanding of those parts of his conduct that brought the most odium upon him in his own time, may be found in the following passage of his speech before the bar of the House of Peers:—'Ever since I came in place, I have laboured nothing more than that the external publick worship of God, so much slighted in divers parts of this kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be. For I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.'

Page 329.

'The Pilgrim Fathers.'
American episcopacy, in union with the church in England, strictly belongs to the general subject; and I here make my acknowledgments to my American Friends, Bishop White, and Mr. Henry Rees of Philadelphia, for having suggested to me the propriety of adverting to it, and pointed out the virtues and intellectual qualities of Bishop White, which so eminently fitted him for the great work he undertook. Bishop White was consecrated at Lambeth, Feb. 4, 1787, by Archbishop Moore; and before his long life was closed, twenty-six bishops had been consecrated in America, by himself. For his character and opinions, see his own numerous Works, and a "Sermon in commemoration of him, by George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey."
and two chests, upon one of which stood milk in wide vessels, covered over. The walls of the house were stone unplastered: it consisted of three apartments, a cowhouse at one end, the kitchen or house in the middle, and the spence at the other end; the rooms were divided not up to the rigging, but only to the beginning of the roof, so that there was a free passage for light and smoke from one end of the house to the other. I went at some time before the rest of the family; the door was shut between us, and they had a bright fire, which I could not see, but the light it sent up amongst the vanished rafters and beams, which crossed each other in almost as intricate and fantastic a manner as I have seen the under-boughs of a large beech tree withered by the depth of shade above, produced the most marvellous effect that can be conceived. It was like what I should suppose an underground cave or temple to be, with a dripping or moist roof, and the moonlight entering in upon it by some means or other; and yet the colours were more like those of melted gems. I lay looking up till the light of the fire faded away, and the man and his wife and child had crept into their bed at the other end of the room: I did not sleep much, but passed a restful night; for my bed, though hard, was warm and clean: the unusual height of my after upper second, from sleeping. I could hear the waves beat against the shore of the lake; a little rill close to the door made a much louder noise, and, when I sat up in my bed, I could see the lake through an open window-place at the bed-head. Add to this, it rained all night. I was less occupied by remembrance of the Trossachs, beautiful as they were, than by the vision of the Highland hut, which I could not get out of my head; I thought of the Faery-land of Spenser, and what I had read in romance at other times, and then what a feast it would be for a London Pantomime-maker could he transplant it to Drury-Lane, with all its beautiful colours!"—W.M.

Page 340.

"Once on those slopes I roamed";

The following is from the same MS., and gives an account of the visit to Bothwell Castle here alluded to:

"It was exceedingly delightful to enter thus unexpectedly upon such a beautiful region. The castle stands nobly, overlooking the river. When we came up to it, I was hurt to see that flower-borders had taken place of the natural overgrowths of the ruin, the scattered stones, and wild plants. It is a large pile of grey sandstone, harmonizing perfectly with the rocks of the river, from which, no doubt, it has been hewn. When I was a little accustomed to the unnaturalness of a modern garden, I could not help admiring the exquisite beauty and luxuriance of some of the plants, particularly those purple-flowered clematis, and the sea-lavender creeping plant without flowers, which scrambled up the castle wall, along with the ivy, and spread its vine-like branches so lavish that it seemed to cover the outlying stones with a network, and one could not help thinking that, though not self-planted among the ruins of this country, it must somewhere have its native abode in such places. If Bothwell Castle had not been close to the Douglas mansion, we should have been disgusted with the possessors' miserable conception of adorning such a venerable ruin; but it is so very near to the house, that of necessity the pleasure-grounds must have extended beyond it, and perhaps the neatness of a shaven lawn and the complete denudation natural to a ruin might have made an unpleasant contrast; and, besides being within the precincts of the pleasure-grounds, and so very near to the dwelling of a noble family, it was fortified, in some degree, its independent majesty, and becomes a tributary to the mansion: its solitude being interrupted, it has no longer the command of a leading place in the old history of past times, or excluding the ordinary feelings which we bear about us in daily life. We had then only to re-
grot that the castle and the house were so near to each other; and it was impossible not to regret it; for the ruin presides in state over the river, far from city or town, as if it might have a peculiar privilege to preserve its memorials of past ages, and maintain its own character for centuries to come. We sat upon a bench under the high trees, and had beautiful views of the different reaches of the river, above and below. On the opposite bank, which is finely wooded with elms and other trees, are the remains of a priory built upon a rock; and rock and trees are blended so closely, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. Nothing can be more beautiful than the little remnant of this holy place: elm trees (for we were not far enough to distinguish them by their branches) grow out of the walls, and overshadow a small, but very elegant window. It can scarcely be conceived what a grace the castle and priory impart to each other; and the river Clyde flows on, smooth and unruffled below, seeming to my thoughts more in harmony with the sober and stately images of former times, than if it had roared over a rocky channel, forcing its sound upon the ear. It blended gently with the warbling of the smaller birds, and the chattering of the larger ones, that had made their nests in the ruins. In this fortress the chief of the English nobility were confined after the battle of Rossbach. If a man is to be a prisoner, he scarcely could have a more pleasant place to solace his captivity; but I thought that, for close confinement, I should prefer the banks of a lake, or the seaside. The greatest charm of a brook or river is in the liberty to pursue it through its windings: you can then take it in whatever mood you like: silent or noisy, sportive or quiet. The beauties of a brook or river must be sought, and the pleasure is in going in search of them; those of a lake or of the sea come to you of themselves. These rude warriors cared little, perhaps, about either; and yet, if one may judge from the writings of Chaucer, and from the old romances, more interesting passions were connected with natural objects in the days of chivalry than now; though going in search of scenery, as it is called, had not then been thought of. I had previously heard nothing of Rothesay Castle; at least nothing that I remembered; therefore, perhaps, my pleasure was greater, compared with what I received elsewhere, than others might feel.—MS. Journal.

Page 541.

‘Hart's Horn Tree.’

‘In the time of the first Robert de Clifford, in the year 1333 or 1334, Edward Baliol king of Scotland came into Westmorland, and stayed some time with the said Robert at his castles of Appleby, Brougham, and Pen-dragon. And during that time they ran a stag by a single greyhound out of Whin Fell Park to Redkirk, in Scotland, and back again to this place; where, being both spent, the stag leaped over the pales, but died on the other side; and the greyhound, attempting to leap, fell, and died on the contrary side. In memory of this fact the stag's horns were nailed upon a tree just by, and (the dog being named Hercules) this rhythm was made upon them:—

Hercules kill'd Hart a gresse,
And Hart a gresse kill'd Hercules.’

The tree to this day bears the name of Hart's horn Tree. The horns in process of time were almost grown over by the growth of the tree, and another pair was put up in their place.”—Nicholson and Burn's History of Westmoreland and Cumberland.

The tree has now disappeared, but I well remember its imposing appearance as it stood, in a decayed state, by the side of the high road leading from Penrith to Appleby. This whole neighbourhood abounds in interesting traditions and vestiges of antiquity, viz., Julian's Tower; Brougham and Penrith Castles; Penrith Beacon; and the curious remains in Penrith Church-yard; Arthur's Round Table, and, close by, Maybrough; the excavation, called the Giant's Cave, on the banks of the River Eden; Long Meg and her Daughters, near Eden, &c.

Page 545.

‘Wings at my shoulders seem to play.’

In these lines I am under obligation to the exquisite picture of “Jacob's Dream,” by Mr. Alstone, now in America. It is pleasant to make this public acknowledgment to a man of genius, whom I have the honour to rank among my friends.

Page 549.

‘But if thou, like Cogito,’ &c.

Many years ago, when I was at Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, the hostess of the inn, proof of her skill in etymology, said, that “the name of the river was taken from the bridge, the form of which, as every one must notice, exactly resembled a great A.” Dr. Whitaker has derived it from the word of common occurrence in the north of England, “to gret,” signifying to lament aloud, mostly with weeping: a conjecture rendered more probable from the stony and rocky channel of both the Cumberland and Yorkshire rivers. The Cumberland Greta, though it does not, among the country people, take up that name till within three miles of its disappearance in the river Derwent, may be considered as having its source in the mountain cave of Wythburn, and flowing through Thirlmere, the beautiful features of which lake are known only to those who, travelling between Grassmere and Keswick, have quitted the main road in the vale of Wythburn, and crossing over to the opposite side of the lake, have proceeded with it on the right hand.

The channel of the Greta, immediately above Keswick, has, for the purposes of building, been in a great measure cleared of the immense stones which, by their concession in high floods, produced the loud and awful noises described in the sonnet.

The scenery upon this river, says Mr. Southey in his Colloquies, “where it passes under the woody side of Latrigg, is of the finest and most memorable kind—

‘ambiguo lapis retintique fituque,
Occurrensque sibi venturas apicid undas.’

Page 549.

‘By hooded watertunes,’ &c.

Attached to the church of Brigham was formerly a chantry, which held a minster of the manor; and in the decayed parsonage some vestiges of monastic architecture are still to be seen.

Page 550.

‘Mary Queen of Scots landing at Workington.’

The fears and impatience of Mary were so great,” says Robertson, “that she got into a fisher-boat, and with about twenty attendants landed at Workington, in Cumberland; and thence she was conducted with many marks of respect to Carlisle.” The apartment in which the Queen had slept at Workington Hall (where she was received by Sir Henry Curwen as became her rank and misfortunes) was long preserved, out of respect to her memory, as she had left it; and one cannot but regret that some necessary alterations in the mansion could not be effected without its destruction.

Page 550.

St. Bee's Heads, anciently called the Cliff of Baruth, are a conspicuous sea-mark for all vessels sailing in the N.W. parts of the Irish Sea. In a bay, one side of which
is formed by the southern headland, stands the village of St. Bees; a place distinguished, from very early times, for its religious and scholastic foundations.

"St. Bees," say Nicholson and Burns, "had its name from Beqa, an holy woman from Ireland, who is said to have founded here, about the year of our Lord 606, a small monastery, where afterwards a church was built in memory of her.

The aforesaid religious house, being destroyed by the Danes, was restored by William de Meschines, son of Ranulph, and brother of Ranulph de Meschines, first Earl of Cumberland after the Conquest; and made a cell of a prior and six Benedictine monks to the Abbey of St. Mary at York.

Several traditions of miracles, connected with the foundation of the first of these religious houses, survive among the people of the neighbourhood; one of which is alluded to in these Stanzaas; and another, of a somewhat holier and more peculiar character, has furnished the subject of a spirited poem by the Rev. R. Parkinson, M.A., late Divinity Lecturer of St. Bees' College, and now Fellow of the Collegiate Church of Manchester.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, Archbishop Grindal founded a free school at St. Bees, from which the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland have derived great benefit; and recently, under the patronage of the Earl of Lonsdale, a college has been established there for the education of ministers for the English Church. The old Conventual Church has been repaired under the superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Ainger, Head of the College; and is well worthy of being visited by any strangers who might be led to the neighbourhood of this celebrated spot.

The form of stanzas in this Poem, and something in the style of versification, are adopted from the "St. Monicas," a poem of much beauty upon a monastic subject, by Charlotte Smith; a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote little, and that little unambitiously, but with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature was not much regarded by English Poets; for in point of time her earlier writings preceded, I believe, those of Cowper and Burns.

Page 259.

"Are not, in sooth, their Requiem sacred sites?"

I am aware that I am here treading upon tender ground; but to the intelligent reader I feel that no apology is due. The prayers of survivors, during passionate grief for the recent loss of relatives and friends, as the object of those prayers could no longer be the suffering body of the dying, would naturally be garnished for the souls of the departed; the barriers between the two worlds dissolving before the power of love and faith. The ministers of religion, from their habitual attendance upon sick-beds, would be daily witnesses of these benign results; and hence would be strongly tempted to aim at giving to them permanence, by embodying them in rites and ceremonies, recurring at stated periods. All this, as it was in course of nature, so was it blameless, and even praiseworthy; since some of its effects, in that rude state of society, could not but be satisfactory. No reflecting person, however, can view without sorrow the abuses which rose out of thus formalising sublime instincts, and disinterested movements of passion, and perverting them into means of gratifying the ambition and rapacity of the priesthood. But, while we deplore and are indignant at these abuses, it would be a great mistake if we imputed the origin of the offices to prospective selfishness on the part of the monks and clergy: they were at first sincere in their sympathy, and in their degree dupes rather of their own creed, than arid and designing men. Charity is, upon the whole, the safest guide that we can take in

judging our present times.

"The Tower" was erected by William Hill, William Hill was the architect, and the boat establishment was carried on under the superintendence of William Hill, and have been so

This superstition, connected with its place, that has ever been so

The summit has the scene of the famous hill named of three great As soon as early times, and represent that had over not to be denied the passions, resemblance that this writer so feels of blance may 6 years advance

Page 259.

"Hop in Chisholm"

Upon the bed of the cave, rest which was the flower, the ex growing with western coast contrast with

The four leaf well-known is better than ur
'Yet fetched from Paradis.'

It is to be feared that there is more of the poet than the sound etymologist in this derivation of the name Eden. On the western coast of Cumberland is a rivulet which enters the sea at Mooreby, known also in the neighbourhood by the name of Eden. May not the latter syllable come from the word Dea, a valley in Langdale, near Ambleside is by the inhabitants called Langdene. The former syllable occurs in the name Eumont, a principle feeder of the Eden; and the stream which flows, when the tide is out, over Cartmel Sands, is called the Eu—eau, French—aqua, Latin.

Page 357.

'Canal, and Vacation, and Railway, tell!'

At Corby, a few miles below Nunnery, the Eden is crossed by a magnificent viaduct; and another of these works is thrown over a deep glen or ravine at a very short distance from the main stream.

Page 357.

'A weight of one not easy to be borne.'

The daughters of Long Meg, placed in a perfect circle eighty yards in diameter, are seventy-two in number above ground; a little way out of the circle stands Long Meg herself, a single stone, eighteen feet high. When I first saw this monument, as I came upon it by surprise, I might over-rate its importance as an object; but, though it will not bear a comparison with Stonehenge, I must say, I have not seen any other relic of those dark ages, which can pretend to rival it in singularity and dignity of appearance.

Page 358.

'To the Earl of Lonsdale.'

This sonnet was written immediately after certain trials, which took place at the Cumberland Assizes, when the Earl of Lonsdale, in consequence of repeated and long-continued attacks upon his character, through the local press, had thought it right to prosecute the conductors and proprietors of three several journals. A verdict of libel was given in one case; and, in the others, the prosecutions were withdrawn, upon the individuals retracting and disavowing the charges, expressing regret that they had been made, and promising to abstain from the like in future.

Page 357.

'Descending to the worm in charity.'

I am indebted, here, to a passage in one of Mr. Digby's valuable works.

Page 356.

'Age change is perilous, and all chance unawed.'—Ronsen.

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER.

Page 357.

'Men of the Western World.'

These lines were written several years ago, when reports prevailed of cruelties committed in many parts of America, by men making a law of their own passions. A far more formidable, as being a more deliberate massacre, has appeared among those States, which have lately broken faith with the public creditor in a manner so infamous. I cannot, however, but look at both evils under a similar relation to inherent good, and hope that the time is not distant when our brethren of the West will wipe off this stain from their name and nation.

Page 357.

'The Horn of Egremont Castle.'

This story is a Cumberland tradition. I have heard it also related of the Hall of Hutton John, an ancient residence of the Hulleston's, in a sequestered valley upon the river Dacre.

Page 406.

'The Russian Peasant.'

Peter Henry Bruce, having given in his entertaining Memoirs the substance of this Tale, affirms that, besides the concurring reports of others, he had the story from the lady's own mouth.

The Lady Catherine, mentioned towards the close, is the famous Catherine, then bearing that name as the acknowledged Wife of Peter the Great.

Page 427.

'The Former of Tinsherry Vale.'

With this picture, which was taken from real life, compare the imaginative one of "The Reverie of Poor Susan," p. 145; and see (to make up the deficiencies of this class) "The Excursion," passim.

Page 436.

'Most Campion (Silene uniflora).'

This most beautiful plant is scarce in England, though it is found in great abundance upon the mountains of Scotland. The first specimen I ever saw of it, in its native bed, was singularly fine, the tuft or cushion being at least eight inches in diameter, and the root proportionately thick. I have only met with it in two places among our mountains, in both of which I have since sought for it in vain.

Botanists will not, I hope, take it ill, if I caution them against carrying off, inconsiderately, rare and beautiful plants. This has often been done, particularly from Ingleborough and other mountains in Yorkshire, till the species have totally disappeared, to the great regret of lovers of nature living near the places where they grew.

Page 438.

'From the most gentle creatures nursed in fields.'

This way of indicating the name of my lamented friend has been found fault with; perhaps rightly so; but I may say in justification of the double sense of the word, that similar allusions are not uncommon in epigraphs. One of the best in our language in verse, I ever read, was upon a person who bore the name of Palmer; and the cause of the thought, throughout, turned upon the Life of the Deported, considered as a pilgrimage. Nor can I think that the objection in the present case will have much force with any one who remembers Charles Lamb's beautiful sonnet addressed to his own name, and ending—

'No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name!'—Walter Scott.

Page 449.

ST. I. COlERIDGE.

Charles Lamb. . . . . 27th Dec., 1824.

George Crabbe . . . . 3rd Feb., 1822.

Felicia Hemans . . . . 16th May, 1835.


'Descend, prophetic Spirit, that inspir...'

'Shakespeare's Sonnets.'
Page 442.

'— much did he see of Men.'

At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have given an intimateWay how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, submit an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emblazoned me to draw this portrait.

We learn from Caesar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and the impression of their inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilizing the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, popish or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

It is further to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to accommodate themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunities of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. As they wander, each about, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation. With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censure of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to carry the pack, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.


Page 440.

'Lost in unsearchable Eternity.'

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet's Theory of the Earth, a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

'Siquid verum Natura nobis dedit spectaculum. In hinc tellure, verum gratum, et philosophos dignum, id semel mitti contigisse arbitror; dum ex cessisse speu speculabundus ad oram maris Mediterranei, hinc aquarum carum, illic tractus Alpinae proposcit; nihil quidem magis dispar aut dissimile, ne in suo genere, magis egregium et singularium. Hoc theatrum ego fatis profuturius Romanus curiosus, Gracie; atque id quod natura hic spectaculum exhibit, scienatis, hinc omnia, aut amphilatearii certaminibus. Nihil hic elegans aut ve-
NOTES.

Page 476.
"This, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to terrify;" &c.

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography.

Page 477.
"Alas! the endowment of immortal Power,
Is matched unequally with custom, time, &c.

This subject is treated at length in the Ode—Intimations of Immortality, page 441.

Page 478.
"Knowing the heart of Man is set to be, &c.

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in Italic, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man's mind in a time of public commotion.

Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant's threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others' crimes;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appall not him; that hath stood at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon imbecility;
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed, while as craft decoys,
And is deceived: whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
And the inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes: He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Implyety.

Thus, Lady, fears that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires: and sees all things
Beneath him; and hath learned this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty; and compared
The best of glory with her sufferings:
By whom, I see, you labour all you can
To plant your heart: and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.

Page 494.
"Or rather, as we stand on holy earth
And have the dead around us.

Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?
Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard.
Perhaps I might: — — —

By turning over these hillocks one by one,

We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.

See the Brothers.

Page 498.
"And suffering Nature grieved that one should die."
Southey's Retrospect.

Page 498.
"And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?"

The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the following Essay upon Epitaphs, which was furnished by me for Mr. Coleridge's periodical work, the Friend; and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathizing reader will not be displeased to see the Essay here annexed.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS.

It needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraved. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation; and, secondly, to preserve their memory. 'Never any,' says Camden, 'neglected burial but some savage nations; as the Britons, which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some insolute curtiars, as Maximus, who was wont to say, Non tumulum curio; sepulchra natura relictas.'

I'm careless of a grave:—Nature her dead will save.'

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and epitaphs from two sources of feeling: but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his Discourse of Funeral Monuments, says rightly, 'proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Thesban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses, then called of him Glina, afterwards Epitaphus, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the sepulchres.'

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows: mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it. The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding associates shall bewail his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at
through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an implication or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedent, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own Individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the social feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. For, from the earliest records of communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of Immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank Ignorance in the child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a thought, or any undistracting accidence upon what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfolder of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his first impressions, traced or recognized the early, obstinate, and unappeasable insinuations of children upon the subject of origin? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct testimony from nature, the mind of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the unseen, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the unseen. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelling to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in perpetually? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the letter, but the spirit of the answer must have been as inevitably—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting, that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inscrutable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward sense the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has thrown that conviction alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a holowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no hope of comfort. Were we to grow up unfettered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no notions of the life of love; and individually have we any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves unequally by the view that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in Immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither moments nor epiphanies, in affectionate or banal commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world. Simondes, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the corpse of an unknown person lying by the sea-side; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the pity of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chiding a youth who had committed an unexcusing acedia upon what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfolder of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his first impressions, traced or recognized the early, obstinate, and unappeasable insinuations of children upon the subject of origin? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct testimony from nature, the mind of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the unseen, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the unseen. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelling to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in perpetually? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the letter, but the spirit of the answer must have been as inevitably—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting, that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inscrutable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward sense the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has thrown that conviction alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a holowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no hope of comfort. Were we to grow up unfettered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the
of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased: and them, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-side.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminate upon the beauty which the monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, "Passer, Traveller!" so often found upon the monuments. And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affect ing analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passes away, or of immortality as one thing that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth fast as a rock against the beating waves—of hope 'undermined insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it,' or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admo nishing heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature with which it was in unison. We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages; and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities, by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obstructed upon the notice of men occupied with the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature, and for the absence of those types of renunciation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless church-yard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypresses in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been called for; to true sensibility by an ingenious Poet of the present day. The subject of his poem is "All Saints Church, Derby:" he has been described with forbidding and unseasonable appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the inhabitants of large towns in the country.—

Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot, Where healing Nature her benignant look Never changes, save at that fond season, when, With tresses drooping over her sable stole, She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man, Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgin erst, With annual mean upon the mountains wept, Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene, So placid, so congenial to the wish The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within That silent grave, I would have stead:

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven Lay on the humbler graves around, what time The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds, Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse, Twere brooding on the dead inhumed beneath. There while with him, the holy man of Cus, O'er human destiny I sympathised, Counting the long, long periods prophecy Decrees to roll, are the great day arrives Of resurrection, off the blue-eyed Spring Had met me with her heart-fainting charms, of the Dove, Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroyed: And I would bless her visit; for to me 'Tis sweet to trace the converse that links As one, the works of Nature and the word Of God.—

JOHN EDWARDS.

A village church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of nature, may indeed be most advantageously contrasted with that of a town of crowded population; and sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients; with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the sabbath-day in rural places, are probably charmed by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and in villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices, In ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contain nothing that shall check or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will rend the words with pleasure and gratitude. A husband exhorts a wife; a parent breathing a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother; a friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious adoration to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a thousand church-yards; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want
of variety in the characters of men; or, to use his own
words, 'to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all.' Such language may be held
without blame among the generalities of common con-
versation; but does not become an artist and a moralist
speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects
of admiration in human-nature are not scanty, but
abundant; and every man has a character of his own,
to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause
of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral
memorials is this: That to analyse the characters of others,
especially of those whom we love, is not a common or
natural employment of men at any time. We are not
anxious uneasily to understand the constitution of the
minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who
have supported us: with whom we have been long and
daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own
justification. The light of love in our hearts is a sat-
isfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the
minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has
proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their
merits and defects to be weighed against each other in
the nice balance of pure intellect; nor do we find much
temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality
or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence
known by the same general name as it exists in the
mind of another. On account of which, we incline to these
refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admira-
tion, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings
which incline men to prolong the memory of their friends
cleaned and kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the
all-uniting and equalising receptacle of the dead.
A writer regularly refers to a text, in an Epitaph is, that it
should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart,
the general language of humanity as connected with the
subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die
are the two points in which all men feel themselves to
be in absolute coincidence. This general language may
be uttered so strikingly as to enoble an epitaph to high
praise; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other
excellencies be superadded. Passing through all
intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once
what these excellencies are, and wherein consist the
perfection of this species of composition.—It will be
found to lie in a due proportion of the common or
universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a
distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the reader's
mind, of the individual, whose death is deplored and
whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his char-
acter as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him
and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be
quickened. The individual is diversified, by particular
thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occu-
pation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased
had known, or a reverse to which he had been subjected
and these ought to be bound together and solemnised
into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two
powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other.
The reader ought to know who and what the man was
whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A
distinct concept should be given (implicitly where it
can, rather than explicitly of the individual lamented).—
But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who
dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a
painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire
tranquility: his delineation, we must remember, is per-
formed by the side of the grave; and, what is more, the
grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity
and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of
which must no longer bless our living eyes! The char-
acter of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen,
no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree
through a tender bough or a luminous mist, that spi-
ritualises and beautifies it; that takes away, indeed, but
only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted
may appear more dignified and lovely; may impress and
affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth,
not a faithful image; and that, accordingly, the purposes
of commemoration cannot be answered?—It is truth
and of the highest order; for, though doubtless things
are not apparent which did exist; yet, the object being
looked at through this medium, parts and proportions
are brought into distinct view which before had been
only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth
bayed by—love—the joint offspring of the worth of the
dead and the affections of the living! This may easily
be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been
sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was
amiss in the character of a good man, bear the tidings
of his death, and what a change is wrought in a mo-
ment! Famine casts away; and, as it disappears, un-
selfishness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and,
through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of
love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a man to the
tombstone on which shall be inscribed an epitaph on his
adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recom-
manded. Would he turn it from as from an idle tale?
No—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps the
involuntary tear, would testify that it had a same,
a generous, and good meaning; and that on the writer's
side there had been a just abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and
quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the
side of the grave where his body is uninhaling,
ought to appear, as it were, in something analogous
between what he was on earth walking about with his
living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a
Spirit in heaven.
It suffices, therefore, that the trunk and the main
branches of the worth of the deceased be boldly and un-
affectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and
crampily pursued, especially if this be done with
laborsious and anticritic discriminations, must inevitably
frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator
to this conclusion,—either that the dead did not possess
the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised
a monument to his memory, and must therefore be sup-
pposed to have been closely connected with him, were in-
capable of perceiving those merits; or at least during
the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the
understanding having been so busy in its petty occupa-
tion, how could the heart of the mourner be other than
cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be
on the part of the buried or the survivors, the memori-
al is prolix and profane.
Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than
to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no
place are we more advanced to dwell upon which he had been subjected
and these ought to be bound together and solemnised
into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two
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NOTES.

these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is great a proud writing shut up for the studious: it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condensling, periscopic, and daringly solicitous regard, its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired: the stooping old man cues the engravers record like a second horn-book:—the child is proud that he can read it;—and the stranger is introduced through its dedication to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all—in the church-yard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which vulgar asceticism deprecates from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Sentiment requires this, and truth requires it: also for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillizing object: resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as do the wild flowers, bespreading the turfs with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is inscribed. The image and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraved, might seem to reprove the author who had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tombstone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his powers are gone; that a state of rest is come; and bemoans you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthy objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unestablished. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a soother sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their proper affections. And it may be observed, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which induce men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable: as it admits a wider range of notions; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect epitaph; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the general ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude.

Yet must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenor of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the actions of a man, or even some one conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act: and such sentiments dwell upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualize them. This is already done by their works, in the memories of men. Their named names, and their grand comprehensive sentiment of civic gratitude, patriotic love, or human admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in the constitution of true virtue:—or a declaration touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound as minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power;—these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an altar would not be unworthy.
Page 529.

"Perish the roses and the flowers of Kings."

The "Transit gloria mundi" is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows:

"Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore," &c.

Page 537.

"Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes."

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to sangur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baseful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.

Page 538.

"Binding herself by Statute."

The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.
APPENDIX, PREFACES,
ETC. ETC.

Much the greatest part of the foregoing Poems has been so long before the Public that no preface is required; & the arrangement which has been adopted appears to be required; & had it not been for the observations contained in these Prefaces upon the principles of Poetry in general they would not have been reprinted even as an Appendix in this Edition.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION OF SEVERAL OF THE FOREGOING POEMS, PUBLISHED, WITH AN ADDITIONAL VOLUME, UNDER THE TITLE OF "LYRICAL BALLADS."

[Note.—In succeeding Editions, when the Collection was much enlarged and diversified, this Preface was transferred to the end of the Volumes as having little of a special application to their contents.]

The first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may reasonably endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, & not unimportant in the quality, & in the multiplicity of its moral relations; & on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of reasoning him into an approbation of these particular Poems: & I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be something like impro-
priety in abruptly obtunding upon the Public, without
a few words of introduction, Poems so materially
different from those upon which general approbation
is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse
an Author makes a formal engagement that he will
gratify certain known habits of association; that
he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain
classes of ideas and expressions will be found in
his book, but that others will be carefully excluded.
This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical
language must in different eras of literature have
excited very different expectations: for example,
in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and
that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country,
in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and
Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden,
or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the
exact import of the promise which, by the act
of writing in verse, an Author, in the present day
makes to his reader: but it will undoubtedly appear
to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms
of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted.
They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and
imane phraseology of many modern writers, if
they persist in reading this book to its conclusion,
will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with
feelings of strangeness and awkwardness; they
will look round for poetry, and will be induced to
inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts
can be permitted to assume that title. I hope
therefore the reader will not censure me for
attempting to state what I have proposed to myself
to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a
preface will permit) to explain some of the chief
reasons which have determined me in the choices
of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any
unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I
myself may be protected from one of the most
dishonourable accusations which can be brought
against an Author; namely, that of an indolence
which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain
what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained,
prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these
Poems was to choose incidents and situations from
common life, and to relate or describe them, through-
out, as far as was possible in a selection of language
really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw
over them a certain colouring of imagination,
whereby ordinary things should be presented to
the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and
above all, to make these incidents and situations
interesting by tracing in them, truly though not
ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature:
chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we
associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble
and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in
that condition, the essential passions of the heart
find a better soil in which they can attain their
maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a
plainer and more emphatic language; because in
that condition the passions of men are incorporated
with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.
The language, too, of these men has been adopted
(purified indeed from what appear to be its real
defects, from all lasting and rational causes of
dislike or disgust) because such men hourly com-
municate with the best objects from which the best
part of language is originally derived; and because,
from their rank in society and the commonness and
narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under
the influence of social vanity, they convey their
feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated
expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising
out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is
a more permanent, and a far more philosophical
language, than that which is frequently substitut-
ed for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring
honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion
as they separate themselves from the sympathies
of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious
habits of expression, in order to furnish food for
fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own
creation*.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present
outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of
thought and language, which some of my con-
temporaries have occasionally introduced into their
metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that
this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable
to the Writer's own character than false refine-
ment or arbitrary innovation, though I should
contend at the same time, that it is far less
pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From
such verses the Poems in these volumes will be

* It is worth while here to observe, that the affecting
parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language
pure and universally intelligible even to this day.
found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakspeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their style, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood,
truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation between Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

*I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contrasubstitution of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of...*
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"such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overtures what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the Intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is of itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot consent myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than any thing which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this facility we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions,
certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, may, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives from the same tribunal, Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding every where objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.
To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying every where with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are every where; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoe'er he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man. It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a dictum of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they
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connected! Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly! It might be proved that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations and the entire world of nature before me—to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description, the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language! To this, by such a one yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished chiefly to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper
bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and, I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader’s own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-pursal of the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe, or the Gamester; while Shakespeare’s writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet’s words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet’s choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader’s mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compo-
sitions, the ease and gracefulness with which the
Poet manages his numbers are themselves con-
fessedly a principal source of the gratification of
the Reader. All that it is necessary to say, how-
ever, upon this subject, may be effected by affirm-
ing, what few persons will deny, that, of two
descriptions, either of passions, manners, or char-
acters, each of them equally well executed, the
one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will
be read a hundred times where the prose is read
once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for
writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects
from common life, and endeavoured to bring my
language near to the real language of men, if I
have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I
have at the same time been treating a subject of
general interest; and for this reason a few words
shall be added with reference solely to these par-
ticular poems, and to some defects which will pro-
bably be found in them. I am sensible that my
associations must have sometimes been particular
instead of general, and that, consequently, giving
to things a false importance, I may have some-
times written upon unworthy subjects; but I am
less apprehensive on this account, than that my
language may frequently have suffered from those
arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with
particular words and phrases, from which no man
can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no
doubt, that, in some instances, feelings, even of the
ludicrous, may be given to my Readers by ex-
pressions which appeared to me tender and patheti-

c. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they
were faulty at present, and that they must neces-
sarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all
reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous
to make these alterations on the simple authority
of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of
men; for where the understanding of an Author
is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot
be done without great injury to himself; for his
own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he
set them aside in one instance, he may be induced
to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all con-

dence in itself, and become utterly debilitated.
To this it may be added, that the critic ought
never to forget that he is himself exposed to the
same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much
greater degree: for there can be no presumption
in saying of most readers, that it is not probable
they will be so well acquainted with the various
stages of meaning through which words have
passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the
relations of particular ideas to each other; and,
above all, since they are so much less interested in
the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the Reader has been detained, I hope
he will permit me to caution him against a mode
of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry,
in which the language closely resembles that of
life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed
over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson’s stanza is
a fair specimen:

"I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand."

Immediately under these lines let us place one
of the most justly-admired stanzas of the "Babes
in the Wood."

"These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town."

In both these stanzas the words, and the order
of the words, in no respect differ from the most
unimpassioned conversation. There are words in
both, for example, 'the Strand,' and 'the Town,'
connected with none but the most familiar ideas;
yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the
other as a fair example of the superlatively con-
temptible. Whence arises this difference! Not
from the metre, not from the language, not from
the order of the words; but the matter expressed
in Dr. Johnson’s stanza is contemptible. The
proper method of treating trivial and simple verses,
to which Dr. Johnson’s stanza would be a fair
parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of
poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants
sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can
lead to any thing interesting; the images neither
originate in that same state of feeling which arises
out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling
in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner
of dealing with such verses. Why trouble your-
self about the species till you have previously
decided upon the genus! Why take pains to
prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is
self-evident that he is not a man!

One request I must make of my reader, which
is, that in judging these Poems he would decide
by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection
upon what will probably be the judgment of others.
How common is it to hear a person say, I myself
do not object to this style of composition, or this
or that expression, but, to such and such classes of
people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unaltered judgment, is almost universal: let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduces, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste: for an accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming, that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.
Perhaps, as I have no right to expect that attentive perusal, without which, confined, as I have been, to the narrow limits of a preface, my meaning cannot be thoroughly understood, I am anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used; and for this purpose, a few words shall here be added, concerning the origin and characteristics of the phraseology, which I have condemned under that name.

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and Men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in any situation. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind; when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment and understanding should be lapsed, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The emotion was in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes. Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and characterised by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and taste.

It is indeed true, that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the event which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of modes of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by themselves. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false were inseparably interwoven until, the taste of men becoming gradually perverted, this language was received as a natural language: and at length, by the in-
fluence of books upon men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would not be uninteresting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd diction. It depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon none, perhaps, more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and in flattering the Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he imagines that he is talked of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to bestow.

The sonnet quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italic, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if one may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers both ancient and modern. Perhaps in no way, by positive example, could more easily be given a notion of what I mean by the phrase poetic diction than by referring to a comparison between the metrical paraphrase which we have of passages in the Old and New Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's "Messiah" throughout; Prior's "Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue," &c. &c. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," &c. &c. 1st Corinthians, chap. xiii. By way of immediate example, take the following of Dr. Johnson:

"Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Describes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastens away
To snatch the blessings of a plentiful day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teming plain,
She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unsown thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artless shades thy dowry couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose.
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitting flight,
Thus want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush'd foe."

From this hubbub of words pass to the original:

"Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways,
And be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs, chap. vi.

One more quotation, and I have done. It is from Cowper's Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk:

"Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a hand I must visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me if yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see."

This passage is quoted as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcely worse in metre. The epithet 'church-going' applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language, till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as objects of admiration.

The two lines 'Ne'er sighed at the sound. &c., are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me to conclude with a principle which ought never to be lost sight of, and which has been my chief
guide in all I have said,—namely, that in works
of imagination and sentiment, for of these only
have I been treating, in proportion as ideas and
feelings are valuable, whether the composition be
in prose or in verse, they require and exact one
and the same language. Metre is but adventurery
to composition, and the phraseology for what
that passport is necessary, even where it may be
graceful at all, will be little valued by the judicious.

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ESSAY, SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE.

Wrth the young of both sexes, Poetry is, like
love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of
those who have been proud of its power over their
minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the
pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself—the
thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the
time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes
only an occasional recreation; while to those whose
existence passes away in a course of fashionable
pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement.
In middle and declining age, a scattered number
of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion,
for a protection against the pressure of trivial em-
ployments, and as a consolation for the afflictions
of life. And, lastly, there are many, who, having
been enamoured of this art in their youth, have
found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate
general literature; in which poetry has continued
to be comprehended as a study.

Into the above classes the Readers of poetry
may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but
from the last only can opinions be collected of
absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon,
as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The
young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are
especially subject to it in their intercourse with
Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is
unquestionable, is the same as that from which
erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of
men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth
it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate
business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine,
is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate
employment, her privilege and her duty, is to treat
of things not as they are, but as they appear; not
as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to
exist to the senses, and to the passions. What a
world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation
prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations
to go astray are here held forth for them whose
thoughts have been little disciplined by the under-
standing, and whose feelings revolt from the rule
of reason!—When a juvenile Reader is in the
height of his rapture with some vicious passage,
should experience throw in doubts, or common-
sense suggest suspicions, a lurking conscience
that the realities of the Muse are but show, and
that her liveliest excitements are raised by tran-
sient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive
assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever
at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction
absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions
are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful
to the mind as a process, what good can be gained
by making observations, the tendency of which is
to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings,
and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable
pleasures! The reproach implied in the
question could not be warded off, if Youth were
indefatigable of being delighted with what is truly
excellent; or, if these errors always terminated of
themselves in due season. But, with the majority,
though their force be abated, they continue through
life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious
an element to be extinguished or dampened by a
philosophical remark; and, while there is no dan-
ger that what has been said will be injurious or
painful to the ardent and the confident, it may
prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic,
are, at the same time, modest and ingenious.
The intimation may unite with their own misgivings
to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner
than it would otherwise have arrived, a more dis-
creet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in
later life, whose understandings have been rendered
acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and
so far imposed upon when they happen to take up
a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;
—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry,
whatever progress may have been made in other
departments of knowledge, they have not, as to
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this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, passions seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confusing these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can serve (i.e. obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to over-rate the Authors by whom those truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet’s language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathize with them, however inspired the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book.—To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions! Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemplative; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious;—and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an ‘imperfect shadowing forth’ of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burden upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommo-
sustained himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; between religion — making up the deficiencies of reason by faith; and poetry — passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion — whose element is infinite, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circum-
scription, and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry — ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error; so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government! Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness; and for active faculties, capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it — among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed — that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mis-taught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly, to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genius poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to support of the cause in which they are utterly unable to com-
pany, — confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily into the region of palest imaginings and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, if the many, are greedy of vicious pretexts; — judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together to two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only in this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blundered into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them: it will be further found, that when Authors shall have at length raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes; — a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that now reads the “Creation” of Duhart? Yet all Europe once resonated with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the Faery Queen faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely
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known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestowed on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

\"The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage.\"

deserve it; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy: while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been their best friend. But he was a great power, and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakespeare was listened to. The people were delighted: but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakespeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakespeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many!

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.*—His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare,' is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties.' How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the

* The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error 'touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay,' cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Baretta, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.
Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of those little pieces, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions—there sitting where he durst not soar.

Nine years before the death of Shakespeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated, I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Stevens wrote upon those of Shakespeare.

About the time when the Pindaric odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the Paradise Lost made its appearance. 'Fit audience find though few,' was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were 'just to it' upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, he it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the masterpiece of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who wished to possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few I fear would be left who sought for it on account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; 'for,' says Dr. Johnson, 'many more readers (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford.' How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to believe it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth edition, 1686; Waller, fifth edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember, that, twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show—that, if Milton's work were not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of the Paradise Lost were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three-thousand copies of the Work were sold in eleven years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the Works of Shakespeare; which probably did not together make one-thousand Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the 'paucity of Readers.'—There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm, that the reception of the Paradise Lost, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erro-
neous*—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanea or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impregnated with original excellence.

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles† in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own country, those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularizes only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lying in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of those arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an overlove of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Elogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Elogues which their author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, 'of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded.' The Pastoral, ludicrous to such as prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, 'became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations.'

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the Paradise Lost appeared Thomson's Winter; which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? 'It was no sooner read,' says one of his contemporary biographers, 'than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in poetry, beyond a point of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart antithesis richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an elegiac complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing any thing new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowing of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man.'

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year; and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting the noctur-
nal Reverie of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the Paradise Lost and the Seasons does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state of knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the Iliad. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless; those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—may, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiastic, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity!—If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time held in as much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was in such good condition at the time of the publication of the Seasons, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; and in cases where the art of seeing had in some measure been learned, the teacher would rather encourage the ingenuity of his pupils, but he could not influence them though so far does vanity assist men in an act of self-deception, that many would often forget the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration in fact have been blind wonderment—he has rest to be accounted for!—Thomson was born in the very title of his poem, which seems to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his powers, he writes a vicious style; and his ornaments are exactly of that kind which will be most likely to strike the unsagacious and likewise abound in sentimental conceptions, from the manner in which they were brought forward, born an imposing air of novelty, a well-used copy of the Seasons, the book goes out of itself with the rhapsody on love, and one of the stories (perhaps Damon and Musaeus) these also are prominent in our collection of Extracts, and are the parts of his Work, still after all, were probably most efficient in commending the author to general notice. He repays the praise which he had received, and thing to extol him to the highest, only style his elegant and philosophical Poet; but nor are we to collect any unquestionable proofs that the characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the Seasons, pointed them out by a note in his book on the Life and Writings of Pope. In the Case of Indolence (of which Gray speaks so often) these characteristics were almost as completely displayed, and in verse more harmonious and decided more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day in delight only of a few! When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon him who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through

* Curts a lone in a night poem.
All things are busy as Nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their head.
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lost and Eary sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eye.

Dryden's Indian Emperor.

* Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the second edition of his Seasons, and find that even that does not contain the most striking passage which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.
innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notices which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the Seasons of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, that appeared not long after its publication; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, ‘mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sunk, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Bürger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating those Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a dietion scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact with regret,

* Shenstone, in his Schoolmistress, gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance, (See D’Israeli’s 2d Series of the Curiosities of Literature) the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in esteeing the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Bürger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

Now day’s gone, and night is come,
And all were fast asleep,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sat in her bowre to weep:

And soon she heard her true Love’s voice
Low whispering at the wall,
Awake, awake, my dear lady,
’Tis I thy true love call.

Which is thus tricked out and dilated:

Als nun die Nacht Gehör’ und Thal
Vermumm’t in Räucherschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen überall
Schon ausgefliumert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafien war;
Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberglanz, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte;
Da horch’! Ein süßer Liebchen
Kam leb’ emporgelogen.
* He, Trudelchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
Friisch auf! Dich angezogen!"

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, Sir of Osian! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the “Reliques” had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance!—Open this far-famed Book!—I have done so at random, and the beginning of the “Epick Poem Temora,” in eight Books, presents itself. *The blue waves of Ulfin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.
their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds. Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion. Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature every thing is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dilated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface.—

Mr. Malcolm Laiding has ably shown that the division of this pretended translation is a medley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his *unds* and his *buts*! and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a conscious plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, and Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Finn-galian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own,—it is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanam, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly unintelligible upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the boy, Clatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon Poems*—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another.

This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the Reliques of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent,
from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the first name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry! Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation! Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer! where is Spenser! where Sidney! and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contradiistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakespeare!—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have not. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us!) Roscommon, and Speney, and Phillips, and Walshe, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Brooke, and other reputed Magnates—metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes!—The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression though widely different in value;—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps. And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature ilimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who may stand below him in the scale of society! Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?
If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of knowledge, it does not lie here. —
Taste, I would remind the reader, like Imagination, is a word which has been forced to extend its
services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken
from a passive sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence not
passive,—to intellectual acts and operations. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained,
from impulsive honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the
noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the
prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and indiscriminable, being no other than that selfishness
which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes
them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the
primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination; but the word, Taste, has
been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing
that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties
conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and conciseness, the requisite knowledge being supposed,
such objects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office,—for in its intercourse with
these the mind is passive, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound
and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary
language, the pathetic and the sublime:—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty
which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor
—Taste. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating power in the mind of the
Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary
impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies suffering; but the connection
which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and action, is immediate and inseparable. How
strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be
in a passion, is to be angry! — But,

*Anger is hasty words or blows itself discharges on its foes.*

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited,

often to external, and always an internal, effect: whether for the continuance and strengthening of
the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly is the course which it takes may be painful or pleas-
urable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,—and new
languages, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings
men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has
to call forth and to communicate power, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original
writer, at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what
is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible
sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human
nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be
not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exer-
cised, or the employment of them is in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is
all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by

the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like

an Indian prince or general—stretched on his palaquin, and borne by his slaves! No; he is
invigorated and inspired by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot pro-
ceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to
call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and there lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an animal sensation, it might seem—that if the springs of this
emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances,
would be instantaneously affected. And, doubt-

less, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness; others—against which it struggles with pride; these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the con-
stitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is
to be affected—is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations.
The genius of the poet melts these down for
his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality
to him who is not capable of exerting, within his
own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also
a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthu-
siastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness
that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which
the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which
it must descend by treading the steps of thought.
And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the
cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote
is the practice and the course of life from the sources
of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered
that there is little existing preparation for a poet
charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom,
and to augment and spread its enjoyments!

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the
word, popular, applied to new works in poetry, as
if there were no test of excellence in this first of
the fine arts but that all men should run after its
productions, as if urged by an appetite, or con-
strained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best
fitted for eager reception are either such as startle
the world into attention by their audacity and
extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial
kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising
out of a selection and arrangement of inci-
dents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch
of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the
trouble of thought. But in every thing which is
to send the soul into herself, to be admonished
of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her
power;—wherever life and nature are described
as operated upon by the creative or abstracting
virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive
wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions
uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative
wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord
of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history
of the remote past and a prophetic enunciation of
the remotest future, then, the poet must reconcile
himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.

——Grand thoughts (and Shakespeare must often
have sighed over this truth), as they are most
naturally and most fully conceived in solitude, so
can they not be brought forth in the midst of
plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity.

Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the
sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities
which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration
of the multitude, are essentially different from
those by which permanent influence is secured.
Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and
conclude with observing—that there never has
been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which
vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not
excited more zealous admiration, and been far
more generally read, than good; but this advan-
tage attends the good, that the individual, as well
as the species, survives from age to age; whereas,
of the depraved, though the species be immortal,
the individual quickly perishes; the object of pre-
sent admiration vanishes, being supplanted by
some other as easily produced; which, though no
better, brings with it at least the irritation of
novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to
the changing humours of the majority of those who
are most at leisure to regard poetical works when
they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion
of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not
to be respected! The thought is most injurious;
and, could the charge be brought against him, he
would repel it with indignation. The People have
already been justified, and their eulogium pro-
nounced by implication, when it was said, above—
that, of good poetry, the individual, as well as the
species, survives. And how does it survive but
through the People! What preserves it but their
intellect and their wisdom?

*——Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge—*

MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox
Populi which the Dicty inspires. Foolish must he
be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or
a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for
years, local though from a Nation. Still more
lamentable is his error who can believe that there
is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour
of that small though loud portion of the community,
ever governed by fictitious influence, which, under
the name of the Public, passes itself, upon the
unthinking, for the People. Towards the Public,
the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference
as it is entitled to: but to the People, philoso-
pherically characterised, and to the embodied spirit
of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves,
at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings,
the past and the future, his devout respect, his
reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily;
and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by
assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that
the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to
which they are subsidiary, evince something of the
*Vision and the Faculty divine,* and that, both in
words and things, they will operate in their degree,
to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

DEDICATION.

PREFIXED TO THE EDITION OF 1815.

TO

SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

My dear Sir George,

Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coalston; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your name and family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself,—to whom it has suggested so many admirable pictures. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your pencil *, may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life,

I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir George,

Yours most affectionately and faithfully,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
February 1, 1815.

* The state of the plates has, for some time, not allowed them to be repeated.

PREFAE TO THE EDITION OF 1815.

The powers requisite for the production of poetry are: first, those of Observation and Description,—i.e., the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer: whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time; as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of sub-
jection to external objects, much in the same way as a translator or engraver ought to be to his original. 2ndly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface.) 3rdly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and best fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment,—to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exercised; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater; nor the greater, slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition*

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, The Narrative,—including the Epopeia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this Class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which every thing primarily flows. Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as singing from the inspiration of the Muse, 'Arma virumque cano,' but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the Iliad or the Paradise

Lost would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly content to tell their tale;—so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2ndly, The Dramatic,—consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the poet does not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue; though depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class. 3rdly, The lyrical,—containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their full effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium,—descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as the Seasons of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone's Schoolmistress, The Cotter's Saturday Night of Burns, The Twa Dogs of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the Allegro and Pensive of Milton, Beattie's Minstrel, Goldsmith's Deserted Village. The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction; as the Poem of Lucretius, the Georgics of Virgil, The Fleece of Dyer, Mason's English Garden, &c.

And, lastly, philosophical Satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a composite order, of which Young's Night Thoughts, and Cowper's Task, are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind predominating in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each

* As sensibility to harmony of numbers, and the power of producing it, are invariably attendant upon the faculties above specified, nothing has been said upon these requisites.
APPENDIX, PREFACES, &c.

of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, "The Recluse." This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, any thing material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; predominant, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and vice versa. Both the above classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of "Poems founded on the Affections;" as might this latter from those, and from the class "proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection." The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of foigining that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity.

Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in each the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible,—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification,—as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem;—in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman:

"He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own."

Let us now come to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. A man," says an intelligent author, has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which images within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (qua inventio is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterised. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced.—*British Synonyms discriminated, by W. Taylor.*

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner,
without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them; each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is "all compact"? he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity — Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot hangs from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats:—

"Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in aere
Dum non pendent procul de rupe videbo."

--- "half way down"

"Hange one who gathers sapumire,"

is the well-known expression of Shakespeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the sapumire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the Monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

"As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengal, or the isles
Of Terrane or Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Plend."

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word hangs, and exerted upon the whole image; First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as hanging in the clouds, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From impressions of sight we will pass to those of sound; which, as they must necessarily be of a less definite character, shall be selected from these volumes:

- Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods
- of the same bird,
- His voice was buried among trees,
  Yet to be come at by the breeze
- O, Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
  Or but a wandering Voice?"

The stock-dove is said to coo, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor broods, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. "His voice was buried among trees," a metaphor expressing the love of seclusion by which this Bird is marked; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shades in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

"Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?"

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence; the imagination being tempted in this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inher in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualifies the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of
imagination are carried on either by conferring
additional properties upon an object, or abstracting
from it some of those which it actually possesses,
and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which
has performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon
an individual image to a consideration of the same
faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by
which they modify each other. The Reader has
already had a fine instance before him in the pas-
sage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently
perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the
shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the
shepherd contemplating it from the seclusion of
the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and
in security. Take these images separately, and
how unaffected the picture compared with that
produced by their being thus connected with, and
opposed to, each other!

' As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Concast on the highest top of an eminence,
Where to all who do the same spy
By what means it could possibly come, and whence, so
that it seems a thing endowed with sense,
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand repose, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.

* * * *

Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heardeth not the loud winds when they call,
And movest altogether if it move at all.'

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting,
and the modifying powers of the Imagination,
immediately and mediately acting, are all brought
into conjunction. The stone is endowed with
something of the power of life to approximate it
to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of
some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the
stone; which intermediate image is thus treated
for the purpose of bringing the original image,
that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to
the figure and condition of the aged Man; who
is divested of so much of the indications of life
and motion as to bring him to the point where
the two objects unite and coalesce in just com-
parison. After what has been said, the image of
the cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power:
but the Imagination also shapes and creates; and
by innumerable processes; and in none
doeth it more delight than in that of consolidating
numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating
unity into number,—alternations proceeding from,
and governed by, a sublime consciousness of th
need in her own mighty and almost divine power.
Recur to the passage already cited from Milton:
When the compact fleet, as one Person, has been
introduced 'Sailing from Bengal,' "They," i.e.
the 'merchants,' representing the fleet resolved
into a multitude of ships, "ply" their voyage
towards the extremities of the earth: "So" (re-
fering to the word 'As' in the commencement)
seemed the flying Fiend; "the image of the
Person acting to recombine the multitude of
ships into one body,—the point from which the
calculation is out. 'So seemed,' and to what
seemed! To the heavenly Muse who disincar
the poem, to the eye of the Poet's mind, and
to that of the Reader, present at one moment
in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the soli-
tudes, then first broken in upon, of the irregular
regions!

'Modes the Thebais, modo posuit Athenis.'

Hear again this mighty Poet,—speaking of the
Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the
rebellious angels,

'Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints;
He onward came: far off his coming shown,'—
the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the
Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the
splendour of that indefinite abstraction: 'His
coming!'

As I do not mean here to treat this subject
further than to throw some light upon the pre-
sent Volumes, and especially upon one division
of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the
trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals
with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the
composition of characters, and determines the
course of actions: I will not consider it (more
than I have already done by implication) as that
power which, in the language of one of my most
esteemed Friends, 'draws all things to one;' which
makes things animate or inanimate, beings with
their attributes, subjects with their accessories,
take one colour and serve to one effect." The
grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative
Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished
from human and dramatic Imagination, are the
propoetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures,
and the works of Milton, to which I cannot forbear
to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in
preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome.

* Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.
because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create personages of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which the character of Ulysses is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakespeare are an inexhaustible source.

' I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you Daughters!'

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable, and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterised as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, 'the aggregative and associative power,' my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from every thing but the plastic, thepliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

'...in shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman.'

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas—because these, and if they were a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded; The expression is, 'His stature reached the sky!' the illimitable firmament.—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appropriately produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal.—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an
active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalship with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples.—Referring the Reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the Paradise Lost:

‘The dews of the evening most carefully shun.
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.’

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

‘Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.’

The associating link is the same in each instance: Dew and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case; a flash of surprise, and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects from the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as Earth had before trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.

Finally, I will refer to Cotton's "Ode upon Winter," an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as 'A palsied king,' and yet a military monarch—advancing for conquest with his army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of fanciful comparisons, which indicate on the part of the poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into his fortress, where

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gory blood of age;
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

It lays the careful head to rest,
Cains palpitations in the breast;
Renders our lives' misfortune sweet;

Then let the chill Stiocreo blow,
And gift us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistling to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar.

Whilst we together jovial sit
Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit
Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies round the world shall roam.

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to;
When having drunk all those and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity;
Men that remote in sorrow live,
Shall by our lusty brawlers thrive.

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The afflicted into joy; th'oppress
Into security and rest.

The worthy in disgrace shall find
Paviour return again more kind,
And in restraint who staid lie
Shall taste the air of liberty.

The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, bays.

Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are?'

When I sate down to write this Preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but, thinking that I ought rather to apologise for detaining the reader so long, I will here conclude.
POSTSCRIPT.

1835.

In the present volume, as in those that have preceded it, the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to as national interests excited them. Since nothing, I trust, has been uttered but in the spirit of reflective patriotism, those notices are left to produce their own effect; but, among the many objects of general concern, and the changes going forward, which I have glanced at in verse, are some especially affecting the lower orders of society: in reference to these, I wish here to add a few words in plain prose.

Were I conscious of being able to do justice to those important topics, I might avail myself of the periodical press for offering anonymously my thoughts, such as they are, to the world; but I feel that, in procuring attention, they may derive some advantage, however small, from my name, in addition to that of being presented in a less fugitive shape. It is also not impossible that the state of mind which some of the foregoing poems may have produced in the reader, will dispose him to receive more readily the impression which I desire to make, and to admit the conclusions I would establish.

I. The first thing that presses upon my attention is the Poor-Law Amendment Act. I am aware of the magnitude and complexity of the subject, and the unwearyed attention which it has received from men of far wider experience than my own; yet I cannot forbear touching upon one point of it, and to this I will confine myself, though not insensible to the objection which may reasonably be brought against treating a portion of this, or any other, great scheme of civil polity separately from the whole. The point to which I wish to draw the reader’s attention is, that all persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law.

This dictate of humanity is acknowledged in the Report of the Commissioners: but is there not room for apprehension that some of the regulations of the new act have a tendency to render the principle nugatory by difficulties thrown in the way of applying it? If this be so, persons will not be wanting to show it, by examining the provisions of the act in detail,—an attempt which would be quite out of place here; but it will not, therefore, be deemed unbecoming in one who fears that the prudence of the head may, in framing some of those provisions, have supplanted the wisdom of the heart, to enforce a principle which cannot be violated without infringing upon one of the most precious rights of the English people, and opposing one of the most sacred claims of civilised humanity.

There can be no greater error, in this department of legislation, than the belief that this principle does by necessity operate for the degradation of those who claim, or are so circumstanced as to make it likely they may claim, through laws founded upon it, relief or assistance. The direct contrary is the truth; it may be unanswerably maintained that its tendency is to raise, not to depress; by stamping a value upon life, which can belong to it only where the laws have placed men who are willing to work, and yet cannot find employment, above the necessity of looking for protection against hunger and other natural evils, either to individual and casual charity, to despair and death, or to the breach of law by theft, or violence.

And here, as in the Report of the Commissioners, the fundamental principle has been recognised, I am not at issue with them any farther than I am compelled to believe that their ‘remedial measures’ obstruct the application of it more than the interests of society require.

And, calling to mind the doctrines of political economy which are now prevalent, I cannot forbear to enforce the justice of the principle, and to insist upon its salutary operation.

And first for its justice: If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where, by so doing, he would not rob another of that which might be equally
protection of mere rights of property!

But, if it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may we not still contend for the duty of a christian government, standing in loco parentis towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation! Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the state to the allegiance, involves the protection, of the subject! And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its members, even to the jeopardizing of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves.

Let us now consider the salutary and benign operation of this principle. Here we must have recourse to elementary feelings of human nature, and to truths which from their very obviousness are apt to be slighted, till they are forced upon our notice by our own sufferings or those of others. In the Paradise Lost, Milton represents Adam, after the Fall, as exclaiming, in the anguish of his soul—

'Had I request Thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man; did I solicit Thee
From darkness to promote me?

My will

Conceived not to my being.'

Under how many various pressures of misery have men been driven thus, in a strain touching upon impiety, to expostulate with the Creator! and under few so afflicting as when the source while they tread its soil, or of their native land as at whose arms, even they who and undeserving may, it betake themselves, without

Such is the view of the present itself to a reflecting man to show, by appeals to with this view, that providence principle have promoted dispositions the reverse spreading idleness, selfishness, these evils have arisen, consequence of the principle judgment in framing laws above all, from faults in the law. The mischief that a height from granting relief vigilance would have shown or in bestowing it in undue, by no truly enlightened state reason for banishing the legislation.

Let us recur to the miseries that it precludes.

There is a story told, by of a female who, by a sudden calamity, was driven out of after looked up incessantly in her fellow-creatures could relief. Can there be Eng good end in view, would, their brother Englishmen to looking upwards only; or do after it shall contain no spot can demand, by civil right, of they are entitled to!
by his rifle-gun, may be made: the means of keeping him and his companions alive. As miserable is that of some savage Islander, who, when the land has ceased to afford him sustenance, watches for food which the waves may cast up, or in vain endeavours to extract it from the inexorable deep. But neither of these is in a state of wretchedness comparable to that, which is so often endured in civilized society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom may be said:

‘Homeless, near a thousand homes they stood, And near a thousand tables pined, and wasted foot.’

Justly might I be accused of wasting time in an uncalled-for attempt to excite the feelings of the reader, if systems of political economy, widely spread, did not impugn the principle, and if the safeguards against such extremities were left unimpaired. It is broadly ascertained by many, that every man who endeavours to find work, may find it: were this ascertained capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far the labourer be fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing; and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms; the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and the unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment, as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end of the argument, the principle here maintained would be superseded. But, alas! it is far otherwise. That principle, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually deprived of their support by shipwreck, and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers; by new discoveries in arts and manufactures; and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice.

But it is urged,—refuse altogether compulsory relief to the able-bodied, and the number of those who stand in need of relief will steadily diminish through a conviction of an absolute necessity for greater forethought, and more prudent care of a man’s earnings. Undoubtedly it would, but so also would it, and in a much greater degree, if the legislative provisions were retained, and parochial relief administered under the care of the upper classes, as it ought to be. For it has been invariably found, that wherever the funds have been raised and applied under the superintendence of gentlemen and substantial proprietors, acting in vestries, and as overseers, pauperism has diminished accordingly. Proper care in that quarter would effectually check what is felt in some districts to be one of the worst evils in the poor law system, viz. the readiness of small and needy proprietors to join in imposing rates that seemingly subject them to great hardships; while, in fact, this is done with a mutual understanding, that the relief each is ready to bestow upon his still poorer neighbours will be granted to himself, or his relatives, should it hereafter be applied for.

But let us look to inner sentiments of a nobler quality, in order to know what we have to build upon. Affecting proofs occur in every one’s experience, who is acquainted with the unfortunate and the indigent, of their unwillingness to derive their subsistence from ought but their own funds, or labour, or to be indebted to parochial assistance for the attainment of any object, however dear to them. A case was reported, the other day, from a coroner’s inquest, of a pair who, through the space of four years, had carried about their dead infant from house to house, and from lodging to lodging, as their necessities drove them, rather than ask the parish to bear the expense of its interment; the poor creatures lived in the hope of one day being able to bury their child at their own cost. It must have been heart-rending to see and hear the mother, who had been called upon to account for the state in which the body was found, make this deposition. By some, judging coldly, if not harshly, this conduct might be imputed to an unwarrantable pride, as she and her husband had, it is true, been once in prosperity. But examples, where the spirit of independence works with equal strength, though not with like miserable accompaniments, are frequently to be found even yet among the humblest peasantry and mechanics. There is not, then, sufficient cause for doubting that a like sense of honour may be revived among the people, and their ancient habits of independence restored, without resorting to those severities which the new Poor Law Act has introduced.

But even if the surfaces of things only are to be examined, we have a right to expect that lawgivers
should take into account the various tempers and
dispositions of mankind: while some are led, by
the existence of a legislative provision, into idleness
and extravagance, the economical virtues
might be cherished in others by the knowledge
that, if all their efforts fail, they have in the Poor
Laws a "refuge from the storm and a shadow from
the heat." Despondency and distraction are no
friends to prudence: the springs of industry will
relax, if cheerfulness be destroyed by anxiety;
without hope men become reckless, and have a
sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own
wretchedness. He who feels that he is abandoned
by his fellow-men will be almost irresistibly driven
to care little for himself; will lose his self-respect
accordingly, and with that loss what remains to
him of virtue?

With all due reverence to the particular expe-
rience, and general intelligence of the individuals
who framed the Act, and of those who in and out
of parliament have approved of and supported it;
it may be said, that it proceeds too much upon the
presumption that it is a labouring men's own fault
if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the
world. But the most prudent are liable to be
thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from
labour, and causing them expense; and who
but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes
without misconduct of their own; and merely
from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without
a correspondent one in the price of provisions; so
that men who may have ventured upon the marriage
state with a fair prospect of maintaining their
families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced
to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase!
Let it be remembered, also, that there are thousands
with whom vicious habits of expense are not the
cause why they do not store up their gains; but
they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to
help their kindred and friends; moreover, they
have a faith in Providence that those who have
been prompt to assist others, will not be left
destitute, should they themselves come to need.
By acting from these blended feelings, numbers
have rendered themselves incapable of standing
up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these
men, in common with all who have the misfortune
to be in want, if many theorists had their wish,
would be thrown upon one or other of those three
sharp points of condition before adverted to, from
which the intervention of law has hitherto saved
them.

All that has been said tends to show how the
principle contended for makes the gift of life more
valuable, and has, it may be hoped, led to the con-
clusion that its legitimate operation is to make men
worthier of that gift: in other words, not to degrade
but to exalt human nature. But the subject must
not be dismissed without advertizing to the indirect
influence of the same principle upon the moral
sentiments of a people among whom it is embodied
in law. In our criminal jurisprudence there is a
maxim, deservedly eulogized, that it is better that
ten guilty persons should escape, than that one
innocent man should suffer; so, also, might it be
maintained, with regard to the Poor Laws, that it is
better for the interests of humanity among the
people at large, that ten undeserving should partake
of the funds provided, than that one morally good
man, through want of relief, should either have his
principles corrupted, or his energies destroyed;
than that such a one should either be driven to do
wrong, or be cast to the earth in utter hopelessness.
In France, the English maxim of criminal juris-
prudence is reversed; there, it is deemed better
that ten innocent men should suffer, than one guilty
escape: in France, there is no universal provision
for the poor; and we may judge of the small
value set upon human life in the metropolis of that
country, by merely noticing the disrespect with
which, after death, the body is treated, not by the
thoughtless vulgar, but in schools of anatomy,
presided over by men allowed to be, in their own
art and in physical science, among the most
enlightened in the world. In the East, where
countries are overrun with population as with a
weed, infinitely more respect is shown to the
remains of the deceased; and what a bitter mockery
is it, that this insensibility should be found where
civil polity is so busy in minor regulations, and
ostentatiously careful to gratify the luxurious
propensities, whether social or intellectual, of the
multitude! Irreligion is, no doubt, much concerned
with this offensive disrespect, shown to the bodies
of the dead in France; but it is mainly attributable
to the state in which so many of the living are left by
the absence of compulsory provision for the indigent
so humanely established by the law of England.

Sights of abject misery, perpetually recurring,
harden the heart of the community. In the perusal
of history, and of works of fiction, we are not,
indeed, unwilling to have our commiseration
excited by such objects of distress as they present to
us; but, in the concerns of real life, men know
that such emotions are not given to be indulged
for their own sakes: there, the conscience
declares to them that sympathy must be followed by
action; and if there exist a previous conviction
that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to
the demand, the eye shrinks from communication
with wretchedness, and pity and compassion
languish, like any other qualities that are deprived
of their natural aliment. Let these considera-
tions be duly weighed by those who trust to the
hope that an increase of private charity, with all
its advantages of superior discrimination, would
more than compensate for the abandonment of
those principles, the wisdom of which has been
here insisted upon. How discouraging, also, would
be the sense of injustice, which could not fail
to arise in the minds of the well-disposed, if the
burden of supporting the poor, a burden of which
the selfish have hitherto by compulsion borne a
share, should now, or hereafter, be thrown exclu-
sively upon the benevolent.

By having put an end to the Slave Trade and
Slavery, the British people are exalted in the
scale of humanity; and they cannot but feel so,
if they look into themselves, and duly consider
their relation to God and their fellow-creatures.
That was a noble advance; but a retrograde
movement will assuredly be made, if over the
principle, which has been here defended, should
be either avowedly abandoned or but ostensibly
retained.

But after all, there may be a little reason to
apprehend permanent injury from any experiment
that may be tried. On the one side will be
human nature rising up in her own defence, and
on the other prudential selfishness acting to the
same purpose, from a conviction that, without a
compulsory provision for the exigencies of the
labouring multitude, that degree of ability to re-
gulate the price of labour, which is indispensable
for the reasonable interest of arts and manufac-
tures, cannot, in Great Britain, be upheld.

II. In a poem of the foregoing collection, allusion
is made to the state of the workmen congregated in
manufactories. In order to relieve many of the
evils to which that class of society are subject and
to establish a better harmony between them and
their employers, it would be well to repeal such
laws as prevent the formation of joint-stock com-
panies. There are, no doubt, many and great
obstacles to the formation and salutary working of
these societies, inherent in the mind of those whom
they would obviously benefit. But the combina-
tions of masters to keep down, unjustly, the price
of labour would be fairly checked by them, as
far as they were practicable; they would encourage
economy, inasmuch as they would enable a man to
draw profit from his savings, by investing them in
buildings or machinery for processes of manufac-
ure with which he was habitually connected. His little
capital would then be working for him while he was
at rest or asleep; he would more clearly perceive
the necessity of capital for carrying on great
works; he would better learn to respect the
larger portions of it in the hands of others; he
would be less tempted to join in unjust combina-
tions; and, for the sake of his own property, if
not for higher reasons, he would be slow to pro-
mote local disturbance, or endanger public tran-
quility; he would, at least, be loth to act in that
way knowingly: for it is not to be denied that
such societies might be nurseries of opinions
unfavourable to a mixed constitution of govern-
ment, like that of Great Britain. The democratic
and republican spirit which they might be apt to
foster would not, however, be dangerous in itself,
but only as it might act without being sufficiently
counterbalanced, either by landed proprietorship,
or by a Church extending itself so as to embrace
an ever-growing and ever-shifting population of
mechanics and artisans. But if the tendencies of
such societies would be to make the men prosper
who might belong to them, rulers and legislators
should rejoice in the result, and do their duty to
the state by upholding and extending the influence
of that Church to which it owes, in so great a
measure, its safety, its prosperity, and its glory.

This, in the temper of the present times, may
be difficult, but it is become indispensable, since
large towns in great numbers have sprung up, and
others have increased tenfold, with little or no
dependence upon the gentry and the landed pro-
prieters; and apart from those mitigated feudal
institutions, which, till of late, have acted so
powerfully upon the composition of the House of
Commons. Now it may be affirmed that, in quar-
ters where there is not an attachment to the
Church, or the landed aristocracy, and a pride in
supporting them, there the people will dislike
both, and be ready, upon such incitements as are
perpetually recurring, to join in attempts to over-
throw them. There is no neutral ground here:
from want of due attention to the state of society
in large towns and manufacturing districts, and
ignorance or disregard of these obvious truths, inun-
merable well-meaning persons became zealous sup-
porters of a Reform Bill, the qualities and powers
of which, whether destructive or constructive,
they would otherwise have been afraid of; and even
the framers of that bill, swayed as they might be
by party resentments and personal ambition,
could not have gone so far, had not they too been lamentably ignorant or neglectful of the same truths both of fact and philosophy.

But let that pass; and let no opponent of the bill be tempted to compliment his own foresight, by exaggerating the mischiefs and dangers that have sprung from it: let not time be wasted in profitless regrets; and let those party distinctions vanish to their very names that have separated men who, whatever course they may have pursued, have ever had a bond of union in the wish to save the limited monarchy, and those other institutions that have, under Providence, rendered for so long a period of time this country the happiest and worthiest of which there is any record since the foundation of civil society.

III. A philosophic mind is best pleased when looking at religion in its spiritual bearing; as a guide of conduct, a solace under affliction, and a support amid the instabilities of mortal life: but the Church having been forcibly brought by political considerations to my notice, while treating of the labouring classes, I cannot forbear saying a few words upon that momentous topic.

There is a loud clamour for extensive change in that department. The clamour would be entitled to more respect if they who are the most eager to swell it with their voices were not generally the most ignorant of the real state of the Church, and the service it renders to the community. Reform is the word employed. Let us pause and consider what sense it is apt to carry, and how things are confounded by a lax use of it. The great religious Reformation, in the sixteenth century, did not profess to be a new construction, but a restoration of something fallen into decay, or put out of sight. That familiar and justifiable use of the word seems to have paved the way for fallacies with respect to the term reform, which it is difficult to escape from.

Were we to speak of improvement, and the correction of abuses, we should run less risk of being deceived ourselves, or of misleading others. We should be less likely to fall blindly into the belief, that the change demanded is a renewal of something that has existed before, and that, therefore, we have experience on our side; nor should we be equally tempted to beg the question, that the change for which we are eager must be advantageous. From generation to generation, men are the dupes of words; and it is painful to observe, that so many of our species are most tenacious of those opinions which they have formed with the least consideration. They who are the readiest to meddle with public affairs, whether in church or state, fly to generalities, that they may be eased from the trouble of thinking about particulars; and thus is deputed to mechanical instrumentality the work which vital knowledge only can do well.

"Abolish pluralities, have a resident incumbent in every parish," is a favourite cry; but, without adverting to other obstacles in the way of this specious scheme, it may be asked what benefit would accrue from its indiscriminate adoption to counterbalance the harm it would introduce, by nearly extinguishing the order of curates, unless the revenues of the church should grow with the population, and be greatly increased in many thinly peopled districts, especially among the parishes of the North.

The order of curates is so beneficial, that some particular notice of it seems to be required in this place. For a church poor as, relatively to the numbers of people, that of England is, and probably will continue to be, it is no small advantage to have youthful servants, who will work upon the wages of hope and expectation. Still more advantageous is it to have, by means of this order, young men scattered over the country, who being more detached from the temporal concerns of the benefices, have more leisure for improvement and study, and are less subject to be brought into secular collision with those who are under their spiritual guardianship. The curate, if he reside at a distance from the incumbent, undertakes the requisite responsibilities of a temporal kind, in that modified way which prevents him, as a new-comer, from being charged with selfishness: while it prepares him for entering upon a benefice of his own, with something of a suitable experience. If he should act under and in co-operation with a resident incumbent, the gain is mutual. His studies will probably be assisted; and his training, managed by a superior, will not be liable to relapse in matters of prudence, seemliness, or in any of the highest cares of his functions; and by way of return for these benefits to the pupil, it will often happen that the zeal of a middle-aged or declining incumbent will be revived, by being in near communion with the ardour of youth, when his own efforts may have languished through a melancholy consciousness that they have not produced as much good among his flock as, when he first entered upon the charge, he fondly hoped.

Let one remark, and that not the least important, be added. A curate, entering for the first time upon his office, comes from college after a course of expense, and with such inexperience in
the use of money, that, in his new situation, he is apt to fall unawares into pecuniary difficulties. If this happens to him, much more likely is it to happen to the youthful incumbent; whose relations, to his parishioners and to society, are more complicated; and, his income being larger and independent of another, a costlier style of living is required of him by public opinion. If embarrassment should ensue, and with that unavoidably some loss of respectability, his future usefulness will be proportionably impaired: not so with the curate, for he can easily remove and start afresh with a stock of experience and an unblemished reputation; whereas the early indiscretions of an incumbent being rarely forgotten, may be impediments to the efficacy of his ministry for the remainder of his life. The same observations would apply with equal force to doctrine. A young minister is liable to errors, from his notions being either too lax or overstrained. In both cases it would prove injurious that the error should be remembered, after study and reflection, with advancing years, shall have brought him to a clearer discernment of the truth, and better judgment in the application of it.

It must be acknowledged that, among the regulations of ecclesiastical polity, none at first view are more attractive than that which prescribes for every parish a resident incumbent. How agreeable to picture to one's self, as has been done by poets and romance-writers, from Chaucer down to Goldsmith, a man devoted to his ministerial office, with not a wish or a thought ranging beyond the circuit of its cares! Nor is it in poetry and fiction only that such characters are found; they are scattered, it is hoped not sparingly, over real life, especially in sequestered and rural districts, where there is but small influx of new inhabitants, and little change of occupation. The spirit of the Gospel, unaided by acquisitions of profane learning and experience in the world,—that spirit, and the obligations of the sacred office may, in such situations, suffice to effect most of what is needful.

But for the complex state of society that prevails in England, much more is required, both in large towns, and in many extensive districts of the country. A minister there should not only be irreproachable in manners and morals, but accomplished in learning, as far as is possible without sacrifice of the least of his pastoral duties. As necessary, perhaps more so, is it that he should be a citizen as well as a scholar; thoroughly acquainted with the structure of society, and the constitution of civil government, and able to reason upon both with the most expert; all ultimately in order to support the truths of Christianity, and to diffuse its blessings.

A young man coming fresh from the place of his education, cannot have brought with him these accomplishments; and if the scheme of equalising church incomes, which many advisers are much bent upon, be realised, so that there should be little or no secular inducement for a clergyman to desire a removal from the spot where he may chance to have been first set down; surely not only opportunities for obtaining the requisite qualifications would be diminished, but the motives for desiring to obtain them would be proportionably weakened. And yet these qualifications are indispensable for the diffusion of that knowledge, by which alone the political philosophy of the New Testament can be rightly expounded, and its precepts adequately enforced. In these times, when the press is daily exercising so great a power over the minds of the people, for wrong or for right as may happen, that preacher ranks among the first of benefactors who, without stooping to the direct treatment of current politics and passing events, can furnish infallible guidance through the delusions that surround them; and who, appealing to the sanctions of Scripture, may place the grounds of its injunctions in so clear a light, that disaffection shall cease to be cultivated as a laudable propensity, and loyalty cleansed from the diabolour of a blind and prostrate obedience.

It is not, however, in regard to civic duties alone, that this knowledge in a minister of the Gospel is important; it is still more so for softening and subduing private and personal discontent. In all places, and at all times, men have gratuitously troubled themselves, because their survey of the dispensations of Providence has been partial and narrow; but now that readers are so greatly multiplied, men judge as they are taught, and reprobations are engendered everywhere, by imputations being cast upon the government; and are prolonged or aggravated by being ascribed to misconduct or injustice in rulers, when the individual himself only is in fault. If a Christian pastor be competent to deal with these humours, as they may be dealt with, and by no members of society so successfully, both from more frequent and more favourable opportunities of intercourse, and by aid of the authority with which he speaks; he will be a teacher of moderation, a dispenser of the wisdom that blunts approaching distress by submission to God's will, and lightens, by patience, grievances which cannot be removed.

We live in times when nothing, of public good
at least, is generally acceptable, but what we believe can be traced to preconceived intention, and specific acts and formal contrivances of human understanding. A Christian instructor thoroughly accomplished would be a standing restraint upon such presumptuousness of judgment, by impressing the truth that—

In the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than ours. MS.

Revelation points to the purity and peace of a future world; but our sphere of duty is upon earth; and the relations of impure and conflicting things to each other must be understood, or we shall be perpetually going wrong, in all but goodness of intention; and goodness of intention will itself relax through frequent disappointment. How desirable, then, is it, that a minister of the Gospel should be versed in the knowledge of existing facts, and be accustomed to a wide range of social experience! Nor is it less desirable for the purpose of counterbalancing and tempering in his own mind that ambition with which spiritual power is as apt to be tainted as any other species of power which men covet or possess.

It must be obvious that the scope of the argument is to discourage an attempt which would introduce into the Church of England an equality of income, and station, upon the model of that of Scotland. The sounder part of the Scottish nation know what good their ancestors derived from their church, and feel how deeply the living generation is indebted to it. They respect and love it, as accommodated in so great a measure to a comparatively poor country, through the far greater portion of which prevails a uniformity of employment; but the acknowledged deficiency of theological learning among the clergy of that church is easily accounted for by this very equality. What else may be wanting there, it would be unpleasant to inquire, and might prove invincible to determine: one thing, however, is clear; that in all countries the temporalities of the Church Establishment should bear an analogy to the state of society, otherwise it cannot diffuse its influence through the whole community. In a country so rich and luxurious as England, the character of its clergy must unavoidably sink, and their influence be everywhere impaired, if individuals from the upper ranks, and men of leading talents, are to have no inducements to enter into that body but such as are purely spiritual. And this ‘tinge of secularity’ is no reproach to the clergy, nor does it imply a deficiency of spiritual endowments.

Parents and guardians, looking forward to sources of honourable maintenance for their children and wards, often direct their thoughts early towards the church, being determined partly by outward circumstances, and partly by indications of seriousness, or intellectual fitness. It is natural that a boy or youth, with such a prospect before him, should turn his attention to those studies, and be led into those habits of reflection, which will in some degree tend to prepare him for the duties he is hereafter to undertake. As he draws nearer to the time when he will be called to these duties, he is both led and compelled to examine the Scriptures. He becomes more and more sensible of their truth. Devotion grows in him; and what might begin in temporary considerations, will end (as in a majority of instances we trust it does) in a spiritual-mindedness not unworthy of that Gospel, the lessons of which he is to teach, and the faith of which he is to inculcate. Not inappropriately may he here repeated an observation which, from its obviousness and importance, must have been frequently made, viz. that the impoverishing of the clergy, and bringing their incomes much nearer to a level, would not cause them to become less worldly-minded: the emoluments, however reduced, would be as eagerly sought for, but by men from lower classes in society; men who, by their manners, habits, abilities, and the scanty measure of their attainments, would unavoidably be less fitted for their station, and less competent to discharge its duties.

Visionary notions have in all ages been afloat upon the subject of best providing for the clergy: notions which have been sincerely entertained by good men, with a view to the improvement of that order, and eagerly caught at and dwelt upon, by the designing, for its degradation and disarrangement. Some are beguiled by what they call the voluntary system, not seeing (what stares one in the face at the very threshold) that they who stand in most need of religious instruction are unconscious of the want, and therefore cannot reasonably be expected to make any sacrifices in order to supply it. Will the licentious, the sensual, and the depraved, take from the means of their gratifications and pursuits, to support a discipline that cannot advance without uprooting the trees that bear the fruit which they devour so greedily! Will they pay the price of that seed whose harvest is to be reaped in an invisible world! A voluntary system for the religious exigencies of a people numerous and circumstanced as we are! Not more absurd
would it be to expect that a knot of boys should draw upon the pittance of their pocket-money to build schools, or out of the abundance of their discretion be able to select fit masters to teach and keep them in order! Some, who clearly perceive the incompetence and folly of such a scheme for the agricultural part of the people, nevertheless think it feasible in large towns, where the rich might subscribe for the religious instruction of the poor. Alas! they know little of the thick darkness that spreads over the streets and alleys of our large towns. The parish of Lambeth, a few years since, contained not more than one church and three or four small proprietary chapels, while dissenting chapels, of every denomination were still more scantily found there; yet the inhabitants of the parish amounted at that time to upwards of 50,000. Were the parish church and the chapels of the Establishment existing there, an impediment to the spread of the Gospel among that mass of people! Who shall dare to say so! But if any one, in the face of the fact which has just been stated, and in opposition to authentic reports to the same effect from various other quarters, should still contend, that a voluntary system is sufficient for the spread and maintenance of religion, we would ask, what kind of religion! wherein would it differ, among the many, from deplorable fanaticism!

For the preservation of the Church Establishment, all men, whether they belong to it or not, could they perceive their true interest, would be strenuous: but how inadequate are its provisions for the needs of the country! and how much is it to be regretted that, while its zealous friends yield to alarms on account of the hostility of dissent, they should so much over-rate the danger to be apprehended from that quarter, and almost overlook the fact that hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, though formally and nominally of the Church of England, never enter her places of worship, neither have they communication with her ministers! This deplorable state of things was partly produced by a decay of zeal among the rich and influential, and partly by a want of due expansive power in the constitution of the Establishment as regulated by law. Private benefactors, in their efforts to build and endow churches, have been frustrated, or too much impeded by legal obstacles: these, where they are unreasonable or unfitted for the times, ought to be removed; and, keeping clear of intolerance and injustice, means should be used to render the presence and powers of the church commensurate with the wants of a shifting and still-increasing population.

This cannot be effected, unless the English Government vindicate the truth, that, as her church exists for the benefit of all (though not in equal degree), whether of her communion or not, all should be made to contribute to its support. If this ground be abandoned, cause will be given to fear that a moral wound may be inflicted upon the heart of the English people, for which a remedy cannot be speedily provided by the utmost efforts which the members of the Church will themselves be able to make.

But let the friends of the church be of good courage. Powers are at work, by which, under Divine Providence, she may be strengthened and the sphere of her usefulness extended; not by alterations in her Liturgy, accommodated to this or that demand of finical taste, nor by cutting off this or that from her articles or Canons, to which the scrupulous or the overweening may object. Covert schism, and open nonconformity, would survive after alterations, however promising in the eyes of those whose subtlety had been exercised in making them. Latitudinarianism is the palliation of liberty of conscience, and will ever successfully lay claim to a divided worship. Among Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, and Independents, there will always be found numbers who will tire of their several creeds, and some will come over to the Church. Conventicles may disappear, congregations in each denomination may fall into decay or be broken up, but the conquests which the National Church ought chiefly to aim at, lie among the thousands and tens of thousands of the unhappy outcasts who grow up with no religion at all. The wants of these cannot but be feelingly remembered. Whatever may be the disposition of the new constituencies under the reformed parliament, and the course which the men of their choice may be inclined or compelled to follow, it may be confidently hoped that individuals acting in their private capacities, will endeavour to make up for the deficiencies of the legislature. Is it too much to expect that priests of large estates, where the inhabitants are without religious instruction, or where it is sparingly supplied, will deem it their duty to take part in this good work; and that thriving manufacturers and merchants will, in their several neighbourhoods, be sensible of the like obligation, and act upon it with generous rivalry!

Moreover, the force of public opinion is rapidly increasing: and some may bend to it, who are not so happy as to be swayed by a higher motive; especially those who derive large incomes from;
lay-impropriations, in tracts of country where ministers are few and meagrely provided for. A claim still stronger may be acknowledged by those who, round their superb habitations, or elsewhere, walk over vast estates which were lavished upon their ancestors by royal favouritism or purchased at insignificant prices after church-spoilation; such proprietors, though not conscience-stricken (there is no call for that) may be prompted to make a return for which their tenantry and dependents will learn to bless their names. An impulse has been given; an accession of means from these several sources, co-operating with a well-considered change in the distribution of some parts of the property at present possessed by the church, a change scrupulously founded upon due respect to law and justice, will, we trust, bring about so much of what her friends desire, that the rest may be calmly waited for, with thankfulness for what shall have been obtained.

Let it not be thought unbecoming in a layman, to have trusted at length a subject with which the clergy are more intimately conversant. All may, without impropriety, speak of what deeply concerns all; nor need an apology be offered for going over ground which has been trod before so ably and so often: without pretending, however, to anything of novelty, either in matter or manner, something may have been offered to view, which will save the writer from the imputation of having little to recommend his labour, but goodness of intention.

It was with reference to thoughts and feelings expressed in verse, that I entered upon the above notices, and with verse I will conclude. The passage is extracted from my MSS. written above thirty years ago: it turns upon the individual dignity which humbleness of social condition does not preclude, but frequently promotes. It has no direct bearing upon clubs for the discussion of public affairs, nor upon political or trade-unions; but if a single workman—who, being a member of one of those clubs, runs the risk of becoming an agitator, or who, being enrolled in a union, must be left without a will of his own, and therefore a slave—should read these lines, and be touched by them, I should indeed rejoice, and little would I care for losing credit as a poet with intemperate critics, who think differently from me upon political philosophy or public measures, if the sober-minded admit that, in general views, affections have been moved, and my imaginings exercised, under and for the guidance of means.

Here might I pause, and bend in reverence To Nature, and the power of human minds; To men as they are men within themselves. How oft high service is performed within, When all the external man is rude in show; Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold. But a mere mountain chapel that protects Its simple worshippers from sun and shower! Of these, said I, shall be my song: of these, If future years mature me for the task, Will I record the praise, making verse Deal boldly with substantial things—in truth And sanctity of passion, speak of these, That justice may be done, obedience paid Where it is due. Thus haply shall I teach Inspire, through unadulterated ears. Four rapture, tenderness, and hope: my theme No other than the very heart of man, As found among the best of those who live, Not unadulterated by religious faith, Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few, In Nature’s presence: these may I select. Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight, And miserable love that is not pain. To hear of, for the glory that redounds Therefrom to human kind, and what we are. Be mine to follow with no timid step Where knowledge leads me; it shall be my pride That I have dared to tread this holy ground. Speaking no dream, but things oracular, Matter not lightly to be heard by those Who to the letter of the outward promise Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit In speech, and for communion with the world. Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then Most active when they are most eloquent, And elevated most when most admired. Men may be found of other mould than these: Who are their own upholders, to themselves Encouragement and energy, and will: Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words As native passion dictates. Others, too, There are, among the walks of homely life, Still higher, men for contemplation framed; Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase; Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse. Their’s is the language of the heavens, the power, The thought, the image, and the silent joy: Words are but under-agents in their souls: When they are grasping with their greatest strength They do not breathe among them; this I speak. In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts For his own service, knoweth, loveth us, Wherever are unregarded by the world.
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