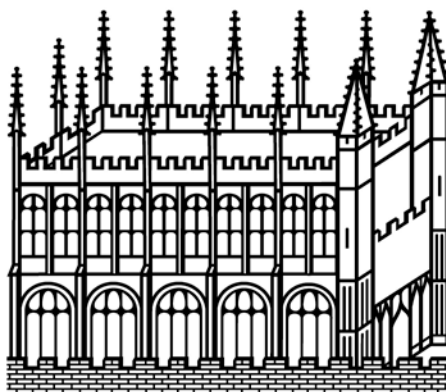




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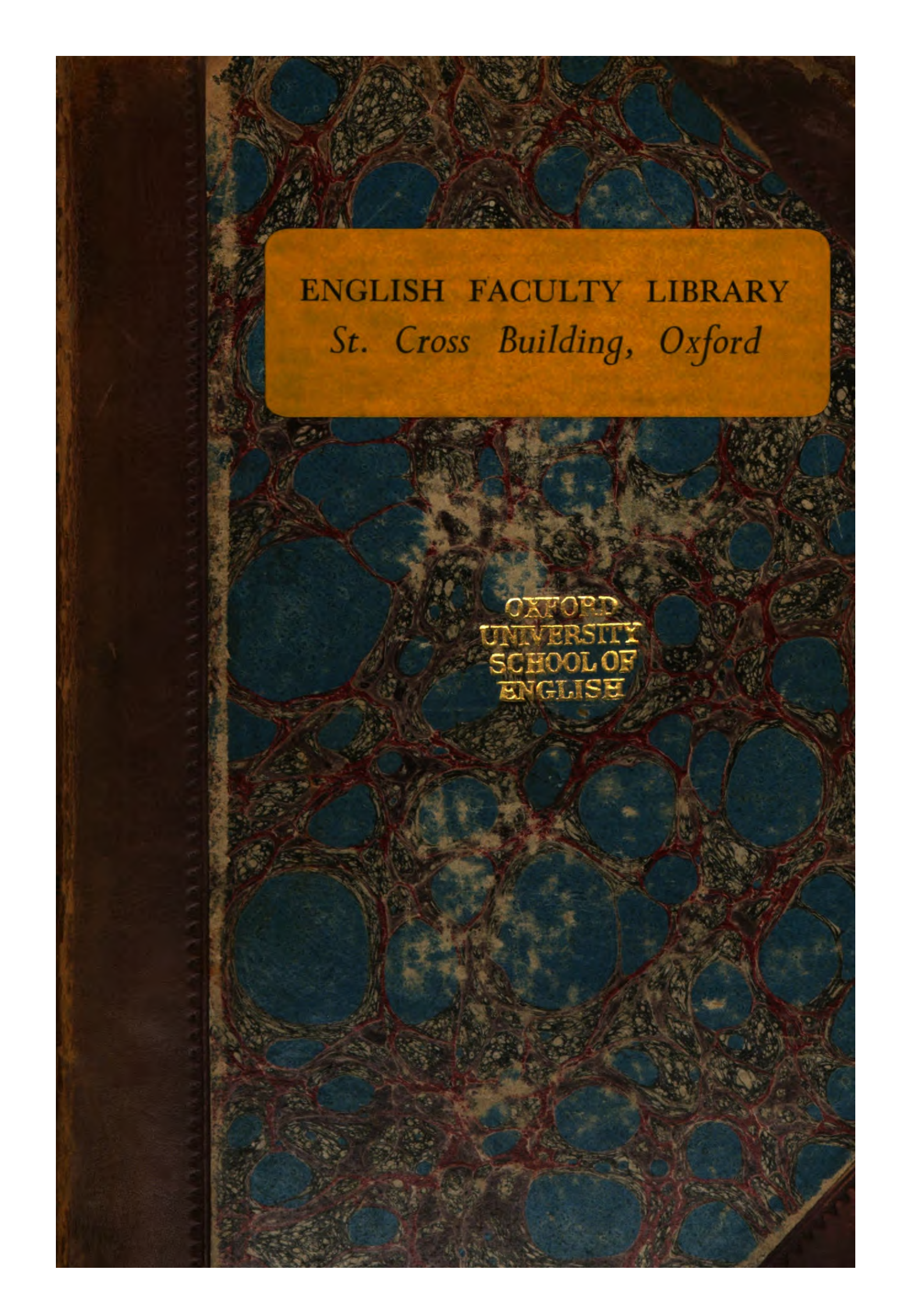
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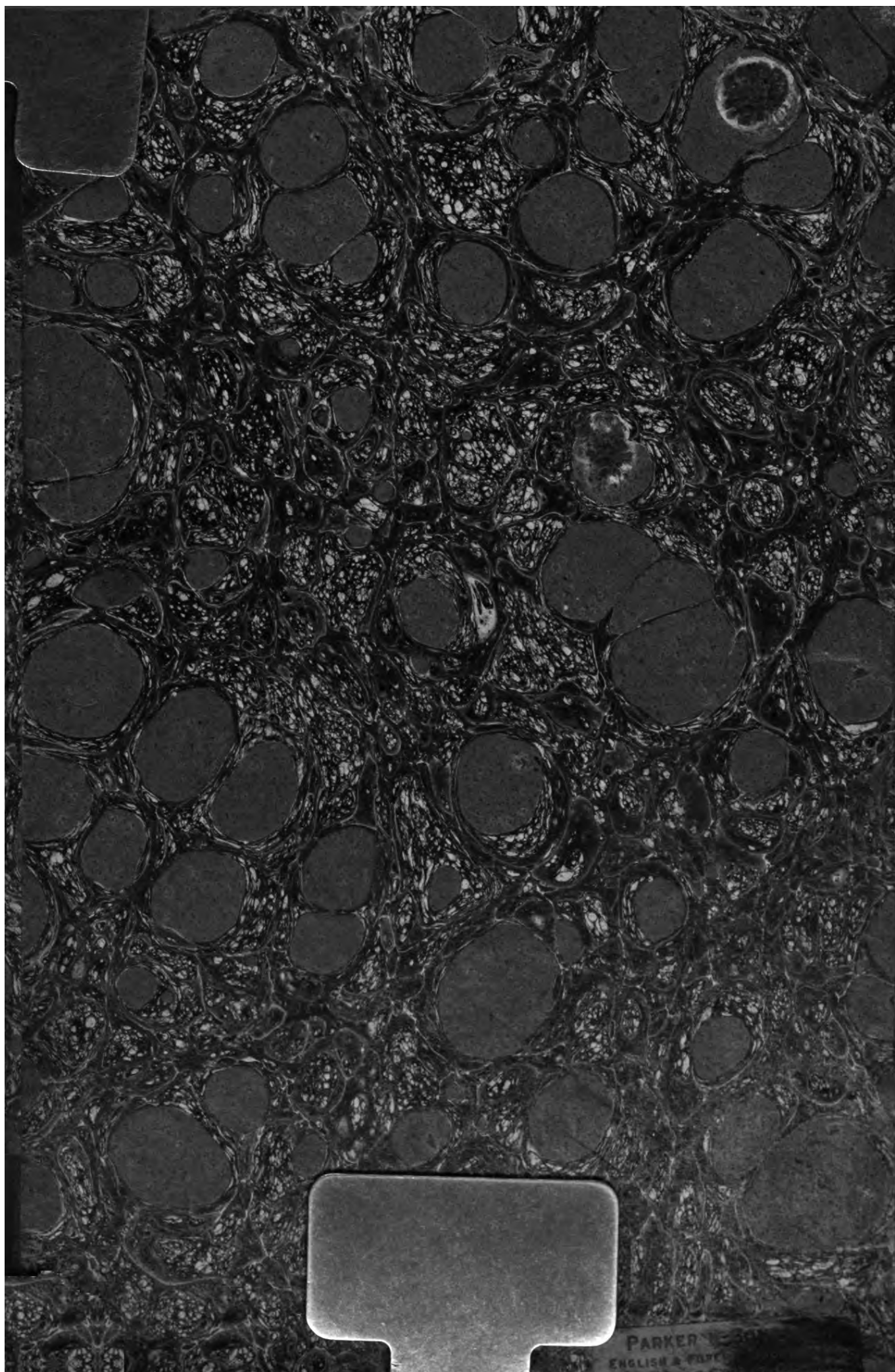


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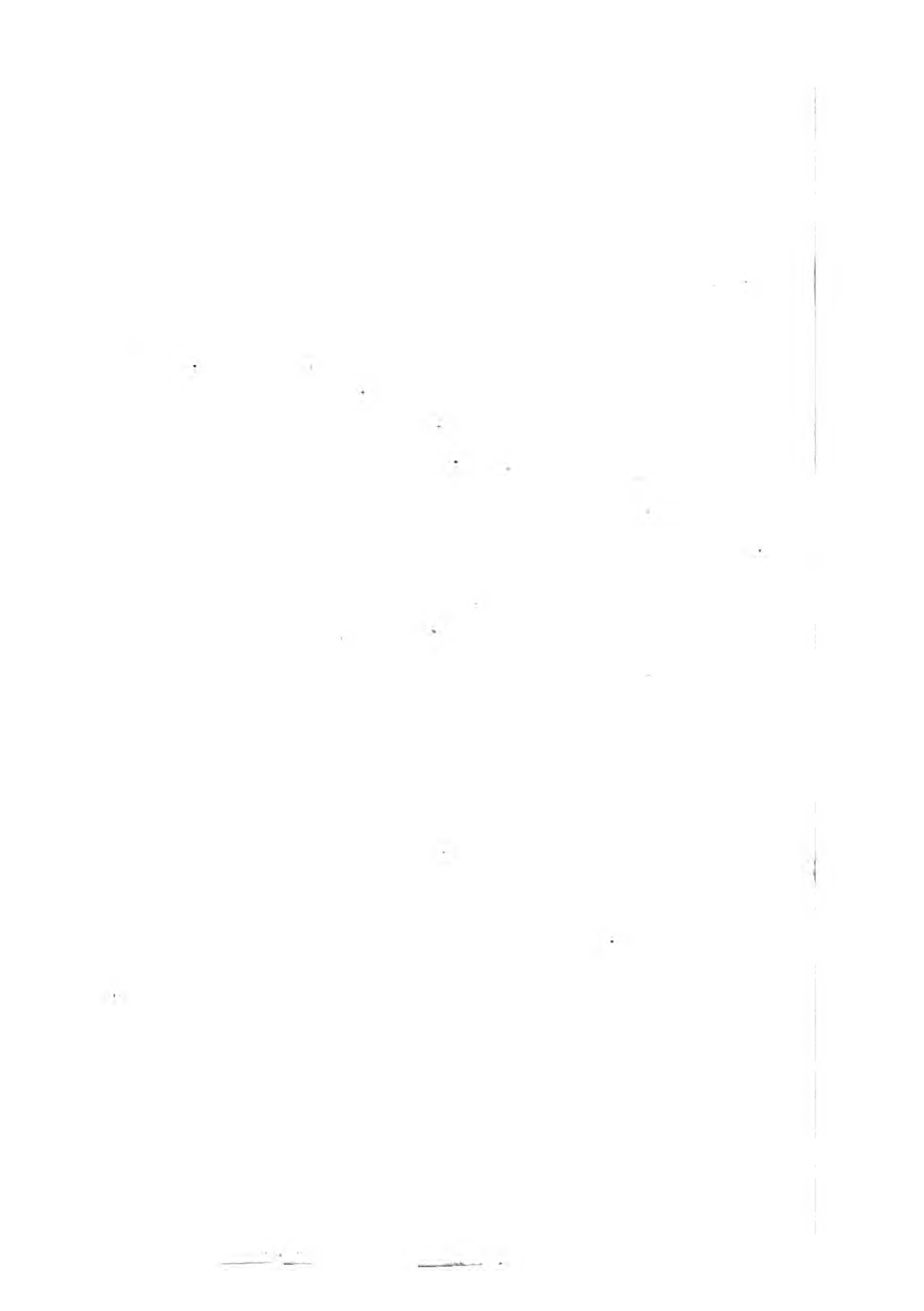
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TAMERTON
CHURCH-TOWER

AND OTHER POEMS

BY COVENTRY PATMORE



LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING

1853



TO
RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, M.P.

This Volume is Inscribed,
AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE AUTHOR'S
RESPECT AND WARM
REGARD.

LIBRARY, BRITISH MUSEUM,
March, 1853.

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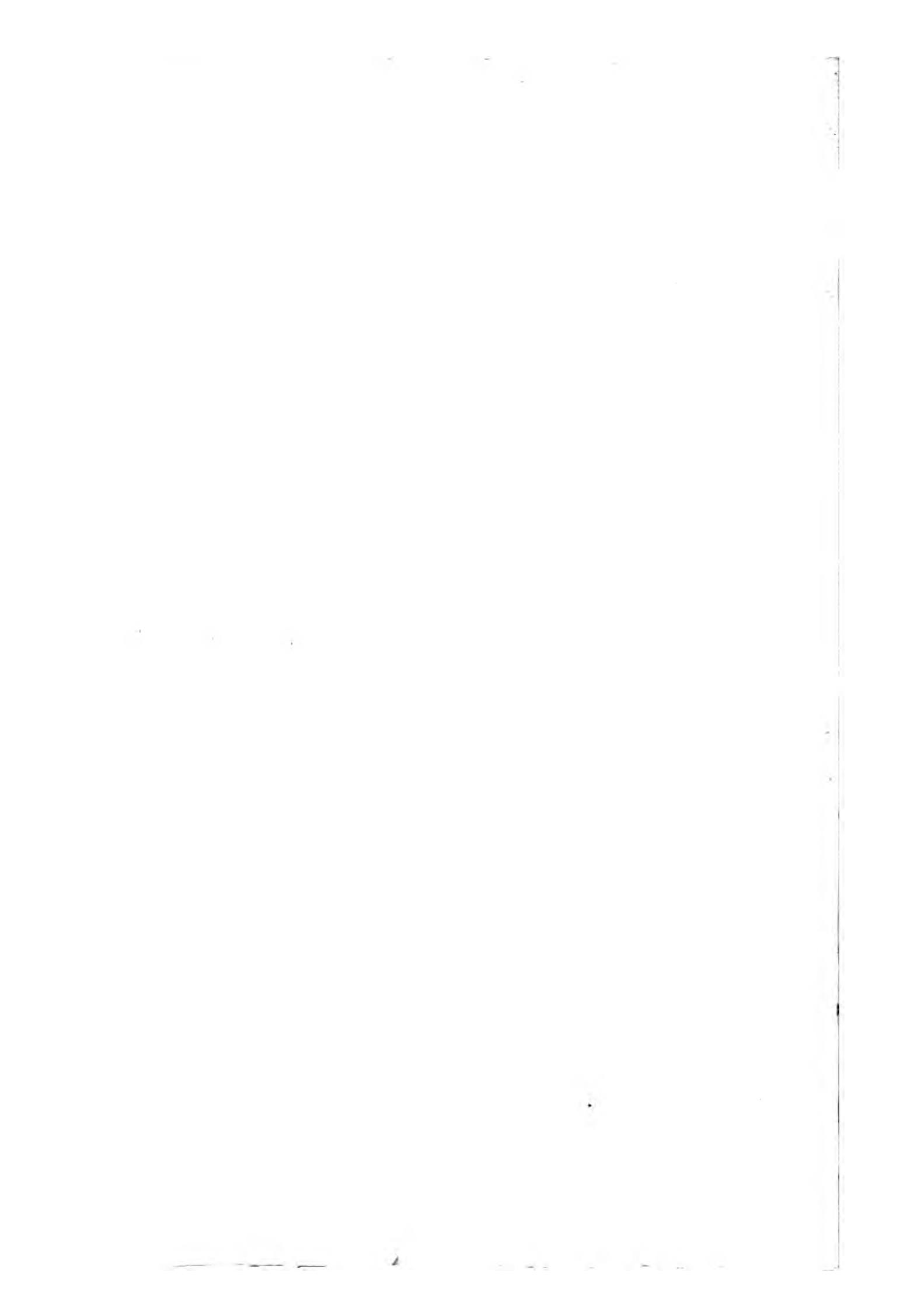


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TAMERTON CHURCH-TOWER.





TAMERTON CHURCH-TOWER.

I.

THE hazy East hot noon did bode ;
Our horses snuff'd the dawn ;
We made ten Cornish miles of road,
Before the dew was gone.

We left the Church at Tamerton
In gloomy western air ;
To greet the day we gallop'd on,
A merry-minded pair.

4 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

We clomb the hill where Lanson's Keep
 Fronts Dartmoor's distant ridge ;
Thence trotted South ; walk'd down the steep
 That slants to Gresson Bridge ;

And paused awhile, where Tamar waits,
 In many a shining coil,
And teeming Devon separates
 From Cornwall's sorry soil.

Our English skies contain'd, that Spring,
 A Caribbean sun ;
The singing birds forgot to sing,
 The rivulets to run.

For three days past, the skies had frown'd,
 Obscur'd with blighting shades,
That only mock'd the thirsty ground
 And unrejoicing glades.

Tamerton Church-Tower. 5

To-day, before the noon was nigh,
Bright-skirted vapours grew,
And on the sky hung languidly ;
The sky was languid too.

Our horses dropp'd their necks and nosed
The dusty wayside grass,
Whilst we beneath still boughs reposed,
And watch'd the water pass.

We spoke of plighted Bertha : Frank
Shot pebbles in the stream ;
And I lay by him on the bank ;
But dreamt no lover's dream.

She was a blythe and bashful maid,
Much blushing in her glee ;
Yet gracing all she did and said
With sweet sufficiency.

6 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

“ Is Blanche as fair ? ” ask’d I, who yearn’d
 To love, and live complete ;
To taste unselfish pleasures, earn’d
 By service strict and sweet.

“ Well, you’ll say fairer : she’ll surprise
 “ Your heart with crimson lips ;
“ Fat underlids, that hold bright eyes
 “ In laughing half-eclipse ;

“ Alluring locks, done up with taste
 “ Behind her dainty ears ;
“ And manners full of wayward haste,
 “ Tho’ facile as the deer’s.”

“ You paint a leaflet, here and there :
 “ Shew me the blossom ; tell
“ What mysteries of good and fair
 “ These blazon’d letters spell.”

“ Her mouth and teeth, by Cupid’s bow !

“ Are letters spelling, kiss ;

“ And, witchingly withdrawn below

“ Twin worlds of baby-bliss,

“ Her little waist—” “ No more,” I cried,

With love and anger faint,

“ Or else, by Cupid’s self, your Bride

“ Shall know how you can paint !”

My life, ’twas like a land of dreams,

Where nothing noble throve :

Dull seem’d it as to maiden seems

The verse that’s not of love.

“ See where,” sigh’d I, “ the water dim

“ Repeats, with leaden hue,

“ The fervid sun, the cloud’s hot rim,

“ The gap of dazzling blue !”

8 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

Quoth Frank, "I do : and thence foresee

 " And all too plainly scan

" Some sentimental homily

 " On Duty, Death, or Man."

" 'Tis this ;" said I, " our senses mar,

 " Ev'n so, sweet Nature's face,

" Unless by love revived they are,

 " Or lit by heavenly grace.

" Below the hazel talks the rill ;

 " My heart speaks not again :

" The solemn cloud, the stately hill,

 " I look on each in vain.

" Sure he for whom no Power shall strike

 " This darkness into day—"

" Is damn'd," said Frank, who morall'd like

 The Fool in an old Play.

“ That’s true ! ” cried I, “ yet, as the worm

“ That sickens to its change—”

“ Or as the pup that nears the term

“ At which pups have the mange—

“ Pooh ! Come, Man, let us on,” he said,

“ For now will be the storm ! ”

And while we rode quaint sense we made

From heav’n’s swift-varying form.

Above us bent a prophet wild,

Pointing to hidden harm ;

Beyond, a magic woman smiled,

And wove some wondrous charm ;

Past that, a censer jetted smoke :

Black convolutions roll’d

To heaven, and caught the light, and broke

In crowns of shining gold.

II.

THE gaps of blue shrank fast in span ;
 The long-forgotten breeze,
By lazy starts and fits, began
 To move the higher trees.

We spurr'd 'neath one black cloud, that flung,
 For earnest of it's stores,
A few large drops, that struck among,
 The light-leaved sycamores.

At noon, we came to Tavistock ;
 And sunshine still was there ;
But gloomy Dartmoor seem'd to mock
 It's weak and yellow glare.

Tamerton Church-Tower. 11

The swallows, in the wrathful light,
 Were pitching up and down ;
A string of rooks made rapid flight,
 Due southward, o'er the town ;

And children ran from field and wood,
 Or under elm and ash,
Embracing sheaves of king-cups, stood
 To watch the first bright flash.

Now, baiting at the Tiger-Inn,
 We talk'd, by windows wide,
Of Blanche and all my unseen kin,
 Who did our coming bide.

The heavy sign-board swang and shriek'd,
 In dark air whirl'd the vane,
Leaves flew, dust rose, and, straining, creak'd
 The shaken window-pane.

12 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

Hot to be gone, Frank rose and eyed
 Black cloud and swinging branch :
But less long'd he to greet his Bride,
 Than I to look on Blanche.

Her name, pair'd still with praise at home,
 Would make my pulses start ;
The hills between us were become
 A weight upon my heart.

“ Behold,” I cried, “ the storm comes not :
 “ The northern heavens grow fair.”
“ Look South,” said Frank, “ ’tis one wide blot
 “ Of thunder-threatening air.”

The string of rooks had travell'd on,
 Against the southern shroud ;
And, like some snaky skeleton,
 Lay twisted in the cloud.

“ No storm to-day ! ” said I, “ for, see,
“ Yon black things travel South.”
We follow’d soon ; our spirits free,
Our bodies slaked from drouth.

I rode in silence ; Frank, with tongue
Made lax by too much port,
Soliloquizing, said or sung
After this tipsy sort.

“ Yea, nerves they are the Devil’s mesh,
“ And pups begin quite blind,
“ And health is oft-times in the flesh,
“ And measles in the mind !

“ Foolish and fair was Joan without ;
“ Foolish and foul within ;
“ High as a hunted pig his snout,
“ She carried a foolish chin.

14 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

“ The Boy beheld, and brisk rose he
 “ At this badly painted fly :
“ That boys less wise than fish should be
 “ We men, Sir, needs must sigh.

“ The fool his Deary vow’d to wed :
 “ The Goodwife bade him not :
“ The Goodman talk’d till his face turn’d red ;
 “ The Boy he quail’d no jot :

“ The Goodman talk’d till his face turn’d blue ;
 “ But the Boy he would be girl’d :
“ And yet a maxim, false or true,
 “ Will shake the mighty world.”

So, jumbling jointless song and jest
 And strangely chosen oath,
He spurr’d ; until, by heat oppress’d,
 We rode in silence both.

III.

ON, on we toil'd, amidst the blaze
From Dartmoor's ridges bare ;
Beneath the hush'd and scorching haze,
And through the twinkling air ;

Along the endless mountain-side,
That seem'd with us to move ;
Past dreary mine-mouths, far and wide ;
Huge dross-heap, wheel, and groove ;

Dark towns by disembowell'd hills,
Where swarthy tribes abode,
Who, in hard rocks, with harder wills,
Pursued the crooked lode ;

16 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

Up heights, that seem'd against us match'd ;
 Until, from table-land,
Before the teasing midge was hatch'd,
 We hail'd the southern strand.

Then pleasantly, on even ground
 And through the lighter air,
We paced along and breath'd around,
 A merry-minded pair.

The hills by lone Tintagil loom'd
 Amidst the setting blaze,
Tintagil, full of warriors plumed,
 In good King Arthur's days.

Frank told how Merlin there the dame
 Of Duke Gorloy beguiled ;
How she, to clear her sinless shame,
 Bare Uther's princely child ;

Tamerton Church-Tower. 17

How Pelles, loving fair Ettarde,
 Forgat himself, and God ;
And how, by sorrow stricken hard,
 He woke and bless'd the rod.

A western night of even cloud
 Suck'd in the sultry disk ;
Bright racks look'd on, a fiery crowd,
 To seamen boding risk ;

The late crow wing'd his silent way
 Across the shadowy East ;
The gnat danced out his little day,
 His ceaseless singing ceased ;

Along the dim horizon round
 Fled faint electric fires ;
Blue glow-worms lit the fresher ground
 By moisture-harbours briers ;

18 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

Far northward twinkled lonely lights,
 The peopled vales among ;
In front, between the gaping heights,
 The mystic ocean hung.

Our weary spirits flagg'd beneath
 The still and loaded air ;
We left behind the freer heath,
 A moody-minded pair.

With senses slack and sick of mirth,
 Tho' near the happy goal,
I murmur'd, fearing nought on earth
 Could quite content the soul :

“ Alas ! should love prove such a light
 “ As yonder glow-worm's lamp,
“ That gleams, at distance, strong and bright,
 “ Approach'd, burns weak and damp.

“ Perchance, by much of bliss aroused,

“ The heart will pant for more ;

“ And then the worm of want lies housed

“ Within the sweet fruit’s core !

“ Far worse, if juggled by the mind

“ Unpurg’d from vapors loose—”

“ You dream,” yawn’d Frank, “and wake to find

“ Your Goddess a green goose.

“ In vowing, as a mortal must,

“ The heart to one fair mate,

“ As in all else, be not unjust

“ Nor disproportionate.”

“ Vain, vain,” cried I, “ is worldly weal.

“ We faint, within the heart,

“ For good which all we see and feel

“ Foreshadows but in part.”

20 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

He answer'd, " What you faint for, win !

 " Faint not, but forward press.

" Heav'n proffers all : 'twere grievous sin

 " To live content in less.

" The Sun rolls by us every day ;

 " And it and all things speak

" To the sinking heart of man and say,

 " 'Tis wicked to be weak.

" We would not hear the hated sound ;

 " But, by the Lord, we must :

" If not, the heavy world goes round,

 " And grinds us into dust."

With each a moral in his mouth,

 We rein'd our sweating nags,

Where quiet Ocean, on the South,

 Kiss'd Edgecomb's ruddy crags.

IV.

SO subtly love within me wrought,
So excellent she seem'd,
Daily of Blanche was all my thought,
Nightly of Blanche I dream'd ;

And this was all my wish and all
The work now left for life,
To make this wonder mine, to call
This laughing Blanche my wife.

I courted her till hope grew bold ;
Then sought her in her place,
And all my passion freely told,
Before her blushing face.

22 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

I kiss'd her twice, I kiss'd her thrice,
 Thro' tresses and thro' tears ;
I kiss'd her lips, I kiss'd her eyes,
 And calm'd her joys and fears.

So woo'd I Blanche and so I sped,
 And so, with small delay,
I and the patient Frank were wed
 Upon the self-same day.

Then friends all round kiss'd either Bride,
 I Frank's, Frank mine ; and he
Laugh'd as for once we thus defied
 Love's sweet monopoly.

Then Blanche bid all farewell with tears ;
 And down the Park's fair slope
We drove ; she grave with virgin fears,
 And I with life's great hope.

Tamerton Church-Tower. 23

And so, with bashful nuptial haste,
 We travell'd ; I and she
Discountenanced both at this first taste
 Of wedded liberty.

But soon I cheer'd my fearful dove ;
 And soon forgot the place,
Where all the world had look'd shy Love
 So rudely in the face.

V.

THE noon was hot and close and still,
When, steadying Blanche's hand,
I trod with her the southern hill,
And row'd with her from land.

Ere summer's prime that year the wasp
Lay gorged within the peach ;
The tide, as though the sea did gasp,
Fell lax upon the beach.

Quietly dipp'd the dripping scull,
And all beside was calm ;
But o'er the strange and weary lull
No angel waved his palm.

The sun was rayless, pale the sky,
The distance thick with light :
We glode beyond the fort and by
The war-ship's sleeping might.

Her paddle stirr'd : without a breeze,
A mimic tempest boil'd :
The sailors on the silent seas
With storm-tuned voices toil'd.

I could not toil ; I seldom pray'd :
What was to do or ask ?
Love's purple glory round me play'd,
Unfed by prayer or task.

All perfect my contentment was,
For Blanche was all my care ;
And heaven seem'd only heaven because
My goddess would be there.

26 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

No wafted breeze the ships did strike,
 No wish unwon moved me ;
The peace within my soul was like
 The peace upon the sea.

At times, when action sleeps, unstirr'd
 By any motive gale,
A mystic wind, with warning heard,
 Ruffles life's slacken'd sail.

The fancy, then, a fear divines,
 And, borne on gloomy wings,
Sees threats and formidable signs
 In simply natural things.

It smote my thought, how, yesternight,
 The moon rose in eclipse ;
And how her maim'd and shapeless light
 O'erhung the senseless ships.

Tamerton Church-Tower. 27

From deeps of sleep my spirit woke,
 Affrighted, uttering prayer :
Merciful Lord ! thy lifted stroke,
 If I repent, forbear !

The terror pass'd, as, lightning-lit,
 Red cloud-scenes shew and close ;
And soon came wonder at the fit,
 And smiles and full repose.

Again I turn'd me, all devote,
 To my sweet Idol's shrine ;
Again I gazed where, on the boat,
 Her shadow mix'd with mine.

VI.

CRIED Frank, who, with his wife, was there,
 “ We dream ! sing each a song.”

And he sang first an old brave air,
 And pull'd the boat along.

“ Sir Pelles woo'd in scorn's despite ;
 “ He cherish'd love's sweet smart :
“ Ettarde proved light ; then, like a Knight,
 “ He turn'd her from his heart.

“ O, the remorse with which men pay
 “ For duties done too well !
“ But conscience gay does grief allay ;
 “ As all true Knights can tell.”

Tamerton Church-Tower. 29

“ Alas, poor Knight !” cried Blanche, “ Nay,
hear,”

Said Frank, “ the saddest half !”
And drearily he troll’d, while clear
Rose Blanche’s puzzled laugh.

“ Sir Lob was drunk ; the stars were bright.

“ Within an empty ditch,

“ Sir Lob all night lay right and tight

“ As a Saint within his niche.

“ Now, well, quoth he, goes life with me :

“ I’ve liquor and to spare ;

“ I hate the herd that vulgar be ;

“ And, O, the stars are fair !

“ The Mill-dam burst : Sir Lob lay sunk

“ In that celestial swoond :

“ The Mill-stream found the Knight dead drunk,

“ And the Jury found him drown’d.”

30 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

“ The tunes are good ; the words,” said I,
“ Are hard to understand.”

And soon I prefaced with a sigh
“ This pagan love-song grand.

“ When Love like Ichor fills the veins,
“ Like Amaranth lights the brow,
“ The Past grows dark, the Future wanes,
“ Before the golden Now.

“ Marc Antony the war-flags furl’d,
“ For Egypt’s Queen said, Stay :
“ He reck’d not of the worthless world,
“ Well lost by that delay.

“ Quoth Antony, Here set I up
“ My everlasting rest :
“ Leave me to drain Joy’s magic cup,
“ To dream on Egypt’s breast.”

Tamerton Church-Tower. 31

Frank smiled, and said my note was wrong ;
'Twas neither Man's nor Boy's ;
And Blanche sang next, some modern song
Of " Flowers " and " Fairy Joys."

As bright disparted skies that break
To let a cherub through,
So seem'd her mouth : my sight did ache,
Glist'ring with fiery dew ;

And in the laugh of her brown eye
My heart, contented so,
Lay like the honey-thirsty fly
Scorch'd in the cactus' glow.

Nor heeded I what sang my Saint,
Such magic had the sound.
The myrtle in her breath made faint
The air that hearken'd round.

32 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

“ Now, Wife,” said Frank, “to shame our lays,
 “ Try you in turn your power :
“ And sing your little song in praise
 “ Of Love’s selectest flower.”

Her hand felt his : thus sang she then,
 Submitted to his rule,
Tho’ shyer than the water-hen
 On Tamar’s shadiest pool.

“ The Myrtle sates with scent the air
 “ That flows by Grecian hills ;
“ Its fragile leaflets glisten fair
 “ By warm Italian rills.

“ The North too has it’s Lover’s-Flower,
 “ The glad Forget-me-not ;
“ Too bold thro’ sunshine wind and shower,
 “ Too blue to be forgot.”

VII.

PPOINTING far East, Frank said, “ Do
“ you see

“ Yon porpoise-droves at play ?”

We gazed, and saw, with failing glee,
Bright lines of spotted spray.

Once more, the boded terror shook

My spirit, this time dumb.

“ To land ! to land !” cried Frank, “ for, look,

“ The storm, at last, is come !”

Above us, heated fields of mist

Precipitated cloud ;

For shore we pull’d ; the swift keel hiss’d ;

Above us, grew the shroud.

34 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

The pale gull flapp'd the stagnant air ;
 The thunder-drop fell straight ;
The first wind lifted Blanche's hair ;
 Looking to me she sate.

Across the mighty mirror crept,
 In dark'ning blasts, the squall ;
And round our terror lightly leapt
 Mad wavelets, many and small.

The oars cast by, convuls'd out flew
 Our perilous hope the sail :
None spoke ; all watch'd the waves, that grew
 Under the splashing hail.

With urgent hearts and useless hands,
 We sate and saw them rise,
Coursing to shore in gloomy bands,
 Below the appalling skies.

The wrathful thunder scared the deeps ;
And where, upon our wake,
The sea got up in ghastly heaps,
White lines of lightning strake.

On, on, with fainting hope we fled,
Hard-hunted by the grave :
Slow seem'd it, though like wind we sped
Over the shouldering wave.

In front swift rose the crags, where still
A storm of sunshine pour'd :
At last, beneath the southern hill,
The dangerous breakers roar'd.

O, bolt foreseen before it burst !
O, chastening hard to bear !
O, cup of sweetness quite revers'd,
And turn'd to void despair !

36 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

Blanche in fear swooning, I let go

 The helm : we struck the ground :

The sea fell in from stern to prow,

 And Blanche, my Bride, was drown'd.

What guilt was her's ! But God is great ;

 And all that may be known

To each of any other's fate

 Is, that it helps his own.

VIII.

ROUND in a vortex go the years,
Each swifter than the last ;
And seasons four their set careers
Pursued and somehow pass'd.

The spirit of Spring, this year, was quench'd
With clouds and wind and rain ;
All night the gust-blown torrent drench'd
The gloomy window-pane.

Against the pane the flapping blind
Flapp'd ever, dismally ;
And ever, above the rain and wind,
Sounded the dismal sea.

38 . *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

The billows, like some guilty crew
Devour'd by vain remorse,
Dash'd up the beach, sighing withdrew,
And mix'd with murmurs hoarse.

The morning was a cheerless sight
Amongst the turbid skies ;
But sweet was the relief of light
Within my restless eyes :

For then I rose to prayer and toil,
Forgot the ocean's moan,
Or faced the dizzy crash and coil
That drown'd its mournfuller tone.

That heaving world I faced, with pride
Of anguish curb'd ; nor quail'd,
While, 'neath the battery of the tide,
The hissing shingles fail'd.

But never, when the waves drew back,
 Trod I the weltering strand ;
For horribly my single track
 Pursued me in the sand.

One morn I watch'd the rain subside ;
 And then fared singly forth
Below the clouds, till eve to ride
 From Edgecomb to the North.

Once, only once, I paus'd upon
 The sea-transcending height,
And turn'd to gaze : far breakers shone,
 Slow gleams of silent light.

Into my horse I struck the spur ;
 Sad was the soul in me ;
Sore were my lids with tears for her
 Who slept beneath the sea.

40 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

But soon I sooth'd my startled horse,
 And check'd that sudden grief,
And look'd abroad to crag and gorse,
 For Nature's sane relief.

Far forth the air was dark and clear,
 The crags acute and large,
The clouds uneven, black and near,
 And ragged at the marge.

The spider, centred in his mesh,
 Shook not, but as I rode,
The opposing air, sweet, sharp and fresh,
 Against my hot lids flow'd.

Peat-cutters pass'd me, carrying tools ;
 Hawks glimmer'd on the wing ;
The ground was glad with grassy pools,
 And brooklets galloping.

Tamerton Church-Tower. 41

The sparrow chirp'd with feathers spread,
And dipp'd and drank his fill,
Where, down its sandy channel, fled
The lessening road-side rill.

I cross'd the furze-grown table-land,
And near'd the northern vales,
That lay perspicuously plann'd
In lesser hills and dales.

Now rearward, in a slow review,
Fell Dartmoor's jagged lines ;
Around were dross-heaps, red and blue,
Old shafts of gutted mines ;

Impetuous currents copper-stain'd,
Wheels stream-urged with a roar,
Sluice-guiding grooves, strong works that
strain'd
With freight of upheaved ore.

42 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

Thought I, "The moving mountain-side
 " Seems half its ancient length,
" And all the land is purified,
 " And fill'd with hearty strength."

Just then, the train, with shock on shock,
 Swift roar and birth-scream dire,
Grew from the bosom of the rock,
 And pass'd in noise and fire.

With brazen throb, with vital stroke,
 It went, far heard, far seen,
Setting a track of shining smoke
 Against the pastoral green.

Now, bright drops, lodg'd in budding trees,
 Were loos'd in sudden showers,
Touch'd by the novel western breeze,
 Friend of the backward flowers.

Now rose the Church at Tavistock,
The rain still falling there ;
But sunny Dartmoor seem'd to mock
The gloom with cheerful glare.

About the West the gilt vane reel'd
And poised ; and, with sweet art,
The sudden, jangling changes peal'd,
Until, around my heart,

Conceits of brighter times, of times
The brighter for past storms,
Clung thick as bees, when brazen chimes
Call down the hiveless swarms.

IX.

I RESTED at the Tiger-Inn,
 There half-way on my ride,
 And mused with joy of friends and kin
 Who did my coming bide.

I saw my Father's half-dropp'd lid,
 His smile when plying Frank
 With pith of wisdom, wisely hid
 In humour rich and rank.

I heard the fable apt, the catch
 With many morals fraught ;
 And even then some random snatch
 Within my memory wrought.

The Vicar next, in sombre wear
That shone about the knees,
Before me stood, his aspect fair
With godly memories.

I heard again his kind “ Good-bye :
“ Christ speed and keep thee still
“ From frantic passions, for they die
“ And leave a frantic will.

“ I’ve watch’d thy life : I think that God
“ Of thee hath special care :
“ Give thanks ! and, ’gainst the heaviest rod,
“ This solace with thee bear ;

“ Best fruits come not of sunniest years ;
“ Good use have griefs ; they try
“ The sacred faculty of tears,
“ And man with men ally.

46 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

“ Misfortunes shew us sins conceal’d,
 “ As slugs come out in rain ;
“ And the heart’s wants are all reveal’d
 “ Unto the heart in pain.”

Then pass’d my Uncle, learn’d and meek ;
 A soul, in strangest truth,
As wide as Asia and as weak ;
 Not like his daughter Ruth.

A Maid of fullest heart she was ;
 Her spirit’s lovely flame
Nor dazzled nor surprised, because
 It always burn’d the same ;

And in the heaven-lit path she trod
 Fair was the wife foreshewn,
A Mary in the house of God,
 A Martha in her own.

Corporeal charms she had ; but these
 Were tranquil, grave and chaste,
And all too excellent to please
 A rash, untutor'd taste.

In love with home, I rose and eyed
 The rainy North ; but there
The distant hill-top, in it's pride,
 Adorn'd the brilliant air ;

And as I pass'd from Tavistock,
 The scatter'd dwellings white,
The Church, the golden weather-cock
 Were whelm'd in happy light ;

Dark rocks shone forth with yellow brooms ;
 And, over orchard walls,
Gleam'd congregated apple-blooms,
 In white and ruddy balls ;

48 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

The children did the good sun greet,
 With song and senseless shout ;
The lambs did skip, their dams did bleat,
 In Tavy leapt the trout ;

Across a fleeting eastern cloud,
 The splendid rainbow sprang,
And larks, invisible and loud,
 Within its zenith sang.

X.

THE wild joys of the noontide curb'd,
There follow'd holy calm,
As when, o'er saints by bliss disturb'd,
An Angel waves the palm.

So lay the Earth that saw the skies
Grow calm and bright above,
As the repentant spirit lies
In God's forgiving love.

The lark forsook the waning day,
And all loud songs did cease ;
The Robin, from a wither'd spray,
Sang like a soul at peace.

50 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

The great sun, that did westward go,
Extinguish'd not the moon,
That mark'd, with alteration slow,
The deepening afternoon.

Far to the South, in sunset glow'd
The peaks of Dartmoor ridge,
And Tamar, full and tranquil, flow'd
Beneath the Gresson Bridge.

There, conscious of the numerous noise
Of rain-awaken'd rills,
And gathering deep and sober joys
From the heart-enlarging hills ;

And strangely taught of teachers high,
The sad and merry clouds,
That variously succeeded by,
In singleness or crowds ;

Tamerton Church-Tower. 51

I sat, until the first white star
 Appear'd, with dewy rays,
And the fair moon began to bar
 With shadows all the ways.

O, well is thee, whate'er thou art,
 And happy shalt thou be,
If thou hast known, within thy heart,
 The peace that came to me.

O, well is thee, if aught shall win
 Thy spirit to confess,
God proffers all, 'twere grievous sin
 To live content in less !

I mounted, now, my patient nag ;
 And scaled the easy steep ;
And soon beheld the quiet flag
 On Lanson's solemn Keep.

52 *Tamerton Church-Tower.*

And now, whenas the waking lights
 Bespake the valley'd Town,
A child o'ertook me, on the heights,
 In cap and russet gown.

It was an alms-taught scholar trim,
 Who, on her happy way,
Sang to herself the morrow's hymn ;
 For this was Saturday.

“ Saint Stephen, stoned, nor grieved nor groan'd :
 “ 'Twas all for his good gain ;
“ For Christ him blest, till he confess'd
 “ A sweet content in pain.

“ Then Christ his cross is no way loss,
 “ But even a present boon :
“ Of his dear blood fair shines a flood
 “ On heaven's eternal noon.”

Tamerton Church-Tower. 53

My sight grew moist. 'Twas not for her
Who slept beneath the sea.

On sped I then without the spur,
By homestead, heath and lea.

O'erhead the perfect moon kept pace,
In meek and brilliant power,
And lit, erelong, the eastern face
Of Tamerton Church-Tower.



THE YEWS-BERRY.



THE YEW-BERRY.

CALL this idle history the “ Berry
of the Yew ;”
Because there’s nothing sweeter
than it’s husk of scarlet glue,
And nothing half so bitter as its black core bit-
ten through.

I loved, saw hope, and said so ; learn’d that
Laura loved again ;
Wherefore speak of joy then suffer’d ? My head
throbs, and I would fain
Find words to lay the spectre starting now be-
fore my brain.

She loved me : all things told it ; eye to eye,
and palm to palm :

As the pause upon the ceasing of a thousand-
voiced psalm

Was the mighty satisfaction and the full eternal
calm.

She could see me coming to her with the vision
of the hawk ;

Always hastened on to meet me ; always in our
daily walk

Low tones to me grew lower, sweet'ning so her
honey-talk,

That it fill'd up all my hearing, drown'd the
voices of the birds,

The voices of the breezes, and the voices of
the herds ;

And her countenance in silence was more speak-
ing than her words.

Even when alone together, looks no utterance
can define

Mark'd, now and then, soul wanderings that
confirm'd her half divine :

High treasure, ten times treasured, for not seem-
ing wholly mine !

On her face, then and for ever, was the serious-
ness within ;

Her sweetest smiles, (and sweeter did a lover
never win),

Ere half done, grew so absent that they made
her fair cheek thin.

On her face, then and for ever, thoughts un-
worded used to live ;

So that when she whisper'd to me, " Better joy
Earth cannot give,"

Her lips, though closed, continued, " But
Earth's joy is fugitive."

For there a nameless something, though suppress'd, still spread around ;
The same was on her eyelids, if she look'd towards the ground ;
When she spoke I knew directly that the same was in the sound :—

A fine dissatisfaction which at no time went away,
But mingled with her laughter, even at its brightest play,
Till it touch'd me like the sunshine in the closing of the day.

I felt that mortal fortune had attain'd its giddiest height :
The things we cannot measure we imagine infinite.
But I soon found that perfecting is confiding a delight.

Next Laura I loved Wortley, in part for the
man he seem'd,
In part because my Laura loved his talk, which
she esteem'd,
As she said, and I demurr'd not, for the thought
with which it teem'd.

For even when he utter'd common things, and
clear to sight,
He look'd at us so intently that we scarcely
thought them trite :
A trick of serious manner wherein women much
delight.

Let none ask joy at the highest, save those who
would have it end :
There's weight in earthly blessings ; they are
earthy, and they tend,
By predetermin'd impulse, at their highest, to
descend.

I still for a happy season, in the present, saw
the past,

Mistaking one for the other, feeling sure my
hold was fast

On that of which the symbols vanished daily :
but at last,

As when we watch bright cloud-banks round
about the low sun ranged,

We suddenly remember some rich glory gone
or changed,

All at once I comprehended that her love was
grown estranged.

From this time forward, glimpses of a darker
fear came on :

They came ; but how, I know not, were no
sooner come than gone.—

At times, some gap in sequence frees the spirit,
and we, anon,

Are aware of states of living ended ere we left
the womb,

And see a vague aurora flashing to us from the
tomb,

The dreamy light of new states, dash'd tremen-
dously with gloom.

We tremble for an instant, and a single instant
more

Brings absolute oblivion, and we push on as
before :

Just so those dreadful glimpses came, and
startled, and were o'er.

The change I saw in Laura I would not ev'n
yet bemoan,

But combated conviction till 'twas almost over-
thrown :

No frauds are so effectual to deceive us as our
own.

One morning, one bright morning, Wortley met
me. He and I,

As we rode across the country, met a friend
of his. His eye

Caught Wortley's, who rode past him, "What,"
said he, "pass old friends by ?

" So I've heard your suit's successful ! Truly
stuff for a romance

After your foul french fashion. But, ah ! ha !
should Herbert chance—"

" Nay, Herbert's here," said he, and introduced
me, with a glance

Of easy smiles, ignoring this embarrassment,
and then

This pass'd off, and soon after I went home, and
took a pen,

And wrote down all the matter, how it hap-
pen'd, where and when :

And, having read it over once or twice, sat down
to think,

From time to time beneath it writing more, till,
link by link,

The evidence against her was fulfill'd : I did
not shrink,

But I read it all together, and I found it was no
dream.

What I felt I can't remember ; an oblivion
which the gleam

Of light which oft comes through it shews for
blessedness extreme.

At last I moved, exclaiming, " I shall not be-
lieve, until

I've spoken more with Laura." Thereon all
my heart grew still :

For doubt and faith are active, and decisions of
the will.

I sought my Love. She started : I suppose
that I was pale.

We talk'd ; but words on both sides, seem'd to
sicken, flag, and fail.

Then I gave her what I'd written, watching
whether she would quail.

In and out flew sultry blushes ; so, when red re-
flections rise

From conflagrations, filling the alarm'd heart
with surmise,

They lighten now, now darken, up and down
the gloomy skies.

She finish'd once ; but fearing to look from it,
read it o'er

Ten times at least. Poor Laura, had those
readings been ten score,

That refuge from confusion had confused thee
more and more !

Seeing, at last, how surely my conviction must
be built,

She turn'd at bay, and trusted to that crutch,
made like a stilt,

The insolent bravado wherewith weakness out-
stares guilt.

“ By what right is it,” said she, “ you are here
to question me ?

“ Read this, your rude indictment, which ac-
knowledges the plea

“ Of common love now cancell'd. Truly, Sir,
the times are free,

“ When a Lady may not venture, when it
pleases her, to slight

“ A foolish boy's first passion, nurs'd awhile for
his delight,

“ Lest he, a man, insult her ; pleading thus his
' wrong,' his right.”

“ I plead no right,” I answer’d, breaking short
this senseless throng

Of words that show’d she dreaded accusation
loud and long ;

“ And, would that you could see this ! your’s
oh, Laura, is the wrong.

“ Love ends where wrong commences, and with
Love Love’s wrong must end.

“ I’ve lost, ah ! what, love losing, you’ve lost
power to comprehend.

“ I feel no wrong.” Then finding all her base-
less pride unbend,

I said, “ You’re ill, sit Laura,” and she sat down
and was meek.

“ Ah tears ! Not lost to God then. But pray
Laura, do not speak :

“ I understand you better by the moisture on
your cheek.”

She shook with tears, in silence. I yet check-
ing passion's sway,
Said only, "Farewell Laura!" then got up,
and strode away ;
For I felt that she would burst my heart asunder
should I stay.

Oh, ghastly corpse of Love so slain ! It makes
the world it's hearse ;
Or, as the sun extinct and dead, after the dooms-
day curse,
It rolls, an unseen danger, through the darken'd
universe.

I struggled to forget this ; but, forgetfulness too
sweet !
It startled with it's sweetness, thus involv'd it's
own defeat ;
And every time this happen'd, aching memory
would repeat

The shock of that discovery : so at length I
learn'd by heart,

And never, save when sleeping, suffer'd thence-
forth to depart

The feeling of my sorrow : and in time this
sooth'd the smart.

Sharp sufferings are not lasting, they may kill,
or drive us mad,

Or leave a tone in talking that will make the
hearer sad ;

But they are never lasting, not even such as I
have had ;

For, evermore, Pain's offspring kill their mo-
ther : at least so

I've found. I thank kind Heaven, woe-bought
wisdom has made woe

Seem light, when I remember what it was
awhile ago.

Yet even now not seldom in my leisure, in the
thick
Of other thoughts, unchalleng'd, words and
looks come crowding thick—
They do while I am writing, till the sunshine
makes me sick.

Yet that is all for her sake, not for mine ; and
lo, the tear
Of Pity hath a sweetness among sweets with-
out it's peer ;
Souls sainted, by such sadness lift themselves
from sphere to sphere.

LADIES' PRAISE,
AND
LOVE'S APOLOGY.



HONORIA.

LADIES' PRAISE.

LO, when the Lord made North and,
South
And Sun and Moon ordained, He,
Forthbringing each, by word of mouth,
In order of it's dignity,
Did Man from the crude clay express
By sequence ; and, all else decreed,
He form'd the Woman : nor might less
Than Sabbath such a work succeed.

And still with favour singled out,
Marr'd less than Man by mortal fall,

Her disposition is devout,
Her countenance angelical.
No faithless thought her instinct shrouds,
But fancy chequers settled sense,
Like alteration of the clouds
On noonday's azure permanence.
Pure courtesy, composure, ease
Declare affections nobly fix'd,
And impulse sprung from due degrees
Of sense and spirit sweetly mix'd.
Her modesty, her chiefest grace,
The cestus clasping Venus' side,
Is potent to deject the face
Of him who would affront it's pride :
Wrong dares not in her presence speak,
Nor spotted thought it's taint disclose,
Under the protest of a cheek
Outbragging Nature's boast the rose.
In mind and manners how discreet !
How artless in her very art ;

How candid in discourse ; how sweet
 The concord of her lips and heart ;
How humbly careful to attract,
 Tho' crown'd with all the soul desires,
Connubial aptitude exact,
 Diversity that never tires !

What though she be the Child of Eve,
 Death-wounded to the dear heart's core,
Shall Man for her sad lineage grieve,
 Man suffering less and sinning more ?
No : he whose praises do not pile
 The measure of her just desert
Impugns the logic of her smile,
 Which gives the balm and takes the hurt.
For my part, when rejoiced I trace
 Her various worth and how she is
Our most effectual means of grace
 And casket of our worldly bliss,

I, looking round, do nowhere see
That second good which doth afford
The like compulsion urging me
With a pure mind to praise the Lord.

When I behold the reckless brook
That casts itself from yonder crag,
Leaving its shade along the rock,
And wavering lower like a flag ;
When I behold the skies aloft,
Passing the pageantry of dreams ;
The cloud whose bosom, cygnet-soft,
A couch for nuptial Juno seems ;
When I behold the mountains bright ;
The shadowy vales with feeding herds ;
I from my lyre the music smite,
Nor want for justly matching words :
All powers of the sea and air,
All interests of hill and plain,

I so can sing in seasons fair
 That who hath felt may feel again :
Nay more ; the gracious Muses bless
 At times my tongue, until I can
With moving emphasis express
 The likeness of the perfect man.
Elated oft by such free songs,
 I think with utterance free to raise
That hymn for which the whole world longs,
 A worthy hymn in Woman's praise ;
A hymn bright-noted like a bird's,
 Arousing these song-sleepy times
With rhapsodies of perfect words,
 Ruled by returning kiss of rhymes.
But when I look on her and hope
 To tell with joy what I admire,
My thoughts lie cramp'd in narrow scope,
 Or in the feeble birth expire ;
No skill'd complexity of speech,
 No heart-felt phrase of tenderest fall,

No liken'd excellence can reach

Her the sheer paragon of all.

Yet shall it be my chosen task

To sing her worth as Maid and Wife ;

And were such post to seek, I'd ask

To live her laureate all my life :

On wings of love uplifted free,

And by her gentleness made great,

I'd teach how noble Man should be

To match with such a lovely mate :

And then in her would move the more

The Woman's wish to be desired

(By praise increas'd) till both should soar,

With blissful emulations fired :

And as geranium, pink or rose

Is thrice itself thro' power of art,

So might my happy skill disclose

New fairness, ev'n in her fair heart ;

Until that churl should nowhere be,

Who bent not, awed, before the throne

Of her affecting majesty,
 So meek, so much unlike our own ;
Until, (for who may hope too much
 From her who wields the powers of Love),
Our lifted lives at last should touch
 That heavenly goal to which they move ;
Until we find, as darkness rolls
 Far off and fleshly mists dissolve,
That Male and Female are the poles
 On which the joyful spheres revolve.

Me to these happy notes of praise
 Not only Woman's graces stir ;
Myself I never seem to raise
 So much as when I honor her :
For while my songs so various run,
 There lives before my constant mind
An image, time-endear'd, of one
 Who is to me all womankind.

Honoria call her. She confers

Bright honor when she breathes my name ;
Birth's blazon'd patents, shewn with her's,

Are falsified and put to shame ;
All rank irradiates from her smile,—
I speak but as I feel and think,—

Yet pride consumes me not, the while

At honor's source, uncheck'd, I drink :
For as a Queen who may not find

Her peer in all the common Earth,
Submits her meek and royal mind,

Espousing one of subject birth ;
All barter of like gain above,

She raised me to her noble place,
And made my lordship of her love
The humbling gift of her free grace.

FELIX.

LOVE'S APOLOGY.

I.

HE meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destin'd Maid : some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.
No songs of love, no summer dreams
Did ere his longing fancy fire
With vision like to this : she seems
In all things better than desire.
His merits in her presence grow,
To match the promise in her eyes ;
And round her happy footsteps blow
The authentic airs of paradise.

For love of her he cannot sleep ;
 Her beauty haunts him all the night ;
It melts his heart, it makes him weep
 With wonder, worship, and delight.
O, paradox of love ! he longs,—
 Most humbled when he most aspires,—
To suffer scorn and cruel wrongs
 From her he honors and desires.
Her graces make him rich, and ask
 No guerdon ; this imperial style
Affronts him ; he disdains to bask
 The pensioner of her priceless smile.
He prays for some hard thing to do,
 Some work of fame and labour immense,
To stretch the languid bulk and thew
 Of Love's fresh-born magnipotence.
No smallest boon were bought too dear,
 Tho' barter'd for his love-sick life ;
Yet trusts he, with undaunted cheer,
 To vanquish heaven, and call her wife.

He notes how Queens of sweetness still
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate ;
How, self-consign'd with lavish will,
They ask but love proportionate ;
How swift pursuit by small degrees,
Love's tactic, works like miracle ;
How valour, clothed in courtesies,
Brings down the haughtiest citadel ;
And therefore, though he merits not
To kiss the braid upon her skirt,
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,
Outsoars all possible desert :
Resistance only makes him gay ;
The fiercer fight the fairer she ;
In vain her distance says him nay ;
Hope desperate grown feigns certainty.
Ah, whither shall a Maiden flee,
When a bold Youth so swift pursues,
And siege of tenderest courtesy,
With hope perseverant, still renews !

Ah, wherefore flee? Her simple breast
Thanks him who finds her fair and good;
She loves her fears, veil'd joys arrest
The foolish terrors of her blood;
By secret sweet degrees her heart,
Vanquish'd, takes warmth from his desire;
She makes it more, with bashful art,
And basks at Love's late dreaded fire.
O, might he, when by doubts aggriev'd,
Behold his tokens next her breast,
At all his words and sighs, perceiv'd
Against it's blithe obtrusion press'd!
But soon, his victory he devines:
He tells her what his feelings are;
And, lo, her love, unveiling, shines
As steady as a tropic star.

II.

MOST rare is still most noble found,
Most noble still most incomplete :
Sad law, which leaves King Love uncrown'd,
In this obscure terrestrial seat !
His heavenly splendour magnifies
The least admixture of Earth's mould,
Cheapens himself in his own eyes,
And makes the foolish mocker bold.
O, zealous good, O, virtuous glee,
Religious, and without alloy,
O, privilege high, which none but he
Who chastely merits can enjoy ;
O, Love, thou art that fabled Sun
Which all the world with bounty loads,
Without respect of realms, save one,
And gilds with double lustre Rhodes !

O, heathen gross conceit, to blind
The eyes of Love, that subtly see,
And him call captive and confin'd,
Whom Love makes excellently free !
With bale more sweet than others' bliss,
And bliss more wise than others' bale,
The secrets of the world are his,
And freedom without let or pale.
If Fate his dear ambition mar,
And load his breast with hopeless pain,
And seem to blot out sun and star,
Love, lost or won, is Wisdom's gain :
For, looking backward through his tears,
With vision of maturer scope,
He smiles as one dead joy appears
The platform of some better hope ;
Confessing that the sharpest smart
Which human patience may endure,
Pays light for that which leaves the heart
More generous, dignified, and pure.

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THE RIVER.



THE RIVER.

I.

T is a venerable place,
An old ancestral ground,
So broad the rainbow wholly stands
Within it's lordly bound ;
And here the river waits and winds
By many a wooded mound.

Upon a rise, where single oaks
And clumps of beeches tall
Drop pleasantly their shade beneath,
Half-hid amidst them all,
Rests in it's quiet dignity
An ancient manor-hall.

Far seen through lofty iron gates,
It is a cheerful sight ;
About it's many gable ends
The swallows wheel their flight ;
The huge fantastic weather-vanes
Look happy in the light.

It's ivied turrets seem to love
The murmur of the bees ;
And though this manor-hall hath seen
The snow of centuries,
How freshly still it stands amid
It's wealth of swelling trees !

The leafy summer-time is young ;
The yearling lambs are strong ;
The sunlight glances merrily ;
The trees are full of song ;
The valley-loving River flows
Contentedly along.

Embracing all this ancient home,
 A host of green hills stand
About the central manor-rise,
 As cheerful as a band
Of happy children round their chief
 Extended hand-in-hand.

Their shadows from the setting sun
 Stretch all across the plain ;
The watch-dog, in the silent night,
 Stops wrangling with his chain,
To hear, at every burst of barks,
 The hills bark back again.

Look where the merry weather-vanes
 Reel upon yonder tower :
There, amid starry jessamine
 And clasping passion-flower,
The sweetest Maid of all the land
 Is weeping in her bower.

Alas, the lowly Youth she loves

Loves her, but fears to sue :

He came this morning hurriedly ;

Then out her young blood flew !

But he talk'd of common things, and so

Her eyes are fill'd with dew.

II.

TIME passes on : thro' strong belief
Of disregard, or pride ;
Thro' passion changed, or choice that hath
The grieving heart belied,
The Maiden has her promise given
To be another's Bride.

November and the clouds are come ;
The river, lately bright,
Rolls foul and black, and gloomily
Makes known across the night,
In far-heard plash and weary drench,
The passage of it's might.

The Bridegroom counts the tolling hours ;
The guests are coming fast ;
(The vanes are creaking drearily
Within the dying blast !)
The bashful Bride is at his side ;
And night is here at last.

The guests are gay ; the minstrels play ;
'Tis liker noon than night ;
From side to side, they toast the Bride
Who blushes ruby light :
For youth and age, for clown and sage,
It is a cheerful sight.

But to the park : away, away,
This merry noise and glare !
To the silent park ; for one whose thoughts
Are darker than the night is there,
Leaning against an aged tree
By thunder smitten bare.

He minds not either warmth or cold,
Nor cares he for the dull moonshine,
And yet he cries “ ’tis chill, ’tis chill,
This lonely heart of mine.”
And yet he cries, “ O, misery,
“ Cold is the dull moonshine.”

The oriel’d hall shines bright with shapes
Of nun and saint devout ;
Broad bars of red and purple light
Stand in the mist without ;
And sadly across the muffled air
Cometh the laughter shout.

No sound or sight this solemn night
But moves the soul to fear :
The faded nuns stare through the gloom
Askaunt, and wan, and blear ;
And wither’d cheeks of watchful saints
Start from their purple gear.

The burthen of the wedding-song
Comes hither like a wail ;
The stream, athwart the cedar grove,
Is shining ghastly pale,
Shining athwart the cedars' gloom,—
Dark soul ! what doth thee ail ?

His cloudy brow clears all at once ;
Some thought brings pleasant balm.
He leans no more, but up he stands
As straight as any palm :
Hath he some soothing plan of life ?
No, for his looks are calm.

He turns him from the lighted hall :
His sad breast scarcely heaves ;
He paces t'wards the gloomy wood ;
Across it breaks and cleaves ;
And now his footfall dies away
Upon the wither'd leaves.

III.

THE restless moon, among the clouds,
Is loitering slowly by ;
Now in a circle like the ring
About a weeping eye ;
Now left quite bare and bright, and now
A pallor in the sky.

The lonely stars are here and there,
But weak and wasting all ;
The winds are dead, the cedars spread
Their branches like a pall ;
The guests, by laughing twos and threes,
Have left the bridal hall.

The moon is looking through the mist,
Cold, lustreless, and wan ;
And wildly past her dreary form
The watery clouds rush on,
A moment white beneath her light,
And then, like spirits, gone.

Silent and fast they hurry past,
Their swiftness striketh dread,
For earth is hush'd, and no breath sweeps
The spider's rainy thread,
And every thing but those pale clouds
Is dark, and still, and dead.

Beneath the mossy, ivy'd bridge,
The river slippeth past :
The current deep is still as sleep,
And yet so very fast !
There's something in it's quietness
That makes the soul aghast.

No wind is in the willow tree
That droops above the bank ;
The water passes quietly
Beneath the sedges dank ;
Yet the willow trembles in the stream,
And the dry reeds talk and clank.

The weak stars swoon ; the jagged moon
Is lost in the cloudy air.
No thought of light ! save where the wave
Sporteth a fitful glare.
The dumb and dreadful world is full
Of darkness and night-mare.

The hall-clock clangs : the watch-dog barks :
What are his dreams about ?
Marsh lights leap, and tho' fast asleep
The owlets shriek and shout ;
Stars, thro' chasms in utter black,
Race like a drunken rout.

A man is on the bridge : behold

His paleness in the dark !

He watches the stars that race in the stream,

And knows them not : but hark !

The clock stops tolling, the owls are still,

And still is the watch-dog's bark.

“ Wake, wake, oh wake ! ” the Bridegroom calls

Unto his sleeping Bride.

“ Alas, I saw thee, pale and dead,

Roll down a frightful tide ! ”

He clasps her hand : “ How chill thou art !

“ What is it, sweet my Bride ? ”

The Bride bethinks her now of him

Who last night was no guest.

“ Sweet Heaven ! and for me ? I dream !

Be calm, thou throbbing breast.”

She says, in thought, a solemn prayer

And turns again to rest.

Along, along, swiftly and strong
The river slippeth past ;
The current deep is still as sleep,
And yet so very fast !
There's something in its quietness
That makes the soul aghast.

IV.

THE morn has risen : wildly by
The water glides to-day ;
Outspread upon it's eddying face,
Long weeds and rushes play ;
And on the bank the fungus rots
And the grass is mix'd with clay.

Time passes on : the park is bare ;
The year is scant and lean ;
The river's banks are desolate ;
The air is chill and keen ;
But, now and then, a sunny day
Bringeth a thought of green.

Amid blear February's flaw,
Tremulous snow-drops peep ;
The crocus, in the shrewd March morn,
Starts from its wintry sleep ;
And daisies shine in lovely hosts,
Among the pasturing sheep.

The waters, in their old content,
'Twixt iris'd margins run ;
The pike, as trackless as a sound,
Shoots thro' the current dun ;
And languid new-born chesnut-leaves
Expand beneath the sun.

The summer's prime is come again ;
The trees are out anew ;
The current keeps the mournful past
Deep in it's bosom blue,
And babbles low thro' quiet fields
Grey with the falling dew.

The sheep-bell tolleth curfew-time ;
 The gnats, a busy rout,
Fleck the warm air ; the distant owl
 Shouteth a sleepy shout ;
The voiceless bat, more felt than seen,
 Is flitting round about ;

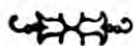
The poplar's leaflet scarcely stirs ;
 The river seems to think ;
Athwart the dusk, the lily broad
 Looks coolly from the brink ;
And knee-deep in the freshet's fall,
 The meek-eyed cattle drink.

The chafers boom ; the white moths rise
 Like spirits from the ground ;
The grey-flies sing their weary tune,
 A distant, dreamlike sound ;
And far, far off, in the slumberous eve,
 Bayeth an old guard-hound.

At this sweet time, the Lady walks
Beside the gentle stream ;
She marks the waters curl along,
Beneath the sunset gleam,
And in her soul a sorrow moves,
Like memory of a dream.

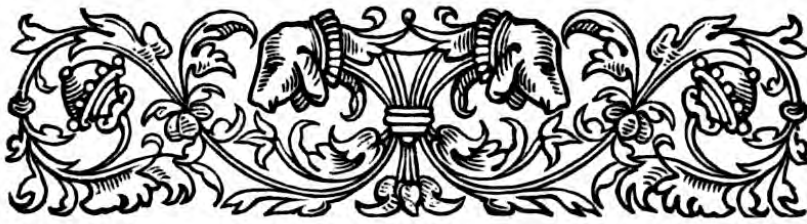
Her pulses flutter palpably ;
Her spirits droop and fail,
As when the startled Bridegroom dreamt
He saw her dead and pale.
She cannot tell what moves her so ;
The stream has told no tale.

She passes on. How still the earth,
And all the air above !
Here, where of late the scritch-owl shriek'd,
Whispers the happy dove ;
And the river, through the ivy'd bridge,
Flows calm as household love.





THE FALCON.



THE FALCON.

I.



WHO would not be Sir Hubert, for
his birth and bearing fine,
His rich sky-skirted woodlands,
valleys flowing oil and wine ;
Sir Hubert, to whose sunning all the rays of
fortune shine ?

So some men praised Sir Hubert, and the others
warmed with praise
Of Hubert noble-hearted, than whom none went
on his ways
Less spoilt by splendid fortune, whom no peril
could amaze.

To Ladies all, save one, he was the rule by
which the worth
Of other men was reckon'd; so that many a
maid, for dearth
Of such a knight to woo her, love foreswore,
and with it mirth.

No prince could match his banquets, when
proud Mabel was his guest;
And shows and sumptuous triumphs day by day
his hope express'd
That love ev'n yet might burgeon in her young
unburgeon'd breast.

Time pass'd, and use for riches pass'd with
hope, which slowly fled;
And want came on unheeded; and report in
one day spread
Of good Sir Hubert bankrupt, and of Mabel
richly wed.

Forth went he from the city where she dwelt,
to one poor farm,
All left of all his valleys : there Sir Hubert's
single arm
Serv'd Hubert's wants ; and labour soon re-
lieved love's rankling harm.

Much action brought much easement of the
melancholy freight
He bore within his bosom ; and his fancy was
elate
And proud of Love's rash sacrifice which led to
this estate :

And quickly he discover'd that the heaven-esta-
blish'd task,
Direct and serious seeking for the bread we
daily ask,
Strikes clear the face of nature from an unsus-
pected mask.

Right glad was he, long 'custom'd to the estate
almost of kings,

To find the sweetest waters in the simplest way-
side springs,

And new delights, twice novel, thus descried in
common things.

One friend was left, a falcon, famed for beauty,
skill and size,

Kept from his fortune's ruin, for the sake of
its great eyes,

That 'minded him of Mabel's. Of an evening
he would rise,

And wake it's royal glances and reluctantly
flapp'd wings,

And looks of grave communion with his light-
some questionings,

That broke the drowsy sameness, and the sense
like fear that springs

At night when we are conscious of our distance
from the strife
Of cities, and the memory of the spirit in all
things rife
Endows the silence round us with a grim and
ghastly life.

His active resignation wrought, in time, a heart-
felt peace,
And though, in noble bosoms, love once lit
can never cease,
He could walk and think of Mabel, and his
pace would not increase.

Who say, when somewhat distanced from
Love's heat and fiercer might,
"His brand burns us no longer ; it is out," use
not their sight :
For ever and for ever we are lighted by the light :

And ere there be extinguish'd one minutest
 flame, love-fann'd,
The Pyramids of Egypt shall have no place in
 the land,
But as a nameless portion of it's ever shifting
 sand.

II.

THREE summers pass'd, and Mabel was
a widow ; but the land,
The wealth of her dead Lord, was first her
child's : so Mabel's hand
Was not for Hubert's having, had it beckon'd
his demand :

For Hubert felt, tho' Mabel might, like him, be-
come resign'd
To poverty for Love's sake, she would never,
like him, find
That poverty is riches, only of another kind.

One morning, while he rested from his delving,
spade in hand,
There came a sense of glory ; and he look'd
about the land,
And he, and all he look'd at, seem'd to brighten
and expand.

The wind was newly risen ; and the airy skies
were rife
With fleets of sailing cloudlets, and the trees
were all in strife,
Extravagantly triumphant at their newly gotten
life.

Birds wrangled in the branches, with a sweet
confused noise ;
Even the conscious cuckoo, judging wisest to
rejoice,
Shook round his "cuckoo, cuckoo," as if care-
less of his voice.

But Hubert mused and marvell'd at the glory
in his breast ;
The first glow turn'd to passion, and he nurs'd
it unexpress'd ;
And glory gilding glory turn'd, at last, to sunny
rest.

Then again he look'd around him like an angel,
and, behold,
The scene was changed ; no cloudlets cross'd
the serious blue, but, roll'd
Behind the distant hill-tops, gleam'd aerial hills
of gold.

The wind too was abated, and the trees and
birds were grown
As quiet as the cloud-banks ; right above, the
bright sun shone,
Down looking from the forehead of the giant
sky alone.

Then the nightingale, awaken'd by the silence,
shot a throng

Of notes into the sunshine ; cautious first, then
swift and strong ;

Then he madly smote them round him, till the
bright air throb'd with song,

And suddenly stopp'd singing, all amid his ex-
tacies :—

Myrtles rustle ; what sees Hubert ? sight is
sceptic, but his knees

Bend to the Lady Mabel, as she blossoms from
the trees.

III.

SHE spoke, her eyes cast downwards, while
 upon them, dropp'd half way,
Lids sweeter than the bosom of an unblown lily
 lay,—

“ In faith of ancient amity, Sir Hubert, I this
 day,

“ Would beg a boon, and bind me your great
 debtor.” O, her mouth

Was sweet beyond new honey, or the bean-per-
 fumed South,

And better than pomegranates to a pilgrim dumb
 for drouth.

She look'd at his poor homestead ; at the spade
dropp'd from his hand ;

And then her heart reproach'd her, What in-
ordinate demand

Was she come there for making ! Then she
says, in accents bland,

Her page and she are weary, and her wish can
wait : she'll share

His noontide meal, by his favour. This he
hastens to prepare,

But, lo ! the roost is empty, and his humble
larder bare :

No friend has he to help him ; no one near of
whom to claim

The tax, and force it's payment in his passion's
sovereign name ;

No time to set the pitfalls for the swift and
fearful game ;

Too late to fly his falcon, which, as if it would
assist

It's master's trouble, perches on his idly offer'd
fist,

With busy, dumb caresses, treading up and down
his wrist.

But now a gleam of comfort and a shadow of
dismay

Pass over Hubert's visage ; now it seems he
would essay

The fatness of his falcon, while it flaps both
wings for play ;

Now, lo, the ruthless lover takes it from it's
trusted stand ;

Grasps all it's frighten'd body with his hard re-
morseless hand ;

Puts out it's faithful life, and plucks and broils it
on the brand.

In midst of this famed dinner, Mabel gave her
wish its word :—

“ My wilful child, Sir Hubert, pines from fancy
long deferr’d ;

“ And now he raves in fever to possess your
famous bird.”

“ Alas !” he said, “ behold it there.” Then
nobly did she say

“ It grieves my heart, Sir Hubert, that I am all
too poor to pay

“ For this magnificent banquet I am honour’d
with to day :

“ But if, Sir Hubert, henceforth, we can meet
as friends, my board

“ To you shall be as open as it would were you
it’s Lord.”

She bow’d and blush’d and left him, from his
vex’d mind unrestored.

IV.

MONTHS pass'd, and Hubert went not,
but lived on in his old way ;
Until to him, one morning, Mabel sent her page
to say,
That should it suit his pleasure, she would speak
with him that day.

“ Ah, welcome Sir !” said Mabel, rising courteous, kind and free :
“ I hoped, ere this, to have had you for my
guest, but now I see
“ That you are even prouder than they whisper
you to be.”

Made grave by her great beauty, but not daz-
zled, he replied,

With every noble courtesy, to her words ; and
spoke beside

Such things as are permitted to bare friendship ;
not in pride,

Or wilful overacting of the right, which often
blends

Its sacrificial pathos, bitter-sweet, with lover's
ends,

Or that he now remember'd her command to
“ meet as friends : ”

But having not had knowledge that the infant
heir was dead,

Whose life made it more loving to preserve his
love unsaid,

He waited calmly wondering to what mark this
summons led.

She, puzzled with a strangeness by his whole
course disavow'd,

Spoke further: "Once, Sir Hubert, I was
thoughtless, therefore proud;

"I trust I'm now more noble; certain 'tis that
like a cloud,

"Youth hides worth from the youthful: very
like a cloud's, youth's light

"Seems more, because more scatter'd, than the
sun's, that makes it bright,—

"The truth that shining through it, is itself
obscur'd from sight.

"I bend beneath the burden of the debts con-
tracted then.

"I was not then so worthy—near—as—as—
alas! 'tis when

"We moralize we find that we have not free
minds like men."

She strove to give her meaning, yet blush'd
 deeply with dismay
Lest he should find it. Hubert fear'd she purpos'd to repay
Love's offerings with lucre, which she wanted
 words to say.

His eyes are dropp'd in sorrow from their worshipping: but, lo!
Upon her sable vesture they are fall'n: with
 progress slow,
Through dawning apprehension to sweet hope,
 his features grow.

And all at once are lighted with a light, as when
 the moon,
Long labouring to the margin of a cloud, still
 seeming soon
About to swim beyond it, bursts at last as bare
 as noon.

“ O, Lady, I have loved, and long kept silence ;
but I see

“ The time is come for speaking. O, sweet
Lady, I should be

“ The blessedest knight in Christendom, were
I beloved by thee !”

One small hand's weight of whiteness on her
bosom did she press ;

The other, woo'd with kisses bold, refused not
that caress ;

Feasting the hungry silence came, sob-clad, her
silver “ Yes.”

Now who would not be Hubert, for his dark-
eyed Bride divine,

Her rich, sky-skirted woodlands, valleys flowing
oil and wine,

Sir Hubert to whose sunning all the rays of for-
tune shine !



THE EVE OF THE WEDDING.



THE EVE OF THE WEDDING.

I.

SHE sits upon her little bed,
And muses by the moon :
Ere this, to-morrow, she'll be wed :
Ere this ? How strangely soon !

An obvious blank of ignorance
Lies full across her way,
And shadows, cast from unknown chance,
Make dim the coming day.

134 *The Eve of the Wedding.*

She must not think of that : the fear
 O'erfilms her giddy eye ;
And she may swoon, with no one near,
 And so, unmarried, die.

Her faithless dread she quite discards :
 And now sad memory flings
It's glory round the last regards
 Of old, accustom'd things.

Twice dear seems yonder moonlit church ;
 Her home, where she was bred ;
Her room ; her linnet on his perch ;
 Thrice dear her little bed.

Her mother's voice, her father's eyes
 Accuse her : all in vain
She thinks herself a wife, and tries
 To feel the greater gain.

The Eve of the Wedding. 135

Her unknown fortune nothing cheers
Her heart's familiar loss ;
And torrents of remorseful tears
Their smarting threshold cross.

When first within her bosom Love
Took birth and beat his wings,
It seem'd to lift her mind above
All care for other things.

But, oh, too lightly did she vow
To leave her happy nest ;
And dreadful is the thought that now
Assaults her shaken breast.

Ah, should her lover's love abate ;
And should she, wretched, lose
All dear regards of maiden state,
Dissolv'd by marriage dues.

136 *The Eve of the Wedding.*

Once more those sickening dreams alloy
Her hope with nameless blame :
But dread, she trusts, will turn to joy
Like smoke to sudden flame.

With instinct of her ignorance,
The virgin's veiled guide,
She casts to Love the reins of Chance
Nor recks what shall betide.

And, so determin'd, she collects
Her senses, much abused
By fear that monstrously reflects
God's future all confused.

And now to bed : at morn's first gleam,
Mother will wake her Pride ;
And weary looks would ill beseem
The decorated Bride.

The Eve of the Wedding. 137

The accustom'd scripture duly read,
 Conferring happy calm,
And pray'rs with sweet acceptance said,
 She says her nightly psalm.

“ My Saviour free, who lovest me
 “ Because I do not doubt,
“ Within me let thy Spirit be,
 “ Thy Providence without.

“ All them to bless, who thee confess,
 “ Thou dost not slack nor cease :
“ Their ways are ways of pleasantness,
 “ And all their paths are peace.”

Now, graceful as a lamb, she stands
 Before her mirror'd charms ;
Unloops her frock, her waist unbands,
 With busy, dimpling arms ;

138 *The Eve of the Wedding.*

Loosens her hair ; relieves the folds
Of her confining vest ;
With colouring cheek, content, beholds
The pureness of her breast ;

And so her fragrant body rids
From art : and now the moon
Makes lilies of her unkiss'd lids,
For simple maids sleep soon.

II.

AND is it no vain fantasy
 That fills his blood with pride ?
Shall he, to-morrow, verily,
 Be Bridegroom to the Bride ?

Is he, ev'n he, indeed, henceforth,
 To live the supreme lord
Of her whose smile, for rarest worth,
 Were over-rich reward ?

To live enchain'd with her by chains
 Not dissolubly wrought ?
Oh, bliss beyond belief ! It pains
 The narrow house of thought.

140 *The Eve of the Wedding.*

Time's briefest void seems infinite
 'Twixt him and his desire ;
Yet Earth must turn ere Passion light
 His own funereal pyre.

Patience and hope have parted truce,
 And all his fancies are
Like blinding mists driven up profuse
 Before Day's glorious car.

Incredible life's promise seems ;
 Or, credible, too great :
Love his own deity blasphemes,
 And doffs his heavenly state !

What force, if man be set so high,
 His further will debars
To pluck the chaste moon from the sky,
 And tread out all the stars ?

The Eve of the Wedding. 141

Vague discontents awaken, fed
By wealth past hope or aim ;
And fears, like salamanders, bred
In Love's unslacken'd flame.

Not prescient of the strong defence
Of thoughts that still perplex
With all the countless difference
And sweet consent of sex,

He dreads lest time should make them twain,
Or use should let them run,
With undistinguish'd heart and brain,
Like dew-drops into one.

He thinks, if Love be blind, then she,
This Maid, esteem'd most rare,
When fact hath marr'd his fantasy,
May prove less wise and fair ;

142 *The Eve of the Wedding.*

If not, then he, his little worth
 Soon known, comes toppling down
From Love's heroic heights to earth,
 And casts his phantom crown.

But this 'tis works him most annoy,
 That peace and gratitude,
The sanction and the soul of joy,
 Are missing from his mood.

He reads how patient Jacob paid
 The price of Rachel ; then,
What reverent grace Tobias said,
 To Sarah's sweet " Amen."

But all in vain : true will is storm'd
 By lawless hope and fear,
And fire-mists of a world unform'd
 O'ercloud his spirit clear.

The Eve of the Wedding. 143

His pulses throb, his temples burn,
He chides himself, "Unwise !
" Who, duteous overmuch, would turn
" Delight to sacrifice.

" Seasons there are to laugh, to pray ;
" Seasons to reap, to sow ;
" Bless God, who gave to each it's day,
" Nor teach the rose to blow !"

In the still night the village-clock
Strikes twice ; and far away,
With answering cheer, the crying cock
Rebukes the lagging day.

O, for the silent wings of sleep !
Beside his joyless bed,
He asks that Heaven will Amy keep,
And him, till they be wed ;

144 *The Eve of the Wedding.*

So casts him down ; but is not won
 To his despised repose,
Until, through shifting mists, the sun
 Like a carbuncle glows.

HOPE AGAINST HOPE.



HOPE AGAINST HOPE.

FIRST the Youth, with eager fore-
head,
Flashing eyes and flowing hair :

“ Lo, the perfect form of goodness

“ Is appearing everywhere ! ”

Then the other, ('twas his father),

Shaking silver locks, Hope's pall :

“ What avails the form of goodness,

“ When there is no life at all ? ”

Cried the youth, " There was a sculptor,

 " And an image fair he made,

" Because the times lack'd beauty ;

 " And, as soon as he had pray'd,

" He saw it move sweet motion,

 " Felt it waxing heavenly warm :

" God gives the spirit, Father,

 " If men will make the form."

" A fable shrewdly morall'd :

 " But,—suppose that moral just,—

" Alas, I look round vainly

 " For the form in which you trust.

" When governments grow formless,

 " Which form the time's events"—

" Nay, look higher ;" said the young man ;

 " Look what governs governments.

“ The outward eye turns inward,
“ Slowly wedding fact to fact,
“ Such harmonized experience
“ Making knowledge, knowledge act :
“ While all of this progresses,
“ Sense is weakly, vision thick,
“ Sin itself has little savour,
“ And the soul of man lies sick.

“ The creeping thing has dwindled
“ To the grub, that it may fly ;
“ And those who will but calmly
“ Watch the present can descry
“ Upon its corpse-like surface,
“ In its dead, mechanic strife,
“ The blind, uneasy motions
“ That foretell the higher life.

“ Religion is in fashion ;
“ All, for decency, profess ;
“ And round her sovereign centre,
“ Lo, all Arts and Learnings press !”
“ I hate their lax lip-worship.”
“ So do I ;” replied the youth ;
“ I say that we are tending
“ Through the *form* of truth to truth.

“ We learn to think the Muses
“ No divinities ; divine,
“ Then only while their glory
“ Is a simple reflex shine,
“ A high and tender moonlight,
“ That endures but while they run
“ With humble faces looking
“ To the universal Sun.

“ Behold !” his eye-lids lifted
 With his hope, the young man saith,
“ These also fill their places
 “ As the pioneers to faith,
“ Clearing paths for higher Powers,
 “ When they give the fleshly clod
“ An upward gaze, through beauty
 “ Unto goodness, unto God.

“ Supporters of our moments
 “ Slack in faith, their quality
“ Is that of humble handmaids ;
 “ Make them Idols, and they flee ;
“ Or, worse, remain as tyrants,
 “ Who, most tyrant-like, employ
“ The power we give against us,
 “ With a jealous hate to joy.

“ Like purpose quickens science :

“ Learnings, hitherto a proud,

“ Loquacious, shallow, heartless,

“ Sightless, deaf, and grovelling crowd,

“ Approaching now their Maker,

“ Hand in hand, like humble friends,

“ Own that alone for knowledge

“ Which in godly wisdom ends.”

“ My son, this is brave talking,

“ But too hopeful far for me.

“ True doctors and true poets

“ Live, perhaps, but where lives he,

“ The gentle, loving shepherd

“ Of the ancient mode, who taught

“ The people by example ;

“ Preaching simply what he wrought ? ”

“ Alas, my Father, seldom
 “ May we meet him now : but where
“ A double choice seems offer’d,
 “ Hope extreme, extreme despair,
“ Choose hope : ah ! let us therefore
 “ Think a day shall drown this night,
“ When each may find his pastor
 “ In a conscience strong with light.

“ For hoping or despairing
 “ There is huge and equal scope.
“ Huge ill or good must follow,
 “ Just as we despair or hope.
“ Hope therefore without limit :
 “ To despair is to blaspheme.
“ Hark ! I will dare to utter
 “ What I have dared to dream.

“ Think, Father, what a heaven
“ Were this common earth full-grown !
“ Think : are not signals given
“ Of its nonage well-nigh flown ?
“ What is heaven ? Trust not any,
“ When they call it mystery :
“ Its features are not many,
“ And have strange simplicity.”

“ That is true ;” replied the old man,
“ But it has been always so :
“ Why therefore think the blessing
“ Nearer now than long ago ?”
“ Nay, nay !” replied the young man,
“ It has not been always so !”

High fervours flush his forehead,
And his eager fancies flow :

- “ Rest from evil, too soon given
 “ Unto man, had found his mind
“ Incapable of heaven :
 “ Evil hath good use assign'd :
“ It makes him question nature
 “ For relief ; which though he miss,
“ He gains by knowledge stature
 To lay hold on highest bliss :
- “ For not until perfection
 “ Shall be his, in Nature's lore,
“ Can he feel heav'n's full dilection,
 “ Can he perfectly adore.
“ His maturity approaches :
 “ Daily fleeter in advance,
“ The rule of light encroaches
 “ On chaotic Ignorance ;

- “ Fast fade the separations
 “ Fine and false,—wherewith we mar
“ Our noblest speculations,—
 “ Of ‘divine’ and ‘secular ;’
“ And ‘Sciences,’ first Science
 “ Now they know themselves for one,
“ Grow golden from reliance
 “ For true light on the true Sun.
- “ In trust, pure, strong, and steady,
 “ T’ward the full light let us fare :
“ See ! Learning’s bound already
 “ Shows its faint edge here and there.
“ There comes an age of power !
 “ Man shall sit at ease all day,
“ In faith, as in a tower,
 “ While all lower things obey.

- “ No more the slave of chances,
“ Or of lies, or partial truth”—
“ What tissues of mad fancies
“ Art thou weaving, silly youth !”—
“ He, with sight unwarp’d by factions,
“ Truly seeing what he sees,
“ Shall do all righteous actions
“ With a heav’n-descended ease ;
- “ Shall call the world his neighbour ;
“ Shall perceive its whole love burn
“ On him ; and, without labour,
“ Shall an equal love return ;
“ Shall fill the lofty station,
“ To fill which he left the sod,
“ The mouth-piece of creation
“ For the praises of its God.

“ O, what a blessed junction
“ Of all joys will happen then !
“ Beyond thought’s deepest function !
“ That was little to it, when
“ Great Kepler’s spirit, steering
“ Past the stars, untouch’d by fears,
“ Within our mortal hearing
“ Brought the music of the spheres !”

“ Alas, my son, what ails thee ?
“ Calmly listen : say, how chimes
“ With thy harmonious story
“ The vast discord of the times ?”
“ O, harshly and appalling,
“ If we dare not with them cope ;
“ But if we act our calling,
“ Love, believe, and work in hope,

“ O, sweetly and completely,
“ Even as should be the din
“ Of instruments tuned meetly,
“ Ere the harmony begin :
“ At times all seems confusion,
“ Still not such that it confounds,
“ For all hath strange allusion
“ To the advent of sweet sounds ;

“ At times, you hear in snatches,
“ Calmly listen ! softest strains,
“ Divine, prophetic catches,
“ Full of rest to human pains ;
“ At times, low voices singing,
“ ‘ Sin and death to hell are hurl’d :
“ It is the second coming
“ Of the Saviour of the world ! ’ ”

He ended. Small birds whistled,
Branches waved, the world was glad ;
And for all the old man's doubting,
And for all his sighing sad,
Boughs and birds still waved and whistled ;
And for all that he could say,
Touch'd with the young man's music,
Ever waved and whistled they.

(1846.)

THE WOODMAN'S DAUGHTER.

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THE WOODMAN'S DAUGHTER.

I.

IN “Gerald’s cottage” by the hill,
Old Gerald and his child,
His daughter Maud, dwelt happily;

He toil’d and she beguiled
The long day at her spinning-wheel, *country side*
In the garden now grown wild. ✓ *wood, mosses &c*

At Gerald’s stroke the jay awoke ;
Till noon hack follow’d hack,
Before the nearest hill had time
To give it’s echo back ;
And the evening mists were in the lane
Ere Gerald’s arm grew slack.

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Meanwhile, below the scented heaps
 Of honey-suckle flower,
That made their simple cottage-porch
 A cool, luxurious bower,
Maud sat beside her spinning-wheel,
 And spun from hour to hour.

The growing thread thro' her fingers sped ;
 Round flew the polish'd wheel ;
Merrily rang the notes she sang
 At every finish'd reel ;
From the hill again, like a shrill refrain,
 Follow'd the rapid peal.

That sound is heard no more, no more
 The gnarl'd and lichen'd oak
Flings moss and mould from smitten roots ;
 Nor Echo mocks the stroke
Which once kept all day long from sleep
 The silence it awoke.

The Woodman's Daughter. 165

The Woodman's dead : his rusting axe ✓
Reddens the wither'd bough
In which he struck it last ; and Maud,
Poor Maud, sings wildly now ; ✓
And village gossips say she knows
Worse grief than she'll avow.

Her tale is this : In the sweet age
When heaven's our side the lark,
She used to go with Gerald, where
He work'd from dawn to dark,
For months, to thin the crowded groves
Of the ancient Manor-Park.

She went with him to think she help'd ;
And whilst he hack'd and saw'd,
The rich Squire's son, a young boy then,
Whole mornings, as if awed,
Stood silent by, and gazed in turn
At Gerald and on Maud.

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And sometimes, in a sullen tone,
 He'd offer fruits, and she
Received them always with an air
 So unreserv'd and free,
That shame-faced distance soon became
 Familiarity.

Therefore in time, when Gerald shook
 The woods at his employ,
The young heir and the cottage-girl
 Would steal out to enjoy
The sound of one another's talk,
 A simple girl and boy.

They spent their time and took their walks
 Uncheck'd, unquestion'd ; yet
They always hid their wanderings
 By wood and rivulet,
Because they could not give themselves
 A reason why they met.

II.

YEARS pass'd away: The month was May,
But almost upon June ;
The linnets to the joyful time
Their voices did attune ;
And hermit moles crept out to suck
The pleasant breath of noon.

Maud once had read, when lovers die
And go where angels are,
Each pair of lovers' happy souls
Will make a double star :
So stars grew dearer, and she thought
They did not look so far.

168 *The Woodman's Daughter.*

But being ignorant, and still
 A child in heart, and prone
To think all new and great delights
 Peculiarly her own,
She scarcely guess'd what made so sweet
 Tales told of lover's moan.

The two friends met, and wander'd forth
 Along the river-side,
Talking of this and that by the way :
 She question'd, he replied ;
And she recollected, at the last,
 This question yet untried :

“ Why is it that we never talk
 “ Of Love, like other things ?
“ We'll do so now, and you shall tell
 “ What 'tis, and whither springs
“ This joy of which that tender Bard,
 “ Whose book you gave me, sings.”

“ Last night,” said he, “ when after dusk

“ I rose up to depart,

“ We saw the moon, all liquid white,

“ Out of the dark trees start,

“ As then I felt, I felt when you

“ First came upon my heart.

“ That's love, Dear, and no more, I think

“ About it can be told.”—

The multitudinous clouds moved past

In glittering heaps uproll'd ;

And all between their carv'd forms stood

The plain skies, blue and cold ;

The flat, white river laps'd along,

Now a broad, broken glare,

Now winding around thro' the bosom'd lands,

Till lost in the distance, where

The tall hills, sunning their ancient peaks,

Made emptier the empty air.

170 *The Woodman's Daughter.*

Swallows among the boisterous winds
Were striving to and fro ;
The raving trees toss'd out their arms
Toward the sky ; below,
The streaming corn-fields smoothly sped
In one continual flow.

“ Love ” said Maud, “ is a noble thing ! ”
And their several fancies wrought
To the same effect with each ; they went
Right on, nor said they aught
But quicken'd their steps, as if they strove
To overtake their thought.

The noonday fled : still on they sped,
Their hands lock'd each in each ;
The youth now and then pluck'd recklessly
The flowers within his reach ;
And both felt a rash, unusual joy
For which they wanted speech.

The Woodman's Daughter. 171

Their novel joy was not all joy :

That indistinct alarm ✓

Which whispers to unsullied minds

The coming on of harm, ✓

before hands

Made joy sit strange and heavily,

Like some unholy charm. ✓

III.

TIME pass'd away. "Poor child, poor
child!"

Was all that Gerald said :
And he would steady his old hand
Upon her hapless head,
And think of her as tranquilly
As wise men of the dead.

But he is gone : and Maud comes out,
This gentle day of June ;
And having sobb'd her Babe to sleep,
Help'd by the stream's soft tune,
She rests along the willow-trunk,
Below the calm blue noon.

The Woodman's Daughter. 173

Her thoughts arise instead of tears :

When Merton met her last

It was just such a day as this :

How life since then has pass'd !

How henceforth pass it ? For she feels

Her mind is failing fast.

Best break at once her present plan !

Out-blush an evil name ;

Bear scorn she cannot scorn in turn ;

Unanswerable blame.

And so she would ; but Merton too,

That done, must feel her shame.

The shadow of her little babe,

Deep in the stream, behold !

Smiles quake over her parted lips :

Some thought has made her bold ;

She stoops to dip her fingers in

To feel if the water's cold.

174 *The Woodman's Daughter.*

'Tis soft and warm, and runs as 'twere
Perpetually at play :

But then the stream, she recollects,
Bears everything away.

There is a dull pool hard at hand
That sleeps both night and day.

She stands there : closing weeds have shut
The water from her sight ;

They stir awhile, but now are still.
Her arms fall down ; the light

Is horrible, and her countenance
Is pale as a cloud at night.

Merrily now from the small church-tower
Cometh a noisy chime ;

The larks climb up thro' the heavenly blue,
Carolling as they climb ;

And, lo, in her face stands the great surprise
That comes with the first crime !

The Woodman's Daughter. 175

The pool reflects the scarlet West

With a hot and guilty glow ;

The East is changing ashy pale ;

But Maud will never go

While those great bubbles struggle up

From the rotting weeds below.

The light has changed. A little since

You scarcely might descry

The moon, now gleaming sharp and bright,

From cloudlets slumbering nigh ;

And, one by one, the timid stars

Step out into the sky.

The night is far advanced ; but Maud

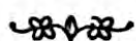
Is constant at her post,

Sunk in a dread, unnatural sleep,

Beneath the skiey host

Of drifting mists, thro' which the moon

Is riding like a ghost.



✓ result of
position?

EROS,
AND OTHER SHORT POEMS.





EROS.

BRIGHT thro' the valley gallops the
brooklet ;
Over the welkin travels the cloud ;
Touch'd by the zephyr, dances the harebell ;
Cuckoo sits somewhere, singing so loud ;
Swift o'er the meadows glitter the starlings,
Striking their wings all the flock at a stroke ;
Under the chesnuts new bees are swarming,
Rising and falling like magical smoke :
Two little children, seeing and hearing,
Hand in hand wander, shout, laugh and sing :

Lo, in their bosoms, wild with the marvel,
Love, like the crocus, is come ere the Spring.
Young men and women, noble and tender,
Yearn for each other, faith truly plight,
Promise to cherish, comfort and honour ;
Vow that makes duty one with delight.
Ah, but the glory, found in no story,
Radiance of Eden unquench'd by the Fall ;
Few may remember, none may reveal it,
This the first First-love, the first love of all !

A THUNDER-SHOWER.

THE cloud-bank rises, huge and calm,
And doubtful if for bale or balm :

Toppling crags, portentous towers

Appear at beck of viewless powers,

Along a rifted mountain-range :

Untraceable and swift in change,

Those glittering peaks, disrupted, spread

To solemn bulks seen overhead.

The sunshine quench'd, from one dark form

Fumes the appalling light of storm ;

Straight to the zenith, black with bale,

The cottage-smoke goes, deadly pale ;

And one wide night of hopeless hue
Hides from the heart the recent blue.

From time to time, a flash unshrouds
The picture of the plighted clouds :
Vague recess, projection dim,
Scatter'd rack and shadowy rim.

The gathering wind licks up the dust ;
Kine drop their heads ; the tortur'd gust
Snatches the long, ascending smoke,
And jags it, like the light'ning's stroke.
The blood pricks ; then a blinding flash
And close, coinstantaneous crash
Humble the soul ; and the hail, far round,
Resilient dims the whistling ground
With a low mist of crossing curves :
It slants against the gust, nor swerves,
Nor flags in force from first to last ;
And, sudden as it came, 'tis past.

The darkness melts ; far thunder faint
Mutters its vast and vain complaint ;
And gaps and fractures, fringed with light,
Show the sweet skies, with squadrons bright
Of cloudlets, glittering calm and fair
Thro' gulphs of calm and glittering air.

ALMS WITHOUT CHARITY.

I KNEW a soft-eyed Lady, from a noble
foreign Land :

Her voice, I thought, was lowest when we
walk'd out, hand in hand ;

I began to say, Heav'n pleasing, I shall have
her for my Bride :

Darken'd, darken'd, darken'd, was the whole
world when she died.

In the street a man since stopp'd me : in a no-
ble foreign tongue

He said he was a stranger, poor, and strangers
all among :

I offer'd all I had. He gazed ; then took it,
hand and all.

O, how his look accused me, while he held my
hand in thrall,

Pressing it with a gratitude which made my
conscience start :

For that was not my meaning ; and his thanks
rebuked my heart.

AMANDA.

SHE wearies with a want unknown ;
In sleep she sobs, and seems to float,
A water-lily, all alone
Within a lonely castle-moat.

And, as the full-moon, spectral, lies
Within the crescent's gleaming arms,
The Present shews her careless eyes
A Future dim with vague alarms.

She sees, and yet she scarcely sees :
For, life-in-life not yet begun,
Too many are it's mysteries
For thought to pause on any one.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

I SOMETIMES sit and mark my child
Through the clover racing wild ;
And then, as if I sweetly dream'd,
I half remember how it seem'd
When I, too, was a reckless rover
Amongst the bee-beloved clover :
Pure airs from heavenly places rise
Breathing the blindness from mine eyes,
Until, with rapture, grief and awe,
I see again as then I saw.

As then I saw I see again
The heavy-loaded harvest-wain,

Hanging tokens of its pride
In the trees on either side ;
Daisies coming out at dawn
In constellations on the lawn ;
The glory of the daffodil ;
The three black windmills on the hill,
Their magic arms flung wildly by,
With magic shadows on the rye :
In the leafy coppice, lo,
More wealth than miser's dreams can show,
The blackbird's warm and woolly brood,
With golden beaks agape for food !
Gipsies all the summer seen,
Native as poppies to the Green ;
Winter with its frosts and thaws,
And opulence of hips and haws ;
The lovely marvel of the snow ;
The happy, happy ships that go,
Sailing up and sailing down,

Through the fields and by the town ;
All the thousand dear events
That fell when days were incidents.
O, for days like those again !
—But life is deep and words are vain.
Mark yonder hedgerow, here and there
Sprinkled with Spring, but mainly bare ;
The wither'd bank beneath, where blows,
In yellow crowds, the fresh primrose :
What skill of colour thus could smite
The troubled heart-strings thro' the sight ;
What magic of sweet speech express
Their primeveral tenderness ?
Can these not utter'd be, and can
The day-spring of immortal man ?

THE YEAR.

THE crocus, while the days are dark,
Unfolds it's saffron sheen ;
At April's touch, the crudest bark
Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of might ;
While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
The mushroom bursts the sod.

The Winter falls ; the frozen rut
Is bound with silver bars ;
The snow-drift heaps against the hut ;
And night is pierc'd with stars.

THE CAVES OF DAHRA.*

I.

IN Dahra's caverns hidden,
 Bide the Arabs, and delay
 To yield when they are bidden ;
 So cries brave Pelissier,
 " Bring faggots of fierce fuel !
 " Frenchmen check'd by Arab slaves !
 " We'll have a vengeance cruel :
 " Roast them in their sacred caves !
 " We'll make their fond trust falter.
 " Cast in faggots ! Let them flare,
 " Till vengeance hath an altar
 " Fitly garnish'd. Vive la guerre !"

* These Verses were written for, and printed in
Punch, soon after the occurrence of the facts which they
 describe.

II.

Now the sparks, in rapid fountains,
Rush abroad into the sky ;
From the bases of the mountains
Leap the fork'd flames mountain-high ;
The flames, like devils thirsting,
Lick the wind, where crackling spars
Wage hellish warfare, worsting
All the still, astonish'd stars.
Ply the furnace, fling the faggots !
Lo, the flames writhe, rush, and tear ;
And a thousand, in among them,
Writhe like maggots. Vive la guerre !

III.

A mighty wind is blowing
 'Twards the cavern's gaping mouth ;
The clear, hot flames are flowing,
 In and in, to glut its drouth ;
Flames with winds roar, rave and battle,
 Wildly battle, rave and roar ;
And cries of men and cattle
 Thro' the turmoil sadly soar.
We are pale ! What, shall a trifle,
 Sounds of woe, our bold hearts scare ?
'Tis long before they stifle !
 Bring more faggots ! Vive la guerre !

IV.

With night began the burning ;
 Look where yonder comes the day !
Hark ! signals for adjourning
 War's brave sport. We must obey !
Be sure the slaves are weary.
 As the short and sob-like sigh
Of gusts on moorlands dreary,
 Float their sinking voices by ;
No sound comes now of shrieking ;
 Let us shew what Frenchmen dare !
Force the Caves, thro' vapours reeking
 Like a kitchen. Vive la guerre !

V.

What's this, and this? Pah! sick'ning,
Whether woman, man, or beast.
Let us on, the fumes are thick'ning :
Ho ! here's that hath shape at least.
How its horny eyes are staring
On that infant, seeking food
From the stiffen'd breast, still bearing
Smoke-dried stains of milk and blood.
At our work do any wonder,
Saying " Frenchmen love the fair ?"
Such " fair ?" Ha ! ha ! they blunder
Who thus twit us. Vive la guerre.

VI.

What's that, so tall and meagre ?

Nay, bold Frenchmen, do not shrink !

'Tis a corpse, with features eager

Jamm'd for air into a chink.

Whence is that hysteric sobbing ?

Nay, bold Frenchmen, do not draw !

'Tis an Arab's parch'd throat throbbing.—

Frenchmen love sweet Mercy's law :

Make way there ! give him breathing !

How he smiles to feel the air !

His breath seems incense wreathing

To sweet Mercy. Vive la guerre !

VII.

And now, to crown our glory,
Get we trophies, to display
As vouchers for our story,
And mementoes of this day !
Once more, then, to the grottoes !
Gather each one all he can :
Blister'd blade with Arab mottoes,
Spear-head, bloody yataghan.
Give room now to the raven
And the dog, who scent rich fare ;
And be this legend graven
On the rock-side : *Vive la guerre.*

VIII.

The trumpet sounds for marching !

On ! alike amid sweet meads,
Morass, or desert parching,

Wheresoe'er our Captain leads.

To Pelissier sing praises !

Praises sing to bold Bugeaud !

Lit up by last night's blazes,

To all time their names will show !

Cry "conquer, kill, and ravish !"

Never ask "who, what, or where ?"

And glorious France shall lavish

Praise upon us. Vive la guerre !

BERTHA.

O SWIFTLY speeds the clear tide, flow-
ing o'er the flat sea-sand :

So swiftly love came o'er me, while we paced
the murmuring strand :

So swiftly Bertha's love met mine : right gladly
then I spake.

Sweet thanks had He who made us each for the
other's sake.

O, slowly falls the dark wave, ebbing down the
rough rock-side :

So slowly sorrow leaves me : it is long since
Bertha died ;

But the memory of her dearness is an ever-new
despair ;
And the burthen of life's mystery seems more
than I can bear.

REPROBATE.

I.

AT intervals, across this strife
 Of strangely mingled death and life,
 Flash awful visions, glimpses vast
 Of each, as each shall surely last.
 A muscle's movement in a face,
 A step, a look, a random word
 Opens a breach in time and place,
 And rumours from beyond are heard :
 Celestial whisper, fiendish mutter,
 Too dread, too sweet for tongue to utter.
 Christ teach us by his timely grace ;
 And, having taught, avert the fate
 Of the relapsing Reprobate !

II.

In him, alas, is little good,
A man of sinful will and blood,
Who fails so often from the Way,
He sickens at the light of day.
His soul, cast down by shame and grief,
Too weak to call for Christ's relief,
From all the glories of the Lord
Shut out, lies helpless, self-abhorr'd,
And faintly hopes, this fever ceased,
To die out wholly, like a beast,
Forgetting all life's ill-success
In dark and peaceful nothingness.

III.

Who sins in hope, who, sinning, says,
"Sorrow for Sin God's judgment stays!"
Against God's Spirit he lies; quite stops

Mercy with insult ; dares, and drops,
Like a scorch'd fly, that spins in vain
Upon the axis of it's pain,
Then takes it's doom, to limp and crawl,
Blind and forgot, from fall to fall.

LITTLE EDITH.

I.

THINK of cloudlets, light and tender,
Underneath the moving moon,
Full of love to that bright lender
Of their beauty in her noon.

Think of ripples, smooth, unriven,
Travelling regularly on,
Swiftly, delicately driven
By the white breast of a swan.

Think of lambs new shorn, at leisure
Filing through the narrow lane,
With repeated bleats of pleasure,
To their green abodes again.

Think of whatsoever feedeth

Tranquil moods ; and you shall find
Calmer grace in little Edith,

Edith of the thoughtful mind.

LITTLE EDITH.

II.

I SAY, " I must amend me,
And be like little Edith."

She does not comprehend me ;

Some riddle she infers :

And while, with sweet demureness,

My countenance she readeth,

I sadden from the pureness

Of that child's smile of her's.

I sigh, " She is unto me

As April to November."

With marvel does she view me,

My meaning to devine :

Thank Heav'n, my heart's compunction
Abates when I remember
Our spirit's dear conjunction
Thro' her dear Lord and mine.

A SKETCH IN THE MANNER
OF HOGARTH.

“**T**HERE to be hang’d till you are dead.”

The man had heard it, had been led
Again to prison, and had heard
The preacher preach the Holy Word—
Too late ; for, by his fear abused,
The phrase of all seem’d all confused,
And this seem’d all that all men said,
“ There to be hang’d till you are dead.”

All night fell hammers, shock on shock ;
With echoes Newgate’s granite clang’d :

The scaffold built, at eight o'clock
They brought the man out to be hang'd.

Then came from all the people there
A single cry, that shook the air ;
A single cry, that turn'd to storm
Of yells and noises multiform,
Where each, with mad gesticulations,
Rivall'd the rest in execrations :
Mothers held up their babes to see,
Who spread their hands and crow'd for glee ;
Here a girl from her vesture tore
A rag to wave with, and join'd the roar,
In shrieks, and singing, and savage jests,
Tossing about her naked breasts ;
There a man, with yelling tired,
Stopp'd, and the culprit's crime inquired ;
A sot, below the doom'd man dumb,
Bawl'd his health in the world to come ;

These blasphemed and fought for places ;
Those, half-crush'd, cast frantic faces,
To windows, where, in freedom sweet,
Others enjoy'd the wicked treat.

At last, the show's dread crisis pended :
Struggles for better standings ended ;
The rabble's lips no longer curst,
But stood agape with horrid thirst ;
Thousands of breasts beat horrid hope ;
Thousands of eye-balls, lit with hell,
But one way all, to see the rope
Unslacken as the platform fell.

The rope flew tight : and then the roar
Burst forth afresh ; less loud, but more
Confused and affrighting than before.
A few harsh tongues for ever led
The common din, the chaos of noises,

But ear could not catch what they said.
As when the realm of the damn'd rejoices
At winning a soul to its will,
That clatter and clangour of hateful voices
Sicken'd and stunn'd the air, until
The dangling corpse was straight and still.

The show complete, the pleasure past,
The solid masses loosen'd fast :
Each went his way or lagg'd behind,
As suited best his need or mind :
A thief slunk off, with ample spoil,
To ply elsewhere his daily toil ;
A baby strung it's doll to a stick ;
A mother praised the pretty trick ;
Two children caught and hang'd a cat ;
Two friends walk'd on, in lively chat ;
Two foes, who had disputed places,
Went forth to fight, with murderous faces ;

These, heavy-paced and heavy-hearted,
Whose dinners were to earn, departed,
Jealous of those who had pence to stay
At gin-shops by, and make it a day.*

* I understand that these verses, which were first printed some years ago, have been regarded as indirectly advocating the abolition of punishment by death. I had no such intention in composing them.

AMY'S MARRIAGE.

NOW all the house is early awake,
And fain would all seem gay ;
But thoughtless are the hearts that make
A merry wedding-day.
With richness due they dress the Bride,
Yet miss the expected grace
Thro' dearth of answering bridal pride
In Amy's anxious face.
With weary hearts and heartless smiles,
At Church the Lovers meet,
And coldly glance down nave and aisles,
Where curious gossips greet.

Now friends kneel round with many a tear,

Shed causeless save for this,

That Pathos stores it's sharpest spear

For times of tenderest bliss.

The Priest takes Amy's hand, and now,

Too much distraught to blush,

After the Priest she says the vow,

Heard in the nervous hush.

Lo, Christ, at gracious nuptials, still

Turns water into wine :

Let Love obey his own sweet will,

Made law by Love divine ;

Let friends arise and greet once more ;

The trembling marriage-vow

Has bound them too, mere friends before,

Brothers and sisters now.

The servants, in the hall arranged,

The Nurse who Amy nurst,

Regard with awe Miss Amy changed
 To Mistress Hazelhurst.
The children laugh and gaze their fill,
 Much marvelling how it is ;
The maids with fluster'd fancies still
 Forget, and call her "Miss."
The luncheon o'er, the chariot waits
 Below the chesnut drive,
Where buzzing people throng the gates,
 Like bees before the hive.
Now sad adieus and solace sweet
 The Bride's faint heart employ ;
And he looks on, with high conceit
 Of his superior joy.
Her father brings them down the way ;
 And lively cheer pretends ;
And soon returns, in converse gay
 With Hugh's neglected friends.

At Amy's bedside, rumped nest,
The bird for ever flown,
Her mother kneels with aching breast,
And weeps and prays alone.
With mirthful talk, the guests belie
Their several thoughts ; for some
Regret sweet days like this gone by,
Or long for such to come ;
Others, thro' ancient tears, discern
Love's prospering purpose cross'd,
Occasion miss'd, ne'er to return,
Despised or lightly lost ;
With dim compunctions some recall
Old times when they could feel,
When noble thoughts seem natural,
And love was virtuous zeal ;
Others there are whose hearts' content
Unlovely shades destroy,

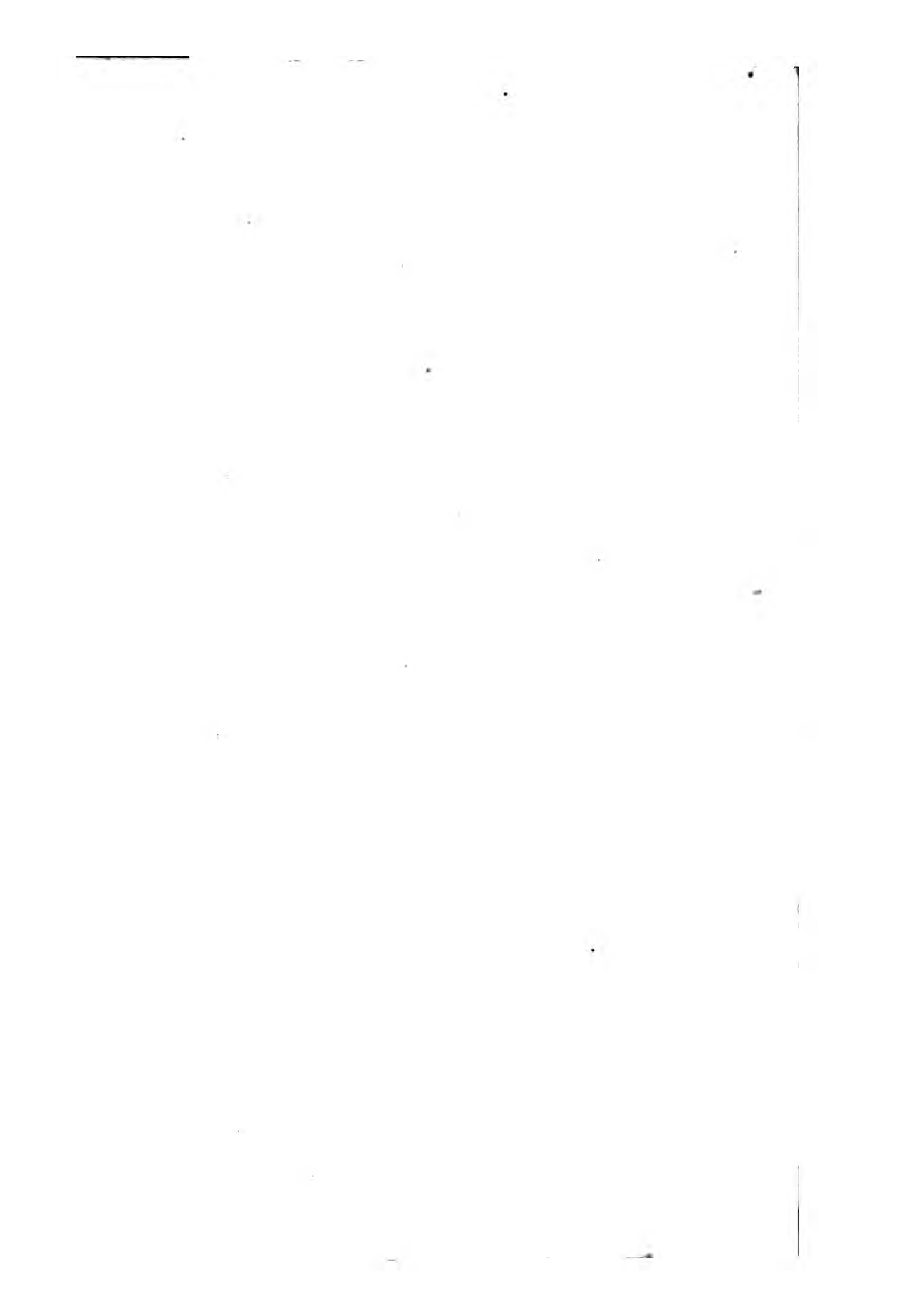
Cast by the brightness eminent
Of these two stars of joy ;
And this to all is sadly known,
Upon the bridal bed
Where Love to-day confirms his throne,
Sweet Hope lies crown'd and dead.

SONNET.

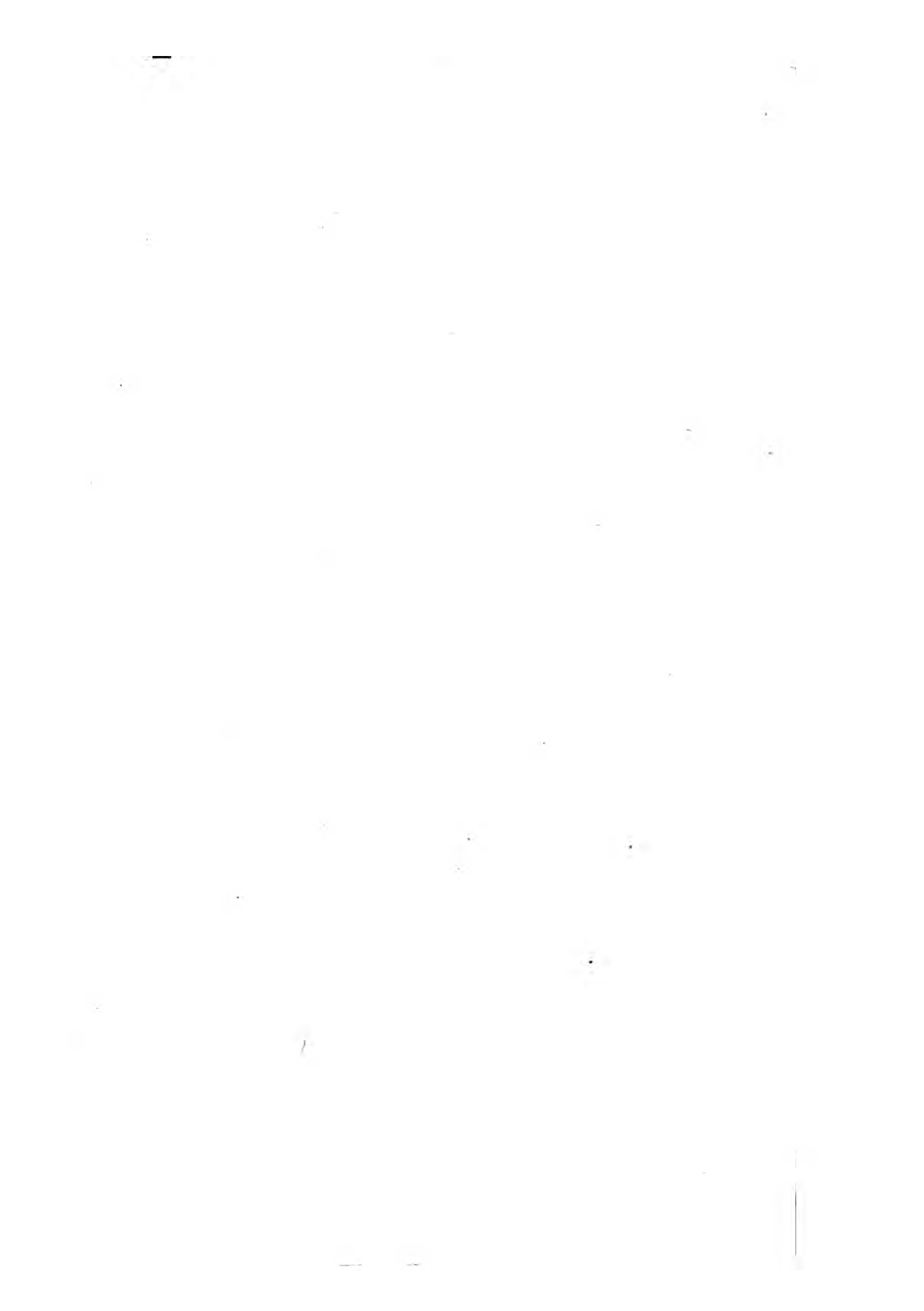
M^Y childhood was a vision heavenly
wrought ;
High joys of which I sometimes dream, yet fail
To recollect sufficient to bewail,
And now for ever seek, came then unsought.
But thoughts denying feeling, every thought
Some buried feeling's ghost, a spirit pale,
Sprang up, and wordy nothings could prevail
And juggle with my soul ; since, better taught :
The Christian's apprehension, light that solves
Doubts without logic, rose in logic's room ;

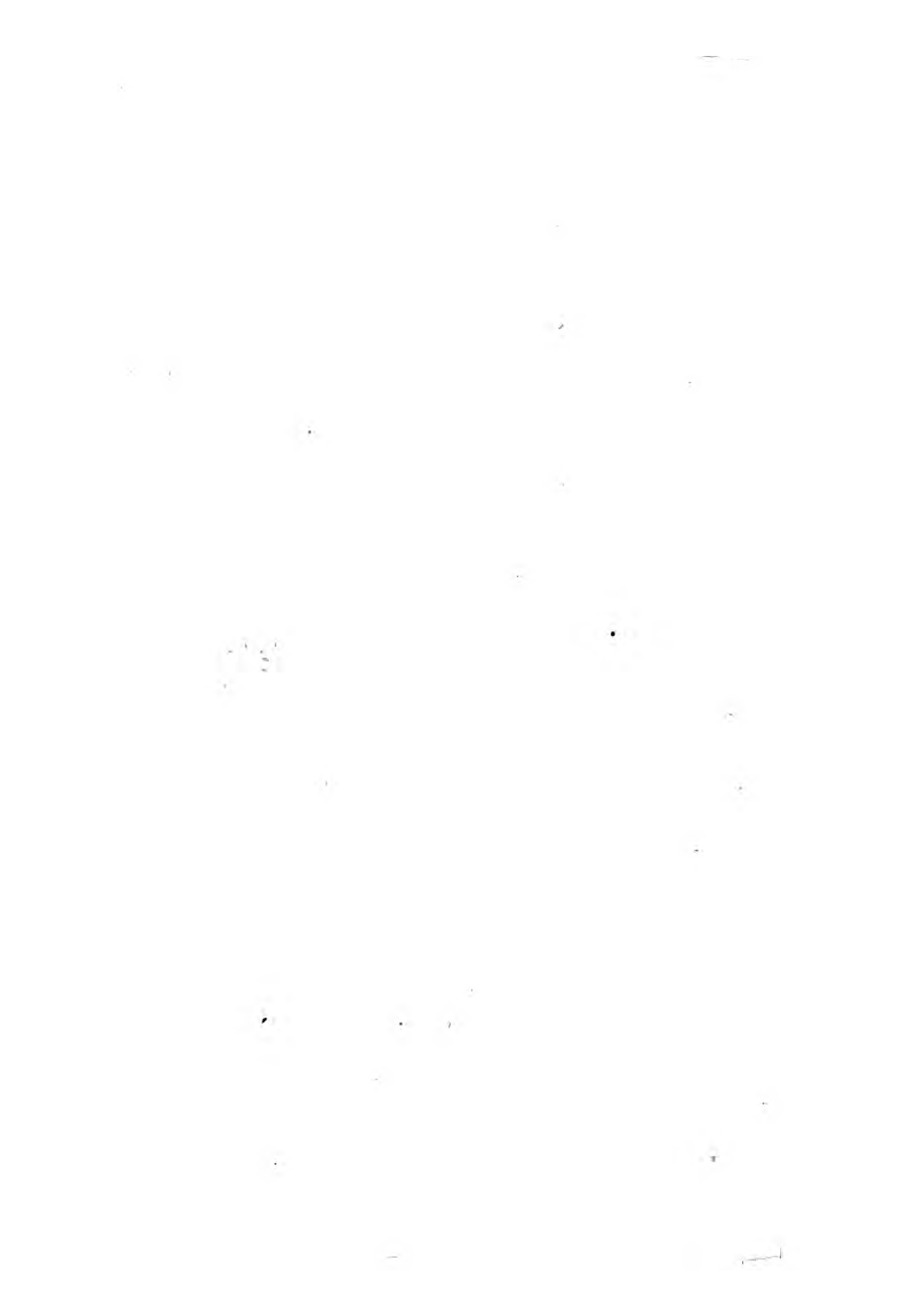
Sweet faith came back, sweet faith that hope
 involves,
And joys, like stars, which, though they not
 illuminate
This mortal night, have glory that dissolves
And strikes to quick transience all its gloom.

THE END.









C8b



