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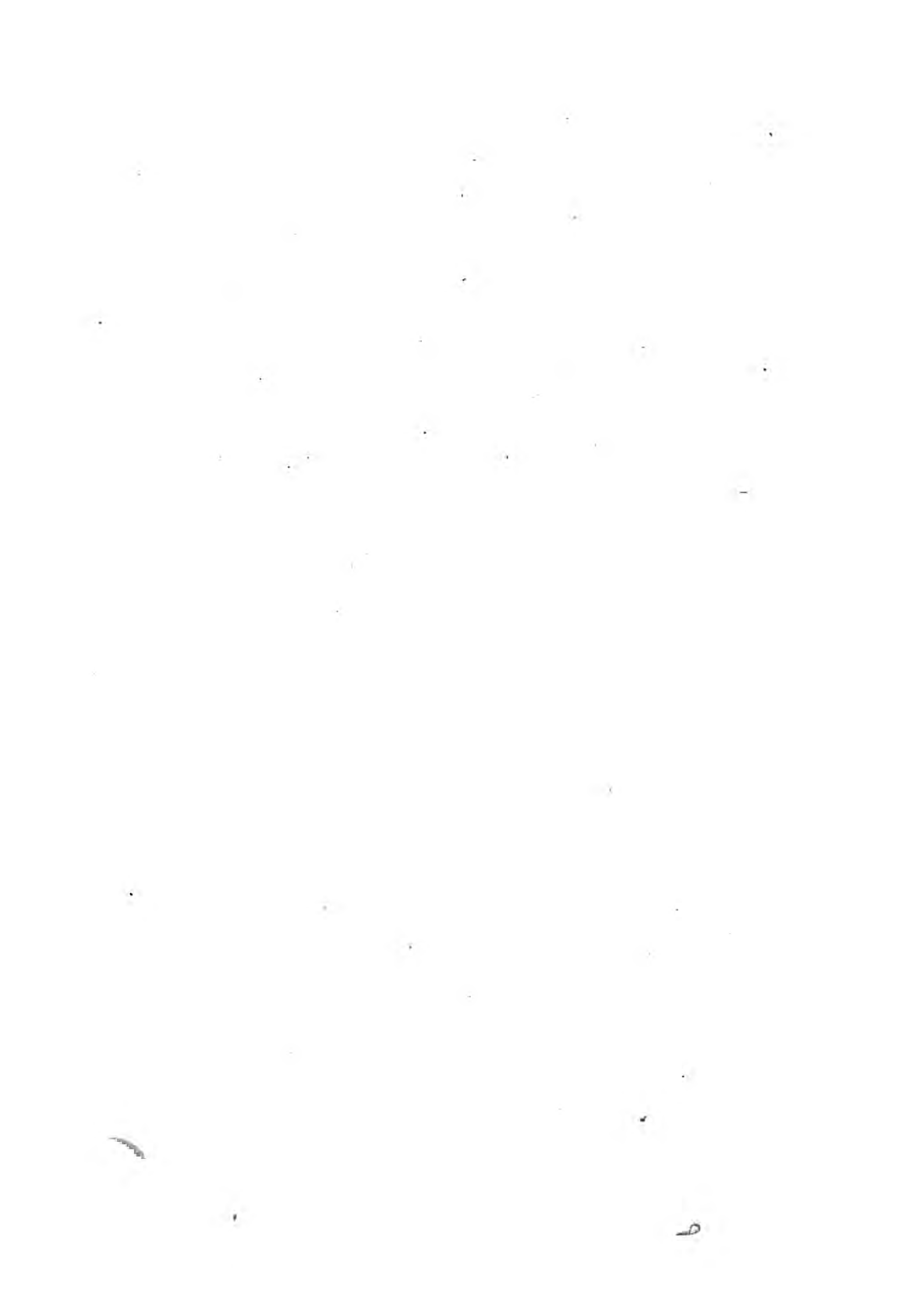




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TODTENKRÄNZE

OF

J. CH. FREIHERRN VON ZEDLITZ:

And other Poems.



TODTENKRÄNZE

OF

J. CH. FREIHERRN VON ZEDLITZ:

And other Poems.

BY LAVINIA DICK.

LONDON:

CUNNINGHAM & MORTIMER, ADELAIDE STREET,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

1843.



P R E F A C E.

I AM not aware that ZEDLITZ has ever found a translator, and yet he holds no mean rank among the men of genius of his fatherland.

His "TODTENKRÄNZE" * is, I believe, considered the gem of his writings, and certainly it is, in the original German, a fascinating poem. But I cannot hope to claim the merit of having so faithfully rendered it as not to have veiled or lost one of its many beauties. The translation is a very free one, and, occasionally, I have condensed the matter which formed two sonnets into one, as our English language does not admit of

* "*Todtenkränze*"—Chaplets of flowers which are laid on the graves of the dead.

the same *long-windedness*, if I may so express it, that the German does. It is an acknowledged fact, that woman's mind can never grasp a subject with the *verf* and energy of manly intellect; hence it necessarily follows that I am but a bad interpreter of the lofty inspirations of the poet.

And for the same reason, too, I hope to escape the bended brows of criticism at the minor poems which conclude the volume.

LAVINIA DICK.

Tewkesbury,—May, 1843.

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Todtenkränze.

I.

THE shadows of a forest were around me,
And contemplation in its chains had bound me,
The visions of my dreams rose all too bright,
And tears unbidden fill'd my eager eyes;
Say, heart of mine, what means this strange delight,
This wild desire, these anxious sighs?
Wilt thou consume thy youth and all its fire
For but a shade, though bright that shade may be—
And for a phantom waste thee in desire,
Till life can yield no joy, no bliss, to thee?
Foe to thyself, destroying thus the real,
And living in a world of the ideal.
Ah! from thy heart chase far those forms of light,
They shine, to mock thee, and to fade in night!

B

II.

No—said a voice within my breast—ah, no!
The power which gave thee wings to soar from earth,
The flames from heaven which made thy bosom glow,
It was a voice from God which gave them birth;
It was a holy breath which quicken'd into life
The flowers with which thy soul was rife,
The dew of tender sadness fed their bloom,
And rays from heaven gave colour and perfume;
No storm in evil hour bade them die,
No breeze of earth could make their beauties fly.
Undying is thy heart's impassion'd feeling,
No shadows are the visions round thee stealing.

III.

FAME's oak, which rears its proud head to the sky;
Love's glowing roses, which so sweetly bloom
In their green leafy bower, whence the sigh
Of warbling nightingale doth softly come
In thrilling tones, by tender sadness fed;
The bending branch, which waves above the head
Of minstrel, whose inspired lips reveal
To the soft breathings of his golden lyre,
Impassion'd strains, which o'er the lone heart steal,
And fill it with eternal truth's bright fire;
Those glorious boughs, which gracefully entwine
To crown our brows with glory and perfume;—
Those crowns are not of earth,—they are divine;
And has he lived in vain who wins their bloom?

IV.

AND when they crown the poet's throbbing head,
Oh! has he not attain'd the topmost height
Of every earthly blessing and delight
Which o'er his soul a holy charm could shed?
Still was there not a higher goal in sight,
Pants not his bosom for that heavenward flight?
No, never more! Like mists that, fading, fly,
When the first sunbeam laughs along the sky,
So fades the dazzling vision from his sight.
Ah! see how fast the darkness sinks in night!
The breath of swift decay hangs o'er each life;
One thing alone escapes the mortal strife:
Like Phœnix springing from its fun'ral pyre,
Rises the bright Ideal, which sets the soul on fire.

v

A PARTICLE of light, minutely small,
Flows in a hundred rays upon the earth,
Declaring the high power which gave it birth.
The sun, whose beams so fertilizing fall
On life, and ripen every sphere—
That sun is Inspiration, shining everywhere.
Whatever be the mirror which reflects its form,
Whether in song it soar on rapid wing,
Or beating hearts unite in feelings warm—
Still, still from heaven its energy doth spring.
The world would be devoid of life and feeling,
If Inspiration smiled not on our way;
Oh! without her, the finger of decay
O'er halls and temples would have long been stealing—
Those halls where heaven's pure flames divine
Burnt brightly on their sacred shrine—
The source from whence eternal life flows on,
Springing from life, and giving life alone.

VI.

ALL that earth has, of noble or of great,
Sprang not from those who float upon the tide
Of Pleasure's frothy sea, nor care that fate
Can give a higher aim than down its stream to glide.
The eye which saw a new world smiling rise
In that far distant sphere of brilliant light,
Which pierced the gloomy clouds of night
And all its thousand mysteries;
Which rested fondly on its brilliant sheen,
Though misty veils still shrouded it from sight,
Unnavigable oceans ran between:
It was the mind, which pierced through clouds and night—
'Twas Inspiration, turning gloom to light.

VII.

“MAD dreamer!” said a low voice at my side;
And when I raised my tearful eyes in dread,
A giant, shadowy form, did slowly glide
To nestle near me. “Who art thou?” I said—
“Spirit! who art thou?” Then the form replied,
“I am the spirit of the grave; and lo!
I come to find thee in the world below;
I come to lead thee where life’s fools of clay,—
Who once, like thee, did dream of things too high,
So that the ground beneath their feet gave way,
And in their breasts flamed burning ecstasy,—
Where they now moulder back again to earth,
And mingle with the dust which gave them birth.
That fire is spent—the noble hearts have perish’d,
Where once so tenderly its flame was cherish’d.”

VIII.

“ By their lone graves I’ll ask thee—do the dead
Who moulder there awake thy envy now?
Oft hast thou named them; and their memory fed
A pensive joy, which made thy bosom glow.
On, then, with me; true answer thou must give,
If they were most to envy, or to mourn,
Ere their warm hearts had ceased to feel and live—
Ere o’er them closed the dank grave’s narrow bourne,
Where now their whitening bones lie wrapt in gloom.
There was a time when, ere their life had faded,
Those wreaths, which to thy eyes so brightly bloom,
Their burning brows in noble beauty shaded.
Up, follow me! and then first shalt thou know
If it be truth or fraud which makes thy bosom glow.”

IX.

HE spoke, and clasp'd me in a cold embrace,
And 'neath his mantle folds he shrouded me;
Then through the ether's blue, unfathom'd space,
We swept along, like sails upon the sea.
We cleaved the air in that our dizzy flight;
We pass'd o'er hills and vales, which 'neath us lay;
Towns, forests, streams, and bridges, met my sight,
As on he bore me—on—away! away!
Until at last the giant hills arise,
Bohemia's ancient landmarks, to the skies.

X.

O'ER that wide plain the gold corn waves, to meet
The kisses of the breeze, which roves to greet
The dark green shrubs and scattered woods, which shade
The mountain sides, and proudly gaze around;
Where the fair Elbe her spacious bed hath made,
Winding like blue snake o'er the varied ground.
Where castles, famed in gallant deeds long pass'd,
Raise their high heads, defying time and blast.
In yonder vale proud Gitschin's fastness stands,
Rich in its memories of that ancient time
When the bold Taborites, in faithful bands,
Fought round the chalice for a faith divine.
Far o'er the land it looks—record of days gone by
Asking in silent grandeur, strangers say,
Why to my walls your lightsome steps draw nigh,
To mock my widow'd grief, my slow decay?



XI.

LIKE some pale widow, o'er the urn which holds
The ashes of the husband of her heart,
So that lone castle, in its gloom, enfolds
The man whom once it saw in pride depart
In all the flush of confidence, and might,
On his fierce war-horse in victorious flight.
Yonder Carthusian cloister's peaceful shade,
His bounty gave it to the smiling glade;
There pious monks, in solitary gloom,
Far from the world, bethink them of the tomb,
Their only greeting, question, and reply,
Those awful words—"Remember, thou must die!"
The ashes of the slain repose there, we will tread,
Gently o'er that pale hero's silent bed—
We stood beside him, and, unseen, we raised
The coffin lid, and on its tenant gazed.

XII.

WITHIN the coffin, worldly pride did flaunt
O'er the stern ravages of grim decay;
There was the skeleton, so cold and gaunt;
Its fleshless skull on velvet cushions lay,
And o'er its temples waved long withered hair,
Beneath a regal circlet, glittering there
As if in mockery of the ghastly dead!
The chain and fleece, wrought o'er with gems and gold,
Hung proudly round his neck, as when of old,
In hall and bower, the gala train he led.
One bony hand was raised upon his breast,
It clasped a cross; the other skinless hand
Upon a general's staff was firmly press'd,
As if e'en there the hero would command,
As if this grasp would linger till decay
Swept staff and mould'ring bones in dust away.
O'er the white shroud which clothed the dead I traced
Dark stains of blood, the grave had not effaced.

XIII.

“Look on this head, now crumbling in decay,”
The spirit murmured,—“he whose soul once dwelt
In that frail tenement of mortal clay,
Fate had to him a glorious fortune dealt.
No king, yet he commanded like a king;
His voice of power made the world wondering ring,
And from his threatening glance they turned aside—
The heroes who had bravely death defied.
O’er the bold thirty thousand soldiers came,
'Neath his dread eye, an awe they could not name,
When 'gainst the conquering ranks he marched in ire.
So, like the red flames which o’er heaven fly,
Creating and destroying with their fire,
His glance gave birth to joy, or bade it die!”

XIV.

“ A SON of arms, born in some humble vale,
He left his cradle’s lone obscurity,
And trod the emperor’s halls, nor thought to quail;
His birthright was his sword and victory!
He seized the banners which had lost their fame,
Fluttering from storm’d walls of the enemy;
By the all-powerful sound of his dread name
He lent them splendour from his brilliancy.
Soon as his call resounds, an army comes
From fair Moldavia’s vales and shepherd homes:
The snow-crown’d summits of the south reply,
And from the Belt, where salt waves foam, they fly.”

XV.

“ AND crownéd heads bent to the shield he bore;
Unnoticed once, in castle hall, it hung,
But now the magic of high deeds it wore,
And prince and peasant laurels o’er it flung.
His friendship e’en the prince could lowly crave,
While envy gnash’d its teeth, but all in vain;
For o’er the noble heart, so proud and brave,
His royal master heapéd gifts amain.
He scorn’d the duke’s fair mantle, and its power,
He will the highest flood of glory stem;
He will possess the star, and not the flower,
And boldly grasps the regal diadem:
But as he seized it, sense and sight grew dim,
Life and the diadem are not for him!”

XVI.

“ THY bold gaze wanders o’er the distant heaven,
Wilt thou read there the planets’ paths of light?
Is’t written that thy house shall fall unshriven,
Or stand for ages?—Fool, suns set in night!
The stars but mock thee through the midnight skies,
What! wilt thou read them? they will tell thee lies!
The hand which rules man’s wayward, changeful fate,
Oh, never yet e’er drew the veil aside
Which hides the coming destiny, ’till late,
Too late, there nothing is to hide!
Look then behind thee! dost thou see the steel
A murderous hand has turn’d upon thee now?
The death-wound in thy breast thou first dost feel;
No star, thou dreamer, warn’d thee of the blow!”

XVII.

“ AND thus he fell, he who was glory's heir,
He who, unharm'd, had braved the battle's rage,
And mock'd the dangers crowding round him there,
When fire and sword their fiercest warfare wage.
But see! when destiny had will'd his doom,
How soon the murderer's blade could snap life's cord;
And so he fell, the victim of the tomb,
Not in the pride of death, with shield and sword.
Not on the field, above the vanquish'd slain,
His war-cry sounding on his dying ear,
His name re-echoing o'er the bloody plain,
The noon-day of his greatness round him there.
Not such his fate, but fell'd by murderous hand;
Judged ere accused; and punish'd, as if he
Were mark'd upon his brow with felon's brand—
Perhaps—he brooded crime—but thoughts are free.”

XVIII.

“HERZOG of Friedland! he has pass'd away,
The name has perish'd, name and man are gone;
No future age shall care to hail the ray
Which glory lent him, and the grave hath won.
He left no son to tread his shining path——”
Yet on the lips of song his name still lives,
And there, I cried, immortal grace it hath:
The poet's lyre to dark tradition gives
Both light and life, all doubt and gloom to banish;
And tried by time, his fame shall never vanish;
The time shall be, when history's proving fire
Brightens the name, now fair on poet's lyre.²

XIX.

BUT was he happy? No! I may not name
His feverish lot as happy; those short hours
Were dearly purchased with their brilliant fame:
He gave his life's best peace for fading flowers.
Like furious blood-hounds, on the scent of prey,
Envy and rage pursued him from afar;
Treason and black ingratitude, obey
The demon wish his glowing fate to mar;
And thus, by foreign storms and tempests driven,
Consumed by fires which smoulder'd in his breast,
Against the ill in vain he might have striven,
'Twas well he died—then peace be on his rest!
He was forgiven,—death has made him free,
Put back the coffin lid—I'll follow thee!

XX.

AND now again I felt the Spirit's grasp,
He bore me on, in restless, hasty flight;
I felt his shadowing arm's protecting clasp,
And soon the firm land faded from my sight.
No sound of life resounded on our track,
No voice of man made music in the air,
The mournful rushing of the waves, gave back
The only sound to break the silence there:
Now foaming wildly in the depths below,
Immeasurable to man's mortal eye,
Now swelling up, like mountains tipp'd with snow,
As if they battled with the distant sky.
Spreading before the doubting anxious eye,
Their scanless depths, type of Eternity.

XXI.

AND changing, on our path, came night and day,
It seem'd as if our goal would ne'er be won;
Morning came onward with his shining ray,
And near me moved the chariot of the sun.
Its golden wheels turn'd on a diamond track,
And o'er the wide expanse of rolling sea,
I saw their glory was reflecting back
A crimson flood of dancing brilliancy.
Again the clouds grew thick, with gathering gloom,
The foggy vapours tower'd above the light;
Until I heard the griffins' dark wings boom,
As on they swept, the fearful team of night!

XXII.

AND now the moon, with all her stars, did glide
From out the darkness of the veiled skies;
Mild splendour pour'd along the foaming tide,
Lustrous with silver sheen its waters rise.
And then, in misty distance, grey and cold,
From out the waters where the moonlight slept,
I saw a desert isle rise lone and bold;
And there its solitary watch it kept.
Is this our goal? I ask'd my rapid guide.
"Soon shall we reach it; courage—on, and on!"
I felt that land, the wave and sky divide—
Earth was beneath me, and the goal was won.
The magic mantle which had wrapt us round,
A chariot cloud to bear us on our way,
Now slowly sank, upon the just gain'd ground,
And mingled with the water's dancing spray.

XXIII.

A SOLITARY rock rose from the sea,
And gazed on heaven and on the watery waste!
So far, so far the ocean wanders free,
The tired eye leaves there its path untraced—
It had no end, no coast, no fair green shore,
On which the eye in distance dim might rest.
Unmoved that isle listed the ocean's roar,
And scorn'd the raging billows' towering crest.
It seem'd as if high Heaven had placed it there,
To stand for ages, and to mock the storm,
And still, as now, its lonely grandeur wear,
Till sea and rock alike must lose their form!

XXIV.

HIGH on the rock I saw a lonely bier;³
On it a warrior's sword gleam'd in the light—
It had no gem, no gold, but waving near,
A laurel's glossy leaves shone green and bright.
The trunk was split, its noble branches riven,
As if Heaven's lightnings aim'd to scathe its pride;
But to those broken boughs green leaves were given,
And verdant foliage clothed its shatter'd side.
The blast had hurried o'er that tree, but still
Uprooted from the earth it might not be;
Heaven bade it stand, to mark *his* sovereign will,
Sign of his justice and his sovereignty—
To shew the world how *He*, the highest, gave
Justice alike to monarch and to slave.

XXV.

AND scatter'd on the earth beside it, lay
A regal sceptre, and a broken crown,
And ermine robes, as if the grave-worm's prey
Once, in the world, the pomp of rank did own.
But now, stern destiny had careless spread
The gay insignia of man's mimic pride,
As if in mockery above the dead.
Power and the grave-worm resting side by side!
The purple velvet's splendid dye had faded,
And desolation o'er the gems had crept.
"Speak! shall I name the splendour death invaded,
That thou mayst know whose grave lies here unwept?"
No more!—I cried—oh, Spirit, hush!—be still!
Through my sad heart I feel grief's shuddering thrill!

XXVI.

I TREAD the earth where now to dust decays
Thy mouldering frame, thou who didst one time shake
The tottering world beneath thy glory's blaze.
Now e'en the tokens of thy power forsake
Thy lonely grave; the spoiler Time hath laid
His grasp on all the baubles of thy might;
The regal purple saw its rich hue fade;
The crown is broke, the laurel feels the blight
Of Heaven's arrows; nought to thee remains—
Nought but thy sword—thy bloody sword clings on,
To deck thy coffin with its crimson stains—
Last record of the glories that are gone!
The ruthless tempest cradles on this isle,
Set in the lonely sea, a funeral pile
For thee, to hold forsaken thy last sleep.
Did *nothing* love thee, that no eye should weep!

XXVII.

WHEN thy soul took its parting glance at life,
Who of thy kindred soothed thy dying hour?
When thy worn frame, with doubt and anguish rife,
Sank silently beneath death's tyrant power,
Vainly thy dim eye wander'd round thy bed.
Where are all they to whom thy crowns were given?
Not one is come, with mournful, silent tread—
Not one is near thee, now that Fate hath striven
To mar thy pomp—to cast thy power away.
Forsaken one! and as thy spirit swept
In bitterness and anguish from the clay,
Tears trembled on the eyelids—thou hadst wept!
And strangers cross'd the cold hands on thy breast.
Who spoke the blessing o'er thy stern, calm rest?

XXVIII.

“ THOU sayst none paid the tribute of a tear,
Thou sayest none wept o’er him, with regret,
No mourner knelt beside his funeral bier;
But yet, I see that tears thine eyelid wet.
I do not hear thee curse him, and condemn,
‘Peace to his ashes’ is thy secret prayer;
Mankind have cursed, and driven him forth from them,
To perish here, alone with his despair!
His name brings sorrow to thy life and heart,
Speak,” said the Spirit; “Speak, and tell me, why
Thy feeble voice alone should take no part
In the loud curses which do echoing fly
Through the wide world?—oh! if his splendid lot
Dazzle thee; Fool! be not his end forgot!”

XXIX.

BECAUSE the world, beside his grave, doth seem
So pitiful, I loathe it with disgust;
When fortune bore him on its glittering stream,
The world knelt at his feet, and lick'd the dust.
Then, not one lip could utter a reproof,
Peru's rich treasure they pass'd o'er, forgot,
But when he fell, the cold world stood aloof,
And spurn'd the fallen, in his bitter lot!
They who in ostentation wore his chains,
When he stood on the pinnacle of fame,
Heap insult on the poor wreck which remains,
And fain would blot out all he left—his name!
Vain, puny faction, vain your jealous hate—
Too high he stands above you, with his fate.*

XXX.

LIKE to a tempest, ravaging the world,
And purifying in its ruthless flight;
From the Eternal throne, so was he hurl'd,
To teach on earth, how little is man's might!
And well we know, to *whom* the warning given;
Then let us kneel, repentant, on the sod,
Brothers in arms, for vainly we had striven,
When he came strong with power, from our God.
For, 'till the hand which raised him laid him low,
We could not hurl him from his glorious track;
And yet we boast, as if we struck the blow,
As if our might alone had driven him back!
I fought against him, therefore not from me
Insult and contumely shall stain his grave,
I fought against him, when his arms were free;
Now bonds are round him, but my foe was brave!

XXXI.

FROM the green laurel boughs I broke a spray,
To keep in sacred memory of *him*;
And then, I spoke, oh, Spirit, hence! away!
Oh, lead me hence, mine eyes with tears are dim.
Let us not linger here—my tears fall fast,
May they not fall uncheck'd, o'er such a fate,
When an avenging God awakes at last,
And they who dared his wrath, sink desolate—
Because, presuming on their short-lived pride,
They had forgotten, man is born to die:—
Hence, Spirit, hence, oh! lead me hence, I cried;
Cleave with thy rapid wings yon distant sky.
Away! and let us leave behind us far,
The fallen ashes of a burnt-out star!

XXXII.

Not on the bloody fame, which battle brings,
Not on the wreath, which decks a warrior's brow,
Would I look more; such fame has bloodstain'd wings,
Such fame and wreath I prize no longer now.
For ah! too many tears hang on each flower,
Too many aching hearts those wings have crush'd;
Who that would wander where war's fearful power
Destroy'd earth's blessings as it onward rush'd?
I shudder at the sheen such greatness wears,
I shudder at the flames so darkly red;
Enough of woe our gloomy earth-ball bears,
'Tis time that peace her blossoms o'er it shed.
'Tis time that man his bloody sword should sheathe,
Time that the palm tree o'er our hills should wave;
Dash down that wreath,—its very perfumes breathe
Of tears and sorrow, misery and the grave!

XXXIII.

BUT what the world forgets to prize, be mine;
The joy which stands alone, amid earth's din,
Nor seeks to steal one ray from glory's shrine,
But only one sweet star from heaven would win.
The joy which looks on naught in the blue sky,
Save that one star, although so far it be,
That careless eyes unseen would pass it by,
Nor pause to mark its twinkling brilliancy.
Fools that ye are! to seek for happiness
Elsewhere than in the true heart's dearest bliss,
When heart on heart beats in the fond caress,
And lips on lips press love's first thrilling kiss!
When arms are twining in a close embrace,
What holier charm can glory for thee trace?

XXXIV.

ON, Spirit!—on, let me but see the bliss
No words may speak, but only tears reveal,
On, let me look but once on joys like this,
Though in a dream alone they o'er me steal.
Once let me quaff, from memory's sacred well,
Quaff from the beaker all its pearly tide;
To list the lovers their fond love-suit tell,
Once let me wander viewless by their side.
Let me once feel the breath of heaven-born bliss;
And all thy strivings wilt thou not resign
For one pulsation of a life like this,
Wilt thou not fling up life, oh, heart of mine?

XXXV.

“CLOSE thine eyes!” cried the Spirit, and once more
He bore me through the air, on pinion strong;
Back o’er the path which we had traced before,
O’er the wide world of waves we swept along.
On eagle wing he brush’d the foam away
Of the dark billows, bursting ’neath our path;
And now the shores of France all smiling lay;
Eternal sunbeams in her sky she hath!
And see, her cloudless sun its kisses showers
On her rich coronal of fruits and flowers!
The musk-grape sparkled from the graceful vine,
And caught the sunbeam on its luscious shine.
The Rhone passed proudly, on her silv’ry track,
Queenly and mountain born, to join the sea;
Her quivering waters gave the sunbeams back,
A rival sheen beneath their brilliancy.

XXXVI.

A DIAMOND, in golden setting laid,
Glitters fair Avignon amid her towers;
And to the cloudless sun, in tribute paid,
Rises the incense of her hundred flowers.
In virgin beauty she sits, by the side
Of Rhone's blue waters, giving them her smiles;
And sees the Queen of Springs, the Sorgue, in pride,
Woo the soft breezes with its sparkling wiles!
Through the dark laurel groves, in sunlight gleaming,
The snake-like Durance, glittering, doth twine;
Amid thy hundred hills, like jewel beaming,
Vaucluse—I greet thee in thy rosy shine!

XXXVII.

AND spoke the Spirit—" See you, cold and pale,
Yon cloister's tower rising to the sky?
Saint Francis is its patron; let us hail
The hallow'd dust which in its walls doth lie.
There rests a star of love, once shining bright
On life's horizon—bright in memory still,
Although death shrouds her in its gloomy night,
And guards her from the cold world and its ill."
Her name has echoes upon every tongue;
Her name has echoes in each beating heart;
A sceptred king^b her gentle praises sung;
And aye so long as Love can wield his dart,
And o'er the green earth wander fond and free,
So long, Petrarca, shall thy soft songs be
Enshrined with memories of her and thee!

XXXVIII.

OH, blesséd pair! we envy thy fond fate!
For like to him who climbs the mountain brow,
And sees the vapoury clouds beneath him wait,
Resting midway upon the vale below,
While round him is the pure, blue ether spread;
So stood ye both, above earth's noisy din,
And saw unmoved her sons by pleasure led—
Their petty triumphs and their future win.
Unmoved, ye saw the gauds of wealth and might
Bought with a life and vanish at a breath.
In fond embrace ye met the sun's broad light,
And scorn'd the gloomy earth which lay beneath.

XXXIX.

“AND yet I tell thee that more tears were shed
By Laura’s beaming eyes than ever yet
The tender blushes of the rose-leaf’s red,
On woman’s cheek, such glittering drops have wet.
More⁶ maddening thoughts have never prey’d on man
Than those which, viper-like, at Petrarch’s heart,
Stung deep, and deep, until the poison ran
Through soul and life, with sure and cruel art.
A day⁷ of holy wo saw their first meeting,
When ransom’d earth weeps o’er her guilty life;
At the first glance, their warm hearts’ ardent beating
With a new, thrilling sense of bliss was rife.
The thrill, the sadness, o’er each bosom stealing,
Bound heart to heart with sympathetic chain;
And o’er them came love’s first, delicious feeling—
The conscious love repaid with love again!
A bond like this, of wo and bliss the token,
Breaks not, until the hearts it bound be broken.”

XL.

“ AND yet that lasting bond was rent in twain,
Ere death had tried its bright links to remove;
The flame is spent, its ashes but remain;
It lasted out the short life of their love!
Yet seem'd their love eternal in its strength;⁸
And it burnt out, ere yet its strength was gone.
The deep wounds it inflicted heal'd at length;
The lone heart call'd on death, yet linger'd on.
Her death was mourn'd, but still the heart, unbroken,
Offer'd to other charms its world of sighs,
And living beauty heard the soft vows spoken
Which o'er the early dead alone should rise.
This fire, so like to madness while it last,
Fed by the warm blood bounding through the veins.
Forgotten, when its waking hour be past,
And cold and still its energy remains:
Is this the highest, dearest aim of life—
This thy bright coronal, with magic rife?
Fading so soon!” And scorn and pity woke
In the cold tones with which the Spirit spoke.

XLI.

“’Tis well, if thus it be! Mark how the light
Sinks less and less, till day itself be lost.
The flowers close their glowing cups, so bright
With many colour’d hues the sunlight toss’d
In fickle fancy o’er them. When the air is still,
And every sound is hush’d through earth and sky,
Till the pale night steals o’er the distant hill,
While soft repose in her fair arms doth lie;
When one by one the glowing hues subside,
Which colour’d all the heaven with brilliant light—
And deeper grows the crimson, far and wide,
Deeper and darker, glowing yet more bright;
Weaving from out its sheen the shades which rise
Darkly and colourless, and one by one—
Till dim, and still more dim, along the skies,
The shadowy forms of moving clouds are gone.
’Tis well for thee! if passion sinks to rest,
Like to the daylight, when the sun has set—
If not again thy lips have madly press’d
The dangerous draught which once their thirst has wet.”

XLII.

“OH, guard thee well, and ever, from that bowl—
Taste not the treacherous draught which lurks within;
Or if thou taste, that instant shall thy soul
A dreary life of misery begin.
They dream who think ecstatic bliss to sip
In that bright draught. Oh, spurn it from thy lip!
Or drink, and madness on thy heart shall wait!
Drink, dream, and wake, to find thee—desolate!
Love has not ever seen its ruby light
Consumed beneath its own fierce ray;
Like to the taper, when it shines most bright,
The speedier its flickering beams decay.
Far oftener than itself consuming,
Love layeth waste man’s trusting soul;
Though flowers around the brink seem blooming,
Poison is lurking in the bowl.
Like to the gift Medea sent of yore,
Poison and death were in the sheen it wore!”



XLIII.

WE left the blue Rhone and her arrowy path,
Where she glides on, the stately Gotthardt meeting,
Whose avalanches, on the noisy wrath
Of sparkling waves, look on with snowy greeting;
Till, struggling from the glacier's cold embrace,⁹
The waters gain new force, and onward rushing,
Down to the sea their headlong course they trace.
Now on the right the Apennines are blushing,
As if their heights were rose-crown'd; Genoa lies,
Queenlike and noble, with her gulf so fair,
Reflecting on its bosom those bright skies,
That cloudless sun, in mimic beauty there.
With nameless beauty in the Gulf's broad tide,
Bathe the Ligurian waves, by Genoa's side.

XLIV.

BUT on we pass'd, nor linger'd on our way,
Through the tall Alps, where rises Po's glad river.
Through earth's most witching spots our wanderings lay;
Like silver thread the creeping stream did quiver
In its fair, flowery path. Before our gaze now gleaming,
Suspended from the mountains' shaggy side,
Fair Lombardy was seen; and poet's dreaming
Ne'er imaged forth such magic grace and pride—
A Paradise, on which the trancéd eyes
Would rest for ever—where all beauties met,
Voluptuous as the sunbeams of her skies,
And sunn'd themselves in pride, for no regret
Could steal upon the bloom of one fair flower;
It seem'd as Fate bent 'neath such beauty's power.
The accents of that land of joy were twining
Both song and music, in their liquid sound;
And now we left it, in its sunlight shining,
Nor linger'd, till the Alps once more we found.

XLV.

“ ON to that ancient town, down in the plain,
Sitting beside the noble mountain chain
Which girts the Tyrol land—the true, the free!
By the swift waters of the Etsch, which rushes
To see the garden of fair Italy,
And revel in the noontide of its blushes;
Where ancient Rome in powerless grandeur lies,
To awe us, even in her slow decay.
On to Verona we will wend our way—
It boasts a grave well worthy of thy sighs:
And Romeo and Juliet’s tragic fate
May shew what happiness on true love wait.”

XLVI.

Two beings, in the noon of youth's fair spring,
Met in an evil hour upon the earth,
And from each breast the throbbing heart took wing,
Ere ever their warm lips had given birth
To word or sigh; but o'er the mute lips stealing,
Distinct, yet soundless, came the lover's vow;
Impassion'd eyes caught the soul's fond revealing,
And glittering tears swept o'er their beauty now:
As soul with soul, in sympathy uniting,
Pass'd o'er the stream of new, undreamt-of bliss.
Alas for love! the breath of death swept blighting
O'er their young cheeks, with love's first, only kiss!

XLVII.

BORN to contemn each other, and to hate—
Their parents' feuds in filial love to cherish,—
They have forgotten all; their wrath, their fate,
For one long look saw hatred, sickening, perish.
Curses hang o'er thy head, young Capulet,
What, for a Montague, thy bosom glows!
And love steps in where hatred should have set
Its deadliest influence: poison for the rose!
Oh! Romeo, never will thy father call
Young Juliet daughter; vain and sad thy sueing!
Sooner above her shall the funeral pall
Wave o'er her grave, than joy attend thy wooing!
Yet, all uncaring for the gulf which fate
Has placed between them, they are dreaming still;
And for their kindred's stern and rancorous hate
They have but smiles, and love's own rapturous thrill!

XLVIII.

To offer up the first bloom of their love,
See how by stealth they seek the sacred shrine;
Oh! holy joy, all other joys above—
When the fond lover whispers, “thou art mine!”
Bliss, above all which earth can give of bliss,
When pleasurable tears swim in the eyes,
And fond lips linger in one long-press’d kiss,
Half sever’d by the throbbing heart’s quick sighs!
Oh! fain would you reveal the ardent feeling
To earth and heaven, so madly beats the heart,
You did not see that clouds were o’er you stealing—
You did not dream that wedded love could part!

XLIX.

THEN destiny grew dark, around their path,
Their fair, unsullied lot was sunk in night,
The tempest, which had slumber'd, woke in wrath,
And their bright sun of bliss hid all its light.
Their tenderness, their love, was now despair;
And Juliet wept her sweet, yet bitter fate,
And drain'd the goblet—for a refuge there
Smiled to protect her from her kinsmen's hate.
In deathlike sleep they bore her to her grave;
Alas! death waited then upon her rest!
O'er Romeo the funeral banners wave,
And Juliet's corse falls lifeless on his breast!

L.

“TOGETHER in one grave they rest at last;”¹⁰
So spoke the Spirit—“ ’tis the common lot
Which waits on love,—the whirlwind’s hurrying blast
Breaks the tall tree, destroys earth’s greenest spot.
But were it not so, still the boughs you cherish,
Would fade and fall, earth lose her greenest bowers:
It is your lot to see, forgotten, perish,
The very dearest of your fairest flowers.
It is the end for which your hearts were made,
To mourn o’er treasures lost, e’en when the dearest;
The most luxuriant boughs, in sunny glade,
To sharp and quick decay are ever nearest.
If the destroying tempest broods in peace,
A worm is feeding on their life and core,
And the decaying blight will never cease,
’Till the tree, falling, waves its boughs no more!
Though what you love you hold within your grasp,
A scanty time, ere fate has claim’d its prey;
’Tis all too long, for ’neath that fleeting clasp,
Peace droop’d her head, and sorrowing turn’d away!”

LI.

OH, envious Spirit! thou wouldst rob my life
Of all its dearest joys, its brightest seeming;
Fain wouldst thou ravish all which is most rife,
With happiness and beauty in its dreaming.
Why wilt thou mock me with the sound of change,
Why try to chase my dreams, if such they be?
Why from my heart its dearest bliss estrange,
Why bind my spirit, when its wings are free?
Yet were it so, were phantoms all my bliss,
From fickle fancy had those visions birth,
I still would cherish phantoms dear as this,
I still would see a heaven on the earth!
Spirit, in vain to tell of change, and pain,
One joy still lingers, 'tis the heart's wild dreaming,
Which bindeth truth and semblance in its chain,
And raiseth earth, to bask in heaven's beaming.
With mighty, all-creative power, it turns
A backward gaze to earth, where far it lies;
And shouting forth its triumph, it returns
To brighten earth with memories of the skies!

LII.

THE simple lays, from modest lute-strings stealing,
Shall they not linger on the lips of time?
Sweet as Eonian chords, which once came pealing
Through the still air, in harmony sublime.
The eternal stars, when they did set and rise,
Their priesthood welcomed, with these chords of yore;
And from their altars, to the listening skies,
The lingering music its soft tones did pour.
Those low sweet chords, I hear them often, sighing
Through the loud tempest on life's troubled tide;
Like to the swan, whose snowy breast is lying
On billowy surges, so those soft strains glide:
Unheeding all, except their own swift track,
And earth and air, with witching sweetness filling;
Oh! lute and song, I would not give thee back
For aught in life, so dear thou art, so thrilling!
As David's harp-strings soothed the stranger's grief,
So thou to my lone heart canst bring relief!

LIII.

“It may not be so;—thou again art erring,”
Murmur’d the Spirit, in his bitterest tone,
“Who, that can say, the lute-strings are conferring
Joy on the heart which wakes their plaintive moan.
Who, that can say, it is not sorrow, waking
The thrilling beauty of the poet’s lyre,
Who, that can say, the lone heart is not breaking,
Beneath the brightness of ecstatic fire.
Oh! Inspiration is a fount, whence flowing,
The bitter waves of anguish ebb and fall;
But yet its sorrows have a noble glowing,
Which frames the heart, to struggle under all.
Oh! Inspiration has no thornless lot,
To give her sons, and yet, I tell thee, yet,
The rugged paths are by her sons forgot,
When once their lips her sacred waves have wet.
Even as rush’d young Phaeton’s wild steeds,
Unruled, unguided, by his weary hand;

So Phantasy flies on, nor ever heeds
The course before her is a trackless sand.
But on, but on, she spurns the wary rein,
And spreads her wayward wings, for heaven flying,
She does not pause until she sinks again,
In the dark chasm on her pathway lying.
Up! let us see how such bold spirits fare,
Onward to Rome, our resting-place is there!"

LIV.

THE lovely land was lying 'neath our feet,
As, through the cloudless space, we floated by;
A thousand towns our raptured gaze could greet,
Studded like stars upon the midnight sky.
We looked upon the proud Farnesian domes,
The castles, scatter'd on the verdant plain,
Where, from strange lands, the poets sought their homes,
And dreamt awhile of peace, but dreamt in vain!
Where Este's race their laurel crowns are twining,
Castruccio Castracani's towers arise,
Where Arno's wavelets, on their course, glide shining,
Medici's haughty city, mouldering lies.
Queen of the world, spirit of other days,
The arts, to thee, their hymn of glory raise!

LV.

WHERE the eye gazed on earth, as on we swept,
There would it ever fain have lingering gazed;
For spellbound memory her vigils kept,
And, o'er that land, her noblest altars raised.
The changing wonders, which were ever springing
In fresh succession o'er that land of light;
Oh, vain to name them, where each was but flinging
A holier, nameless charm upon our flight.
Onward we pass'd, on our glad pilgrimage,
'Till, on each side, we hail'd the sparkling seas ;
The Tyrian flood, where nestled the soft breeze,
And Adriatic, in her billowy rage.
Until the wonder of a world was seen,
Sacred to Gods, whose shrines unmould'ring linger ;
Hail to thee, Roma! thou art yet a Queen!
Thou still canst mock at Time's destroying finger!

LVI.

MAGNIFICENCE, which had not pass'd away,
Shed still a hallowing glory over Rome;
The Coliseum, splendid in decay,
The ruin'd temples, and the shining dome:
The proud walls of the Forum, giving back
In the bold splendour which had not yet faded,
Dreams of the past, along whose shadowy track,
Still might be traced the chaplets Fame had braided.
The gates, through whose high portals, echoing sounded,
Shouts of rejoicing, round her heroes' cars;
The giant walls, which her proud splendour bounded,
The pillar'd halls, now open to the stars.
The mausoleum, where, in silent gloom,
Shades of her heroes, ye are wandering yet;
All whisper of the grandeur and the doom,
Which Fate's stern hand upon her being set.
The one time ruler of the world, she wore
Her power, with state, which was at least sublime;
And now, the remnant of her pride of yore,
Lay at our feet, and spurn'd the touch of time!

LVII.

I SAW Bramante's walls, in queenly Rome,
And Buonarotti's heaven-aspiring dome,
Raising the sacred cross so high, to heaven,
That vain the soaring eagle's wing had striven
To gain its verge." I saw fair palace walls,
The Vatican, the Obelisk's stern glory,
The marble fountains, and the picture halls,
Each was a shrine, each had a thrilling story.
I could not pierce the veil which o'er them lay,
I could but wondering gaze, as on we swept,
For the dark Spirit hurried me away
To where a lowly spire in silence slept.

LVIII.

WHERE the rich air through orange groves came stealing
From the calm cloister's far-off garden glade;
Through Saint Onufrio's aisles the chant was pealing,
As by its modest church our course we stay'd.
He that has gazed upon Saint Peter's dome
Would pass Onufrio's modest aisles unseen;
The living glory of all-glorious Rome,
The jewel on the sceptre of a queen!
Up to the sun Saint Peter's spire ascendeth,
And with his beams a rival glory blendeth.
We pass'd a door—a single gravestone lay
Lonely and modestly upon our way;
But on the simple slab my quick eyes traced
Dark characters, which had outlived Time's flying—
The magic words still linger'd uneffaced:—
“Here Tasso's mouldering bones in peace are lying.”

No other word, nought else save that one name,¹²
Yet all-sufficient for the poet's fame.
Sorrow came o'er me, and I bent my knee
At that lone grave, in homage to the dead.
The heart's best homage, poet, is for thee,
Thy sacred lyre its energy hath fed!

LIX.

“LET Tasso’s life glide o’er the magic face
Of memory’s mirror in thy bosom sleeping,
And there, poor mortal, thou shalt clearly trace,
What happiness o’er him its watch was keeping.
What though to him the laurel crowns were given,
While wondering crowds upon his pathway knelt;
What though his genius, not in vain, hath striven
To wake in other hearts what his hath felt.
’Tis vain, if happiness still mocking flies,
And, from his grasp, a shadow, melts away,
If science flourishes, upon the sighs,
His worn heart echoed over joy’s decay.
See if the Godhead’s sacred fire, lent
Strength to his spirit, in its inward trials,
If o’er his lyre, one joyous feeling bent,
The magic of a glad heart’s beaming smiles.”

LX.

UNHAPPY one! e'en in thy dawn of life,
Thou wert a wandering fugitive, upon the Earth;
Driven forth, from thy calm home, to pain and strife,¹³
Ere yet the passions in thy soul had birth.
Ere yet the formless, darksome dream, had parted
From the unconscious soul, which slumber'd yet,
Thou wert a homeless wanderer, broken-hearted,
And manhood's tears thy childish eyelid wet.
Snatch'd from the bosom of the yet closed rose,
Torn from the dream of childhood's gentle slumbers,
A mark for fate: too many are the woes
Already thy young bosom, sickening, numbers.
From bud to flower ripening too soon,¹⁴
The child bears manly sorrows in his heart,
And loses all the brightness of life's noon,
In the sad tears which from his young eyes start.

LXI.

WHEN the first thrilling tones from youth's young lyre,
Rose in a strain of passionate revealing,
As if thy very life was in its fire,
And loves most ardent kisses gave it feeling:
When life's glad spring upon thy path was shining,
And flowers and vigour to thy life had given;
A brilliant wreath song's blossoms were entwining,
Thou wert on earth, thy spirit was in heaven!
But even then, 'mid all the beauty, shading
Thy new-born life, from earthly touch of ill,
Deep in thy inmost heart the bloom was fading,
Thy very life-blood fed the spirit's thrill.
A nameless pain upon thy life came stealing,
A nameless grief, whose voice as yet was mute;
Thou didst not know, the strange, the holy feeling,
Woke with thy song, and slumber'd o'er thy lute!

LXII.

OH! mournful gift of song, on thee descending;
Oh! mournful destiny, its path attending!
If thy fair, star-encircled name, had slept,
Unknown and dark, upon the wings of time,
If on a thousand lips it had not kept
Echoes which told thy genius was sublime.
Oh! hadst thou vanish'd, without name or trace,
Instead of leaving us thy fame's bright shine;
Grief had not made thy soul its resting-place,
The thorn which wounded never had been thine!
Oh! had Alphonso in his glittering halls
Ne'er welcomed thee, amid the gala throng!
Was it meet atmosphere, in princely walls,
For thee and thy sweet lyre, thou child of song?
'Twere well for thee if thou hadst never trod
Ferrara's halls, a proud, invited guest;
Tasso, the poet's home is Nature's sod,
Couldst thou in princely halls find peace and rest?

LXIII.

THOU, whose full heart sought only for a voice,
With which to pour forth all its latent fire;
One moment saw thee weep, the next rejoice,
O'er the wild chords of thy own glorious lyre.
How wilt thou wander 'mid the world's gay throng,
Where all are feigning what they do not feel;
How wilt thou mingle folly with thy song,
And thy soul's yearnings to dull ears reveal?
What in thine eyes is great, and all divine,
The world rejects, with vain and scornful seeming;
And all for which the giddy worldlings pine,
Thy heart spurns from it, as a sordid dreaming.
When reason bid thee shrink, amid the crowd,
Thou still wilt linger, with a foolish pride;
And when thou hast the right to feel most proud,
Then, fain wouldst thou thy fame and genius hide.

LXIV.

OH, fly, Torquato, ere it be too late,
The world smiles on thee, but it smiles deceiving;
What though it tell thee of a brighter fate,
And laurel crowns around thy brow is weaving:
It does not feel with thee; oh, thou art dreaming,
When thou canst trace a spark of thy own fire
In the bright tear drops which are quickly streaming
From eyes which own the magic of thy lyre.
Though eyes are tearful, and all hearts are sighing
At the soft music of thy beating heart,
'Tis not, that sympathy with thee comes flying,
In the bright tears which from the eyelids start.
They bend beneath the magic fire, which burns
In lute and song, they do not bend to thee;
Too soon thou'lt learn, how the cold worldling spurns
The heart, which woke that heaven-born harmony.
And thou dost dream, because the world is smiling,
That thou hast won its friendship and esteem,
Oh, fly! Torquato, its applause, beguiling,
Will leave thee like the phantom of a dream!

LXV.

UNHOLY blindness over thee has crept!
That thy sweet lute may charm the lagging hour,
Canst thou not see thy vacant place is kept
In banquet hall, and in the festive bower?
Forgotten by them all, when thou art mute,
Praised for thy song, and cherish'd for thy lute!
Why dost thou rove, thy inmost soul revealing
In eager glances, through the glittering halls;
'Till thy dark eye, through all the gay throng stealing,
On Leonora passionately falls!
Ah! woe for thee! thy wayward heart is thrilling
'Neath the high spell of charms thou shouldst not see;
Rank poison is each quivering life-pulse filling,
A martyrdom of love destroyeth thee!
And thou art feeding on her every tone,
And catching hope from her too brilliant eyes;
Those eyes deceive thee, she is not thine own,
She dare not listen to thy frequent sighs!

LXVI.

THE glittering halls have vanish'd: and the throng
Of noble lords, and ladies bright, are gone;
Where are the smiles they lavish'd on thy song?
All, all have vanish'd, and thou art alone!
And other walls enshroud thee, in their gloom,
Thy glowing fate has left thee, like a dream!
A dark, dank tower is thy living tomb,
O'er which the sunlight sheds no straggling beam.
Behind the iron bars gaunt forms of woe
Glide, spectre like, to fill the soul with fear;
Unearthly ravings fill the vaults below,
And fearful laughter echoes on thy ear!

LXVII.

WHY art thou here? O Tasso, tell thy crime;
Thy full heart would not stay its ardent sighs,
Forgetting all, high rank, the world, and time,
To sun its passion in thy lady's eyes!
Thy path was watch'd, and from the thicket glade,
Came Echo, with her many tongues, revealing
How Tasso to his sovereign homage paid,
At her loved feet in adoration kneeling.
Was this the crime, so dark, that death alone,
Could blot its memory from the book of fate,
And though the witching dream from thee has flown,
Still must thy tears its memory expiate?
So be it then!—such death thou fain wouldst crave;
Thy sword and lute, thy meed of fame have twined,
Like man and hero, thou wilt find thy grave,
Nor leave one murmur at thy fate behind!

LXVIII.

BUT yet not death, disgrace alone for thee;
Thou shalt not die; thy name alone shall perish!
Before the harsh world's jest, and contumely,
Shall fading fall the fame thy soul doth cherish.
Fain would they rob thee of the starry sheen
Which glory sheddeth over graves like thine,
Rob thee of memory's crown of fadeless green,
Shield thee from death, to watch thy spirit pine.
That o'er thy grave, when tardy death was come,
The tear of sympathy might never fall,
But pallid fear should, shrinking, find its home,
And shudd'ring horror spread thy funeral pall.
They call'd thee mad; to screen thy wretched life
They herded thee with madmen; woe for thee!
Thus shalt thou wear away, in bitter strife,
The weary years, 'till death hath set thee free!

LXIX.

SHAKE the high walls, now echoing to thy cries,
Vain, vain thy efforts, they will cage thee still,
Unheard, uncared for, must thy voice arise,
Disgust and horror must thy bosom fill:
And when despair and sorrow join'd the twain,
To quench the spirit in their iron grasp,
'Twere strange, if they had striven all in vain,
If night and shade that worn heart could not clasp.
'Twere strange, if madness had not sear'd his brain,
Blasting the soul, and its all-glorious lyre;
Yet still around him lingering lights remain,
Still glows the deathless spark of heaven-born fire.
The wondering world now listens to thy lay,
Thy voice is heard, like music from the spheres,
Rising above the world, and mortal sway,
And triumphing the brighter for its tears.

LXX.

· THY foes look on, to mock thee with their hate,
Yet still untroubled is thy spirit's fire;
From the far Belt to Etna, Tasso's fate
Is bright with the wild flashes of his lyre—
What falsehood whispers he may well despise,
The world, entranced, still owns the poet's fame,
The soul, unshackled, from its chains can rise,
And its bright coronal of glory claim.
But the frail body sinks in slow decay,
To seek an early and a lonely tomb,
The dungeon's poison'd breath has mark'd its prey,
And death is lurking in its sunless gloom.
Yet tardily they set him free again;
Unfetter'd and unbound he now may die;
And Mantua's duke has pleaded—not in vain;
He breathes the pure air of his native sky!
'Tis the last boon decaying life could prize,¹⁵
The sunlight and the fresh breeze of his skies.

LXXI.

YET once again he felt fresh vigour creeping
Through his worn frame; the captive now was free,
The air, the sunlight, his glad heart was steeping
In its forgotten sense of ecstasy!
The aged Tasso left his dungeon's night
To revel in the broad day once again,
And youth and fervour met him in the light;
He has forgotten all his manhood's pain.
As 'neath the snow the tender corn is springing,
And the first primrose rears her fragrant head,
So Tasso's heart, though ice was round it clinging,
Still grace and beauty on his being shed.
His poet's wreath of song was bright with flowers,
His poet's love was deathless as his lay,
They cheer'd the chill breath of his wintry hours
With summer blossoms, passing not away.
A sister's arms received the stricken heart,
Long in Sorrento she had wept its fate;
A sister's love shall check the tears which start;
The poet is no longer desolate!

LXXII.

UNHAPPY heart, that knoweth no repose!
Gaze on the sea, its waves lie still at last—
The hurricane's wild wind no longer blows;
The thunder ceases—its fierce rage has pass'd.
Even Vesuvius findeth peace and rest,
In whose deep bowels, fire and fury burning,
Fling high the melted ore from its dark breast,
As if the inward flames their hell were spurning.
Yet the volcano stills its weary voice,
The raving of its inward fire grows dumb;
And thou alone, poor heart, canst ne'er rejoice
That peace and rest to thee at last have come!
Thou canst not rest, thou never knowest peace—
Thy fire, thy tempest, lieth never still,
The stormy billows may their roaring cease,
The heart alone undying murmurs fill.

LXXIII.

AND once again thou wanderest forth alone,
To tempt the false waves of the stormy sea;
Scarce hast thou looked upon thy home, thine own,
Thy household gods; oh, wayward destiny!
It drives thee on to try the world again;
The restlessness of other days comes back.
Dost thou not know, that sword and shield are vain
Against the dragon lurking on its track?
Dost thou not know, the magnet of his gaze
Loosens the nails upon the warrior's mail?
And all unarm'd the hapless wanderer strays,
To find his courage is of no avail.

LXXIV.

YET ere thy sun had set, it gave once more
A blaze of brilliant beauty, as if fate
The bitter martyrdom thy manhood bore
Would in thy end with glory expiate.
All Italy knelt at the wanderer's feet;
They bore him, like a new-found god, to Rome,
Radiant with triumph: see! how nobles greet
The one time captive, torn from fame and home!
All hearts and voices echo Tasso's name;
Proud Aldobrandi greets thee with a tear,
And Clemens speaks the tribute to thy fame,
Earth's haughty Prelate owns thy power here.
" Though laurel crowns on other brows are shining,
The one thou wearest has a brighter sheen,
For glory round its glossy leaves is twining,
And fame immortal brightens on their green."

LXXV.

HARK! to the capitol they call thee on;
Before the world thy laurels shall be given!
Hark! how Italia greets the crown thou'st won!
Hark! how the air by shout and song is riven!
From lattice and from balcony are streaming
The gayest banners and the Poet's bays,
And brilliant eyes their brightest smiles are beaming,
The sweetest guerdon for the Poet's lays.
Hark! how the bells their triumph song are pealing!
See! how the streets are crowded in old Rome!
They seek the modest shrine where thou art kneeling,
'Neath Saint Onufrio's monastic dome.
Tasso, come forth! the gala train is come—
They loudly call thee from thy humble cell;
Come forth! the noble and the fair of Rome
Impatient wait, thy triumph ranks to swell.
Come forth! they seek thee—come, for glowing fame
No brighter fate on mortal heart can shed.
When to the threshold of the cell they came,
They found the spirit flown—their Tasso dead!

LXXVI.

HE who bestows the coronals of light
Hath call'd thee; in thy hour of earthly pride
He sent his angels, in their starry might,
To brighter glories thy glad soul to guide.
On their fair wings, before the ruby throne,
They bear thee in thy dreamless sleep afar.
Wake, Tasso, wake! a wreath is now thine own—
Thine is the glory of the sun and star!
No laurel wreath, whose withering leaves grow pale
Shall bind thy brow; see! see! for thee entwining,
In starry circlet, how the bright stars sail
Around thy head, in brilliant beauty shining!
And hark! the earthly songs have changed their tone,
And hallelujahs echo round the throne!

LXXVII.

“ WILT look upon another poet’s life?
Come o’er the sea, which ebbs on England’s shore,
O’er the white cliffs, which mock the billowy strife,
And wake the breakers’ loud, unceasing roar.
See, where grey clouds are o’er the landscape flying,
And o’er the old towers of that castled hall;
Hark! how the wind, in wailing murmurs dying,
Through the deserted chambers seems to call!
See, how the walls, so proudly desolate,
Frown on the starless heavens, as if defying
The tempest-blast, which shakes their ruin’d state,
And in the grey oaks’ shuddering boughs is lying!”

LXXVIII.

“ ENTER! the banquet halls are cold and bare,
The chambers empty, and their voices mute;
No sound, no footstep, breaks the echoes there;
Through the arch'd roof the wind wails o'er a lute.”
Why, light of song, leav'st thou these noble walls?
Why, voice of song, art thou now dumb and dead?
A stream of sparkling waters swept these halls;
Light, voice, and streamlet, whither are ye fled?
Where is the soul whose dwelling-place hath made
Sunlight and beauty out of night and shade?
O'er whom the tempest's fierce, destroying power,
Gave to the tree its fruit, the plant its flower!

LXXIX.

HIS was a soul far above earthly things;
His song was wild, and fitful as the blast,
Bearing the tempest on its mighty wings,
While devastation howl'd where it hath pass'd.
The golden harvest scatter'd on its path,
The flowers wither'd, and the odours dead;
The linden blossoms scarce outlived its wrath,
Whose fragrant breath the summer's sweetness fed.
But when the heavy clouds are torn apart,
Through the dark gloom a gleam of blue appears—
Type of the beauties of that stormy heart,
Fair 'mid its fearful passions and its tears!

LXXX.

E'EN as the songs from demon lips are said
To drive the soul to madness, so his lute,
By its wild tones the fancy captive led,
And reason, 'neath its magic power, was mute.
The raptured ear hung fondly on his lay,
And spurn'd at reason, when he swept the strings,
The struggling spirit pined to soar away,
Won by the beauty of his Muse's wings.
'Till, when his power he had fully tried
And the heart thrill'd beneath the witching strain;
With scornful smile he threw the wand aside,
And flung the heart from heaven, to earth again!

LXXXI.

Not like the swan, whose tender song is filling
The noontide air with beauty, and the tide
Of some fair river, whose clear wave is thrilling
Beneath the graceful minstrel's snowy pride.
Not like the swan, whose harmony is flowing,
'Mid scenes of peace, and nature's richest bloom,
Where the bright flowers are in the sunset glowing,
And earth is full of beauty and perfume.
Rather art thou the desert's haughty King,
The eagle, brooding on his lonely rock,
And rising high, on bold, unfetter'd wing,
To meet the thunder, and to brave its shock.
Soaring beyond the ken of mortal gaze,
No eye may watch him in his track afar;
Yet not to reach the sun's immortal rays,
He soars to look for carnage, and for war.
His keen, unflinching gaze can pierce the cloud,
He turns on earth a backward eager eye,
He scents the grave worm, and the mould'ring shroud,
The bloody soil where death's cold victims lie!

LXXXII.

UNHAPPY Spirit! all distorted seem
The pictures floating on thy magic glass;
When thou to life and nature's fairest dream
Might give a radiance too bright to pass!
Oh! thine the power to thrill and to subdue,
To call up forms of beauty at thy will,
And yet, thy wayward hand will but renew
Scenes, before which the very heart grows chill.
True, on thy brow the master seal is laid,
True, that to thee the master power is given,
But thou hast sought it in the gloom and shade,
And demon hands thy chain of spells have riven.
When thou mightst soar among the starry sheen!
And sun thy wings, in Eden's glowing bowers;
Thy soul still wanders where the snake has been,
Poisoning earth's fruits, and withering her flowers!

So changed from what thou wert; although the light
Which shone around thy spirit, dazzles yet,
It cannot hide the trace of that dark night,
Which o'er thy genius its seal hath set.
In thee, I see Prometheus and his fate,
I see the vulture, preying on his heart,
Art thou Prometheus, thou, the desolate,
Is thine the victim, or the avenger's part?

LXXXIII.

FORTH from his fathers' halls he goes alone,
He leaves thy abbey, Newstead, desolate,
And those dear ties, e'en his stern heart must own
The best and dearest which on man can wait.
He leaves them all; Ahasuerus wept,
When from his home and kindred he was driven,
His foot ne'er rested, and his eye ne'er slept,
Beneath the anger of offended heaven.
Like to that Eastern king he wanders forth
Through the wide world, nor rest nor peace are given;
Of war and danger he defies the wrath,
And still, before him, happiness is driven.
He cannot grasp the phantom as she flies,
Her smiles, her beauty, they are not for him,
For still upon his soul the dark ban lies,
Beneath whose influence the light grows dim.
Climb the high rock, where yawns the deep abyss,
Swim through the flood of Hellespont's cold stream,
Passion may lure thee, but thy dream of bliss,
Will vanish with the swiftness of a dream!

LXXXIV.

Soon to the golden strand of Tajo's shore
He bears his restless spirit, but in vain;
Where the Atlantic flings its watery main,
Dividing Europe from the swarthy Moor.
And, where the Mediterranean billows leap
To kiss the daybeam, there his steps are turning,
He looks on nature in her peaceful sleep,
And for repose his restless heart is burning.
Soon on the sunbright Pyrenees he stands,
Now, by the Adour's young and rushing wave,
And as he wanders thro' the strangers' lands,
His yearning Spirit one small boon would crave.
It fain would find the peace it may not feel;
It seems to fly, as from its own unrest;
Still on, still on, it wastes its life and zeal,
Striving in vain to bless and to be blest.

LXXXV.

HE stands, where sleep the brave, on Waterloo,
Field, whose green corn now waves above the dead,
The hearts were noble, as their faith was true,
Who on thy bloody plain their life-stream shed.
Hark! a low wail, as from their spirits, fills
The listening air, upon that sacred plain;
Oh! cherish'd earth, my awe-struck bosom thrills,
As the foot treads, where rest thy glorious slain.
How many thousand hearts now mould'ring lie
Beneath thy green corn: hearts who freely gave
A dauntless courage at thy battle cry,
A ready sword to win a bloody grave!
They fell, like laurell'd heroes, bravely fighting,
They rest together, as the brave should rest,
The warrior with warrior's dust uniting,
The green corn waving o'er each mould'ring breast!

LXXXVI.

AND, on the glacier's heights, his thoughtful eye
Watches the waterfall's tumultuous course,
As in a sheet of foam the waters fly,
O'er rock and chasm, with unfetter'd force.
From land to land the pilgrim journeys on:
Where shines the crescent moon from minaret,
Upon his brow in vain its light hath shone,
It hath no charm to wile away regret.
And, like Leander, he will tempt the flood
Of Bosphorus' broad stream; but not, like him,
To win a Hero in her softest mood:
He scoffs at life and danger, for a whim!
He roves thro' many a pass, to distant shore,
He seeks the ruins of the fallen great,
And pictures Athens, as she was of yore,
No longer wailing o'er her widow'd state.

LXXXVII.

HE fights for Greece and her old liberties;
The Spartan courage lives in him again;
It long had faded 'neath her sunny skies,
And Spartan hearts had worn the captive's chain.
But he is with them, and he leads them on
To freedom, and their energy of yore,
When Greece, so oft besieged, saw freedom's sun
Still shine around her island's ocean shore.
Now, her proud head is sinking to the earth,
The sword and brand have left her desolate,
She has no record of her ancient worth,
Save in the legend of her fallen state.
In the dark gloom of night, pale spirits glide
Amid her sacred ruins, where of old,
They trod her temples with a hero's pride,
And their triumphal cars, from victory, roll'd.

But pale and wan, they haunt, in silence, now,
The relics of her greatness and her shame,
The laurel wreaths hang quivering on each brow,
Which Greece had given when she smiled on fame.
'Twas a fit haven for the desolate;
The poet reached his goal, to rove no more,
'Twas the last kindness of relenting fate,
Rest for the pilgrim upon Hellas' shore!

LXXXVIII.

AND still, in every clime, 'neath every sky,
His spirit flow'd in song, the same wild song;
The same dark shadows o'er his lyre-strings lie;
He sings earth's crimes, her sorrows, and her wrong.
" The blended pain, and ardent fire, glowing
In his enthralling lay—oh, can they be
Born of a soul whose happiness is throwing
A radiant veil of hidden ecstasy?
But is the spirit bless'd by earth and heaven,
Which images such horror and despair?
When did it sing of home, and home joys, given
By love's dear ties, the father's watchful care?
The finest, holiest feelings it hath crush'd;
That yearning spirit hugs its inward pain;
Yet on his brow Fame's laurel-rose hath blush'd:
He might be free, yet wears the captive's chain.
Speak! canst thou envy such a wayward fate?
Is this the happiness which thou art seeking?
Scorn on the lip, the sick heart desolate,
And yet too proud to shew that it was breaking."

LXXXIX.

SPIRIT—I spoke,—full many a bleeding heart
Found rest and peace within those lonely graves ;
Yet wherefore shew me life's embitter'd part,
As if o'er grief alone the laurel waves?
I know the past saw many a foul stain,
Flung by ambition, on the laurel's leaves ;
It saw love rivet the unhallow'd chain—
Saw how a heated fancy sorrow weaves.
The present, like the past, has many a tale
Of blighted hopes, perverted life, and grief.
We prize the sun, although 'mid clouds he sail,
Nor for its thorn fling by the flower and leaf.
Flames may destroy our altars and our hearth,
But do we cease to love our crackling fire?
Do we not still admit its useful worth,
And for its very danger prize it higher?

XC.

AND is the chaplet which proud Fame entwined,
Only to grace the lyre and the sword?
Round them alone its magic beauty shineth—
Warrior, poet, lover, reap the glittering hoard.
For them alone it bloometh—shall they be
Smiled on by Fame, while he whose aim has been
To shield his country, set the captive free—
Shall he alone not share Fame's laurel green?
The noble heart, whose energy is given
For justice and the land which gave him birth—
Say, shall the patriot in vain have striven,
And, all forgotten, seek his mother earth?

XCI.

“ FORGOTTEN, not by Fame, but happiness!
Is it enough that on the early bier
A spray of laurel lies, the dead to bless,
And Fame herself bedews it with a tear?
Is it reward enough for wasted frame,
Life spent in striving for his country's weal?
Is not the laurel shadowing his name
Too hardly won by all that murderous zeal?
The noble spirit oftentimes hath yearn'd
For peace and rest, but still it labour'd on,
And, in its patriotism, nobly burn'd
To finish the good works it had begun.
Death threw a veil upon man's hopes and schemes,
And stamp'd upon his brow the seal—'decay.'
'Twas not enough to give his fondest dreams;
His country claim'd himself—the nobler prey;

And then the laurel crowns him, but too late,
Its glossy leaves fall silent on his tomb.
Say, is it meet reward for such a fate,
Those withering leaves, the cold grave's darksome gloom?
On! I will lead thee where two noble dead
Shall from their prison-house—the grave—confess
If the proud halo Fame has o'er them shed
Was smoothly won by calm-brow'd Happiness."

XCII.

“ NOT where the Thames is rolling its proud flood,
Beneath the dark walls of the time-worn Tower,
Where England's history is writ with blood,
And guilt and horror made of yore their bower—
Not there, not there, our eager search begin,
Lest that the murder'd leave their bloody graves,
To tell how party hatred sanction'd sin,
And innocence in vain man's mercy craves.
Swift, let us leave that fearful gloom of thine,
To trace the nobler mansions of the dead—
Westminster! they whom thy proud walls enshrine
Were worthiest 'mid the worthy, for they fed
The starry radiance science loves to meet;
The brilliant flame high deeds and valour brings,
And Britain proudly their fair names may greet,
Borne on the high track of Fame's glittering wings.
They who have nobly suffer'd and have wept,
They who have fought through many a day of glory,
Here, on fair tablets, is their memory kept,
And after ages read the thrilling story.

The meed of praise, so nobly earn'd, is given,
And justice lights upon the dead at last;
Here, not in vain, the patriot heart hath striven;
Here, not in vain, it rests from trials past.
In those three graves, reposing side by side,
Are they whom every voice has named as great;
A nation laid them here, in tearful pride;
Here mayst thou ponder on their blissful state."

XCIII.

“ YET were they happy? Call on them by name—
Call him, whom last a nation buried here;
His clay shall answer thee, and tell thee, Fame
Gave all she had of peace—an early bier!
Call him, the third of those illustrious dead,¹⁶
Whose steady hand Britannia’s bark hath steer’d;
Secure and free, along the main it sped,
And Glory’s haven, ’neath his hand, it near’d.
The watchful pilot slumbereth at last,
The mighty soul has rent its bonds in twain,
Earth and its troubles from his sight has pass’d,
The inspired spirit seeks its home again.
Faithfully, nobly did it keep the light
Undimm’d, unstain’d, on Freedom’s glorious shrine,
And justice, honour, sunn’d them in his sight,
Cowardice and tyranny did sickening pine.
He labour’d for his country’s spotless weal,
For England’s honour’d altars, and her throne.
Who that could blame so pure, so true a zeal,
Who would not wish to make such faith his own?”

XCIV.

“ HE did not call it glory to betray,
To bend the powers of speech his end to gain—
To meet the false, as he were false as they—
To deal in promises, and make them vain.
No, he would conquer with an upright heart,
Justice and truth his weapons and his shield,
And proudly spurn'd the mean and treacherous art
A little soul had too well known to wield.
He wedded truth with justice, and he thrust
The dark plots of the false ones forth to light;
Forth, for a world to judge them and distrust,
He drew them from concealment's veiled night.
His noble soul has stamp'd the man as great,
As bearing of the dross of earth no part;
Where others wear the star of empty state,
In his warm breast he bore a feeling heart!”

XCV.

“NAME the reward which bless'd his weary strife?
Did he e'er rest, beneath the setting sun,
In garden bowers, with fragrant beauty rife,
Rejoicing that his weary day was done.
Like to the reaper, when the harvest home
Tells that his joyous labour now is o'er,
Could he, like him, in peace and rest then come,
Rejoicing o'er his harvest's golden store?
Not so, not so, but in the warm noontide,
When all his hardest labour was begun,
He sank exhausted: not o'er him may glide
The dewy freshness of the setting sun.
As, on a lonely tower, the watch-light glows
O'er raging billows, 'mid the wild wind's raving,
So stood he lonely there, to meet his foes,
The tempest and its perils boldly braving.
Yes! thou mayst see the wreath which binds his hair,
And to thine eyes it seems all beauty now;
Thou canst not see the thorn which lurketh there,
Tearing with bloody wounds his throbbing brow!”

XCVI.

'Tis well, I said,—he went unto his home,
After a hard work'd and a sultry day,
A noble harvest to his lot hath come,
Let others bear the golden sheaves away.
He fell like hero, full of scars and fame,
Whose dying welcome to the grave was given,
When Victory had shouted loud his name,
And pointed to the fields where he had striven—
Still from his dark grave does a voice arise,
Hist! 'tis his spirit calls; from pole to pole,
The free-born Briton's noble motto flies:
'Religion, justice, freedom, rule man's soul!'

XCVII.

THEY, who in life had turn'd from him away,
Moons of the night, while he was day's bright sun,
See, now they own his spirit's mighty sway,
And echo wide the noble works begun.
Is it not bliss, the noblest bliss of all,
Thus in our deeds to live, tho' life has pass'd,
To know that blessings o'er our grave will fall,
That fame is ours, so long as time shall last!
His heirs are rich in the proud fame he leaves,
Rich in the lustre his fair spirit sheds;
From his green chaplet fell some quivering leaves,
See, how they brighten now upon their heads!
The charm is still unbroken; they have laid
The great magician's seal within his tomb,
And vulgar hands may not its peace invade;
Still works the magic powerfully from its gloom.

XCVIII.

AND he has left us for the starry halls
Of that far better land beyond the skies;
The world, complaining, on his memory calls,
To screen it from the ills which still arise.
But he is gone, and his fair name is left,
To live for ages, ay, while time shall be;
The mourning earth, of its best guide bereft,
Shall breathe its blessings o'er his memory.
Thou envier of his greatness, look how bright
The flaming glory shineth on his track!
Such was the prophet's chariot of light,
When heaven call'd him to its glories back.

XCIX.

“ WAS the world better while he lived than now;
Its glory brighter, or its peace more fair?
Did all its blessings vanish at the blow
With which death laid the true heart breathless there?
Since he is gone, speak, are its blessings less?
Have justice, virtue, order, left the earth?
It is not freedom only which can bless;
Man does not want its unrestricted worth.
His restless spirit will be happier far,
When limits to its active powers are given;
He does not thank the hand which raised the bar,
And framed the ladder, leading up to heaven.
Though his glad feet may try the golden track,
Though in the light of freedom he may soar,
He better loves the voice which calls him back
To the same pathway he had trod of yore.”

c.

AND on, again, we floated thro' the air;
I saw the blue sky mirror'd in the tide,
And 'neath my feet the breezy downs shone fair;
Then gloomy forests flung their shadows wide.
The smiling fields of Brabant's rich domain
Caught the bright sunbeam as we floated by,
'Till a luxuriant land's bold mountain chain
Mark'd with its purple tints the deep blue sky.
I saw the noble minster's lofty towers,
The broad waves of a rushing mighty river,
The vine-clad hills, where, from luxuriant bowers,
The cluster'd grapes in brilliant sunshine quiver.
The venerable towns, where true hearts beat
In German bosoms, with the strength of yore;
Where Faith has chosen her domestic seat,
And German voices bless the ear once more.
Thou heart of Europe! may the living God
Preserve the healthy pulse which beats in thee,
Preserve the German hearts which bless thy sod,
Keep thee and thine, the loyal and the free!

CI.

I SAW the Rhine, the god of boundaries, flowing
Along the vineyards, and the castled height,
Whose moss-grown battlements in sunlight glowing,
Look'd nobler for their pine-woods' chasten'd light.
The ruin'd castles, and the forests, stood
On either shore of that broad rolling stream,
Crowning the hills which rise above its flood,
In all the charm of nature's wildest dream.
But on we rush'd, o'er distant meadows far,
Back to the spot which we had left of yore;
Until I greeted, 'neath the first bright star,
The Danube's silent wave and verdant shore.
Bounded by many a green and lovely height,
O'er which the evening sunset lingering slept,
A sea of houses lay, half shade, half light,
The imperial city there its proud seat kept.

CII.

I SAW the gold corn waving o'er thy sod,
Thou field of death, where once I look'd on war,
Where the proud warhorse in the fierce strife trod,
And the loud tumult echoed wide and far.
From the dark graves, where heroes now are lying,
See, how the wildling flowers spring so fair!
The blood that flow'd, thy soil with crimson dying,
Has left no record of its dark track there.
But to the world, that crimson tide has given,
The lovely shine of hope, which cannot die:
When the young day, glad messenger from heaven,
First smiled on Europe from the Eastern sky.
The life-blood glistened, crimson as the morn,
And gallant hearts e'en then had ceased to beat;
And then, proud yearnings! freedom, peace, new-born,
Seem'd, from the strife, our troubled earth to greet.

CIII.

FAIR welcome to thee, in thy blood-stain'd mail,
Thou, who wert one of that day's glowing dawn!
I see the standards in the glad air sail;
Rejoicing sounds of victory wake the morn.
And once again, from fire and smoke, bright springing,
The double eagle soars to meet the sun;
Above the battle its proud pathway winging,
When the fierce contest fiercely had begun.
Scion of the Cesars! hail, bold Spirit, hail!
Thou strength and shield of Germany's old right,
Thy hero courage made Gaul's eagle quail,
Thy arm was seen, the foremost in the fight.
The coronal of glory was thine own,
Ere yet so cheaply won was wreath of Fame,
When hero hearts could win the wreath alone,
And hero blood inscribe a deathless name.

CIV.

AND when on other fields brave ranks were met,
To shield the crown, and many a boundary right,
On future weal thy noble aim was set,
And to preserve our glory thou didst fight.
Thou foughtest to revenge the oppressing shame,
Which we had tamely suffer'd, all too long,
Thou foughtest to exalt the German name,
Foughtest to shield the German soil from wrong.
And who so fit as thee to be our shield!
Forth from the dust thy arm has borne, unstain'd,
The glory of our land, on bloody field,
And pure and free its vigorous power maintain'd.
For other blessings many a standard waved,
From north to south a bloody path they made;
But thou, for naked honour, death hast braved,
On thy proud flag, glory's best wreath is laid.
And when, for honour, thou hadst fought and bled,
Rejoicing, thou didst leave the victory won,
For some green leaves had fallen on thy head,
The glorious share which thou hadst made thine own.

CV.

AND it was dark ; night came, the stilly night!
In the wide space of deep blue ether lay
The silver boat, whence Luna's eyes shone bright,
Over the flood, whose waters whirling play
Beneath our feet, in dark yet lustrous pride,
As on the shore, and 'mid the isles, they glide!
Dumb lay the city, its loud voice was hush'd,
Its dwellers lay in mute and deep repose;
The lonely mourner's tears no longer gush'd
A hidden rain, o'er solitary woes.
The joyous dance of pleasure now was o'er,
The voice of revelry and song was still;
The very pang of pain was felt no more,
Alike oblivion lay, o'er joy and ill.
Slumber, o'er all, its downy wings did fold,
Slumber, the one dear boon which earth bestows,
Which low and high, with equal right may hold,
Tired joy's glad refuge, balm for misery's woes.

CVI.

THEN, as we glided down on earth again,
I saw, in starry light, all dimly shining,
A mighty statue, on whose charger's rein
The moonbeams were a mellow glory twining.
Crown'd was the head, in noble, stern repose;
The metal seem'd a spirit life to hold.
In the uncertain light its dark form glows,
Bright in its darkness, in its warm life cold.
An inward shudder seized me, as I gazed
Upon the giant statue standing there;
Its spirit voice on the still air it raised,
And to my boding heart it seem'd to bear
Tidings of coming evil, yet untold,
Brought to this world by him from realms of light.
"Hist! thou must hear me!" thunder'd stern and bold,
In loud, commanding accents, through the night.

CVII.

Oh, thou! great son of ancestors as great!
Oh, thou!—I said—to whom a God has given
The strong arm worthy of its regal state!
Thou valiant warrior! thy arm has striven
For truth, for justice, and for light; oh, thou,
The mighty man, upon thy royal throne;
Thou, whose inspired life did warmly glow
For the best gifts which decorate a crown.
Thy hand has torn the darksome veil aside,
Which lay for ages on the heart of man;
From falsities the wavering soul did guide,
To worship truth, on Heaven's holy plan.

CVIII.

WHERE'ER the eye can rest thy path has been,
From southern snows, to where the billows break
On pagan shores; the brilliant track is seen
Of all thy wanderings. Glory's self doth make
Halos of splendour shrine thy name and thee.
So long as hearts can throb for what is great,
So long shall glory shroud thy memory,
So long shall time still spare thy glowing Fate.
Wave follows wave in the deep sea of time,
And with them many a stream of glory pass'd;
But thine resisteth with a strength sublime,
Vast, bright, undying, thine shall ever last.

CIX.

So shalt thou stand, like Memnon's polish'd shrine,
Which, when Aurora danced along the sky,
Thrill'd with a strain of harmony divine;
And when the sun on purple clouds did lie,
Sinking beneath the sparkling sea to rest,
Soft, sorrowing music wail'd the parting light,
In mournful echoes from its faithful breast,
Scared by the shadows of the gloomy night.
So shalt thou stand, enlighten'd by the sun,
Protecting genius, over Austria's plains,
Blessing the hands which end thy works begun,
Blessing the hearts in which thy spirit reigns—
Blessing the hearts, who, like to thee, have given
Their strength and vigour to the God of heaven;
Disgraced, contemn'd, and still they labour on,
True soldiers, fighting for their martyr faith;
And purer, brighter shines the light they've won,
Though sown in misery, and reap'd in death!

CX.

“ BUT was he happy—he, the good and brave?
I saw him wander, death was in his heart,
Ingratitude had bow’d him to the grave;
I saw the hopes which cheer’d him all depart.
The lamp of hope, whose flame once burnt so bright,
I saw its light extinguish’d in his hand;
I saw his broken spirit sink in night;
Abandon’d and alone I saw him stand,
Mourning the angel woman, who was gone¹⁷
To her calm grave—mourning with silent tears,
And yearning for the hour he might lay down
The burden of his sorrows and his years.
I saw him turn, as with remorse, away
From all the works he had so nobly plann’d;
I saw him cast the green bough to decay,
Destroy the good seed with a ruthless hand.”

CXI.

“ AND on the grave of him, the first of kings,
I saw a Baal dance, triumphant led;
Saw Bacchanalian joy unfold its wings—
Shameless venality exalt its head.
Saw Freedom's goddess, in her priestess' veil,
Push'd from the altars she had fed so long;
I heard her parting prayer, her dying wail,
Lost in the echoes of licentious song.
And in her place, in bold, unseemly pride,
Wearing nor robe nor veil, a vile form came,
Lust and dishonour in her eyes did hide:
She was the liberty which waits on shame.
I saw the insignia of her name and state,
The cap of liberty borne high in air;
But he who strove to win the pure and great,
Whose soul was light, whose very thought was prayer—

He who, though man, had been by man esteem'd,
Whose fortune was no gift of blinded fate—
Shall not his royal efforts be but deem'd
Lightly and scornfully, though pure and great?
Shall not the errors of the times be made
A ready calumny, a heartless blame,
That all his labours ended but in shade,
That he has left the world in sin and shame!"

CXII.

“ THIS is the happiness the noble soul
Gains as reward for all its eager trials
To reach the distant, bright, and heavenward goal,
And rest its wings beneath the sun’s fair smiles!
This is the price of all his care and pain;
He who would make the world a better thing,
Him does the world cast off, and all in vain
Has been his ardent soul’s aspiring.
The world but leaves him on its trodden track,
It giveth him nor thanks, nor gratitude,
Not even a glance it casteth on him back,
Tho’ his good deeds were writ in his heart’s blood.
When man unveils truth’s hidden mysteries,
He grasps at truth, and wins doubt and mistrust;
And whether truth or falsehood therein lies,
He asks not, but believes in ecstasies.
It little matters, to this race of dust,

Whether from truth's pure crystal spring it drink,
Or quench its thirst at error's fountain brink,
The draught is ever from the world conceal'd,
Unless by dreamers, like to him, reveal'd."

CXIII.

AWAY from me, thou Spirit of dark lies,
Away, thou scorner of the good and great;
Thy despicable doctrine I despise,
It cannot rob the good man's glowing fate;
For even thou must own his heavenly life;
The arrows of thy wit fall pointless there.
Silence, dark Spirit, cease thy cruel strife,
Against the noble soul Heaven made so fair!
Though legion were thy name, I would defy
Thy cruel doctrines, and, ay, even thee.
Darest thou name them dreamers, whose fond eye
Turns to the light of heaven unceasingly?
Darest thou name them dreamers, who are glowing,
The god inspired, with fire from heaven caught;
The noble type of man, even thou art shewing
As with a more than mortal beauty fraught.

The noble type of man, which even thou,
Vile as thou art, and bound in error's chain,
Art forced both worth and honour to allow:—
Though thou wouldst scorn, thy scorn is all in vain.
Oh! did there come upon our earthly ball
One like to him, even in a hundred years,
It were enough to guard the world from all
Thy specious arts, and all thy wily sneers.

CXIV.

PRAISE be to God! a holier sense hath sprung
In bosoms of the anointed and the just;
Pleading more powerfully than thy lying tongue,
And covering thee with shame and with mistrust.
See here! this bronze shall tell a coming race,
This senseless marble shall reveal the name
Of that true heart, whose homage it doth trace
Unto the great and good, the worthy fame.¹⁸
And what pure hearts, like unto this, proclaim,
Shall stand for aye, despite the bad man's might;
With noble fire for inspiration fight—
Fire which is kindled at the purest shrine!
It is eternal, combat it in vain,
For truth which once hath shone shall ever shine,
And through all ages steady light maintain.

CXV.

AND not the conqueror alone, but they,
Who do maintain the good and constant cause,
Are worthy that fame's coronal of bay
Should crown their brows with glory and applause!
How many noble swords have clash'd in fight,
That justice might the world appease at last;
Whether or not the buds unfold their white,
In God's hand lies success, by him the lot is cast.
Then noble be the struggles they have made
To reach the light, and burst from darkness forth!
Look on that fresh grave in the chilly north,
A hero of humanity in its dark lap is laid.
'Tis but the temperate victor who is truly great,
Not they, whose murderous spirits move in blood,
The fame of mercy clings around his fate,
And even history writes his deeds as good:
The judgment of the world they have withstood.

CXVI.

LEAD me to Isar's green and flowery shore,
A prince died there, of Wittelbach's proud race;
The silent tears, which did the dead deplore,
Sawest thou glittering on each sadden'd face?
The tears which mourn'd the good, the mild, the just,
The righteous spirit, didst thou see them shed,
Over the cold and all unconscious dust?
And yet their ruler is not lost, though dead.
For see, he leaveth them a son behind,
Great, noble, resolute, and like to him,
With energy to govern,—firm, yet kind,
Not for the future, are their sad eyes dim,
Not for the future do they weep—his arm
Will shield them, as his father's did, of yore;
Not for the future do they feel alarm:
They mourn the friend whom they may greet no more!
When from his own a father hath departed,
Are not the children's tears in sorrow shed;
And he, their father, he, the noble-hearted,
Shall they not weep for him, their holy dead!

CXVII.

THOUGH flowers of love and song, oft withering fell
From life's green tree, hath that tree never worn
Ripe golden fruit? Did never fond hearts swell
With lover's bliss, a bliss in silence borne?
I see the towers of Westminster afar:—
Hist! I will ask the demi-god of song,
Whose lyre hangeth on the morning star,
Him will I ask, if, when the listening throng,
Enchanted, heard the music of his lyre,
Whose thrilling accents made each bosom glad,
If sorrow brighten'd his poetic fire,
Quench'd his light joy, and made his spirit sad:
So that his noblest lays were sang in tears—
Lays, that a wondering world repeateth yet—
Lays that have lived, that shall outlive the years
Of future ages, with his tears were wet.

CXVIII.

Ask him, who resteth where the surges beat
Of the bold Ilm, whose lingering waters listen'd
To the sweet strains his lute-harp did repeat,
When 'neath his hand its golden strings oft glisten'd;
Ask him, o'er whom fresh sorrow still is waking,
That God recall'd him to the heavenly quire,
And death's dark angel, through his listeners breaking,
Bore with swift wings the poet and his lyre.
Ask him, the cherub, with his sword and shield,
In whom the man and child together met;
Whose spirit floateth in the starry field,
Where the eternal planets rise and set—
Ask him, if his poor heart hath never trembled
With holy bliss—a bliss he could not name;
When his bright gaze the hidden joy dissembled,
And the soft teardrops on his eyelids came?

CXIX.

FULL often, that the world as sorrow names,
Is but the bliss which lives in hidden fire;
Like the Asbestos, purified in flames,
When weaker things would perish in their ire.
So are their tears, though scanty understood,
Like Maydew, in the eyes which weep them, glowing!
In war the heart rejoiceth, wounds and blood
Are all forgotten, when in breezes flowing,
The flag of victory kisseth the glad sky,
And inspiration in its arms doth lie:
The inspiration God himself enwreathed
Around our hearts, when, in the lifeless clay,
His holy lips immortal essence breathed—
Eternal bond we should survive decay!

CXX.

As sparkling in the clear and waveless sea,
The sun in one broad mass of flame is glowing,
And in reflected light, all gloriously
On ocean's silver shield its rays is throwing;
As rising lightly from a veil of mist,
In the deep, dark-blue, trackless fields of air,
The brilliant rainbow hath the hill-tops kiss'd,
And left its diadem upon them there;
The sapphire and the chrysolite so bright,
The gold and purple streaks which waving lie,
They but reflect the primal, glorious light,
Though hidden to the ken of human eye.
So are the rays which inwardly are glowing
With a mysterious beauty all too bright,
Images of the sun, and ever shewing
The bright reflection of the well-known light!

CXXI.

AND woe! and woe! if from this earth departing,
Should Inspiration to her heaven soar,
For then the soul would sink in night once more,
And death-chills o'er creation's life be darting!
The soul would have no more consoling food!
And crime would wake despair and pallid fear;
Murder would walk our streets, a thing of blood,
And God, in justice, turn from mercy's tear!
Then the luxurious seed of vice would spring,
Water'd with blood, infesting all the earth;
And, all uncheck'd, the Will, with ready wing,
Would follow wishes to which vice gave birth.
No law would rule, no justice longer guide,
No bond of love would keep men's actions more,
For all they had of good would then have died,
When Inspiration to her heaven did soar.

CXXII.

ALL that is glorious and good would fade;
Friendship would be a tale to cheat the ear;
And love and faith, in one dark hour betray'd,
Unite no more the hearts which held them dear.
Our fatherland would see its sons no more
Rally around it in the hour of strife;
And the mute lips of minstrel would not pour
Harmonious songs, with joy and beauty rife.
The holy deeds of innocence would see
Nor heart to love, nor arm to shield them then;
But hate and scorn their heritage would be,
In the bad hearts of weak, ungovern'd men.
Then, like the wild beast of the desert sand,
Man would but follow his own lawless will;
His changing passions, like a demon band,
Would goad him on to misery and ill!

CXXIII.

YET though the world, with cold and scornful smile,
Deride that heaven-born and glowing flame,
And dare the aspirings of the soul revile,
And moonstruck madness those wild longings name;
And though it mete the worth by weight and measure,
E'en of that wreath which floateth 'mid the stars,
And scorns the hand which strives to grasp the treasure,
And fain would fetter it in prison bars,
It cannot understand, though it revile.
Oh, Inspiration! star, to point the way
Where sleep thy sacred ones in honour'd pile,
The world may scorn, it cannot check thy sway,
For still thy temple and thy throne will rise,
The world will still defame, but all in vain,
It must behold thee, though with sullen eyes;
It cannot check thy worship or thy reign!

CXXIV.

AND priests will not be wanting at that shrine,
Nor faithful hearts to stand around the throne;
But they who would be vassals must not pine
To find a rough and rugged path their own.
They must not hide the toil upon their way,
For broad paths lead not to thy glittering halls;
And they who would thy golden rules obey
Must climb the rocks where thy least sunbeam falls.
They who would win that coronal sublime
Must bear the cross, and make it all their own,
Like the Knights Templar of the olden time,
Poor in the world, rich in the heart alone;
Wearing a cord and sword, like them of yore,¹⁹
But nought of selfishness the hearts must wear,
Who have cast off the world for evermore,
And Holy Cross upon their mantles bear.

CXXV.

YET all whose lips that fiery draught have wet,
Are happy, yes! I will declare them bless'd;
For on their origin their eyes are set,
They see the immortal essence in their breast.
It cannot be destroy'd by mortal hand,
The germ of light and truth and holy bliss;
The heroes falling for their fatherland,
Were animated by a zeal like this.
When their deep death-wounds pour'd the sanguine tide,
Then, even then, they shouted victory,
For their bold hearts, to noble thoughts allied,
Saw beyond death themselves and country free!
The thought is heaven-born within the soul,
Which marketh out itself a worthy goal,
And makes man labour, love, and suffer on,
Unchanged, unwavering, 'till that goal be won.
Yes! they were bless'd; I envy them their bliss,
A thousand joys were floating in their pain,
Yes! they were bless'd! for suffering like to this,
Is but a link in joy's ecstatic chain!

CXXVI.

“AND art thou happy?” said the Spirit,—“thou
Who scorneth prudence on his downy bed,
Although no cares are furrowing his brow,
Though gentle slumber pilloweth his head?
Safe are the paths on which he moves along;
Chain’d to its anchor, safe in haven lying,
His bark is moor’d; the far-off billows’ song
In a low murmur over it is dying.
While thou art wandering on a rocky path,
Tempting the frail bridge, some new-fallen tree,
Thrown o’er the deep abyss by Tempest’s wrath;
Rent rocks around, the bare clouds over thee!
Speak, art thou happy, thou, whose life has been
An empty strife to reach a far-off goal?
Speak—in the toil and danger of the scene,
Did joy e’er minister unto thy soul?”

CXXVII.

YES! I am happy! could I ne'er attain
That goal; its beauty hath my spirit fired;
Though all my toil, my efforts, were in vain,
Mine eyes have gazed upon it, and admired!
As Moses stood before the promised land,
And knew it by the tokens of its bliss;
So do my yearnings fly, an eager band,
To greet a distant light so dear as this!
So stand I, gazing from the mountain's brow
Upon the promised land, in distance lying;
Yes, I am happy!—though the death-throe now
Silenced my pulses, I were bless'd in dying!
For I have gazed upon its far-off light,
Its flower-bright vales, its roses and its streams,
Its dancing sunbeams gloriously bright,
Its silver seas, I see them in my dreams!
Although my foot may never press the sod,
I yet have seen its glory and its bloom.
And Moses' foot the promised land ne'er trod;
He found upon its threshold a calm tomb.

CXXVIII.

“WHAT hast thou won, I ask, though thou hast seen
The luscious grapes on Kaleb’s branching vine?
Thou hast but gazed upon their glowing sheen—
To taste their ripen’d fruit was never thine.
What hast thou won, that thou hast cast aside
Life’s stern reality, to clasp a dream?”
What have I won?—the courage and the pride
To *bear reality*, though harsh she seem.
What have I won?—the firm and holy trust,
Which looks beyond the darkness into light;
Though it see merit humbled to the dust,
And empty heads adorn’d with circlet bright:
The fool exalted to the wise man’s place;
Virtue in misery left, to pine forsaken,
While vice triumphantly, with painted face,
The echoes with her boldest songs doth waken.
Though I see vice and base unworthiness
Scare modest virtue from the gates of bliss;
The evil tree thrive, as if Heaven did bless
Its growth, and bid the lightnings that tree miss—

While scathed and ravaged is the noble stem
By the same lightnings, as if Heaven had given
Stronger destroying power unto them,
And 'gainst the noble tree that power had driven;—
Although I see all this—my heart hath won
The strength to see it, and to still hope on!

CXXIX.

AND thus let me the better future greet
Which in me lives, which I in spirit see;
For I must move with swift unwearying feet,
To meet the day-dawn of Eternity!
Following the stars on whom I boldly trust!
To whom my faith in confidence is given;
When from my feet I shake off earthly dust,
And flower-bright rain floats over me from heaven;
Then, even then, it will be mine to cherish
The calm and beautiful and deep repose;
Then, even then, to rise from things which perish,
And hail the day-dawn which so nobly glows!
I know that He, the Great undying One,
Wakens the music of the starry spheres;
He gave its radiance to day's glorious sun,
And bade it rise and set in dewy tears.

He moves upon the waters, and his voice
Bids the loud tempest's hollow murmurings cease;
He lets the weary mariner rejoice
In the far beacon-light which whispers peace!
And from his hand no seed e'er vainly fell;
In his good time the harvest he will end;
In his dread hand my soul feels all is well;
In his good time he will his angels send!

CXXX.

“ Now then”—began the Spirit—“ let us part,
And if a dream thy happiness, still dream;
Once waken'd, peace will vanish from thy heart,
And that deceitful slumber veil its beam.”
Then I look'd round, and lo! the same green trees,
Meadows and hedges, where the light was glancing;
And over all, the swift track of the breeze
Gracefully set the leaves and flowers dancing.
While like to Phœnix with the wings of flame,
The sun sank brightly to his slumbers down,
And lustrous lights reflected from him came,
And laid upon the boughs a bright green crown.
While vale and meadow lay in rosy sheen,
'Twas as if Nature held high festival;
And fain would shew herself a peerless queen,
In gala dress, whose tints shone bright o'er all.
But then the shade, like smoke wreath, gliding slow,
Dissolved in air, and vanish'd from my side;
A dusky cloud swept o'er the sunset glow,
And with it the last traces of my guide.



SAPPHO TO PHAON.

I saw thee in a dream,
I felt thy kisses on my brow,
I saw thy eyes with rapture beam;
Where art thou now?

I saw thy noble form,
I heard thy soft voice naming me,
Thy breath upon my cheek was warm:
Say, was it thee?

I was no more alone,
Thy presence could night's darkness banish;
I heard thee whisper—"Love! my own!"
Why didst thou vanish?

I turn'd to answer thee,
But a dark spirit hurried thee away;
And sadness fell then over me:
Couldst thou not stay?

Was it a mocking dream?
Or was thy Spirit near me then?
Once more let that bright vision o'er me gleam:
Come back again!

Was it of heaven or hell,
An angel, or a demon, near me then?
I care not—from thy lips the accents fell:
Come back again!

GIVE ME THY HAND.

GIVE me thy hand once more,
Draw it not coldly from my grasp;
Rememberest thou that time of yore,
When I thy hand might clasp!

Take all I have to give thee now,
My falling tears, my frequent sighs;
My happiness was in the vow
Now worthless in thine eyes.

And happiness is mine no more,
Now that thy heart is cold and free;
Yet once as in those days of yore,
Give that dear hand to me!

Yes! let me press it once again,
E'en though it answer not the thrill
Which runs through every quivering vein,
And bids my pulse be still.

Give me thy hand, I ask no more,
Though neither love nor friendship thine;
One moment let me linger o'er
The hopes which once were mine.

Give me thy hand, and we will part,
But ne'er, oh! ne'er to meet again;
Farewell cold hand, and colder heart,
Thy tears fall now in vain.

THE FALLING STAR.

I.

THE crimson hues, the purple and the gold,
Which colour o'er the sunset hour of eve,
Had faded from the twilight's mantle fold,
One after one, yet lingering, loth to leave.
But they were gone, and o'er the solemn sky,
Robed in a veil of deep unfathom'd blue,
Mysterious eyes look'd forth, and wings did fly,
Unseen yet heard, as twilight deeper grew.
And one by one the bright eyes beaming came,
Nor e'er withdrew their stedfast holy gaze;
The unseen wings moved on a track of flame,
Fed by the lustre of the silver rays
Which from the Queen of Heaven, the Moon, did
 brightly blaze.

II.

THROUGH the vast vault of heaven did sweetly fly
A wondrous harmony; it was the spheres,
Moving in music o'er the listening sky;
And then the bright eyes wept delicious tears.
Down to the earth those sparkling tears fell down,
And earth received them with a grateful kiss;
On leaf and flower they lay, a radiant crown,
Feeding material life with mystic bliss;
'Till the bright beams flash'd from their glorious sun,
And gather'd up those precious drops again,
And bore them to the vast Immortal One,
Who pour'd them out in a soft falling rain;
When thirsty earth pined for that boon, and not in vain.

III.

THE Immortal Essence which gives life and light,
Springs from the One omniscient and supreme;
It burneth in the eyes which hallow night;
It gloweth in the daylight's sunny beam.
A breath of that Immortal Essence lent
Lustre and power to the starry eyes,
And tenderly on earth their gaze was bent,
Which 'neath the watching heaven calmly lies.
And as they gazed, the viewless wings did wave
To bear the spiritual to earth afar;
They did not know the earth was one wide grave,
Whose darkness e'en their holy light would mar,
Quenching the spiritual life of the immortal star.

IV.

THE earth look'd beautiful in her calm sleep,
Too beautiful, and glittering like a queen;
The stars look'd forth, and each bright star did weep
He could not wave his winglets in her sheen.
The stars look'd forth, they saw her calm repose;
The germ of light within them could not deem
So sweet a rest might screen a thousand woes :
The stars were spiritual, not supreme.
Then the Immortal Essence, high o'er all,
Will'd that one star should quench on earth his light;
But they who envied that glad star his fall,
Could not foresee that it should end in night,
And darkness shadow those eyes shining now so bright.

V.

THROUGH the vast space of ether, like a thought,
A rapid thought, the star went downward flashing,
And as he came near earth, his quick sense caught
The distant din of swords and sabres clashing.
And as he came near earth, his lustre faded,
'Till as he struck the green and verdant sod,
A dark dark veil his bright eyes' beaming shaded;
The light which lived in them return'd to God!
And now the star, no more a star, could feel
His viewless form, his wings, in thick air bound;
He felt the glory from his being steal,
And heavy sadness weigh him to the ground.
Yet still he look'd with eager eye upon the earth around.

VI.

THE music of the spheres he heard no more,
But yet he saw the starry eyes of heaven;
In vain he strove to stretch his wings and soar,
No more to him the soaring power was given!
And for the music of the starry spheres,
He heard the weapons clashing in the fight,
And saw the orphan's and the widow's tears
Flow at the battle cry—"Our Queen and right!"
He saw the miser gloating o'er his gold,
He saw the beggar starving at his door,
And at each glittering heap the miser told,
He felt 'twas well that virtue should be poor,
If she had found the faith to worship and endure.

VII.

FOR in the rich man's bosom, worldly lust
Had quench'd the essence of immortal light;
And poorer than the beggar in the dust,
His purple splendour told of inward night.
No prayer was on his lips or in his heart,
His every thought unto the world was given,
Faith and good deeds were of his creed no part;
His own importance would ensure him heaven!
He saw the rich man on the thorny bed
Of sickness and of death, and there his gold
No comfort o'er the parting soul could shed;
No word of hope its glittering treasure told,
For never yet eternity was bought by man or sold!

VIII.

AND then the fallen star in bitterness
Wail'd o'er the earth, all lovely though she be,
And then he own'd her beauty could not bless,
Until from sinful fetters she was free.
Where'er he look'd, he look'd on want and crime,
He saw the black spots on the sun's broad face,
He saw the snake's track leaving blight and slime
In every fragrant bower and blooming place.
And then the fallen star did vainly shake
His heavy wings, to soar back to his heaven;
In vain, in vain, his chains he could not break,
In vain, in vain, his spirit wings have striven;
Back to the smiling earth his struggling wings were driven.

IX.

AND never more, oh! never more to leave
This home of misery for holy bliss;
Never to watch, with flashing eye, the eve,
Steal o'er a sunny, treacherous world like this!
He struggled vainly in his wild despair,
He call'd the stars, but they shone heedless on;
For to the outward eye the world was fair,
The inward eye could pierce its veil alone.
So be it then; though spiritual no more,
My wings refuse to bear me back from earth,
The star will not forget he once could soar,
Will not forget his old primeval worth,
And the Immortal Essence which has given him birth!

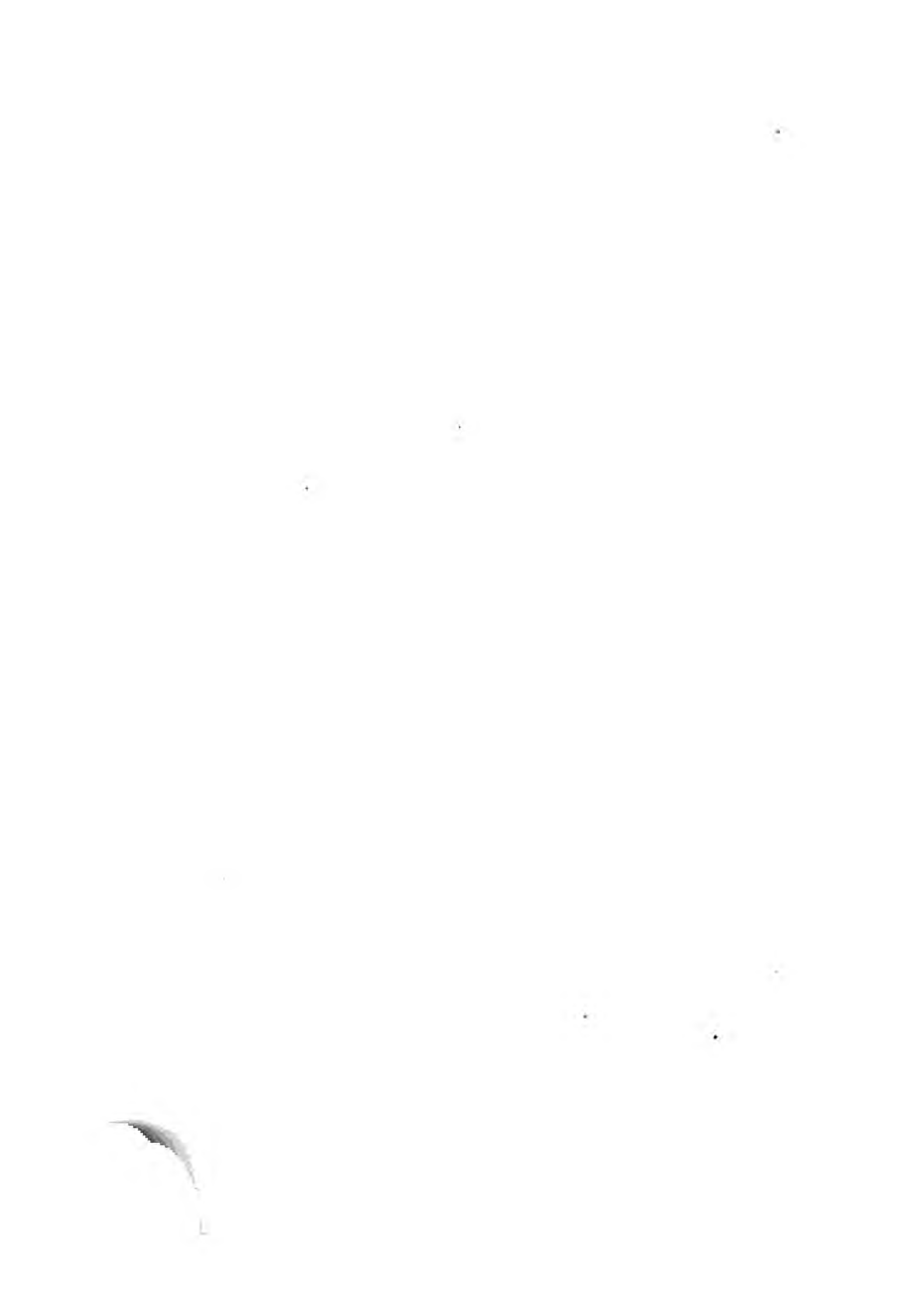
X.

THEN o'er him came a beautiful repose,
And gentle voices sang around him "peace!"
Once more a lustre o'er him faintly glows,
His restless wings their useless flutterings cease.
He sees the glorious one, the living God;
The cross that holy one so meekly bore,
And as he falls in tears upon the sod,
His eyes are shining with their light of yore!
The vision passes—all is dark again;
But the immortal mandate he has heard,
"Go, stir the hearts of weak unrighteous men,
And sow therein the spirit of my word!"
And with a holy hope his spiritual life is stirr'd.

XI.

ONCE more he is a Spirit, and once more
The germ within him bursts forth into light;
What though his eyes are not the stars of yore,
He bears an inward eye more purely bright!
And forth he wanders, viewless, o'er the world,
He enters man's dark soul, and all is day;
In every land his banner is unfurl'd,
He helps the pilgrim on his rugged way.
He is no more a star in midnight skies,
But, dearer far, the starlight of the soul;
Heaven's viewless messenger, o'er earth he flies,
To point thro' narrow paths the distant goal,
And urge weak hearts to burst from sin's control!

This is a splendid poem



NOTES

TO THE

TODTENKRÄNZE

NOTE 1, PAGE 11.

“Memento Mori” were the only words the strict order of the Carthusian monks were allowed to utter.

NOTE 2, PAGE 18.

In the Austrian military journals, authentic documents of former times, taken from the archives of the Minister of War, were published, which went far to prove Wallenstein's complete innocence. Freiherr Von Hormayr, in a most able review in the Vienna Jahrbüchern (year books) of literature, has endeavoured to show the untenability of this assertion. But the Poet, unprejudiced by historical critic, may be allowed to take that reading which is most serviceable for the object of his poem.

NOTE 3, PAGE 24.

Horace Vernet's well known painting floats before the Poet in this description.

NOTE 4, PAGE 29.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader of the host of caricatures and squibs which appeared against Napoleon, all of them as low in invention as they were degrading to the century in which they appeared. There are phenomena in the moral as well as in the physical world, which, by reason of their fearful magnitude, can scarce be made objects of derision without crime, and in which point of view they are ever regarded. Such a phenomenon was Napoleon! But Time and his death have silenced alike his friends, and the foes who, in the ardour of their zeal, overlooked the fearful might of the apparition. Time and his death have placed him beyond the reach of love, hatred, and human passions, where the bold portraiture of character stands out alone in history, apart from the schisms of party spirit.

NOTE 5, PAGE 37.

When Francis the First, king of France, passed through Avignon, on a journey to Marseilles, he visited Laura's grave, and had her coffin opened. When the stone was raised, the body, all but the bones, was mouldered into dust. A leaden box, in which a medal was found, lay on the breast; on one side of the medal was a likeness of Laura, on the other, the letters M. L. M. J. were engraved. The following sonnet was copied on a parchment by her side, and was immediately ascribed to Petrarca :—

“ Qui riposan le caste e felici Ossa
 Di quell' alma gentil, e sola in terra,
 Aspro e dur sasso hor ben tico hai soterra
 Il vero honor, la fama, e belta scossa.

Morte hai del verde lauro svelta e mossa
 Fresca radice, e il premio di mia guerra
 Di quattro lustri, e piu, s'ancor non erra
 Mio pensier tristo, e'l chiudi in poca fossa.

Felice pianta in borgo d'Avigione
 Nacque e mori, e qui con ella giace
 La penna, e il stil, l'inchiostro, e la ragione.

O delicate membra, o viva face,
 Che ancor mi nuoci, e struggi in ginocchione
 Cia'scum preghi il signor t'accetti in pace.

Mortal Bellezza indarno si sospira,
 L'alma beata in ciel vivrà in æterno,
 Pianga el presente, e il futur secol priva
 D'una tal luce, ed io degli occhi, e il tempo."

The king commanded that a new and handsomer tomb should be erected over Laura, with the following inscription on it, which he himself composed:—

" En petit lieu compris vous pouvez veoir
 Ce qui comprend beaucoup par renomeé
 Plume, labeur, la langue, et le sçaveoir
 Furent vaincus par l'aymant, et l'aymey.
 O gentil âme estant tant estimeé,
 Qui te pourra louer qu'en se taisant ?
 Car la parole est toujours reprimeé
 Quand le sujet surmonte le disant."

NOTE 6, PAGE 39.

Petrarch says of this, in one of his letters:—

" Amore *acerrimo* sed unico et honesto in adolescentia laboravi, et diutius laborassem, nisi jam *tempescentem ignem mors acerba*, sed utilis *extinguisset.*"

NOTE 7, PAGE 39.

Petrarch saw Laura for the first time in Saint Clara's church at Avignon, the 6th April, 1327, on Good Friday :—

“ Era il giorno che al sol si scoloraro
Per la pietà del suo fattor i rai.
Quando io fui preso, e non me ne guardai
Che i bei vestr' occhi, donna, mi legaro.”

PETR. Part I. Sonnet iii.

NOTE 8, PAGE 40.

Squarciafico tells of Petrarch's nuptials with a maiden of the house of Beccari. She bore him a daughter, whom he named Franciscola, and who in after years married a gentleman of Lombardy, Franz Von Brosano. Franciscola died, during her father's lifetime, in childbed, and was buried at Treviso, in the Franciscan church, where a marble slab, with the following inscription, points out her grave :—

“ Franciscæ parienti peremptæ,
Francisci Petrarchæ
Laureati filix,
Franciscus de Brosano, Mediolanensis, maritus.”

NOTE 9, PAGE 43.

The Rhone rises in the Mountain of Furca, or Mount Furca, and flows on to the Lake of Geneva.

NOTE 10, PAGE 50.

The grave of Romeo and Juliet is no longer to be seen at Verona. All which the stranger sees as the remains of it, is a

marble water-pitcher at a fountain, whose genuine rising from the grave of the lovers is as doubtful as that a tomb in a Veronese garden contains their ashes.

NOTE 11, PAGE 58.

Saint Peter's church was begun by Bramante; Michael Angelo arched the mighty dome, and placed the colossal cross on it. The height is seventy toises. A toise is six feet.

NOTE 12, PAGE 60.

Cardinal Cynthis Aldobrandi wished to raise a splendid mausoleum to the dead Tasso, but the performance of this pledge remains unfulfilled. Tasso's friend, the Marquis Von Villa (Gio. Bap. Maus.), had the words,

"Hic jacet Torquatus Tassus,"

placed on his grave; and this simple inscription is sufficient, so great is the Poet's fame!

NOTE 13, PAGE 62.

Fernand San Severino, Prince of Salerno, fled from the pursuit of Don Pedro of Toledo, vice-king of Naples, to whom he had offered violent resistance, when Don Pedro tried to introduce the Inquisition. Torquato's father, Bernardo Tasso, followed the Prince in his flight, and took his son Torquato, then nine years old, with him. San Severino, and all who had followed him, were

declared rebels, their property confiscated, and themselves condemned by the vice-king to death, whenever they returned to their fatherland. Torquato was included in the proscription, although he was of so tender an age.

NOTE 14, PAGE 62.

Tasso's mind developed itself astonishingly early. At the age of six months he articulated every word clearly, and at three years old he read so diligently, that his teacher was obliged to take away his books, in order that his health might not suffer from over-study.

NOTE 15, PAGE 72.

At Cesar Von Este's nuptials, the Duke of Mantua was at last able to obtain Tasso's freedom, which until then had been obstinately refused by Alphonso, although Tasso had solicited the interest of the Pope, and the Dukes of Mantua, Urbino, and Savoy, in his behalf.

NOTE 16, PAGE 99.

Between Fox and Sheridan.

NOTE 17, PAGE 116.

The first wife of his nephew, the Emperor Francis the First, who was tenderly beloved by Joseph, died immediately before him, and filled the last moments of the Emperor with double sorrow.

NOTE 18, PAGE 123.

“FRANCISCUS.
ROM. ET AVST. IMP.
EX. FRATRE. NEPOS.
ALTERI. PARENTI.
POSVIT.
MDCCC VI.”

NOTE 19, PAGE 133.

According to the rules of the Order, no other ransom for a captive Templar could be offered to the enemy than a cord or rope, and a sword.

