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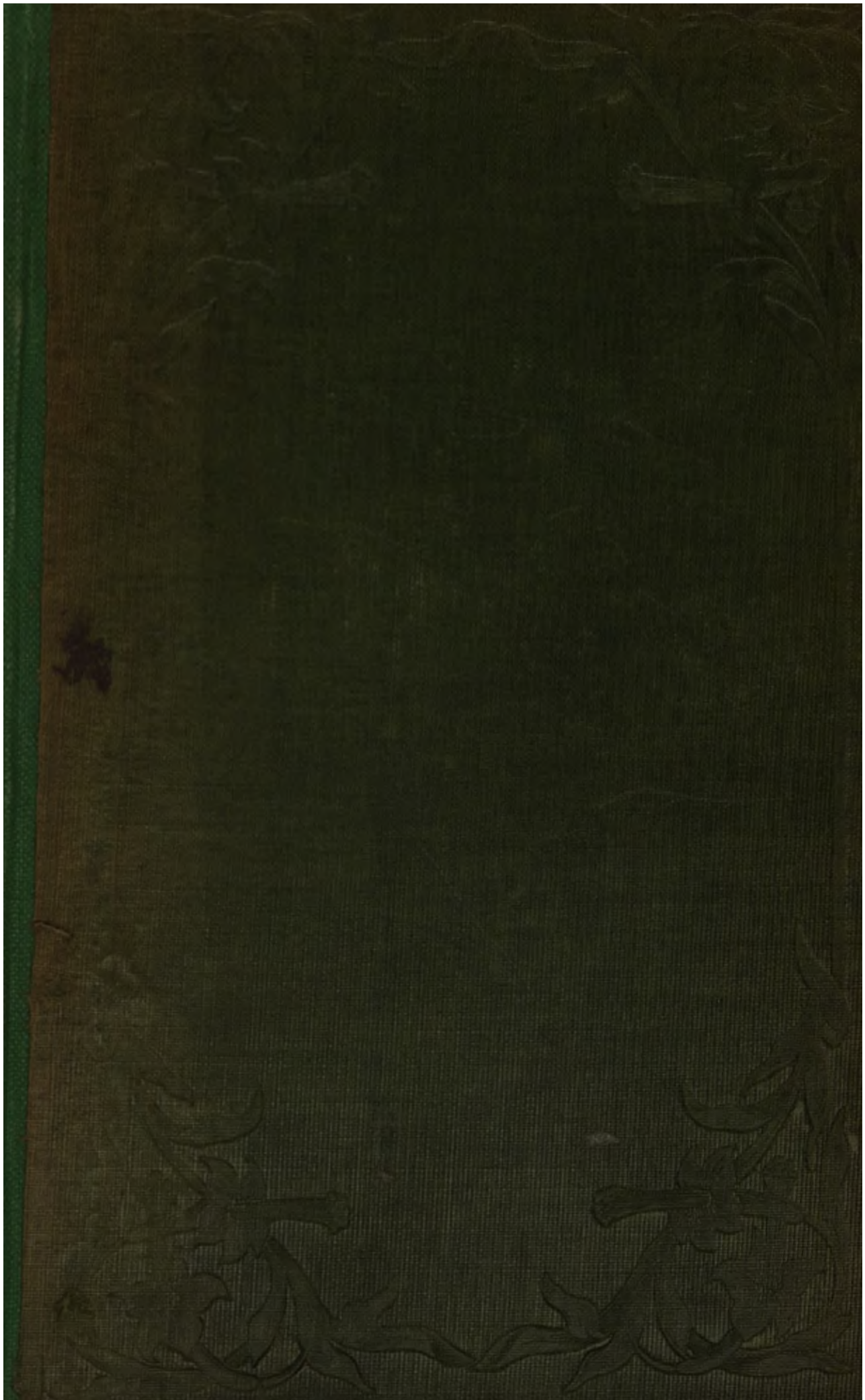
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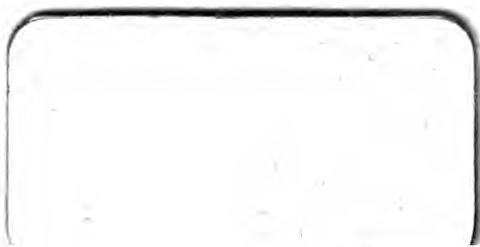


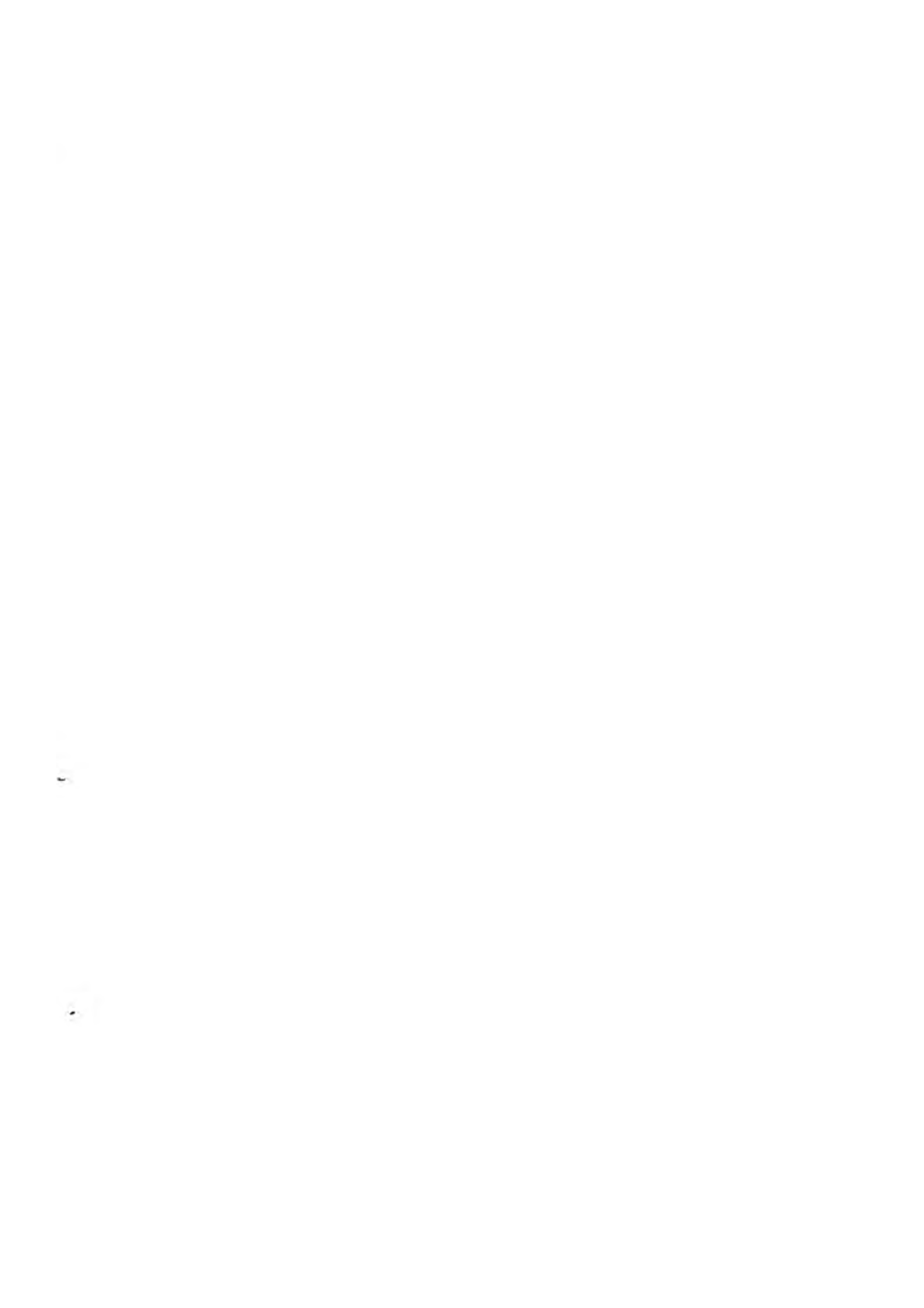
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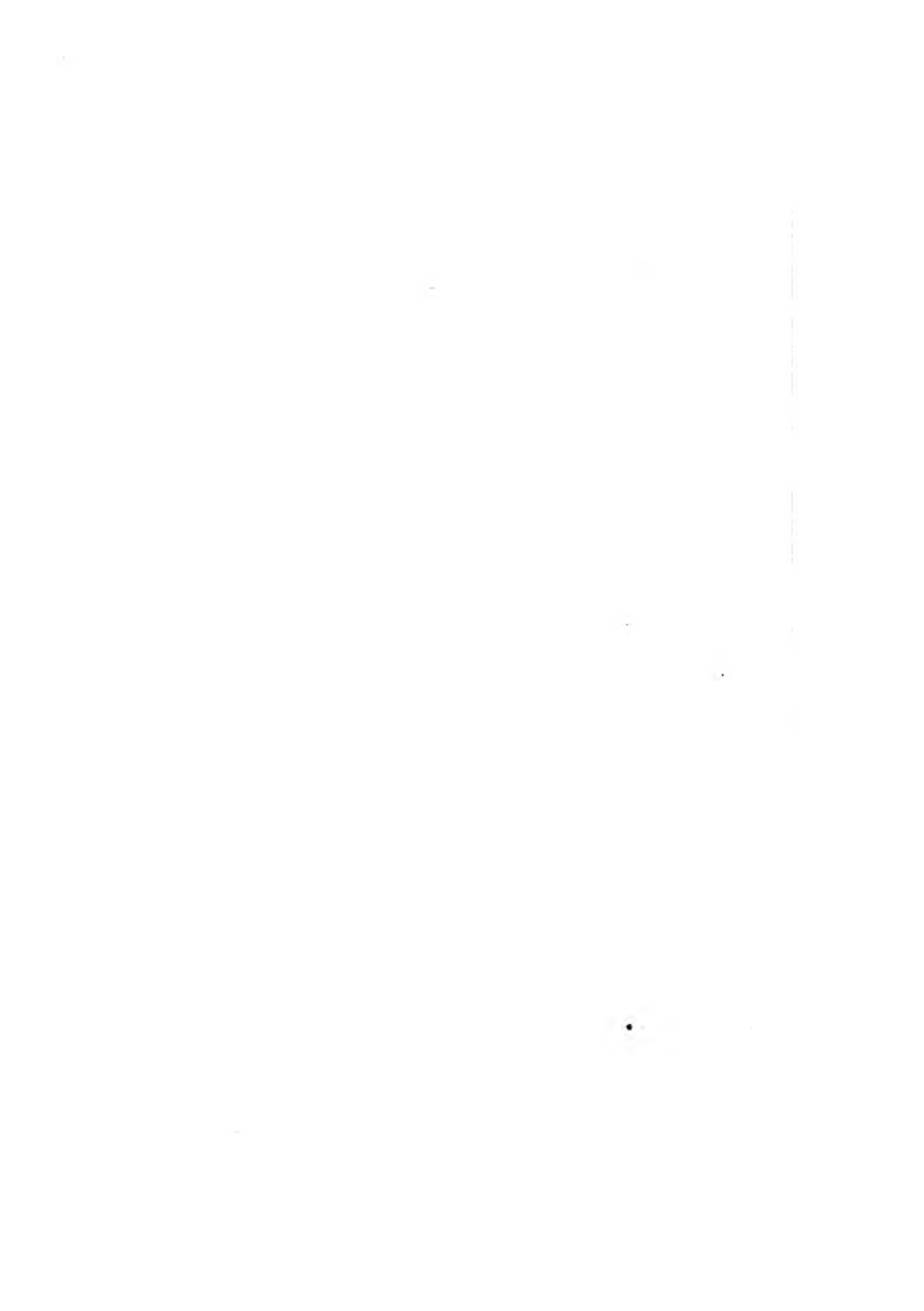
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POEMS.



POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

LONDON:
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1850.

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TO

LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.,

WHO ENCOURAGED MY FIRST LITERARY ATTEMPTS,

AND HAS SINCE BEFRIENDED ME IN MATTERS OF MORE IMPORTANCE,

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



PREFACE.



THE writer of the following verses does not thus make them public but after some hesitation.

Though circumstances can neither create nor destroy the Poetic faculty, they can, doubtless, assist or retard its development.

It is his hope, should he have the opportunity of making a future essay in Literature, to show an ascent above some of those many faults and defects of which he is conscious at the present stage of his progress. One of the chief inducements to this publication is the belief that it will assist him on his way by giving, as it were, a fresh starting-point, and also some external checks in calculating his position.

First publications, especially when they wear the shape of Poetry, almost always afford inadequate expression to the power from which they proceed,—supposing them to give evidence of the existence of any genuine power,—yet if all early effusions, in such cases, were to be burnt instead of printed, later ones would undoubtedly be deprived of some elements of value.

What has been said refers to the artistic qualities of the verses; with regard to their moral qualities, the writer is at least conscious of a constant aim towards sincerity.

THE LANE, BALLYSHANNON, IRELAND.

June, 1850.

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P O E M S.

THE PILOT'S PRETTY DAUGHTER.

—◆—

THE harbour banks, all glittering gay,
 Laughed in their turn no sad adieu
In parting from a fair Spring day
 That laughingly withdrew.
Great brilliant clouds, piled round the sea
And hills, had left blue zenith free
For last lark earliest star to greet ;
When, for the crowning vernal sweet,
Along my path I chanced to meet
 The Pilot's pretty Daughter.

Round her gentle, happy face,
 Dimple-soft and freshly fair,

Danced, with careless ocean-grace,
Locks of silk-brown hair ;
Shading her cheeks or waved behind,
As lightly blew the veering wind,
Unbound, unbraided, and unlooped ;
Or when to tie her shoe she stooped,
Below her chin the half-curls drooped,
And veiled the Pilot's Daughter.

Rising, she tossed them gaily back,
With gesture infantine and brief,
To fall around as soft a neck
As wilding-rose's leaf.
Her Sunday frock, of lilac shade
(That choicest tint), was neatly made,
And not too long to hide from view
The stout but no-way clumsy shoe,
And stocking's smoothly-fitting blue,
That graced the Pilot's Daughter.

With look half-timid and half-droll,
And then with slightly downcast eyes,
And blush that outward softly stole,
Unless it were the skies

Whose sunlight shifted on her cheek,
She half-turned when she heard me speak ;
But 'twas a brightness all her own,
That in her firm light step was shown,
And the clear cadence of her tone ;
 The Pilot's lovely Daughter !

Were it my lot, there peeped a wish,
 To hand a pilot's oar and sail,
Or haul the dripping moonlight mesh,
 Spangled with herring-scale ;
By dying stars, how sweet 'twould be,
And dawn-blow freshening the sea,
With weary, cheery pull to shore,
To gain my cottage home once more,
And meet, before I reached the door,
 My darling Pilot's Daughter !

This element beside my feet
 Looks like a tepid wine of gold ;
One touch, one taste, dispels the cheat,
 'Tis salt and bitter cold :
A fisher's hut, the scene perforce
Of narrow thoughts and manners coarse,

Coarse as the curtains that beseem
With net-festoons the smoky beam,
Would no-way lodge my favourite dream,
E'en with my Pilot's Daughter.

To the open riches of the earth,
Endowing men in their own spite,
The " Poor," by privilege of birth,
Stand in the closest right :
But not alone the palm grows dull
With clayey delve and watery pull ;
And Labour sends a sleepy class
To school, a childish school to Mass :
True love will raise, not sink,—alas !
How fades my Pilot's Daughter !

Raise *her*, perhaps ?—But ah ! I said,
'Twere wiser let such thoughts alone.
So may thy beauty, simple maid,
Be mine, yet all thy own :
Joined in my free, contented love
With these fair gathering stars above—
Before whose stedfast truth it seems

That "Rich" and "Poor" are as the beams
And shadows on the river-streams
That soon will sing thee into dreams.
So passed the Pilot's Daughter.

THE CUPIDS.



IN a grove I saw one day
A flight of Cupids all at play,
Flitting bird-like through the air,
Or alighting here and there,
Making every bough rejoice
With a most celestial voice,
Or amongst the blossoms found
Rolling on the swarded ground.
Some there were with wings of blue,
Others some, of rosy hue,
Here, one plumed with purest white,
There, as dyed in golden light ;
Crimson some, and some I saw
Coloured like the gay macaw.
Many were the Queen of Beauty's—
Many bound to other duties.

A band of fowlers next I spied,
Spreading nets on every side,
Watching long, by skill or hap
Fleeting Cupids to entrap.
But if one at length was ta'en,
After mickle time and pain,
Whether golden one or blue,
Piebald, or of rosy hue,
When they put him in their cage
He grew meagre as with age,
Plumage ruffled, colour coarse,
Voice unfrequent, sad, and hoarse ;
And little pleasure had they in him
Who had spent the day to win him.

IN HIGHGATE CEMETERY.



FAR-SPREAD below doth LONDON wear
Its cloud by day, its fire by night,—
Yet scarce with heavenly presence there
Shrined in the smoke or pallid light.

Incessant troops from that vast throng
Withdraw to silent colonies ;
Where houses, lo, are fair and strong,
Though ruins, all that dwell in these.

Yet, 'neath the universal sky,
Bright children here too run and sing,
Calm verdure waxes green and high,
And grave-side roses smell of Spring.

CROSS-EXAMINATION



WHAT dost thou know of the eternal code ?

As much as God intended to display.

Wilt thou affirm thou knowest aught of God ?

Nor, save his works, that creature ever may.

Is not thy life at times a weary load ?

Which aimless on my back he would not lay.

Is it all good thy conscience doth forebode ?

The deepest thought doth least my soul affray.

When hath a glimpse of Heaven been ever showed ?

Whilst walking straight, I never miss its ray.

Why should such destiny to thee be owed ?

Easy alike to him are yea and nay.

Why should'st thou reach it by so mean a road ?

Ask that of him who set us in the way.

Art thou more living than a finch or toad ?

Is soul sheer waste, if we be such as they ?

In their brook-divided meadows
Blythe they ted the new-mown hay ;
And the violet starry shadows
Fold in sleep their summer's day.

Your homes are but live interments
Down in narrow, noisome nooks,
Under shade of hanging garments,
By the side of filthy brooks.

Pennyworths of sunshine dully
Light green patches, not of grass ;
Dust and smoke the close air sully,
Night brings nauseous stars of gas.

Other than the gay brown tinting
Of the sun on rustic cheek,
Shows your early wrinkles' printing
Sallowed in the smoky reek.

You have some few shrivelled flowers,
Moping feathered slaves a few ;—
Are your feelings and your powers
Thus debased and saddened too ?

Yielded we to gloom and mourning,
Here indeed were ample scope.
Yet in this faint natural yearning
Comes, I feel, a breath of hope.

Heaven's own stars, too, pale and quiet,
Looking with compassion down
O'er the city's smoke and riot,
Even this poor alley crown.

Could we turn your gaze dejected
To those truths as high and bright,
Coping life for eyes erected,
Even here not vanished quite,—

Simple soon as mountain valley,
Vice no more a nest would find
In the shelter of your alley ;
Nor would Filth remain behind.

THE LIGHT.



THE plunging storm flies fierce against the pane,
And thrills our cottage with redoubled shocks ;
The chimney mutters and the rafters strain ;
Without, the breakers roar along the rocks.

See, from our fire and taper-lighted room,
How savage, pitiless, and uncontrolled
The grim horizon shows its tossing gloom
Of waves from unknown angry gulphs uprolled,

Where, underneath that black portentous lid,
A long pale space between the night and sea
Gleams awful : while in deepest darkness hid
All other things in our despair agree.

What strength of Man is able to contend
With brutal raging elements like these?
Here all his pride of conquest has an end;
His so-called slaves can crush him when they please.

But lo! what star amid the thickest dark
A soft and unexpected dawn has made?
O welcome Light-House, 'tis thy steady spark,
Piercing the turmoil and the deathly shade!

By such a glimpse o'er the distracted wave
Full many a soul to-night is repossessed
Of courage and of order, strong to save;
And like effect it works within my breast.

Three faithful men have set themselves to stand
Against all storms that from the sky can blow;
Where peril must expect no aiding hand,
And tedium no relief may hope to know.

Nor shout they, passing brothers to inform
What weariness they feel, or what affright;
But tranquilly in solitude and storm
Abide from month to month, and show their Light.

JUSTICE FOR IRELAND !



Justice for Ireland! brothers all,
Of every creed and station !
Both great and small, a private call
Hath each to save the nation.
The impulse of *my* patriot heart
Is to advise you truly
(Advisers have an easy part),
Be yours to act it duly.

Justice for Ireland! O ye bards
By whom her woes are bruited ;
Her laurel wreath the Muse awards
To strains more deeply rooted.
For tears and rage are transient things,
And whilst on these ye 're battered,
The sky looks love, the gay bird sings,
The mountain soars unflattened.

Justice for Ireland! if ye can,
O host of writers broguish ;
Nor paint each fellow-countryman
As blundering or roguish.
Think less of oddities and rags,
And more of human-nature ;
And 'stead of party-words and flags,
March under something greater.

Justice for Ireland! O ye priests,
Both Protestant and Roman ;
Let each observe his fasts and feasts,
But try to anger no man.
Religion's rind is little worth,
The milk is in the kernel ;
All love is of celestial birth,
All hatred, of infernal.

Justice for Ireland! echoing band
Of empty agitators ;
Who scorn each noiseless busy hand,
And canonise the praters.
Well may shrewd foes in secret scoff,
Nor think your mouths of corking ;

While so much steam is blowing off,
 There 's little left for working.

Justice for Ireland! Members dear,
 Be honest not so rarely ;
 And blush, ye Landlords, praise to hear,
 For treating tenants fairly.

Justice for Ireland! poorer man,
 Your evil passions bridle ;
 And to assist you, try the plan
 Of ne'er by choice being idle.

Justice for Ireland! brothers all,
 Of every creed and station ;
 And other counsel if ye call,
 For saving of the nation—
 This maxim in the meantime prize,
 Nor think its plainness humbling,
 LET EVERYONE BEWARE OF LIES,
 AND LAZINESS, AND GRUMBLING.

A HALLOW-EVE CHANT.



THE Autumn's elfin gold turns pale,
And twilight closes fast and chill,
And dirge-like winds with lengthening wail
Moan low, or rise with whistle shrill.
In winter's night the year declines,
A night that gaily we receive,
For thick with happy stars it shines,—
Its Hesper, Hallow-eve!
Fresh-dawning Hallow-eve!
Sweet new-old Hallow-eve!
For what thou wert, for what thou art,
Twice-welcome, Hallow-eve!

It freezes, but no frost on earth
The seasons of the soul can blight;
Here bloom at once a Spring of mirth,
A Summer-tide of joy to-night.

Though days grow short, this Fire's a sun
That will not set without our leave ;
Our hearts are flowering every one
In the beams of Hallow-eve !
Bright-blazing Hallow-eve !
Warm-glowing Hallow-eve !
Far sweeter flowers than April's dowers
Are these of Hallow-eve !

'Tis Autumn too ; who can may snatch
The golden fruit from bough or pail ;
But Fire and Water closely watch
The treasure, as in fairy tale.
And sure this is a fairy hour,
That lets the spirit-world retrieve
A little while its ancient power,
In right of Hallow-eve !
Mysterious Hallow-eve !
Fantastic Hallow-eve !
To hall and hob our childhood's throb
Returns with Hallow-eve !

Heav'n's stars were used for lamps of old
The future's mantling mist to clear ;

By earth-stars are our fortunes told,
The Nuts in constellation here.
Glimpse of the patterns, gay or dull,
From which the Fatal Spinsters weave
Our life-threads for their Berlin-wool,
Is caught from Hallow-eve!
Love-sibyl, Hallow-eve!
Heart-prophet, Hallow-eve!
A nut can hold the story told
All through by Hallow-eve!

Now love in cabbage-stalk can read
Papyrus-wealth of hidden lore;
Or raise a crop from garden-seed,
Like that from dragons' teeth of yore.
To-night before the wasted fire
A phantom turns the drying sleeve,—
The treasured thought, the heart's desire,
Takes shape from Hallow-eve!
Fair-shadowing Hallow-eve!
Gay-threatening Hallow-eve!
A guardian sprite, a witch in white,
Is gentle Hallow-eve!

Here are no eyes to frown us grave,
No tongues to creak in rusty talk ;
And cares take flight before our stave,
Like goblins from the crow of cock.
What grim and shadowy spectre hosts
Do men as substances receive ?—
To-night we supersede such ghosts
By those of Hallow-eve !
Our laughing Hallow-eve !
Our loving Hallow-eve !
Till love and mirth have fled from earth,
Our thrice-dear Hallow-eve !

A VALENTINE.



LADY fair, lady fair,
 Seated with the scornful,
Though your beauty be so rare,
 I were but a born fool
Still to seek my pleasure there.

To love your features and your hue,
 All your glowing beauty,
All in short that 's good of you,
 Was and is my duty,
As to love all beauty too.

But now a fairer face I 've got,
 A Picture's,—and, believe me,
I never looked to you for aught
 That it cannot give me ;
What you 've more, improves you not.

Your queenly lips can speak, and prove
The means of your uncrowning ;
Your brow can change, your eyes can move,
Which gives you power of frowning ;
Hers have Heaven's one thought, of Love.

So now I give good-bye, *ma belle*,
And lose no great good by it ;
You 're fair, yet I can smile farewell,
As you must shortly sigh it,
To your bright, light outer shell !

ANOTHER VALENTINE.



I know, I see, that you are fair,
And so do other lips declare ;
I love your face, I love your form,
My eyes grow dim, my heart grows warm,
With tender joy and pure affection,
At sight of these, or recollection.

And yet I could not nicely trace
From memory now your form and face ;
I never sought to scrutinise
Your loveliness with curious eyes ;
When with you, 'tis enough that I
So richly feel that you are nigh.

For I adore with fondest love
The earthly shape in which you move,

Because 'tis yours ; not loving you
(Though you can gain such homage too,)
Because your looks do also speak
The promise which so many break.

The promise there is more than kept ;
And deep love-founts, I know, have slept
In some hearts, till the power of God
In Beauty's light material rod
Took shape, and worked a miracle,—
But my love is a natural well.

A natural well, a centre given
To springs of earth and showers of heaven ;
Whose earth-transmitted tinge of clay
Subsides at once, or melts away,
And leaves its *heavenly* birthplace shown,
In trembling softness of its own.

THE TRIUMPH.

(A FUNERAL FANCY.)

—◆—

THE sad array wound slowly along the road ;
The dusky feathers nodding on the bier
Moved in the solemn distance ; spreading near,
The dark and sluggish stream of mourners flowed,
Oft pausing, with slow resumption of the load
Of lazy motion ; through the tranquil, clear,
Thin morning air, a sound upon the ear,
Monotonous of feet and wheels abode.
A tyrant's triumph I beheld, I thought ;
On that plumed car, unseen of mortal eye
Enthroned ; and the slain victim that did lie
Beneath his feet, on those his vassals brought
Dumb fear—each knowing it might be *his* lot
Next to adorn that awful pageantry.

“ WOULD I KNEW ! ”



PLAYS a child in a garden fair

Where the demigods are walking ;

Playing unsuspected there

As a bird within the air,

Listens to their wondrous talking :

“ Would I knew—would I knew

What it is they say and do ! ”

Stands a youth at city-gate,

Sees the knights go forth together,

Parleying superb-elate,

Pair by pair in princely state,

Lance and shield and haughty feather :

“ Would I knew—would I knew

What it is they say and do ! ”

Bends a man with trembling knees
By a gulph of cloudy border ;
Deaf, he hears no voice from these
Wingèd shades he dimly sees
Passing by in solemn order :
“ Would I knew—O would I knew
What it is they say and do ! ”

MORNING.

(AN OPEN VIEW.)

THE wind shakes up the sleepy clouds,
To kiss the ruddied morn ;
And from their awful misty shrouds
The mountains are new-born.
The sea lies fresh with open eyes ;
Night-fears and moaning dreams,
Brooding like clouds on nether skies,
Have sunk below, and beams
Dance on the floor like golden flies,
Or strike with joyful gleams
Some white-winged ship, a wandering star
Of ocean, piloting afar.

In brakes, in woods, in cottage-eaves,
The early birds are rife ;

Quick voices thrill the sprinkled leaves,
 In thankful joy of life.
With silent gratitude of flowers
 The morning's breath is sweet,
And cool with dew that freshly showers
 Round wild things' hasty feet.
But the heavenly guests of quiet hours
 To inner skies retreat,
From daylight thoughts of lower birth
That 'gin to waken on the earth.

This is a new day ; new as that
 Which flashed from Adam's eyes
The birth-sleep on a flowery plat
 Of garden Paradise.
Why should we with our clothes resume
 Yesterday's motley mood ?
Cast it aside ! and in its room
 Be everywhere pursued,
Minding past use nor future doom,
 The Lovely and the Good.
So shall the holy calms of night
Blend with the toilings of the light.

EVENING.

(A CLOSE VIEW.)



STAR-shadows dot our tiny lake,
And, sparkling in between
The dusky fringe the larches make,
Soft stars themselves are seen ;
Our boat and we, not half awake,
Go dreaming down the pond,
Whilst slowly calls the Rail, "Crake-crake,"
From meadow-flats beyond.

The happy, circling, bounded view
Embraces us with home ;
But up, through heaven's star-budding blue,
Our souls are free to roam ;
Whence for this veil of scented dew
That makes the earth so sweet,
A touch of astral brightness too,
A peace—that is complete.

THE MUSIC-MASTER.

(A LOVE STORY.)

—◆—
PART I.

I.

MUSIC and Love,—two names of sweet accord,
The two white wings of super-mortal joy!
Music, that tells of Heaven without a word,
And flows through sense unstained with its alloy;
Love, that at last a worshipper doth win us
To the divinity we feel within us.

II.

Love, that is charged with far a higher task;
Through wicket of a single soul to show
An upward path, until the pilgrim bask
In that broad beam, diffused through all below,
Where the transmitted prismatic rays unite
In pure, unbounded, universal light.

III.

Music and Love! Would I had power to blend
These two to beautify a simple tale,
So charm a gentle audience to attend,
About a village in an Irish dale,
Where once I lived, in those uncareful years,
Upon whose sunshine we look back through tears.

IV.

Ireland, the Cinderella of the three
Called Sister Kingdoms, darkened with the stains
Of long and sore maltreatment though she be,
Amidst her ashes a sweet voice retains :
And our old village was as deep imbued
With music as a mavis-peopled wood.

V.

When evening fell upon the long-drawn street,
And brother-fields, reposing hand in hand,
Unlike where feverish cities scorn to greet
Atoning dusk that quiets all the land,
'T was my amusement to go strolling by
Houses and cottages, a friendly spy.

VI.

In one place would a fiddle deftly glide
Through jovial mazes of a jig or reel ;
Or ever deepen down with plaintive slide,
Like passion forced to tremble, bend and kneel ;
Or rise like bitter sorrow half subdued,
And gently buoyant to a higher mood.

VII.

Blent with the roar of bellows and of flame,
Perchance the reed-voice of a clarionet
From forge's open, ruddy shutter came ;
Or round some hearth a silent ring was set,
Where the low flute with plaintive quivering ran on
Through " Colleen Dhas," or " Hawk of Ballyshannon."

VIII.

And not the least delightful glimpse, o' nights,
Would be, a group of girls at needlework,
Placed round a candle throwing soft half-lights
On the contrasted faces, and the dark
And fair-haired heads, a bunch of human flowers,—
Whilst some old ditty helped to wile the hours.

I

Pianoforte's sound from curtained pane
 Would join the lofty to the lowly roof,
 In the sweet links of one harmonious chain ;
 And often down the street some Glee's old woof,
 "Hope of my heart"—"Ye shepherds"—"Lightly tread,"
 Would stay my steps, or lull me in my bed.

x.

Claude was our village music-master's name.
 His little foreign mother, pale and sad,
 Only to make him ours by birth-right came,
 And call him Claude,—an alien grave she had,
 Beneath the ivy's everlasting pall,
 That hangs upon the ruined abbey-wall.

xi.

Nature for once a father's hope outwent
 In gifts that favoured his peculiar prayer :
 And all the widower's fond desires were bent
 In Claude his own successor to prepare ;
 Commencing from that moment he could win
 A baby-crow with tinkling triangle's din.

XII.

And to the boy it did not come amiss,
To live and labour in the new Art-world.
Easy and native he became in this ;
And gladly every green thought-tendrill curled
Around the trelliage, shaped itself thereby,
And on that ladder mounted to the sky.

XIII.

To time and tune his young sensations swayed.
He heard a minor in the wind at night
To what it all day long had boldly played ;
The thunder roared like bands before the might
Of marching armies ; in a summer calm
The chanting waters fell into a psalm.

XIV.

The chapel organ-loft, his father's seat,
Was to the child an earthly paradise ;
And that celestial one, that used to greet
His infant dreams, could take no other guise
Than green enchanting curtains and gold pipes,
And angels of whom quire-girls were the types.

XXI.

So went the years. Day after quiet day
Bathing our village, in the great time-floods
Set like an islet with a hawthorn grey,
Where circling seasons bring a share of buds,
Nests, blossoms, scarlet fruit ; and, in their turn,
Of falling leaves and broken twigs forlorn.

XXII.

So went the years, that never may abide.
How boy to manhood, manly prime to age,
With ceaseless, unsuspected motion slide !
His father, wearying in his pilgrimage,
Has long resign'd to Claude the master's place,
A youthful master, and boy-smooth in face.

XXIII.

But Claude still saves his hour of evening leisure :
And now, the Spring upon the emerald hills
Dancing with flying clouds, how keen his pleasure,
Plunged in deep glens, or tracking upland rills,
Till night's first star recall him from his roaming,
To breathe his gathered secrets to the gloaming.

XXIV.

Spring was around him, and within him too.

Delightful time ! when life without a spur
Bounds gaily forward, and the heart is new

As the green wand fresh budded on a fir ;
And Nature, into jocund chorus waking,
Tempts each young voice to join her merry-making.

XXV.

Many a clear echo gave he to the Spring,

When from his fingers streamed electric power,
In spirit-troops of evanescent wing,

And sunshine glimpsing through the April shower,
And clouds, and delicate glories, and the bound
Of yellow sky came melting into sound.

XXVI.

The ear receives in common with the eye,

One beauty, flowing through a different gate ;
Melody is its form, and harmony

Its hue ; the arts so interpenetrate,
And all reciprocally sympathise,
For all at first from one foundation rise.

XXVII.

Nature is one, and Art is also one,—
The Sun of Nature, and the Moon of Art ;
And he who at the centre has begun,
Shall lifelessly perform his single part ;
Whilst he who blindly chains himself to this
In surface-work, the part shall also miss.

XXVIII.

Yet sometimes in Claude's playing came a tone,
It never caught upon the April earth,
A sighing music, scarcely deemed his own,
That rose uncalled, and sounded like the birth
Of pensive longing, and of soft despair,
Of novel promise veiled with doubt and care.

XXIX.

Abode a dim anxiety, and threw
Upon his thoughts its shadow from behind ;
That he was ever as in search, he knew,
But never what it was he hoped to find ;
Companions pained him, and whene'er he could,
He soothed himself with friendliest solitude.

xxx.

For he was in that crisis of the soul
When many men grow weak, and some grow strong;
When morning mists begin to rise and roll,
Sweet poison stings the poet into song,
Love to the lover shows the life of life,
The heart's white shield is summoned into strife.

xxxI.

Duly each lengthening evening served to call
His footsteps to the frank, untroubled fields;
Ev'n though the gulphy sky with frequent fall
Lightened its mass of clouds, and all the bields
And boughs were dripping wet; and day by day
One constant path now seemed to be his way.

xxxII.

Two pupils lived upon the river side,
At Iyycot,—just where a sudden gush
Of foamy tumbling water, then a wide
And lakelike mirror sundered, brimming flush,
The wooded shores; and there he also found
His golden leisure's best enchanted ground.

xxxiii.

It was a humble home, compact and neat
As oriole's nest. A gentle woman, she
Who chose and beautified the green retreat,
Where she was doomed so short a time to be,
Ere summoned to a stiller place of rest ;
Spending her last breath in a dear behest.

xxxiv.

That was for her two daughters : she had wed
A plain, rough husband, though a kind and true ;
And " Dearest Bernard," from her dying bed
She whispered, " Promise me you 'll try to do
For Ann and Milly what was at my heart,
If God had spared me to perform my part."

xxxv.

As well as his not ample means allowed,
Or as the neighbouring village could supply,
The father kept his promise, and was proud
To see the girls grow up beneath his eye,
Two ladies in their culture and their mien ;
Though with a difference easy to be seen.

XXXVI.

A spirit unrefined the elder had,
An envious eye, a tongue of petty scorn.
That women these may own—how true ! how sad !
And these, though Ann had been a countess born,
Had stamped her meaner to the dullest sight,
As is a yellow lily than a white.

XXXVII.

White lily,—Milly,—darling little girl !
I think I see as once I saw her stand ;
Her light hair waving in a single curl
Behind her ear,—a kid licking her hand ;
Her fair young face with health and racing warm,
And loose frock blown about her slender form.

XXXVIII.

The dizzy lark, a dot on the white cloud,
That sprinkles music to the April breeze,
Was not more gay than Milly's lightsome mood ;
The gentle bird that starry twilight sees
Cradled among the braird in closest bower,
Was not more quiet than her quiet hour.

XXXIX.

Knowledge flowed softly to her open mind,
And made it rich with colour and perfume,
As flowers imbibe the sun ; she seemed to find
Her thoughts and acts unconsciously assume
A tone like Nature's heiress, one endowed
With harebell, leaf, and star, and rosy cloud.

XL.

Not seldom Claude without intention used
His customary time to overstay
With her, whose music was a power educed
From inner treasures, opening day by day ;
Not seldom, whilst with finest skill he taught,
It seemed he took away more than he brought.

XLI.

And never did her fair face look more fair
Than when the sacred glow of harmonies
Lighted it up, as though her spirit were
A mild blue heav'n out-beaming at her eyes,
As with Claude's voice her round contralto rose
In those sweet psalm-tunes which they often chose.

XLII.

She was a child in years when he began
His visits ; but her mind was further grown.
Woman more childhood ever keeps than man,
In her soft voice and cheek—nor these alone ;
And up the sky with no intense revealing
May the great dawn of womanhood come stealing.

XLIII.

The faded moon of childhood, trembling white,
Now lingers low in her soul's flushing heaven,
As wooed in a farewell ; the mounting light
Transfuses all the air with subtle leaven ;
And shadowy mountain-peaks begin to show
Their unsuspected paths amid the glow.

XLIV.

Her silky locks have ripened into brown,
Her soft blue eyes grown deeper and more shy ;
And lightly on her lifted head the crown
Of queenly maidenhood sits meek and high ;
And in the rich reluctance of her voice
A seraph seems too thoughtful to rejoice.

XLV.

Few her companions are, and few her books ;
And in a ruined convent's circling shade,
The very loveliest of river-nooks,
Where trailing birch, fit bower for gentle maid,
And feathered fir-tree half shut out the stream,
She often sits alone to read or dream.

XLVI.

Thence once or twice she thinks that she espies
Claude's fleeting figure on the other shore ;
But ever past the charmèd ground he hies,
And where the rapids round an angle roar
Through verdured crags, shelters his beating heart ;
Child-like intent to seek yet stay apart.

XLVII.

Milly resumes her favourite reverie
About " a friend," " a real friend, to love ;"
But finds her broken thought is apt to flee
To what seem other subjects : slowly move
The days, and counted days move ever slowest :
Milly !—how long ere thine own heart thou knowest ?

XLVIII.

Sooner than Claude knows his. His path-side birds
Are scarcely more unconscious or more shrinking.
Yet would he tell his love in simple words,
Did love stand clearly in his simple thinking ;
Too high that grand discovery for one
Who thinks that life with him is scarce begun.

XLIX.

All but himself seem wise and busy men ;
He feels as though despised, and justly too,
Or only borne with ;—could he venture then
To deem this rich inheritance his due ?
Slowly the fine and tender soul discerns
Its rareness, and its noble station learns.

L.

And so upon a royal eventide,
When the ripe month sets glowing earth and air,
And lovely Summer by a current side
Twines amber honeysuckles in her hair,
Our Claude and Milly meet by trembling chance,
And side by side are moving, as in trance.

LI.

It is a path branch-curtained and moss-grown,
From which at intervals the loiterer sees,
Through headland green and ivied rock borne down,
The white flood flashing swift behind the trees.
How oft they stop, how long, they nothing know,
Nor how the pulses of the evening go.

LII.

A level pond, adorned with softest shadows
Of groves and fissured cliffs and evening sky,
And rural domes of hay, where sunny meadows
Slope to embrace its margin peacefully,
The slumb'ring river to the rapid draws ;
And here, upon a grassy jut, they pause.

LIII.

How shy a strength is Love's, that so much fears
Its darling secret to itself to own !
Their rapt, illimitable mood appears
To each of them to be enjoyed alone ;
Exalted high above all range of hope
By the pure soul's eternity of scope.

LIV.

Yet in each heart a prophecy there breathes,
Of how in future hours this evening's phantom,
Arrayed in fairer hues than sunlight weaves
For Nature's richest robe, may rise to haunt them.
The landscape wavers from the sight of each ;
And full their bosoms swell, too full for speech.

LV.

Is it a dream ? The countless happy stars
Stand silently into the deepening blue ;
In slow procession all the molten bars
Of cloud move down ; the air is dim with dew ;
Eve scatters roses on the shroud of Day,
And the old world seems far withdrawn away.

LVI.

With good-night kiss the zephyr, warm with sleep,
Gains its soft cradle in a bed of trees,
Where river-chimes aye tolling sweet and deep
Make lullaby ; and all field-scents that please
The Summer, float into its veil of gloom
Dream-interwoven in a viewless loom.

LVII.

Clothed with an earnest paleness, not a blush,
And with the angel gravity of love,
Each lover's face amid the twilight hush
Is like a saint's whose thoughts are all above
In voiceless gratitude for heavenly boon ;
And o'er them for a halo comes the moon.

LVIII.

Thus through the leaves and through the gloaming croft
They linger homeward. Flowers around their feet
Bless them, and in the firmament aloft
Night's silent ardours. And an hour too fleet,
Though like whole years of bliss without a blot,
Has drawn them to the porch of Iyycot.—

LIX.

Unfolding love full many a change hath lent
To lovers' bearing, flushed and wanned by turns ;
In hearts so simple and so innocent
The sacred flame with steady whiteness burns.
They do not shrink, hereafter, but the more
Seek converse ; sweeter, graver than before.

LX.

One theme at last preferred to every other,
They joy to talk of that mysterious land
Where each enshrines the image of a mother,
Intentest watcher in the guardian band ;
And scope to high and tender thought is given,
All unembarrassed, in the air of Heaven.

LXI.

Thus sometimes when a hymn has died away
With Palestrina's music of full chords,
And at the trellised window loiter they,
Deferring their good-night with golden words,
Almost they see, without a throb of fear,
Spirits in the blue twilight standing near.

LXII.

But day by day, and week by week pass by,
And still the floating Cupid spreads his plume,
Poised on the verge of blissful certainty,
While ev'n a look may call him to assume
The purple ease of his expectant throne,
And claim two loyal subjects for his own.

LXIII.

Wondrous, that first full, mutual look of love,
Coming ere either looker is aware ;
Unbounded trust, a tenderness above
All tenderness, a blessing in a prayer,
Music, and dreams, and life, and joy, and might,
Soft-swimming in a single beam of light !

LXIV.

Oh, when shall fly this talismanic glance,
Which melts like lightning every bolt of steel,
Displays the weighty riddle all at once
That sun and moon were powerless to reveal ?
Hath Time the moment treasured when these two
Shall blend their souls in one, like drops of dew ?

LXV.

Claude came one evening earlier than his hour,
Distrustful of the oft-consulted clock ;
And now he waits alone until his flower,
Who keeps true time as one of Flora's flock
Shepherded by the even-star, shall fold
Her loveliness for soft home-leaves to hold.

LXVI.

Nor does he think it long. Familiar-dear,—
A sanctity pervades the silent room.
It is the Autumn season of the year ;
And mystic softness and love-weighty gloom
Gather with twilight. In a dream he lays
His hand on the piano—dreaming plays.

LXVII.

And low and broken sounds at first are stealing'
Into the shaded stillness ; trembling low
And broken tearfully ; opprest with feeling
That knoweth not, and is afraid to know,
The mystery of its life ;—but soon do words
Begin to measure with more passionate chords.

LXVIII.

And all that has been shadowing through his brain,
A dim existence waiting to be born,—
Amid the inspiration of a strain
Half full of ecstasy and half forlorn,
Flows into eager rapture of expression,
And love at last has gained its free confession.

LXIX.

Angel of Music! when our finest speech
Is all too coarse to give the heart relief,
The inmost fountains lie within thy reach,
Soother of every joy and every grief;
And to the creeping words thou lendest wings
On which aloft the 'franchised spirit springs!

LXX.

Claude leaves the earth below him; fade and lapse
All worldly circumstance of place and time;
A mist-like music, never his, enwraps
And bears him toward some destiny sublime.
The notes are smothered in his tingling ears,
His head swims, and his cheeks are wet with tears.

LXXI.

He cannot overhear (O might it be!)
This stifled sobbing at the open door,
Where Milly stands arrested tremblingly
By that which in an instant tells her more
Than all the dumb months mused of: tells it plain
To joy that cannot comprehend its gain.

LXXII.

One moment, and they shall be face to face ;
Free in the gift of this great confidence,—
Wrapt in the throbbing calm of its embrace ;
No more to disunite their spirits thence.
The myrtle crown half stoops to either brow,—
But ah ! what alien voice disturbs them now ?

LXXIII.

Her sister comes. And Milly turns away ;
Hurriedly bearing to some quiet spot
Her tears and her full heart, longing to lay
On a dim pillow cheeks so moist and hot :—
The midnight stars between her curtains gleam,
And Milly sleeps, and dreams a happy dream.

LXXIV.

Oh, dream, poor child, beneath the midnight stars !
Lie slumbering far into the yellow dawn !
The shadow creeps apace ; the storm that mars
The lily even now is stealing on.
All has been long fulfilled : yet could I weep
At thought of thee so quietly asleep !

LXXV.

Most cruel Nature, so untouched, so hard,
The while thy children shake with joy or pain ;
Thou wilt not forward Love, nor Death retard
One finger-push for mortals' dearest gain !
Claude, through the summer night, serenely spread,
Strays calmly home, and finds his father—dead.

LXXVI.

Thereafter follow many heavy days,
Like wet clouds moving through a sullen sky.
A great, unlooked-for change the mind dismays,
And smites its world with instability ;
Its rocks seem quaking, towers and treasures vain,
Peace foolish, Joy disgusting, Hope insane.

LXXVII.

And Ivycot itself, that image dear,
Returns to Claude's mind like its own pale ghost,
In melancholy garments, drenched and sere,
Its light, its colour, and its music lost.
Wanting one token sure to lean upon,
(How nearly gained!) his dream of joy is gone.

LXXVIII.

His uncle, from beyond th' Atlantic wave
By hap a visitor at this sad season,
Finding him now of such a mood the slave,
Afresh impels him, and with weighty reason,
To *his* new-chosen country in the West.
And Claude at length gives way to his request.

LXXIX.

Brief is the parting scene, and frosty dumb.
The unlike sisters stand alike unmoved ;
For Milly's soul is wildered, weak, and numb ;
That dead and lost which seemed so dearly proved.
While thought and speech she struggles to recover,
Her hand is prest—and he is gone for ever.

LXXX.

Time speeds : on an October afternoon,
Across the well-known view he looks his last :
The valley clothed with peace and fruitful boon,
The chapel where such happy hours were passed,
With rainbow foliage massing round its eaves,
And windows all a-glitter through the leaves.

LXXXI.

The cottage-smokes, the river ;—gaze no more,
Sad heart!—although thou canst not, wouldst not shun
The visions future years will oft restore ;
Whereon the light of many a summer sun,
The stars of many a winter night, shall be
Mingled in one strange, sighing memory.

END OF PART I.

THE MUSIC-MASTER.



PART II.

I.

THE shadow Death o'er Time's broad dial creeps
With never-halting pace from mark to mark,
Blotting the sun ; and as it coldly sweeps,
Each living symbol melts into the dark,
And changes to the name of what it was ;
And earth's progression's indexed by its loss.

II.

The Spring unfolding into Summer cheer,
The Summer dreaming into Autumn glow,
The Autumn yellowing with the wasted year
To Winter, and the Winter stealing slow
To Spring again, in smoothest order bound,
Have five times trod their planet circle round.

III.

See once again our village ; with its street
Lazied in dusty sunshine. All around
Is silence, save a tone for slumber meet,
The spinning-wheel's unbroken whirring sound
From cottage door, where basking on his side
The dog lolls motionless and drowsy-eyed.

IV.

Each hollyhock within its little wall
Sleeps in the richness of its crusted blooms ;
Up the hot glass the sluggish blue flies crawl ;
The heavy bee is humming into rooms
Through open window, like a sturdy rover,
Bringing with him warm scents of thyme and clover.

V.

From little cottage-gardens you almost
Smell the fruit ripening on the sultry air ;
Opprest to silence, every bird is lost
In eave and hedgerow ; save that here and there
With twitter swift, the sole unquiet thing,
Shoots the dark lightning of a swallow's wing.

VI.

Yet in this hour of sunny peacefulness,
One is there whom its influence little calms ;
One who now leans in agony to press
His throbbing forehead with his throbbing palms,
Now paces quickly up and down within
The narrow parlour of the village inn.

VII.

He thought he could have tranquilly beheld
The scene again. He thought his steadfast grief,
Spread level in his soul, could not have swelled
To find once more a passionate relief.
Three years, they now seem hours, have sighed their breath
Since when he heard the tidings of her death.

VIII.

Last evening in the latest dusk he came,
A holy pilgrim from a distant land ;
And many an object of familiar name,
As at the wave of a miraculous wand,
Rose round his steps ; his bed-room window showed
His small white birth-place just across the road.

IX.

And yet that room afforded poor repose ;
For crowding images perplexed his mind.
Often he sighed, and turned, and sometimes rose
To bathe his forehead in the cool night wind,
And vaguely watch the gradual curtain grey
Uplifting from the glowing stage of day.

X.

The long bright morning hours have shifted slow,
When by the hedge he rounds the old green turn,
Wasted by summer of its sweet may-snow,
And through the chapel-gate. His heart forlorn
Draws strength and comfort from the pitying shrine,
Whereat he bows with reverential sign.

XI.

Behind the chapel, on a sloping hill,
Circling the ancient abbey's ivied walls,
The graveyard sleeps. A little gurgling rill
Poured through a corner of the ruin, falls
Into a dusky-watered pond, that lags
With lazy eddies 'mid its yellow flags.

XII.

Across this pool, the hollow banks enfold
An orchard overrun with rankest grass,
And gnarled and mossy apple-trees, as old
As th' oldest graves almost; and thither pass
The smooth-worn stepping-stones that give their aid
To many a labourer and milking-maid.

XIII.

And not unfrequently to rustic bound
On a more solemn errand :—who can see
A kneeler in that melancholy ground,
With aught but gentleness and sympathy,
And feeling of that life in *every* prayer,
In which the world of matter has no share?

XIV.

But resting in the sunshine very lone
Is now each hammock green and wooden cross ;
And save the rillet in its cup of stone
That poppling falls, and whispers through the moss
Down to the quiet pool, no sound is near
To break the stillness to Claude's mournful ear.

xv.

The writhen elder spreads its creamy bloom ;
The thicket-tangling, tenderest briar-rose,
Kisses to air its exquisite perfume
In shy luxuriance ; leaning fox-glove glows
With elvish purple ;—nor all vainly meet
The eye which unobserved they seem to greet.

xvi.

Under the abbey-wall he winds his way,
And passes through a doorway arching deep,
To where no roof excludes the common day ;
Though some few tombs in corner shadow sleep
Beneath the matted roof the ivy weaves
With its grey fibres and its varnished leaves.

xvii.

First hither comes, in piety of heart,
Over his mother's,—father's grave to bend,
The gentle exile. Stand we far apart,
Whilst his sincere and humble prayers ascend,
As all that are sincere and humble must,
To that Great Soul which lives within our dust.

XVIII.

And much more shall we tremble to intrude,
When, rising slow, he seeks another spot,
Where lies enwrapped in grassy solitude,
The grave of " Mary D., of Ivycot ;"
And on the stone these added words are seen,
" Also, her daughter Milly, aged eighteen."

XIX.

Profound the moanless aching of the breast,
When weary life is like a grey dull eve
All wrung of colour, withering, and waste
Around the prostrate soul, too weak to grieve.
Less awful far the outcry passionate,
With which an anguished strength accuses fate.

XX.

Nor hope, nor wish these mysteries to disperse,
By words that may by human tongue be spoken ;
It were a shallow toy, this Universe,
If so its inmost casket could be broken.
Sorrow and pain, as well as hope and love,
Stretch out of sight into the heavens above.

XXI.

Yet oh! the cruel coldness of the grave,
The memory of the too, too happy past,
The thought which is the tyrant and the slave,
The sudden sense that drives the soul aghast,
The drowning horror, and the speechless strife,
That cannot sink to death nor rise to life!

XXII.

Who, if he could, would paint a grief like this—
The gloomy torturing caverns open lay,
Whence after more than Death's worst bitterness
The toiling spirit struggles back to day,
And fainting lies beneath a careless sun,
Whose succour is not to be begged, but won?—

XXIII.

Now slowly lifting up his pallid face,
Claude grew aware that he was not alone.
Amid the silence of the sacred place
Another form was stooping o'er the stone;
A grey-haired woman's. When she met his eyes
She shrieked aloud in her extreme surprise.

XXIV.

“ The Holy Mother keep us day and night !
Is it himself then ? Is it Master Claude ?
I little thought I ’d ever see this sight !
Warm from the heart I offer up to God
My praises for the answer he has sent
To all my prayers ; for now I ’ll die content ! ”

XXV.

Then, as if talking to herself, she said,
“ I nursed her when she was a little child.
I smoothed the pillow of her dying bed.
And just the smile that long ago she smiled
When in her cradle fast asleep she lay,
Was on her features when she passed away.

XXVI.

“ ’Twas in the days of March,” she said again.
“ And so it is the sweetest blossom dies,
The wrinkled leaf hangs on, though falling fain.
I thought your hand would close my poor old eyes ;
And not that I ’d be sitting in the sun
Beside your grave,—the Lord’s good will be done ! ”

XXVII.

Thus incoherently the woman spoke,
 With many interjections full of woe ;
And wrapping herself up within her cloak
 Began to rock her body to and fro ;
And moaning softly, seemed to lose all sense
Of outward life in memories so intense.

XXVIII.

Then Claude burst through his silence, and exclaimed
 With the most poignant earnestness of tone,
“ O nurse, I loved her !—though I never named
 The name of love to her, or any one.
'Tis to her grave here—” He could say no more
But these few words a load of meaning bore.

XXIX.

Beside the tombstone mute they both remained.
 At last the woman rose, and coming near,
Said with a voice that seemed to have regained
 A tremulous calm, “ Then you must surely hear
The whole from first to last, cushla-ma-chree ;
For God has brought together you and me.”

xxx.

And there she told him all the moving tale,
Broken with many tears and sobs and sighs ;
How gentle Milly's health began to fail ;
How a sad sweetness grew within her eyes
And trembled on her little mouth so meek,
And flushed across her pale and patient cheek.

xxxI.

And how about this time her sister Ann
"Entered Religion,"* and her father's sight
Was very slow the stealing change to scan
In Milly's face, form, voice, and movement light ;
Until the sad conviction flew at last,
And with a barb into his bosom passed.

xxxII.

Then, with most anxious haste, her dear old nurse
Was sent for to become her nurse again ;
But still the pretty one grew worse and worse.
For with a gradual lapse, though free of pain,
And changes slow, that fond eyes would not see,
Crept on the hopeful, hopeless malady.

* Took conventual vows.

XXXIII.

Spring came, and brought no gift of life to her,
Of all it lavished in the fields and woods.
Yet she was cheered when birds began to stir
About the shrubbery, and the pale gold buds
Burst on the shallows, and with hearty toil
The ploughing teams upturned the sluggish soil.

XXXIV.

“ ’Twas on a cold March evening, well I mind,”
The nurse went on, “ we sat and watched together
The long grey sky ; and then the sun behind
The clouds shone down, though not like summer weather,
On the hills far away. I can’t tell why,
But of a sudden I began to cry.

XXXV.

“ I dried my tears before I turned to her,
But then I saw that her eyes too were wet,
And pale her face, and calm without a stir ;
Whilst on the lighted hills her look was set,
Where strange beyond the cold dark fields they lay,
As if her thoughts, too, journeyed far away.

XXXVI.

“ After a while she asked me to unlock
A drawer, and bring a little parcel out.
I knew it was of it she wished to talk,
But long she held it in her hand in doubt ;
And whilst she strove, there came a blush and spread
Her face and neck with a too passing red.

XXXVII.

“ At last she put her other hand in mine ;
‘ Dear nurse,’ she said, ‘ I ’m sure I need not ask
Your promise to fulfil what I design
To make my last request,—’tis no great task.
You knew young Master Claude ’ (and in her speech
She shook) ‘ that used to come here once to teach ?’

XXXVIII.

“ I said I knew you well ; and she went on,
‘ Then listen : if you ever see him more,
And he should speak of days are past and gone,
And of his pupils and his friends of yore—
Should ask you questions—knowing what you ’ve been
To me, —— Oh! could I tell you what I mean!’

XXXIX.

“ But, sir, I understood her meaning well,
Not from her words so much as from her eyes.
I saw it all ; my heart began to swell,
I took her in my arms with many sighs
And murmurs, for I had no tongue to speak,
And then I cried as if my heart would break.

XL.

“ She saw I knew her mind ; and bade me give
Into your hand, if things should so befall,
The parcel. Else, as long as I should live
It was to be a secret kept from all,
And then, in case you never more returned,
When my last hour drew near, was to be burned.

XLI.

“ I promised to observe her wishes duly ;
But said I hoped in God that she would still
Live many years beyond myself. And truly
While she was speaking, like a miracle
Her countenance lost every sickly trace.
Ah, dear ! ’twas setting light was in her face !

XLII.

“ After this she was tired and went to bed,
And I sat watching by her until dark,
And then I lit her lamp, and round her head
Let down the curtains. ’Twas my glad remark
How softly she was breathing, and my mind
Was full of hope and comfort,—we ’re so blind!

XLIII.

“ The night wore on, and I had fallen asleep,
When about three o’clock I heard a noise
And leaped up quickly. In the silence deep
There she lay praying with a calm weak voice,
Still sweet, although it did not sound the same;
And in that prayer I surely heard *your* name.

XLIV.

“ Sweet Heaven! we scarce had time to fetch the priest!
How sadly through the shutters of that room
Crept in the blessed daylight from the east
To us that sat there weeping in the gloom,
And touched the close-shut eyes and peaceful brow,
But brought no fear of her being restless now!

XLV.

“The wake was quiet. Noiseless went the hours
Where she was lying stretched so still and white;
And near the bed, a glass with some Spring flowers
From her own little garden. Day and night
I watched, until they took my lamb away,
The child here by the mother’s side to lay.

XLVI.

“The holy angels make your bed, my dear!
But little call have we to pray for you:
Pray you for him that’s left behind you here,
To have his heart consoled with heavenly dew!
And pray too for your poor old nurse, *asthore*;
Your own true mother scarce could love you more!”

XLVII.

Slow were their steps among the crowded graves,
Over the stile and up the chapel walk,
Where stood the poplars with their silvery leaves,
Set motionless on every timid stalk.
The air in one hot calm appeared to lie,
And thunder muttered in the heavy sky.

XLVIII.

Along the street was heard the laughing sound
Of boys at play, who knew no thought of death ;
Slow silent-stepping cows to milking bound,
Lifting their heads, lowed with moist clover breath ;
The girls stood knitting at the doors, and cast
A look upon our stranger as he passed.

XLIX.

Scarce had the mourners time a roof to gain,
When with electric glare and thunder-crash,
Heavy and straight and fierce came down the rain,
Soaking the white road with its sudden splash,
Driving all folk within doors at a race,
And making every kennel gush apace.

L.

The storm withdrew as quickly as it came,
And through the broken clouds a brilliant ray
Glowed o'er the dripping earth in yellow flame,
And flushed the village panes with parting day.
Sudden and full that swimming lustre shone
Into the room where Claude sat, all alone.

LI.

The door is locked and on the table lies
The open parcel. Long he wanted strength
To trust its secrets to his feverish eyes ;
But hurriedly he has disclosed at length
A note ; a case ; and folded with them there,
A silky ringlet from her wealth of hair.

LII.

The case holds Milly's portrait—her reflection—
With the small mouth as though about to speak,
The forehead white, the eyes of calm affection,
Even the pretty seam in the soft cheek.
Sweet art ! that fixes in eternal prime
The shadow of a moment snatched from Time.

LIII.

The note ran thus, " Dear Claude, so near my death,
I feel that like a Spirit's words are these,
In which I say, that I have perfect faith
In your true love for me,—as God, who sees
The secrets of all hearts, can see in mine
That fondest truth which sends this feeble sign.

LIV.

“ I do not think that He will take away,
Even in Heaven, this precious earthly love ;
Surely he sends its pure and happy ray
Down as a message from the world above.
Perhaps it is the full light drawing near
Which makes the doubting Past at length so clear.

LV.

“ We might have been so happy !—But His will
Said no, who orders all things for the best.
Oh, may his power into your soul instil
A peace like this of which I am possessed !
And may he bless you, love, for evermore,
And guide you safely to his Heavenly shore ! ”

LVI.

That night Claude's pillow bore a restless head ;
Aching with memories. His mind retraced
The jewels and the pearls, like flower-leaves shed,
That strewed the by-gone hours with priceless waste,
Whose images beneath a plumbless tide
The searching beam disclosed and magnified.

LVII.

Thus clearly into his remembrance strayed,
How once he found (O time that *once* hath been!)
Amongst his wild flowers on the table laid,
A lovely dark carnation he had seen
In Milly's belt; and how he little guessed
What meaning on its crimson leaves might rest.

LVIII.

Once more, the centre of the summer eve,
She lingered by the stream. Once more she sung,
With face all melody; he could believe
Th' appealing tones in distant echoes rung.
He saw her stretched in a most silent place,
With the calm light of prayer upon her face.

LXIX.

And all night long the water-drops he heard
Vary their talk of chiming syllables,
Dripping into the butt; and in the yard
The ducks gabbling at daylight: and the spells
Of misty sense recalled a childish illness
When the same noises broke the watching stillness.

LX.

Almost he hoped that he had sadly dreamed,
And all the interval was but a shade.
But now the slow dawn through his window gleamed,
And whilst in real slumber he was laid,
There stole a rosier vision 'mong the shrouds
Of folded thought, than Morning through her clouds.

LXI.

Wandering in deep green meadows, sunshine-gay,
The mountains wooed him, waving purple dim,
And thither through the soft air glided they,
Himself and Milly. And there rose a hymn
Like silver mist along the climbing glades,
And white forms wafted through the plummy shades.

LXII.

Seated together on a bank of flowers,
She took his hand and she began to sing
In Heav'n how softly flow the eternal hours,
And with them all no hour of parting bring :
Then joined a floating chorus overhead,
“ Parting and Pain and Doubt, for ever fled ! ”

LXIII.

What comfort and what strength in dreams descend,
Which do not wholly vanish in the light !
—When this our little story hath an end,
That trembles, dreamlike, on the woof of night,
Might so a slender memory be enwrought
To glance among the threads of waking thought !

LXIV.

Claude came and went. Till he was far away,
Few in the village guessed that it was Claude.
And years had left behind that sunny day,
Before it chanced a straggler from abroad
Gave news of him ; and bade us set him down
As growing rich in a great Southern town.

LXV.

After another silent interval,
Arrived a letter from a friend of mine
Who, in obedience to that ceaseless call
Which summons westward, had made bold to join
A band that quitted our domestic fields
For what emprise untamed Columbia yields,

LXVI.

“ ’Midst dateless forests (thus he wrote) we came
One sundown to a clearing. Western light
Burnt through the pine-tops with a fading flame,
Over untrodden regions ; and the night
Out of those solemn woods appeared to rise ;
Ushered with sound of ghostly harmonies.

LXVII.

“ Such must have been the atmosphere, we thought,
The visionary light of ancient years,
When Red Man east or west encountered nought
Save bear and squirrel, with their wild compeers.
But other life was here ; and soon we found
The little citadel of this new ground.

LXVIII.

“ The cot beneath a shadowy wall of pines
Looked calmly on a stump-rough sweep of grass :
Its timber roof was eaved with running vines ;
And out of Nature’s rule it seemed to pass
By shape alone. Long ere we reached the door
We questioned of the mystic sounds no more.

LXIX.

“ They blended with the twilight and the trees
So softly, floating far and far away,
It was not strange to deem them but the breeze
Hymning its vespers in the forest grey.
But now we heard not airy strains alone,
But human feeling swaying every tone.

LXX.

“ There swelled an agony of tearful strife ;
Which lapsed in swoon;—but from that dark profound
Arose a music deep as love or life,
Spreading into a placid lake of sound,
That took the infinite into its breast,
With Earth and Heaven in one embrace at rest.

LXXI.

“ The flute-notes failed. At last approaching slow,
Whom found we seated in the threshold shade ?
'Twas Claude, our Music-Master long ago
In poor old Ireland!—long inquiries made
Along our track for him were all in vain ;
And here at once we grasped his hand again !

LXXII.

“ And he received us with the warmth of heart
Our brothers lose not under any sky.
But what was strange, he did not stare or start
Like one astonished, when so suddenly
Long-missed, familiar faces from the wood
Emerged like ghosts, and at his elbow stood.

LXXIII.

“ He seemed like one, I fancied, who was greeting
Long-absent, but not unexpected friends.
Yet he knew nothing of our chance of meeting—
I asked him that. But soon he made amends
For any trace of oddness, by the zeal
With which he cooked us no unwelcome meal.

LXXIV.

“ We gave him all our news, and in return
He told us how he lived,—a lonely life!
Miles from a neighbour sowed and reaped his corn,
And hardy grew. One spoke about a wife
To cheer him in that solitary wild;
At which he only shook his head and smiled.

LXXV.

“ Next dawn, when each one of our little band
Had on a mighty Walnut carved his name,
Henceforth a sacred tree, he said, to stand
’Mid his enlarging bounds,—the moment came
For farewell words. But long, behind our backs,
We heard the echoes of his swinging axe.”

THE FAIRIES.

A NURSEY SONG.



UP the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a hunting
For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
And grey-cock's feather !

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam ;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,

With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits ;
He is now so old and grey
He 's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses ;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.


They stole little Bridget
For seven years long ;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.

They have kept her ever since
 Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flagon-leaves,
 Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hill-side,
 Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
 For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
 To dig up one in spite,
He shall find the thornies set
 In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
 Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a hunting
 For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
 Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
 And grey-cock's feather !

GREENWOOD TREE.



OUR host has spread beneath our tread
A broidered velvet woof,
Curtains of blue peep richly through
Our fretted palace-roof;
Well spent, say I, in forestry
Each summer day like this,
Till glow-worms light, owl-watchmen cry
Through our green metropolis!

Like those that made in Arden shade
Their happy court of old,
We'll "fleet the time" as in the prime
Of the innocent Age of Gold;
And gently school with Dryad rule
The "forest burghers" here,
That will obey our gentle sway
From love and not from fear.

We will not take, for our pleasure's sake,
The life of bird or beast ;
Of herb and fruit and wholesome root
We'll make our Eden feast ;
All gay with crowns that give no frowns,
Leaf-woven diadems,
And jewels Earth unmined gives forth,
Her fragrant surface-gems.

We've band and quire that never tire,
By their own music paid ;
We've swarded spaces for dancing places ;
For thought, calm aisles of shade.
And nooks as meet for converse sweet,
Or rest, or happy book,
Fresh with perfumes from growing blooms,
And the rustling of a brook.

O wood and stream, how fair a dream—
How vain a dream is this !
We owe our life to thoughtful strife
With woe and wickedness.
Man must not spare to spell with care
And *work out* God's intent ;

And know, thou wilt be charged with guilt
Who art but innocent.

The Hermit wise (my friend replies)
With equal truth might say,
“ This word for me, not DO but BE,
Has sempiternal sway.
Effect from cause in Nature’s laws
Our succour little needs ;
There may be debt for pardon yet
In thy most virtuous deeds.”

DEATH AND MAN.



DEATH came to a young man, and said,

“ If thou wert dead,

What matter ? ” The young man replied,

“ See my young bride,

Whose life were all one blackness if I died.

My land requires me ; and the world’s self, too,

Would miss, methinks, some things that I can do.”

Then Death in scorn this only said,

“ Be dead.”

And so he was. And soon another’s hand

Made rich his land.

The sun, too, of three summers had the might

To bleach the widow’s hue, light and more light,

Again to bridal white.

And nothing seemed to miss beneath that sun

His work undone.

But Death soon met another man, whose eye
Was Nature's spy ;
Who said, " Forbear thy too triumphant scorn.
The weakest born
Of all the sons of men, is by his birth
An heir of the Eternal Strength ; and Earth
Feels and is movèd by him in his place,
And wears his trace.

" Thou, labouring at destruction day and dark,
Canst leave no mark,
Hoard'st nothing from the past,
Working blind help to man,—and at the last
How is it ? " Mighty Death
Shook, like a mountain to a prophet's breath.
He seemed to hear the fated voice descend
To speak his end.

LOVE.



WOULD'ST thou prove that love 's a cheat,
Love so gentle, love so sweet ?

Clear our thoughts, unseal our eyes,

Make us in a wink despise

All we now sincerely prize ?

Prythee, leave us in deceit !

Here through fairy-land we skim ;

From without the circle's rim

Words of bitter sound from thee

Blame our eyes with fantasy ;

But as justly may not we

Tell thee thine are now grown dim ?

CHANGE.



THAT raven tress unbraided
Enshrined from where it flew,
I wonder has it faded,
Since when she proved untrue ?
I cannot choose the anguish
Of seeing it anew,
Of knowing if it languish,
And match my own in hue.

For grey has thickly sprinkled
The locks upon my brow,
And *that*, which was unwrinkled,
Is scored with sorrow's plough.
My features would not strike her,
As like my portrait now ;—
But her heart is far unlike her,
The one that heard my vow !

ANACREON'S GRAVE.

[ANTIPATER OF SIDON.]



MAY the ivy-boughs o'ershadow,
 Clustering thickly round thy tomb,
 Bard of Teos! and may bloom
Buds from every purple meadow!
Spirts of milk in pearly gushes
 Leap from all the conscious earth,
 Every tuft around give birth
To founts of wine, sweet-scented, luscious!

So to thy gentle dust below
A ceaseless rain of joy shall flow,
If any joy the dead may know,
Thou dearest fondler of the lyre,
 Who didst chant thy songs for ever,
Full of love and full of fire,
 All adown life's winding river!

TO THE CICADA.

[MELEAGER.]



CICADA, drunk with drops of dew,
What musician equals you
In the rural solitude?
On your perch within the wood,
Scraping to your heart's desire
Dusky sides with notchy feet,
Thrilling, shrilling, fast and sweet,
Like the music of a lyre.
Dear Cicada, I entreat,
Sing the wood-nymphs something new,
So that from his arboured seat
Pan himself may answer you,
Till every inmost glade rejoices
With your loud alternate voices.
And I may listen, and forget

All the thorns, the doubts and fears,
Love in this sad heart hath set—
Listen, and forget them all ;
And so, with music in mine ears,
Where the plane-tree-shadows steep
The ground with coolness, softly fall
Into a noontide sleep.

A DEFINITE ATTAINMENT.



OF all the things accomplished yet by man
Which is the greatest? In our loftiest aims
No full accomplishment the wise man claims ;
In our mechanic marvels we but plan
To live a little easier if we can ;
Science a schoolboy is ; poetic fames
Are mere appropriations ; Nature shames
The old painters, while we even miss their span.

Our greatest fact,—which Nature rivals not,
Adam owned not before he rued the tree,
Nor Greek in templed Athens e'er attained,—
With weakness, doubt—with earth or death unstained ;
I deem, the various powers of Music brought
Together in one soul-deep harmony.

A DREAM.



I HEARD the dogs bark in the moonlight night,
And I went to the window to see the sight ;
All the dead that ever I knew
Going one by one and two by two.

On they passed, and on they passed ;
Townsfellows all from first to last ;
Born in the moonlight of the lane,
And quenched in the heavy shadow again.

Schoolmates, marching as when we played
At soldiers once—but now more staid ;
Those were the strangest sight to me
Who were drowned, I knew, in the awful sea.

Straight and handsome folk ; bent and weak too ;
And some that I loved, and gasped to speak to ;

Some just buried a day or two,
And some of whose death I never knew.

A long, long crowd—where each seemed lonely.
And yet of them all there was one, one only,
That raised a head or looked my way ;
And she seemed to linger, but might not stay.

How long since I saw that fair pale face !
Ah, mother dear, might I only place
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,
While thy hand on my tearful cheek were prest !

On, on, a moving bridge they made
Across the moon-stream, from shade to shade :
Young and old, and women and men ;
Many long-forgot, but remembered then.

And first there came a bitter laughter ;
And a sound of tears the moment after ;
And then a music so lofty and gay,
That every morning, day by day,
I strive to recall it if I may.

THE WANDERING JEW.

—◆—

O EARTH, I am heart-sick with weariness !
Thy times and seasons are alike in pain.
I hate the mocking sunshine, and no less
These high cold-staring stars. The enormous chain
Must all be thus unwinded, link by link,
And I must, drop by drop, thus slowly drink
My ocean-cup of misery to the lees.
All places are alike, and yet, as though
I had some hope of finding change, I go
Through cities, forests, deserts, mountains, seas.
Everywhere like a wandering wind I roam.
O Earth! in all thy bounds I only crave
A place of rest—in all thy lands, one grave.
Earth, Earth, O take me home !
Thou that wast guilty of my birth,
Hast thou no pity, O harsh mother Earth !

The unregarded breath of my despair
Groans forth in oft-repeated words of woe :
But I am never mad, even when I tear
This wretched flesh ; I never cease to know
The stinging truth, the sharp reality,
Of all that was, and is, and is to be ;
The mind doth calmly judge the senses' strife—
And that is ceaseless ; for no hour may bring
A moment's lull to my disease of Life.
Sleep's dew that falls on every living thing
With comfortable balm, leaves only me,
Like Gideon's fleece, unwet ; this awful lamp,
Burning for ages 'mid sepulchral damp,
Needs no fresh oil nor trimming ; on my way
No resting-places stand. I gasp, and pray
For peace, though all in vain until the appointed day.

Hear now the real burden of my woe.
I have gone round and round about the Earth,
Across the halves of morning and of night,
Urged like the planet's breathing satellite ;
And searched and sifted all that man can know
Of matter—from the inorganic birth,
Through all the upward workings of its life,

By infusion of the element of strife—
Death ever moving (save in me); the might
That makes, by hurrying to destruction each
Successive atom, as a fire keeps bright.
Fold after fold was drawn within my reach
Of Nature's veil, and when I raised at last
The farthest corner, I despised the past
And future of this world.

The inner life

Is noway better : generations run
In the old ruts ; the toys are now the same
That mocked forgotten children, and the game
Is ever recommenced and never won.
It made my soul with deepest loathing burn,
While 'twas yet warm enough to loathe and spurn,
Beneath these idiots' feet who mount elate
A palace-stair to upper rooms of state,
To see the vile old treadmill turn and turn.

Be thankful, grumbler at thy shortened span,
There is not giv'n, save to one wretched Man,
Time to exhaust his earth-life, and, mature,
Foolish unlovely childhood long endure !
The simple first-born people lingered slow,

The movement quickens as the ages grow,
Till one year teaches more than ancient ten,
And in proportion shrinks the life of men.
The Age that views its World with piercing ken,
Dooms it.

But stiffened in the cramp unscope,
I have, methinks, grown weary ev'n of Hope ;
Of what a future world may have in store
Half-tired in prospect, be it worst or best.
I see no good in anything but rest ;
Silence and dreamless rest for evermore.

EVENING SHADOWS.



IN dream of thought to be among the years
That are not born, like years of long ago,
Who bows not, trembling? Dusk, with steps as slow
As mine, crept through the churchyard, dropping tears
Like one that mourned. I mused and mused; methought
Some months, some years were gone, and in that spot
Of graves is lingering a thoughtful Boy.
Amid the twilight stillness deep and lone
He stoops to read an old half-buried stone,
And weeds the mosses that almost destroy
The letters of the name, which is—my own.
The wind about the old grey tower makes moan.
He rises from the grave with saddened brow,
And leaves it to the night, and sighs, as I do now.

SEA-SIDE.



CHEQUERED with woven shadows as I lay
Among the grass, blinking the watery gleam,
I saw an Echo-Spirit in his bay,
Lazied to silence by the noontide beam.
The depths heaved round his Boat of shell, with sway
To ocean's giant pulse, and the white dream,
Buoyed like the young moon on a level stream
Of greenish vapour at decline of day,
Swam airily,—watching the distant flocks
Of sea-gulls, whilst a foot in careless sweep
Touched the clear-trembling cool with tiny shocks,
Faint-circling ; till at last he sank to sleep,
Lulled by the hush-song of the dreamy deep
Lap-lapping drowsily the heated rocks.

By the shore, a plot of ground
Clips a ruined chapel round,
Buttressed with a grassy mound ;
 Where Day and Night and Day go by,
And bring no touch of human sound.

Washing of the lonely seas,
Shaking of the guardian trees,
Piping of the salted breeze ;
 Day and Night and Day go by
To the endless tune of these.

Or when, as winds and waters keep
A hush more dead than any sleep,
Still morns to stiller evenings creep,
 And Day and Night and Day go by ;
Here the silence is most deep.

The chapel-ruins, lapsed again
Into Nature's wide domain,
Sow themselves with seed and grain
 As Day and Night and Day go by ;
And hoard June's sun and April's rain.

Here fresh funeral tears were shed ;
And now, the graves are also dead ;
And suckers from the ash-tree spread,
 While Day and Night and Day go by ;
And stars move calmly overhead.

FROST IN THE HOLIDAYS.



THE time of frost is the time for me !
When the gay blood spins through the heart with glee,
When the voice leaps out with a chiming sound,
And the footstep rings on the musical ground ;
When the earth is grey, and the air is bright,
And every breath is a new delight !

Morning ! Each pane is a garden of frost,
Full of delicate growths, soon raised, soon lost ;
For their stalks are fed by the moon's cold beams,
And their leaves are woven like woof of dreams
By the night's keen breath, and a glance of the sun,
Like dreams, will scatter them every one.

But now the dull sun lies long in bed,
And through curtains of mist putting forth his head,

When he sees the firm lakes, and the armoured earth,
Winking and laughing in their mirth
At his feeble beams, he swiftly shrouds
His face again in the tent of clouds.

Last night, though he sank unseen to rest,
What a glorious sky!—through the level west
Pink clouds in a delicate greenish haze,
Which deepened up into purple greys,
'Mid scattered stars as the light decreased,
To the brilliant moon in the rich blue east.

And the brilliant moon is still in the sky,
And the stars are shining unpaled on high;
For as yet there is not one vanward fold
Of day's oriflamme in the east unrolled,
As bursting with joy we hurry out,
Startling the dusk with shout on shout.

Away! hurrah! the lake is like glass!
Buckle and strap on the iron grass!
Off we shoot, and poise and wheel,
And swiftly turn on scoring heel;
And our flying sandals chirp and sing
Like a flock of swallows upon the wing.

Hurrah ! we 've a better power than steam,
To speed us on with a meteor-gleam ;
For with portable rails our feet are shod,
So we are not bound to one dull road ;
And in panting smoke our breaths arise,
But blot not the face of the clear grey skies !

O timid tyro, distrust not fate,
In time even you shall learn to skate !
Though, making a star, you chance to drop,
As if marking the place with a large full-stop,—
Take hopeful heart, and commence in a trice
A new paragraph there of your Essay on Ice !

Away from the crowd with the wind we drift,
No vessel's motion so smoothly swift ;
Fainter and fainter the tumult grows,
And the gradual stillness and wide repose
Touch with a hue more soft and grave
The lapse of joy's declining wave.

Here the ice is pure ; a glance may sound
Deep through the awful, dim profound,
To the water-dungeons where snake-weeds hide,

Over which, as self-sustained, we glide,
Like wizards on dark adventure bent,
The masters of every element.

Homeward now. The shimmering snow
Kisses our hot cheeks as we go ;
Wavering down the feeble wind,
Like a manifold Dream to a Poet's mind ;
Till the earth, and the trees, and the icy lakes,
Are slowly clothed with the countless flakes.

The village street is all motion and noise ;
The long black slides are alive with boys.
Here the hob-nailed brogue is the aristocrat,
The weak-soled boot must give way to that ;
But still last, on the little Beggar, behold
Those unslippery slippers, a century old !

He is using childhood's peculiar power
To seize and enjoy the passing hour.
He fears not to make himself hungry now,
Albeit he knows not when or how
His dinner shall come ;—how sad their plight
Who have heavy hearts with pockets as light !

Oh, let us not fail to think of those
To whom the season of frosts and snows
Brings no White Days, but an annual blot
Of darker shade on their gloomy lot ;—
May the cold weather keep, as is but meet,
Our milk of human-kindness sweet !

LOST, ON THE COLOUR.

—◆—
“ MAN of Art, thy skill I test ! ”
“ You shall wed next March. ” — “ Well guessed ! ”
“ Tall Brunette. ” — “ Absurdly wrong ! ”
Right enough it proved ere long.

MADNESS.

“The monument woos me.”

Second Maiden's Tragedy.



EVERYTHING that seeks to do thee harm
Hearkens to the song that I am singing.
Sly and winding worm is in his hole,
Ruddy shrewmice listen in their burrow ;
Wasps are nested by thee, but the charm
Keeps that yellow robber-band from stinging ;
In thy bed of clay the howking mole
Bores no tunnel thorough.

Now that day from heaven is gone,
Thou art smoothly dreaming on,—
Not to waken with the dawn.

Only now the moaning of the breeze
Answers to the song that I am singing.
In the moonlit dyke the crouching hare
Raises up her watchful ears to listen ;

From the blackness of the ghostly trees
Swift and silent bats like Dreams are winging ;
Round the grassy hammocks here and there
Elfen tapers glisten.

 Whilst the wind's sad tale is told,
 Thou art lapt up from the cold
 In a blanket made of mould.

Many nights and many days have heard
Songs of mine like that I am singing ;
By the sun, or by this paler round ;
In the dark, when shrouded stars are weeping ;
When the old tower shakes his ivy-beard ;
When the skiey thunder-bells are ringing ;
Hurtful things that live below the ground
From thy pillow keeping.

 And when I have leave to die,
 Then an Angel from the sky
 Comes to watch us where we lie.

THE WITCH-BRIDE.



A FAIR witch crept to a young man's side,
And he kissed her and took her for his bride

But a Shape came in at the dead of night,
And filled the room with snowy light.

And he saw how in his arms there lay
A thing more frightful than mouth may say.

And he rose in haste and followed the Shape
Till morning crowned the eastern cape.

And he girded himself and followed still
When evening had sainted the western hill.

But mocking and thwarting clung to his side,
Weary day!—the foul Witch-Bride.

THE UPPER ROAD.



COULD I fling by this work at length,
These cares, these men, to find
God-service fitter for my strength,
One song would fill my mind.

“The height to which all conscience strives,
The upper road’s begun ;
Whereas before I lived two lives,
I now live only one.”

Hush ! hush ! thou vain and coward heart,
Though slavish be thy load,
Serve God in oneness where thou art,—
Thou’rt on the upper road.

SERENADE.

—◆—

Oh, hearing sleep, and sleeping hear,
The while we dare to call thee dear,
So may thy dreams be good, although
The loving power thou canst not know!
As music parts the silence, lo!
Through heaven the stars begin to peep,
To comfort us that darkling pine
Because those fairer lights of thine
Have set into the Sea of Sleep.
Yet closèd still thine eyelids keep;
And may our voices through the sphere
Of Dreamland all as softly rise
As through these shadowy rural dells,
Where starlight Echo sleeping dwells,
And touch thy spirit to as soft replies.
And, shed from gentle guardian skies,

Till watches of the night be worn,
May undisturbing angel-light
Fall round thy bed,—then joyous morn
Steal on its shadows rosy bright!
Good-night!—From far-off fields is borne
The drowsy Echo's faint "Good-night,"—
Good-night! Good-night!

THE DUSTY MILLER.



Noo I 'm three-an'-twenty,—
What'n a time I 'm losin' !
Sweethearts I hae plenty,
A' the trouble 's choosin' ;
Some are landed men,
Some wi' heaps o' siller,—
I can wale frae ten
Richer than the Miller.
Than a dusty, dusty,
Common dusty Miller ;
Just a rusty, fusty,
Musty, dusty Miller !

Pairk the walthy tailor 's
Crabbit-like an' bandy ;

Sandy Brown the sailor 's
But a shiftin' sandy ;
Hawick's head 's like snaw,
An' his heart it 's chiller,—
Tho' he 's laird an' a'
I 'd sooner tak' the Miller !
E'en the dusty, dusty,
Landless dusty Miller ;
Just the dusty, dusty,
Working dusty Miller !

Hearty, blythe, an' ruddy,
Fresh and pleasant-featured,
With his footstep studdy,
An' his laugh good-natured ;—
If I 'd ten times mair
Beauty, birth, an' siller,
Yet, I do declare,
I wad tak' the Miller !
Aye, the dusty, dusty,
E'en the dusty Miller !
Tho' he 's dusty, dusty,
Just the dusty Miller !

THE TOWER AND THE OPEN AIR.



LEARNING sat in a lonely tower,
Heaping knowledge hour by hour ;
Searching through all lives, all forces,
All beginnings, and all courses ;
Tracing on, from old to new,
How rounded worlds from chaos grew ;
Sifting all matter's form and plan,
Within the utmost reach of man ;
All dependence, all relation,
Through the system of Creation.
Of man's mind too, and its modes,
Disentangling all the nodes,
To that limit where extremes
Interpenetrate like dreams,

Where the eager wings in vain
Struggle madly to sustain
The soul in void,—where rises ever
A wall of blank to man's endeavour.

One day came a shepherd lad
To where Learning plied his task ;
And of him did Learning ask
What knowledge was the best he had.
“ A crowded, various earth is spread
Around my footsteps,” said the youth ;
“ A great Heaven is above my head.
To love and hope in simple truth,
To reverence God, whate'er befall,—
This is best, this is all.”

Then did Learning take the boy,
And teach him all that he could teach ;
And, after many years, he said,
“ All knowledge in the human reach
Is thine to use and to enjoy.
What count'st thou best ? ” He answer made,
“ Increase of knowledge is good and sweet,
That the soul may shun deceit ;

And the best is this in sooth—
To love and hope in simple truth,
To reverence God, whate'er befall.
This is best, this is all."

THE WAYSIDE WELL.



O THOU pretty wayside well
Wreathed about with roses,
Where, beguiled with soothing spell,
Weary foot reposes !

With a welcome fresh and green
Wave thy border grasses,
By the dusty traveller seen,
Sighing as he passes.

Treads the drover on thy sward,
Comes the beggar to thee,
Free as gentleman or lord
From his steed to woo thee.

Thou from parching tongue dost earn
 Many a murmured blessing ;
And enjoyest in thy turn
 Innocent caressing.

Fair the greeting face ascends,
 Like a naiad daughter,
When the peasant lassie bends
 To thy trembling water.

When she leans upon her pail,
 Glancing o'er the meadow,
Sweet shall fall the whispered tale,
 Soft the double shadow !

Mortals love thy crystal cup,
 Nature seems to pet thee,—
Swinking Summer's fiery lip
 Hath no power to fret thee.

Sheltered cool and free from smirch
 In thy cavelet shady,
O'er thee in a silver birch
 Stoops a forest lady.

To thy glass the Star of Eve
Shyly dares to bend her ;
Matron Moon thy depths receive,
Globed in mellow splendour.

Bounteous Spring ! for ever own
Undisturbed thy station,—
Not to thirsty lips alone
Serving mild donation.

Never come the newt or frog,
Pebble thrown in malice,
Mud or withered leaves, to clog
Or defile thy chalice.

Heaven be still within thy ken,
Through the veil thou wearest,—
Glimpsing clearest, as with men,
When the boughs are barest !

TO A BLIND LADY.

THOUGH beggared of the inheritance of light,
The glorious eye-possession of the earth ;
Be thankful still : how few of those with sight
Can feel or use their privilege aright ?
A soul undimmed is of far greater worth ;
Outweighs a million times the deepest dearth
Of flower-frail sense,—and when from this short night
It shall emerge, how wonderful the Birth !

Emerge, as one who whilst he slowly strains
Up a dark narrow tower with sigh on sigh,
The fresh and brilliant air suddenly gains,—
And lo ! created instantaneously,
A sunbright world far stretching to the sky ;
Woods, Lakes, and Rivers ; Valleys, Hills, and Plains.

PLAY OVER.



THE curtain fall'n, the audience gone,
The theatre left dark and cold,
Stage-feasts forgot, stage-titles flown,
No more grand words, emprises bold ;—

The actors are not left in gloom ;
The curtain-fall but set them free
To enjoy true feasts, true names assume,—
To live in wide reality.

THE BULL.



THE plaudits shake the circus round.
No "sluggard" has the Bull been found.
Three gallant steeds he swiftly gores,
And pushes hard the picadores ;
In one mad sweep the chulos drives
Over the barrier for their lives ;
And, tail outstretched and head low-bowed,
Fierce nucleus of a dusty cloud,
Flies round the orbit free of check,
Stung by the bandarillas in his neck.

What strikes the crowd with such amaze,
And more intensifies their gaze ?—
One soft low whistle has the force
To curb the monster in his course !

From the seats a rustic stranger
Vaults into the ring of danger,
Mildly calls the Bull by name,
“Bell’Azufre!”—never came
A lamb more meekly to a child
Than to his friend this brute so strong and wild.

Joined in a gentle group they stand ;
The fierce Bull licks the herdsman’s hand,
Whose other strokes his shivering ear,
And soothes away his rage and fear,
Till with a low, contented moan
He lays his tortured body down,
And of the mountain pasture dreams,
And of the free and cool Sierra streams.

A passing ruth the audience share :
The simple herdsman could not bear
His favourite’s pangs, and thus hath sought
The old friend’s side, distrusting nought,—
Trusting the faithful beast aright,
Whose rankling pain, tumultuous fright,
Mocked despair, revengeful rage,
The well-known voice could in a breath assuage.

Is it not so ? Ah shame, not so !
This is a portion of *the show*—
Contrived a novel zest to bring
To the arena's bloody ring.
A luxury has been found at length ;
Besides his courage and his strength
The brute's affection's bought and sold
To help the pastime, for some bits of gold !

New plaudits shake the circus round.
The Bull is startled by the sound :
Remembering all the wrong and pain,
He plunges to his feet again,—
Whirls his master over his head.
“ Madre Santa ! he is sped ! ”
In air a purse drops from his breast
And falls before him to the trampled dust.

Din springs up and swift commotion,
As on laughing tropic ocean
May a wild tornado strike.
Brilliant chulos, leopard-like,
Bound in to the herdsman's aid.
Too late. He now is both ways paid.

—Might all that true love falsely sell
Make sure of being recompensed as well!



TO THE AUTHOR OF "HESPERIDES."



HAYRICK some do spell thy name,
And thy verse approves the same;
For 'tis like fresh-scented hay,—
With country lasses in't at play.

M. C.



ON a sunny Saturday evening
They laid him in his grave,
When the sycamore had not a shaking leaf,
And the harbour not a wave.
The sandhills lay in the yellow ray
Ripe with the sadness of parting May ;
And when had ended the voice of prayer .
The Fall's deep bass was left on the air,
Rolling down.

Young he was and hopeful,
And ah, to die so soon !
His new grave lies deserted
At the rising of the moon ;
But when morn comes round, and the church-
bells sound,
The little children may sit on the mound,

And talk of him as they count the hour
On the feathery dandelion flower,
Whilst the stone-clacker rattles here and there,
And the glittering Fall makes a tune in the air,
Rolling down.

THE BANNER.



WE blazon on our banner wide,
Whose silken scarlet fold
In streams of noble blood is dyed,
A mystic crown of gold.

Which needs, in peacefullest repose,
Regilding every day:
And half our daily service goes
The charge thereof to pay.

And when the sacred symbol strives
Amid the storm of war,
We take and give ten thousand lives
For what is dearer far.

That it again may float at ease
On haughty palace-height,
Unfurling to the summer breeze
And glittering in the light.

Yet preach not that its cost is great,
And that its worth is small:
Till ancient honour 's out of date
Our Banner shall not fall!

The earth is full of symbol powers
In all that 's great and fair;
And if thou like not this of ours—
Go, range thyself elsewhere.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.



It is a lover and his bride
Walking slowly side by side
Through the golden eventide,
By a swift river.

As the love-deep waterflow
Feeds its flowery border, so
In their talk sweet fancies blow,
By the swift river.

A little flower of brilliant blue
Meets by hap the lady's view;
She shows it to her lover too,
By the swift river.

Down he springs with gesture gay,—
Fatal blossom! heavy day!
All at once the bank gives way
 By the swift river.

He flings to her the flower he sought,
With these three words, 'Forget-me-not!'
Then falls, and out of sight is brought
 By the swift river.

And evermore the Flower for name
Bears three mournful words, the same
With his last fond look that came,
 By that swift river.

THE MAIDENS OF THE MERE.



WHEN the spinning-room was here,
Came three damsels clad in white
With their spindles every night,
Spinning to a pulsing cadence.
Came and sat three fairest maidens,
Singing songs of Elfen-Mere,
Till eleven o'clock had tolled ;
Then they went into the wold.

Very kind and sweet they were,
They were loved by every one ;
Most of all, the pastor's son
Listening to their gentle singing,
Felt as though his heart were clinging

Round these Maidens of the Mere ;
Sued each night to make them stay,
Saddened when they went away.

Hands that shook with love and fear
Had put back the village clock,—
Flew the spindle, turned the rock,
Flowed the song with subtle rounding,
Till the false “ eleven ” was sounding ;
Then the Maidens of the Mere
Swiftly, softly, left the room,
Like three doves on snowy plume.

One that night who wandered near
Heard lamentings by the shore,
Saw at dawn three stains of gore
In the waters fade and dwindle.
Never more with song and spindle
Came the Maidens of the Mere.
The pastor's son did pine and die ;
Because true love should never lie.

IN THE TRAIN.



WITH its precious human freight
Barred and linked in long array,
Slowly moves the ponderous weight,
Smoothly glides away.

Quickened puff and playing stroke
Find the narrow ledges true,
Over fields the torn white smoke
Lingers into dew.

Swiftly with dismaying shriek
Down through cavern gloom we roll,
Forth in laughing daylight break,
Onward to the goal.

Through the mountain's rocky heart,
Over champaign richly spread,
'Thwart the flood, the chasm, we dart,
Distant streets to tread.

Lender, not antagonist,
Nature claims this force as hers,—
But, the strict conditions missed,
Jealously demurs.

LADY ALICE.



i.

Now what doth Lady Alice so late on the turret stair,
Without a lamp to light her, but the diamond in her
hair ;

When every arching passage overflows with shallow
gloom,
And dreams float through the castle, into every silent
room ?

She trembles at her footsteps, although they fall so
light ;

Through the turret loopholes she sees the wild mid-
night ;

Broken vapours streaming across the stormy sky ;
Down the empty corridors the blast doth moan and cry.

She steals along a gallery ; she pauses by a door ;
 And fast her tears are dropping down upon the oaken
 floor ;
 And thrice she seems returning—but thrice she turns
 again :—
 Now heavy lie the cloud of sleep on that old father's
 brain !

Oh ! well it were that *never* should'st thou waken from
 thy sleep !
 For wherefore should they waken, who waken but to
 weep ?
 No more, no more, beside thy bed may Peace her vigil
 keep !
 Thy sorrow like a lion waits, upon its prey to leap.*

II.

An afternoon in April, no sun appears on high,
 But a moist and yellow lustre fills the deepness of the
 sky.
 And through the castle-gateway, left empty and
 forlorn,
 Along the leafless avenue an honoured bier is borne.

* The lion was supposed "to prey on nothing that doth seem as dead."

They stop. The long line closes up like some gigantic
worm.

A shape is standing in the path, a wan and ghostlike
form,

Which gazes fixedly ; nor moves, nor utters any sound ;
Then, like a statue built of snow, sinks down upon the
ground.

And though her clothes are ragged, and though her
feet are bare,

And though all wild and tangled falls her heavy silk-
brown hair ;

Though from her eyes the brightness, from her cheeks
the bloom is fled,

They know their Lady Alice, the darling of the dead.

With silence, in her own old room the fainting form
they lay,

Where all things stand unaltered since the night she
fled away :

But who—but who shall bring to life her father from
the clay ?

But who shall give her back again her heart of a
former day ?

STILL in my prayers and in my dreams,
 Though from my hourly thoughts exiled,
As spirit-bright thine image beams
 As ever saint on hermit smiled.

I used to breathe thy name in prayer
 With human feeling warm and deep ;
Now breathed as those that angels bear,
 Where love is never taught to weep.

I used to dream thy hand in mine,
 And waken with a longing pain ;
But now the dream is too divine
 To blend itself with earth again.

Oh, early found and early lost !

 Though on my course thou sheddest now
No light, no strength when tempest-tost,
 Still in my prayers and dreams art thou.

FORWARD.



EVER stream the living gales
On into the forward void,
In whose breath the eager sails
Feel their straining bonds,—employed
To drag through denser element
A sluggish hull ; and forward bent
They press and pull with selfish force,
And so the ship fulfils her course.

When I was a child, I thought,
All because I knew them not,
Grandly of the ways of men,
Their aims and motives ; but since then
Master Time has made me free,
Step by step in swift advance,

Of manhood's full freemasonry ;
And its mysteries prove to be
Blanker far than ignorance.
Such an earth as children see,
Never was, shall never be.

Crowds of men, too, blind without
A childish narrow range of sight,
With empty building-ground about
Their peristyle of lantern-light,
Live in a world unfixed and crude,
Where chaos still is unsubdued ;
Soothed in daily pain and sorrow,
With nursery promise for to-morrow ;
With dreams of corners unexplored,
Where the wealth of life is stored ;
Something to be shown at last,
Something to be known at last,
Beyond what toys the petty present ;
Their moon of hope, for ever crescent,
For ever seems to grow, is never grown.

Yet for the weakest ev'n of these,
Not all the Arabian mysteries

· Within this world's most credulous scope,
Afford sufficient ground for Hope
To build the future's temple on :
At last they end where those begun,
Who searching with a mountain view
The old earth-world all round and round,
And nowhere finding open ground,
At once sent Hope on strong wings forth
Into a world almost as new as birth,—
HOPE says, *almost* as new.

And so at last, not much afraid,
Forward, file on file, we march
· Beneath a gay triumphal arch
Into the cloud that takes our breath ;
For lo ! the Door of Death
Is of a Rainbow made.

WAKENING.



A GOLDEN pen I mean to take,
A book of ivory white,
And in the mornings when I wake
The kind dream-thoughts to write,
Which come from heaven for love's support,
Like dews that fall at night.
For soon the delicate gifts decay,
As stirs the mired and smoky day.

“ Sleep is like death,” and after sleep
The world seems new begun ;
Its earnestness all clear and deep,
Its true solution won ;
White thoughts stand luminous and firm,
Like statues in the sun ;
Refreshed from super-sensuous founts
The soul to blotless vision mounts.

“ Sleep is like death.” Is death like sleep ?
—A waftage through still time ?
And when its dreams of dawn shall peep,
What strange or altered clime
Will they foreshow ? Day’s KING and Night’s
(Oh, be my prayer no crime,)
Give but a world wherein may stay
The love and loved of earth’s yesterday !

AN AUTUMN EVENING.



QUEEN Autumn now makes progress through the land,
That loyally hath spread along her way
A golden carpet, pranked with many a band
Of broidered flowers and leafage clustering gay.

The tapestries of the tissued clouds on high,
Rich with the changing glories of the heaven,
Mass round a vaulting of the purest sky
That e'en to festal season can be given.

And tall tree-arches, hung with scented wreaths
And studded with warm fruit, cope every road ;
And everywhere a busy joy outbreathes ;
And Plenty's wide-mouthed horn is overflowed.

Lately, when this good time was at its best,
One evening found me, with half-wearied pace,
Climbing a hill against the lighted West,
A cool air softly flowing on my face.

I reached the top: the calm and gorgeous sky
Bathed a broad harvest-view in double gold;
Sheaf-tented fields of bloodless victory;
Stacked farms, embosomed in their leafy fold,

Pillared with light blue smoke;—grass-shaded hill
And brown ploughed-land, their graver colourings lent;
And some few heads of corn ungathered still,
Like agèd men to earth, their cradle, bent.

And reapers, gleaners, and full carts of grain,
With undisturbing motion and faint sound
Fed the rich calm; whose marge a mountain chain,
Soaked in dream-colour, girt with Beulah bound.

At length across an easy-falling slope,
Down through the harvesters I sauntered slowly,
Field after field; until I reached a group,
A pleasant group, who were not strangers wholly.

The Farmer, still an active man though grey,
 Stood talking to his sturdy second son,
Who had been with the reapers all the day,
 And now put on his coat, for work was done.

And two as lovely girls as ever breathed,
 A slender, blue-eyed, golden-headed pair,
Laughed with a little nephew whilst he wreathed
 Red poppies through his younger sister's hair.

I joined the party, at their warm request.
 The cheerful dame, outside the cottage-door,
Welcomed her cheerful people and their guest,
 Then hastened to display her choicest store.

The children running to a poor lame boy,
 Whose crutches, on the stool beside him leaning,
Seemed in his book forgot,—with eager joy
 Gave him the crowded flowers that formed their gleanings.

With humble wisdom, blotless merriment,
 In that low, gentle-simple, plain abode,
Delightful was the evening that I spent ;
 Closed with a quiet worshipping of God.

And loitering home—all worldly feelings stilled—
Unclouded peace, a supermortal boon,
Filled all my soul : as heaven and earth were filled
With the white glory of the Harvest Moon.

THE SLAVER.

THE Slaver was burning, the sea was aflame,
And the sunset was dimmed with the blaze of the same.
“These slaves,”—said the crew, “Let us pick two or
three;
For the rest, they may burn, they may drown—what
care we!”

Then the cry of ten-score in that black vessel crammed
Arose like the cry of ten-score of the damned;
Chained fast whilst the growling flame fought with the sea,
Like tiger with lion, whose prey they should be.

Some rended their bonds with the strength of despair,
And swam to the boats; but a fiercer was there
Than the sea or the fire, and more cruel than they;
For Man took Death's side in the terrible fray!

A young negro girl in the long-boat had place.
Through the water close by rose a dark, well-known face.
When she saw it she cried out with joy like a child,
And held down her hand to her lover, and smiled.

A shot rang beside her : he sank like a stone :
The waters were bloody, and she was alone.
She has sprung from the boat : she is lost in the deep.
In the grey gulphs of ocean these two lovers sleep.

THE CRUCIBLE.



Is he shrunk to Name and Date,
Painted on a coffin plate ?

With golden talismans bedecked,
Deep this single man was sheathed
In atmosphere of soft respect,
Which all around him breathed.
Well he was served, well attended,
Well becourted, well befriended ;
Many labours stopped or sped
By the turning of his head ;
Many lives toiled like bees
To make the honey of his ease ;
Round him, centre of the spring,
A coil of constant force was curled,

Turning in laborious ring
A little world within the world.
A little mill-world, whence, by sleight
Of dragging wheel and nipping notch,
Groaning faintly out of sight
Like the ticking of his watch,
Flowed his flour, so fine and white.

And leave you *him* all alone
Beneath a stone ;
Now when comes the twilight cold
Down the bare wold,
And winds are crying to the darkened foam ;
When thoughts of glowing rooms and faces,
And the dear domestic graces
Draw all men home ?
On this stone the ragged rooks will meet,
And the gusty rain-storm beat,
And the little grass-mouse will scamper over it
To and from her nest in the bield,
And the wide-falling snow will cover it,
With the other stones of the field.
Black Rook, white Snow, how can they know
This stone has a costly vault below ?

Brown Mouse, wild Rain, 'tis too, too plain,
Won't spare this grave from the common disdain.

Oh, you say it is not he
You are laying by the sea ;
Leaving by the sea-side lonely ;
'Tis not he—his body only.
Darkness is its dwelling fit,
And a stone to cover it.
He, Himself, His Soul,—you say
God has called him far away.

Would that men could well discern
What a lesson they might learn
From this natural separation,
Chemist Death's elimination
Of the drossy and the fleeting,
Past all further trick or cheating ;
And in the actual be so wise
As to strive to analyse
The elements of life, while blended,
Which they rank, when all is ended,
Thus concluded, proved, and past,
In a juster rate at last.

“The inscription *Think How To Live* is admirable, and the more so, because it calls to mind the detestable *Memento Mori*, and triumphs over it beautifully.”—*Schiller to Goëthe, criticising Wilhelm Meister.*



“LEARN to Live,” “Remember Death,”

Are not maxims that oppose.

Life, that wafts not on a breath

Nor with pulses ebbs and flows,

Diligently learn :

Death, not Life's antagonist,

But consoler, glorifier ;

Transcendental realist ;

Sure, and daily drawing nigher,—

Joyfully discern.

ÆOLIAN HARP.



MOANING blast,
The summer is past,
And time and life are speeding fast!

Wintry wind,
Oh, where to find
The hopes we have left so far behind!

Mystery cold,
To thee have they told
Secrets the years will never unfold?

Sorrow of night,
Is love so light
As to follow thee round the world in thy flight?

Opiate balm,
Is death so calm
As to faint in the ear like a distant psalm?

THE BUBBLE.



Ah, the pretty planet!
Ah, the floating sphere!
Gentle sighings fan it
Near and yet more near.

World as light as feather,
Spun of coloured rays;
All the hues together
Tinge it as it plays.

Autumn's deepest golden,
Summer, wed to Spring,
Silvery Winter olden,
Move in changeful ring.

Open shine of morning
 Fresh on dripping flow'rs,
Closer pomp adorning
 Pillow of the hours.

Childhood's dreamy colour,
 Pulsing into light,
Waxing full and fuller,
 Dimmed again to night.

Past and future mingle
 Through the lucent globe ;
Wave entwined and single,
 Like a woven robe.

All is freely flowing,
 Interchanging round ;
Prismal life outgoing,
 Welling without sound.

Would the breath to fan it
 Had for once repelled,
Since that fairy planet
 Never could be held !

Ere it burst for ever ;
 Leaving as our prize,
Gall our lips to savour,
 Tears to blind our eyes.

THE THREE FLOWERS.

I.

A PILGRIM light for travel bound
Tripped through a gay parterre :
The cool fresh dew was on the ground,
The lark's song in the air.
He chose a bud as blue as heaven,
Ere turned he to depart ;
And kissed it over seven times seven,
And stored it next his heart.
How happy !—might the tender thing,
So passionately prest,
Have kept the sweetness of its Spring,
Nor withered in his breast.

II.

He strode along through cultured fields
By sturdy conquest won ;

And blessed the shade the woodland yields
From too oppressive sun.
But spying far a rich red bloom—
Come good or evil hap,
Its airy precipice he clomb,
To set it in his cap.
Then on with dauntless step he went ;
But never taking heed
How leaf by leaf the prize was shent,
And scattered in his speed.

III.

O'er moorlands wended he his way ;
The heather far and near
Steeped in the light of sinking day,
And of the waning year.
His bent regard descried a flower
As white as upper snow ;
Whose subtle fragrance had the power
To bring him kneeling low.
He stooped to it. He fell asleep.
The sun's last rim had set.
And oh, that slumber was so deep,
He has not wakened yet !

MOONRISE.



ABOVE the headlands massy dim
A swelling glow, a fiery birth,
A marvel in the sky doth swim,
Advanced upon the hush of earth.

The Globe, o'erhanging bright and brave
The pale green-glimmering ocean-floor,
Silters its wave, its rustling wave
Soft-folded on the shelving shore.

O lonely Moon, a lonely place
Is this thou cheerest with thy face ;
Three sand-side houses, and afar
The steady beacon's faithful star,

Comprise the tokens few and weak
That here of human effort speak.

But at this moment thou art risen
Full above the mighty city ;
Viewing palace, viewing prison,
Calm alike from pride and pity ;
Witching the ranges of its lamplight wan,
With other glares thou coldly gazest on.

One veil of mystic pattern thou hast spread
Over the multiform, enormous bound.
Halving church-towers and endless streets with shade ;
Piercing to many a lurking-place profound ;
Lighting those aits of melancholy ground
Where, 'mid the rush of life, repose the dead :
And sliding through, with pale unnoticed ray,
As into Time Eternity doth flow,
Skylights where little heaven can find its way
Amidst the theatre's distracted glow :
Flooding the suburbs with effulgence wide,
And shining into pleasure-gardens, gay
With variegated glitter and display,
Where lively music thrills and dancers glide.

Of all pursuits and passions that engage
Man's Proteus soul, an aggregate so vast
Thou seest not upon this sphere amassed
Elsewhere in thy encircling pilgrimage.

And o'er it thine, like Memory's pallid beams,
An all-subduing pensiveness do cast,
Until the present as a vision seems
Enchanted from the stillness of the past ;
Or like our childhood's hopes and dreams
Wafted back at last.

Trembling in half-consciousness,
Hovers to console and bless
On its pinions shining
The glory mild, the tearful boon,—
But it fades away, how soon !
From rapture into pining,
For childhood's home of vanished bliss,
Aye the heart's metropolis.

Little Town, by other shores,
Girt with other mountains,
No Italian City pours

Such a wealth of fountains,
As in thee my steps would greet
Gushing up in every street,
Of recollections full and sweet!

O Moon, a calm ascent is thine,
Above that well-known mountain-line ;
There, while I speak, ascendest thou ;
Its towering westward bastion now
To golden sunset bids good-night,
And eastward it receives thy ghostly light.

Art thou truly looking down
Into the streets of the little town,
Where I know every chimney's place,
Every door's and window's face ?—
Thou hast set before thee clear,
As in many a by-gone year
'Fore the years begun to change,
One small roof, familiar-strange,
Roof that oped to many a vision
Grim, fantastic, or elysian :
On the river dance thy beams
To the tune that swayed my dreams ;

Swallowed in the gloomy arches
Where beneath the bridge it marches ;
Shining unopposed and wide
O'er the harbour's mingling tide ;
Striking with a wand of power,
Landmark grey, the old church-tower ;
Yet disturbing not its sleep ;
Nor the slumber far more deep
Its solitary precincts claim,
Paved with many a well-known name.

There the Fall for ever tolls ;
And the Bar, through nights and days,
Booms from sand-hills by the sea,
When th' Atlantic water rolls
Solemnly and heavily,—
Now whitened with thy rays.

The narrow tide I gaze on *here*,
With thee, O Moon, less kindly greets
My pensive eye than that which beats
The fierce Atlantic cliffs along ;
Its stranger voice, though far less strong,
Less soothes mine ear.

But with a full and pure emotion,
To thee be all the ancient homage brought,
Calm Queen of the tempestuous ocean,
And more unruly tides of human thought !
Thou, at the touch of whose enchantments mild
The jars of Time and Space are reconciled ;
All life is with the passing moment blended,
All earth around the present scene suspended,—
With vanish'd joys and dreams within their scope,
And unreach'd mysteries of Faith and Hope.

THE EMIGRANT'S DREAM.



ONCE I dreamed that I was crossing,
Exile sad, the lonely ocean,
Ever plunging, ever tossing
In monotony of motion ;
All too cramped, and yet too free,
Smothered in a shaking jail,
Driven by the wandering gale
Over wastes of sea.

Swift the senseless ship is cleaving
Death-dark waters, that dissever
Weary hearts, out-worn with grieving,
Weary hearts and homes for ever.
Berth is sickly close below,
Blast above us harshly rings ;
—O the early thrush that sings
Where my carnations blow !

Mine? alas, that day is vanished!

I am outcast, I am lonely,
I am broken, I am banished,
All my hope is patience only!
—In my dream I moaned aloud,
And behold! a heavenly bliss
Stooping like a mother's kiss
Through the slumbrous cloud.

Thrush from laurel-bough was trilling.

Eyelids not as yet unclosing
Hugged the home-contentment filling
My luxurious heart's reposing,
As the soft embracing air
Was full of spiced carnation-breath,—
'Scaped from the Satan of sleep's death,
The horrible Nightmare!

Would Death's self, that nurse ungainly,

To a dreamless rest had rocked me—
Ere the chill light showed me plainly
'Twas not slumber that had mocked me.
Ere I saw my thrush's cage
Swinging in the steerage glooms,

Saw the box that held my blooms
On the rough-laid stage.

“ Bird,” I said, “ in double prison,
Quickly is your song reviving ;
Flowers, your scents have never risen
Sweetlier, when in garden thriving.
O that in my heavy state
Hope could promise that at length
I might gather needful strength
To surmount my fate ! ”

THE LULLABY.

I SAW two children hushed to death,
In lap of One with silver wings,
Holding a lute, whose latest breath
Still lingered on the trembling strings.

Her face was very pale and fair,
And from her hooded eyes was shed
A love celestial, and her hair
Was like a crown around her head.

No smallest wave will she displace
That fills the lute's faint-ebbing strain ;
The notes seem echoed from her face,
And echoed back from their's again.

SONNET.

PALE little country girl, you could not guess
Why I have looked so fondly on your face,
And spoken to you in so soft a tone,
And caught your answer with such listening stress.
You moved a heart-thought which were not your own
By personal right, although your prettiness,
Exalted into pure ideal grace,
Suited an inward beauty tried and known.

Likeness and Memory, transpicuous shades,
That realising this, and this in turn
Hallowing the other, made my spirit yearn
With sudden thrill, as suddenly that fades,—
Though not so this fresh longing which invades
The longing, lonely heart, to bid it burn.

ÆOLIAN HARP.



WHAT saith the river to the rushes grey,
Rushes sadly bending,
River slowly wending ?

Who can tell the whispered things they say ?
Youth and time and manhood's prime
For ever ever fled away !

Cast your withered garlands in the stream,
Low autumnal branches,
Round the skiff that launches
Wavering downward through the lands of dream.
Ever, ever fled away !
This the burden, this the theme.

What saith the river to the rushes grey,
Rushes sadly bending,
River slowly wending ?

It is near the closing of the day.
Near the night. Life and light
For ever ever fled away !

Draw him tideward down ; but not in haste.
Mouldering daylight lingers ;
Night with her cold fingers
Sprinkles moonbeams on the dim sea-waste.
Ever, ever fled away !
Vainly cherished ! vainly chased !

What saith the river to the rushes grey,
Rushes sadly bending,
River slowly wending ?
Where in darkest glooms his bed we lay,
Up the cave moans the wave,
For ever ever fled away !

THE TOUCHSTONE.



A MAN there came, whence none could tell,
 Bearing a Touchstone in his hand ;
 And tested all things in the land
By its unerring spell.

A thousand transmutations rose
 Of fair to foul, and foul to fair :
 The golden crown he did not spare,
Nor scorn the beggar's clothes.

Of heir-loom jewels, prized so much,
 Were many changed to chips and clods ;
 And even statues of the Gods
Crumbled beneath its touch.

Then angrily the people cried,
 “The loss outweighs the profit far.
 Our goods suffice us as they are.
We will not have them tried !”

And since they could not so avail
 To check his unrelenting quest,
 They seized him, saying, “ Let him test
How real is our jail !”

But, though they slew him with the sword,
 And in a fire his Touchstone burned,
 Its doings could not be o’erturned,
Its undoings restored.

And when, to stop all future harm,
 They strewed its ashes to the breeze,
 They little guessed each grain of these
Conveyed the perfect charm.

THE MOTHER.

I.

WAKING after dawn of day,
Warm and full of smiles I lay,
Safe, come good or evil hap,
In a queenly mother's lap.

II.

Her skirts, that were of flowing wind,
Rustled the grass and swept behind
On hanging boughs of pathside trees,
But shook no bud nor leaf from these ;
Her misty robe was rich and fair,
As a mountain's clad in soft blue air ;
Her breath was like the green scents of Spring
Blowing round birds to make them sing ;

Her tresses' tinge faint cloudlets hold
Where sets the sun in flame of gold,
Whilst her pure face stood serene
And glowing, as the sky between.
Brooks and flowers her feet to grace,
All the shoreless Sea of Space
Doming her imperial head,
Were round her and above her spread,
She had landscapes on her garment's hem,
And the jewelled night for diadem.
Throned amid noiseless poms of cloud
Where they swelled and changed and burned and flowed,
As a trackless snowy peak might rise
Up through the last sun of the skies,
When Day takes flight from the shadowy ghost,
On crimson wings from a western coast,
She sat serene and still, yet took
Their splendours on her lofty look.

III.

Ever she sung a wondrous song,
Many-toned and full and strong,
Yet drawn to whisper in my ear
As though for mine alone to hear.

The dash of floods and the chime of rills
Were in it ; and far on misty hills
I heard the footsteps of the thunder,
And bleating sheep in pastures under.
The lark in airy glitterings
Sparkling song from her quivering wings,
The chorus of thrushes gay and bold,
The evening blackbird in thicket-fold,
The rail craik-craiking through starry shadows
Over dim lawn and darkling meadows,
The carolling redbreast from roadside spray,
Or garden-wall on an Autumn day ;
And the waving, rustling sea of wheat,
Foamed at its marge with meadow-sweet ;
And the whispering harebell on the leas,
And the forest-harp of the playing breeze
With its strings of subtilely varied tone,
Came in that music, every one :
And the roar and burst of the ocean waves,
And the water chimes in heavy caves,
And the outcast wind condemned to grieve
Through casement chinks on a winter's eve,
And a strange-familiar melody
Of cradle-rock and lullaby,

And purring flame on a shadowy hearth,
And hum of frost to the dreaming Earth.

IV.

I was lapt in full content
When her mouth my mother bent
Down to my cheek,—and soon I knew
Where the primrose treasures grew ;
And rolled in richer garden-mines,
Tasting scents like fairy wines ;
Centered in the heavens that lie
Round Childhood's short eternity.

V.

Were they moments, were they years,
Measured out the sliding spheres—
The growing, changing, longing, dreaming,
In me, the centre of all the seeming,
Till the hour, the hour of hours,
When she called me from my flowers,
When she kissed me on the lips,
And revealed from long eclipse
Fateful eyes of infinite blue
Where the living soul shone through,

Like watching stars that lie soft and bright
In the violet depths of the midsummer night ;
And ever still her cadence sung,
While a softest spirit-tongue,
Thrilling, mystical, remote,
Echoed every falling note,
With a ringing crystalline,
A monotony divine — ?

I.

Then a strong and joyous madness,
Then a dark and heavy sadness,
Swept across my struggling brain ;—
Deep the rapture, fierce the pain,
Ere I found myself again !
And the weak departing fever
Took away from me for ever
Much that memory can deplore ;
Much, besides, that grieves me more,
Because my mind in vain is tost
To recollect what I have lost.

VII.

But now, to keep me from despair,
Gifts she brought, of mirrors rare,

Reflecting the sea and earth and air ;
Mingling with these in magic scope
The phantoms of Memory and of Hope ;
Catching her ample robe of blue,
And lighting the sapphire through and through
With inner blazes that came and went
Like angels flushing the firmament ;
Showing a blossom at her feet
Orbed into a sphere complete,
Full of music and life and power—
The careless birth of a sunny hour ;
Or painting one face in coloured flame,
With the universe for frame.
Spiritual-strange did forms appear,
And the stars and the depths of heaven drew near,
And blended mystic lights and songs
With glance and voice of earthly throngs.

VIII.

What was that which lurked behind
To draw a fresh cloud on my mind ?
For I was tempted to despise
And look upon all with unholy eyes.
My mother's pure look and royal clothing
Filled me with weariness and loathing ;

In gentle words I began to hear
 Pining, and discontent, and fear ;
 And in louder tones a continual uttering
 Of hate, and rage, and rebellious muttering ;
 I saw an omnipotent darkness lurk
 To swallow all light, all life, all work ;
 All growing, changing, bearing, dreaming ;
 And Me—the centre of all the seeming,—
 Yet lying encrusted with painful fate ;
 A leper at God's great palace-gate.

ix.

But again she stooped,—I feel it now,
 That heavenly kiss on my scalded brow.
 There were awful thunders rolling round me ;
 And harshest tearings of bands that bound me ;
 And stretchings of cramped, retorted limbs ;
 And an agony of life, as when it brims
 On the wrung-out brain of a rescued man,—
 And I was saved from the crushing ban.

x.

And now I am master in my house ;
 Granted power to bind and loose ;

In noble heirdom set at one
With princely stars and kingly sun.
And ever doth my mother keep
Steady watch the while I sleep ;
In hours of sickness still she tends me,
In hours of danger still befriends me ;
And with voice that rises clearly,
Sings the hymn I love so dearly,
Hymn that seems unfolding slowly
To a sense profound and holy ;
Etherizing loss and gain,
And forgetting its own strain.

XI.

She hath kissed my cheek, my lips, my brow.
One other kiss awaits me now ;
One which I shall scarcely feel,—
To close mine eyelids with a loving seal.

THE WORLD'S EPIGRAM.

O LAND of Freedom! well thou didst begin;
A noble blazonry most nobly win:—
O Land of Freedom! it is strange, methinks,
Thy Stars should seem a chain of spiky links,
Thy Stripes, whip-printed on a human skin,
Thine Eagle sick, or else a dunghill bred,
(The blessed sun so disconcerts his eyes)—
That empty Cap inscribed as LIBERTY'S,
A relic of the absent or the dead.

THE EPICUREAN.



You upon the tossing surges,
We upon the shore ;
Soon the mighty tide immerges
Both for evermore.

Love, you say, is nought but folly,
—Do not tell me why.
Earth's best joys are melancholy,
—Learn it you, not I!

How long Love may choose to love me,
What is that to me ?
Joy comes from below, above me ?
Either let it be !

We on easy margin lolling,
Hear the billow fret ;
See you mud and weeds uphauling
In your toilsome net.

Here we kiss and make us merry,
Drinking of the best ;
When the tide our joys shall bury,
Here we 'll lie at rest.

If they will, let angel pinions
Save us into air.
Hope and Fear have joint dominions.
Be the present fair !

THE PALE IMAGE.



WHEN she lieth on her bed,
 With a crown of lilies pale
Set upon her peaceful head ;
 And her true-love's kiss would fail
To restore a little red
 To the blanchèd cheek ;
When her hands, all white and cold,
 On her cold cold breast are laid,
O'er the straight and snowy fold,
 Palm to palm as though she prayed,—
Prayer to rest for aye untold
 On that mouth so meek :

Do not gaze on her too much.
 You that have the dearest right,



Press her lip with parting touch,
Leaving dimmed your misty sight :
Death is false,—and e'en to such
Gentle ones as she.
If you feed your loving eyes
Then when Death her bridegroom seems,
She shall come in deathly guise
Through your thoughts and through your dreams ;
And when met in Paradise,
Scarcely known shall be.

PRIZE ENIGMA.

LISTEN what transporting magic
I have ever at command,
Here with feet on Irish fender,
In the moving of my hand.
Oh, how soft and instantaneous
Is the waftage that I feel ;
Words of charm pronouncing softly,
Words the wizard leaves reveal !

Now I 'm by a lake enchanted,
Folded in a winding wood ;
Roofs of lily-crusted marble
Gleam upon the shadowy flood ;
Elfen music trembles round it,—
Who can tell if that be boat

With a shining spirit-pilot,
Or a golden star afloat ?

Now I sweep through dell and greenwood,
With my band of merry men ;
Wind the mort upon my bugle,
'Tis a stately stag of ten !
Jovial then our hall of banquet,
With old spears and morions dight ;
Sweetly sung, those ancient ballads
To the harp at dim twilight.

Now I 'm with a serious tutor,
Taking me a country walk ;
Leaving no delight unnoticed,
Bird or blossom, cloud or rock.
Clumsy-gay, pedantic-humble,
He 's a mild and stubborn saint ;
Self-esteem'd,—and widely honoured,
Spite of all his Foy-Bells quaint.

Now I 'm at a lively picnic,
Rounded with an evening dance.
Sentimental lays are warbled,

Helped with many a killing glance ;
 Flirts are in the flowered balcony,
 Masqueraders in the lawn ;
 Glowing waltzers after supper
 Little heed the stealing dawn.

Now in deep Thessalian valley
 Rest I 'mid the summer grass ;
 Vision-floated round Olympus
 With the clouds that slowly pass.
 I am 'ware of Fauns and Dryads,
 Facing through the leafy screen ;
 More than mist is on the fountain,—
 But oh, might the Gods be seen !

Brandy now and soda-water
 At the *buffet* of a " Hell :"
 Pledge me deeply, fairest creature,
 Philtre this, of strongest spell !
 Shutters close, make noon and midnight
 All alike, as in the grave.
 Ha ! I take the tide of fortune,
 Or a darker, colder wave !

Now one morning before breakfast,
In the shrubbery I rove,
Chatting to a pretty damsel
Half in pique and half in love ;
She 's romantic, smart, coquettish,
Eager, tearful, never calm.
Overhead the larks are trilling,
And I hear a bleating lamb.

Now I 'm on a mighty river,
Borne in foam and misty shroud
Down through whirlpool, crag, and rapid,
Valley, precipice, and cloud.
Day and night, and storm and splendour,
Moonlight dammed with monstrous bars,
Mines of darkness veined with lightning,
Red sundawn that kills the stars ;
Meadow wide where Pan yet harbours,
Distant peak with snowy crown,
Broad eternal forest-margin,
Swiftly borne—*O, whither ?*—down.

Cease awhile from weird journey,
Close the spreading wings to rest,

One by one, the summoned spirits
Smiling friend hath simply guessed.
Learn the prize then. Whatsoever
Land or sea our homes divide,
By this same unfailing magic
We shall travel side by side!

THE mild promising stars are coming into view,
The voice of the waterfall is toning in the air,
Whilst lazily the cloud-fire smoulders on the sea,
And all the landscape-outlines are blurred with falling
dew,—
As my rapture is with sadness, because I may not
share,
And double it by sharing it with Thee.

Now the calm shadowy earth lies musing like a saint,
Wearing for a halo the pure circlet of the moon ;
Like a full happy heart is the flowing of the tide ;
And the night-wind from the mountain breathes
steady, though so faint,—
As I am breathing softly, “ Ah ! might some heavenly
boon
Bestow thee, my beloved one, to my side ! ”

GRAYWACKÈ'S TOMB.



GRAYWACKÈ on his bed of death
Cheaped a tomb with stint of breath :
I could have told him how to save
Some money wasted on his grave.
'Twere but extraction of his heart,
(Death must have pierced some softer part,)
Then, after some few strokes, to turn
The lump into a marble urn,
If chisel could be found to cut it,—
For lasting monument to put it.
No epitaph were half so ample,
At once a record and a sample ;
And Time had vainly there, in sooth,
Gnawed, till he broke his last old tooth !

TO THE CASTLE OF DONEGAL.

CASTLE of Donegal ! both green and grey,
Like an old poet ; where thine outworks lay
A sessions-house, and barrack for police
Lie in thy shadow. If from ivied peace
We could recall thee, and revive to-day
The men whom thy crazed walls, their children,
cease*

Almost to recollect ; how we and they
Would wonder ! How their wonder would increase
When by their antique customs they were driven
(As soon would happen to those chiefs of yore)
To feel our unromantic forms of power,
Police and Statute-Law. Therefore, still riven
And roofless be thou ; strength is law no more ;
The times that suited thee are gone—thank Heaven !

* Resembles Fuller:—"The Pyramids, dotting with age, have forgot the names of their founders."

ROYAL MARRIAGES.

THREE days ago
Her hand was won
By suitor that was skilled to woo ;
And now come we
In state, to see
The Church's ceremonials due.

The Bride in white
Is clad aright,
And in the carriage closely hid ;
No blush to veil—
For too, too pale
The cheek beneath each downcast lid.

White favours rest
On every breast ;
And yet methinks we seem not gay.

The church is cold,
The priest is old,—
Now who will give the bride away ?

Bowed sexton there,
With frosty hair,
Stand forward and discharge thy trust.
Priest's words sound forth ;
They 're—" Earth to earth,
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Withdrawn in gloom
Waits Death the groom ;
(His wedding-chimes, how slow they swing !)
With icy grip
He soon will clip
Her finger with the wormy ring.

The match is fair.
This silent pair,
Here to each other given for ever,
Were lovers long,
Were plighted strong
With oaths and bonds that nought could sever.

So sisters two
Are parted now,
Quitting the home where both drew breath ;
The Soul made wife
To the Prince of Life,
The Body wedded to King Death.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

PRELUDE.

—◆—

LIKENESS, oft'er found than sought
Or by wit's exertion wrought,
Here 'tween two delights exprest,
In the varying tinge is drest
Not uncourted by affection's
Sympathising recollections.
When you find the fancy just,
Wreathe the Blossom round the Bust.

Nor of Fancy's birth may be
Every correspondency.
Say that matter 's but expansion
Of that force whose central mansion
Is the soul that each man shares,
And so each, like Atlas bears

Earth on 's shoulders—in his head ;
Here involved, what 's there outspread :
Thus each modal element
A faculty doth represent,
And the beauty creamed on Flowers
Mind's distinct poetic powers,—
Poured in both from one completeness
Into various moulds of sweetness.
Say that we, in scanning over,
Do not fancy, but discover
Where the Inner 's like the Outer ;
Then, whoe'er will be a doubter,
Let him prove it is not so.
I meantime my guesses show ;
And my fellow-children bid
Search where mother's hand hath hid.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

FIRST GUESS.



THIS dark-red Wallflower seemeth well to me
Dan CHAUCER's emblem meetest for to be :
So rich it is, yet sturdy in its hue ;
So sweet in scent, yet very wholesome too ;
So freshly thriving in a homely place,
Yet in the rarest knots a welcome grace.

THE REPROOF.

WHY dost always weep and groan ?

(Nature thus reproved her son)

Never child do I disown,

But thou art a favoured one.

Strong and apt attendants run

Swiftly to thy call ;

Best of every service done

To thy share doth fall.

Greener elm I give to thee ;

Rosier rose, of richer scent ;

Brighter river, grander sea,

Bluer sky above thee bent ;

Dreams on others never spent,
 Waking or asleep ;
Love, and varying wonderment,
 Almost angel-deep.

Yet the grumbler's part you choose ;
 Gifts so noble, lightly prize ;
Murmur that these brilliant hues
 Only serve to blind your eyes.
Welcoming the rose with sighs,
 Since it has a thorn ;
Cradling every joy that dies,
 Freezing the new-born.

Try, ere longer you complain,
 If there be no fault in you.
All my wealth is spread in vain,
 Where the heart is less than true.
Rose's favour wisely sue,
 Fear not then to bleed ;
Love with earnest spirit woo,
 Loves thou 'lt never need.

Know, my child, I 've sent thee down
 To instruct and cheer the rest :

On thy mountain brow a frown
Chills and darkens east and west.
Deep within a lordly breast
Hide thy skill in grief,—
Only in a power expressed
For thy friends' relief.

A BURIAL PLACE.



WHERE those green mounds o'erlook the mingling Erne
And salt Atlantic, clay that walked as Man
A thousand years ago—Oster or Kerne—
May still repose : and thither, if ye can,
I pray ye, friends, to see my ashes borne
When I have measured out this mortal span ;
After so many centuries have rolled,
Adding one brother to the sleepers old.

The silver salmon shooting up the fall,
Itself at once the arrow and the bow ;
The shadow of the old quay's weedy wall
Cast on the shining turbulence below ;
The water-voice which ever seemed to call

Far off out of my childhood's long-ago ;
The gentle washing of the harbour wave ;
Be these the sounds and sights around my grave.

Soothed also with thy friendly beck, my town,
And near the square grey tower, within whose shade
I might not with my fathers lay me down :
Whilst, by the wide heavens changefully arrayed,
The purple mountains its horizon crown ;
And westward 'tween low hummocks is displayed
In lightsome hours, the level pale blue sea,
With sails upon it, creeping silently :

Or, other time, beyond that tawny sand,
An ocean glooming underneath the shroud
Drawn thick athwart it by tempestuous hand ;
When like a mighty fire the bar roars loud,
As though the whole sea came to whelm the land,—
The gull flies white against the stormy cloud,
And in the weather-gleam the breakers mark
A ghastly line upon the waters dark.

A green, unfading quilt above be spread,
And freely round let all the breezes blow ;

May children play beside the breathless bed,
 Holiday lasses by the cliff-edge go ;
And manly sports upon the sward be sped,
 And cheerful boats beneath the headland row.
And be the thought, if any rise, of me,
What happy soul might choose that thought to be.

COOKERY.



THE QUICKEST WAY FOR A *Tête de Veau, Couronnée.*

TAKE a sect, no matter what,
Throw the doctrines in your pot,
Stirring as it may require,
On the very slowest fire,
Till it dance and sing a little,—
Boiling over not a tittle !

Put in pepper for a savour ;
Butter next, to smooth the flavour ;
Add, with well-dried slips of sage,
Whate'er sauce may be ' the rage.'
Choose neat mould, and fill the same :—
You've cooked yourself a Poet's Fame !

ÆOLIAN HARP.

Is not the world too beautiful for thee,
Child of littleness, child of clay ?
Thinkest thou skies will ever bend o'er thee,
Kind and patient as those of to-day ?
Flowers their sweetness ever keep,
Night be prompt with dew and sleep,
Passions flow within the marge,
Madness care for custom's targe,
Wind, fire, water, spare to slay,
Brain exalt thee, hand obey,
Tame as the servants, the slaves of to-day ?

We wait, we wait, we wait, we wait,
We lie in ambush for thy fate !
Is the end come at last ?
The proud foolish dream past ?

We are flinging off the yoke,
Thou art melting into smoke.
Dost thou feel the waking earth
Spurn thee with a terrible mirth ?
As the mighty change kindles,
Hue fades, strength dwindles,
All the beauties, all the riches,
Vanish like a feast of witches !

Is it in truth the revolt thou wert fearing,
Child of the infinite, child of hope ?
Or is it the world but disappearing,
As thou soarest to loftier scope ?

THE MAIDEN AND CHARON.

A ROMAIC BALLAD.

[Charon is the *Death* of the modern Greeks.]

SHE had nine noble brothers,
This beautiful young maid,
And of old gloomy Charon
Not much was she afraid.

Young Kostas her betrothèd
Of four estates was heir,
And for old gloomy Charon
Right little did she care.

But Charon like a bird flew past
And shot his deathly dart ;
Flew like a coal-black swallow,
And pierced her to the heart

Then deep deep did her father sigh,
And loud her mother moan,
O my one only daughter,
My fair, my only one.

And down the valley Kostas came,
With twice three hundred men,
And sixty-two musicians,
Along the mountain-glen.

Oh, stop the marriage jubilee,
Musicians, play no more ;
Oh, stop awhile, for I can see
A cross upon the door.

Perchance one of my brothers
Lies wounded here to-day,
My father-in-law may be dead perchance,
Or else his father may.

He spurreth to the churchyard
His steed so black and brave,
And there he finds the sacristan
Digging in a grave.

O Sacristan, be greeted—
For whom that grave? he cries.
'Tis for a fair young maiden,
Her with the beautiful eyes;

Who had nine noble brothers
Within her father's gates,
And Kostas for her bridegroom,
The heir of four estates.

O Sacristan, I pray thee,
Now dig the grave more wide,
Now dig it wide enough for two
To rest there side by side.

He drew his golden-hilted sword,
He plunged it in his breast,
And there the young betrothèd lie
Side by side at rest.

TO ———.



KNOW, the chill breeze that warns the eager buds
From childish hurry to forestall the Spring,
Is more a benefactor to the woods
Than that which breathes a warmer welcoming :
And this is deemed too rare a growth to lose
One ripening element the garden can infuse.

OUR MOUNTAIN RANGE.



THANK Heav'n, we live in a mountain land !
Where a flight without wings is at our command,—
To play with the streams in their springing youth,
Let them swell in spate or dwindle in drouth ;
Or to make o'er the clouds our Olympian seat,
Where the thunder is rolled beneath our feet,
 Where storm and lightning,
 And sunshine bright'ning,
Solemnly girdle our steep retreat !

Above, the king-eagle's realm we share,
Below, the haunts of the shy brown hare.
Upland farmstead, and shepherd's cot,
Wide view, with many a round lake-dot,—
Beechen valley, and bilberry dell,
And glen where the Echoes and Fairies dwell,

With heaps and bosses
Of plume-fern and mosses,
Scarlet rowan, and slight blue-bell.

The watch-towers of the Morn they rise,
And they treasure the last light of the skies,
Wear giant shadows from noontide clouds,
Or dimmer foldings of vapoury shrouds ;
And at dusk the mounting stars appear
On their pinnacle crags, or the chill moon-sphere
Crowning only
Summits lonely,
'Mid black abysses and caves of fear.

Or the sun-parched heather, afire by night,
Traces with awful judgment-light
The outline black of our mightier dome
Than glows in the Easter-fires of Rome ;
And leagues over valley and plain and bay
Beacons afar the flickering ray ;
Bright o'erpowering
Embers cowering
Pale in the west, of the sunken day.

When Winter, fierce slave, with mutter and frown
Brings the misty robes and the cold white crown,
And blares with the terrible trumpet gale,
And crashes the cymbals of the hail—
Stung into life by the savage strains
Muster the barbarous suzerains,
 And redly horrent
 Each shouting torrent
Rages down to the trembling plains.

But when packed in the hollows the round clouds lie,
And the wild-geese flow changing down the sky
From the salt sea-fringe,—the softer rains
Run like young blood through the withered veins
That sweeping March left wasted and weak ;
And the agèd mountain, so dim and bleak,
 With sudden rally
 By mound and valley
Laughs with green light to his baldest peak.

Not to the heaven of heavens they go,
Our cliffs, nor wear the eternal snow ;
Yet we feel our kinship stablished well
To those by the great White Mount that dwell ;

To the shepherds closed in Idalian glade ;
To the Arabs resting in Libanus' shade ;
 To swartest livers
 By unknown rivers
'Mong Hills of the Moon, like ghosts arrayed :

When the wide and lonely morning breaks,
To stern explorers of condor-peaks ;
When storm gathers red in the burthened air,
To the wanned in Etna's or Hecla's glare ;
At eve-glow, to those who love from their vines
The chestnut surge of the Apennines ;
 At night, to Norwegians
 In craggy regions
Grim with grey bristles of scattered pines.

O broad, inorganic, mighty range
Of familiar Beings, for us no change
'Mid changing landscapes descends on you,
To the early memories ever true.
The mountain-child loves his home the best,
Years destroy not his rock-built nest ;
 Nor his pure emotion,
 When over the ocean,
He prays to be laid on its mother-breast.

Day with its waves of light and noise
Ebbs o'er the barrier: seem like toys
The objects our daily life fulfils,
To the Power flowing free on the ancient hills.
Soar higher, Thought! The time-sickness leavens
The mountains too, and the starry sevens:
Souls endeavour
To HIM that ever
Is throned on the circle of the heavens.

It seems an easy thing to say,
“To-morrow I must go away.”
And yet when I come back again,
How little treasure may remain,
For people will change as the swift months fly,—
Forget, or travel, or marry, or die.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

SECOND GUESS.

OF all that bloom in field or fell,
O SCOTT of Scots, how passing well
The Scottish flower, the wild Blue-Bell
 May be assigned to you.
On breezy heath it nods to greet
The happy rover's bounding feet,
Whose eye a welcome laughs, to meet
 Its full and hearty blue ;
Or on some mouldering donjon tower
Waves in the wind its slender flower
 Where 'scutcheoned banners flew,—
A fresh existence, springing gay
From time's despoil and power's decay.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

THIRD GUESS.

ONE summer noon, all carelessly dispread

Where fresh green trails a thickest bower did form,
I gazed on trumpet-blossoms overhead

Dropping with honey sweetness, amber-warm,
Till sleep came softly. Oh, what maiden charm
Flushed dainty-bright that bower, in vision seen!

What noble knighthood there did swiftly arm
For high emprises of the Faëry Queen!
Murmuring a name, I woke—'twas SPENSER'S name
I ween.

WHERE ?



“IT is written.” Where? Oh, where?
In the blue chart of the air?
In the sunlight? In the dark?
In the distant starry spark?
In the white scroll of the cloud?
In the waved line of the flood?
In the distant range of cliff?
In the rock’s deep hieroglyph?
In the scribbled veins of metal?
In the tracings of the petal?
In the fire’s fantastic loom?
In the fur, or scale, or plume?
In the greeting brother’s glance?
In the corpse’s countenance?
In the core of my own soul?
In the cypher of the whole?
Trying to be true and meek,
Daily, momentarily, I seek.

LOTA.



AFTER long bitter days, and nights weighed down with
sadness,

Faint I lay on the sofa with softened thoughts in the
twilight.

Stilly she glided in, and tenderly came beside me,
Putting her arm round my head that was weary with
silent aching,

Whispering low in a voice trembling with love and
with pity,

“ Knowest thou not that I love thee?—am I not one
in thy sorrow ?

’Maze not thy spirit with secrets, joy that our Father
excels us,

Since with his power extends the greatness of his
compassion.

Fear not the losing of love ; for, listen, a spirit hath
told me

Heaven is not without aught that Earth has of holy
and lovely ;

Purified shall they be found, but better in essence they
could not ;

Gold in this earthly alloy has not come but from mines
of Heaven.

Thou—move on in thy course unswerving from shades
in the pathway,

Pits and crags they seem, thou wilt find them all but
as shadows.

Take thou care of the present, thy future will build
itself up for thee ;

Ever in bodily life's contradictions and sad entangle-
ments

Keeping the soul-realities, suffer the rest to unwind
itself.

Think of me, pray for me, love me,—I cease not to love
thee, dearest.”

So it withdrew and died, and my heart was too full with
tenderness.

Swift in a longing pain flowed back the lonely evening,

Sunken, and dull, and cold. But soon on my cheek I
felt it,—

Strange relief of tears!—and my heart grew calm and
calmer.

— Veiling with earnest peace the stars looking in
through the window,

Slow up the Eastern night like a pale smoke spread the
moon-dawn.

THE BEE.

“BUSY Bee, untiring one,
Honest eye-servant of the Sun,
Is't for him thou workest so?
Will he ever care or know?
Or who else doth service crave?
Art thou hireling? Art thou slave?
Whither doth thy toiling tend?
To be smothered in the end—
While the Dorr and Dragon-Fly
Idly live and gently die?”

Saith the Bee, “It is my part,
And I do it with my heart,
Ever cheerful work to give,
And herein I happy live,

Waiting not the close of day
To receive my certain pay.
Of the end I nothing wis,
But full clearly know I this—
Idle should I rest, or fly,
Every hour a death I 'd die."

RESPECT FOR LITERATURE.



“FOR letters, I declare,”
(Old Pomposo cries) “I bear
As profound respect as any man on earth!”
He is certainly exempt
From the species of contempt
To which familiarity gives birth.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

FOURTH GUESS.

—◆—

THIS is an Indian sun, well-nigh,
And the hour in a deep green shade to lie.
—Strolling off from your palanquin
As though in your English barouche you 'd been,
If there should ray through the forest-gloom edge,
Under the jungle-grass's white plumage,
Two sudden stars of fierce red fire
Just in front, and nigher and nigher
Crawling, you saw,—and those eyes unwinking
Tied you from running, upheld you from sinking,
Till the clawed yellow Strength all swarthy barred,
With that serpentine tail stretched stiff and hard
Should crash —

So mild as our garden border is,
Can it feed us with fancies murderous ?
Lily, that set me off on such freaks,
Rich with dark-splendid spots and streaks,
We 're assigning the Flowers ; and you 're whose else's
Than his I may title PARACELsus ?

THE YOUNG STREET SINGER.

How sad!—to hear a song of mirth
Sung in the homeless street,
By one in melancholy dearth
Of clothes, and food to eat,
Or place beside the poorest hearth
For bare and blistered feet.

Some tones of softness still retains
This worn and feeble voice,
That once, perhaps, in hawthorn lanes
Helped spring-time to rejoice ;
Not then impelled by hunger-pains,
But childhood's merry choice.

Mayhap the mother little thought
Her darling and her pride,
Portioned with but the songs she taught,

Must face the world so wide,
And give the starving outcast's lot
A speech so unallied.

How weary are the unknown ways,
How sharp the pitiless stones,
What haughty heads the houses raise
From one whom no one owns.
Whose mouth is singing lively lays,
Whose heart is utt'ring groans !

The careless window's happy glow
Displays the lighted room,
The very pools of rain below
The ruddy tint assume ;
But not a ray doth it bestow
To cheer the wanderer's gloom.

Save that a petty hope has strayed
Into the aching breast :
Nor be the slender fee delayed.
But may thy weary quest
Alight on more effectual aid ;
Or may'st thou soon find *rest* !

THE GOBLIN CHILD OF BALLYSHANNON.

A REGIMENT, filing row by row,
One evening sixty years ago,
As wintry dusk was drawing late,
Through Ballyshannon's old bridge-gate,
Changed pass-words with the pacing guard,
Left-wheeled into the barrack-yard,
And halted willingly,—for tired
The men were, drooping, soaked, and mired ;
And ev'n the highest in command,
With trembling knee and fevered hand,
Felt on his horse almost as jaded
And glad to end the march as they did.

No wonder then that he withdrew
Betimes to bed ; and though, 'twas true,

His quarters here proved strange enough ;
 Snatched as they seemed, with trimming rough,
 From long disuse ; yet in a pile
 Heaped on the hearth in good old style,
 Bogwood and turf with jovial roar
 Threw ruddy blaze on wall and floor,
 And the new-comer thought he might,
 On such a fagged November night,
 Ev'n in a rougher place have found
 A door to sleep's Enchanted Ground.

Yet, when he tried, he tried in vain.
 A dim, fantastic, endless train
 Of striving fancies vexed his brain ;
 Till as the weary hours went by
 He ever grew, he knew not why,
 More anxious, and his heart was sick,
 And the pulse in his pillowed ear beat thick.

The wide half-furnished barrack-room
 Was full of heavy midnight gloom,
 Save when the sinking coals gave birth
 To smouldering flashes on the hearth,
 And from the single darkness made

A thousand ghostly forms of shade,
On which the waker gazed and gazed
Until his thoughts grew mazed and mazed,
And down at length his aching lids were weighed.

When suddenly—O Heaven!—the fire
Leaped up into a dazzling pyre,
And boldly from the brightened hearth
A Naked Child stepped forth.

With a total, frozen start,
A bound,—a pausing of the heart,
He saw. It came across the floor,
Its size increasing more and more
At every step, until a dread
Gigantic form stood by his bed.

Glaring for some seconds' space
Down into his rigid face—
Back it drew, with steadfast look,
Dwindling every step it took,
Till the Naked Child returned
To the fire, which brightly burned
To greet it: then black sudden gloom

Sunk upon the silent room.
Silent, save the monotone
Of the river flowing down
Through the arches of the bridge,
And beneath the casement-ledge.—

It happened when our island still
Had nests of goblins left, to fill
Each mouldy nook and corner close,
Like spiders in an ancient house.
And this one read within the face
Intruding on its dwelling-place,
Lines of woe, despair, and blood,
By spirits only understood ;
As mortals now can read the same
In the letters of his name
Who in that haunted chamber lay,
When we call him CASTLEREAGH.*

* See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, chap. lvi. Something of the story is still remembered at Ballyshannon.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

FIFTH GUESS.

THE coloured sunset's waning glow,
The coy sparks trembling forth on high,
The summer moon, alifting slow
Amid the purple summer sky,
Melt through these dim and fragile bars,
Our dream-enfolding Jasmine weaves ;
While scarce its own white, scented stars
Divide their shadowy heav'n of leaves.
What dreams are on the dusk afloat ?—
A ruin'd "Dragon on the Heath,"
Mount Ida, Locksley, Camelot ;
A Poet with a Jasmine wreath.

CANT.

WHEN the Priest who talks of striving
 A heavenly strife,
Thinks far more of present *living*
 Than future-life ;
When the altar-fire he 's stirring
 To roast and stew,
As if for cure of souls, like herring,
 The smoke would do ;
When, to one well-known hell-deserver
 Most tolerant,
He warns the rest with chronic fervour ;
 Here is Cant.

When the Author writes love-letters
 To all mankind ;
Or strikes with lightning-scorn the fetters
 That myriads bind ;

When, who is his neighbour, truly
 He tells the proud ;
Or groans for Genius most unduly
 Chilled and cowed ;
Yet low to guilt, shrined calves will lout it ;
 Nor hand will grant
To Worth, till Worth can do without it ;
 Here is Cant.

When all motives in the Soldier
 Take holiest names ;
And at the touch of death grow bolder
 In lofty claims,
As if the ghastly phosphorescence
 That rotting sheds
Were one with th' heavenly halo-presence
 On sainted heads.

When artful knaves thus flatter grossly
 Fools-militant,
And blockhead millions echo closely ;
 Here is Cant.

When Statesmen, down at foot of hill, are
 All warm and bold,

But as they climb the mountain-pillar
 Grow cold and cold :
 When the Patriot's voice is *vox et*
 Præterea nihil :
 When the Martyr-spirit baulks at
 Each daily trial :
 When Bishops' sleeves, with all their bloatage,
 Give space too scant
 For laughs at Mother Church's dotage ;
 Here is Cant.

When "Honesty," that bragged ingredient
 In every trade,
 Means just the minimum, expedient
 For Interest's aid :
 When beyond abstract gold, so many
 "Friendship" esteem,
 Yet with so few the concrete guinea
 Will kick the beam :
 When "Love," while owned the firmest, chiefest
 Boon life can grant,
 Is weighed as though the least and briefest ;—
 Here is Cant.

When poem-reader,—poem-writer,
 (This too may be)

In living type is no inditer
 Of poetry.

When any man thinks God's prescription
 Man's ways should school ;

And makes *himself* the one exception
 To prove the rule ;—

Howe'er he may in sight of others
 Gloze, pray or rant ;

Howe'er the conscience-voice he smothers ;
 His life is Cant.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

SIXTH GUESS.



HIGH in the costly gardens of the great,
Still proud of its ancestral seat in ken
Of Andes or of Appalachian hills,
The Agave towers. Step after step is built
Above its weighty leaves the mass of bloom,
Slow-nurtured pyramid—with which compared,
Flowers at its base appear like shepherd's huts
Round those Nilotic structures that beheld
Isis and Orus and the Memphian gods,
Long ruined, they still firm.

For whom but thee
(Although of foreign stock its pilèd wealth)
O great Blind Man of England, to whose sight,
Cancelled from earth, unrolled the wars of Heaven,
And sweetness of the primal Paradise,
For whom but thee, this mighty Agave blows!

THE LYRIC MUSE.



ONE night a Sylph or Fairy
Came to me in a dream,
And her supporters airy
The singing-birds did seem.

Aloft they gaily kept her
On floating feather-down.
A lily was her sceptre,
And roses made her crown.

A crown that, blushing greatly,
Was thrilled with choral joy ;
A sceptre calm and stately,
And pure without alloy.

The birds left off rejoicing,
A sweeter song to hear,
And soon with softest voicing
These words came to my ear,

“ My roses resting brightly
One moment on thy brow,
My lily touching lightly
Thy beating heart below,

“ Would bring a wealth of lyrics
To thy enchanted tongue,
Surpassing Robert Herrick's,
Or aught more lately sung.

“ But seldom is the earthy
Fit house for the divine,
And didst thou prove unworthy
A mournful fate were thine.”

I cried, “ Whate'er may follow,
O teach me thus to sing!”—
But through the darkness hollow
Waved but a parting wing.

ON READING OF THE FUNERAL OF THE
POET WORDSWORTH.

WHEN, looking eastward forth from Mona's shore,
I saw on peaks that crowned the dim sea-line
Sunlight with sudden revelation pour ;
A superadded radiancy, more fine
Than ever mountains from mere sunlight wore,
Above a viewless vale appeared to shine.
Such glory, rock-built Westmoreland, was thine,
Such glory now, alas ! is thine no more.

Not so ! His honoured grave to thee belongs ;
The pedestal for an eternal Thought ;
Set in its solemn temple fitly wrought
Of waters, clouds, and giant mountain-throngs—
Enriched with what they gave his life and songs,
And by the exalted Spirit unforgot.

ÆOLIAN HARP.



A TRAVELLER wendeth over the wold,
Black the air and black the ground,
(Would he were cherished from the cold
Nigh this blaze we sit around !)
Into the dark and through the dark,
Over marsh and mound,
—Death-bell like, his heart hath tolled
One groan—no other sound.
Hush!—hark!

A creeping wind cometh over the wold,
Creeping through the pitch-dark air,
Whistling for Will-o'-the-Wisp to hold
His flickering lantern there.

High it is, and low it is,
And the dead man's face is bare ;
But the prying wind is not so bold
As to touch his blood-wet hair.
—What is this ?

Is 't a tale by warm fireside ?
Paused the whispering pair, and sighed ?
—Draw the window-curtains close,
Blackest night is round the house.
The cat purrs loud, the crickets sing ;
How shadowy sweet our tranquil ring.
Hush !—hush !
The wind's in the chimney ; and below
The softly-crackling fire sheds dusky glow.

JOHN JONES'S ENEMY.

A TRUISM.



JOHN JONES he has an enemy
Who haunts him night and day,
Who tempts him, and poisons him,
And leads him all astray.

John Jones he hates this enemy,
And curses him full sore,
And nine misfortunes out of ten
Lays justly at his door.

John Jones he loves this enemy
Before his friend or wife,
And 'fends his fame from evil words
At peril of his life.

He thinks there is in all the world
No truth except in him,—
He finds him all one living lie,
Tongue, body, brain, and limb.

He knows him well,—is still deceived ;
Distrusts him,—takes his word ;
Abuses him,—excuses him ;
Fears him,—is not deterred.

Who is John Jones's enemy,
This haunting demon-elf ?
You 've seen his enemy, whene'er
You 've seen John Jones's self.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

SEVENTH GUESS.

ALL Roses be the crown for Shakspeare's head !
The half-green buddings, and the bossy bloom,
The virgin White, the tender Maiden Blush,
Nor that rejected where the canker's hid,
To move us more than beauty ; bring the badges,
Twinned and embraced, of York and Lancaster ;
And blossoms won from every region's mint !
Rose, Flora's regent, frankly dost thou give
Thy monarchy the air,—thy favours fling,
To make the hovel's easiest ornament,
The palace-cincture's most luxurious prize.
All zones are native to thee ; never beam
Can scorch thy pearliest cheek, nor snow make wan
The due of flushing, nor thine odours freeze.
With no rank homage nourished into pride,

Thy kingly spirit is unsick, and breathes
Exhilaration, buoyancy, and triumph,
Wedded to richness without paragon ;
That even thy cast-off leaves are treasured things,
And thy nice essence is of dearer rate
Than the oft-furnaced gold.

O rarest thou,
And commonest—most cheap, most precious far,
Of all the Flowers in garden or in field ;
Of all that earth from east to west can yield !

THE GANDER IN POUND.



ONE day a wise old Gander found
A friend of his shut up in pound ;
Who soon conveyed his grievous wrongs
In tone that to such tale belongs.
As down the road he took a stroll,
Without offence to living soul,—
One of the frightful monster-birds,
Those gabblers of unfowlish words,
Nips him between its bony wings,
And into this vile dungeon flings ;
Where he must starve to death, alas !
Without a single blade of grass.

“ O Liberty, thou Goddess fair,
No more may I thy blessings share ;
Nor see my little goslings' face ;
Expiring in this dismal place !”

This said, like a despairing thing
He thrust his head beneath his wing,
And as he stood, appeared to have
One leg already in the grave.
While feathered sage from wall-top *ansered*,
In speech were no disgrace to Hansard :
“ My friend, 'tis plain you need not bear
One hour's starvation or despair,
If you will merely condescend
Your lazy thrapple to unbend ;
Let down your leg, shake either wing,
And on the wall beside me spring.
The height 's the same, within, without ;
Your pinions are more young and stout
Than mine ; so if you choose to try,
You 're in a moment free as I.”
Thus spake (he must have been a Solan)
The ancient bird. As our days roll on,
Perhaps his counsel may avail
In some like case to hit the nail.

THE BIRD.

A NURSERY SONG



“ BIRDIE, Birdie, will you pet ?
Summer is long a-coming yet ;
You ’ll have silken quilts and a velvet bed,
And a pillow of satin for your head.”

“ There ’s a prettier bed in the ivy wall,
Where I live with my brothers and sisters and all ;
And every day some garden tree
Brings a message from Summer to me.”

“ O Birdie, Birdie, will you pet ?
Diamond-stones and amber and jet
We’ll string in a necklace fair and fine,
To deck this pretty bird of mine.”

“ Thanks for your diamonds and amber and jet,
But here is a necklace far better yet ;
A ring of feathers of changing hue,
Lighter, and smoother, and warmer too.”

“ O Birdie, Birdie, won't you pet ?
We'll buy you a dish of silver fret,
A golden cup and an ivory seat,
And carpets soft beneath your feet.”

“ There 's no running water in cups of gold,
Free food a silver dish can't hold,
A rocking twig beats an ivory chair,
And the softest paths lie through the air—
So adieu, fair lady, adieu ! ”

ÆOLIAN HARP.



Is it all in vain ?
Strangely throbbing pain,
Trembling joy of memory !
Bygone things, how shadowy
Within their graves they lie !

Shall I sit then by their graves
Listening to the melancholy waves ?
I would fain.
But even these in vapours die :
For nothing may remain.

One survivor in a boat
On the wide dim deep afloat,
When the sunken ship is gone,
Lit by late stars before the dawn.

The sea rolls vaguely, and the stars are dumb.

The ship is sunk full many a year.

Dream no more of loss and gain :

A ship was never here,

A dawn will never, never come.

—Is it all in vain ?

SWEET SUNDAY BELLS.



SWEET Sunday Bells, your placid sound
Enhances that repose profound
Which bathes the golden fields around,
And far-off mountains, sunshine-crowned.

Amid the clustered roofs outswells,
And wanders to the upland dells,
And near and far its message tells,
Your holy voice, sweet Sunday Bells.

Sweet Sunday Bells, ye summon round
The youthful and the hoary-crowned,
To one observance gravely bound ;
Where comfort, strength, and joy are found.

And many a tale your burden tells
Of marriage-chimes and funeral knells ;
Commixing memory's tender spells
With loftier power,—sweet Sunday Bells.

Sweet Sunday Bells, your pleading sound
At times in natural tears hath drowned
The eyes of one, whom pew nor mound
May harbour in the hallowed ground :

Whose heart to your old music swells ;
Whose soul a deeper thought impels ;
Who like an alien sadly dwells
Within your chime—sweet Sunday Bells.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

EIGHTH GUESS.



FOR KEATS, O Hyacinthus, thou dost show
Thy sumptuous curling bells of crispèd snow ;
Ingrainèd pure as snow fresh-feathering,
Or dyèd like the richness of Night's wing,
Or sapphire morn, or roseate even-bloom ;
And loaded down with luscious perfume.
Were but thine antique legend legible,
'Twould suit our modern loss too sadly well !

POETS AND FLOWERS.

NINTH GUESS.

LEIGH HUNT, the bloom I name for thine
Is pretty, pointed Eglantine ;
Flushed with the gentlest garden hue,
Yet with a wilding freshness too ;
With fragrant breath in fine flower-lips,
And fragrance to green finger-tips ;
And all its sweetness sweeter yet,
With dews or showery droppings wet.
For not in blossom books alone
Thy Poetry and Love are shown ;
And tearful trials of this earth
But draw their richest essence forth.

BEFORE BREAKFAST.



I SPRING from my lightly-prest pillow
To tread the gay sunshiny floor,
And greet the young glittering billow,
Whose surf almost reaches our door.

Now the cliff spreads its cheerful adorning
Of matted sea-pink under foot ;
The lark gives me " top of the morning !"
The sailing-boat nods a salute.

Already, with new sea-born graces,
Comes many a bright-featured maid ;
Peep children's damp hair and fresh faces
From straw-hat's or sun-bonnet's shade.

With whisper alone for my hearing,
Clear-trembles my tide-brimming pool ;
Head-first from the rock disappearing,
I waver, embraced with the cool !

The king of the Morning's wide treasures,
I revel in water and air ;
Join salmon and gull in their pleasures—
Then home to my sweet human fare !

OH, WERE MY LOVE.

Oh, were my Love a country lass,
That I might see her every day ;
And sit with her on hedgerow grass
Beneath a bough of may ;
And find her cattle when astray,
And join her driving them to field,
And linger on the homeward way,
And woo her lips to yield
A twilight kiss before we parted,
Full of love, yet easy-hearted !

Oh, were my Love a cottage maid,
To spin through many a winter night,
Retired in ingle-corner's shade
From fir-wood blazing bright !
Beside her wheel, what dear delight

To watch the blushes go and come,
With tender words that took no fright
 Beneath the friendly hum,—
Or rising smile, or tear-drop swelling,
At a fireside legend's telling!

Oh, were my Love a peasant girl,
 That never saw the wicked town ;
That never dressed in silk and pearl,
 But in a lilac gown !
How less than weak were fashion's frown
 To vex our unambitious lot ;
How rich were love and peace to crown
 Our green secluded cot,—
Where Age would come serene and shining,
Like an autumn day's declining !

POETS AND FLOWERS.

TENTH GUESS.



A MIGHTY stream from undiscovered fountains
Pours through an ancient and deserted land,
With cities of the dead along its mountains,
Tombs of forgotten kings amid its sand,
And shattered temples, where the priestly band
With all their gods have mouldered ;—on its tide
The deep-rolled moonlight Lily doth expand,
Unveiling like a faint-breathed stately bride,
And float—as loved to float ALASTOR dreamy-eyed.

ÆOLIAN HARP.



O PALE green sea,
With long pale purple clouds above—
What lies in me like weight of love?
What dies in me
With utter grief, because there comes no sign
Through the sun-raying West, or on the dim sea-line?

O salted air,
Blown round the rocky headlands chill—
What calls me there from cove and hill?
What falls me fair
From Thee, the first-born of the youthful night?
Or in the waves is coming through the dusk twilight?

O yellow Star,
Quivering upon the rippling tide—
Sendest so far to one that sighed?
Bendest thou, Star,
Above where shadows of the dead have rest
And constant silence, with a message from the blest?

DYNAMIC.



THINKEST thou that stone is dead ?
Its very steadfast quiet tells
It is not ; or in it were bred
A changing into something else.

Stones, imbued with more of Death,
Might expect more quick improvement.
See the source of sap, blood, breath—
Vital impulse, hopeful movement.

FAIRY DIALOGUE.



“WHITHER goest, brother elf?”

“The sun is weak—to warm myself
In a thick red tulip’s core.
Whither thou?”

“Till day be o’er,
To the dim and deep snow-palace
Of the closest lily-chalice,
Where is veiled the light of noon
To be like my Lady’s moon.
Thou art of the day, I ween?”

“Yet I not disown our Queen.
Nor at Lyse’ am backward found
When the mighty feast comes round;

When She spreads abroad her power
To proclaim a midnight hour
For the pale blue fays like thee
And the ruddy elves like me
To mingle in a charmèd ring
With a perfect welcoming ;
Guarded from the moon-stroke cold,
And wisp that scares us on the wold.”

“ Swift that Night is drawing near,
When your abrupt and jovial cheer
Mixes in our misty dance.
Else we only meet by chance,
Within the dark undewed recesses
Of the leafy wildernesses,
Or thus hid in some cold flower
To escape the sunlight hour,
And more afflictive mortal eye.”

“ Gladly, gladly, do I spy
The little cottage-girls go by—
Feel the bounty and the grace
Of a pleasant human face.
O my sister, would we might

Show ourselves more to mortal sight!
They sure would love us if they knew
All the friendly turns we do.
But ever, see us, see us not,
We love them in deed and thought.
Though paler favourites of the moon
Cannot give nor take such boon."

"Chantings, brother, hear you might,
Softly sung through still of night:
Calling from the weird North
Dreams like distant echoes forth,
Until through curtained shades they creep,
T' inlay the gloomy floor of sleep
For babes, and souls that babe-like are:
So we bless them from afar
Like a faint but favouring star.
—But tell me how in fields or bowers
Thou hast spent these morning hours?"

"Through the tall hedge I have been,
The shadowy wall of crusted green,
Within whose heart the birds are seen.
Speeding swiftly thence away

To the crowning chestnut-spray,
I watched a tyrant steal along
Would slay the sweet thrush in her song ;
Warned, she soon broke off from singing,
And we left the branchlet swinging.
Whispering robin, down the walk,
News of poisoning, pouncing hawk,
The sycamore I next must strew
On every leaf with honey-dew.
And hither now from clouds I run ;
For all my morning work is done.”

“ Alas, I wither in the sun,
If I hap to leave my nest
Ere the day be laid to rest !
But to-night we lightly troop
Beneath the young moon’s silver hoop ;
We shall weave our later ranks
As on the evening river-banks
Shifting crowds of midges glance
Through mazes of their airy dance :
O might you come, O might you see
All our shadowed revelry !
Yet the next night shall be rarer,

Next and next and next, still fairer ;
We are waxing every night,
Till our joy be full and bright ;
And then as slowly do we wane
With gentle loss that makes no pain.
For thus are we with life indued :
Ye, I guess, have other food,
Since with rougher powers ye deal.”

“ Auricula gives fragrant meal ;
Purple, yellow, richest brown,
Pied, and pink, and lilac down,
Which the bounteous sunshine bakes,—
What pretty-coloured loaves it makes !
Nor do the other seasons miss
Boon as good and sweet as this.
Thy life I little envy thee.
And yet I long, I long to see
The moonèd midnight of our feast
Flushing amber through the east ;
When every cap in Elfendom
Into that great ring shall come ;
Owf and elf and fairy blended,
Till th’ imperial time be ended !

Even those fantastic Sprites
 Lay then aside their dear delights
 Of freakish mischief and annoyance
 In the universal joyance,—
 One of whom I saw of late
 As I peeped through window-grate,
 (Since under roof I may not enter)
 Haunt the housewife to torment her;
 Tangle up her skeins of silk,
 Throw a mouse into her milk,
 Hide her thimble, scorch her roast,
 Quickly drive her mad almost;
 And I too vexed, because I could
 Bring no succour, as I would.
 —But where shall this be holden, say?
 Far away ?”

“ O, far away.

Over river must we fly,
 Over the sea, and the mountain high,
 Over city, seen afar
 Like a low and misty star,—
 Soon beneath us glittering
 Like a million worms. Our wing

For the flight shall ne'er suffice.
 Some are training flitter-mice,
 I a silver moth."

" Be ware

How I'll thrid the vaulted air!
 A dragon-fly with glassy wings,
 Born beside the meadow springs,
 That can arrow-swiftly glide
 Thorough the glowing eventide,
 Nor at twilight-fall grow slack,
 Shall bear me on his long red back.
 Dew-stars, meteors of the night,
 May not strike him with affright,
 He can needle through the wood,
 That's like a green earth-chainèd cloud,
 Mountain-summits deftly rake,
 Draw swift line o'er plain and lake;
 If at Lysco I be last,
 Other elves must journey fast.
 Lu a vo!"

" But Elf, I rede,
 Of all your herbs take special heed.

Our Mistress tholes no garden flowers,
Though we have freedom of these bowers.
Tell me what you mean to treasure,
Each in's atom ?”

“ Gold-of-Pleasure,
Medic, Plumeseed, Fountain-arrow,
Vervain, Hungry-grass, and Yarrow,
Quatrefoil and Melilot.”

“ These are well. And I have got
Moonwort and the Filmy Fern,
Gathered nicely on the turn.
But wo to fairy that shall bring
Bugloss for an offering,
Toad-flax, Barley of the Wall,
Enchanter's Nightshade, worst of all.
—Oh, brother, hush ! I faint with fear !
A mortal footstep threatens near.”

“ None can see us, none can hear.
Yet, to make thee less afraid,
I am still, as thou hast prayed.”

LET us not teach and preach so much,
But cherish, rather than profess ;
Be careful how the thoughts we touch
Of God, and Love, and Holiness,—

A charm, most spiritual, faint
And delicate, forsakes the breast,
Bird-like, when it perceives the taint
Of prying breath upon its nest.

Using, enjoying, let us live ;
Set here to grow, what should we do
But take what soil and climate give ?
For thence must come our sap and hue :

Blooming as sweetly as we may,
Nor beckon comers, nor debar ;
Let them take balm or gall away,
According as their natures are.

Look straight at all things from the soul,
But boast not much to understand ;
Make each new action sound and whole,
And then pass on and let it stand :

Be true, devoid of aim or care,
Nor wrestle, nor antagonise ;
Know well that clouds of this our air
But seem to wrap the mighty skies :

Search starry mysteries overhead,
Where wonders gleam ; but bear in mind
That EARTH 's our planet, firm to tread,
Nor in the star-dance left behind.

For nothing is withheld, be sure,
Our being needed to have shown ;
The far was meant to be obscure,
The near was placed so to be known.

Cast we no astrologic scheme
To map the course we must pursue ;
But use the lights whene'er they beam,
And every trusty landmark too.

The Future let us not permit
 To choke us in its shadow's clasp ;
It cannot touch us, nor we it ;
 The present moment's in our grasp.

Soul severed from the Truth is Sin ;
 The dark and dizzy gulph is Doubt ;
Truth never moves,—unmoved therein,
 Our road is straight and firm throughout.

This Road for ever doth abide.
 The universe, if fate so call,
May sink away on either side ;
 But This and GOD at once shall fall.

POETS AND FLOWERS.

A PARTING POSY.



IN idle shade to mark them one by one
We may not loiter more ; the waning hours
Haste us through garden, park, and woodland dun,
To match no meaner flowers.

The Passion-Flower, so delicate and strange,
And dim, as though half-faded into air
By enchantment, or awaiting some high change,
Let none but COLERIDGE wear.

'Midst quaintly-crumpled leaves, the Violet
Hides close and warm its tufts of sweetness blue,
For HOOD ;—and if his flower be softly wet,
Say, is it more than due ?

Aspiring, shrinking Lily of the Vale,
 The word "ELIZABETH" is faintly tolled
 From all thine arching chime of silver pale
 In dark green turret-fold.

The Primrose stars itself for MARY HOWITT,
 (Albeit the gentle Quakeress is not prim).
 BARNES is a poet, though not many know it ;
 The Apple-bloom 's for him.

"The milk-white Thorn," that scents the rustic vale ;
 Where lad and lassie in the gloaming sit,
 And where the labourer takes his noontide meal ;
 For whom but BURNS is fit.

Geranium is the meed of EMERSON.
 The home-familiar with the choice is blent ;
 A fresh antiqueness, too, appears to run
 Through shape, fine hues, and scent.

THOMAS CARLYLE,—think you if he were named
 Among the Muse's children, 'twould offend her ?
 Or Queen of Flowers refuse the Cactus claimed
 For ruggedness and splendour ?

Eve's shadow falls. So quickly as we may,
 We touch for HERRICK, never sad or cold,
 The Meadow-Sweet that borders fields of hay ;
 For CHAPMAN, Marygold :

The flaming Peony with MARLOW mate ;
 The Rhododendron give to DRYDEN large ;
 To BEN the Dahlia, burly-elaborate ;
 Iris to holy GEORGE.

Lavender, QUARLES ; Sweet-William's honest face
 Claims MARVELL ; FLETCHER must Convolvulus get ;
 POPE the CAMELLIA, nursed for lamplight grace ;
 GOLDSMITH, the Mignonette.

The dark sward's spirits of early Crocus-flame,
 Purpure, and Or, and Argent, do thou take,
 Boy CHATTERTON ;—and "crowned with a golden dream,"
 This angel Lily, BLAKE.

ELLIOTT's, swarth Foxglove of the Yorkshire fells ;—
 The double Cowslip must be COWPER's right ;
 HEMANS's, Gillyflower ; and L. E. L.'s,
 Anemone so slight.

Rich Pansy, gravely "freakt," is WORDSWORTH'S OWN;
 BYRON'S, the Sunflower; MOORE'S, the gay Sweet-
 Pea,
 Flower-butterfly; SOUTHEY'S tall blazon grown
 In Garden-Poppy see.

HOGG takes the Heath of fairy-mountain's top;
 And CUNNINGHAM the Gorse's honey-golds;
 The other ALLAN, Broom; CLARE, Buttercup;
 BLOOMFIELD the Daisy holds.

The Polyanthus, CAMPBELL, blossoms thine,—
 Cultured, compact: the Hollyhock's firm pride,
 MACAULAY'S: and the Rocket, hearty-fine,
 For CLOUGH we lay aside.

Light melts from Heav'n. Shall we accept the same
 Dim folding-season as these happy clans?
 New bridals may another day proclaim,
 And none forbid the banns!

POSTSCRIPT.



ONCE (oh, not immodest deem
Your friend, if he relate his dream)
Fast asleep as I was laid
Under hops' translucent shade,
FLORA came, and stooping down
Blessed me also with a crown,
For adding, over all her dowers,
One new sweetness to the Flowers.
But woven of what bloom or leaf
Never knew I, to my grief;—
Lifting hand up to my head,
Swift th' unreal honour fled.
—Who, that knows, will say me sooth,
Whether dreams have any truth?

NOTE.



The main incidents of "THE BULL" are given as facts by some writer on Spain.

The legends of "THE FORGET-ME-NOT" and "THE MAIDENS OF THE MERE" are, I believe, originally the property of Germany.

"THE SLAVER" was suggested by a description in *Tom Cringle's Log*.

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