SCENES OF WAR;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

I GAVE MY HARP TO SORROW'S HAND,
AND SHE HATH RULED THE CHORDS SO LONG,
THEY WILL NOT SPEAK AT MY COMMAND,
THEY WARBLE ONLY TO HER SONG.

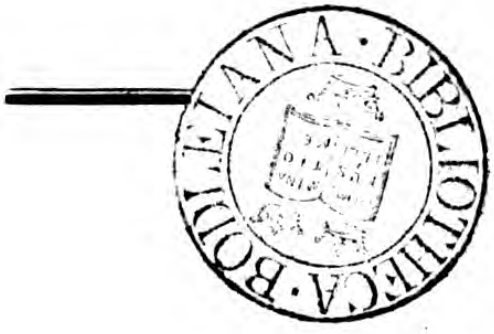
MONTGOMERY.

SCENES OF WAR;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY JOHN MALCOLM.



OLIVER AND BOYD, EDINBURGH.

MDCCCXXVIII.

PREFACE.

THE Poem with which this volume commences is not (as its name might seem to indicate) descriptive of battles, but is merely a short sketch of some of the other scenes and circumstances of a Campaign, in which the Author served; as are also the few Minor Pieces which immediately follow.

Several of the other little Poems were originally published in the LITERARY SOUVENIR and in various other Periodicals.

In coming before the Public, the Author cannot omit the opportunity thus afforded him of expressing his warmest acknowledgments to those Gentlemen of the Periodical Press who honoured with their notices his former little volume;—whose criticisms were often laudatory and always lenient; and which constitute his best apology for presenting these effusions to the world.

The Miscellaneous Poems were all written on the thought of the moment, without any higher aim than the amusement derived from their composition: and being, moreover, the pro-

duction of one engaged in a service little compatible, perhaps, with that of the Muses, the Author hopes they may obtain a lenient reception from the Public.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

CONTENTS.

SCENES OF WAR.

THE CAMPAIGN.

The mountain-storms are high
  In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss their pine-boughs through the sky,
  Like rose-leaves on the breeze.
But let the storm rage on,
  Let the forest-wreaths be shed;
For the Roncesvalles field is won—
  There slumber England's dead.

MRS HEMANS.

LAND of my fathers, island of the free,
Fair Albion! thou art fading o'er the sea,
Whose boundless waters, into shadow cast,
Repose in cold pale beauty like the past.

The stars, heaven's festal lights, hung out on high,
Reflected gleam along a nether sky,
While seems our ocean-mirror'd bark to steer
Mid-way in circle of a hollow sphere.
With snowy sails, that woo the dying breeze,
In lonely majesty she walks the seas;
The tiny waves around her mighty prow
In murmur and in music break below;
While wafted o'er the darkening waters come,
Half sound, half sigh, the voices of my home,
And with the tolling of the vesper-bell
To silence swoon. My native land, farewell!

Sole shape within the circle of the flood,
To break its deep and awful solitude,
Unvaried by a shadow but her own,
Making e'en loneliness itself more lone,
Our bark so softly steals o'er ocean's breast,
Her sound seems silence and her motion rest.

With all her souls she wanders o'er the sea,
(A plank betwixt them and eternity!)
To scenes beyond the homeless deep she bears
The love of youth, the stay of later years,
From native bowers and peaceful shades afar,
Perchance to wither in the blasts of war.
But Slumber's magic o'er her inmates cast,
Restores the phantom-beauty of the past:
The sound of groves is in the sleeper's ear,
The voice perchance he never more may hear
Melts sweetly on his charmed sense, and seems
Like angel-music in the land of dreams;
Till winds awake, and with the vessel's roll
The roar of waters rushes on his soul.

Long doom'd o'er Biscay's restless bay to roam,
She rides the waves, that bound like steeds of foam,
Till, rising o'er the ocean huge and high,
Spain's dusk sierras heave into the sky.

And, lo! from yon tall rock upon the shore,
A tall and vapoury column seems to soar,
Huge as the tower on plain of Shinar piled,
Or Israel's cloudy pillar o'er the wild.
Hark! there be muttering sounds, like dying groan,
Sent from some far volcano's furnace-cone;
'Tis battle's thunder pealing round the wall
Of proud Sebastian ere her final fall.
Her watch-fires thro' night's shadows o'er the flood
Shed baleful light; the billows roll in blood,
And start and blush amid the fitful gleams,
The earth and sky, the mountains, rocks, and streams;
While round her towers exploding bombs are driven,
Whose blazing earth-stars vie with those of heaven.

Fair land! though welcomed to thy sunny shore
'Mid fire and thunder, I but loved thee more,

Whose long and glorious summer seemed to me
E'en as the shadowed smile of Deity,
The piercing glance of whose love-lighted eyes
Broke like a beam from depths of midnight skies.
Land of the olive, orange-grove, and vine,
Oft have I lingered 'mid thy day's decline,
When the bright west above its silent fall
Of gold and crimson hung a gorgeous pall,
And on the breeze the song of muleteer
In sighs of music melted on the ear,
Blent with the tinkling bells of distant flocks
That browsed among the shrub-surrounded rocks,
Above whose vast and time-coeval peaks
The lone majestic eagle soars and shrieks.
There have I mused until the vesper-bells
Pealed o'er that lovely land their far farewells,
Where once the muezzin's voice was wont to call
To evening prayer from off the temple's wall,

And desert-dwellers hymned amid the calm,
Far from the shadow of their native palm;
O'er whose cold shrines the bird of darkness sails,
And o'er the lone Alhambra nightly wails.

Oft have I wandered through thy temples lone,
Where war had stained with blood the altar-stone.
No more the organ's thunder pealing praise
Rolled down the columned aisle on Sabbath-days,
Where but the echoes of my lone footfalls
Died into whispers down the choral walls,
And but a wandering day-beam would illume,
Like Hope, the dreary precincts of the tomb.

Oft have I traced thy convent-cells, where long
Had ceased the vesper hymn and matin song;
The gloomy shrines, deserted then and bare,
That oft had hid the spirit's deep despair.

If walls had tongues, what tales could their's
impart!
Tales of the blighted hope and broken heart;
Of lips and eyes from which the light and bloom
Had dimmed and sickened in a living tomb;
Of hearts from tenderest ties to being riven,
That inly pined for earth, though vowed to Heaven.

Four banded nations battled on those plains
Where now the rayless night of slavery reigns.
'Twas sad to see their beauty and their bloom
So marred by man, and changed into a tomb;
But doubly sweet, each peaceful pause between
The acts of war's wild drama on that scene,
When but some vale or streamlet would divide
The hostile ranks reposing on each side;
And day's departing radiance there would stream
O'er battle's files, all blazing in the beam,

At evening's gay parades; and music bands
Would charm the ear with lays of distant lands;
And bugles plaining through the lonely woods
Awakened pensive Memory's home-sick moods
And early dreams; like that heart-cherished strain
The Switzer hears, and dies of longings vain.

Thence gazing seaward, on the straining view
Sebastian melts away in distance blue:
Her wreck along the dirge-resounding wave
Sits, a pale phantom, glimmering o'er her grave;
Upon her "place of pride" no banners soar,
Along the deep her thunders peal no more;
The night-winds wail along her ruined walls,
The bat holds revels in her festal halls;
From her once-busy streets the ceaseless hum
Of life hath passed away, and all is dumb,
Save thro' her spectre-haunts at times when heard
The dirge of darkness from its hermit-bird,

Or far and fitful, at the fall of day,
Upon the breeze the house-dog's mournful bay,
Or of ill-omened birds the croaking dread
Around their dreary banquet of the dead.—
I gladly turn me from that place of sighs
To hills that hide their summits in the skies.

There Man, once more a dweller of the woods,
Amidst the deep and central solitudes
Of the huge Pyreneans, grimly piled,
Cliffs, cones, and rocks, a chaos vast and wild,
Roamed free, and felt the mighty scene impart
A grandeur and a beauty to the heart,
Which impress of surrounding forms will take,
True as the landscape glassed within the lake.
'Twas magic all, when o'er each wizard dell
The shades of eve in sombre masses fell,
While rocks in middle air that rose between
The hollow darkness of each deep ravine,

Abruptly shooting up their naked peaks,
Where sailing vultures pause to whet their beaks,
With day's departing radiance stood on fire,
In varied forms of turret, dome, and spire;
As some vast city, by enchantment raised
Into the sky, the homes of Genii, blazed.
The mighty hills, in giant masses hurled,
The Titan offspring of a teeming world,
That from her burning womb perchance were torn,
And 'mid the earthquake, fire, and thunder born,
And left from Nature's agonizing throes
In voiceless solitude and vast repose,
All flamed into the gay and gorgeous sky,
In strange and varied forms of phantasy;
Such as 'mid clouds that, heaped in masses, sail
Before the winter's cold and scourging gale,
Imagination, musing, loves to paint,
At eve, along the fading firmament.

There lost in deep and lonely reverie,
Lulled by the murmur of the mountain-bee,
Or streams whose wailing on the ear would melt
Like music, making silence deeper felt,
When pensive Twilight in her airy loom
Slow wove her mingled web of light and gloom,
Or when the pale moon waned o'er hill and wood,
With softest radiance silvering rock and flood;
Amid these loveliest scenes of earth and sky,
Where vibrated the heart 'twixt grief and joy,
And Melancholy's mystic transports proved,
And Love's romantic memories, have I roved,
When Nature's breathings, e'en as dew the flowers,
Embalmed the spirit in her holier hours,
And, 'mid the hallowing calm, each beauteous star
Looked like the eye of Heaven, rebuke to war;
When Fancy held communion with the sky,
And earth was gazed on with a "poet's eye,"

And thou, O blessed Youth, didst lend the scene
A sky more azure, and a brighter green,
And, like the beam that gilds where'er it glows,
Gavest added beauty to the blushing rose.
The heart, amidst its silent withering,
Still sighs for thee, thou unreturning spring,
Thou April of our days, whose very tears
Are lovelier than the joys of later years:
Though fled on angel-wings, thy magic still
Rests on the vale and wraps the dusky hill;
Thy charmed mantle clothes each early scene
With hallowed beauty where thy steps have been;
Thy days gone down reflect their sunset smiles
E'en o'er the deserts of my native isles,
And shed a beauty o'er their dreary moors,
Their hills of silence, and their sounding shores,
Where, saddening o'er the wide and weltering sea,
High swell the green sepulchral tumuli,

And, robed in gathered moss of countless years,
As in its shroud the warrior's stone appears,
Memorial of a long-forgotten name,
That points to heaven, but mocks at earthly fame.

Then Autumn's livery robed the forest sere,
That heard the steps of the departing year,
Sad as the echoes of the last footfalls
That sink to sighs along the festal halls,
Whose lights and garlands fade along the walls;
And the world's beauty, touched by pale decay,
Waned from the land on viewless wings away,
While dying music sweetened my repose
Beneath the solemn shade of forest-boughs,
That stretched like Gothic minster-aisles, all dim,
And vocal with pale Nature's requiem-hymn
Of falling waters, woods, and quiet streams,
That lulled my spirit back in bygone dreams:

For o'er these mighty hills and sombre dells
A strange and thrilling sense for ever dwells;
O'er his pale haunts the Spirit of the past
A nameless charm, a hallowing spell, hath cast,
Blent glorious memories with each valley's name,
And hung the mountains with a wreath of fame.

Stern Winter came, his dark and awful form
Swathed in the cloud and wafted on the storm;
The rustling of his wings was on the blast,
Deep sighed the fading forest as he past,
And moaned away through mountain-gorge and glen,
But brought no shelter unto war-worn men.
Still on the outskirts of the neutral ground
The wakeful sentry paced his weary round;
Still crouched the picquet by the watch-fire pale,
Half-quenched and smouldering 'neath the drifting hail;

While roared the blast through ghostly glen and
wood,
Bassed by the hollow knell of falling flood,
That from its height of fear, in thunder thrown,
Awoke the mountain-echoes loud and lone;
And poured the moon from out her silver horn
A wan, wild radiance o'er the night forlorn,
Startling the darkness with her fitful rays,
And dimly wandering in her waning phase;
While the deep pattering of the thunder-speat
Was heard like rushing of a thousand feet,
And hum of warring hosts upon the breeze
Sighed like the saddening sound of distant seas,
That with their moaning, when the storm is o'er,
Seem as they wailed the wrecks upon the shore.
Then hearts that bore them bravely in the fight
Quailed 'neath the weary day and wakeful night,
Till, in the mood of darkness and despair,
I've heard the soldier breathe his fervent prayer,

That death or battle soon might come to close
Those sleepless nights of horror with repose.

His prayer was heard. Adown those Southern
Alps,
That throne the thunder on their snowy scalps,
The tide of war like wintry torrent rolled,
And forced the foemen from their mountain-hold.
The battle thunders, and the hills reply;
The smoke in wreathing columns seeks the sky;
Dark Maya startles at the central roar,
And Roncesvalles' echoes wake once more,
Till through the hollow night the uproar dies,
And sinks to silence on its shades and sighs.

Then came a pause to war, whose type might be
An isle of rest amidst a stormy sea,
A dream of waters on a burning sand,
The shadow of a rock on desert land,

An hour of rainbow-beauty, brief as bright,
A smile through tears, that turned them all to
light;
For 'neath the shelter of the peasant's cot,
The woes of war and winter were forgot,
And soldiers led the dance, linked hand in hand
With the gay dark-eyed daughters of the land,
Whose smiles from youthful hearts could charm
away
The dark remembrance of the fatal fray.
Oh! who would lose the hour of present joy
In dreams of horrors past or dangers nigh!

Yet oft, from all these festive scenes could yield,
I've turned to muse upon the battle-field
Where silence slept, unbroken by a breath,
And peace reposed—the awful peace of death;
Where, thick as autumn-leaves, the thousand dead
Reposed without a shroud, without a shred;—

Beneath the smiles of day, the tears of night,
Wept o'er the mournful relics of the fight,
'Mid which the blasted gaze could scarcely trace
Departed friendship in each ghastly face,
But marked the types of soft affections spring,
Where all besides lay cold and withering,
Like precious flowers that shed their breath and
bloom
Around the red volcano's edge of doom;
For here and there a lonely laurel-bough,
Whose green leaves should have wreathed the
hero's brow,
Reared by some pious hand, was seen to wave,
The heart's lorn offering, o'er the *buried* brave;
A simple touching tribute, left to tell,
That loved in life, and mourned in death, he fell.

All Nature's partings, know, return again:
The river joins its fountain-head in rain;

The comet, vanished from the glowing sky,
Mysterious traveller of immensity,
Down through the boundless wastes of Chaos driven,
Careers, the flaming minister of Heaven,
Away, away, until the chain is run
That binds the fiery Titan to the sun,
Booms through the hollow wastes of endless night,
Then, homeward wending, seeks the gates of light;
O'er her lost son Creation throbs with joy,
And stars sing forth his welcome through the sky:
But Man is merged into a boundless sea,
Mysterious, dark, unknown—and where is he?
Gone to the spirits' land, the place of souls;
This truth each planet whispers as it rolls.
It tells, that but for mind, th' unconscious reign
Of worlds and suns and systems were in vain,
Unfelt and dead. Shall then their glowing host,
The shrine remain, the worshipper be lost?

Spring came at last, in sunshine and in showers,
With leaf and bud repairing faded bowers,
Shedding her balm and beauty wide and far,
But could not charm away the Fiend of War,
That roused him from his trance, and woke the morn
With trumpet's bray and blast of bugle-horn;
Nor ceased his work of death till night would bring
The sullen shelter of her raven-wing,
When, cloaked by darkness, fled the hurrying foe,
And paled away their watch-fires' dreary glow.
Then came the morning march, the noon's hot fray,
The flight and skirmish till the close of day;
The clay-cold couch beneath night's rayless dome,
The broken slumber, and the dream of home;
Or, 'neath the shadow of the sheltering tree,
The tale of its loved scenes beyond the sea;
Or, by the watch-fire's wild and fitful blaze,
The ne'er-forgotten song of other days,

Charming the night away with sweet reviews,
Till rose the Gothic turrets of Toulouse,
Where flying foemen made their final stand
In gloomy grandeur o'er the lovely land.

Night veils the earth; but through her shades profound
The ear is haunted with a mournful sound,
Like the far torrent, or the moaning sea:
Whence may that tone, so sad and solemn, be?
'Tis of the cannon's dark and ponderous train,
Dragged slow along upon each groaning wain:
But soon the sound in distance faints and dies,
As sleep descends like balm on closing eyes.

Oh, blessed Sleep! upon the battle-eve,
The soldier feels thy brief but sweet reprieve;
The sailor, rocked upon the roaring sea,
Forgets the terrors of the storm in thee,

Though deep and dreary sings the wintry gale,
And wakes through snowy shrouds its wildest wail.
A friend to all save guilt; but where, oh! where,
Shall that e'er find a refuge from despair,
Or cease to hear the still small voice within,
That whispers through the day and all its din?
And when at last its light and sound are o'er,
That through the lonely night cries, "Sleep no more!"

Stretched in repose that sooths the aching breast,
What thousands take their last of earthly rest!
Oh! with a sense to luxury unknown,
How blest the weary soldier lays him down!
From his own bowers, beyond the distant deep,
What beauteous visions steal upon his sleep!
The scenes of youth again he seems to tread,
And wander with the distant and the dead.

Perchance upon the heart, to charm its pain,
Beams back the loved one's sainted smile again,
Sighs on his dreaming ear her long-lost voice,
Like the far echo of departed joys,
Or music melting o'er a summer sea,
The shade of sound, the soul of melody;
Till, like Æolian harp's expiring lay,
Upon the morning breeze it fleets away.

Far in the east, as dawn is glimmering pale,
The ear and heart are smote with woman's wail;
For there be long farewells and burning tears,
Fraught with the hoarded agony of years,
And parting pangs, that in their date so brief
Condense a life of wo, an age of grief,
Blench the bright roses of our early May
With timeless blight, and steal our youth away;
And there be wild embraces, such as strain
The hearts that sever ne'er to meet again,

Last-murmured words, half choked in sob and sigh,
And prayers breathed forth in hopeless agony.
But the drum beats! the dreamer may not stay;
In sorrow's trance the mourner swoons away;
What shall she be ere darkness spread its wing?
Perchance a lone, forsaken, widowed thing,
Doomed the long day the pangs of doubt to bear,
Till eve shall change all doubts into despair;
Then, shrieking as the fatal roll is read,
That tells the names and numbers of the dead,
Shall seek her lost—lost love, embalming there
His wounds with tears, to dry them with her hair,
And, treasured from the tomb, one tress shall save,
Then lay him in a low and nameless grave.

Morn on the mountains, sunrise on the main,
And battle's red array upon the plain.
Touched with the orient gleam, each line appears
A wall of fire beneath a hedge of spears.

The war-horse with his rider paws the air;
Flaunt on the gale the gorgeous banners there;
The snowy plumes are tossing on the breeze,
Like billowy foam upon the bounding seas;
Peals the wild charge, and from yon ancient wall
Replies the roar like echo to its call;
Bursts from the battle's cloud its voice of doom,
With sheeted lightnings flashing thro' the gloom;
And, torrent-like, beneath the baleful blaze,
Descend the foe with long and wild hurras.
A thousand bonnets wave; and Albyn's cheer
Hath struck them in the pulseless pause of fear
Upon the steep, where, chilled as by a pang,
A while like frost-arrested floods they hang,
Till, gulfed in fire and thunder, war-clouds dun
Wreath night-shades o'er them, and obscure the
sun;
Nor ends the mortal struggle, o'er the wave,
Until he sink, like glory, to his grave.

But ere he fade o'er ocean's bright expanse,
Oh! let us cast, like him, a parting glance
Upon the fatal field, so thickly spread
With mortal wrecks, the wounded and the dead!
See on the dying soldier's upcast gaze,
In farewell beauty set his last of days,
Whose parting smiles but mock his aching sight!
And must he leave for aye the gates of light,
And be from this most bright and blessed day,
And this fair world, so early called away,
E'en when the Spring had gladdened earth and sky
With light and song, and made it hard to die?
Must her fair flowers for him all vainly bloom,
And shed their fragrance o'er his lonely tomb?

THE FUNERAL.

THE day-star's latest smile
  Has faded o'er the deep;
The work of death has ceased a while,
  And war gives time to weep.

Loud peals the minute-gun
  With deep and solemn boom;
It tells a chieftain's race is run,
  And calls him to the tomb.

Slow moves the dreary pomp
  To sounds he cannot hear;
The voice of the archangel's trump
  Alone may reach his ear.

In long array they come,
  The mourners sad and pale,
'Mid rolling of the muffled drum,
  And music's wildest wail;

A strain that speaks their praise,
  Who for their country die,
Balmed in the minstrel's deathless lays,
  And breathed in beauty's sigh.

The tomb receives its dead,
  In weeping memory shrined;
The brief but solemn prayer is said,
  And dust to dust resigned.

The drooping banners wave,
  The volley'd thunders knell
O'er fallen valour's closing grave
  A long and last farewell.

But, lo! in smiles as beautiful as brief,
Peace comes, all dove-like, with her olive-leaf.
Our march is by the broad Garonne, that strays
Through fairy-land in many a mighty maze.
Oh! shadowed in its calm and silent breast
Sleeps many a dream-like Eden-isle of rest,
That smiles before in bright uncertainty,
Like scenes that gleam on Hope's delighted eye,
And lingers on the gaze we cast behind,
Like hallowed visions in our memory shrined,
Till, dim and distant as futurity,
Breaks in its boundless blue the sea! the sea!
With a wild shout of joy, upon the gaze,
Like a long-absent friend of early days.

Our barks await, the waters spread before,
In farewell beauty sets the sunny shore;
Like Israel's guides, along the pathless way
They wander, stars by night and clouds by day.

But who shall speak the heartfelt throb of joy,
In beauteous vision, on the straining eye,
When o'er the waters Albion's airy steep
Rose like a buried treasure from the deep,
Bright as a glowing dream of youthful years,
In memory shrined, and balmed in smiles and
tears,
The sweet heart-cherished home of happier hours,
To fancy fair as Eden's long-lost bowers?

But, oh! for them to whom their native shore
Arose to set in darkness evermore,
Whose fate but one sad solace could supply,
To gaze upon their father-land and die;
And them who but survived the wounds of war,
To close their eyes from every land afar,
And find a shroud and sepulchre in thee,
Thou lone, eternal, melancholy sea,

For ever knelling o'er the slumberer's head,
Thou faithful keeper of the countless dead.

Thus, where the loud reveillie's call at morn
Shall break no more their sleep, cold, dark, and
lorn,
Where the pale mourner cannot come to shed
The tear of sorrow o'er the narrow bed,
Or strew with gentle hands above their bier
The incense-breathing offerings of the year,—
'Mid field and flood I've seen my early friends
Laid where, alas! all human friendship ends;
Yea, lived to see the hearts for them that sighed
Forget their griefs, and tears of kindred dried:
Each faded cheek the rose of health regain,
And eyes bedimmed with tears grow bright again;
Their memory fade amid their native bowers,
No more to cloud the heart in festal hours,

Save when perchance some simple touching words,
Wove into song, awake the bosom's chords,
Such as so sadly breathe in Scottish lay,
And wail the " Forest flowers all wede away."

So sleep the brave, their mortal warfare o'er,
Where pain and peril ne'er shall reach them more.
What though for them there tolled no passing-
bell,—
Ten thousand thunders pealed their parting knell;
The cannon's blaze did light them to their rest,
Upon the green earth's calm and peaceful breast,
Far from their own loved land in slumber laid,
Sound as the sleeper in his native shade.
What though above their dark and distant home
There tower no temple's arch, no pompous dome,—
O'er them a loftier canopy expands,
A mightier temple's dome, not made with hands.

What though they rest where Friendship may not
bring,
To deck their graves, the garlands of the Spring,—
For them her greenest wreaths shall Memory
twine,
For them each gentle bosom be a shrine;
Each lonely hour shall thoughts of them recall,
Mournful, but sweet as music's dying fall,
And holiest dews of heaven their graves shall wet,
When hearts grow cold, and love itself forget.

Well have they scaped a world where all that's
made
Most fair but cheats the heart, and blooms to fade;
Where e'en its purest dreams of present joy
The heart with many a future pang must buy;
Where Love himself, arrayed in smiles and bloom,
Is leagued with Death, and caters for the tomb;

In whose bright blush and lip-enwreathing smile
I trace the deep and all-resistless wile
By which he wins from his too-willing slave
Unceasing victims for the silent grave:
For the glad birth-song heralds but the knell,
And all must end in "that wild word, Farewell!"

NOTES TO THE CAMPAIGN.

Page 6, lines 13, 14.

Oft have I traced thy convent-cells, where long
Had ceased the vesper hymn and matin song.

During the peninsular war, it was a common circumstance for troops to be quartered in the convents which had been deserted by their inhabitants.

Page 7, lines 13, 14.

When but some vale or streamlet would divide
The hostile ranks reposing on each side.

The scene to which the above and succeeding lines allude I have frequently witnessed from the Pyrenean heights, during the fine autumnal evenings, before the British army entered France. But no description can do justice to the effect produced upon the mind by the grandeur and beauty of the scene, aided as it was by the finest associations.

Page 8, lines 9, 10.

Her wreck along the dirge-resounding wave
Sits, a pale phantom, glimmering o'er her grave.

St Sebastian might indeed be said to be her own monument. Of her once-handsome streets not a single house was left entire, and her ramparts were covered with the dead in every stage of decay, altogether forming a scene too shocking for description.

Page 14, line 5.

Blent glorious memories with each valley's name.

Roncesvalles, for instance, so famed in story and in song.

Page 18, lines 3, 4.

'Mid which the blasted gaze could scarcely trace
Departed friendship in each ghastly face.

"There is nothing so unlike sleep as death. It is a poet's lie. The one is a gracious repose, a vital calm: the other is a horrid solemnity, no more like sleep than a mask of plaster; stiff, rigid, white—beyond the whiteness of shrouds or the paleness of stone. All parallels fail. We strain at comparisons in vain."—NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

Page 23, lines 9, 10.

Far in the east, as dawn is glimmering pale,
The ear and heart are smote with woman's wail.

A scene like that to which the above and succeeding lines refer I once witnessed, just as our troops were marching off from their encampment to the field of battle.

Page 24, lines 15, 16.

Morn on the mountains, sunrise on the main,
And battle's red array upon the plain.

The battle of Toulouse was fought on the 10th April, 1814; and, though glorious to the British arms in its result, cannot be looked upon in any other light than that of a disaster—a vain effusion of human blood, which might have well been spared, as the abdication of Napoleon had taken place about ten days before. It is said that the despatch containing intelligence of that event was stopped at a post-town in the south of France; but it has been surmised that Soult was not ignorant of the real state of affairs previous to the battle.

THE BATTLE-EVE.

The vesper-bell had tolled
  The dirge of parted day,
The sun on chariot-clouds had rolled
  O'er western waves away;
But lingering o'er his downward flight
  The vapoury glories seemed to lie,
Like fairy regions, lands of light,
  Along the evening sky.

And in their glowing train,
  From off that foreign shore,
A vivid gleam could Fancy gain
  Of distant scenes once more.

Amid their hues of light and shade,
  The landscapes of my native isles
In beauteous vision rose, arrayed
  In their sweet evening smiles.

But Fate's dark hour was come,
  And to the marshalled plain
The rolling of the evening drum
  Recalled my steps again;
'Neath sunset skies, where silently
  And slow the twilight waned away,
And where, like sails upon the sea,
  The tents dim-gleaming lay.

It was the battle-eve,
  The hour of pale reviews,
When pensive Memory loves to weave
  Her wreath of mournful hues;

When on predestined warrior's dream
  The prophet-spirit comes in power,
And sheds a sad and sunset gleam
  Before the dying hour.

Ah! thoughts were busy then,
  And hearts were far away
With friends they ne'er might meet again,
  'Mid native shades to stray;
And while the still and pale stars shone
  O'er tented field and marshalled band,
I too in slumber's trance had gone
  Unto my father-land.

'Twas Sabbath bright and calm,
  My smiling home was near,
The music of the choral psalm
  Was in my dreaming ear;

The flowers of youth's bright summers flown
  Their sweetness to my slumbers gave,
Lost voices, long to silence gone,
  And beauty in the grave.

And from her bower in haste
  I saw the loved one come;
She sank, and sobbed upon my breast
  A weeping welcome home:
But while she clung, as ne'er to part
  From that embrace's gentle thrall,
I wakened with a fearful start,
  At the reveillie's call.

SCENE AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE sun, now setting o'er the deep,
Was lighting thousands to their sleep,
And o'er the dying and the dead
Alike his reckless beam was shed;
For by no sign in earth or skies
Doth Nature grieve when valour dies.
With clouded brow or aspect wan,
Say, weeps she o'er the wreck of Man?
Ah, no!—in vain would Fancy trace
A shade of sadness in her face,
A voice of sorrow in the flood,
A sigh amid the whispering wood,
A requiem in the evening breeze,
A nightly knell amid the seas.

For him she hath no tear, no sigh,
  No falling leaf, no drooping flower,
But on his dying agony
  Smiles bright, as on his bridal hour.

Proud is the thought, the feeling high,
When trumpets sound a victory,
When meeting warriors sheath the brand,
To join in friendship's grasp the hand;
  Yet still the heart must grieve,
The tear and smile together flow,
The thrill of joy, the throb of wo,
When at the call of bugle-horn
The friends we gaily hailed at morn
  Return no more at eve.

Closed is the battle's deadly game,
And silent all its field of fame:

The stars of night their radiance shed
O'er shroudless corse and tombless head;
The tents are pitched, and wild and high
The watch-fires blaze into the sky;
Grim guardians of the night are set,
And warriors at the board are met,
Where brimming wine-cups, circling gay,
Crown the red memory of the fray;
And many a toast they drain with cheers,
But one is drank 'mid gathering tears
And the deep silence of the grave,—
"The Memory of the fallen Brave!"

Sincere but brief the soldier's wo,
And soon the circling goblets flow
'Mid tale and song of love and war,
And fumes and fragrance of cigar,
Till fancied laurels wreath his brows,
And, drooping from the deep carouse,

He sinks into that sweet repose
The weary bosom only knows,
To dream perchance of future fame,
Whose promise is a deathless name
Her fond adorers ne'er shall hear;
It falls upon a heedless ear,
Sealed in that sleep, which, ere it wake,
Another trump than her's must break;
Whose gifts are but an early doom,
A tear, a trophy, and a tomb.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

Day faded from the hill and wood,
  Around a rayless night was spread,
It closed upon a scene of blood,
  The dying and the dead;
And silence brooded o'er the field
  Where echoed late the trump and drum,
And where a thousand thunders pealed
  Their death-knell,—all was dumb.

There, 'midst his brave but perished band,
  Upon a midnight-couch of clay,
With ghastly wound and broken brand,
  A dying warrior lay.

No fond and faithful one was there
  To kneel her parting Love beside,
To staunch his death-wound with her hair,
  And stay life's ebbing tide.

He lay beside the gushing spring,
  That from its fount in freshness burst;
But helping hand was none to bring
  A drop to cool that thirst
Which "scorches in the parting breath,"
  Fierce as the simoom's burning sigh,
And adds to bitterness of death
  Its fiery agony.

E'en then on Memory's wakeful eye
  Would forms of children, wife, and friend,
Fair as a vision of the sky,
  In rainbow-beauty blend:

A dream of summer, love and youth,
  And scenes he ne'er may see again,
In all the glowing tints of truth
  Break o'er his dying brain.

While Victory sends her deafening shout
  Through streets that madden with the din,
And all is reckless mirth without,
  Then Beauty droops within:
She clasps her babes with sob and sigh,
  And sorrow's dreary vigil keeps;
Her orphans gaze, and wonder why
  Their widowed mother weeps.

THE DESERTER.

Loud raved the gust, the torrent fell
On the night-watch of the sentinel;
Swept o'er the skies the hurrying scud,
The moon broke through the storm in blood;
The river roared along the glen,
The wolf howled from his mountain-den,
The winged hermit of the gloom
Pealed his drear dirge o'er tower and tomb.

Far on the outskirts of the host
The war-worn soldier held his post;

The victim of protracted wars,
His toil rewarded but with scars;
When Memory's dreams of home arose,
Fair as the visions of repose,
And longings wild, and wishes vain,
To view his native land again,
Like frenzy wrought upon his brain.
A soldier's honour was forgot,
And death is the Deserter's lot:—
Caught in the act of crime he stands,
With sullen brow and fettered hands,
To hear the law's awarded doom—
A soldier's death, a foreign tomb.

The sun, now lingering o'er the land,
Smiles on his life's fast-ebbing sand,
And ere it sinks beyond the wave,
Shall gild his cold unconscious grave.—

On earth and sky he wildly cast
One glance, his saddest and his last:
Oh! many a drear and pale review
Rose in that long unspoke adieu
To the bright scene that round him lay,—
The blessed light of this fair day,
The choral anthem of the bowers,
The bloom of incense-breathing flowers,
And forms that gleamed on Fancy's eye
Betwixt him and the evening sky:—
His weeping wife and child were there,
All beautiful amidst despair:—
Then blenched, methought, his manly cheek,
Moved the pale lips that could not speak;
For in that heart-appalling thought,
That dream with more than madness fraught,
There passed with one brief moment by
A whole life's hoarded agony.

The lots, in silence drawn, reveal
The hands that must his sentence seal:
Then sternest eyes were dimmed with tears,
Limbs shook that never shook with fears;
For they who often side by side
Had stemmed with him the battle's tide
And shared his couch, must now fulfil
The dark decree, the doomer's will.

Around his eyes the kerchief prest,
The grave received its living guest;
There, while in act of prayer he kneeled,
From trembling hands the death-shot pealed,
And soft and calm he sunk to rest,
As the babe upon its mother's breast.

THE SOLDIER'S FUNERAL.

His sword and plume are on his pall,
  The muffled drum beats drear and deep,
And gathering tears are seen to fall
  From warriors' eyes unused to weep.

They lay him in his dreamless bed,
  The banners droop above the brave,
The requiem of the glorious dead
  Thrice rolls in thunder o'er his grave.

How sound his sleep!—his battles o'er—
  Life's fitful fever past away,
Where sounds of war are heard no more,
  And trump and drum are mute for aye.

While buried Grandeur cannot buy
  One mourner o'er its lonely bier,
His name shall breathe in Beauty's sigh,
  His memory brighten in her tear.

'Twill steal upon the festal train,
  The voice of reckless mirth to quell,
And wake in music's melting strain,
  Whose accents weep so wildly well.

But to the lorn and widowed heart
  Can thoughts like these a balm instil?
Can Glory's voice a charm impart,
  To lull, to sooth its cureless ill?

They'll bid her try to think no more
  On days and dreams for ever fled;
They'll say that tears can ne'er restore
  The loved, the lost, the silent dead.

But when was sorrow known to woo
  The themes that make its pangs the less?
Or what have broken hearts to do
  With cold and dull forgetfulness?

Or how should e'er the source of wo
  Prove solace to the bosom's pain?—
The silent tear must ever flow,
  Because, alas! it flows in vain.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

RETROSPECTIVE MUSINGS.

'Tis but a parting pilgrimage,
To save from Time's destroying rage
And changeful Fortune's withering blast
The hallowed pictures of the past.

PRINGLE.

'TIS eve, but on the mountain-head
No farewell sunny smile is shed;
The woodland-choristers are gone,
The hermit-robin sings alone;
The waning beauty of the earth
To musings sadly sweet gives birth;
Recalling from the past again
Of thoughts a pale and pensive train,

And scenes that sun them in the rays
Reflected from departed days;
And in the mellowed radiance wear
A sainted aspect, sadly fair,
O'er which the tints of time have shed
The mournful beauty of the dead:
And there, while Memory wanders o'er
The regions of a lonely shore,
A moaning of the distant main
Is blending with my dreamy strain:
In dying sounds of softened tone,—
From music to its echo grown,
From far away come back on me
The torrent's mountain-melody;
And faint and low the murmurs mild
Of streams that warble to the wild.

For there, beneath the evening-star,
From home and haunt of man afar,

Oft have my wandering footsteps sought
The scenes that wakened solemn thought;
But ever dearest seemed to me
Companionship of the lone sea,
Where, o'er the foam around them flung,
The world's grey fragments frowning hung,
Dim-shadowed in a misty shroud,
Or hooded in the stooping cloud;
Where Ocean, with a quire of waves,
His anthem thundered through the caves,
And rolled through Nature's vaulted piles
Like organ's down cathedral-aisles.

There, when the wintry storm was o'er,
I loved to linger on the shore,
And gaze upon the floating wreck
On Ocean's breast, a darkening speck,
And muse on its pale crew, who found
No rest in earthly burial-ground;

But sunk, perchance, 'mid tempest's roar,
A thousand miles from every shore;
Or on some night of fate and fear
Went down when their sweet homes were near;
And while around each native hearth
Pealed songs of joy and sounds of mirth,
Perchance arose from sea to sky
Their shriek of mortal agony.—
'Tis thus the rolling world doth run,
One half in shade and one in sun;
Thus some rejoice while others weep,
And some must wake while others sleep.

And oft upon the silent hill,
While evening brooded bright and still,
And shed a dying beauty o'er
The beetling cliff and ruin hoar,
I watched the snowy sails at rest
Far off upon the billow's breast,

And thought how blest the crews they bore
To many a sweet and summer shore,
And longed for that expected time
When I should seek a brighter clime,
And scenes that Fancy painted there
Of dying saints as visions fair.—
Delusive were the happy dreams
As those of childhood, when it deems
That earth is circled by the eye,
And wedded to the azure sky.

When eve, of day and darkness born,
Paled like the spectre of the morn,
And from the hearth the blazing pile
Shed round the pictured wall its smile,
Whose silent dwellers there would seem
More life-like in the sportive beam,—
How sweetly then the cares of day
From weary bosoms past away,

While music's witching accents rung,
And a fair seraph sweetly sung
Those strains that prompt the bosom's sigh,
Those magic airs that cannot die,
Eternal as the rocks that stand
The bulwarks of our native land,
Immortal as the feelings given
Unto the human heart by Heaven!

Oft, when on high the harvest-moon
Rode clear and cloudless in her noon,
We wandered onward with delight
Beneath the cool and silent night,
When not a frowning shade was there
To dim the soft and azure air,
But all was lustre pure and mild,
A pale light o'er a pathless wild;
When Silence slumbered on the hill,
And lakes below lay bright and still,

As at Creation's dawning morn
They slept ere yet the winds were born;
Reflecting mountain, rock, and tree,
Fair as the good man's memory
Gives back, ere life's last sun is set,
Its scenes unclouded by regret.

Still haunts my heart, where'er I rove,
Those days of youth and dreams of love;
Of beauty vanished from the view
Like morning-cloud or early dew,
But shrined in Memory's moonlight, where
She rises still as sweetly fair
As when we wandered through the wood
Of dim sequestered solitude,
Where glowworm-lights on either hand
Gleamed like the stars of fairy-land;
And where her love and maiden fears
Beamed forth through blushes, smiles, and tears:
Still o'er the darkening vale of years,

And Time's dim twilight shades afar,
She shines a lone and lovely star,
Sweet as affection's earliest gleam,
Dear as the poet's raptured dream;
All, all unfading to the last,
A ray that brightens o'er the past.

And when my soul, with sorrow fraught,
Hath ta'en a paler cast of thought,
In waking dreams or slumber's bed
I hold communion with the dead,
When from her buried form is cast
The shroud and shadows of the past.—
The chain of love death cannot rend,
That binds us to each parted friend;
Nor can the grave dissolve the tie
That links our spirits to the sky.

But chief when Autumn comes, arrayed
In softened light, like Summer's shade,

With dying gleams unto the wood,
And deeper music to the flood,—
That gentle season of the heart,
Whose tints look lovelier as they part;
When the sad earth seems Sorrow's shrine,
Doth Memory love her wreaths to twine:
Or when the twilight, pale and grey,
Draws her dim veil 'twixt night and day,
And brings the gracious hour of even,—
An interval 'twixt earth and heaven,—
A sainted season of repose,
Calm as a well-spent being's close,
Which soothing comes as hope at death,
Revealing, too, like holy faith,
When fades the world upon the eye,
The burning glories of the sky,
Where God in characters of flame
Hath traced his everlasting Name:—

Or when the moon adown her height,
A waning phantom of the night,
Doomed on her distant path to flee,
With crescent cradled on the sea,
Gleams like a wandering bark of fire,
Whose rays, in ocean quenched, expire;
And stars look through their shadowy veil,
Like Beauty's eyes at Sorrow's tale,
While sits the night in sackcloth pale;
And through her watches still and lone,
Of winds and woods the dying moan,
Blent with the ocean's ceaseless boom,
Sound like a dirge o'er Nature's tomb:—
Oh, then, what thoughts the bosom throng,
That ne'er may find a voice in song,
And o'er the heart their magic cast,
Like mournful music from the past!

THE LOST ISLE.

Earthquakes have heaved to heaven the humble vale,
And mighty mountains in their gulf entombed,
And where th' Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloomed.

BEATTIE.

O FOR some green secluded spot of rest,
Like such as gems the bosom of the waste;
'Midst desolation gladdening with its bloom
The weary pilgrim to the Prophet's tomb!—
Where the cool shadow of the lonely palm
Woos to repose at noonday's sultry calm;—
Where, while a boundless desert wraps him round,
His dreaming ear shall drink the grateful sound

Of breezy woods and music-breathing rills,
And distant falls, the night-song of the hills!
O for some spot like such as from the ark
Wiled the lone dove; or such as to yon bark
Opes its green bosom from the stormy deep,
Calm as in danger innocence can sleep!

And welcome to that vessel's wave-worn crew
Yon star-like Isle amidst the boundless blue;
And warm the greeting which its dwellers gave
To the far wanderers of the faithless wave,
Though mixed with awe and wonder; for that shore
The foot of stranger ne'er had trod before:
And with regret they leave that ocean-home,
Again the wilderness of waves to roam,
While grateful Memory haunts in nightly dreams
Its shady steeps and solitary streams.

There Nature, with an ever-lavish hand,
Spread out an endless feast along the land;
And every tree above her verdant board,
To woo the taste, displayed its ample hoard.
No feast of blood had there polluted Man,
And marred Creation's first and gracious plan,
Where ties of heart and instincts of the dove
Bound all in one great family of love.
There sounds of war and wo, the city's hum,
Sent from a tortured world, had never come;
The Babel-voices fainted on the breeze,
The roar of battle died o'er distant seas:
Of such no wandering winds or waters bore
An echo to that solitary shore.

Far other sounds were there: The song she sings,
When winds are harping over Nature's strings,
Rose from the bosom of the boundless sea,
An everlasting dream-like harmony.

One distant torrent from its mountain-height,
Heard in the awful stillness of the night,
All sad and ceaseless, solemn and sublime,
To Fancy's ear might seem the voice of Time;
And the deep sighing of the distant sea
The far-off echoes of Eternity.

Such was that Isle,—but where its glories smiled
The cold oblivious wave rolls waste and wild;
And, blotted from Creation's page, the blank
Blue sea reveals not where its green hills sank.
Through dun sulphureous clouds above the flood,
Broad glared the setting sun, and sunk in blood,
And rose again; but vain his potent beam
To pierce the ever-deepening shroud of steam
Sent from the sea; while ever and anon
Was heard the struggling earthquake's stifled
groan

Beneath the ocean's dark mysterious caves,
That rocked the Isle on cradle of the waves.
The sea-bird wailed away, and sought on high
A distant refuge in the depth of sky;
And youth and age, by secret instinct led,
Left their sweet homes, and to the mountains fled:
A death-like stillness fell on sea and shore,
And then a rending and sepulchral roar
Pealed from below, like Titan's strangled groans,
And shook the hills upon their giant thrones;
While, mixed with seas of fire that upwards toiled,
High o'er the rocks the bubbling ocean boiled,
And rolled and rose around with rapid flow,
While yawned the wide engulfing hell below.

And now the mountain-tops alone remain,
Where hapless pairs have fled for aid in vain;
And from the sinking solitary peaks
Arise their wild and heart-appalling shrieks,

As fixed they stand in love's last maddening
clasp;
And then come half-choked sighs, and sob, and
gasp,
And bubbling air, and a low moaning sound,
As cold funereal waters close around,
Which in descending whirls all wildly boil,
As if dragged downward by the drowning Isle.

But where is she, the bark, that sailed away
The secrets of the ocean to survey?
Led by her mystic guide, she tracks again
Her homeward course along the pathless main.
Sure is her reckoning, and the spot is nigh
Where seeks its Island-ark each weary eye;
But its green hills the crew expect in vain,
Its sun-bright shores they ne'er shall hail again:
Its tale of ruin nought is left to tell—
The deep sea shrouds its awful secret well:

No record writ in ocean of its doom,
No monumental rock reveals its tomb.
Like those who journey to the spot where stood
Their native bowers, and find a solitude,
They mused, till wildered Memory half could
deem
The scene they sought some bright protracted
dream,
In which the sportive Genii of the deep
Had held their senses spell-bound as in sleep.
Around the Island's site a while they stray,
Then sail the seas, away, away, away!

THE SHADOW.

Upon yon dial-stone
  Behold the shade of Time,
For ever circling on and on,
  In silence more sublime
Than if the thunders of the spheres
Pealed forth its march to mortal ears.

It metes us hour by hour,
  Doles out our little span,
Reveals a presence and a power
  Felt and confessed by Man;—
The drop of moments, day by day,
That rocks of ages wear away.

Wov'n by a hand unseen,
  Upon that stone survey
A robe of dark sepulchral green,
  The mantle of decay,—
The fold of chill Oblivion's pall,
That falleth with yon shadow's fall.

Day is the time for toil;
  Night balms the weary breast;
Stars have their vigils; seas a while
  Will sink to peaceful rest:
But round and round the shadow creeps
Of that which slumbers not nor sleeps:—

Effacing all that's fair,—
  Hushing the voice of mirth
Into the silence of despair
  Around the lonesome hearth,—

And training ivy-garlands green
O'er the once-gay and social scene.

In beauty fading fast
  Its silent trace appears,—
And—where, a phantom of the past,
  Dim in the mists of years,—
Gleams Tadmor o'er Oblivion's waves,
Like wrecks above their ocean-graves.—

Before the ceaseless shade
  That round the world doth sail,—
Its towers and temples bow the head,—
  The pyramids look pale:
The festal halls grow hushed and cold,
The everlasting hills wax old.

Coeval with the sun
  Its silent course began,—

And still its phantom-race shall run
  Till worlds with age grow wan;—
Till darkness spread her funeral-pall,
And one vast shadow circle all.

DREAMS.

NIGHT comes, the weary day to close
With sweet oblivion of our woes;
The captive of the dungeon-wall
To free from fixed and fettered thrall;
The hopeless exile to restore
To home and weeping friends once more;
To waft the slave beneath the calm
Cool shadow of his native palm;
Till morning wakens with a start,
To curse her beam, the broken heart.

Night comes to close the scenes of day
With visions not more vain than they:

She comes with sad and silent fall,
The tyrant's spirit to appal;
In dread and retributive might
The deep-sealed eye to blast with sight
Of scenes that tortured bosoms wring,
And faded memories back that bring;
Which start from dark oblivion's waves
Like midnight spectrès from their graves,
And scare their solitary sleep,
Whose deeds have made the world to weep.

How oft the Cæsar's couch was spread
Amid Pharsalia's field of dead;
How oft, perchance, on Actium's coast
He shrunk from Pompey's headless ghost.—
Methinks such visions came to close
His fitful and his brief repose,
Whose bright career, whose blazing day,
Makes fame of others blench away;

Before whose earthquake-tread went forth
A flame unto the frozen North;
Till where that Titan spirit trod,
The nations owned the scourge of God.
In his lone isle amid the wave,—
At once his prison and his grave,
Behold him laid in slumbers dire,
And tossing on his couch of fire,—
Lulled far away in dreams of night,
He speeds upon a phantom-flight,
And on and on he seems to haste
O'er many a pale and polar waste:
With gory spur and slackened rein,
On foamy steed he sweeps the plain;
And by the watch-fires well can scan
The dying faces, wild and wan,
And grim and ghastly with despair,
That eye his flight with demon glare,

And howl upon the night-wind's breath
The imprecations choked by death.

On, on he speeds, still doomed to mark
The frozen mummies, stiff and stark,
That seem once more on him to raise
Death's fearful, fixed, and glassy gaze;
And from blue muttering lips to cast
Unearthly curses on the blast;
Or join his flight, and, side by side,
To haunt him in that ghastly ride:—
While he, the lofty laurel-browed,
Before whose fiat nations bowed,
Hath shrunk at shadows of the mind,
And quaked like aspen in the wind,
Till o'er his brow cold dews would break,
And he from terror's trance awake.

THE MOTHER AND CHILD.

Yon infant-cherub's conscious smile,—
  Best balm unto a mother's breast,—
Her heart from every woe can wile,
  And sooth the trembler into rest.
Her offspring's future years to bless,
  While Fancy culls from Pleasure's bowers
Joys that in such a world as this
  Bloom few and far as desert flowers.

Ah! could she with prophetic eye
  Explore that infant's future doom,—
Behold his path before her lie,
  Stretch from the cradle to the tomb,—

Perchance, with aching heart, she'd turn
  Distracted from the sickening sight;
To wish her babe had ne'er been born,
  Ne'er wakened from unconscious night.

His name, his destiny enrolled,
  Rest darkly in the book of Fate;
But who its pages may unfold,
  And life's vicissitudes relate?—
What clouds may shade his morning-sun,
  What blight may fall upon his name,
What crimes, ere half his days are done,
  May close them with a death of shame!

Reposing on Eve's bosom lay
  The first-born Cain, in beauty's bud:
Ah! could she dream, some future day,
  That babe would shed a brother's blood?—

Thus he whose deeds our bosoms wring,
  Abhorrent at whose name we start,
Was once that helpless smiling thing
  A mother pillows with her heart.

THE WAKE.

In our ancient Scottish airs
Even joy the sound of sorrow wears.

WILSON.

How sweet upon my slumbers break
  Those solemn sounds with dying fall;
The music of the midnight wake,
  When silence sleeps o'er all:—

Its strains, that weep o'er past delight
  And soften into sighs, prolong
The soul of sorrow through the night,
  Which breathes in Scottish song.

It sinks upon the heart like balm
  Of brighter days the memory brings;
And nights of beauty, peace, and calm,
  All fled on angel-wings.

Now through the silence deep and wide
  The soft aerial accents swoon;
Like some lone spirit's anthem sighed
  Beneath the midnight moon;

And sweet as that which charmed the hours,
  From Chaos when Creation sprung,
And o'er green Eden's early bowers
  The stars of morning sung;

Or such as tranced lone shepherds, when
  The angels hymned a SAVIOUR'S birth
In strains that breathed good-will to men,
  And promised peace to earth.

Oh! thus may sleepless Sorrow's ear
Be ever soothed by Music's strain;
The purest, best of pleasures here,
Which leaves nor sting nor stain.

THE FIRST LAND.

How welcome from the dizzy mast,—
  The watchful seaman's stand,—
Sounds o'er the billow and the blast
  The joyful cry of "Land!"
Which, veiled within a misty shroud,
Lifts o'er the wave its peak of cloud.

Ah! who but he, whose weary eye
  Hath long been doomed to dwell
Upon the wastes of sea and sky,
  The raptured throb can tell,
The boundless burst of joy that fills
The heart that hails earth's distant hills!

At once upon the gaze they come
  With mingling smiles and tears,—
With beauteous visions of our home,
  And days of other years,—
Reflected from the past, that throw
Around their heads a sunset glow.

And far away, in Fancy's dream,
  Beyond the waste of floods,
The wave-worn spirit hath a gleam
  Of sunny vales and woods;
A gentle whisper of the trees,—
A murmur of the forest-breeze!

A dying echo of the grove,
  That to the heart doth bring
Sweet memories of the walks of love,
  In life's unclouded spring;

And dear the woodland-anthems be,
Far warbled o'er the moaning sea.

And soon upon the lonely shore
Our bosom-friends we strain;
They welcome us from ocean's roar
To native shades again,—
To woman's love and smiling home,
From which our lot has been to roam.

ON REVISITING A RUIN.

THE still and soft autumnal eve
  Descends in beauty so serene,
That the soothed spirit scarce can grieve
  Above the fading scene;
Where, pale and saddening in decline
  Above the sere and yellow bowers,
Thou ivy-robed, time-hallowed shrine,
  I hail thy mouldering towers!

Amid the Summer's blooming reign,
  'Tis sad to gaze upon decay,
Which mars, as doth a funeral train,
  The glad and glorious day:

But while the year thus droops and dies
  Around thy walls so worn and wan,
The scene and season harmonize,
  And Nature mocks not Man.

Yet fast as thy frail turrets fade
  And moulder from their place of pride,
How oft beneath their sullen shade
  Youth, love, and hope, have died!
But thou art here; thy form appears
  E'en as of yore it used to be:—
Alas! our few and fleeting years
  Scarce work a change on thee!

The scene around on which I gaze
  Recalls life's summer-morning dream;
The music of departed days
  Still murmurs in thy stream;

While Love and Friendship's voices long
  Have passed to silence, like the strain
Breathed in some sweet heart-touching song
  We never hear again!

But Nature's harp hath lost no string:
  The waving woods and lonely sea
Upon the living ear still fling
  Their solemn harmony;—
Yet changeless as in days gone by,
  Though that wild music warbles on,—
To me the breezes seem to sigh,
  The waters seem to moan.

Nor only Nature's scenes of grief
  Forlorn remembrances recall,
When droops away the yellow leaf
  From Autumn's coronal;

But the green earth and vernal air,
  Each bud and blossom of the Spring,
Wake thoughts of things more sweet and fair—
  The flowers she cannot bring.

LOVE.

When tranced in Beauty's witching smile,
That sweetly sooths but to betray,
Let not the soft enchantment wile
Thy heart away.

For Love is oft a fatal spell—
A garland of the cypress-tree
Or weeping willow-wreath may well
Its emblem be.

An April-day of sun and shower,
  The glow—the chill of hopes and fears,
An ague of the heart—a flower
                That blooms in tears.

More blest, perchance, its lot afar—
  Amid the regions of its birth—
In bowers beyond the morning-star,
                But not on earth.

Oh! shun the soft bewitching bane
  That steals like balm upon thy breast;
With fairy visions false and vain
                To break thy rest.

'Twill waste thy young heart day by day,
  As rocks the caverned waters wear;
And touch the blossoms of thy May
                With tints of care.

Sad as the drear, the dying streak
That Autumn's falling flowers disclose,
'Twill plant upon thy fading cheek
Consumption's rose;

Or bid thee woo—to sorrow dear—
The shades that sooth to foster grief,—
And haste thy days into the sere,
The yellow leaf.

Or bid thee seek the battle-field,—
Or sail the wide and wandering wave,—
That to the broken-hearted yield
An early grave.

Then, oh! when tranced in Beauty's smile,
That sweetly sooths but to betray,
Let not the soft enchantment wile
Thy heart away.

Who that the passion's power hath proved,
Its fever-fits of joy and pain,—
Who that hath well and wildly loved,
Would love again!

SOLITUDE.

Spirit of the lonely scene,
  Desert shore and distant sea,
Where Man's step hath never been,
  Or long hath ceased to be,—
By thy ever-saddening shrines
  Melancholy's vespers rise;
There, when daylight calm declines,
  She greets thine ear with sighs.

On the Pyramids sublime,
  Towering o'er a thousand graves,
Landmarks in the sea of time,
  Long wasted by its waves,—

On the mystic mouldering cone,
  Hooded in the night of eld,
Thou hast fixed thine awful throne,
  And silent empire held.

Gleaming high on Greenland's coast,
  Where the polar star doth gem
Mountain-pinnacles of frost,
  Hoar Winter's diadem,
List'st thou to the rending roar
  Of the ice upon the seas,
Or howl of monsters from the shore,
  Borne on the midnight breeze?

Or dost thou rather love to dwell
  Where the lordly lion roams,
Whose awful voice, a nightly knell,
  Peals through Palmyra's domes?

Or where majestic Babel lies
  Buried in oblivious gloom,
Whose tower hath crumbled from the skies
  Into a desert tomb?

From thy deep and dread repose,
  'Midst primeval starless night,
Didst thou start when God arose
  And said, "Let there be light?"
Spirit! yet there comes a day
  To restore thine ancient reign,—
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
  And all be thine again.

HUMAN SORROW.

O'ER her lost son a mother wept,
  A sister's tears flowed wild and free,
For with the fallen brave he slept,
  Far, far beyond the sea:
But days and months and years rolled o'er,
  Till bleeding hearts forgot their pain;
Smiles beamed on faded cheeks once more,
  And eyes looked bright again.

But far upon the fields of Spain,
  Above the spot where he reposed,
The tears from Beauty's eyes did rain
  Until those eyes were closed.

Yea, graves of kindred may be wet
With tears friends shed their turf above;
But these will fail, and those forget:—
There's nothing true but love.

ON REVISITING A SCENE IN SCOTLAND.

How bright is every scene beheld
In youth and hope's unclouded hours!
How darkly—youth and hope dispelled—
The loveliest prospect lours!

WATTS.

WITH pensive steps and cheerless heart,
Again I tread this once-loved shore,
And sigh o'er scenes that can impart
To me a joy no more:
For to the dim and tearful eye
But dark the brightest views appear;
And the glad songs of Summer's sky
Fall sad on Sorrow's ear.

The feelings long have past away
  That shed o'er life a hallowed light,
That lent enchantment to the day
  And beauty to the night.
The flowers as gaily deck the stem,
  The leaves as greenly shade the tree;
I weep no faded charm in them,—
  The change is all in me.

The heart—the heart—I trace it there,
  Whose brightness and whose bloom are gone,
That mantled ocean, earth, and air,
  With beauty all its own.
The heart—the heart!—Each breath of joy
  May sweep its broken chords in vain,
O'er tuneless harps as breezes sigh,
  But wake no answering strain.

OCEAN.

Endless, ever-sounding sea,
Image of Eternity!
Troubled, with unconscious breast,
Like the dead without their rest;
Deaf unto thy own wild roar,
Heard at once on every shore;
Stretching on from pole to pole,
Far as suns and seasons roll,
Far as reign of night and day,—
Sounding on, away—away!

Oh! what precious things there be
Shrined and sepulchred in thee!
Gems and gold from every eye
Hid within thy bosom lie:
Many a treasure-laden bark
Rests within thy caverns dark;
And where towers and temples rose,
Buried continents repose,—
Giant secrets of thy breast,
With their thousand isles of rest,—
With their brave and beauteous forms,
Undisturbed beneath thy storms;
In a safe and peaceful home,
Where the mourner may not come,
Nor the stranger rudely tread
O'er their calm and coral bed.
Where the ocean-buried lies,
May no monuments arise;

For thy bosom bears no trace
Of our evanescent race:
On thy wild and wandering wave
Bloom no laurels for the grave;
O'er thy dread unfathomed gloom
Tower no trophies for the tomb.

But there comes a day of dread,
To reclaim thy thousand dead;
Bursting from thy dark control,
While in fire thy billows roll,
Shall that countless multitude
Soar from out thy shrinking flood,
Thy mistress moon be changed to blood!
And the sun, with aspect drear,
Look upon this parting sphere,
As once his startled orb looked wan
On His cross who died for Man:—

Then shall the Archangel stand,
  One foot on sea and one on shore,
And swear with an uplifted hand—
  That "Time shall be no more!"
And while Heaven's last thunders roll,
Sounding Nature's parting knoll,
Like a burning, blackening scroll,
Reeling from the face of day,
Earth and sea shall flee away.

TO A LADY SINGING.

Fair Siren! while I list thy strain,
  Awakening visions cherished long,
I dream myself to youth again,
  And bless thy witching song,—
Oh! to my bosom far more dear
  Than all the modish lays of art
That play around the wildered ear,
  But never reach the heart.

Thy strain comes o'er me as the breeze
  That wafts on its refreshing wing,
From some sweet shore, o'er distant seas,
  A message of the Spring,

An odour of life's vernal hours,
  A breathing of its earlier day,
A sweet remembrance of the flowers
  Waned from the world away.

Thus Music hallows with her spell
  The past, to which she fondly clings,
As the lone ivy loves to dwell
  Around long-faded things,
And "wakes, but does not waste the heart;"
  For even the silent tears that flow
From feeling, ever can impart
  A balm unto its wo.

PÈRE LA CHAISE.

The spot is holy, and it seems
Like to some shadowy land of dreams.

HERVEY.

'TIS sweet amid the sun's declining rays
To muse upon the mount of Père la Chaise;
To mark those gay abodes and gilded domes
Flame in the gorgeous sky like Genii's homes;
Then from the living city's distant hum
To turn a while to that where all is dumb;
Yet lovely in its silence and repose,—
A place of refuge from our many woes;

A scene where blight and beauty closely blend,
And pleasure-grounds of graves afar extend.
Upon the cheek of death the wild-flower blooms,
And mingle marshalled ranks of trees and tombs;
Whence many a lengthening shadow darkly lours,
Like dreary spectres of departed hours;—
And the low sighing of the evening gale
Through bough and blossom which the pale shrines veil,
With garlands woven by the pious hand,
Seem like soft whispers from the spirit's land.

There glimmers through the shade of ghost-like trees
The tomb of Abelard and Eloise;
The very air around their sacred urn
Glows with the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn;"

To live when marble moulders o'er the grave,
And, worn by Time's all-silent ceaseless wave,
The fond memorials traced by Friendship's hand
Shall fade away like records "writ in sand."

Oft through that wide and calm sepulchral grove,
At dewy eve I've felt it bliss to rove;
For, oh! its sacred solitude might seem
A scene for lover's walk or poet's dream;
Where, fenced with odorous shrubs and gay parterre,
A bower of beauty bloomed each sepulchre:
Yet oft the heart would ask if this were meet,
And feel, but scarcely blame, the baby cheat
Of garlanding with wreaths of brightest bloom
The dreary marble's monumental gloom;
Till the soothed spirit half could deem it sweet
To lay its cares within that still retreat;—

And the long last repose seemed less forlorn,
Where the glad warblers wake at eve and morn,
The shady boughs and whispering leaves among,
Their vesper hymn and earliest matin song.

FAME.

Is Fame the fallen Hero's lot,
  On Waterloo's ensanguined plain?
Its sweetest flower, "Forget me not,"
  Pleads for the dead in vain.
There many a gallant soldier lies,
  Whose name, whose tale no tongue imparts;
Whose memory lives but in the sighs
  That steal from broken hearts.

Or is the wreath-enwoven bay
  Above the grave of Genius hung?
Immortal is each magic lay,
  And minstrel's name who sung?—

The strain may live on Fame's bright page,
  But, oh! how oft unknown for whom,
Fadeless and fresh from age to age,
  Her greenest garlands bloom!

Then vainly was this longing given,
  Of future praise to be the theme;
The wish, unless it point to heaven,
  On earth is but a dream.
To eyes that sleep in darkness drear,
  What 'vails the blessed light of day?
Or music warbled on the ear
  That cannot list the lay?

STANZAS.

A LONELY thing I would not be,
From kindred things exiled;
A sad and solitary tree
Upon a lifeless wild.

I would not be an only flower,
To dwell in desert air,
Or blossom in the loveliest bower,
With none my lot to share.

No!—e'en in brotherhood of grief
  I'd rather live and die,
'Mid fading leaves a fading leaf,
  Responding sigh for sigh.

CONSUMPTION.

We saw—and could we cease to grieve?—
On Mary's cheek a hectic glow,
Bright as the parting blush of eve
Upon a wreath of snow:
Gone was her eye's glad sparkling ray,
Which late its lashes could disclose;
She seemed as weary of the day,
And wished for night's repose.

So calm, so gently did she fade,—
Still lovelier to the closing scene,—
She seemed the softened seraph-shade
Of what she once had been:

Thus passing silently and slow,
  What emblem might her charms pourtray?—
The beauty of the second bow;
  The eve of summer's day.

Till the last sigh had passed her lips,
  A lingering charm around them played;
And then the long and last eclipse
  Left that sweet face in shade.
Yet in her ail death had no gloom,
  Nor from her pale cheek chased the smile,
But gently led her to the tomb,
  And whispered peace the while.

STORM ON THE PYRENEES.

'Tis night, and all around is deadly still,
  Save the far torrent sunk into a sigh,
And the low wailing of the mountain-rill,
  Through deepest solitude that wanders by.
Amid the wastes of darkness, soaring high,
  The giant hills their midnight conclave hold,
Far in the secret chambers of the sky,
  With clouds and forest-mantles round them rolled:
But, hark! a heavy sound, as if a death-bell tolled!

Again, again, it breaks upon the gloom,
Fitful and far, like billows on the shore;
Anon, with voice like what shall wake the tomb,
At once it bursts into a boundless roar!
Of fire and flood the mingled torrents pour
Down blazing cones, that red volcanoes seem:
Like rush of armies falls the thunder-shower;
The mighty mountains leap amid the gleam,
And from his eyrie soars the eagle with wild scream!

And as the thunder, swathed in purple pall,
Peals o'er sierra high and central vale,
A thousand echoes, starting at the call,
Adown the darksome Roncesvalles sail,—
Till Fancy hears, upon the hollow gale,
Its phantom-knights above the battle-plain

Charge on the storm, that to a feeble wail
Dies o'er the spectre-night: the thunders wane
To murmurs down the skies, and all is hushed again.

THE RETURN.

WRITTEN ON REVISITING EDINBURGH.

For time makes all but true love old.

CAMPBELL.

FROM wandering on a foreign shore,
  Fair City! in the evening skies,
As on my raptured gaze once more
  Thy long-lost scenes arise,—
A thousand sweet emotions start,—
  My frame a gush of feeling thrills,
And strays in distant dreams my heart,
  With years beyond the hills.

Again amidst thy scenes I rove,—
  Those scenes that sweetly can restore
The day-dreams of my youth and love
  In all the charms they wore:
But on each well-remembered face,
  As through thy varied crowds I range,
I sigh to mark the dreary trace
  Of ruthless time and change:—

And, more than all, of wasting care,
  That lurks in lines his hand hath made;
And, ere the blight of time is there,
  Bids beauty's blossom fade.
Thus e'en life's gayest scenes supply
  Thoughts less to joy than sadness near,
Till mirth oft melts into a sigh,
  And smiles into a tear.

I too am changed:—Bright eyes impart
  To me a raptured thrill no more,
Awake not in the withered heart
  The throb they waked before.
Alas! what renovating power
  The charm of life again can bring?
The sweets of love, that fleeting flower,
  Which feels no second spring!

First love!—Oh! how these two brief words
  Wake thoughts too deep for speech that lie;
Which steal along the bosom's chords
  Like long-lost melody!—
Thy blessed days once more to live,
  With all their magic sweetness fraught,—
With worlds—if I had such to give—
  Methinks were cheaply bought.

Then, oft as one dear name I heard,
  The tell-tale blush unbidden came,
And a fair woman's soft regard
  Was more than wealth or fame:
But now the charm of beauty's glance
  Falls on my bosom cold and weak;
No more her smiles the heart entrance,
  Or tinge the faded cheek.

Yet as a glow upon the hill
  Remains when summer's sun is set,
Thy image, dearest, lingers still,
  Bright as when first we met;
And 'mid the crowd, if passing by,
  Perchance some radiant form I see,
Her loveliness still prompts the sigh
  That Memory breathes to thee!

THE CLOSING YEAR.

WHILE midnight's chime beats deep and drear
The pulses of the parting year,
I will not hail another's birth
With reckless and unseemly mirth:
By me its welcome shall be said,
As in the presence of the dead.

A smile the new-born year to greet,
  A silent tear to that gone by;
As blending in our bosoms meet
  The dreams of hope and memory.

Again I hail each inmate gay
  Assembled in the festal room;
But some, alas! are far away,
  Some sleeping in the tomb!
A narrower circle seems to meet
Around the board:—each vacant seat
A dark and sad remembrance brings
Of faded and forsaken things;—
Of youth's sweet promise to the heart;
Of hopes that came but to depart,
Like phantom-waters of the waste,
That glad the sight, but shun the taste;
Of bright eyes veiled in cold eclipse,—
The balm, the breath, and bloom of lips
Where oft in silent rapture ours
Have clung like bees to honeyed flowers;
With their sweet voices past away,
E'en like the harp's expiring lay.

But fled and gone with all its ills
  And dreams of good,—a long adieu!
Unto the year beyond the hills,
  And welcome to the new:
And hoping oft to meet again,
  To hail the sacred season's call,
Thus hand in hand the bowl we drain,—
  "A good new-year to all!"

THE NORTH-WESTER.

They were the first
That ever burst
Into that silent sea.

COLERIDGE.

'MID shouts that hailed her from the shore,
And bade her speed, the bark is gone
The dreary ocean to explore,
Whose waters sweep the Frigid Zone;—
And bounding on before the gale,
To bright eyes shining through their tears,
'Twixt sea and sky her snowy sail
A lessening speck appears.

Behold her next 'mid icy isles
  Lone wending on her cheerless way;
'Neath skies where Summer scarcely smiles,—
  Whose light seems but the shade of day.
But while the waves she wanders o'er,
  Around her form they sink to sleep:
The pulse of Nature throbs no more,—
  She's chained within the deep!

Then Hope for ever took her flight;—
  Each face as monumental stone
Grew ghastly in the fading light
  In which their latest sun went down;
And ere its disk to darkness past,
  And closed their unreturning day,
The seaman sought the dizzy mast,
  To catch its latest ray.

All other secrets of their fate
  From darkness would the Muse redeem;
Unheard-of horrors to relate,
  Which Fancy scarce may dare to dream.
Thus much we only know,—they died;
  All else oblivion deeply veils,
And charnels of the waters wide,
  That tell no babbling tales.

For them were wishes, longings, fears,
  The sleepless night and ceaseless prayer,—
Hope, gleaming rainbow-like through tears,
  And doubt that darkened to despair!
Suns, seasons, as they roll away,
  No light upon the lost can shed;
Their tale a secret, till the day
  When seas give up their dead.

WRITTEN ON LEAVING PARIS.

The sun rises bright in France,
And fair sets he.
CUNNINGHAM.

FAIR city of a beauteous land,
I see thy domes and fabrics high,—
A vision of enchantment,—stand
Amidst the sunset sky;
Like cloud-sketched glories in their rest,
At eve, along the glowing west,
And ere the flush of day expire,
Reflecting far its crimson light,
And gleaming high in pillared fire,
Like Israel's guide by night,

Stands Victory's column,—and may stand
  Perchance a remnant of the past,
Like Pompey's, on a desert land,
  Or fragment of that waste,
Where now responds not Memnon's lyre
At morn to Phœbus' touch of fire,
Nor lulls him down the evening wave
With song of sorrow to his grave.

Far from the trophy of renown
  He bade arise, and far from thee,
Fair land, that once he called his own,
Thy Despot of the Iron Crown,
Still as hushed babe, hath laid him down
  To sleep amidst the sea;
And Saint Helena's rocks of gloom,
That sentinel his lonely tomb;—
Where peals his dirge on ocean's cry,
In its wild anthem to the sky,—

Whose onward course was as its flood,
  And as its ebb his dread recoil;
When shrinking back in seas of blood
  From Moscow's funeral-pile.—
His mighty legions sped in vain
  O'er polar wilds their fearful race;
Death on his pale horse led the chace,
And smote them with "petrific mace"
  To mummies on the plain.

But, lo! the western gates of light
Have closed above the day-star's flight;
And night descends serene and slow,
  Arrayed "in purple and in pall,"
And wreathes around her regal brow
  A starry coronal:
And to the scenes of mirth and song
The queen-like city pours her throng;

Where Vice allures in fairest hues,
  And Pleasure strews with flowers the path,
And Avarice pale her votary woos
  To haunts of hell and death !—
Where sits the worshipper of Chance,
  With aspect lorn, and loathed, and feared,—
Whose eye hath blasting in its glance,
  Whose brow seems thunder-sered.

Land of the chivalrous and gay,
  A long adieu,—perchance a last !
Thy scenes I traced in life's sweet May
  Still brighten o'er the past ;—
Where Pyrenean mountains high
Toss their dark forests in the sky,
Which undulate like ocean waves
When wild the wintry tempest raves ;—
And where, through lilied vales and meads,
  And vine-clad hills in sun that sleep,

The broad Garonne majestic leads
  His waters to the deep :—
Still bloom in Memory's fairy-land
The flowers that blossomed on his strand,
Where yet, in many a lovely dream,
  I bask my heart beneath the ray
Of smiles that on my slumbers beam
  From faces far away.

AUTUMN.

SWEET Sabbath of the year!
  While evening-lights decay,
Thy parting steps methinks I hear
  Steal from the world away!

Amid thy silent bowers,
  'Tis sad but sweet to dwell;
Where falling leaves and drooping flowers
  Around me breathe farewell.

Along thy sunset skies
  Their glories melt in shade;
And, like the things we fondly prize,
  Seem lovelier as they fade.

A deep and crimson streak
  Thy dying leaves disclose;
As on Consumption's waning cheek,
  'Mid ruin, blooms the rose.

Thy scene each vision brings
  Of beauty in decay;
Of fair and early-faded things,
  Too exquisite to stay;

Of joys that come no more;
  Of flowers whose bloom is fled;
Of farewells wept upon the shore;
  Of friends estranged or dead;

Of all that now may seem
To Memory's tearful eye
The vanished beauty of a dream,
O'er which we gaze and sigh.

WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

As sweeps the bark before the breeze,
  While waters coldly close around,
Till of her pathway through the seas
  The track no more is found;—
Thus passing down Oblivion's tide,
  The beauteous visions of the mind
Fleet as that ocean pageant glide,
  And leave no trace behind.

But the pure page may still impart
  Some dream of feeling, else untold,—
The silent record of a heart,
  E'en when that heart is cold:

Its lorn memorials here may bloom,—
  Perchance to gentle bosoms dear,
Like flowers that linger o'er the tomb
  Bedewed with Beauty's tear.

I ask not for the meed of fame,
  The wreath above my rest to twine,—
Enough for me to leave my name
  Within this hallowed shrine;—
To think that o'er these lines thine eye
  May wander in some future year,
And Memory breathe a passing sigh
  For him who traced them here.

Calm sleeps the sea when storms are o'er,
  With bosom silent and serene,
And but the plank upon the shore
  Reveals that wrecks have been.

So some frail leaf like this may be
  Left floating on Time's silent tide,—
The sole remaining trace of me,—
  To tell I lived and died.

THE VESPER-BELL.

HARK! 'tis the vesper-bell
  Far pealing from the shore;—
Oh! welcome are the tones that tell
  Of ocean wanderings o'er;—
That hail us from the homeless main
To earth's great family again.

Sad, solemn, and sublime,
  Above the waters swung,
Rolls on that awful voice of Time,
  Tolled from his iron tongue;—
And every deep and sullen boom
Seems like an echo from the tomb.

Lorn as a distant knell
  O'er Friendship's passing bier,—
Or accents of a far farewell
  From many a vanished year;
Awakening with its mournful voice
The memory of departed joys.

It brings the dream of home,—
  Of sweet sequestered hours,—
Of shades through which I loved to roam
  At still and starry hours;—
Of music heard at fall of day
Over the seas and far away;—

Of hall and social hearth,—
  Of love-walks 'neath the tree,
When day, departed from the earth,
  Was buried in the sea;

And beating breast and blushing cheek
Revealed what maiden may not speak.

Of Sabbath's holy calm,—
  Orisons duly said
In temples, where the choral psalm
  Died o'er the silent dead,
And to each hallelujah gave
Response, the echoes of the grave.

Oft have I paused to hail,
  Amid my own loved land,
The vesper-chime o'er hill and dale
  Float downward to the strand,
And melt above the summer sea,
As now its magic falls o'er me.

And thus its dying strain
  Above the waters cast,

Thrills o'er the dark mysterious chain
  That links me to the past;
And from the dim and distant shore
Speaks to my heart of days of yore.

"OUR FATHERS,—WHERE ARE THEY?"

Our fathers,—where are they?—and where
  The Prophets?—From this mortal scene
Gone, with the dream of things that were,
  As if they ne'er had been:—
Beyond the wanderings of the morn,
  Beyond the portals of the day,
Unto a land whence none return,—
  Our fathers,—where are they?

The vanished comet, long deemed lost,
  And absent for a thousand years,
Again amidst the starry host
  From darkness re-appears:

Seas ebb and flow upon the shore;
  Moons wax when they have waned away;
But they who go to come no more,—
  Our fathers,—where are they?

Thou sun, that light'st the boundless skies,
  Where are the earth's departed gone?—
Ye stars, to your all-seeing eyes
  Is the great secret known?—
Ye breathe not of their place of rest,
  But roll in silence on your way;
And the lorn echoes of the breast
  Still answer—Where are they?

TO A LADY.

WHILE on thy early charms I gaze,
All lovely as thou art,
E'en like a beam from brighter days,
Thy smile steals o'er my heart:
And yet that smile, I scarce know why,
To saddening thought gives birth;—
Thou seem'st too beautiful to die,
Yet, oh! too fair for earth.

'Tis not the roses of thy cheek
That of departure tell,—
As early-blighted spring-flowers speak
A sorrowful farewell:

But still I've seen the fairest things
  All fleetly fade away;
Like dreams that take the morning's wings,
  Or shadows at noonday.

I would not that thou e'er couldst prove
  To me but what thou art;—
A spell unbroke by earthly love;
  An idol of the heart;—
A beauteous shrine to bend before,
  In silent thought at even;—
A form at distance to adore,
  And but to love as Heaven.

MY BIRTHDAY.

TIME shakes his glass, and swiftly run
  Life's sands, still ebbing grain by grain;—
Yon weary, wan, autumnal sun
  Brings round my birthday once again;—
And lights me, like the fading bloom
Of pale October, to the tomb.

My birthday!—Each revolving year
  It seems to me a darker day;
Whose dying flowers and leaflets sere
  With solemn warning seem to say,
That all on earth like shadows fly;—
That nought abideth 'neath the sky.

My birthday!—Where, when life was young,
  Is now each promise which it gave?—
Hope's early wreaths have long been hung,—
  Pale, faded garlands,—o'er its grave,
Where Memory waters with her tears
Those relics of departed years.

My birthday!—Where the loved ones now,
  On whom in happier times it dawned?—
Each beaming eye and sunny brow
  Low in the dark and dreamless land
Now sleep—where I shall slumber soon,
Like all beneath the sun and moon.

My birthday!—Once I loved to hear
  These words by Friendship echoed round;
But now they fall upon mine ear
  With thoughts too mournful and profound,—
Fraught with a sad and solemn spell,
And startling as a wailing knell.

TO A LADY.

In many an hour, when all alone
I muse on days for ever flown,—
At morning's dawn or brighter noon,—
Or 'neath the soft and silent moon,—
Or when the twilight pale and mild
Comes stealing o'er the voiceless wild,—
Thine image beams on Fancy's eye,
The brightest star in Memory's sky.

Nor only doth the lonely hour,
The pensive walk by twilight bower,
Or silent wood, or sounding shore,
Thy form of loveliness restore:—

E'en while I smile amidst the gay,
My heart—my heart is far away,
And from each beauteous form I see
Still turns to sigh and think of thee.

But chief when gentle slumber brings
A balm to sorrow on its wings,—
On weary beds sweet healing pours,
Like falling dew on closing flowers,—
Shuts out the world of toil and care,
But opes within a world more fair,—
Restoring to the broken-hearted
The loved, the lost, the long departed,
And many a vision of delight
That day denies to waking sight;—
Thy beauty on my lonely dreams
Then breaks in clear and dying gleams,—
Through closing clouds as glows a while
The second rainbow's shadowy smile:

I feel thy phantom-form's caress,
And o'er my brow each clustering tress,—
The soft warm pressure of thy cheek,—
And hear thy voice of music speak,
Soft as the witching accents given
By harp-strings to the winds of heaven.

Oh! may'st thou through this fleeting scene
Still be to me what thou hast been,—
An angel-presence to control
Each erring impulse of my soul,—
That all in Woman 'neath the sky
For which the heart can seek or sigh.—
But if, surviving youth's bright day,
Like all that's fair to fade away;
When sorrow comes on circling years
To strew the path of smiles with tears,—
To steal from eyes their morning light,
And dim them with a shade of night,—

Decay's dark traces to disclose,
And blend the lily with the rose ;—
Far, far from me may time and care
  Steal o'er thee with their withering power ;
For, oh ! methinks I could not bear
  To see thee fade, my flower !

ELEGIAC VERSES.

'Tis hallowed ground, where, mourned and missed,
The lips repose our love has kissed.

CAMPBELL.

ABOVE the low abode and last
Where Beauty rests, Affection weeps;
And the sweet sunshine of the past
Serenely sleeps.

The echo of a long-lost voice
Seems melting on the silent air;
The shadow of departed joys
Still lingers there.

In lonely beauty, o'er thy tomb,
  The summer's earliest blossoms blow :—
Ah ! why thus mock thee with their bloom,
  Pale flower below !

Thou faded'st not when leaflets fade,
  And storms of winter wreck the sky ;
But when the beams and blossoms made
  It sad to die.

But summer suns and winter showers
  In beauty or in blight may fall
Above those lone and silent bowers,
  Unheeded all.

Ah ! there no bleeding bosoms prove
  The sickness hopes deferred impart ;
Or pangs of unrequited love,
  That waste the heart.

One couch the beautiful and young,
  The lover and his mistress share,
Safe from the tale of Slander's tongue,
  That comes not there.

With sorrow long familiar grown,
  There, pillowed on thy gentle breast,
How gladly would I lay me down
  And be at rest!

To him of winds and waves the sport,
  How blest upon a peaceful shore
Appears the calm and silent port
  They reach no more!

THE SUICIDE.

No dark and sorrowful array,—
  No pompous hearse with sable plume,—
No mourners heralding the way,
  Conveyed him to the tomb:
But in the shadow of the night,
  When slept the moon within her cave;
And the pale stars withdrew their light,
  They bore him to his grave.

It was not made in hallowed ground;
  But on a drear deserted wild,
On which the face of Nature frowned,
  They laid Misfortune's child,—

Where flowers and verdure never spring,
  Nor pilgrim pauses on his way;
But boding birds of darkness wing
  Their flight at fall of day.

The prayer they lowly murmured o'er
  The lost one to the dust consigned,
Was answered by the sullen roar
  Of thunder on the wind.
Pale sheeted lightnings pierced the gloom,
  As struck his bier the sounding clod:—
Yet dare not thou to speak his doom,
  But leave him to his God.

TIME.

Unto the pale, the perished past,
  Another year hath darkly flown;
And, viewless as the winged blast,
  Hath come and gone.

Gone, with its fond and fairy dreams;—
  Gone, with its feverish hopes and fears;—
Gone, with its blossoms and its beams,—
  Its smiles and tears.

What art thou, Time? and of thy course
  What may the mystic emblem be?—
A rolling stream without a source;—
  A shoreless sea.

In silence though thou speed'st thy flight,
  Of thee all Nature utters speech;—
Day unto day, and night to night,
  Doth knowledge teach.

The ocean waves upon the shore,
  That, ever restless, sink and swell,
Sound with their sad and solemn roar
  Thy ceaseless knell.

Each little floweret's fading bloom,
  Each leaflet falling from the tree,—
The very silence of the tomb,
  All breathe of thee.

Fast falling from its glass, the sand
  Doth mete thy moments as they flow,—
And lengthening shades, when o'er the land
  The sun is low.

And when from ocean's verge remote
  He climbs yon heaven's majestic arch,
He bodies forth to human thought
  Thy noiseless march.

Thou dost with every ebbing year
  Bid hopes, and joys, and smiles depart;—
Thou too dost dry the mourner's tear,
  And hush his heart.

Or rudely crost, or wildly blest,
  Thy stream Lethean, cold and calm,
Pours down upon the fevered breast
  Oblivion's balm;

Till e'en the loved ones, wont to share
  Our joys and griefs in days gone by,—
Our hours of sleep, of play, and prayer,
  Forgotten lie.

THE POET'S DEATH-BED.

Oh, alas, and alas!
Green grows the grass!—
Like the waves we come, like the winds we pass.

DELTA.

YE tell me 'tis the evening-hour;—then, ere the day be flown,
The casement ope, that I may see my last of suns go down.
With beams as beautiful he'll rise to gladden earth again,
And wake the world with life and light,—but shine for me in vain.

Yes—of the azure sky above, and the green earth below,
I yet would take a last farewell, to cheer me ere I go;
And I will deem the light that glows along the verge of even,
And plays upon my faded cheek, the smile of opening heaven.

And let my fainting heart inhale sweet Nature's fragrant breath,
That wafts a message from the bowers to sooth the bed of death;—
That bears a whisper from the woods, a farewell from the spring,—
A tale of opening leaf and bud,—while I am withering.

And let me hear the small birds sing among the
garden bowers
Their evening hymn, that wont to bless my soli-
tary hours:
That choral anthem, warbled wild upon the leafy
spray,
Will glad this ear, that to the strain must soon
be deaf for aye.

And blame me not, that, called away unto a land
of bliss,
I fondly linger on the shores of such a world as
this;
And better love than aught I know of bright
immortal spheres,
This earth, so lovely in her wo, so beautiful in
tears.

Ye say that songs of triumph swell, and flowers eternal wave,
Along the streams of life that flow 'mid scenes beyond the grave;
But shall I love the fadeless blooms and songs of endless joy,
Like strains that make it bliss to weep, and flowers that bloom to die!

And now I give the parting kiss, and wave the parting hand;
My passing spirit's on the wing to seek the distant land.—
Ye loved ones of my heart, with whom I may no longer dwell,
And thou green earth, with all thy streams, woods, songs, and flowers,—farewell!

THE PAST.

The past is nothing; and at last
The future can be but the past.
BYRON.

How strange the retrospect of youth
  To musing recollection seems,—
Its hopes, that "came like things of truth,
  And disappeared like dreams:"—
And but for shades of sad regret,
  Sole traces of their brightness gone,
Are all our suns and summers set,
  As if they ne'er had shone.

Yon sky, the gay and gorgeous cloud
That gilds at morn, at eve shall pall;
And scenes in rising day that glowed
Grow grey beneath its fall.
The odours wafted on the breeze
Have left no traces on the air;
And all that ever sailed the seas
Have "writ no record" there.

The voices heard in other days
Into an echo's echo fade;
And faints the past on Memory's gaze,
The shadow of a shade.—
Whate'er hath been,—the bright and fair,—
Are but the phantoms of our thought,—
Memorials sad that such things were,
And that they now are not.

Oh! if beyond this mortal strand
  There bloom for us no better clime,
And we but *dream* a spirit's land
  Beyond the gulf of Time;—
Then all that e'er have swelled its tide,
  Their days of pleasure and of pain,
Have vainly suffered and enjoyed,
  And lived and died in vain.

STANZAS.

Love is the sweetest flower that grows
On earth, of Eden born;
But, oh! what hand e'er plucked its rose
Unscathed by lurking thorn?—
Beneath the beam of Beauty's eye
Though fondly beats the heart,
Yet oft the deep unconscious sigh
Reveals its secret smart.

And, touched by that sad ail, how soon
The maiden's roses fade,
And pines away her glowing noon
Beneath the myrtle shade,—

'Mid pensive thoughts and visions vain,
  And dreams that shun the day,—
While clings her bosom to the bane
  That steals her peace away.

Thus warned, seek thou a calmer joy
  That woos not to beguile:—
Thy days in peace may wander by
  Unsunned by Woman's smile;
And, sighing to the night-wind's song,
  Above thy lonely bier,
The waving grass will grow as long
  Unwatered by her tear.

THE FIRESIDE.

How sweet, when day withdraws his smile,
  And winter's night falls drear and long,
By social hearth and blazing pile,
  The hour of tale and song!—

When wavering on the pictured wall
  The flames their sportive radiance shed,
And gleam along the ancient hall
  The portraits of the dead.

Where still in imaged sweetness glows
  The parted spirit's hallowing light,—
The cheek that long hath lost its rose,—
  The eye where all is night.

The smile in sadness or in mirth,
  To bless adoring bosoms given;—
A beam of beauty set from earth
  To dawn more bright in heaven.

We sit in music's wizard ring,
  Whose strain each parted one restores,—
As vanished birds the voice of Spring
  Recalls from foreign shores.

Awaked as by enchanter's wand,
  The distant and the dead appear;
And voices from the spirit's land
  Sigh dream-like on the ear.

Life's vanished joys and faded flowers
  Are wreath-entwined with every strain,
Till all that we have loved is ours
  In Memory's dream again.

A SKETCH.

I saw her in the morn of life,—the summer of her
years,
Ere time had stole a charm away, or dimmed her
smile with tears;—
The blush of morn was on her cheek,—the tender
light of even
Came mellowed from her azure eye, whose sphere
reflected heaven.

I saw her once again, and still her form was
young and fair,—
But blight was with her beauty blent,—its silent
trace was there;—
Her cheek had lost its glowing tint,—her eye its
brightest ray,
The change was o'er her charms which says, the
flower must fade away.

Oh! then her tender bloom might seem the
shadow of the rose,
Or dying gleam of sunset skies, scarce tinging
stainless snows;
And clustering round her brow serene her golden
tresses lay,
As sun-bright clouds on summer lakes are hung
at close of day.

Yet—yet once more I saw her face, and then she
seemed to sleep
In bright and beautiful repose,—but, ah! too
still and deep,—
Far, far too deep for lovely dreams;—for youthful
eyes too long;
O'er which the morn may vainly break with all
her light and song!

THE WISH.

O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!

So prayed the Psalmist to be free
From mortal bonds and earthly thrall;
And such or soon or late shall be
Full oft the heart-breathed prayer of all:—
And we, when life's last sands we rove
With faltering foot and aching breast,
Shall sigh for wings that waft the dove
To flee away and be at rest.

While hearts are young and hopes are high,
  A fairy scene doth life appear;
Its sights are beauty to the eye,
  Its sounds are music to the ear:
But soon it glides from youth to age,—
  And, of its joys no more possessed,
We, like the captive of the cage,
  Would flee away and be at rest.

Is ours fair Woman's angel smile,
  All bright and beautiful as day?—
So of her cheek and eye the while,
  Time steals the rose and dims the ray;
She wanders to the spirit's land,—
  And we, with speechless grief opprest,
As o'er the faded form we stand,
  Would gladly share her place of rest.

Beyond the hills,—beyond the sea,—
O for the pinions of a dove,—
O for the morning's wings to flee
Away, and be with them we love:—
When all is fled that's bright and fair,
And life is but a wintry waste,
This, this at last must be our prayer,—
To flee away and be at rest!

MEMORY.

As music from Æolian lyre
  Wakes mournfully at evening's fall,
To winds that wander o'er each wire,
  Like echo to its call;—

Even so with sighs responds my heart,
  By every breath of Nature swept,
Till from its fount the waters start
  I deemed had all been wept.

If at the evening hour I gaze
  On sunset skies,—to Fancy's dream
The light of long-departed days
  Smiles in their dying gleam.

If unto me upon the gale
  The odour of a flower is blown,—
It comes with many a lovely tale
  Of youth's bright summers flown;

With many a tale of love and joy,
  And sun, and song, and opening rose;
And that green earth and azure sky
  Life's morning only knows.

If on mine ear a dying strain
  Of music wanders through the night,—
It wakes within my breast again
  Echoes of lost delight.

Oh! why must hearts their vigils keep
O'er parted joy,—a present pain!—
Oh! why must Memory wake to weep,
Yet ever weep in vain!

THE END.

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