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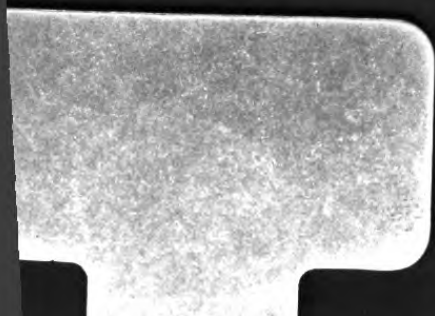


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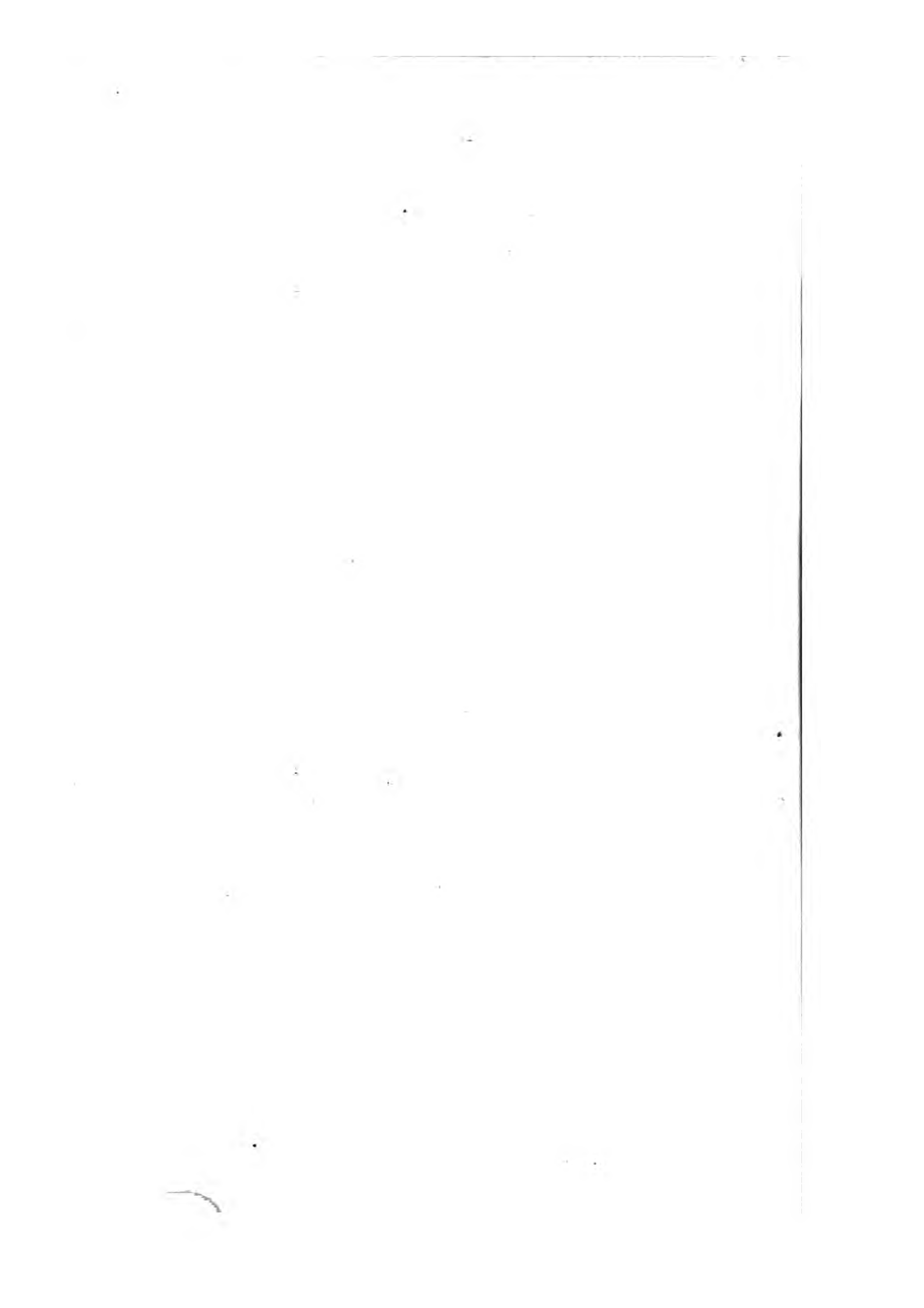
*THE SONG OF THE BELL,
THE GODS OF GREECE
&
OTHER BALLADS
Paraphrased from
SCHILLER*



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THE GODS OF GREECE,
AND
OTHER BALLADS.

PARAPHRASED FROM

SCHILLER

BY

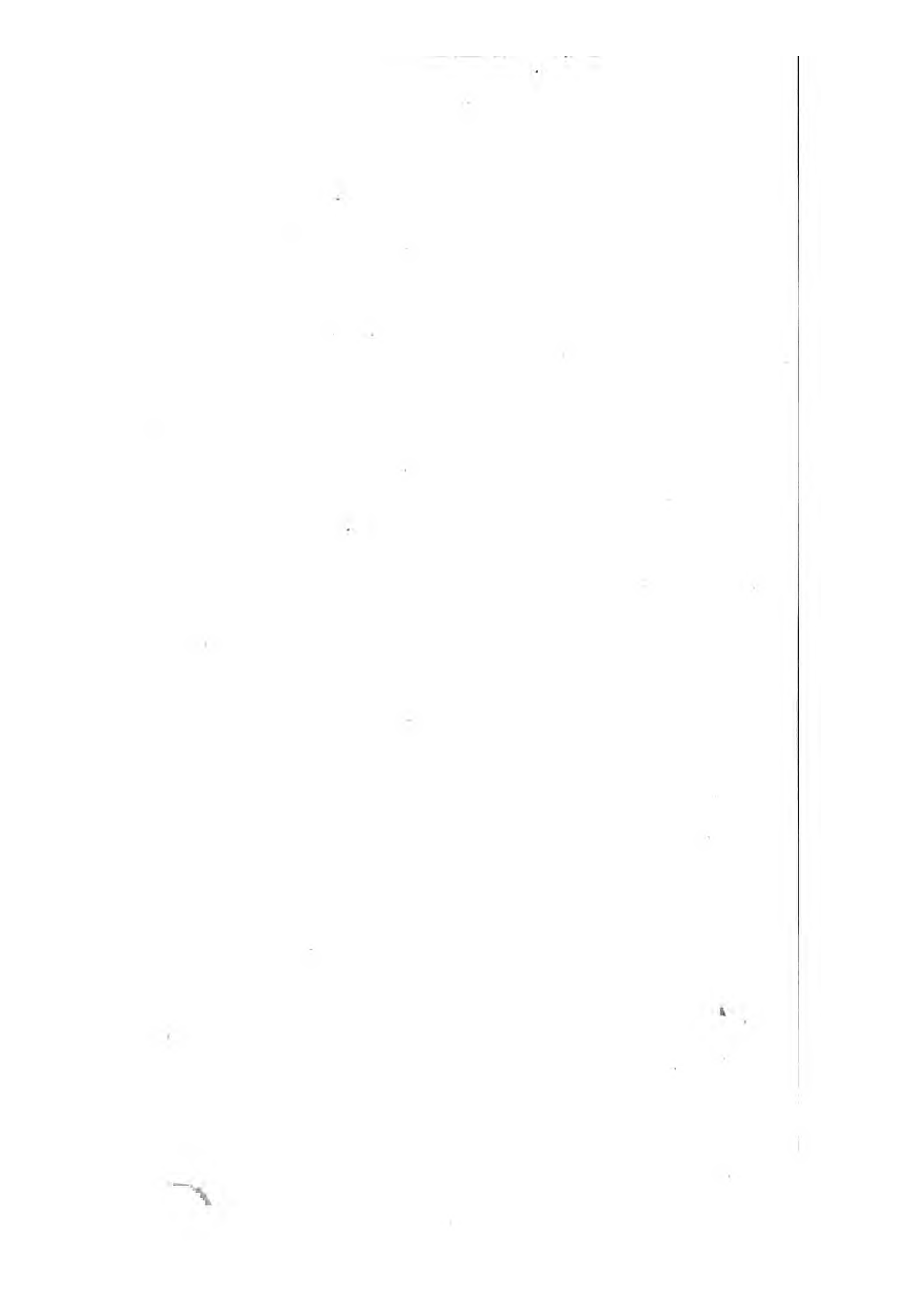
ARTHUR MILLS, M.P.



LONDON:
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1876.

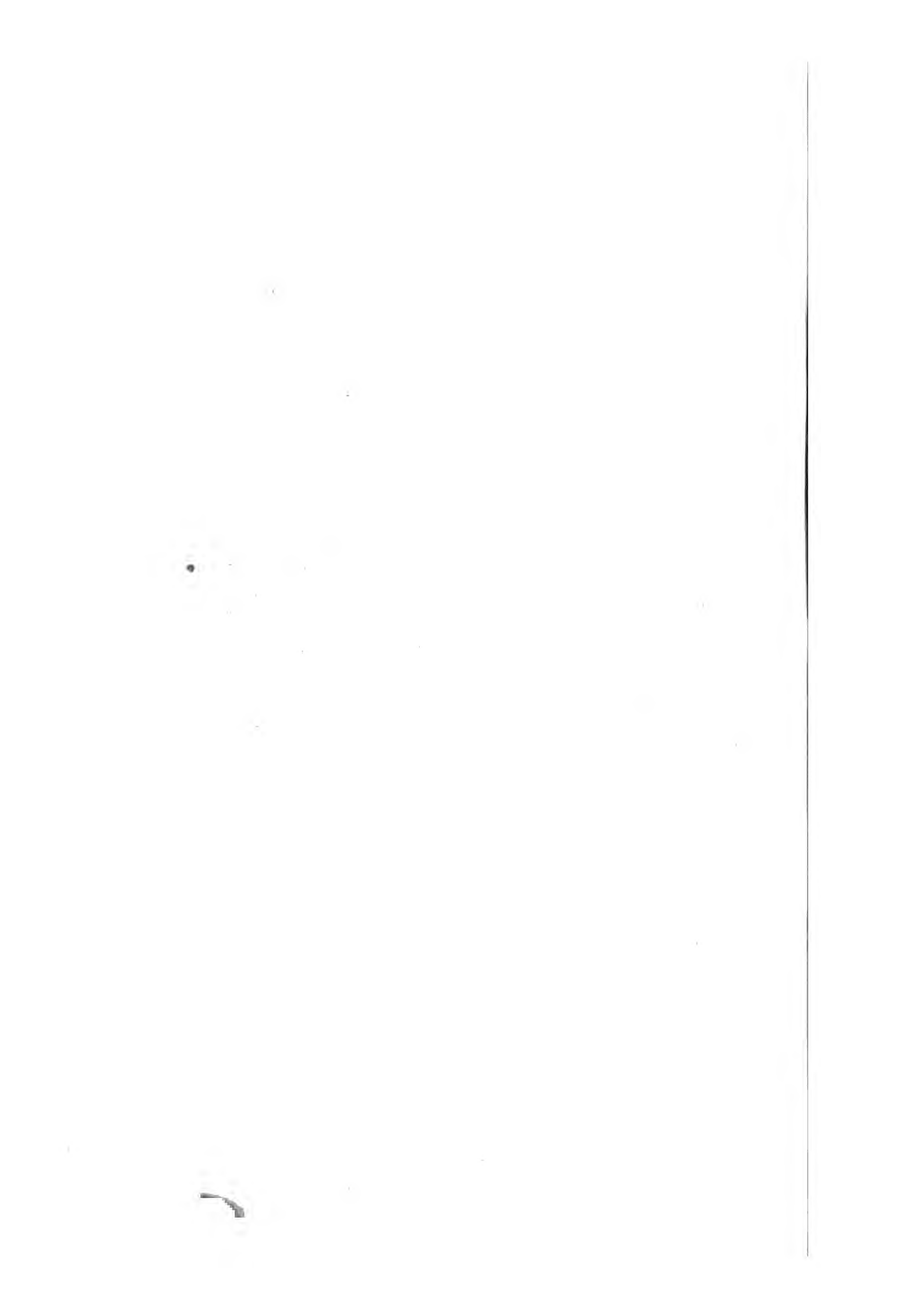
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THE following Paraphrases are simply an attempt to render in English the general meaning of the original Ballads.

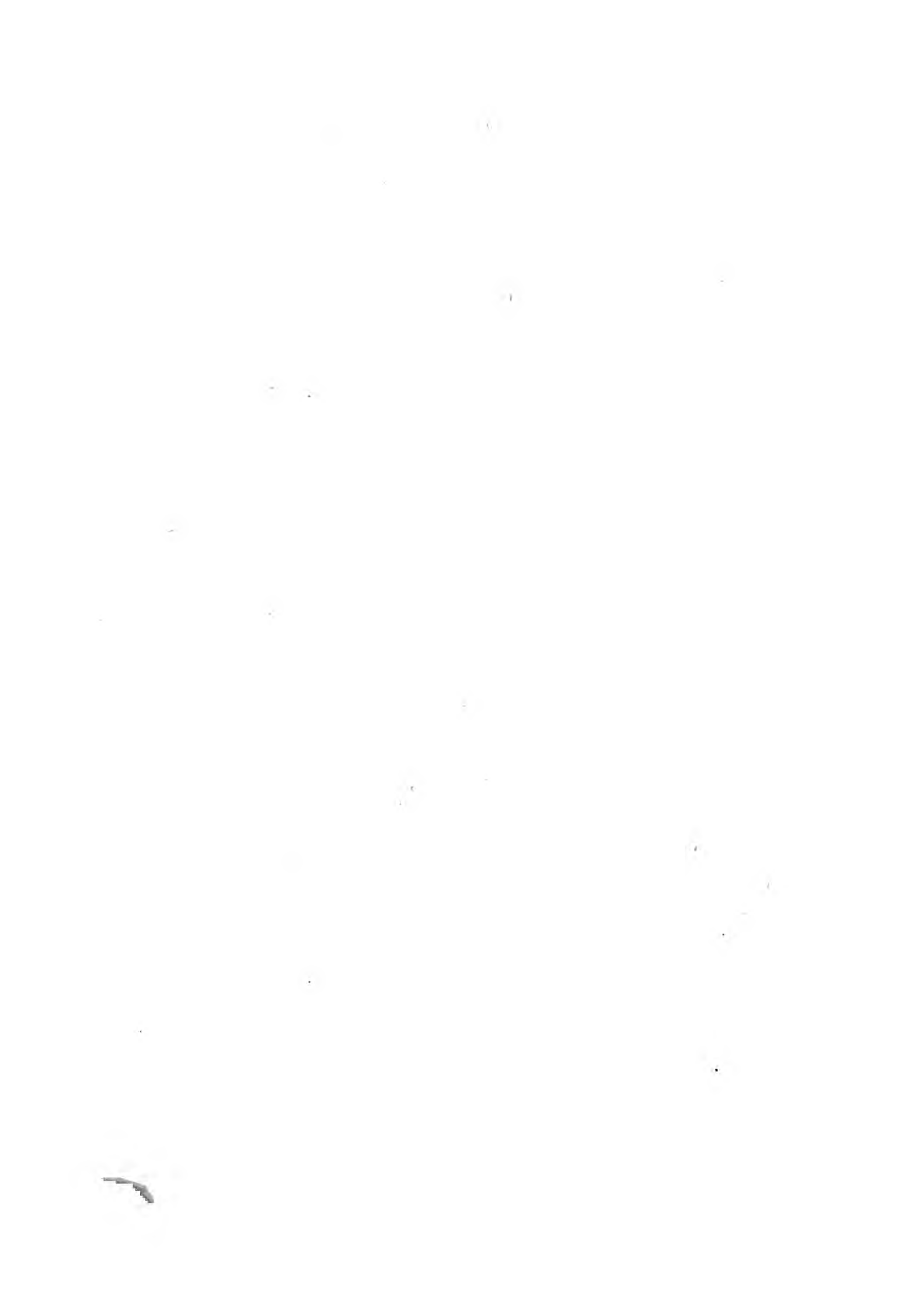
They do not profess to be literal Translations, but are intended to offer to the lovers of these beautiful Poems a metrical English version, which, though not pretending to give throughout the exact words, convey, it is hoped, faithfully the thoughts, of Schiller.

A. M.



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The Song of the Bell.

(Vivos voco—mortuos plango—fulgura frango).

Deep in the soft dark loam
A form is moulded well.
A shapely form—a comely home
For the metal of our Bell.
Haste workmen ! for to-day
Upon each manly brow
The dew of toil must stay,
Till the sun falleth low.
On toilers who their labour love
Descends the blessing from above.

An earnest word becometh well
This earnest work of ours.
Labour is lightened as we tell
How speed the glowing hours.

Feeble our strength at best ; but toil
That springs from thought is blest,
Unlike the wearisome turmoil
Of frivolous unrest.

Happy the son of toil whose hands
Obey his inmost heart's commands.

Feed the fire with pinewood dry,
And melt the metal well,
Through the tall furnace force on high
The flames that fuse our Bell.
Which, when our work is done, our name
Shall from some stately tower
Loudly our toil obscure proclaim,
In days to come, and tell again
Our tale to many a race of men.

With sorrowing hearts our Bell shall mourn,
And to the upper air
Its tones shall rise at eve and morn
To summon men to prayer.

And on the metal crown shall ring
Its echoes far away,
To Fancy's ear its notes shall bring
A changing destiny,
Of storm and sunshine—tears and mirth
To daughters and to sons of earth.

And now the airy bubbles rise
Above the seething tide,
A token sure to workmen wise
Of changes that betide.
The molten mass—now let it blend
With ash and alkali,
So shall the dross impure ascend,
And clear the liquid be.
Wherewith we hope to fashion well,
Our strong and clearly sounding Bell.

For soon with solemn sound of joy
Its loving peal shall greet,
The new-born infant girl or boy
With welcome calm and sweet.

In slumber's arm the baby lies,
And in the womb of Time
Still unrevealed its smiles or sighs,
Its virtue or its crime.

But bright must be Life's golden morn
To child of loving mother born.

Swift as the arrow thro' the air
Life's years speed fast away,
The full-grown boy will proudly dare
From childhood's haunts to stray.
With scrip and staff he wanders far,
Of girlish sports ashamed,
Weary of peace, he yearns for war,
As yet by Life untamed.

Then wearying of the power to roam,
Returns, a stranger to his home.

And there before his dazzled eyes
A Heaven-sent form appears,
Who bids strange longing thoughts arise,
Unknown to earlier years.

A maiden with a bashful mien,
And form as angel fair,
And beauty—not of earth—is seen,
A day-dream of the air.

Charmed by a power ineffable,
The youth resigns him to the spell.

He strays alone—he shuns the sound
Of mirth and revelry—
Where'er he walks he looks around
To seek where she may be :
The idol of his youthful hours
He seeks for offerings meet,
Nature's best gifts and fragrant flowers,
And lays them at her feet.

O worthy of the tenderest rhyme,
All hail first love thy golden prime !

And now my workmen ! haste again,
For see ! the pipes grow brown,
The time for founding cometh when
The glassy flux runs down.

See that the ore which once was hard,
With the soft mingleth well,
And both in unison have shared
In the welding of our Bell.

For in such blending there shall be
An omen sure of harmony.

'Tis thus, when strong and gentle hearts
Are blended each with other,
And both resolved to bear their parts,
And cherish one another.

Then let two souls who would be bound
By links that may endure,
See well that heart to heart is found
In union strong and sure.

For brief the day dream of romance,
And long the night of penitence.

Right joyously the garlands wave
Around the virgin's brow,
For the fair is wedded to the brave,
And the Bell calls us now,

To share that brightest holiday,
Saddened alone to man,
Because it ends life's morning May
Which ne'er shall bloom again.

But when the blossom falls, the tree
With summer fruit shall laden be.

To toil—to plant—and to contrive
Fresh honours to attain,
A struggling busy life to live
For power, or rank, or gain.
Such is the lot of man ! With grain
He fill his barns—his heart
With mad ambition, and doth strain
With heaven-forgetting art,
His nerves to wage in deadly strife,
The battle of his earthly life.

Within his inner home and heart
The gentle housewife reigns,
With spirit of another earth
She sways her mild domains.

The centre of home's holiest joys
With hand and mind and heart,
The mother of his girls and boys
Bears her laborious part.
With busy hand the wheel she plies
That spins the silken thread,
And guards her stores with watchful eyes
In order duly laid.
In polished cupboards may be seen
Her household treasures stored,
The snowy linen white and clean
To grace the festal board.
Unresting in her toil, she brings
Beauty and grace to homeliest things.

Meanwhile the master's cheerful eye
From forth his gabled home,
Doth his far spreading realm survey
And o'er its pastures roam.
And now his heart distends with pride
As he beholds his empire wide.

“ Fast as the earth’s foundations stand
“ The pillars of my power,
“ Beyond the spell of Fate’s weird wand
“ In dark disaster’s hour.”

’Tis thus he boasts—but let him know
No covenant can be
To shield poor mortal man below
From God’s divine decree.

Quick comes the sudden hour of sorrow
To-day are smiles, but tears to-morrow.

And now at last the hour is come
To found our Bell, for now
The metal freed from dross and scum,
With genial heat doth glow.
And this may be our surest sign,
Immerse yon testing wand,
And if the molten metal show,
And on its surface stand.

By this the workman knoweth well,
The hour is come to found our Bell.

Now 'ere ye bid the liquid flow
Forth in its fire-bronzed wave,
Let every knee be bended low,
To Him our strength who gave.
Blest is the power of fire, if man
Guide and control its force,
And the safe channels wisely plan,
That bound its onward course.

For to weak mortal man 'tis given,
To mould the powers of earth and heaven.

But fearful is the power of fire,
When from its fetters free,
It satiates its wild desire
In awful revelry.
Nature's free daughter! Thou dost seem,
The works of man to hate,
And in thy mad delirious dream,
With fury reprobate,
All in thy fiery flood would'st drown,
The corn-field fair—the crowded town.

Forth from the turret's topmost crown
The loud alarm Bell calls,
Tumultuous thousands crowd the town,
And throng its marble halls.

Bright as the glowing light of day,
Glares thro' the night the lurid ray—
The timber cracks, the rafters fall—

I hear the stifled moan
Of infants, and the mother's call,
Mid falling wood and stone.

And the dumb animals in pain
Beneath the ruins lie,
And fast along the living chain
Of hands, the buckets fly.

The high arched fountain surges where
Stand blazing towers in sultry air.

Hopeless the strife for home, for life,
With heaven-sent forces waged,
The giant waves his blood-red knife,
With fury unassuaged.

And bears above the tide of war
And woe his flashing scimitar.

Man yields at last, struck down to earth
Beneath the fiery storm,
And standing on his blasted hearth,
Surveys each shattered form.
And as he gazes on his home,
And on its roofless walls,
And the charred planks and glass-less dome
Above his ruined halls,
 No words of woe his anguish tell,
 But silently he looks farewell.

But, though his wealth and hopes of gain
Are buried all and gone,
His dearest treasures yet remain,
And he is not alone.
For all his loved ones still are there
Unscathed by fire or flame,
And with their loving cheerful air,
And greeting, still the same.
 No missing face, for all the band
 Around the ruined roof-tree stand.

Our Bell hath found its resting place,
The metal fills the mould,
But what shall be its form and grace,
To-morrow shall be told.

Even now the casting, like the seed
Sown in the dark cold earth,
May spring again a flowerless weed,
Devoid of grace or worth.

Then pray we God to prosper well,
The anxious seed-time of our Bell.

Hark! from the land of shadows calls
A sad and solemn knell,
And on the mourner's ear it falls,
The sorrow-telling Bell.

A pilgrim passes to her home
From the joys and woes of time,
And from the minster's sacred dome,
Peals forth the slow, sad, chime ;
It is the wife—the mother dear,
From tender children torn,
Whom to the grave the mourners bear,
With step and mien forlorn.

No more in husband's loving arms
That gentle form shall rest,
Or helpless infant's wild alarms
Be soothed upon her breast.

But motherless the youthful band,
Shall own henceforth a stranger hand.

Now let the boiling metal cool,
And workmen! all take rest,
And holiday, from labour's school,
In slumber calm and blest.

Like birds of air in evening hours,
Reposing in their leafy bowers.

When wanderers thro' the forest drear,
Wend to their cottage home,
The bleating sheep—the broad browed steer,
No more abroad do roam.

And the herd of kine wind lowing,
To their accustomed bourne
And the heavy wagon bowing,
Beneath its load of corn.

The youthful home-bound reaper leaves
The flowery garlands on the sheaves.

And now no sounds of merry feet
Are heard abroad to-night,
Still is the market and the street,
Save where yon festal light
Heralds a wealth of joyous sounds,
Of genial mirth and ease,
That dwell within its friendly bounds,
And tell of joy and peace.

For night speaks not of fear or awe,
To those who love their country's law.

Daughter of Heaven! Thou power divine,
That didst in union bind,
Of law and liberty benign,
The nations of mankind,
And bid the wandering savage learn
The blessings of that band
Which binds the patriots who yearn
For their own Fatherland.

The man who loves his country's laws,
The privilege shall hold,
Of toil and travail in her cause,
More precious far than gold.

Whate'er the Crown doth grant the King,
That shall his toil to toiler bring.

Now break the mould, our task is done,
Let heart and eye delight,
Our battle now is almost won,
Our victory in sight.
But the master hand must break the mould,
Or, even in this bright hour,
The fiery metal uncontrolled
By cunning workman's power,
Might yet with furious recoil
Destroy the fruits of all our toil.

So when the rude relentless force
Of Revolution's wave
Buries the nations in its course,
In an untimely grave,

Woe to the State whose pent up fires
No timely vent can find,
No safety valve for wild desires,
No power their wrath to bind.

And Liberty no more can dwell,
Where mad Seditious sounds her knell.

Freedom for all! We hear them call
Now citizens to arms!
The tocsin sounds—the city hall
Echoes with wild alarms.
And blood-stained bandits range the street,
Hyena-like the maids
With murderers in their orgies meet,
And share their ruthless raids.

Virtue is weak and vice is bold,
Rebellion triumphs uncontrolled.

Peril awaits the fool who braves
The lion in his den,
Fiercely the angry tiger raves
Amid the haunts of men.

But madder in their maddest dreams,
Than all the beasts of prey,
Wild ever-blind Sedition seems,
And fiercer far than they,—

Who at heaven's altar lights his brand
To desolate his Fatherland.

Now God hath given me joy. Behold
From forth its polished shell,
We to the sun-light may unfold
Our bright and beauteous Bell.
Come in! Come in! And form a ring,
My workmen brave and true,
Due honour to the labour bring
That honest hands can do.

And see the shield that shall proclaim,
To future days our labour's fame.

“Concordia”! Thy name shall shine
In letters graven fair,
Thy tones shall chime in notes divine,
Thro' the realms of upper air.

And bordering on the star-world tell
Their tale of holy love,
And with heaven's mighty chorus swell,
The triumph song above.
And thou thy loving voice shalt raise,
To summon men to prayer and praise.

To earnest and eternal things
We consecrate thy chime,
And pray that as the soft swift wings
And changeful play of time
Waft their sweet cadence, they may tell
To every listening ear,
The solemn lesson which our Bell
To thoughtful hearts should bear.

And its softly-fading music say
"All earthly things shall pass away."

Now strain the cords with manly power,
And from the lower earth
Uplift our Bell to yonder tower,
The home of its new birth :

There raised aloft to heaven's high throne,
Now swinging slow with sullen roar,
Now ringing with right joyous tone,
May it proclaim for evermore

“Peace to our homes,” and when we cease
From life, may its last word be “Peace”!

The Gods of Greece.

O! for the Queen of happier days,
When the bright world was young!
O for the garlands and the bays
Around thy brows that hung!
When beauteous beings from the land
Of fable, swayed mankind,
And bound them with the loving band
Thy tender hands entwined.

Goddess of earth's first brightest day,
Fair Venus Amathusia!

Then earth and heaven and sea were wreathed
With song and poetry,
And into soul-less forms was breathed
A love that could not die.
And lifeless nature everywhere
A godlike being claimed to share.

The golden chariot of the sun
By mighty Phœbus driven,
In quiet splendour daily shone
Above the orbs of heaven.

Where now man's unpoetic eye
Sees a mere fire-ball in the sky.

Oreads in yonder height did dwell,
And Dryads in that grove,
The fountain whence yon stream doth well,
A Naiad once did love.

And in each waving laurel tree
Once Daphne writhed in agony.

Silent and sad in that cold stone,
Sat Niobe enshrined,
Where mournful reeds pour'd forth their moan,
Responsive to the wind.

And sorrow-stricken Philomel,
Loved from that grove her tale to tell.

The brook that trickles down the vale
Received Demeter's tear,
The listeners fair Cythera's wail
From yonder tarn might hear.

And in that storm-clad sky we see
The world that mourned Persephone.

The gods descended from on high
To woo Deucalion's race,
Latona's offspring left the sky
Earth's daughters to embrace.

And love in union fair did bind
Heroes and gods and human-kind.

Fastings and fierce austereness then
Fled from the cheerful earth,
When jovial heroes joined with men
In liturgies of mirth.

And mortals worshipped at a shrine
Where beauty only was divine.

Their temples like the stately halls
Of earthly monarchs shone,
The victor's garland graced the walls,
Each altar was a throne.

Through Isthmian course the chariots rang,
Where graces danced and muses sang.

And then with trumpet-shout was raised
On high the thyrsus wand,
The symbol of the throng who praised
The God who cheered the land.

And the twin panthers first advance,
And fawns and satyrs join the dance.

And then no haggard form of death
Haunted the sick man's bed,
With a last kiss the parting breath
From lips unquivering fled.

And even the furies seemed to quail
Moved by the Thracian's deep-souled wail.

In fair Elysium's happy groves
The joyful shadows meet,
And there revive their earthly loves,
There wife and husband greet.

Admetus in Alcestis' arms
Forgets past sorrows and alarms.

Bright were the laurels and the bays
That wreathed the victor's brow,
Who won the prize in ancient days,
More glorious far than now.

When from Olympus light was given
To man who dared the heights of heaven.

O beauteous age! return! return!
O fairy-time of song,
Warm the cold hearts that still would burn,
And fill the souls that long
For god-like forms of other days,
When lifeless nature glowed with praise.

Fable's bright blossoms once so fair
Before the north wind fall
Scathed by cold reason's wintry air,
Behold them withered all.

A thousand gods fall from the throne,
Where One shall henceforth rule alone.

Through the wild woods I call in vain,
And o'er the dark blue sea,
And far into the star-world strain
My sad and aching eye,
To scan the realms of upper air,
Alas! no Deity is there.

Unconscious of the joys she gives,
Unmindful of the glory,
Which gilds the life of all that lives
In old poetic story.

Cold nature yields herself in awe,
To reason's un-romantic law.

In her own darkness self-interred,
She lies to-night in sorrow,
To wait till her own voice be heard
To summon her to-morrow.
 And year and month, and day and hour,
 Obey a stern, relentless power.

Now from this self-ruled, soul-less shore
To the land of poesy,
Their task fulfilled—the Gods once more
In silence pass away,
 And leave a world that hath out-grown
 A fairy sway it once did own.

And with their beauteous forms hath fled
The melody of life,
And hues that once their radiance shed,
On this dark world of strife.
 Now seen no more where mortals throng,
 They glorify the land of song.

Hector's Farewell.

Andromache.

Wilt thou my Hector! then depart
To Orcus' gloomy land,
Falling beneath the deadly dart
Sped from Achilles' hand.

Who then shall teach thy children dear
To fear the Gods and hurl the spear!

Hector.

Wife of my heart! restrain thy tear,
My yearning is for war,
For Pergamus alone I fear,
My country is my care.

I cross the Stygian stream with joy,
To save the Fatherland of Troy.

Andromache.

No more I hear the ringing clang
Of armour in our halls,
Where sounds of Priam's warriors rang,
No welcome echo falls.

The love that linked us soul to soul,
Shall lie where Lethe's waters roll.

Hector.

No! Even in battle's wild array
Oblivion ne'er shall sever
Thy heart from mine: and as to day
It shall be thine for ever.

But see! the foe in arms appears
Gird on my sword and cease from tears.

Ideals.

And art thou faithless fled for ever,
O golden age of Life,
With all thy dreams—thy sunny weather—
Thy joys—thy woes—thy strife.

Are all sped downwards to the sea
Of fathomless eternity?

The joyous suns are pale and shrouded,
That shed their early rays
Upon my path, with doubt unclouded,
In those romantic days.

The bright Ideals of my youth
Have fled before the stern-dark truth.

His tale of old hath oft been told,
Whose earnest warm embrace,
Awoke the marble pale and cold,
To life and love and grace.

That tale was mine, when nature's charms
Glowed in my childhood's loving arms.

Then sang each silver falling stream,
Then bloomed each flower and tree,
And all that soulless now might seem,
Had loving words for me.

Welcome the echo of life's spring,
Responsive to my heart's true ring.

In deed—in word—in heart—in song,
How brightly dawned the world,
That made my childish heart to long
To see its flag unfurled.

How bright the bud! how poor the flower,
That blooms in life's autumnal hour.

Then soared on eager wings upborne,
My soul in visions high,
And grasped, in youth's unclouded morn,
Fair phantoms soon to die,
And roamed in air to regions where
Shines heaven's remotest palest star.

How joyous was that upward flight!
How danced the happy throng,
Of blithe companions ever bright,
That airy track along.

Honour and truth and love and mirth,
All garlanded with flowers of earth.

One brief bright hour they seemed to soar,
And then the pageant faded,
And one by one for evermore
In clouds of darkness shaded.

All vanished from my saddened sight,
My dream had passed—and all was night.

Philosophy can now no more
My thirst for truth assuage,
Dark storms of doubt have clouded o'er
The faith of middle age.

The once prized wreaths of fame are now
Garlands for every vulgar brow.

The springtide of my days is ended,
That un-returning hour
When hope and love are sweetly blended,
To quench affliction's power.

'Tis mine henceforth to thread with care
Life's rugged, darkening, thoroughfare.

And who of all the glittering band
That shared my happier hours,
On my heart's wounds with tender hand,
Still heaven-sent comfort pours ?

Still follows through life's evening gloom,
My faltering footsteps to the tomb ?

Thou who life's every sorrow sharest—
Sweet silent Sympathy!
And lovingly each burden bearest
Of sad humanity.

Healer of every woe and wound,
Thou whom I early sought and found.

And thou sweet Toil! the wedded bride
Of calm consoling love,
Who dost with sorrowing souls abide
A comforter to prove.

And when the angry billows roll
Can'st soothe the tempest of the soul.

One grain of all the myriad sands
That drift on ocean's shore,
Such the poor offering of my hands,
As, labouring hour by hour,
I strike the minutes, days, and years,
From life's long tale of toil and tears.

