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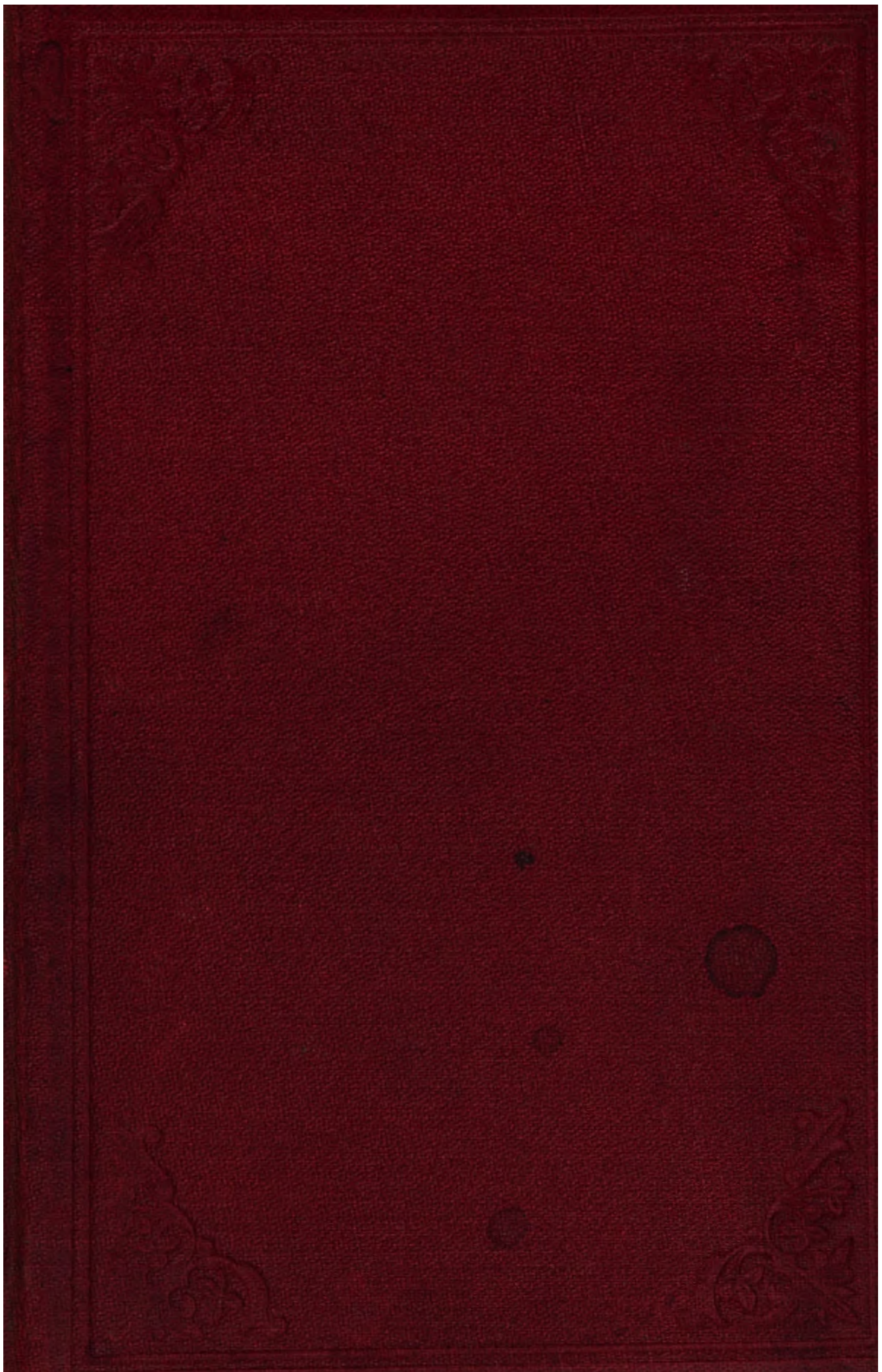
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J. W. Smith

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THOUGHTS AND SKETCHES
IN VERSE.

BY

J O H N H A L L ,

ALIAS "J. H. J."

(FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.)

SHEFFIELD :
PAWSON AND BRAILSFORD, HIGH-STREET AND MULBERRY-STREET.
1877.

DEDICATED TO

My Wife,

THE SHARER OF MY "THOUGHTS"

AND CRITIC OF ALL MY "SKETCHES"

FOR NEARLY QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF HAPPY

COMPANIONSHIP.



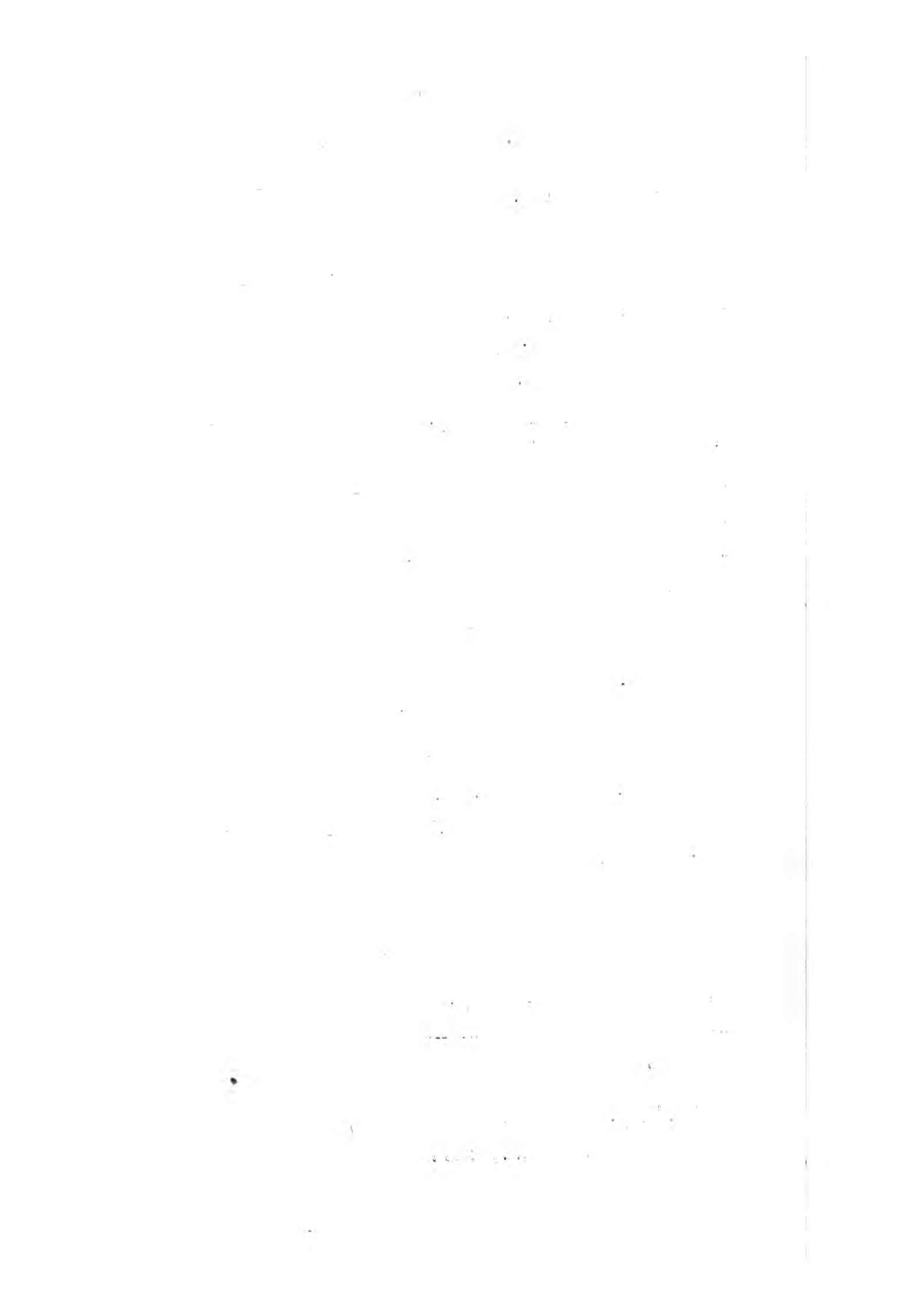
PREFACE.

The following Poems, or, as the title designates, "Thoughts and Sketches in Verse," have been published from time to time in "The Sheffield Telegraph" and other journals and periodicals during a space of nearly thirty years. They are now collected and reprinted for private circulation only, amongst the members of the author's own family, and numerous friends and acquaintances who have been kind enough to express their appreciation of the compositions as they appeared in print. Many of them, as the reader will perceive, have been written on special events, local and historical; also at Christmas, a season that always aroused the poetic element, and impelled the author almost irresistibly to dally with his fickle muse. He trusts, however, that the variety of the mode of treatment will prevent the subject becoming too monotonous.

Should the casual reader of these "Thoughts and Sketches" in future years find pleasure or amusement of any kind, or recall pleasing memories and associations of the past, their rescue from oblivion by publication will not have been altogether in vain.

Norbury, Sheffield,

June 22, 1877.



Sketches in Verse.

BASLOW.

Hail, smiling village of the vale !
Pride of the Peak's wild desert, hail !
No "lodge in the vast wilderness,"
No "Auburn sweet," whose loveliness
Fond poets sing in raptures rare,
Can with thy matchless charms compare !
With what delight do we descry
Thy blue smoke curling to the sky,
As down the moorland's shaggy side,
From the bleak hills above we ride ;
And view thee, like the promised land,
An Eden at our feet expand ;
Whose verdant landscapes spread around,
With beauty and luxuriance crowned,
Where "milk, and wine, and honey flow,"
And all that nature can bestow ;
While peace and plenty, health and ease,
Yield every blessing that can please.

Here, far remote from worldly strife,
The peasant plods his even life,
Contented with the daily good
Of healthy toil and plenteous food,

Employing here his leisure hours
 To cultivate the garden bowers ;
 To train the roses round his door,
 Some passing stranger to allure ;
 Or prune with a fantastic hand
 The trees that round his cottage stand ;
 And thus the day's long labour close,
 To sleep the night in sound repose.

Here, from the town's tumultuous noise,
 The man of trade for refuge flies,
 And seeks amid thy rural calm,
 For all his cares a needful balm—
 A sweet oblivion of all
 The ills that business befall,
 Musing, instead of birds and flowers,
 Of sunny streams or shady bowers.
 Thrice happy he to rest or rove
 By Derwent's banks, or Chatsworth's grove,
 With pliant rod and slender line,
 And tackle treacherously fine,
 His angling skill anon to try ;
 Or, basking in the sunshine, lie
 And watch the deer gregarious stray
 Along the park's untrodden way :
 With pencil, book, or better still,
 A fair companion, at his will
 To read, or sketch, or climb the hill ;
 And happy thus, without alloy,
 Admire—exult—repose—enjoy.

Here, when the bees begin to hum,
And orchards are all white with bloom,
And blackbirds, piping through the air,
The genial time of Spring declare ;
Reminded then of thy dear charms,
The town lets loose its busy swarms,
Who long confined in noisome smoke,
Through dreary Winter's tedious yoke,
Like captive birds escaped, take wing
To sound the first glad notes of Spring :
A motley group, of every age,
From laughing youth to manhood sage—
Merchants, mechanics, men of trade,
Professionals of every grade,
With clerks and shopmen, and their chosen
Wives and sweethearts by the dozen ;
In open britska, shay, or drag,
Or hired gig with doubtful nag,
From Owler's heathered heights they come
To thy sweet vale, Elysium !
To spend the day in harmless joys
Amid thy fairy Paradise—
To breathe thy bracing mountain air,
And feed their lungs with wholesome fare ;
And through a lengthened summer's day
Here pass their joyful holiday.

And here have I, (not less inclined
Than others to relax the mind,)

With chosen friend or party gay,
Whiled happily the hours away—
Those wingèd hours that fly so fast,
But so delightful while they last :
How many have I passed within
That hospitable village inn
Called after Juno's favourite bird
And the proud crest of Rutland's lord !
A snug retreat, that stands alone,
Hard by the park's extended lawn,
Where Flora's fairest gems abound,
And creep the trellised walls around,
Rose, and clematis, and jasmine,
With honeysuckle wreathed between ;—
How oft have I, at early morn,
Inhaled their fragrance, freshly borne
By balmy zephyrs as they flew,
Scatt'ring their perfumes with the dew :
How often loitered on that green,
And gazed upon the glorious scene
That bursts, expansive, on the view—
A landscape of the richest hue ;
Meads, mountains, moorlands, woods, and hills,
With fountains, cataracts, and rills ;
And in the distance, gleaming bright
Beneath the morning's rosy light,
Imperial Chatsworth's palace hall,
With golden lustre crowning all,

In contrast mingling with the bowers
 Her shining walls and glittering towers,
 Like the mild radiance of the sun
 Ere well his rising has begun.

* * * * *

Such are the charms which thou canst boast,
 Fair Baslow!—such thy beauteous host;
 And long as Nature shall dispense
 The bounteous gifts of Providence—
 Long as the trees put on their green,
 And landscapes glow with summer's sheen—
 While rivers murmur as they run,
 And fountains sparkle in the sun,
 And mountain heath and garden bloom
 Their tints perennial resume,
 Thine e'er shall be a chosen seat—
 A fond Arcadian retreat—
 A cherish'd, honour'd, favour'd spot,
 By none who know thee e'er forgot;—
 A land of luxury and ease,
 Of joy and hope, of health and peace!

About 1850.

“THE BRIDGE” AT SCARBOROUGH.

(After Longfellow.)

I stood on the Bridge, at Scarbro'
 When the bells were chiming noon,
 And strains of melodious music
 Came up from the Spa-Saloon.

I watched the rippling motion
Of that ever restless tide,—
Not only the tide of Ocean
But of human life beside.

I saw the gay procession
Pass by me to and fro,
Of wealth, and rank, and fashion,
Of youth and beauty too.

I marked each type of manhood,
Each charm of female grace,
And all the variations
Of feature, form, and face.

I saw the happy children
At play upon the sands,
Wading to snatch the sea-weed,
With feet as bare as hands.

I heard the merry voices
Of bathers in the sea,
And as I watched their gambols
Stray thoughts came over me.

How often! oh, how often,
In the days that have gone by,
Had I stood on that bridge at noon-day
When hopes were young and high—

When gazing upon that Castle,
So rugged, and yet so fair,—
I was building in fervid fancy
Castles my own, in the air!

How often in my childhood
Had I looked upon that sea,
And thought of its depth and distance
With awe and mystery!

And in the time of boyhood—
That hungry time of youth!
When a luncheon of cakes and oysters
Told only one half the truth!

Then came the days of courtship—
Of poetry and love,
And the sentimental nonsense
I talked in yonder grove.

And now I'm called “the Governor”
By a troop of grown-up sons,
And my friends will write me “senior”
Who wrote me “junior” once.

And the girl to whom I whispered
That nonsense years ago—
She is Materfamilias, Uxor—
My lover, and mistress too!

I often have asked the question—
Was I happier as a boy,
With my lollipops, cakes, and oysters,
Than now, in my married joy?

Was youth, and zest, and freedom
Sweeter than wedlock now?
That life has its compensations
Is the only reply I know.

I would that all the thousands
Who have cross'd this bridge to-day
May have cares as light as mine are,
And as soon to pass away.

And, like that tranquil ocean,
That hath borne its share of strife,
May they outlive each commotion,
And every storm of life!

July 18th, 1871.

THE PAUPER ANGLER, *ALIAS* "THE HERMIT."

(Fact, not Fiction.)

Beside an old hovel, form'd out of a cave
In a quarry that lay in the midst of a wood,
Hard by a canal, that did sluggishly lave
The bracken and rushes that margin'd its flood,

I met-an old fisherman baiting his lines—

They were night-lines, he said, for the capture of eels,
 And I saw by his face unmistakable signs
 He had known the privations that poverty feels.

And yet he was cheerful, and smiled with delight
 As he show'd me a potful of worms he had found,
 For they, like the fish, had been scarce till to-night,
 A shower having tempted them up from the ground.

I asked where he dwelt, and how long he'd been here :
 He pointed his hand to the hovel descried,
 And said, " For two months I have been living *there* ;
 Would you like to walk in ? There's a fire inside."

I enter'd the hole, for there was not a door,
 And found myself soon in a dark-looking lair,
 With a rude-fashion'd hearth, and some logs on the floor,
 Which he said formed his sofa, his bed, and his chair.

He showed me his larder—a shelf on the rock,
 On which was a saucepan, a crust, and a cup,
 With a bundle of herbs, which he said was the "stock"
 From which he brew'd liquor, tea, med'cine, and soup.

" Did he live there from choice ? Had he no other home ?"
 Yes, the Workhouse in town was his winter abode ;
 But in summer he left it, preferring to roam,
 And live in the woods by his night-lines and rod.

“Did he live, then, on fish? Were they plentiful here?”

Not they! Oft for days ne'er an eel could he 'tice.
What he *did* catch he managed to sell pretty dear,
Or exchange for a meal—he was not very nice.

“Was he lonely at all?” Now and then in the night,
When he woke in the dark, and his fire had gone out;
Or a wandering fox sometimes gave him a fright,
But a pipe of tobacco soon cleared off his doubt.

He was seventy turn'd, and a cutler by trade;
And wifeless and childless, his life seem'd a blight;
Yet he said he was happy so long as he'd bread—
A dinner of bacon was luxury quite.

How I envied that old man his simple content,
And thought how all wise and all good was His name
Who gives compensation where trials are sent,
And tempers the storm to the newly-shorn lamb!

Would that they who have riches, and honour, and friends,
Learnt a lesson from him, the poor pauper bereft;
And when age comes upon them, and life's summer ends,
Still be thankful and grateful for what there is left!

May 8th, 1869.

THE LITTLE SHOE-BLACK BOY.

I met a little ragged boy,
And dirty, too, was he;
“Clean your boots, sir?” said the rogue,
“They're dirty, sir, like me.”

“ Ay, set to work : though black yourself
You seem a decent boy,
And tell me how it comes to pass
You follow this employ ?”

“ My father, sir, is out of work,
My mother’s ill at home,—
She goes a-washing when she’s well,
But that don’t often come ;
My sister Sue a tripe stall keeps,
And earns a crown a week,—
So I, you see, must do a bit,
Or else we’ve bread to seek.”

“ How many of you are there, then,
That to your home belong ?”
“ There’s seven beside the baby, sir,
And two of these are young.
My sister Poll she stays at home
To nurse the younger two,
And mother is so bad at times
That she wants nursing, too.”

“ You say your father’s out of work—
Now tell the truth, I pray,
Is it that work’s so very scarce,
Or would he rather play ?”

“ Why, sir, I fear the truth is this—
He’s sadly fond of drink,
And when he’s on the spree, you see,
He’ll neither work nor think.”

“ And have you ever been to school,
And can you read or write ?”

“ I went a while on Sundays, sir,
And once or twice at night ;
I learnt to read a bit, and then
When mother took so bad,
I got no decent clothes to wear ;
They pawn'd the few I had.”

“ And how much can you earn a week
In blacking boots and shoes ?”

“ Why, sir, it varies very much,
As luck and weather choose ,
A penny is my reg'lar charge,
To work for that I'm willing,
But when I meet a gent like you
I sometimes get a shilling.”

“ Suppose, now, *I* should give you one,
What with it would you do ?”

“ I'd lend it, sir, to sister Sue,
And she would make it two ;
For Sue, sir, is an honest girl,
And brings home all she earns,
And more the capital she has,
The better her returns.”

I risked the shilling—“ Here my boy,
I'll trust your honest face,
And if deceived, I'll try no more
The signs of truth to trace,”

* * * * *

The only time I ever saw
 That little boy again,
 Was tossing halfpence in a crowd,
 On Sunday, up a lane.

“MY RIVER”—

(THE DERBYSHIRE DERWENT.)

The River I love is a changeable one,
 Like a lovely woman with will of her own,
 Fickle and fair, and inconstant ever,
 Seldom the same two minutes together;
 Yet in all her tempers and moods and ways
 Beautiful always, where'er she strays;
 And though I have follwed her half a life,
 In shade and shine, in storm and strife,
 In all her wanderings up and down,
 Through cowslip meadow or moorland brown,
 I love her as much in my manhood's prime
 As I did in my youthful, gushing time!

Sometimes she will stray like a wayward child,—
 Through rocky glens or woodlands wild,
 Tumbling and foaming with noise and spray
 As though impatient to bound away;—
 Turning a summersault here and there,
 As she leaps down a fall, cascade, or weir;
 And then as she comes to a smoother bed
 Where the rounded pebbles are thickly spread,

Checking her speed and impetuous course,
As she kisses each stone with a gentle force,
And laughs and ripples, and sighs and sings,
As she trifles and toys with a hundred things ;—
Till the pastime o'er and the shallows run—
For awhile she is grave and shy as a nun.

Now in a deep and silent still,
Beside a wooded and sloping hill,
She lingers fondly, and seems to sleep,
While the trees above her a vigil keep ;—
Whose waving boughs and forms of grace
Are mirror'd upon her glassy face,
While joyous birds with continuous strain
Sing over her couch a sweet refrain ;
And wild flowers, clustering thick and rank,
Waft their perfume from bank to bank,
And here and there, in a shady nook,
The angler looks on and baits his hook ;
—This is the mood I love her in best,—
Calm and serene, as a child at rest.

And then sometimes on a summer's day,
As through green meadows she winds her way,
And seems so happy and lazy and still,
(Almost too lazy to turn the mill),
When a thunder-storm breaking overhead
Will rouse her at once from her peaceful bed ;
And then she will suddenly swell with rage,
And on all around fierce war will wage,

And froth and foam and tear along
 Like a furious Amazon swift and strong,
 O'erflowing banks and uprooting trees,
 And whirling their trunks about with ease ;
 Reckless of beauty and joy and life
 In the passionate rage of her sudden strife !

* * * * *

—You ask, do I love her in this wild mood ?
 This roaring torrent and turbid flood ?
 Oh yes—for I know when her temper's o'er
 What a rich reward she will have in store ;
 And soon, as she gently settles down,
 And her foam subsides to an amber brown,
 How the trout will rise to my tempting fly
 When the sun shines forth from to-morrow's sky ;
 And I shall have sport that will much repay
 Many a bad and unlucky day.
 Yes—yes, I love her in every mood,—
My river she is—in calm or flood,
 And when I no longer can cast a fly
 I'll love her for sake of the days gone by !

IN MEMORIAM—JOHN HOLLAND,

*Author of "Sheffield Park, a Poem ;" "Flowers from
 Sheffield Park," "Hopes of Matrimony," &c., &c.
 Died December 28th, 1872, aged 79.*

“ Call it not vain ; they do not err
 Who say that when the Poet dies
 Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
 And celebrates his obsequies ;

Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone
 For the departed bard make moan ;
 That mountains weep in crystal rill,
 That flowers in tears of balm distil —
 Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
 And oaks in deeper groans reply ;
 And rivers teach their rushing wave
 To murmur dirges round his grave.”

* * * * *

Thus sang the minstrel of the North,—
 And shall not Hallamshire break forth
 In grief for her departed son—
 Her bard—and last remaining one—
 Whose muse for half a century long
 Has hymned her praise in ceaseless song—
 Whose harp has never been unstrung,
 Nor once upon the willow hung.
 Ah ! could these native rocks and hills,
 These winding streams and mountain rills,
 Moorlands and woodlands, dells and groves,
 And all the haunts a poet loves—
 With every flower that skirts the way,
 And every bird that trills a lay,
 Give utterance in voice like ours,
 Would they not cry, rocks, woods, and flowers,
 “ Alas, alas ! a friend is gone,
 The dearest, truest, ever known,
 Whose fond affection never changed,
 As oft his wandering footsteps ranged

Our scenes among, through every stage
 From hopeful youth to hoary age ;
 Farewell, farewell, a long farewell,"
 The wail would ring from dell to dell.

* * * * *

Poet of nature ! though thy name
 May never reach immortal fame,
 And of thy townsmen few indeed
 Thy choicest gems will ever read,
 Gems that were valued in their day
 By generations passed away ;
 Yet still of those now left behind,
 That knew thy worth of soul and mind—
 The pure devotion of thy heart
 To science, literature, and art,
 And all things beautiful and good
 In town or country, street or wood ;—
 Thy simple grace, and blameless life,
 Free from the cares of vulgar strife ;
 Thy fervent piety and zeal
 In all that touch'd thy neighbours' weal —
 The very quaintness of thy dress
 In its unstudied carelessness—
 To these at least thy name will be
 A fondly-cherished memory ;
 And as the Christmas time comes round,
 When sweet remembrances abound

(That season which so oft thy muse
 With love has sought to interfuse)
 Amid the gay and festive scene
They e'er will keep that memory green.

CHRISTMAS EVE : A REVERIE.

CHRISTMAS EVE ! Again another—
 Ah ! how quick upon the other ;
 How life's journey hurries on,
 Every stage a shorter one !
 How the distance lessens yearly,
 And the change is marked less clearly,
 While the milestones come so fast,
 Ere we note them, they are past !

“ Sic mutantur et mutamur, ”
 Man, at best, is but a dreamer,
 And the dreams come sometimes true—
 Often false, and never new.

Musing thus, a thoughtful mood in,
 O'er the past and present brooding,
 Back reclining in my chair,
 In my domum's snuggest lair—
 Smoking in contented ease
 My accustomed pipe of peace,
 I sit out the blessed Eve,
 Loth to take my midnight leave ;

Loth to quit the cheerful rays
Of the yule fire still a-blaze,
Breathing forth at every puff
Christian sentiments enough—
Peace, good-will, and charity,
Open hospitality,
Good intentions and resolves
Which the season now involves :
Thinking, ever and anon,
Of the dear ones lately gone
To their cozy-curtained cots,
(Snowy white, with crimson spots),
Sleeping the serene repose
Happy childhood only knows.
Busy have they been to-day
Heralding their holiday ;
Garnishing the Christmas tree
With its gaudy gimcrackry,
Decorating high and low
With the festive mistletoe,
Laurel leaves, and arbor-vita,
Ivy, yew, and laurestina !

Ah ! What would our Christmas be
Unenlivened by their glee ?
With no merry voices ringing
All day long, like birds a-singing ;
With no busy, pattering feet
Telling of some hourly treat,

Snapdragon or raree-show,
Blind-man's-buff, or kissing bough !
Dull indeed would be the meal
That did not those forms reveal ;
Happy forms and happy faces
Radiant with a thousand graces—
Youth, and health, and appetite,
Spirits buoyant with delight.
But, alas ! one tiny chair,
Vacant in the corner there,
Tells of one that's gone before,
And will fill it never more !
Ah ! methinks I see him now
With his alabaster brow,
Ruddy cheeks and golden hair,
Rounded limbs, so plump and fair,
As he sat upon my knee
Toying with my watch and key ;
Or as I last saw him, lying
In his mother's arms a-dying,
Gasping out his tender life
In an agony of strife !
Drop the curtain, draw the veil :
What will retrospect avail ?
He is gone, and we are left ;
He is happy, we bereft.
He has miss'd a world of pain
An angel's paradise to gain !

Hark ! the midnight chimes are ringing,
And the choristers are singing,
Bidding Christians to awake,
And for Christ their Saviour's sake,
To salute the blessed morn
When in Bethlehem He was born.
Ah ! what music so sublime
As that quaint old-fashioned rhyme,
Bursting in seraphic strains
O'er the dark and silent plains,
Telling us of days gone by
When to hear was ecstasy ;
And to listen—half asleep—
Wond'ring whence the echoes sweep
(While the rosy-vision'd dreams
Linger'd yet in golden gleams)
Was a rapture and a joy
Only known to girl or boy !
Still the music gives us pleasure,
And our spirits in a measure
Feel the influence of its power
At this solemn midnight hour.
Others, too, will hear its strain,
Some with gladness, some with pain ;
Some in mansions fill'd with mirth,
Where the revel still holds forth ;
Some in hovels cold and squalid,
Grim with want—with sickness pallid ;

Some on beds of downiest feather,
Some in rags scarce held together—
Crouch'd in doorways, glad to find
Passing shelter from the wind ;
Some with dear relations round them,
Others 'reft of all that bound them
Unto earth ! of husbands, sons,
Fathers, brothers, cherish'd ones,—
Weeping for the untimely dead,
Whose hard toil supplied their bread,—
Hurried off, without a warning,
As upon that fearful morning
When in Edmunds' fiery Main
Fifty at a stroke were slain !

Let us, then, to whom kind Heaven
Hath the better portion given,
Think of those who only know
Sorrow, suffering, and woe,
And as far as we are able
Help the poor man's scanty table ;
Cheer the widow's aching heart,
And espouse the orphan's part ;
Lend our sympathetic aid
To distress of every grade.

Midnight past ! 'tis Christmas morning,
And the fire, now dimly burning,

Warns me it is time at least
Christians should retire to rest,
Ere they join the salutation
Of this day's great jubilation.

So I'll bid the world adieu
For a fleeting hour or two,
And in dreamland wander back
Through each well-remembered track,
Where, in sunshine and in shade,
Once my boyish footsteps stray'd.

Lock the door—“ put out the light—”
Dearest friends, good night, good night !

Christmas, 1861.

“ OLD BUTCHER.”

(A Derbyshire Character; the “ Walton” of the Peak).

Old Butcher is young : though he's nigh fourscore
He can tramp twelve miles across a moor ;
He can fish all day and wade up stream,
And at night as fresh as the morning seem.

Old Butcher is young ; he can make a fly
With as steady a hand and as sure an eye
As though he were still in manhood's prime,
And never had known the ravage of time.

He will drink his glass, and despoil a dish,
With an appetite keen as any fish
That ever took grub from his baited hook
When hunger its victim overtook.

He can spin a yarn, or a sermon preach,
Or on special occasions spout a speech ;
He can fast or feast, like a monk of old,
Though he likes the latter much best, I'm told.

In the summer time when the days are long,
He will rise with the lark at her matin song ;
But never a day's too long for him
When wetting his line by the river's brim.

Yet on winter nights, when the weather's cold,
And fuel and victuals as scarce as gold,
He will dress his flies in his moorland cot,
And live on potatoes, and murmur not.

He knows each pool of the streams about,
And every stone that conceals a trout ;
Some say that he knows all the fish as well,
Both where they were born and where they dwell.

To those who have wander'd in Baslow's vale,
Through Chatsworth's meadows and Darley Dale,
Or skirted the banks of the silvery Wye,
Where Haddon's grey towers rise steep and high ;

Or straying westward by Calver's weir
 To Hathersage, Hope, or Edale fair,
 Where the Noe and the Derwent wind at will,
 Beneath the shadow of great Win-Hill ;

His form and garb will familiar seem
 As the guardian deity of the stream,
 With his oval face and his grizzly locks,
 And his smile like that—of a sly old fox.

His vocation is, to instruct the young
 Noviciates how the fly is flung ;
 To rig their tackle and range their flies,
 And show them where to obtain a rise.

Long may he live to pursue his art,
 For few are there left to succeed his part ;
 And when he is gone let his epitaph be—
 “ Here lies George Butcher ; rare fisherman he ! ”

January 21, 1875.

THE STREET SINGER.

(Fact, not Fiction).

The east wind blew a bitter blast,
 The night was dark and wet ;
 The driving sleet fell thick and fast,
 And every one you met
 Hurried along the dreary street,
 Too glad to reach a safe retreat.

I heard a voice—a woman's voice,
More shrill than sweet, I own,
Shrieking a ditty that for noise
Surpass'd all I had known ;
And then I heard *another* wail,
A child's, that told a sadder tale.

I hastened on, and soon beheld
A woman ragg'd and red,
And in her brawny arms she held
A boy that seem'd half dead,
Shivering beneath the icy sleet
That numb'd his little hands and feet.

I ask'd her if it was indeed
A stern necessity
To take a child like that to plead
Her tale of poverty ;
He could not help to sing—so why
Expose *him* thus ; except to die !

“ He'll soon come round ; he's oft a fit
Of crying just at first ;
The cold, you see, has nipt his feet ;
We'd go, sir, if we durst,
But till we've got enough to pay
Our lodging we are forc'd to stay.”

“ Here, follow me ; I cannot bear
A child like this be found
Starving to death in open air
With shelter all around.”
I led them to a neighbouring inn,
And order'd food and fire within.

I told the landlord to provide
Some supper for the two,
And most of all a warm fireside ;
I left them money too.
The woman thank'd me o'er and o'er,
And said that night she'd sing no more.

I left them and pursu'd my way,
Brooding on human woe,
And all the miseries that lay
Around, where'er we go ;
And as I closed my office door,
Thank'd God He had not made *me* poor.

I scarce had been in half an hour,
When, hark ! that voice again
Broke forth with double-treble power
Its agonizing strain !
Shriller than ever—like the scream
Of tortured engine venting steam !

Again I turnèd to the spot—
“ Woman, pray how is this ?
Why has your promise been forgot
So soon ; is aught amiss ? ”
“ We're working home, Sir—there's no harm ;
The boy, you see, has now got warm ! ”

Next morning, passing by the inn,
I just looked in to know
How far'd my guests last night within—
Were they well serv'd, and how ?
The landlord answer'd with a grin,
“ Yes, Sir—they took it all in gin ! ”

THE FISHERMAN'S SONG.

*Dedicated to Mr. John Wreaks, "The Crown,"
Scotland-street, and the Members of his famous
Angling Club.*

TUNE: "The Song of the Shirt," (if it has a tune), or with
a little musical licence, "Begone, dull care."

In sunshine, storm, and rain,
In heat, and cold, and wind,
From the dawn of the day to the dusk of the night,
The fishermen you will find ;
Fish ! fish ! fish !

With hearts that never grow sick,
And hopes as light as the floats we watch,
Though deferred from week to week.

Fish ! fish ! fish !
With maggot and worm and grub,
Or anything else that a fish will bite
From a minnow to a chub ;
Talk of the patience of Job,
I question very much
Whether he ever sat on a bank all day
Without a nibble or touch.

Oh, "Sweet is the breath of morn,
When at five o'clock we rise,
To trudge with our traps through the silent streets
On our fishing enterprise ;

But sweeter still is the whiff
Of our morning pipe's first fume,
As it curls from the bowl of our two-inch clay,
The sweetest of all perfume !

Fish ! fish ! fish !
The noontide heat all through,
If the fish won't bite, the horseflies will,
And gnats and midges too ;
And now and then we bite ourselves
At the baits our wives did pack us,
And wet *our* line, from the throat to the spine,
With the liquids that ne'er lack us !

Oh, ye who scoff and sneer,
And think it a senseless thing
To sit the whole day like I won't say what,
At the end of a stick and a string ;
Little know ye of the joys sublime,
The ecstacies that lie
In watching the trill of our cork or quill,
When a nibbling fish goes by.

Fish ! fish ! fish !
Oft fifty in a row,
For we have a famous Angling Club,
As all the world doth know ;
And we do fish for a double dish,
Assured that if we catch
A pound of gudgeon, perch, or eel,
We win a prize to match.

And lest our zeal grow slack
The fishing days between,
We freshen it up with a weekly cup
And supper at our inn ;
And there we catch our fish again
In a free and easy flow,
And throw a longer line by far
Than ever we did in our finny war,
And draw a longer bow !

In sunshine, storm, and rain ;
In heat and cold, and wind,
From the dawn of the day to the dusk of the night,
The fishermen you will find,
Fish ! fish ! fish !

With hearts that never grow sick,
And hopes as light as the floats we watch,
Though deferred from week to week !

THE OLD HOUSE AT HOME.

There was lightness, there was brightness,
In the dear old house at home,
And the Christmas sun smiled gladly on
Each holly-garnish'd room ;
There were busy footsteps tripping
In hospitable throng ;
There were merry voices ringing
With laughter and with song ;

There were brothers, there were sisters,
 And a venerable sire,
 Whose kindling eyes beam'd welcome
 With a soft and tender fire ;
 And the Christmas dinner prosper'd
 With unalloy'd success,
 And the day was all too short by half
 For so much happiness !

* * * * *

There was sadness, and no gladness,
 In the dear old house at home,
 And the Christmas morn came greyly in
 With a cold and cheerless gloom ;
 No guests were there—no banquet,—
 No smiles to cheer the day ;
 But every eye was moisten'd
 With tears that would not stay ;
 And stealthy footsteps trod the stairs,
 And voices whisper'd low,
 And anxiously they ask'd the news
 They only fear'd to know !
 And so the Christmas-day wore on,
 Ah, wearily and slow,—
 A day to be remember'd long,
 Of bitterness and woe !

* * * * *

Desolation,—desecration,
 Now reign around the place,

And the dear old house no longer
 Has welcome on its face ;
 The rude hands of the stranger
 Its beauty hath effac'd,
 And road and railway ruthlessly
 Its sure destruction haste ;
 The voice of him that greeted us
 Can greet us there no more,
 And the eyes are closed for ever
 That beam'd on us before ;
 And Christmas sheds a cold, cold look
 On that deserted shrine ;
 And I pass it with a sigh now,—
 The home no longer mine !

Christmas, 1868.

THE MIDNIGHT FLOOD.

Referring to the bursting of the Bradfield Reservoir, which occurred March 11, 1864, by which 250 lives, and more than a quarter million of property were destroyed.

Twas midnight ; and hamlet, and village, and town
 Were resting in peace from the toils of the day,
 And each weary cotter had laid himself down
 Secure, in his fancy, from every prey.
 And there lay his little ones, mother and all,
 Sleeping the sleep only innocence knows,
 Dreaming of pleasures that childhood befall :
 Of games left unfinished at yesterday's close.

Ah ! little reck'd they of the wind as it raved
And roar'd at the casement and batter'd the door ;
Full many a storm their snug cottage had braved,
And oft in the night they had heard it before.

The cattle were hous'd, and in stable and stall
Lay stretch'd the live products of many a farm ;
And they, like their masters, were slumbering, all
Unconscious of danger—unused to alarm.

But hark ! What is that ? Something more than the rave
Of the hurricane-blast as it sweeps down the moor,
Something more than the rush of the rain-swollen wave
Of the mountain-stream rolling its course at the door !

Is it thunder ? or earthquake ? that ominous sound !
Now startling the slumberer's terrified ear,
Growing louder and louder, and " hissing " around,
Till the stout-hearted quail with an ill-defined fear !

No time for reflection ;—before they can think,
The deluge is on them—around them—within
The doors of their cottages, up to the brink
Of the beds that they lie on ;—with horrible din,

Like the crash of artillery,—homestead and cot,
And all that belong them are swept by the flood,
Till scarcely a vestige remains of the spot
To show the old landmark and point where it stood !

And then rose the shriek and wild cry of despair
Of women in agony, clasping their young !
And panic-struck men, e'er they murmur'd a prayer,
Borne, helpless to save, the fierce waters along !

In vain are their struggles—the merciless foe
Spares father, nor mother, nor children, nor wife :
But one and another, it drags them below,
Till scarcely a witness is left of the strife !

But here and there one, like a mariner wreck'd,
Is seen at the dawn of that terrible morn,
Still clinging for life to some gable erect
That had stood out the torrent—a ruin forlorn !

Oh God ! 'twas a sight causing angels to sigh
As they gazed on that ghastly and desolate scene,
Which daylight revealed to the awe-stricken eye,
Where death and destruction so lately had been !

The hamlet—the village—the populous town—
So busy, so peaceful, till yesterday night,—
Now wild as a desert, with ruins o'erthrown,
A bleak, howling wilderness, shunning the light !

Is it God's work, or man's, this calamity dire ?
We wait for the answer ; but stay not our hand
To give and to help, with a longing desire
To mitigate horror we could not withstand !

March 18, 1864.

THE MIDNIGHT MAIL.

Through the darkness and the downpour
Of the black and stormy night ;
Through the blinding and the driving
Of the tempest in its might ;
Over viaducts and bridges,
And embankments' giddy ridges ;
Over hideous abysses
Where the foaming torrent hisses ;
Into tunnels madly plunging,
Rattling, shrieking, roaring, lunging,
Like a demon of the gale—
Onward flies the midnight mail !

Past the lonely country station
Shivering beneath the shock,
Where the pointsman's gibbet signal
Does its spectral arms unlock ;
Past lone hamlets without number,
Buried deep in peaceful slumber ;
Past the populated town
With its gaslit suburbs strewn ;
And then over field and meadow,
Through the forest's deepest shadow,
And across the darkling river
Where the dark waves dimly quiver—
Through the hill and o'er the dale—
Onward speeds the midnight mail !

Onward, onward—'spite the darkness—
Wind and rain and fog despite—
What cares it for storm and tempest,
Laden with its precious freight?
Passengers of every station,
Every country and vocation,
Noble, simple, gentle, poor,—
Statesman, lawyer, bishop, boor,
High-born dame and lowly maiden,
Tourist, traveller, and tradesman;
All in cushion'd ease reposing,
Sleeping tranquilly or dozing
As though couch'd on beds of feather,
Roof'd and hous'd from wind and weather,
Little heeding, little caring,
Though the train is madly tearing
Through a hundred perils' power
Forty miles at least an hour!

Ah, what treasure, trouble, pleasure
In that mail-van flies along—
News of gladness, and of sadness—
Right to some, to others wrong!
Onward speed, then! Heaven guard it,
Let not storm or night retard it;
For a thousand eyes now sleeping
Wait the secrets in its keeping,
And the postman's ring to-morrow
Will to them bring joy or sorrow;

But should aught of ill betide it
 And the precious freight inside it,
 Ah! what wail of consternation
 Would be heard throughout the nation—
 What bright homes would cease to gladden,
 What light hearts would quickly sadden
 As was read the startling tale—
 “Accident to midnight mail!”

March 14, 1873.

ALBERT MORTUUS.

Not in the mellow autumn of ripe age,
 With harvest honours garner'd at his feet,—
 Not at the close of life's accomplished stage,
 The journey ended, and the work complete,
 But in the midsummer of his career—
 The bright meridian of manhood's prime—
 He fell amongst us, stricken like a deer
 By hand invisible—before his time;
 Leaving a nation, stagger'd at the blow,
 To mourn, aghast, the noble work undone;—
 Mingling its tears in sympathetic flow
 With widow'd royalty, on yonder throne;
 Whilst every lip that ever lisp'd a prayer
 Invokes the King of kings' protection *there!*

Dec. 23, 1861.

CLASSICAL CAROLS.

*(Dedicated to David Parkes, Esq., after a lecture from him
on the Hallamshire Dialect.)*

No. 1.—CHAUCERIAN HALLAMSHIRE.

Betty, mo lass, it's Christmas-eve,
To-morrow's Christmas-day,
And thee and me mun mak believe,
To hev a holiday.

It's true we've had enough of late—
Six weeks wi' nowt to do;
And holiday's a sorry mate
When there's no wage to draw.

It's true we've ne'er a drop o' beer,
To mak our hearts grow merry;
But t' watter's sweet, and 'tap is near,
And tay's refreshing, very.

We've nother turkey, gam, nor goose,
And scarce a pike o' meit;
But, thank the Lord, we've hunger sauce
To flavour what we eit!

We've health and strength, and though we're poor,
We've childer, good as gowd;
They'll never see us want, o'm sure,
Nah we are getting owd.

There's Jimmy coming hoam to-neet,
And Moll fust thing i't morn ;
Yo'll see, wes't raise a pudding yet,
Sure as them two were born !

For, though their wages are but small—
Not quoite a craan a-piece—
Bless 'em, they bring us nearly all,
To do wi' as we please !

It's true there's not a lump o' coil
On t'arston fire to blaze ;
But there's some sleek and smudge i't hoile,
Thank God, a *reek* we'll raise.

And hev'n't oi t' sweetest little woif
As ivver cutler wed ;
God bless her ! long as shoo has loif
Oi'll nivver wish me dead.

We've had some struggles in ar time,
And toil'd and moil'd together,
Up hill and dahn—in weet an fine,
And every kind o' weather.

And bravely, lass, tha's borne thy share,
For better and for worse ;
And leeten'd me o' many a care
That might hev been my curse.

A kiss, mo lass, this blessed eve,
 Beneath the sprig o' holly ;
 Whoile tha art by my side, believe,
 Oi'll ne'er be melancholy !

Oi'll share my Christmas crust wi' thee,
 And thank the Lord for that ;
 And ne'er a murmur come from me
 Whoile tha art still my mate !

CLASSICAL CAROLS.

No. 2.—TENNYSONIAN HALLAMSHIRE.

Fill up the glass ; pass on the wine ;
 This day our hearts should ne'er be sad, —
 Of all the year they should be glad ;
 Fill up the glass ; pass on the wine !

This ruby port of vintage fame
 Is from the store our sires secured ;
 While they have slept, it has matured,
 We drink it “ in memoriam.”

Yet not to Bacchus will we drink,
 Nor pledge the toast in drunken noise ;
 Not in the Wassail be our joys,
 But let our mirth with wisdom link.

'Tis meet that we should merry be,
'Tis right that we should drink the toast,
"The living loved," "The loved and lost,"
Yet not in thoughtless revelry.

These Christmas days that come their round,
So quickly now, and year by year,
Quicker and quicker still appear—
Bring thoughts that need not to be drowned—

Thoughts that embrace the widest range
Of childhood, boyhood, youth, and age,
The length of life's long pilgrimage,
Through every turn and every change.

And sweet it is, in table talk,
Those bygone seasons to recall,
And "keep the memory green" of all
Who shared with us life's early walk :

Those dear companions of the past,
So cherish'd once—now half forgot,
Their jokes, their tales remembered not,
Their very features waning fast !

And so, full soon, 'twill be with us,
When we, like them, shall pass away ;
And those dear children now at play
Shall talk, and moralize on us.

Ah! little do they think or care,
 How soon those future days will come
 When they will muse on friends and home,
 And joys they never more will share.

Fill up the glass! one bumper more,
 We'll drink it, too, with three times three,
 "Our children, and our heirs to be;"
 God bless them! now and evermore!

Christmas, 1869.

TO NOVEMBER.—ON ITS DEPARTURE.

Oh wretched month! Oh season of despair!
 Of dismal doubts, and dull, desponding care;—
 Of green-eyed melancholy—madness—mumps,
 Coughs, asthmas, colds, sore throats, and aching stumps;
 Dyspepsia—hypochondria—and all
 The morbid miseries that man befall;
 Sunless and flowerless, desolate and damp,
 Thy dews a drizzle, and thy fields a swamp;
 Thy forests leafless, and thy landscapes bare,
 Thy sky a fog—impervious everywhere;
 Farewell—a long farewell—thou dreary month!
 My nerves abhor thee—as my body shunn'th!

* * * * *

How have I 'scaped thy horrors—how surviv'd
 Thy muggy days, and weary nights, yet liv'd?
 Surely it was the memory of the past,
 And hopes of better days to come at last,—

The pleasant thoughts of summer days gone by,
Of daisied turf, bright suns, and cloudless sky—
Of gardens spangled with a thousand flowers,
Of full-leaf'd trees, and blossom-weighted bowers ;
Of gentle zephyrs, wafting fragrant smells
From clover meadows, and from cowslip dells ;
Of winding streams, and sylvan solitudes,
Sequester'd lanes, where seldom man intrudes ;
Of birds and bees, and the delightful hum
Of happy insect life, no longer dumb !

These are the thoughts that keep me still alive,
And cheer my heart, when oft despair would drive
My soul to madness : so, foul fiend, avaunt !
Ye blue dyspeptic devils, cease to haunt
My dull, disorder'd brain ! Come heavenly hope,
And to my fancy give a wider scope ;
And though I may not look for spring-time yet—
Woo the soft breeze, or cull the violet,—
Though weeks and months of winter still remain,
Let me regard them in a livelier vein ;
Not as thy squalid offspring, O November !
But the blythe sons and daughters of December ;—
Crisp, sparkling morns, bright noons, and frosty nights,
O'er which a million stars diffuse their lights ;
Transparent skies—invigorating air,
Nature's best tonic—antidote of care ;
With merry Christmas knocking at the door,
To cheer and bless us in a few weeks more ;

Restoring genial gladness to our hearth,
 And to our hearts a long-forgotten mirth ;
 Dispelling all remembrance of the past,
 The clouds and darkness o'er November cast :
 The gloomy fears—the misery and mud—
 The unstrung nerves,—the ill-condition'd blood,—
 Giving new life—new spirits—new desires—
 Enkindling once again the nigh-quenched fires.
 Oh, pleasing thought ! delightful hope remain !
 My spleen is o'er—“Richard's himself again !”

Nov. 29th, 1860.

FAREWELL, OLD YEAR !

Farewell, Old Year !—and yet thou art not old ;
 It seems but yesterday since thou wert born,
 When merry bells thy welcome advent told,
 And kindly greetings heralded thy morn ;
 Yet thou hast run thy full appointed course ;
 Fulfill'd thy destiny for woe or weal ;
 Brought millions forth, for better or for worse ;
 And millions launch'd into the “land of leal.”
 And now we let thee go with scarce a tear—
 A little sadness perhaps on thy last day—
 And then the sigh is chang'd into a cheer :
 “Ring out the old, ring in the new,” we say ;
 So 'twill be said of us when we are gone—
 Our end accomplish'd, and our duties done.

LORD BYRON.

*A slight continuation of "Don Juan's" Description
of "Don Jose."*

He was an Angel and a Fiend combin'd,
 Who soared to Heav'n, or grovell'd in the earth ;
 A brute in passion, and a God in mind—
 A Poet and a Profligate from birth,
 Who, when his nobler impulses inclin'd,
 Could from his muse such heav'nly strains give forth
 As ne'er before the hearts of mortals stirr'd,
 Or from Parnassus' lofty heights were heard !

Yet he could do the meanest things of life,
 And while he sang of heroes' magnanimity
 Could throw a moral dagger at his wife,
 And at her tortures laugh with equanimity :
 With all things pure and virtuous at strife,
 Like a lost spirit—in his deep malignity,
 Wielding the wondrous weapon of his pen
 To scatter poison in the minds of men !

Oh ! he was vicious—and seem'd proud of it—
 To wrong a woman was his soul's delight,
 ' Specially if the world spoke loud of it
 And made him out a Pluto in his might ;
 In all his writings you will see a crowd of it—
 Vice everywhere—in colours flaunting bright ;
 Such was Don José—devil and divine—
 Seducer—scoffer—poet—libertine !

Will you not say, as you survey the picture,
 " Oh, what a noble work is here undone ?"
 A child of Genius, such a sorry mixture—
 A son of Fame sold to the Evil One—
 A marble statue, fallen from its fixture,
 And tumbling in the dirt, with clay and stone !
 It is a sight to make the angels weep :
 Draw now the curtain ; let the subject sleep !

Sept. 14, 1869.

A CONVERSAZIONE OF THE LITERARY
 AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Oh ye, who sip the sacred rill
 Of wisdom and sobriety,
 Who sup on science, or a grill
 Of flints and fossils, at the Phil-
 Osophical Society !

What pleasant meetings have ye still,
 Ye literary moiety !
 What conversaciones fill
 Your learned leisure at the Phil-
 Osophical Society !

How many hours of intel-
 Lectual variety,
 I've passed among ye at the drill
 Ye yearly give us at the Phil-
 Osophical Society !

Oh, sweet reunions of the dil-
Ettantes of not'riety !
Such "Noctes" knew I not, until
I was a member of the Phil-
Osophical Society !

And sweet the converse of those thril-
Ling daughters of propriety,
Who talk of acids, salts, and sil-
Ica, and words that make you chill
From lips less fair, than at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

In art or science, what you will,
You'll find all contrariety,—
Breech-loading guns, and missals il-
Luminated by the quill
Of monks of old—seen at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

Oh, such a never-failing bill-
Of-fare, for sages' joyety ;
Old Wedgewood ware, and shot and shell,
And 'scopes of every kind, to tell
Life's mysteries—all at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

And curiosities of steel,
Of parchment, and of piety,—
Of ancient manuscripts on vel-
Lum, books so queer, they make you feel
You've much to learn yet, at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

To you, dear J., and C., and W—ll,*
 Philosophers of high degree ;
 A thousand thanks for all your zeal,
 Your courtesy, and kind good will,
 In cat'ring for us at the Phil-
 Osophical Society !

February 1, 1867.

THE DEATH OF HAVELOCK.

Weep for the brave—the bravest of the brave !
 Let Britain weep, and India o'er his grave
 Weave the sad chaplet, plant the sacred tree,
 And raise the shrine to hallow'd memory !
 Oh, Havelock ! 'twas a glorious thing to die
 After a work like thine ; to hear the cry
 Of succour'd captives, rescued from despair,
 Pouring to God and thee their grateful prayer ;
 Of helpless mothers and their infant brood,
 Sav'd by thy hand and purchas'd by thy blood ;
 Glorious for thee ! but for thy country sad,
 Who scarce had known the valiant son she had—
 Scarce recompensed thy long-neglected claim,
 And paid the just reward of wealth and fame ;—
 When, lo ! thou diest—honours come too late,
 And Britain mourns thy unpropitious fate ;
 Mourns that she may not welcome back her son,
 And crown him with the laurels he has won.

Jan. 12, 1858.

* John Holland, Clifton Sorby, and William Baker are here referred to.

CHRISTMAS, 1870,
IN GAUL AND ALBION.

(*Written during the Franco-Prussian War and the
Siege of Paris.*)

“Peace upon earth! Goodwill to man!”
Such was the reign that Christ began,
When on Judea’s star-lit plain
The Shepherds heard that heav’nly strain,
Breaking the stillness of the night,
While Angel hosts appear’d in sight,
Proclaiming with celestial voice
The tidings glad, “Fear not, rejoice!
For unto you, this blessed morn
The promis’d Saviour, Christ, is born;
A Prince of Peace, a King of Kings,
That to the world salvation brings!”

* * * * *

Though eighteen hundred years have fled
Since first this joyful message sped,
And tens of millions have since then
Caught up the melody again,
“Peace upon earth, goodwill to men,”—
How many millions still remain
Who ne’er have own’d this King divine,
Or his beneficent design?
Who still believe that bloody fight
Should regulate the laws of right,
And Fire, and Pestilence, and Sword
The only settlement afford;

Who laugh to scorn the tidings given
That Christmas morn—direct from Heaven!

* * * * *

Oh, would to God this reign of Peace
Would bring unhappy Gaul release!
Restrain the greedy dogs of war
That hunt her victims, near and far;—
Restore the sabre to its sheath,
And all the implements of death;—
Bind up the ghastly wounds that lie
Expos'd before each pitying eye,
And soothing consolation bring
To all this people's suffering!

* * * * *

This hallowed eve, when every hearth
Commemorates the Saviour's birth—
And England, happy, safe, and free
(Safe by that "silver streak of sea"),
Rejoices in each cheerful hall
At the returning festival;
And, in the fulness of its joy,
Doth each luxurious art employ
To enhance the hospitable rites
That custom bids on Christmas nights,—
Let grateful prayers to Heav'n ascend
For all the blessings that descend
On this small speck of island, known
As free, enlighten'd Albion,

Whose ocean ramparts rise and swell,
A fortress all impregnable.

* * * * *

Again the festive board is spread,
Again the merry-makings made,
Again the friends of youth and age
Perform the yearly pilgrimage,
And meet together at the home
Whence all their Christmas longings come ;
And while we join the happy throng,
And strive to share the laugh and song,
There comes a sickness of the soul
That makes the pleasures sad withal,
As we remember all the woes—
The untold agonies and throes
That now afflict that gallant race,
Renown'd in every art and grace—
A nation rear'd in luxury
And all the pride of chivalry,
Whose beauteous capital hath been
The pride of Europe and her Queen—
Whose fertile plains and valleys rich
Yield everything that man can wish,
Like ancient Israel's Palestine,
A land of honey, corn, and wine.
Ah, what a Christmas-time is there !
What desolation and despair ;
What ruined homes, and broken shrines,
The war-fiend's unmistakable signs ! —

What widows waiting for the dead,
 What orphans vainly asking bread ;
 What wounded, sick, and dying men,
 With none to cheer or comfort them !
 Their little all for ever gone,
 And scarce a cup to call their own !

* * * * *

Oh, God ! how long shall these things be,
 This thirst of blood and butchery ?
 How long shall wars despoil the earth,
 And turn fertility to dearth ;
 Leading their victims to the field
 Like sheep to shambles—to be killed ?
 Permitting devilries that make
 The very brutes with terror quake,
 And look with pity and with scorn
 On man's degraded state forlorn !
 Oh speed the promised peaceful time
 When battles, murders, sin, and crime
 Shall be as relics of the past—
 Of barbarisms for ever cast ;
 When " Peace upon the earth " shall be
 A truth and a reality ;—
 And " goodwill " universal reign
 From " pious King " * to vulgar swain ;
 When Teuton conquerors shall know
 How gentle mercy to bestow,

* Referring to the Emperor of Germany, often styled the
 " Pious King."

And spare the prostrate foe that lies
 Beneath their feet—too weak to rise ;
 When all the world shall bow the knee
 To Him Whose advent-mystery
 This day with anthems we proclaim,
 Singing Hosannahs to His name.

December 23, 1870.

A CITY OF THE DEAD.
 REFLECTIONS IN THE CEMETERY.

I sought a grave—a long-forgotten grave,
 Neglected now some score of years or more—
 Where once I planted flowers, and sought to save
 The weeds and grass from rudely growing o'er.

'Twas in a public cemetery—then
 But thinly tenanted—graves here and there ;
 And this among a little group was seen
 Conspicuous by its florist's tender care.

And now I found that little grave-plot grown
 Into a crowded city of the dead,
 Where tombstones thick as cottages were strewn
 In lanes and alleys, labyrinthine spread.

And as I thread my way in solitude
 Amidst that lonely crowd—anxious to find
 The stone I sought—musing in sadden'd mood
 Of fleeting time and perishing mankind,—

I read the names of hundreds, that recall'd
A bygone generation—names that were
Familiar to my ear in days of old,—
Forgotten now through many a changeful year :

Some who had figur'd on the stage of life,
And made themselves an evanescent fame ;
Some who with Fortune, long had wag'd a strife,
And left behind them nothing but a name.

Of some I could recall the very tone—
The very look and gesture as they spoke—
And scarcely could believe the letter'd stone
That told how long since, I had heard their joke.

And here and there were graves of recent date,
With head-stones new, or granite monument ;
And chaplets, with the flowers unfaded yet,
That told of tears unshed, and grief unspent.

And then I came upon a little tomb,
With short inscription,—merely of a child ;
And I recall'd a day of deepest gloom—
A Father's woe—a Mother's anguish wild,

Merciful time, that heals the sorest wound !
This was my thought as back to town I sped ;
And in the busy streets and life around
Full soon forget the city of the dead.

February 9th, 1877.

THE RELIEF OF LUCKNOW.

JESSIE BROWN'S DREAM.

On the lap of her mistress she lay down to sleep,
 By the garrison walls of beleaguer'd Lucknow ;
 And the roar of the cannon, incessant and deep,
 Disturb'd not poor Jessie's tranquillity now.—

For she dreamt as she lay, of her dear Highland home,
 In the green glens of Scotland, so far, far away ;
 Where her father, she thought, from the ploughing had
 come,
 To rest from his toil at the close of the day .

So calmly she slumber'd, they let her sleep on,—
 'Twas her first rest for days, and would perhaps be
 her last,
 For the brave little band was now nearly outdone,
 With watching, and working, and fighting, and fast.

And the heathen outside, raging fierce with delay,
 Now closer and thicker its multitudes pour,
 Like wild beasts ferociously waiting their prey,
 And gnashing their teeth for another Cawnpore.

But hark ! what is that ? A wild cry of surprise
 From Jessie, upstanding, with hand to her ear ;
 “ Oh ! dinna ye hear it ? we're savèd ! ” she cries ;
 “ 'Tis the pipes o' auld Scotland—the slogan I hear ! ”

They look and they listen, but nothing is heard,
 Save the roar of the muskets, and yell of the foe ;
 And Jessie bewilder'd, excited, disturb'd,
 Tries to slumber again, and dream away woe.

But scarce have her eyes clos'd, when, starting again,
 With a cry of delight wilder still than before—
 “ Oh ! *noo* do ye hear it ? I am no mista'en ;
 Hark ! hark ! 'tis ‘ The Campbells are coming,’ for
 sure ! ”

Thank God ! it is true ; unmistakeably now
 The pibroch's shrill notes, are heard clear through the
 roar ;
 And hearts long despairing, with gratitude glow,
 As they hear the lov'd strains of their country once
 more.

And the Campbells *did* come, not with music alone,
 But with Havelock and vengeance, to rescue the
 brave ;
 At the hour when all hope of deliv'rance had gone,
 And before them yawn'd deeply, a massacre grave.

Jan. 14, 1858.

THE STREET NEWS-GIRL.

Ragged and barefoot—
 Young and yet old—
 Sat on a door-step,
 Out in the cold,

Out in the stormy night—
Snow, sleet, and rain—
A poor little news-girl
Shivers in vain.

Scarce ten years old is she—
Such a frail mite—
With face wan and hungry,
Though with eyes still bright;
O'er her head an old garment
That once was a shawl,
And now serves for bonnet,
Hood, mantle, and all.

Nightly you see her there—
Or in the street,
Selling her "Evening Star's"
Halfpenny sheet;—
Now at a crossing, and
Now with a dart,
After an omnibus
Ready to start.

Should she run after you
Coaxing your trade,
Turn not away from her—
Give her your aid;
Take not the change from her,—
Give her the penny,
And a kind word or two,
If you have any.

Look at her, talk to her,
And you may find
Under her rags and dirt,
Something refin'd ;
Limbs lithe and active,
Features of grace,
Soft tender eyes, too, and
Innocent face.

Ask her the question,
Why she is there,
Earning so hardly
Such pitiful fare ?
Frankly she'll answer you
With her sweet voice,
The old tale of poverty,
Sickness and vice :

“ Mother an invalid,
Father a sot,
Six little mouths to fill,
Wages or not ;
I and my brother, earn
Tenpence a day,
Which for our victuals, sir,
Goes a long way.”

What will *her* Christmas be,
How will she fare ?
Frugal her feast, I fear,
Scanty her share ;

A feast-day for others,
To *her* means a fast,
When one day's poor pittance
Has two days to last.

Say, ye philanthropists,
What shall be done?
Rescue these children
Or leave them alone?
Leave them to wander
In rags through the street,
Or stop them from gaining
The bread that they eat?

While ye reflect on it,
Pray one and all
Give them a Christmas-box,
Ever so small!
Let them to-day at least
Wear a bright face,
And when to-morrow comes—
Ponder their case.

Christmas, 1876.

SEASIDE RECREATIONS AT SCARBOROUGH.

Nothing to do, nothing to think of—
Plenty to eat and more to drink of—
Walking and talking,—often smoking,—
Everywhere peering, prying, and poking:

Reading the newspaper, stretched on a seat,
 Going to market to buy the meat ;
 Helping the children to dig in the sand,
 Then lying down in it, list'ning the band ;
 Wondering what to do with yourself next,—
 Then rousing up on a sudden pretext,—
 Just for a walk on the grand parade
 To see how the belles and beaux are array'd ;
 Meeting, perchance there, a feminine friend,
 Taking a turn with her on to the end,
 And, by way of variation,
 Having a very mild flirtation,
 Such as a married man may with propriety
 Indulge without shocking his wife or society—
 Just a gossip on seaside platitudes,
 Lodgings and lodgers and landladies' latitudes ;
 Babies and bathings, and dinner providing,—
 Matters important for daily deciding.

* * * * *

Having a walk to the harbour or pier
 To see what the people are doing there ;
 Watching the fishermen tar their boat ;
 Bringing mementoes away on your coat ;
 Taking a pleasure trip out to sea—
 Sick all the while and as ill as can be ;
 Going to bathe in a sloppy machine,
 Sobbing and shivering all the time in,
 Thinking it good for the constitution
 To be daily soaked in a salt solution ;

Watching excursionists take their delight in
 The eating of crabs, and fishing for whiting ;
 Having a tiresome march up a hill,
 Then marching down with a very good will ;
 Never forgetting the minute we dine,
 And the pleasant hour after it, sacred to wine :
 Going to sleep in an easy chair
 By an open window, with sea-view fair,
 Dreaming of mermaids, naiads, and nymphs,
 Till awoke by the fishwoman shrieking " shrimps."'
 Spending each night at some entertainment,
 To give you pleasure by no means in vain meant ;
 Then to bed with an easy mind—
 At peace with the world and all mankind,
 Till roused in the morning by sundry bawls
 Of " Herrings ! fresh herrings ! soles ! fine soles !"

* * * * *

Such is the kind of recreation
 We take at the sea-side in vacation ;
 Such is the way we recruit our health
 And ease our purse of its surplus wealth ;
 Giving a rest to the over-wrought brain,
 And to the stomach, I fear, a strain.
 Reader ! if thou art man or maiden,
 With a mind and a purse, overladen,
 Betake thyself to some Spa or other—
 Scarbro' will serve thee as well as another ;
 Thy mind will be eased of its " perilous stuff,"
 And thy purse made speedily light enough !

SONNET. IN MEMORIAM.
 THOMAS ASLINE WARD.

Obit Nov. 26th, 1871. Ætat 90.

Like the calm sunset of a summer's day,
 When ne'er a storm disturbs the sky serene,
 And not a cloud obstructs the golden ray
 That sheds its dying lustre o'er the scene—
 Another gentle spirit sinks to rest,
 And ends a life that seldom knew a pain ;
 Of many a friend, and ne'er a foe possest,
 Through near a century's eventful reign.
 A man of books and literary lore,
 Who lov'd Minerva for Minerva's sake ;
 Whose mind a kingdom was of richest store,
 Clear and unruffled as the lucid lake ;
 In all his objects, modest, hopeful, sure,
 He liv'd in humble faith ; may all men die as pure !

THE EX-PARISH CLERK.

*(His Opinion on past and present, for which the Author
 is not responsible.)*

“ Ah, well ! ah, well ! they may say as they will,
 But I'll hold to the same opinion still ;
 These new-fangled ways will all come to nought,
 With their chants and intones, and I know not what ;
 As they rid the old clerk they'll rid parson next—
 If they don't miss ' Amen,' they'll not miss the text.

“ Yes, the good old times of the Church are gone
When parson and clerk were like father and son,
The one up above, and the other below,
In old-fashion'd pulpits, unlike the things now,
Three, tier upon tier, in the orthodox fix
Like a butt, and a pipe, and a thirty-six.

“ There were none of your children in surplices then,
Squalling bad time in the place of full men :
The clerk led the singing, and cried the response
In a Christian-like tone, that did well for the nonce,
And the people all join'd in a reverent way
In all but ‘ Amen,’ which they left *him* to say.

“ There were none of your free seats and Popery stuff,
Your chairs and your benches—back-breaking enough—
But well-cushion'd pews, where you'd room to turn
round,
And the family group all together were found ;
Where the old ones could sit, and the young ones could lie,
And all take a nap when the sermon was dry.

“ No fal-lal devices on altar and walls,
No bowing of priests, in their copes, capes, and shawls ;
No turning to east, and intoning of creed,
And sing-singing parts which the clerk ought to read ;
But a good honest service in surplice and gown,
With the clerk's loud ‘ Amen,’ prayers and sermon to
crown.

“ In my days, when I was clerk, sexton, and choir,
 At ‘ Fenley-cum-Bogmoor,’ in Lincoln’s fam’d shire—
 Ah! then we had singing worth going to hear,
 And *judges*, who knew what was what, here or there—
 We had anthems and psalms of the old-fashion’d style,
 With none of your organ to drown and to spoil.

“ Then at Christmas and feast-days we’d instruments
 such

As you seldom hear now, and play’d to a touch!
 We had fiddle and flute, and bass and bassoon,
 And clarionet, oboe, and trombone;
 Ah! talk about organs—give me a good band,
 And a *village* one too—the best in the land!

“ But the times have chang’d, and the people too;
 They know nought of singing as we used to do;
 And the next change will be, the old Church itself,
 Will be serv’d like the Irish and laid on the shelf;
 As they rid the old clerk they’ll rid parson next—
 If they don’t miss ‘ Amen,’ they won’t miss the text!”

May 7th, 1875.

JOHN DOUGHTY'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

A TALE OF THE PEAK.

Dame Doughty was busy on Christmas Eve,
 With chopper, and bowl, and grater, and sieve,
 Mixing together the suet and crumbs,
 The spice and the sugar, the peel and the plums,

To aid the grand banquet of turkey and chine,
From which on the morrow they all were to dine,
With mince-meat, and sauces, and pudding beside ;
All which the good-wife had that night to provide.

The children were watching with eager intent
The wonderful process on which she was bent,
Looking and longing with hungry eyes
As she sliced up the peel and put lids on the pies ;
Thinking how soon 'twould be their turn to work,
Not only with hands, but with knife, spoon, and fork ;
Pondering deeply the mode of attack,
What to demolish, and how much to sack ;
For dinner like this only came once a year,
And Christmas to them was a day very dear !

John Doughty, the husband and tenant of house,
(I dare not say master—no, that was his spouse,
For she ruled the kitchen, the dairy, and cream,
While John only reigned over stable and team),
Had gone to the market the butter to sell,
And a few little matters to purchase as well ;
Some sugar, and coffee, and tea (superfine),
With a bottle of rum and another of wine,
To gladden the hearts and to heighten the mirth
Of the guests that to-morrow would honour his hearth.

The clock had struck eight, and the time had gone by
When his footsteps returning were wont to draw nigh,

For John was a steady and punctual man,
Ever true to his word, to his wife, and his clan,—
A fact which the good dame kept constant in mind
As she glanced at the clock, and gave heed to the wind ;
For a winterly blast was beginning to blow
From the keen north-east—with a deep fall of snow
Which threaten'd ere morning to choke up the door, —
When woe to the wanderer over the moor !

Eight! nine o'clock struck! and no sign yet of John.
The children long since to their garret had gone ;
And the dame, having finish'd her work long ago,
Now sat by the fire that was still all aglow ;
A basin of frumenty stood on the hob,
Remains of the suppers of Harry and Bob,—
Intended for John as a special delight
When he came from his journey on that festal night :
And so she sat wondering, pondering, thinking,
Now and then nodding, and blinking and winking,
For had she not been on her feet since the dawn,
For full sixteen hours without ever a yawn ?
And can it be matter of any surprise
If a film of sleep crept over her eyes,
And she glided off in a dosy dream,
Where John, all white, in a snow-drift would seem ?
When a crash at the door, like a sledge-hammer knock,
Woke her up in a trice with a start and a shock ;
And rushing with candle to open the door,
She lifted the latch and fell back on the floor,

While the doughty John, in a tipsy reel,
 Came headlong after her—head over heel!—
 The empty basket still tight on his arm,
 His hands very cold, but his face red and warm,
 While the snow on his coat like an avalanche fell
 On his prostrate dame, and the cat as well.

* * * * *

Oh, John! Oh, John! 'twas an evil luck
 That led thee that night to the "Fox and Duck,"—
 That bowl of punch was a Devil's snare
 That caused thee so long to shelter there:
 Better, far better, have brav'd the blast,
 Though the driving snow fell thick and fast,
 Than have lost thy good repute and fame,
 And exchanged them thus for a drunkard's name!

* * * * *

Dame Doughty, as soon as she opened her eyes
 And recovered her legs from this sudden surprise—
 As soon as she saw how that treacherous man
 Had at length brought disgrace to his wife and his clan,
 Deep vengeance she vowed, although little she said,
 But hustled and bustled him quickly to bed,—
 Unheeding the maudlin excuses he made
 As he hiccup'd white lies about being *way-laid*
 And plunder'd alike, the contents of his purse
 And basket as well (which to her was far worse);—
 Then left him alone on his back like a log,
 Where he soon began snoring as loud as a hog.

* * * * *

Next morning betimes she was up and astir,
 Doing duty for both without word or demur—
 Gave her children their breakfast, as well as the calves,
 The pigs, and the fowls—doing nothing by halves—
 Then taking the frumenty left overnight
 She went to the room where that pitiful wight,
 Her husband and lord, was now sleeping calm
 As babe in a cradle, dreaming no harm ;
 She left it to serve breakfast, dinner, and tea,
 And, locking the door, went away with the key.

* * * * *

The Christmas dinner was cooked and served,
 The turkey and chine all duly carved,—
 The pudding and pies were demolished the same
 As though John himself had play'd part in the game ;
 Uncle Ralph from the mill, with his wife and a son,
 Were the guests that arrived as the clock struck one ;
 And though, 'twas at first, a surprise to be told
 That their host was in bed of a very bad cold,
 They got over it soon, and enjoyed none the less
 The dinner provided with so much success.

* * * * *

Meantime on his bed through that weary day
 John Doughty in shame and in penitence lay :
 Now and then a faint effort he made to be heard,
 But to all his appeals there came never a word ;
 So he ate up the frumenty, grateful for that,
 (Though he felt all the while he was robbing the cat) ;

For his heart was soft and his feelings strong,
 And to man nor beast would he do any wrong,
 But to all creation he wished good luck,
 With but one exception—"The Fox and Duck."

Christmas, 1871.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS.

(Suggested by the Song of the Redbreast and the Floods.)

The golden days of summer, the silver nights are o'er,
 The balmy summer zephyrs, waft over us no more ;
 The scents of summer flowers and the hum of summer
 bees

No longer charm our senses, and soothe us as they please ;

Yet cheerily and sweetly still

The redbreast sings on high,

With a flutter of his joyous wings,

A grateful melody !

The blackbird and the thrush, are silent in the grove,
 And the skylark, too, has ceased, his lullaby of love,
 And all our migrant minstrels, that with the summer
 come,

Have fled before the winter, to seek a brighter home ;

Yet cheerily and merrily

Our little constant friend

From the top of yonder tree

Sings gaily to the end.

It seems but yesterday since, we trod the meadows green,
When first we heard the cuckoo and the swallow first
was seen,

And culled the fragrant hawthorn, with blossoms
whiten'd o'er,

And cowslips by the handful, and blue-bells by the score;
And watch'd the sparkling river flow on its tranquil
course,

As though it ne'er knew trouble, or trial of its force,
Toying amongst the pebbles, or rippling in the shade,
Or basking in still pools, like a coy and fickle maid.

And now the landscape's faded; the meadows far and wide
A scene of desolation, with floods on every side,
And the placid river swollen, o'erflowing bank and brae,
Like a tyrant tearing onward, with devastating sway!

Yet cheerily and gratefully
The little Robin sings,
And with his sweet, melodious note
A welcome solace brings.

So may it be with us, in life's autumnal time,
When youth is fled for ever and manhood's vigorous
prime;

When troubles come upon us and summer joys are past,
May we have still some redbreast to cheer us at the last,

And lovingly and soothingly
To chant a hopeful strain,
Bidding us trust in Providence
For sunshine yet again!

Nov. 4th, 1873.

THE BELL-BUOY AT SEA OFF FILEY BRIG.

Hark ! there is music afloat ;
 Church bells solemnly chiming !
 As we glide in the fisherman's boat,
 Or over the rocks go climbing ;
 On a lazy midsummer's day,
 When the noontide sun is glowing,
 And the sea in a mood of play,
 Is calmly ebbing and flowing
 All through the caves and pools
 On Filey's Brig abounding,
 Where she rests herself and cools,
 With scarce a surge resounding,
 Like a happy innocent child
 Taking its long vacation,
 Looking so meekly mild,
 As if courting approbation.

* * * * *

II.

Listen ! it comes again,—
 That sweet, melodious tinkle !
 And yet, it comes from the main,
 Where church bells seldom mingle.
 “ Whence, and what can it be ?
 Oh, tell me, gentle stranger ! ”
 “ Sir, ' tis the bell-buoy at sea,
 Warning of rocks and danger ;

For this is a perilous coast,
 And often in stormy weather,
 When land and lights are lost
 For days and nights together,—
 The captain hears the bell
 And steers his ship to the offing ;
 He knows the signal well
 And heeds it without scoffing ;
 Thus many a noble crew,
 And many a mother's darling
 Is saved for perils new
 By the bell-buoy's timely warning !''

* * * * *

III.

Then tinkle on, sweet chime !
 I listen with new pleasure,
 As I catch from time to time
 Thy soft Æolian measure
 Borne by the fitful gale
 From thy belfry on the ocean,
 A low and plaintive wail,
 As of sorrow and emotion
 At the false and fickle sea
 So lovely, yet so changeful,
 So fair as it can be,
 Yet cruel and revengeful ;
 And these silent, treacherous rocks,
 That aid her wicked passion,
 As pitilessly she mocks
 And ridicules compassion.

But thou, O tuneful friend !
 Beneficent invention !
 At least can serve the end
 Of warning and prevention,—
 Like the blessed Gospel sound
 In darkest dispensation,
 Guiding the homeward-bound
 To the haven of salvation !

Aug. 8th, 1874.

PALLIDA MORS.

SUGGESTED BY THE RECENT RAVAGES OF DEATH AT
 HOME, AND WAR ABROAD.

*Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
 Regumque turres.*

HORACE, Ode iv., Liber 1.

Young, middle-aged, and old !
 Some in the busy whirl of life,
 Some at the closing of the strife,—
 The rich, the poor, the weak, the bold,
 One, and another falls
 As the grim monarch calls !

Of what avail the rank,
 The gain of riches or of fame,
 The pride of ancestry or name ?
 Death sweeps his victims front and flank,
 And strikes with equal blow
 The lofty and the low !

Man struggles, toils, and schemes,—
He wears the brain, he frets the soul,
To win the prize, to reach the goal,
The pinnacle of all his dreams ;
And then he lays him down,
And dies with scarce renown !

Some in a green old age,
With hoary honours on their head,
Their duty done, their mission sped,
After a lengthen'd pilgrimage,
Like ripen'd fruit at last,
They fall with Autumn's blast.

Others in manhood's prime,—
In the full tide of their career,
When all they hope for seems so near,
At some unguarded, luckless time
Drift on a hidden rock
And perish with the shock.

And youth and beauty too—
In all the promise of their spring,
Their tender buds just opening,
And life before them bright to view,—
They wither, fade, and die,
Without our knowing why.

Like soldiers in the strife,
We see our comrades fall around
In quick succession to the ground,
And harden'd by the waste of life,
We scarcely pause to think
How soon we too may sink.

God grant, that when we fall,
 It may not be on battle plain,
 Amid the terrors of the slain,
 Imploring piteous help in vain,—
 But when *we* hear the midnight call,
 May loving friends be near
 Our peaceful end to cheer!

January 27th, 1871.

SONNET. IN MEMORIAM.
 WILLIAM HOWARD.

Obit Feb. 7th, 1869, Ætat 88.

Like autumn fruit that lingers to the last,
 Till fully ripe it softly melts away ;
 Whose perfect form no rude, untimely blast
 Has prematurely hastened to decay—
 So falls away our friend ; at eighty-eight,
 Still rosy as the morn, and fresh in mind,
 With active frame that seem'd to scorn the weight
 Of near a century ; with taste refin'd,
 Still sensitive to each harmonious sound,
 And keenly critical of music's laws,
 And love of all things lovely to be found
 In art or nature, poetry or prose ;
 So falls our friend ! and we shall see no more
 That venerable head, crown'd with its silver hoar.

UPPINGTON CHURCH.

THE CHRISTMAS DECORATING—AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

The grey old church of Uppington
 Gleamed bright beneath the Christmas sun,
 Whose slanting rays at mid-day fell
 On window, roof, and pinnacle :
 And through the ancient yews and elms
 That guard the dead's sepulchral realms,
 You caught anon its graceful spire
 Pointing aloft to regions higher,
 And warning all the unforgiven
 To turn their thoughts from earth to heaven.

Hard by the church a mansion stood,
 Surrounded by a belt of wood,
 And glimpses here and there of park,
 With clumps of hollies, almost dark,
 And laurel groves that grew so high
 They half-concealed the rookery,
 That in the beeches overhead
 Its ragg'd and scattered nests o'erspread.
 Here lived the squire, and there beyond,
 In that snug villa by the pond
 Whose gabled-roof you just descry,
 The parson lived, and hoped to die.
 And now, on this eventful day
 (Or Christmas *Eve*, we ought to say),
 Both hall and parsonage had sent
 Of inmates, each its complement,

To aid the curate and the clerk
 In doing decoration work,
 And making the old church within
 Fit for the morrow's gathering ;
 When all the country folk around
 Will hasten at the bell's glad sound
 To hear the psalms and anthems sung,
 So long prepared by old and young,
 And these grand decorations view,—
Some, p'rhaps, to hear the sermon too.

* * * * *

Ah ! what a merry group were they,
 And how they laughed and worked away ;
 Three pretty daughters from the hall,
 Besides two cousins, male and tall ;
 These, with the parson and his wife,
 And curate (foremost in the strife),
 Made up the party ; how they worked !
 Nothing neglected—nothing shirked,—
 Now, weaving garlands for the dead,
 (The marble tablets overhead,)
 Or hanging rich festoons across
 The altar and the reredos ;
 And now with ivy leaves or laurel
 Pricking out texts of Christmas moral—
 “ Peace upon earth, goodwill to men,”
 And others of a sim'lar strain.
Some to the pulpit gave their care,
 And fringed it with a border rare—

Holly and berries intermixed,
 With laurustinus flowers betwixt.
Some on the reading desk and font
 Made rival efforts, as was wont ;
 While in the vestry two were seen
 Working a symbol for the screen ;
 A grand, elaborate design,
 That every other would outshine ;
 And such a time it took to do it,
 The rest were gone ere they were through it,
 Leaving them in the church alone,
 To follow when the work was done.
 And so it chanced—the clerk discerning
 The party from the church returning
 Back to the parsonage and hall,
 Supposed they represented all ;
 And, looking in the porch once more,
 Saw all were gone, and locked the door.

* * * * *

Ah, little thought that happy pair
 How fled the time while toiling there,
 As, hand to hand and head to head,
 Among the leaves their fingers sped ;
 Weaving and wreathing and entwining,
 Like our first parents when designing
 Those leafy robes and garments green,
 The newest fashions ever seen.
 But let us first know who they are—
 The curate one—Augustus Clare,

Young, handsome, clever, and B.A.,
High Churchman too, as some would say ;
The other, Rosa MacIntyre,
The youngest daughter of the squire,
Who long has thought the young man's teaching
Far better than his master's preaching ;
And his intoning of the psalms
As near perfection as his charms
Of person, toilet, and address,
Leaving alone his cleverness.

So when they found themselves alone,
The church door locked, their friends all gone,
They were not in the least afraid,
Nor yet annoyed, if truth be said,
But finished what they had to do,
And then surveyed it from a pew ;
To see the effect it would occasion
Upon the morrow's congregation.
—And will you be at all surprised
If, as they sat, and criticised,
The curate's hand, which all day long
Had been with hers the leaves among,
Slipped there again with eager grasp,
And ere she could remonstrance gasp
He whispered an impromptu prayer
To her (*his* only Virgin there),
In words so fervent and appealing,
So full of tenderness and feeling,

She thought, till then, she ne'er had heard
 Such eloquence *in church* preferred ;
 And ere they left the pew together
 Had promised to be his for ever !

* * * * *

One hour had passed, and Sol's last ray
 Had vanished from that short-lived day.
 The clerk, his wife, and children three,
 Were eating plumcake with their tea ;
 The Christmas party at the hall
 Were just returning from a stroll
 Which they had taken in the park
 As "constitutional" ere dark ;
 When suddenly they heard a sound
 Which made them one and all turn round ;
 The solemn tolling of the bell,
 Which like an evil omen fell
 At that strange hour ; what could it mean ?
 The clerk, John Thompson, must be seen !
He, when he heard, jumped off his chair,
 As though a pin had struck him there ;
 He spilt his tea and nearly choked,
 As the last mouthful he evoked.
 He scratched his head, and looked to see
 If, in its place, the church-door key.
 Yes,—there it was ; "Then what the d——
 Living or dead, who could it be ?"

He snatched it down—then took his hat,
 And while his heart went pit-a-pat
 He hurried through the church-yard dim,
 Where stood the belfry, gaunt and grim ;
 Unlocked the door with trembling hand,
 And saw—no ghostly couple stand
 Before his dazed, bewildered eye,
 But flesh-and-blood reality ;
 Who soon explained the case, and cause,
 (As much at least as you'd suppose),
 And fee'd the old man for his fright
 With what, soon changed it to delight.

* * * * *

Long ere old Christmas came again,
 With all his decorating train,
 The Reverend Augustus Clare
 Had wed the squire's daughter fair,
 And held a living of his own,—
 A church of ritual renown ;
 Which, when the festival returned,
 They vowed each year, should be adorned
 With the same ornamental taste,—
 The same device and symbols chaste,
 That once together they had wrought,
 In sweet communion of thought,
 When in the vestry, all alone,
 Of the old church at Uppington.

Christmas, 1872.

THE RETURN OF SPRING.

FROM AN EPICUREAN POINT OF VIEW.

Once more the primrose scents the gale,
 And wood anemones unveil
 Their blushing beauty to the sun,
 Proclaiming Spring's glad time begun ;
 When, welcome blooms at dinner hour
 That flow'r of all—the cauliflow'r !

I hear the plaintive cry of lambs
 Bleating responses to their dams ;
 I watch their gambols o'er the mead,
 As playfully they test their speed,
 And think with joy how soon they'll vie
 To furnish me the best lamb fry !

The song of birds, the caw of rooks,
 The tuneful babble of the brooks ;—
 The cackle of parturient hens
 From yonder farm, when day begins,
 Bring pleasing hopes and prospects nigh
 Of early chickens and rook-pie !

Green grows the grass beneath my feet,
 And mosses, ferns, and meadow-sweet
 Put forth their leaves of tender hue
 From every bank and dell in view ;
 But ah ! of all the grasses grown,
 Give me the one as “sparrow” known !

Exulting runs the limpid stream,
 With many a sparkle in its gleam,—
 While here and there a rising trout
 Tells that the April flies are out,—
 And soon that dainty fish will be
 Fit for the frying-pan—and me !

Waft, gentle breeze ! shine, genial ray
 E'en now I scent the holiday
 When I o'er yonder hills may drive,
 And my cloy'd appetite revive
 On the Spring viands that await us—
 Salad and lamb and new potatoes !

THE RUSTIC AND THE POET.

“ Swarthy rustic, toiling daily
 At the plough or harrow's tail,
 'Heeing,' 'hawing' e'er so gaily,
 As thy horses fag or fail !
 Tell me, in thy avocation
 Hast thou either care or pain,
 Or a wish for variation,
 Or a longing vague and vain ? ”

“ Mester, Oi am none a schollard,
 And Oi scarce know what yo mean ;
 All my life the ploo Oi've foller'd,
 And Oi'st foller it agean.

Is it rheumatiz ye spake on ?

No, thank God ! Oi've none o' that :
And my longing's chief for bacon,
Variations, lean and fat."

" Lov'st thou, then, this lowly station,
Art thou truly all content ;
No ambition, emulation,
No regrets for life misspent—
Dost thou feel no sense of *ennui*,—
Ever on this self-same spot ;
Canst thou toil thus without envy
Of a lighter, happier lot ?"

" Dang it, sur, yo're lingo caps me ;
What yo say Oi'm fash'd to know ;
Am Oi quite contented, ax ye,
Do Oi envy chaps like yo ?
No, Oi dunna ! Oi can keep well
As Oi am, and nowt regret ;
Oi can eit, and drink, and sleep well ;
What more can Oi hope to get ?"

" Swarthy rustic, eat thy bacon—
Eat and drink, and sleep in peace,
More philosopher than Bacon,
Plato, or Diogenes !
Greater far than Alexander
When the world lay at his feet ;
Thou art thy own wants commander,
Knowing when they are complete !"

THE MISSEL-THRUSH.

The Missel-Thrush sings on the topmost bough
 Of the tallest tree in the garden ground,
 And his bugle notes in their jubilant flow,
 Are welcom'd with joy by the neighbourhood round ;
 For his song is " Eureka, eureka ! lo, now
 The Queen of the Spring, she is found, she is found ! "

Herald and trumpeter, foremost is he
 To sound the glad news, too, of Flora's return ;
 To wake up the minstrels of forest and lea
 And bid them rejoice, and no longer mourn,
 As he pipes forth, " Eureka ! to you and to me
 The winter is dying, the summer is born ! "

In the joy of his heart and impetuous haste,
 He helpeth his consort to fashion her nest,
 Heedless how bleak and exposed it be placed—
 On a leafless fork of the elm's bare breast ;
 Still singing, " Eureka ! there's no time to waste ;
 Let us work while we may, and leave the rest ! "

And should it be taken, as often it is
 By ruthless youths, who have climbed the tree,
 He maketh but little ado of this,
 But buildeth another as quick as may be,
 Still crying, " Eureka ! don't take it amiss,
 There's time enough yet for two or three ! "

The wild winds of March interrupt not his song—
 Hence is he known as the “storm-cock” of boys ;
 Hail, snow, or rain do not daunt him, so long
 As he hath for a list’ner, the mate of his choice ;
 While he chanteth, “ Eureka ! though Eurus be strong,
 Soft Auster is nigh, so we still will rejoice !”

Friend of Adversity ! brave bird and true !
 Cheerful when all thy companions are mute ;
 All save the redbreast—our winter friend, too—
 Whose notes are to thine, like the harp to the flute :
 Long, long may thy music our spirits renew,
 And thy cry of “ Eureka !” our glad ears salute.
March 31st, 1875.

NEW NURSERY RHYMES.

FOR THE “ REFORM’D ” CHILD’S PARLIAMENTARY
 PICTURE BOOK. *

There was a little man, and he had a little plan
 To reform a House of Commons that was bad, bad, bad ;
 But the Commons said, “ No, no, John, your little plan
 won’t do,”
 Which made this little man very sad, sad, sad !

There was a valiant wight, and his name was Quaker
 B——ght,
 Who always wore a broad-brimm’d hat, hat, hat ;
 And though call’d a man of peace, he was never at his ease
 But when cudgelling an aristo-crat-crat-crat !

* A political squib, referring to a discussion on a new Reform Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, in 1867, the parties referred to being Russell, Bright, Disraeli, Gladstone, Stanley, Lowe, and Lord Derby.

There was a cunning Jew, who could do a trick or two,
Better far than any conjuror in town, town, town ;
And to see what he could do, made you almost "Dizzy"
too,
Which has made him now a man of great renown-
nown-nown !

There was a clever lad, who at school was ever *Glad*
To win a Latin prize, or a Greek, Greek, Greek ;
And when he came a man, and in Parliament did scan,
'Twas ravishing to hear him speak, speak, speak !

There was a noble Lord, now at the foreign board—
And he's his father's eldest, son, son, son—
Who promises so well, though a Tory and a swell,
That his countrymen cry, "On, Stanley, on, on, on!"

There was a Captain bold, who, like David, we are told,
To a Cave drew all the rebels of his day, day, day ;
And this Captain's soon became, a terror-sounding name,
To all who were in power, or in pay, pay, pay !

There was a gouty Seer, both Premier and Peer,
A Scholar and a Senator too, too, too—
Who can write as well as talk, better far than he can walk,
And translate a book of Homer, or a blue, blue, blue !

And many more, beside, there are on every side,
Both Tory, Whig, Rad, and Adulla-mite,
Too numerous to name—too dubious in fame,—
So we'll leave them for the present out of sight, sight,
sight !"

March, 1867.

CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES. *

“ Eheu fugaces, Postume. Postume
Labuntur anni.”—HORACE.

'Heu fugaces! how they fly,
How the whirling years go by!
Christmas days succeed so fast,
We can scarce recall the past,
Or remember how we spent
Each one as it came and went;
Who the dear companions were
Sitting by us year by year,
As we gather'd round the board
Laden with its festive hoard,
And together quaff'd the wine
In the days of “ auld lang syne.”

Now as Christmas comes again,
And amid the hosts of slain,
We are spared another year,
To participate its cheer,—

* The Sheffield worthies alluded to in these Remembrances, who had passed away during this year, were John Holland, the well-known Poet; William Lockwood, Chairman of the Sheffield Gas Company, and of the Sheffield and Rotherham Bank, and noted fisherman; William Ibbotson Horn, an opulent bachelor, who left about £20,000 of legacies to the public charities; Sounes, Principal of the School of Art; Miss Harrison, the church philanthropist; the Rev. W. Mercer, Incumbent of St. George's, and compiler of Mercer's Hymn Book; Dr. Sale, Vicar of Sheffield and Canon of York; and Mrs. Alfred Gatty, editor of “ Aunt Judy's Magazine.”

While the sparkling jests abound,
 And the bumping toasts go round,
 Let us drink a silent one
 To the spirits that have gone—
 To the memory of the dead
 That since Christmas last have fled,
 And have left behind a name
 And a transitory fame,
 That still blossoms fresh and green,
 While *we* linger on the scene ;
 But, full soon, alas ! will fade
 In the grave's oblivious shade,
 When we, too, alike forgot,
 Share with them the "common lot."

Gentle Holland—poet kind,
 Friend of nature and mankind ;
 Ardent wooer of the Muse,
 Dear discourser of the news ;
 True philosopher and sage,
 Prizing only wisdom's page ;
 Quaint, original, and pure—
 In religion safe and sure—
 Let us at this Christmas time
 (Sung by him so oft in rhyme)
 Throw fresh garlands o'er his tomb—
 Flowers of everlasting bloom !

Lockwood ! of the granite mould,
Roughly polish'd, stern and bold ;
Strong of purpose, clear in brain ;
Kind of heart, and never vain ;
Ah ! what *banks* have mourn'd thy loss
(Those, I mean, of turf and moss),
Banks of Derwent and of Wye,
Where thy feet were wont to ply,
And thy cunning hand to throw
O'er the rippling stream below,
With sure aim and certain eye,
That inimitable fly,
Which no trout could e'er withstand,
Cast by thy all-practised hand !

Horn ! benevolent and great,
As in body, in estate ;
Heavy, honest and inert,
Full of charity at heart,
Yet deferring day by day,
Whatsoe'er would brook delay ;
How we miss his radiant face
In the old accustom'd place,
And the broad benignant smile
Innocent of guilt or guile !

Sounes ! ill-fated son of art,
Victim of the spoiler's dart,

Like thy predecessor slain
In the flush of life's campaign ;
In the pride of its success
And the prime of usefulness ;
Yet before thy work was done,
Or the prize of victory won,
Or the needful solace left
For thy mourners, thus bereft !

Harrison ! time-honour'd name,
Coupled with a maiden's fame,
Whose munificence had grown
In proportion with the town ;
Ever ready at command,
With the charitable hand,
And the sympathising heart
Help and comfort to impart ;
And when death at last came o'er,
And the hands could give no more,
Leaving most she had, behind
For the good of all mankind !

Mercer ! servant of the Lord,
Earnest preacher of His word,
Watchful shepherd ! zealous friend,
True and faithful to the end ;
—Master of the sacred lyre
And the songs its chords inspire,
Whose selected hymns and chants
Have supplied a nation's wants ;

He, too, gone ! and scarce the bell
O'er him tolls the parting knell,
When from yonder parish spire
Breaks another omen dire—
Longer, louder, than the last,
Deeper muffled—farther cast—
Echoing from hill to dale,—
Wafted by the mournful gale,
Tidings, that in all who heard
Blank dismay and sorrow stirr'd.
—Ah, what honest tears were shed,
As that morning's news was spread !
“ *Death of Sale !*” the black type said,—
Sheffield's spiritual head,
Vicar, canon, doctor, priest—
Prized, by those who knew him least,
Lov'd, by all who knew him best,
—Let his memory be blest !

Last of all, amid the host
Of distinguish'd neighbours lost,
There is one of world-wide fame,
Whose familiar household name,
Every child has learnt to spell
And appreciate as well—
Dear “ Aunt Judy ”—children's friend,
Orphans' pleader to the end ;
Sweet instructress of the young
In their purest mother-tongue ;

Graceful writer of the day—
Story, parable, or lay ;
Or in earnest truthful prose
When describing Nature's laws—
She, too, pass'd from life to death,
And we lay the cypress wreath
Lovingly upon her grave
Where she sleeps—the good, the brave !

Pass the wine ! dry up the tear !
Christmas comes but once a year,
And we cannot linger long
O'er regrets and feelings strong ;
For the living claim our share
Of the joys we have to spare.
One toast more we drink again,
“ Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men ! ”

Christmas, 1873.

TO WILLIAM HOWARD, ESQ.,
ON HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY.

And hast thou walked about,—how strange a story !
In Sheffield streets o'er eighty years ago ;
When George the Third was king, in all his glory,
And Pitt his friend, and Washington his foe ;—
When Sheffield Park with trees was dotted o'er,
And smiling gardens graced the Nursery ;
When blackberries grew ripe on Sheffield Moor,
And Glossop Road was bank'd with bilberry,—

When steam, and gas, and rails, were things unknown,
And even coaches yet were rude and rare ;
When flick'ring oil-lamps dimly lit the town,
And good folks rode on pillion, pack, or chair ?

And didst thou strut about in powder'd wig,
And ribbon'd cue, in pigtail fashion worn ?
Perchance a sword, too, dangling at thy leg,
While countless ruffles did thy breast adorn.

Tell us thy pastimes in those days of old ?
Did'st ever catch a salmon in the Don,
Or tickle trout at Blonk, or Castle Fold,
Where sluggish Sheaf its rugged course runs on ?

Did'st ever visit London in thy youth ?
If so, pray tell us something that is new
Of Pitt and Burke, and Fox,—the unvarnish'd truth—
A thing historians don't always do.

Did'st ever see old Drury in thy time,
When Siddons ruled, and Sheridan wrote plays ?
Tell us how Kemble acted in his prime—
How Liston laughed, and Munden chang'd his face.

Canst tell us aught of Byron, Burns, or Scott,
When first their genius flashed upon the age—
What critics said, when Waverley came out,
And the " Childe Harold " wrote his pilgrimage ?

Remember'st aught of Wesley and his schism ?
Of Wilberforce, friend of the negro's claim ;
Or James Montgomery, escap'd from prison,
Illuming Hartshead with poetic fame ?

Or something of " Ned Lud," and " Peterloo,"
Of Lord George Gordon and the Papist row ;
Or that election contest, when the two
Great Yorkshire Earls made gold like water flow ?

But thou art musical, and wouldst prefer
To tell us something of thy glorious art,
When the great world of music was astir
With the last works of Haydn and Mozart ?

How Braham sang, and Paganini played,
Though he was *modern* to the like of thee ;
And thy friend Foster reputation made
By many a strain of sacred melody.

Did'st thou not hear the thunder in the air
When Gaul's grand monarchy was overthrown ;
And shudder at the deeds of Robespierre,
When Bonaparte was yet a name unknown ?

Wouldst thou not throw thy cap up as a boy
At the great news of Nelson's victory ;
And swell the chorus of those shouts of joy
That cheered the first exploits of Wellesley ?

Perchance thou wert a captain, brave and bold,
 In that fam'd corps of British Volunteers,
 Which, when the beacon signal falsely told,
 "The invader come!" — rush'd forth in arms and *tears!*

But tell us something about Sheffield men
 And Sheffield doings—who thy comrades were?
 What sort of feasts, gave Master Cutlers then,
 Who were the guests, and what the bill of fare?

Dost thou remember Attercliffe's grim sight,
 When Broughton's bones, high on the gibbet swung;
 Or Runcorn, worried by his bear at night,
 While all Park Hill with his loud death-cries rung?

Oh, couldst thou write with that same gifted power
 That charms discourse from thy Cremona's strings,
 The world's mutation since thy natal hour,—
 The shifting pantomime of men and things!—

How large a volume would thy writings fill!
 How deep the interest, how wide the range!
 No book of fiction ever could reveal
 Such thrilling incident, such wondrous change!

Fill up the glass! We pledge thy health anew,
 At Eighty-seven, still vigorous and hale,
 Still fresh in feeling, as in colour true,
 Like the last rose that scents the autumn gale.

Fill up the glass! May we another year
 Still find thee with us, genial as now;
 And long as mem'ry holds, our meetings here
 Shall o'er life's track a cheerful radiance throw.

Feb. 1st, 1868.

THE WELCOME OF
 THE MEN OF HALLAMSHIRE
 TO THE
 PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

To England's future King
 And Denmark's daughter fair—
 The brightest gem by far
 That King will ever wear—
 The sturdy Vulcan race,
 The Cyclops of the day,—
 The men of terrible renown—
 Of Sheffield's ill-reputed town,
 Their loyal homage pay!

Not merely in the show,
 The pageant and parade,
 The miles of waving banners,
 The trophy-crown'd arcade;
 The grand triumphal arches,
 The forest of festoons,—
 The gorgeous ritual of State,
 The Crown's inevitable fate,
 The thunder of the guns,—

These, but the outward signs—
 The symbol's glittering part
 To mark a deeper feeling,
 The welcome of the heart;

For these rough sons of toil
 Have finer grain within,
 And know the difference between
 A Red Republic, and a Queen
 Such as *our own* hath been !

Long as Victoria's crown
 Thus worthily be worn,
 And with untarnish'd brightness
 Hereafter shall adorn
 Her sons and their successors—
 The heirs of future thrones—
 No truer friends will they retain,
 Should anarchy disturb their reign,
 Than loyal Sheffield's sons !

Three hundred years have pass'd
 Since Royal footsteps trod
 Yon ancient castle court
 Where Shrewsbury's fortress stood ;
 And then, a captive Queen,
 Unfortunate as fair,
 Whose only welcome was the sound
 Of tramping sentinels around,
 Guarding with jealous care.

Chang'd is the time and scene !
 The cruel days of yore
 Have given place to freedom
 Wide as the ocean's shore,—

And liberty and reason,
Free as the mountain air,
Combine with heart, and voice, and hand,
And every token at command
To greet *this* royal pair !

Not in a lonesome tower,
Watch'd by a feudal lord,
Our royal guests to-day
Sit at a merchant's board,
And sleep secure unguarded
Beneath a Mayor's roof—
A noble citizen whose claim
To honourable wealth and fame
Is stain and slander-proof.*

And the proud Lord of Hallam,
The Norfolk of to-day,—
Heir of the ancient Manor
Where Shrewsbury held sway,
Now joins his loyal tenants,
And opens wide his gate,
To give a welcome fit and meet
His future sovereign to greet
With hospitable state !

Long live the Prince and Princess
Great Britain's throne to grace,

* Mark Firth, Esq., of Oakbrook, the donor of the "Firth Park," which the Prince and Princess had come to open.

And add yet brighter lustre
 To England's free-born race !
 Long live the mother-Queen, too,
 Whose wise example still
 Brings love and honour to the crown,
 And keeps the rebel spirit down
 Of Democratic will !

Long live the generous host !
 Whose enterprising soul
 Hath gain'd the town this honour
 And given a Park withal !
 And long may Sheffield Vulcans
 Enjoy the noble boon ;
 And future generations rise
 To emulate the enterprise
 Of Hallam's princely son !

Sheffield, August 16th, 1875.

THE WRECK OF THE ATLANTIC.

The steamer ship Atlantic
 Sailed forth in all her pride ;
 Her graceful spars, pointing up to the stars,
 And canvas swelling wide.

For she was a thing of beauty—
 And young, as she was fair ;
 And rich, as fair, with equipments rare
 About her everywhere.

Still in her teens of voyage,
Her fame just at its height,
She skimm'd like a queen, the ocean green,
In majesty and might.

A thousand strong she carried,
Who proudly trod her deck ;
And mark'd her grace, as she steam'd apace,
And answered her captain's beck.

Away, o'er the Irish Channel,
And away, past the Emerald Isle,
She carved a track, o'er the ocean's back
That made Old Neptune smile !

And all went well and prosper'd,
Despite the stormy billow ;
No leak she sprung—no fog o'erhung,—
No iceberg, or “ Murillo.” *

The passage all but ended,
The land was near in sight ;
And hopes ran high, as the end drew nigh,
And they wish'd a last “ good night.”

'Twas past the hour of midnight—
'Twas near the break of day—
When a shock was heard, that each sleeper stirr'd,
And drove bright dreams away.

* The Spanish steamer that had run down the Northfleet a short time before.

And then rose wild commotion,
And hurrying on deck,
To see and hear, with a wondering fear,
Their noble ship a wreck !

Short time for preparation,
And shorter still for prayer ;
The mother's wail, was of scant avail,
As she shriek'd in her despair.

Scarce had the sleeping children
Awaken'd with the fright,
When the ship roll'd o'er, with a wild uproar,
And buried them out of sight !

Oh, God ! it is heart sickness
To hear the story read ;
How the cruel waves, closed o'er their graves
And stifled them in bed.

And then the strong and resolute
Hard struggle made for life,
And grimly clung, to the rigging that hung
Still clear of the billows' strife.

And some, leap'd madly o'er,
And hugg'd the fatal rock ;
Till numb'd with cold, they lost their hold,
And perish'd with the shock.

And out of that gay thousand
That trod th' Atlantic's deck,
Not half were sav'd, of those that brav'd
The struggle of the wreck.

'Twas but a case of blunder—
A short supply of coal—
A sight, wrong taken, a light, mistaken,
And the ship struck on a shoal.

Oh! ye who sleep securely
In home's soft beds of ease,
Oh, think of those, as the tempest blows,
Who toss on treach'rous seas,

And help, the helpless sailor
Who lives upon the wave,
Whose daily life, is a constant strife
To escape a watery grave!

April 7, 1873.

TO THE WILLOW WARBLER.

“SYLVIA TROCHILUS.”

Thou tiny specimen of feather'd grace,
Of simple note and unpretentious song;
The sweetest, smallest minstrel of thy race,
Once more we welcome thee our woods among!

Where hast thou been, thou migratory mite,
Since last we heard thee, warbling in our grove,
Cheering thy little ones, in their first flight
With strains of sweet encouragement and love ?

Whence hast thou come, and whither didst thou flee,
With thy young progeny at Summer's close,
Ere the first apple ripen'd on the tree,
Or the last leaf had faded on the rose ?

Thou didst not surely cross the ocean wide,
And brave the fury of the raging foam ?
Thy feeble wings could ne'er *its* storms outride,
That fragile atom ne'er such distance roam ?

Tell us, sweet bird, the secrets of thy life—
Those hidden mysteries we long to know—
What instinct guides thee in thy wanderings rife,
From clime to clime ?—what the unerring law
That brings thee hither each recurring Spring,
To every copse our sylvan island through—
The very haunts from which ye first took wing,
There to rebuild, the nests from which ye flew ?

Where have ye sojourn'd ; in what southern clime
Found ye your Winter's home and resting place ?
Had ye your old companions for the time—
The blackcaps and the whitethroats of your race,
Making sweet melody in lonely woods
(Unheard, perchance, by man's approving ear)
On Afric's wilds, or Asia's solitudes,
Or shores less distant ? Tell us, sweet ones, where ?

Oft have I watch'd you in the early days
 Of Spring's return, ere yet the full-leaf'd trees
 Conceal'd your willow plumage from my gaze,—
 With restless energy, like busy bees,
 From bud to bud the insect treasures cull,
 And only pause to pour a grateful lay
 (Swelling your little throats unto the full),
 As sweet as simple, and as plaintive, gay !

Now to your pleasant task once more repair,
 And in yon bank, by yon accustom'd tree,
 Your cozy nest and feather'd home prepare
 In snug concealment, only known to me,—
 Who will not tell your secret, or reveal
 The hidden mystery of eggs within ;
 But leave you unmolested to fulfil
 The cherish'd hope—the promis'd blessing win !

TO THE EIGHTY-FOURTH REGIMENT
 ON ITS RETURN FROM INDIA.

*Written on the occasion of the Presentation of an
 Address by the Sheffield Town Council.*

Heroes of a hundred fights,
 Sieges, marches, and campaigns ;
 Brave defenders of our rights
 On fierce India's burning plains !
 Welcome home, ye veteran band,
 After seventeen years of toil ;
 Exiles in a foreign land,
 Welcome to your native soil !

'Tis a nation's thanks ye claim,
 All that countrymen can give,—
 Honour, gratitude, and fame,
 And a name that long shall live ;
 For the deeds that ye have done,
 Handed down on history's page,
 Shall survive, when ye are gone
 As your children's heritage !

But, what history shall tell
 How your victories were won ;
 How ye suffer'd, fought, and fell,
 ' Neath that scorching Indian sun ?
 Victims of a double foe—
 Earth and sky in dread array,
 From above, and from below,
 Hurling firebrands every way ?

How, through every adverse fate,
 Dauntlessly ye struggled on,—
 To relieve, before too late,
 Lucknow's fainting garrison ;
 How, beleaguer'd in your turn,
 In the city ye had storm'd,
 Further sufferings were borne—
 Further miracles perform'd ?

How, while comrades fell around,
 (Havelock, Lawrence, borne away,)
 Spartan-like, ye held your ground
 And the blood-hounds, kept at bay ;

Till the name of Campbell rose,
With a loud and welcome cry ;
Sounding terror to your foes,
And to you, fresh victory ?

How, with gallant Campbell then,
Reinforc'd, and re-inspir'd,
Ye revers'd the siege again,
And with double courage fir'd,
Drove the fierce assailants back
From the ambush, where they lay,
And thus robb'd the greedy pack
Of its long-expected prey ?

How, with vengeance ye pursued,
Far and wide across the plain,
Blood, retributing for blood ;
Resting not, till ye had slain
For each murder'd innocent
In the shambles of Cawnpore,
Twenty times, a miscreant
Of that hellish host—and more ?

But, though history may fail
All these wondrous deeds to tell,
We, at least, have heard the tale,
And their truth can vouch full well ;
And as long as memory serves,
And our tongue can utter forth,
We will give (as it deserves)
Honour to the Eighty-fourth !

JOHN HODGE'S CHRISTMAS :

AN EPISODE OF COTTAGE COUNTRY LIFE.

The wintry wind whistled o'er coppice and moor,
 And moan'd down the chimney and howl'd at the door,
 And the cold, driving sleet, that should have been snow,
 Pelted hard at the window, with blow upon blow.

It was Christmas Eve, and John Hodge and his wife
 Sat over a fire that had few signs of life,
 While beside, on a bedstead there lay a mute form,
 That seem'd about soon to die out with the storm.

It was but a child—a poor cottager's, too ;
 Their first and their only—a daughter aged two ;—
 A frail little thing—to the world a mere nought,
 Yet priceless to them, and more precious than aught.

For long days and nights, with her short, catching breath,
 She had wrestled with fever and struggled with death :
 And now 'twas the crisis—the fever had gone,
 And life in the balance hung tremblingly on.

They watched the pale face as she slept through the night,
 Nor heeded the storm, though they longed for the light ;
 They thought not of Christmas, yet look'd for the day
 When the doctor his next promised visit would pay.

The morn came at last,—cold, cheerless, and grey,
 And a thick heavy mist o'er the dull landscape lay,
 Yet the village bells rang from the church in the dale,
 While ruddy boys chanted the old Christmas tale.

“Merry Christmas” indeed—“A Happy New Year,”
What a mock’ry the words to the lone couple there!
Still the child slumber’d on, as they wonder’d and fear’d
What the waking might be that so tardy appear’d.

At noon came the doctor—a kindly old man
Whose presence brought comfort, with hope in the van;
He felt the small pulse, with his watch in his hand,
While the wan little face he most carefully scann’d.

As he watch’d, the child woke—with a wondering gaze
Which turn’d to a smile at the mother’s embrace.

“Bring food,” cried the good man, “there’s hope yet
at last,

If she eat she will live, and the danger be past.”

How they hoped, how they pray’d, how they wept at
the sight,

As the dear little child took its milk with delight!
And they saw by the sparkle of life in the eye
That the battle had turned, and that conquest was nigh.

“Merry Christmas to you, and God bless you, my boy!”
Was the next answer given, by Hodge in his joy;
For the world had all chang’d since the morning began—
A load was remov’d, and he felt a new man!

Oh, sweet was the dinner the wife now prepar’d,
The first that for many a day they had shar’d;
And though frugal indeed, ’twas to them a repast
That made the day seem a Rejoicing at last!

And their daughter came round, and for long years to
come

Was the light of the cottage, the sunshine of home ;
And every Christmas John Hodge and his wife
Thank'd God for His mercy in sparing her life.

December 23rd, 1874.

HYMN.

(*St. John's.*)

*Written for the Park Sunday School Anniversary
and Jubilee.*

“ And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on
them, and blessed them.”

When on earth the Son and Saviour
Love's redeeming work began,
And in spirit and behaviour
Prov'd Himself both God and man,—
Daily teaching His salvation
By example, precept, rule,
Parable and illustration,
To the earliest Christian School,—

Little children, sought His blessing—
Children from the mother's knee,—
And He took them up, caressing,
Saying, “ Let them come to me ;
For of such, my Father's kingdom
And the company of heaven,—
And to them, and ye who bring them
This inheritance is given.”

Lord, these dear ones we have brought Thee,
As thy servants did of old ;
As our fathers, did who sought Thee
Fifty years since in this fold ;
In that *upper room*, or story,
Some, perchance, remember still ;
Where they first proclaim'd Thy glory,
And each Sabbath taught Thy will.

Hear, oh Lord, their infant voices,
While they sing the song of praise,
While each grateful heart rejoices,
On this Jubilee of grace ;
Put Thy hands on them and bless them,
As thou didst in days gone by ;
With Thine arms of love possess them,
Let them on Thy bosom lie !

Prosper, too, this institution,
In the future as the past ;
Let Thy servants' distribution
Of the good seed live and last ;
Till not fifty but a hundred
Years of mercy shall be known,
And the harvest-sheaves are numbered
By the thousand at Thy throne !

ODE TO FRANCE.*

[BYRON MODIFIED.]

Oh, grief to thee, land of the Gaul !
 Oh, grief to thy children and thee !
 Unwise in thy glory, and crushed in thy fall,
 How wretched thy portion shall be !
 Compassion shall strike thee, forlorn,
 A mockery that never shall die,
 And sympathy, harder than hatred or scorn,
 Shall burthen the winds of thy sky ;
 And over thy downfall for ever be hurl'd
 The pity of nations—the jeers of the world !

Thy beautiful city, so proud,
 The world's giddy haunt of delight,
 Where fashion, and pleasure, and opulence crowd,
 And all that is gorgeous and bright—
 It is humbled, and broken in heart,
 Its spirit of revelry fled ;
 In anguish, and anger, it writhes 'neath the smart,
 And wails o'er its valorous dead !
 Like Nineveh, Babylon, Carthage, and Rome,
 It yields to the Conqueror—vanquish'd at home.

* Written during the siege and occupation of Paris by the Prussian army.

The vineyards that gladden'd thy soil,—
 The hamlets that studded thy plain,—
 Too vividly tell of the murderous toil
 That cover'd their ruins with slain.
 From chateau, and villa, and farm,
 There comes a wild cry of despair,
 As cannon and mitrailleuse cease their alarm,
 From wounded and sick lying there ;
 And all that was prosperous, peaceful, and good,
 Overthrown and o'erwhelm'd, in a torrent of blood !

The Ruler that govern'd thy land,
 In the pride and the pomp of his power,
 Who curb'd and restrain'd thee with vigorous hand,
 Till Destiny ended his hour ;—
 He is fallen, like others of old,
 Which history's pages record,
 The victim of pride, and ambition—behold
 Napoleon yielding his sword !
 Oh, grief to thee, grief to thee, land of the Gaul,
 Unwise in thy glory, and crush'd in thy fall !

Sept. 5th, 1870.

S U M M E R T H O U G H T S .

Now is the choicest morsel of the year,
 The perfect fulness of the summer's reign ;
 When wood, and field, and plant, and flower attain
 The richest beauty that they ever wear :

The time of hawthorn and of chestnut flowers,
Of lady-smocks and sweet forget-me-nots ;
Of lovers, whispering in shady grotts,
Making the most of day's long lingering hours :

The time of bees, and gaudy butterflies,
Of happy children in the bluebell glades ;
Of lowing cattle and bright milking-maids,
Filling the meadow with soft, soothing cries :

The time of birds and forest minstrelsy,
Sweeter by far than operatic strains
In crowded theatre, where fashion reigns,
And gas and tinsel hold supremacy.

The time of fishermen, by pool and stream,
Philosophising in their gentlest mood,
Yet striving hard to tempt the finny brood
With every lure the angler's art can scheme.

And soon the time the mower whets his scythe,
And busy haymakers begin their work,
Tossing the fragrant grass, with rake and fork,
And joking merrily, with voices blithe.

Yet, do our souls rise equal to the scene
That spreads around us like a heaven below ?
And do our hearts with holier rapture glow,
As we survey the landscape's glorious sheen ?

Are we more grateful and more purified,
 More free from selfishness and worldly care ;
 From sordid avarice, our greatest snare,
 By all the beauties we have thus descried ?

Do we forget, amid these scenes of joy,
 Sickness and Death still stalk throughout the land ;
 And Want and Misery on every hand
 Demand our strongest efforts to alloy ?

God grant, that, while we share this gladsome time
 In all its fulness, both of sight and sound,
 Our minds with nobler sentiments abound,
 And in their purity, with Nature chime !

June, 1875.

THE STOMACH'S WARNING.
 DEDICATED TO DINERS-OUT.

Forbear—forebear ! for pity's sake,
 Pass by that dish ! none other take ;
 Surely thy mouth hast ta'en enough in—
 Two mortal hours of ceaseless stuffing !
 Just think what thou hast stow'd away,
 Since knife and fork began to play ;
 First, soup—mock turtle—swallow'd hot,
 With punch, forsooth !—to cool thy throat ;
 Next turbot—lobster-sauce, and sherry,
 Then kidneys, stewed—with rice and curry ;

Then dainty cutlet, with tomato,
 Mushroom, green peas, and new potato,
 Wash'd down by hock of Rudesheimer
 (Which well thou know'st from *Niersteiner*);
 One slice of turkey, boil'd, with ham—
 One sav'ry cut of early lamb—
 Then wild-duck, Charlotte-Russe, and trifle,
 And thrice champagne, my groans to stifle;
 Concluding all, as if in sport,
 With maccaroni, cheese and port!

* * * * *

“Concluding,” said I,—rash assertion!
 'Twas but a pause in thy diversion!
 A momentary lull to gain
 Fresh vigour for a new campaign;
 Ice puddings now (ah me!) invite
 Thy satiated appetite;
 Then melon, pear, and Yankee pippin,
 And wine—which thou art ever sipping!
 Thrice port, twice claret, hast thou had,
 And once Madeira—(which was bad),
 And now thou puttest forth thine hand
 To try what filberts I can stand!
 Oh, foolish man! oh suicidal!
 Hast thou no power, thy jaws to bridle?
 Dost thou suppose I'm made of metal,
 To solve and grind, like mill or kettle?

Hast thou not seen "Florentine Venus,"
 And learnt the mysteries within us?
 How liver, stomach, heart, and lung,
 Together work, for right or wrong;
 And when the one gets out of order
 The whole machine is in disorder?
 Hast thou no fear of soften'd brain—
 Of gouty leg, and *real* pain—
 (Unlike the *sham* thou'st had so much of)—
 Of harden'd liver, and a touch of
 Congestion, cholera, or colic—
 Blue devils, and their bilious frolic?
 Take warning, and beware in time;
 Such trials cannot long be mine:
 Already do I feel the pain
 Of over-work and over-strain.
 A few more dinners such as these,
 And then, farewell to all thy peace;
 Too late wilt thou repent thy folly,
 And rue the days thou wert so jolly!

 THE MISSING SHIP AT SEA.

A TRUE INCIDENT—ONE OF MANY.

A ship went out to sea,
 As trim as a ship could be:
 Her decks were bright,
 And her sails were white,
 And her flags wav'd merrily.

She had hardy hands on board,
Heaving at cable and cord ;
While friends on shore,
They would ne'er see more,
Cheer'd them a parting word.

She sail'd from the port of Hull,
With a cargo rich and full ;
And she cross'd the bar
For some land afar,
Skimming the wave like a gull.

And anxious eyes were strain'd,
With many a tear enchain'd,
To catch the last
Of the gallant mast,
That now in the distance wan'd.

* * * * *

A ship was hail'd at sea,
The self-same ship was she ;
She had pass'd the Cape
All well and safe,
All well as well could be !

And this was the only word,
Of tidings ever heard,
Of that noble barque,
Of high-class mark,
And her gallant crew on board !

And mothers' hearts have bled,
And lovers' eyes grown red ;
And sailor's wives
Have consum'd their lives,
In wonder and in dread—

In wonder, if the lost,
Were shipwreck'd on the coast,
Of some strange land—
A captive band
Amidst a savage host—

Of dread from day to day,
As long years roll'd away,
That the cruel wave
Of an ocean grave
Over their bodies lay.

God help those widows lone,
God hear that mother's moan,
As she thinks of her boy,
Her darling joy,
And hopes when hope is gone !

Nov. 1st, 1869.

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER.

The revolving lights of the lighthouse tower
Were lit at the nightfall's usual hour,
Which the bright reflectors flash'd with power
O'er the stormy deep below ;

For the wind had freshen'd to a gale,
And swept o'er the sea with a sullen wail,
Ill-boding every luckless sail
That landward held its prow.

The keeper, his task for the present done,
To his snug little cot hard by had gone,
O'erlooking the ocean's dreary zone,
Yet dry and warm within ;
And there, with his household gods around,
He ate and drank the good things he found,
As on Christmas-eve he was duly bound,
Without reproach or sin.

Darker and darker, grew the night,
Till the storm had reach'd its wildest height,
Hiding the rays of the beacon light,
And dimming it more and more,
When the boom of a gun from the surge below,
And a struggling rocket's feeble glow,
And a cry, that coast-guards too well know,
Told of a wreck ashore.

Short was the feast in the lighthouse cot,
And the Christmas evetide soon forgot,
As the inmates hurried to the spot,
Prompt to the rescue all.

Down the precipitous cliff they sped,
Down rope-ladders like links of thread,
Down to the beach's reefy bed,
Where the seething billows roll.

There, where the breakers go and come,
And round the headland flash and foam,—
Where the wild sea-birds make their home,
 In many a rocky cave ;
Three shipwrecked fishermen they found,
Shivering with cold, and almost drowned,—
Their shattered vessel fast aground,
 A prey to wind and wave.

Soon was the work of rescue done,
And ere the Christmas eve had gone,
Bright fires again in the cottage shone,—
 Again the feast began ;
Three husky seamen were the guests,
With grizzled beards, and bare, brown breasts,
Snatch'd from the billows' greedy crest,
 Grateful to God and man.

Christmas, 1875.

A MORNING LAY OF PATER FAMILIAS.

When the morning sun comes streaming,
Through my bedroom windows gleaming,
As, half musing, dozing, dreaming,
 On my couch I lie ;
Sweet it is to be awaken,
By a white arm fondly shaken,
And a soft voice (ne'er mistaken),
 Bidding slumbers fly.

Pleasant, too, the song of thrushes
In the garden trees and bushes,
As their music sweetly rushes
 O'er my drowsy ear ;
But, oh ! sweeter far the babble
Of that noisy infant rabble,
As it pours its ceaseless gabble
 From the nurs'ry near.

Pleasant, too, the sight of breakfast—
Comely wife, at tea-urn steadfast ;
Rosy children—every speck wash'd
 Off their shining faces ;
Snowy linen—tidy waiter—
Bread and butter, thin as wafer,
New-laid eggs, and—morning paper ;
 Coffee, hot as blazes !

What, though all the boys want breeching,
Booting, hatting, and school-teaching,
And the bigger ones are reaching
 Pocket-money age ;
What, though tailors' bills increasing,
Butchers', bakers', never ceasing,
And the servants ever teasing
 For advance of wage !

Have I not the consolation,
Of domestic regulation,
And conjugal approbation—
 Recompense for all ?

Have I not my Annie's kisses,
 And that precious babe's caresses
 (Sweetest of paternal blisses)
 Ever at my call!

Have I not, in daily pleasure,
 Measure meted out for measure,
 Treasure in exchange for treasure,
 Money's worth and more?
 Yes; let Cœlebs hoard his guineas
 For who'er his next of kin is,—
 Give me wife and piccaninnies—
 Never mind a score!

THE SIGNALMAN.

The signalman stands in his sentinel box
 In a dark, deep cutting, hewn out of the rocks,
 With a yawning tunnel nigh;
 Where the darkness of night grows darker still,
 And the fogs of winter, hang heavy and chill,
 And the baffled winds, blow hoarse and shrill
 When the hurricane rages by.

His duty to guard the junction points,
 Of the railway branch, with its maze of joints
 And labyrinth of lines;

To ply the signal that guides the train,—
As it plunges on, from branch to main,
Or from main to branch, on its course again—
Obedient to the signs.

Winter and summer, night and day,
In Stygian gloom or twilight grey,
To his watch he keepeth true ;
For well he knows, as he strains his eyes,
One little mistake, one slight surprise,
One turn amiss of the lever he plies,
And havoc and death ensue !

He lives in a cottage of bright red brick,
With a garden round—not far to seek,
When you've climb'd the cutting stairs :
Here dwell all his treasures and joys of earth,
His children and wife, in their sorrows or mirth—
The household gods of his peaceful hearth,
And solace of all his cares.

They bring him his meals at a certain hour,
When his turn is on, at the signal tower,
And he, the sole watchman there ;
And when the glad times of relief arrive,
He flies like a bee to his honey'd hive,
And thinks he's the happiest man alive,
With a home so near and dear.

Signalman ! signalman ! “ Watch and pray ”—
 This be thy motto by night and by day,
 For life and death are with thee !
 Enjoy thy home, as becomes thee most,
 But, Oh ! when on duty, at danger’s post,
 When care or neglect, means safe or lost
 To hundreds of souls, and thousands of cost—
 Watchful and prayerful be !

March 22nd, 1875.

THE STEAM-HAMMER.

DEDICATED TO THOSE LIVING IN ITS VICINITY.

Thud ! thud ! thud !
 Cough ! cough ! cough !
 Like a giant with an asthma,
 And a voice both hoarse and rough ;
 You hear the big Steam-hammer,
 Pounding at his mill ;
 Steady and slow, with measur’d blow,
 And a steel and iron will.

Thud ! thud ! thud !
 When eyes are heavy for sleep ;
 And cough ! cough ! cough !
 When the day begins to peep.
 Is it the fabled Vulcan,
 With his one-eyed Cyclops band,
 Forging the thunderbolts of Jove
 With never wearied hand ?

Would you view the giant—
Monster though he be—
Crushing ponderous ingots,
Terrible to see ?
Yet he can be gentle,
Tractable and mild,
And will crack a nut, or break an egg,
As softly as a child.

See his huge arm rising
At the prompter's call !
Yet a touch will turn it
And modulate the fall.
Such is all true greatness—
In the power of might,
Ready to do a little thing
If only it be right.

Thud ! thud ! thud !
See what it has wrought !
Fortune upon fortune,
Hammer'd out of nought ;
Almshouses and churches,—
Palaces and parks,
And everywhere prosperity
The product of its sparks !

Cough ! cough ! cough !
Through the midnight deep,
It is earning thousands
While the owners sleep ;

It is toiling for a nation
 And all the world beside ;
 For railways, ships, and arsenals,
 O'er lands and oceans wide !

Let it thud and thunder—
 Let it cough and groan—
 Though our rest be broken
 We will not bemoan,
 But honour the steam giant—
 The Vulcan of our time ;
 No myth of old mythology,
 But a working power sublime !

June 25, 1874.

A STREET CHARACTER,
 DAILY VISIBLE.

A little old man, with a sallow face
 And a shrivell'd, parchment skin,
 With a batter'd hat, and a seedy coat,
 And an apron up to his chin,—
 Stands all day long by the Railway Arch,
 Selling his simple wares—
 Butter-scotch, toffy, and India rock,
 On a wooden tray he bears.

Winter and summer, there he stands,
 Counting his half-penny gains,
With an ancient gig umbrella,
 To shelter him when it rains ;
Around him you will often see,
 Stray loungers of the street,
For he is a public character
 Whom idlers love to meet.

And you will hear him there descant
 On politics and laws—
Trades unions, and workmen's strikes—
 Their remedy, and cause ;
For while he has been standing there
 These fifteen years or more,
He has studied human nature well,
 And gather'd wisdom's lore.

Go ask him how his business pays—
 He answers with a smile,
“ Although the dividends are small,
 Thank God, *they're free of guile* ;
A *honest* shilling day by day
 Is as much as it can do—
But on Saturdays, a trifle more
 To serve for Sunday too.

“ My wants are few ; I eat and drink
 As much as does me good ;
There's more folks kill'd by *over much*
 Than *over little* food.

I'm better off than many men
With wages ten times told—
I've neither servant, wife, nor child
To worry me or scold.

“ I live in lodgings near at hand,
At half-a-crown a week,
Including fire on winter nights
And what small help I seek ;
But that, thank God, I seldom want,
Altho' I'm nigh fourscore,
For I have rarely ache or pain,
And of health a perfect store.

“ It's better earning something here,
Altho' it be but small,
Than moping, upon parish pay,
Or in the Workhouse thrall ;
And long as I have strength to stand,
I'll struggle on alone,
And gain a living for myself,
Dependent upon none.”

God help thee, valiant little man !
I never see thy form,
Thy stoic face, and placid mien,
Serene amid the storm—
But I think of the great goodness
Of compensating Heaven
That to friendless age and poverty
So much content has given.

Though I do not say I envy thee
 Thy humble lot and part,
 Yet I envy much, thy patient soul,
 Thy brave enduring heart ;
 And I learn from thee a lesson
 Of manly toil and trust,
 To make the best of circumstance
 And own God's dealings just.

May 15th, 1874.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Once more the merry Christmas bells
 Ring out their cheerful chime,
 While every pealing echo tells
 Another stroke of time ;—
 Another circle of the wheel,
 So rapid, that we scarcely feel
 The flight when it is o'er.
 Thus do the years go whirling on—
 Another and another gone,
 Till human destiny be done
 And Time shall be no more !

Again the happy groups we meet,
 In holiday array,
 In every lane and every street
 Where'er our footsteps stray ;
 Some hast'ning to the House of Prayer,
 To hear the day's glad anthem there,
 And swell the strains above :—

On walks of health and pleasure, some,
Or visits to their childhood's home,
Where once a year they go and come—
A pilgrimage of love !

The holly and the mistletoe
Once more, as wont, are seen,
And bud and bloom where'er you go
In everlasting green ;
Fit emblems of the Christmas time,
Of Friendship, in her verdant prime,—
Of Love's unfading hue !
Of Life, amid surrounding death,
Of Hope, still blossoming beneath
The chilly winter's icy breath,
And promising anew !

Around each home's enliven'd hearth
Accustom'd faces meet,
And hearts unite in cheerful mirth,
And friendly voices greet ;
And Christmas rites are there renew'd,
The old, old customs that have stood
The lapse of ages past ;
And healths are drunk and carols sung,
And stories told by old and young,
And care from every brow is flung
While the fleet moments last !

And yet, how many a tender thought
Will steal among the train,
How many a recollection, fraught
With sadness and with pain !
What visions of the past disclose—
What gushing memories of those,
That now in church-yard lie !
Whose lov'd familiar faces long,
Commingle with our happy throng,
And shared the anecdote and song
Of Christmas days gone by !

“ A merry Christmas ! ” so the words
Of welcome pass around,
And children's voices catch the chords,
And swell the joyful sound ;
But ah, how many still there are
On whom the words untimely jar,
With mockery of tone !
Whose joys have fled—whose clouded sky
Has not a ray to cheer the eye—
Whose laugh has ended in a sigh,
And mirth for ever gone !

But some there are, nor few indeed,
Who would be happy yet,
Could they but eat the honest bread
That industry might get ;

But cruel Fate has shut the door—
 There is no work for starving poor,
 The brand is on their brow ;
 For them no Christmas cheer is spread—
 No sparkling wine—there's scarcely bread
 For the poor children that in bed
 For warmth have crowded now !

Oh, ye who live in Plenty's Hall
 And share in Dives' lot,
 Whom Want nor Poverty befall,
 And Famine knoweth not !
 Remember Lazarus in rags,
 Who hungry and a-weary drags
 His feet unto your door ;
 Forget not Destitution's claim—
 The widow's lot—the orphan's name,
 The poor—the sick—the blind—the lame,
 And Heav'n will bless your store !

SEA-SIDE MEDITATIONS.

Here in this grot—in this cool, grateful shade
 On Scarbro's cliff,—beneath the Esplanade,—
 Where art and nature vie, in pleasing strife,
 To yield mankind the sweetest joys of life ;
 O'erlooking far the wide expanse below,
 Of land and water—ocean's ebb and flow ;—
 The placid bay, speck'd o'er with many a sail,
 That flit like sea-birds, as they catch the gale ;

The yellow sands, with the blithe baby throng,
 The weedy rocks, and glassy pools among,
 Where Flora's treasures of the ocean bloom—
 Each a museum and aquarium ;
 The glittering spa—its terraces and towers,
 Its winding walks, and paradise of flowers ;
 Sooth'd by the melodies of yonder band
 Playing below—harmoniously grand ;
Here let me linger through the summer days
 In lazy attitude, devoid of grace,—
 Here, while away the fervid, sultry hours
 Till the hot sun has spent his raging powers ;
 And calmly meditate on men and things,—
 On human joys and human sufferings,
 Of all the varied phases that we see
 Around us here, of life's complexity.

.
 I hold a book, but do not care to read,—
 The Book of Nature is my only need ;
 "The noblest study of mankind is man,"
 I'll study him—and his fair partner scan.

.
 There goes the crowd!—the fashionable crowd,—
 The rich, the poor, the humble and the proud,
 The gay, the sad, the feeble and the strong,
 The tottering old, the buoyant, bounding young ;
 The gouty sire, the convalescent child,
 The ruddy boy, with jovial spirits wild,

The blooming bride, in beauty's brightest blush,
The tender maid, ting'd with the hectic flush
And skin transparent—unmistaken sign
Of lurking mischief—treacherous decline.
Here comes a portly squire, with pompous gait,
And here a parson, sable and sedate ;
There goes a city magnate, grave and grim,
Walking as though the world were made for him :
Here lovers come and flirt beneath the shade,
Talking sweet nonsense, as the vows are made ;
Some in the richest robes of fashion come,
And oft, alas ! in badge of mourning *some* ;
Each with their joys and griefs—their hopes and fears,
Unseen anxieties, and unshed tears.

.
Those ships at sea ! how lazily they glide—
They scarcely seem to move—but with the tide
To drift like we, to regions all unknown ;
Yet ere the night comes they will all be gone.
How fair they seem ! how peaceful and serene !
Yet, could we see the inner life within,
We scarce should wish that ocean life to share
With the wild crews that toil in danger there.
And now there comes a steamer ! see the trail
Of smoke behind her, like a comet's tail ;
Unlike the ships, she presses on her line
With steady aim and resolute design ;
Would we could imitate her purpose true,
And strive the course of duty to pursue—

Put on the steam, and trust not to the gale
Of fickle fortune, to inflate our sail.

* * * * *

Here, on my right, the ancient castle stands,
On its bold rock, uprising from the sands,
Its massive wall and rugged turret high
Stretching an outline clear against the sky ;
Could it but tell the history of its time !
Those feudal days when it was in its prime,
When its grim dungeons were in daily use ;
Ah ! what a theme of terror it would choose,
Of bygone cruelties, when might was right,
And Norman tyranny was at its height !
There to the left—that promontory's neck—
Runs "Filey Brigg," the scene of many a wreck ;
Where many a home-bound mariner has found,
The native rocks he'd cross'd the ocean round
To see and reach once more, become the tomb
Of his own grave, and hurry him to doom,
After a thousand foreign perils passed,
And all he hoped for, was in sight at last.

* * * * *

Those crested waves ! that dash upon the beach,
And madly fret themselves to overreach
Their neighbours—and the limits of their span,—
How they remind me of ambitious man,
Who seeks to pass the orbit of his power,
And tread on ground he cannot hold an hour—

Like those wild waves, he ventures at the shock,
 Makes a bold leap, and breaks upon the rock !

* * * * *

“ Blow, gentle gales,” ye ocean breezes blow !
 Fan this hot cheek, and this perspiring brow ;
 Pierce the thick umbrage of this green arcade,
 And give me air to breathe, as well as shade ;
 And ofttimes in the sultry summer days,
 When I return to crowded city ways,
 I’ll think of Scarbro’s labyrinthine bowers—
 Her glittering spa, and terraces, and towers,
 And the “ cool grot ” where I so oft reclined,
 And gave these meditations to the wind.

July 21st, 1869.

L I T T L E H A R R Y .

ÆTAT III.

Harry, Harry, tiny treasure,
 Never-tiring toy !
 While thy pleasure knows no measure,
 Be our daily joy ;
 While the roses on thy cheek
 Ne’er a blemish show,
 And the lily hath no speck,
 On thy marble brow.

While the longings of thy life,
Centre all in home,
And the cares of future strife
Are as yet to come :
Would that thou couldst ever be
Just as thou art now,
And no clouds of sorrow see—
No misfortunes know.

Harry, of the golden hair,
And the hazel eyes,
Lips so red, and limbs so fair—
White as ivory !
May thy duty, like thy beauty,
Steadfast be, and sure ;
May thy smile be, e'er as guile-free,
And thy thoughts as pure.

Little doth he comprehend
All the love we bear him ;
How, each day, our prayers ascend,
That kind Heaven may spare him.
Little cares he, what our prayers be,
Long as he can play ;
Romp and ramble, climb and scramble,
Through the live-long day.

Puzzles, skittles, Noah's ark,
Bricks (not made of clay),
Wooden horses, stiff and stark,
BROKEN every day ;

Picture books of " Poor Cock Robin,"
Cinderella's blisses,
Set his little heart a throbbing
More than all our kisses.

Music, too, hath charms for him—
Singing, his delight ;
" Happy Land," and " Rosseau's Dream "
Lull him every night ;
And when twilight's shadows flee—
Light succeeding dark—
" Not for Joseph," chirrup he,
Wakeful as the lark !

Fitful, fickle, not a little
Wilful and mischievous,—
Shy and haughty, often naughty,
Careless how he grieves us ;
But, as sunshine follows shower,—
Calm, the stormy blast—
So his smiles have double power
When the cloud has pass'd.

And should sickness overtake him,
How we guard his rest !
Fearful lest a footfall wake him,
Or a wind molest ;
How alternate hope and fear
Buys us, or depresses,—
Now a smile, and now a tear,
Mingling our caresses.

And when hope at length assures us,
 We have won the fight,
 And returning health allures us
 Back to life's delight ;
 Ah ! those hours of convalescence,
 With the new bought toys ;
 How their soothing reminiscence,
 Hallows all our joys !

Little Harry, naughty Harry,
 Mischief-loving sprite,
 May the fun-gleams, of thy sunbeams
 Never grow less bright !
 And when manhood creepeth o'er thee—
 Golden childhood pass'd,—
 May the love, that we have for thee
 Linger to the last !

* "SPRING, SPRING, GENTLE SPRING."

NEW WORDS TO A POPULAR SONG.

"Spring, spring, gentle spring !"
 Ah, what stuff the poets write ;
 Yet, when pretty minstrels sing,
 How we listen with delight !
 Though we're shivering the while,
 Crouching near a blazing pile,

* The bitter Spring of 1873, when coal was at fabulous prices, and this song just come out.

As though Christmas were the season,
And hard coal a price in reason ;
Elements, in constant strife,
East winds, cutting like a knife,
Storms of snow and hail and sleet,
Whirling round you in a sheet ;—
“ Spring, spring, gentle spring !”
Do ye call this a gentle thing ?

Coughs and colds, and pains rheumatic,
Toothache, chronic, or emphatic,
Gout, neuralgia, and tic,
Bronchial tubes inflam'd and thick,
Influenza—sore throat,
Boils, carbuncles, and what not ?
Nerves unstrung, and liver wrong,
Say, is this a time for song ?
“ Spring, spring, gentle spring !”
Ah, ye wicked, mocking sprites,
How ye laugh while thus ye sing,
Of our English May's delights.

Cold within and cold without,
Domiciles turn'd inside out,—
Carpets up, and curtains down,
All things topsy-turvy thrown ;
Paperers here,—upholsterers there,—
Paint and whitewash everywhere—
Bedlam loose through all the household,
Scarce a room that would a mouse hold ;

Women in their element,—
 Masters in bewilderment,
 Seeking refuge at their club
 From the everlasting “scrub ;”
 And all this because “ ’tis spring.
 “ Spring, spring, gentle spring !”
 Ah, ye mocking sprites who sing,
 Do ye call this a gentle thing ?

April 30th, 1873.

IN MEMORIAM.

THOMAS SALE, D.D., CANON OF YORK.

“ Friend after friend departs ”—link after link
 Is sever'd from the chain that binds us here ;
 And each recurring wrench brings back the fear
 That those still left may snap, ere we can think.
 Toll, muffled bells ! ye mournful organs, peal
 Your saddest dirge—your deepest swelling strain !
 A Saul is dead—a king amongst us slain ;
 Vicar of Christ, in office, as in zeal !
 High-soul'd, large-hearted, with elastic mind
 That knew no narrow limits to its scope,
 But shar'd the sympathies of all mankind,
 While clear and steadfast in its own sure hope.
 Christian and scholar—gentleman and priest,
 Honour'd, and lov'd by all—his memory shall be blest !

Sept. 21st, 1873.

PEACE AND WAR.*

The hills were purple with the vine,
The valleys red with harvest sign,
The wine-press waiting for the wine,
 The garner for the grain ;
The peasantry, with hook and knife,
Were ready for the peaceful strife,
Of gathering the food of life,
 Kind Heaven had sent again.

But while the God of Peace was there,
Smiling upon the scene so fair,
Bestowing blessings everywhere,
 On that fair land of sun,
The demon War broke o'er the land,
Attended by his hellish band,
With all their devilries in hand—
 Sword, bayonet, and gun !

How changed ! How hideous the sight !
A million souls in deadly fight,
Waging the war of might and right,
 Like savages of old !
Turning the vineyard and the wood,
To reeking shambles, hot with blood,
That crimson dyed the crystal flood
 Which through the valley roll'd.

* Written on the outbreak of War between France and Germany in the summer of 1870.

And far and wide across the plain,
 From Rhineland mountains to Champagne,
 And thy fair province, loved Lorraine,
 The ghastly slaughter spread ;
 And all that industry had raised,
 And all that virtue ever praised,
 Was ravaged, pillaged, burnt, or razed,
 And mingled with the dead !

Oh, men of Europe ! will ye be
 For ever slaves, and never free,
 Tools of despotic tyranny,
 The puppets of a game ?
 Renounce the call ! Deny the right,
 That ye for Monarchs' whims must fight,
 To prop the throne, or prove the might,
 Of Dynasty and Name !

August 29, 1870.

WRECK OF THE NORTHFLEET.*

The *Northfleet* at her anchors lay,
 With home's dear shore in sight,
 And her twenty score of human freight,
 Were cabined for the night ;
 The signal lamp was swung aloft,
 The nightwatch duly set,
 And all was snug, and taut, and safe,
 When squall and darkness met.

* An Australian emigrant ship, run down, as she lay at anchor in Dungeness Bay, in the year 1872, by the Spanish steamer "Murillo."

Four hundred anxious, hopeful souls
She had within her hold,
Mothers and wives, and little ones,
And brides a few weeks told !
And sturdy men of iron mould—
Well skilled with pick and spade—
Whose bones, and brains, and sinews strong,
A precious cargo made.

For they were bound ten thousand miles,
Across the Eastern seas,
To carry England's iron roads,
To her antipodes ;
And hope, and trust, and confidence
Were theirs that fatal night,
As in their berths they thought of home,
And future visions bright.

A shout—a crash—a loud hallo—
A shock like cannon's boom,
A wild, disordered rush on deck,
A struggle in the gloom ;
God help them all ! full soon the truth,
The hideous truth, was known—
A steamer's bow had struck the ship,
And she was going down.

Then rose the captain to his post—
Equal to danger's hour—
With death before him (and his bride),
Yet strong in valour's power ;

And the brave crew, with dauntless hearts,
 Stood by him to the last,
Nor thought of safety to themselves,
 Till every hope was past.

And then, alas ! the frantic fear
 Of panic-stricken men,
Unused to perils of the sea
 And ocean discipline ;
And women's wail, and children's cries,
 Were borne upon the gale,
But ne'er an answering voice was heard,
 Or reassuring hail !

The dastard steamer slunk away
 When she had struck the blow,
Like an assassin in the dark,
 Deaf to its victim's woe ;
Then down the noble *Northfleet* went,
 With all its human freight ;
Down through the yawning gulf it sank,
 And none to see the sight.

Hushed were the cries ; the cruel waves
 Smothered them ere they rose ;—
And only now and then the shriek
 Of some hard swimmer's throes—
As here and there a straggler clung,
 To ladder, spar, or plank,
And held awhile, in grim despair,
 Till overpowered, he sank.

One boat alone escaped the wreck,
With cargo small and frail ;
Of the four hundred, scarce a fifth
Were spared to tell the tale.
The captain's wife, the youthful bride,
Was one among the few ;
But *he*, the lion-hearted " Knowles,"
Went down with ship and crew.

THE DEAD YEAR !

A SONNET.

With thunder, lightning, snow, and angry blast,
And driving sleet, and wild tempestuous rain,
The grim Old Year dies, blustering to the last,
Like a fierce giant in his anger slain.
Short though his time, and limited his reign,
What a wide world of mischief has he wrought !
What dire disasters following his train
At home, abroad, on men and nations brought !
Famine, and pestilence, and bloody war—
Tornado, earthquake, hurricane, and storm,
Panic and anarchy in every form,
Commercial ruin, and rebellion's jar !
Ah ! what a year of misery and woe
Lies buried 'neath this winding-sheet of snow !

Dec. 31, 1866.

THE ANGLER'S SONG OF THE SPRING.

When the western breezes blow
Softly o'er the rippling stream ;
When the sun begins to glow
Every day with brighter beam ;
When the cock is heard to crow,
Early, as we lie in bed,
And the milkmaid's song below,
And the skylark's over head ;

When the cowslip scents the mead,
And the blue-bell yields delight,
And from every bank proceed
Odours sweet and colours bright ;
When the warblers of the grove,
(Wanderers and strangers some),
By their joyful music prove,
Winter fled, and summer come ;

When the corncrake calls at eve,
And the cuckoo "mocks" by day,
And beneath the cottage eave
To and fro the swallows stray ;
When the flies of May are out,
Hov'ring o'er the treach'rous stream,
And the eager-rising trout
Glance beneath the sun's broad beam ;

Then to our delightful sport,
 By the margin of the flood,
 With deceits of every sort
 To allure the finny brood,—
 Light of step and gay of heart,
 Happy, joyous anglers, we
 At the early dawn resort,
 Blithely whistling o'er the lea.

Merrily, oh, merrily,
 Our fond pastime we pursue ;
 And our souls in harmony
 With the glorious scenes we view,
 We will happy, happy be,
 Oblivescient of the past,
 And from every care be free,
 While the blissful moments last !

 THE PASSING BELL.

Walking on a summer's evening beside a suburban church-yard, the writer was startled by the sudden toll of the Passing Bell. Arriving at his friend's house, where was the clergyman with a number of parishioners, he asked for whom the bell was tolling at that late hour. No one being able to tell him, the following lines were suggested, as he returned musingly homewards :—

Hark ! 'tis the Passing Bell, tolling the news,
 Somebody dead ! somebody gone !
 Seeking a resting place under the yews,
 Here in the Church-yard, lowly and lone,
 With a sod and a stone,
 To shelter his head from the night-falling dews.

Solemnly, solemnly, breaks the dull sound,
O'er the still night, at intervals slow ;
Hushing the birds, that in concert around,
Were joyously singing from every bough
Their eventide flow,
Till hushed by the death-knell to silence profound.

And who is the missing one gone to his rest ?
Nobody knows, nobody cares !
Some poor parishioner—fameless at best—
One of the many whose worldly affairs,
Trouble no heirs,
And barely suffice to pay sexton and priest.

Has he no mourners—children or wife,
To weep o'er his grave, and sorrow for one
Whose strong arm sustained them in poverty's strife ?
Or was he an old man, living alone,
Surrounded by none,—
Who long had outlived the companions of life ?

What were his sufferings ? How did he die ?
Was he alone in the chamber of death ?
Or had he compassionate friends standing by,
Whisp'ring kind words and upholding his faith,
While he drew his last breath,
And closed for ever his death-clouded eye ?

Let the bell toll ! 'tis the first and the last,
From cradle to grave ever sounded for him !
And lay him in peace, where the trees overcast
Their quietest shadows, solemnly dim,—
To dream his last dream,
And only to wake at the Archangel's blast.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN HALL AND COT.

The guests are assembled in Blythesome Hall,
 And tables are spread from wall to wall,
 In festival array ;
 The mistletoe hangs in its wonted place,
 And holly and laurel each window grace,
 While gaiety shines in every face,
 All welcoming the day.

 Lone the cot, and darkly drear,
 That bleak December morn ;
 And scanty signs of Christmas cheer,
 Its gloomy hearth adorn.
 No lively holly decks the wall,
 Nor mistletoe on high ;
 No plenteous larder to recall
 The day's festivity.

The dinner is served at the rich man's board,
 And the gladsome guests with one accord
 Sit down to the gay repast ;
 And little think they of the world of care,
 As they eat and drink of the sumptuous fare,
 Viands so rich, and wines so rare,
 With plenty to the last.

 Dinnerless and breakfastless
 The poor man's children lay,
 In hunger, rags, and wretchedness,
 All through the Christmas-day.

Their father has been out of work
For fifteen weeks or more,
And mother, overdone with work,
Is lying at death's door.

The banquet is over in Blythesome Hall,
The lights are all lit, and the curtains fall
On the dark'ning world without ;
And now for the carol and Christmas song,
Riddles and games for both old and young,
Kept up without ceasing the whole night long,
Till Christmas again dies out.

Drearily and dismally
The evening shadows close,
Around that lonely family,
Forgotten in their woes.
The wretched fire is out at last,
And long has ceased to warm ;
While bitterly the cruel blast
Creeps round each shivering form.

Oh ye, whose happier lot is cast
Within the joyful hall—
Whose merry Christmas will be pass'd
In feast and festival—
Think of the hardships of the cot,
The starving, suffering poor ;
And soothe the sorrows of their lot,
From your abundant store !

CHATS WORTH.

WRITTEN AFTER A VISIT ON WHIT-MONDAY, THIRTY
YEARS AGO.

Hail, Palace of the mountains !
 Hail, land of wood and flowers !
 Of rills and sunny fountains !
 Of groves and fairy bowers !
 Of hills, and vales, and rocky dells,
 Enchanted by a thousand spells,
 Of landscapes bright and gay,—
 Whose varied scenery among,
 The silver Derwent winds along,
 Its mead-meandering way !

Ah ! with what charms attended,
 Hath Nature's lovely Queen,
 With Art here sweetly blended
 To grace the glowing scene :
 The stately Hall,—the rising wood,—
 The placid lake,—the mountain flood,
 The rich luxuriant mead ;
 And Park, wherein the wandering deer
 In herds gregarious appear
 Beneath the sylvan shade !

Here Flora, too, hath chosen
 Her fair and honour'd seat,
 With lavish hand disclosing
 Her beauties at thy feet ;

“ MAN WANTS BUT LITTLE.”

From east, from west, from lands afar,
 Where flowers the radiant landscape star,
 And gem the shining plain ;
 Here, to this highly favour'd spot,
 The first and fairest she hath brought,
 Of all her glittering train !

Ah ! lovely scenes ! what grandeur
 And beauty ye display :
 Where'er my footsteps wander,
 Fresh charms adorn the way !
 Where'er I turn my feasting eyes,
 New prospects there before me rise
 With bright and varied gleam ;
 So rich, so fairy-like,—the whole
 Would seem to my enraptured soul
 The phantom of a dream !

“ MAN WANTS BUT LITTLE.”

A NEW VERSION.

“ Man wants but little here below,
 Nor wants that little long,”—
 Food, raiment, and a little gold
 Just interspersed among.

A few odd thousands, all I ask
 As yearly income *sure* ;
 I scorn the greed of paltry pelf,
 Yet care not to be poor !

A humble cot outside the town—
A dozen rooms will do,—
With a few roods of garden ground,
And stabling—say for two.

A modest dog-cart for myself,
A brougham for my wife ;
I only want *necessities*,
No luxuries of life !

A plate of soup, a slice of fish,
A cutlet or a steak,—
A pudding, and a crumb of cheese,
My frugal dinner make.

A glass of Hock or Burgundy,
I mind not *much* the sort,
To wash my dinner down, and then
Some two or three of port !

Indulgences I hold aloof,
And all that injures health ;
A meerschaum, or a mild cigar
Is more to me than wealth !

Simple my tastes—a trip to town,
Just once a year—in May ;
A month in August at the sea,
My only holiday !

A rural life two days a week
 Will give my heart content ;
 With rod and gun, and liberty,
 To rove where'er I'm bent.

I care not for the pomps of life—
 They are but vanity !
 A concert, play, and opera,
 Are quite enough for me.

A dinner party now and then,
 A casual supper-night,—
 Will just suffice, to show my friends
 I'm not a hermit quite.

Thus, let me live in mood serene,
 From vain ambitions free ;
 I envy not the proud and rich,
 Nor poorer would I be !

HADDON HALL.

A SKETCH—DESCRIPTIVE OF A SCENE WHICH TOOK
 PLACE JUNE 15TH, 1849.

'Twas noon ;—and Sol's meridian ray
 Gleam'd on old Haddon's ruin grey ;
 Each dusky tower, each gloomy height,
 Was bathed in floods of golden light,
 Whose radiant beams, of lightsome hue,
 Around the pile their lustre threw ;

Flinging anon its sombre shade,
In darker contrast, o'er the glade,
Where, deeply shadowed in the grass,
It lay, an elongated mass,
Stretching its prostrate limbs afar,
Like a huge giant slain in war,
Till in the Wye's adjacent flood,
Broken at last, the image stood.

But not alone was Haddon's pile
Illumin'd by the sunbeam's smile,—
Not only turrets, walls, and towers,
But woods, and streams, and fields, and bowers
All shared the glorious god of day,
And gladden'd in his bounteous ray!
Above, dark groves of ancient trees,
Wav'd their green branches in the breeze;
Below, the Wye's meandering stream,
Gush'd through the mead with silvery gleam;
Around, as far as eye could view
The landscape glow'd with brightest hue:
The rocky glen, the rising wood,
The smiling vale, and crystal flood,
The towering hills of moorland heath,
And peaceful hamlets couch'd beneath,
All, gaily garbed in summer's dress,
Shone forth, mid Nature's loveliness,
And blended, in one beauteous view,
Colours of every shade and hue.

But Haddon saw another sight,
By the same sun's discursive light ;
For while the noontide splendour shone
O'er the horizon's glittering zone,
Stray wandering beams anon would pass,
The narrow casement's clouded glass,
Gliding through gallery and hall,—
Scaring the bats on roof and wall ;
But when at length they pierced the gloom,
That filled the ancient banquet room,
(Where, ages past, the proud and great
Of England's barons ruled the fête,
But where the tattered tap'stry now
A melancholy change doth show),
Strange was the scene those beams beheld ;
Strange was the picture they reveal'd !
No longer desolate and void,
The room was filled from side to side—
The tables set, the banquet spread,
The ample sirloin at the head,
The dishes filled with fruit and kine,
The goblets crown'd with ruddy wine ;
While round the ancient room of state,
As fair a company there sate,
As Haddon in her proudest day,
E'er saw at wake or holiday ;
Nor ever till that hour, I ween,
Was such a group of beauty seen :

The maidens all, like rosebuds rare,
Were beautiful, and passing fair,—
The matrons too, with charms mature,
Failed not to dazzle and allure ;
While both, on that eventful day,
Held, as of old, triumphant sway ;
And as they sat around the board,
Methought the grim and bearded lord,
Whose picture hung upon the wall,
Smiled, as he looked down on them all ;
Wond'ring, no doubt, again to see
Such scenes of life and gaiety,
And hear the blythe and merry strain
Of human voices once again,
Filling the halls with festive roar,
As in the feudal days of yore ;
When he, perchance, the living lord,
Presided at the welcome board,
And saw around, on every hand,
The first and fairest of the land,
Join in the merriment and glee
Of English hospitality.

But, as he gazed, with kindling eye,
The vision changed as rapidly ;
Awhile, the merry sounds were heard,
Awhile, the busy footsteps stirr'd,
Awhile, the gay and happy throng
Filled the old hall with laugh and song ;

Then all was hushed : the clanging door
Creak'd on its rusty hinge no more ;
The music and the laugh were quelled,
And solitude sole empire held ;
The merry company had fled,
And all was silent as the dead !
Again the ancient room of state
Was left all void and desolate ;
The owlet and the bat again
Resumed their interrupted reign,
And the grim picture on the wall
Was left sole tenant of the Hall !

CHRISTMAS EVE—AT HOME AND ABROAD.

DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR.

'Tis snowing fast, 'tis freezing hard,
The ground is covered quite ;
And icicles hang in the yard—
The trees are robed in white.

The boys are sliding in the street,
And welcoming the snow ;
And careful walkers watch their feet,
To save their heads a blow.

The timid horses slowly creep,
And eye the treacherous road ;
And riders look before they leap,
And spare the accustom'd goad.

Strong artizans are trudging home,
Laden with Christmas fare ;
And thrifty wives with baskets roam,
To markets cheap and rare.

Within the cottage, warm and bright,
The yule log blazes high,
And happy faces greet the sight
Of the round Christmas pie.

The grandsire in the corner sits,
Quaffing his evening ale ;
And Kitty sings and sighs by fits,
Till granny ends her tale.

The restless children romp all night,
And long for Christmas morn ;
For they have learnt a carol light,
To sing on its return ;

And long ere darkness quits the skies,
By starlight's glimmering ray,
O'er the smooth snow and slippery ice
Their busy feet will stray,

Wishing to all who hear the sound,
A merry Christmas time,
And waking all the neighbours round
With their rude carol rhyme.

Within the rich man's spacious hall
The festive board is spread,
And o'er the wassail's reeking bowl
The social hours are sped.

And hospitality is rife
In every house and heart,
And everywhere performs the knife
A serviceable part.

Such is the Christmas eventide
In favour'd Albion's isle ;
Such are the customs that abide
Where peace and plenty smile.

But ah !—not such 'twill be to those,
Of England's gallant braves,
Amid Crimea's dreary snows,
Or stormy Euxine's waves.

No smiling home, no guarded hearth,
No peaceful pastime theirs ;
No sounds of joy or festive mirth,
From hearts that know not cares.

Instead of these, starvation, want—
The scowling fiends of war ;
Grim-visaged death, and sickness gaunt,
And bloody slaughter's jar !

A fearful Christmas will be theirs—
God grant that it were past !
And send an answer to our prayers
That this may be the last.

And when another Christmas comes,
With all its welcome train,
Safe in their happy English homes
May they be found again !

December, 1854.

THE BATTLE OF "BLEND'EM," *alias* THE
"COALITION."

FOUGHT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 3, 1857.

A new Version of Southey's "Battle of Blenheim."

'Twas early in the morning,
When Cobden's work was done,
For he had been hard fighting,
Ere rising of the sun ;
And at the breakfast-table he,
Was telling all about
His victory in parliament,
And ministerial rout.

" Ah ! 'twas a glorious sight," says he,
" Which none will e'er forget,
And 'twould have done you good to see
How on old Pam we set ;
And how, besieg'd, he stood at bay,
And dared us to come on,
Thinking that, single-handed, he
Could fight us, one by one."

" Then at him one and all of us,
In front, and flank, and rear,
Peelites and Derb'ites, Whigs and Rads,
Commingling did appear ;
On every side we compass'd him,
And pinn'd him close and fast,
'Till forced by numbers to give in,
Hard fighting to the last."

- " Well, 'twas a very shameful thing,"
 Says little Peterkin,
 A bright-eyed, curly-headed boy,
 Who sat there listening.
- " What had he done amiss, good sir,
 That you should all unite,
 To overcome this brave old man,
 Do tell me—was it right?"
- " Why, as to what he did amiss,
 I cannot well relate,
 Except that he was minister
 And premier of the state ;
 So that's why we did fight him,
 And whether right or wrong,
 It was a famous victory,
 Which doth to me belong !"
- " But was not this Lord Palmerston,
 Whom you have thus turned out,
 The same, that in the Russian war,
 I heard so much about,
 Who was the only statesman *true*
 In England's hour of need,
 And safely brought her back to peace
 With honour and with speed ?"
- " Yes, 'tis the very self-same man ;
 But that is past and done,
 And now that all the fighting's o'er,
 'Tis time that he was gone ;

For we are *men of peace*, you know,
 And he's a *man of war* ;
 He's had his day—so we want ours,
 For we are strongest far."

" Well, after all, it seems to me
 A very shabby thing,
 And, what is worse, ungrateful too,"
 Says Master Peterkin.

" Why, that's as people think, my boy ;
 But this I know full well—
 I've won a glorious victory,
 As history will tell !"

BEN RHYDDING.

*Written after a short Visit to a Friend there, undergoing
 the Water Cure under the care of the then
 Principal, Dr. Macleod.*

Oh, stranger! hast thou ever seen that wonderful
 establishment
 Which crowns Ben Rhydding's rugged heights with
 every Gothic blandishment,
 Whose lofty towers and pinnacles, and gables multitu-
 dinous,
 And winding walks and terraces, high climbing, altitu-
 dinous,
 Proclaim the mansion widely known, for treatment
 hydropathical,
 Where man and nature both combine, to make the
 treatment practical?

Oh, if thou hast not, stranger, then, when next thou
fallest sick again,
Be sure and visit that sweet place, and leave it not too
quick again ;
And thou wilt find a perfect cure for every ailment
physical,
If only thou wilt work in faith, and be not over
quizzical,
And do the bidding of the learned Doctor who presideth
there,
And eat the food with grateful heart that he so well
provideth there,
And drink the water, fresh from spring, each morn a
brimming tumblerful,
And do the “douche,” and “dripping sheet”—don’t
mind the shock—’tis wonderful !—
The early drill, the noontide “pack,” the evening
“spout” adown the back,
Oh, if you are not cured by that, your case is very
brown, alack !
But ’tis a very charming place ; such is the verdict
pass’d on it ;
Cold mutton’s not *so very bad*, when breaking a long
fast on it.
The morning walk and mountain air will sharpen well
your appetite,
And what at home you’d think poor fare you there will
welcome with delight.

Then you have pleasing company, the choicest of
 society—
 Fair ladies to play croquet with, and games of all
 variety ;
 And gentlemen of every grade—professors, artists,
 millionaires ;
 And if excitement you require, you've but to join the
 billiard players ;
 Oh, 'tis a very charming place,—such is the verdict
 pass'd on it,
 —Cold mutton is not *very bad*, when breaking a long
 fast on it.

September, 1864.

O U R N E W R O O K E R Y .

AT OSGATHORPE, THE RESIDENCE OF W. WAKE, ESQ.

Not in the forest glade, or lonely wood
 Where giant oaks for centuries have stood ;
 Not in some belted copse, that skirts a park,
 Where towering elms a neighbouring mansion mark ;
 But, hard by a crowded city,
 Where the tumult knows no pity,
 And a thousand hammers braying,
 And a hundred engines playing,
 Shrieking, hissing, throbbing, groaning,
 Like a Pandemonium's moaning,
 Night and day, and day and night,
 Din our ears without respite—

Here, wandering Arabs of the tribe of rook,
 Have rear'd their nests amid the noise and smoke ;
 A young establishment of recent date—
 Perchance the founders of a new estate :

And each morn we hear their clatter,
 As they caw, and scream, and chatter,
 Rousing us at early dawning,
 As we lie in bed a-yawning,
 Filling us with rural fancies,
 Wake or sleeping, as the chance is,
 Ruling, for a while, the clamour
 Of old Vulcan's ceaseless hammer.

Whence come they, these new colonists of ours ?
 Are they " Adullamites " from other bowers,
 Reformers, Radicals, and discontents,
 Seceders from their tribe's ancestral tents ?

Or, come they from yonder farm,
 Exiles, driven in alarm,
 By the Railway's rude invasion
 Of their ancient habitation,
 Undermining its foundation
 With a tunnel's desecration,
 And the subterranean noises
 In which Pluto p'rhaps rejoices,
 But which rooks of ancient lineage
 Shun with horror—and a scrimmage ?

Where'er they come from matters not to tell ;
 Exiles or outcasts, we will greet them well,
 Guard them from peril, and protect their young,
 Now in full plume, and clamorous of tongue ;
 Screaming, chattering, and cawing,
 Fighting, quarrelling, and jawing,
 Making every tree a Babel—
 Fluttering their pinions sable,
 As incessant they are trying
 First experiments at flying,
 From the tall trees' topmost branches
 Wheeling forth in timid launches,
 Safe from gun or rifle slaughter,
 " *Wake*"-ful eyes in every quarter
 Watching them through every danger
 Of inhabitant or stranger,—
 Trusting to their long abiding
 As a colony to pride in ;
 As an antidote to " Cyclops,"
 " Atlas," " Ætna," and the like shops ;
 As a rookery of fame
 Lasting as their owner's name.

May 21, 1877.

THE MAN I ENVY.

How I envy the man who can always look round
 On himself and belongings with pleasure profound ;
 Who can saunter through life with a satisfied smile,
 And think how kind Fortune has blessed him the while—
 Who has health, good digestion, high spirit, and hope,
 And ne'er looks beyond the small world of his scope.

No doubts or misgivings e'er trouble *his* mind ;
Whatsoever he does must be right, you will find :
While others may now and then make a mistake,
He always must win, whatsoever the stake ;
At least so he says, and we're bound to believe :
A man so high-favour'd would never deceive.

His wife is perfection ; his children the same,
Precocities all, and predestined to fame.
His house and his furniture, pictures and wine,
His horses, his garden, his greenhouse and vine,
All rare and unrivall'd, in beauty and cost,
Such as no other man for miles round him can boast.

Has he sometimes a fear, things will e'er go amiss,
In this world or next—with himself or with *his* ?
Not he ; how could such a man ever go wrong ?
So good and so moral, so healthy and strong ;
God made *him* for happiness—that is quite clear—
So why of the future indulge in a fear ?

Oh, 'tis pleasant to see how he chuckles and laughs,
As he sits at his table, and gobbles and quaffs ;
Or walks down the road with a dignified swing,
Or stands up in church, to respond and to sing,
Confessing himself a most " mis'erable sinner,"
Yet all the while thinking of what is for dinner.

He's a capital shot ; never misses a bird ;
Never makes a bad debt ; and whenever you've heard
Of a Company's smash, be sure he's sold out ;
Or another's success, be sure he's just bought ;
In short, what he touches, like Midas of old,
Is sure (he assures us) to turn into gold.

Did I say that I envy him ? Well, so I do,
(Not his wife, or his house, or belongings thereto) ;
But I envy his placid contentment of mind,
And his trust in what Fortune for him has designed ;
His unerring belief that regarding *his* lot,
What *is* must be right, and *what is'nt*, is *not*.

March 19, 1877.

DOMESTIC RHYMES FOR THE CHRISTMAS
HOLIDAYS.

BOYS :

“ Hip ! Hurrah ! vacation's come,
Christmas holidays begun ;
Hip for school ! hurrah for home !
Won't we have some jolly fun ?
Here's the coach—good bye, good bye,
Harry, Bob, and dear old Jack ;
Don't forget to write, my boy :—
Now, then, coachee, go it—crack !”

MATERFAMILIAS :

“ Oh the boys, the darling boys,
 Here they are all safe and sound !
 What a racket, what a noise !
 Never mind—come, kisses round !
 Are you hungry ? Are you cold ?
 Go and warm your hands and feet ;
 Mind, now, do as you are told,
 And—what will you have to eat ? ”

PATERFAMILIAS :

“ Now, my boys, how do, how do ?
 Glad to see you home once more ;
 Hope you've brought good manners, too,
 And a stock of learning's lore.
 Let me all your prizes see,
 For the money you have cost,
 Surely *some* results must be,
Sure it cannot *all* be lost.”

MASTER FRANK :

“ I say, George, let's off and slide :
 Thompson's pond is frozen o'er :
 Jip and I have been and tried ;
 Yesterday it *nearly* bore.
 Only don't let mammy know,
 Or the gov'nor ; if you do
 There'll be such a precious row,—
 Should we get a ducking, too ! ”

MASTER GEORGE :

“ Crab some lunch, then, 'fore we start ;
There's such lots of hot mince pies,
Lemon-cheesecakes, and plum tart
Just done baking—law! so nice ;
And be sure we're back in time
For our dinner—do ye ken, now,
What we're going to have? Oh, prime !
Goose and apple sauce, by jingo !”

SUSAN, THE NURSE :

“ Gracious me !—them biys 'll craze me,
Sure as my name's Susan Slut ;
'Tis a shame the way they taze me,
Just as though I was a brute ;
Up stairs, down stairs, in and out,
' Susan ' this, and ' Susan ' that,
Putting everything to rout,
From the cradle to the cat !”

BETTY, THE HOUSEMAID :

“ Well, I du say it's a slame
Missus lets 'em play such pranks ;
And the master, just the same,
Nivver gives us praize or thanks,
Though we tells him, times a day,
What young jackanapes they be,
And the tantrums they du play
When *his* eyes aint there to see.”

MOLLY, THE COOK :

“ Ah, you imps, I’ll tell your pa, sirs !
Let that poor dumb thing alone !
Goodness ! bless my stars and garters,
Just ye look what they have done !
Thrown the nasty, stinking cat
In the flour bin, through and through
My best pudding—hark ! what’s that ?
'Pon my life, the dog’s in too ! ”

JOHN, THE COACHMAN :

“ Please, sir, will you speak to Master
Frank ? He’s got your single gun ;
If you don’t, there’ll be disaster,—
For young Mike, the miller’s son,
Has gone with him, also armed
With a rusty blunderbuss,—
And I fear, unless they’re warned,
Somebody will be the wus.”

FRIENDS AND SPECTATORS :

“ Happy rascals, chide them not :
Let them have their fill of joy.
'Twill not always be their lot
To have mirth without alloy.
Let then gambol, laugh, and play :
Christmas time will soon be past,
And their youth’s short holiday
Will not for much longer last ! ”

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