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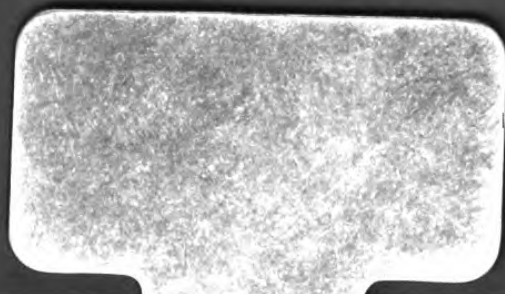


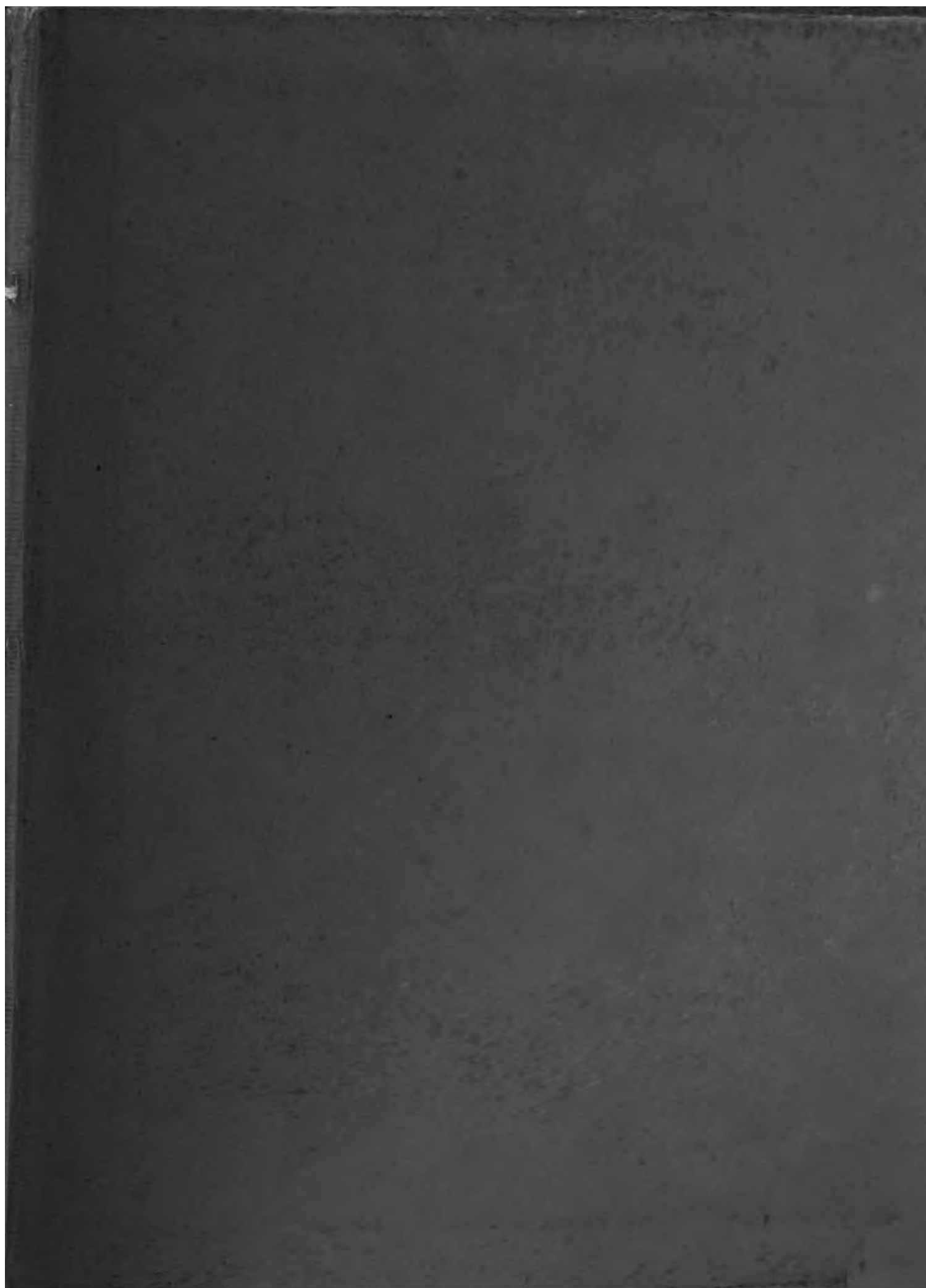
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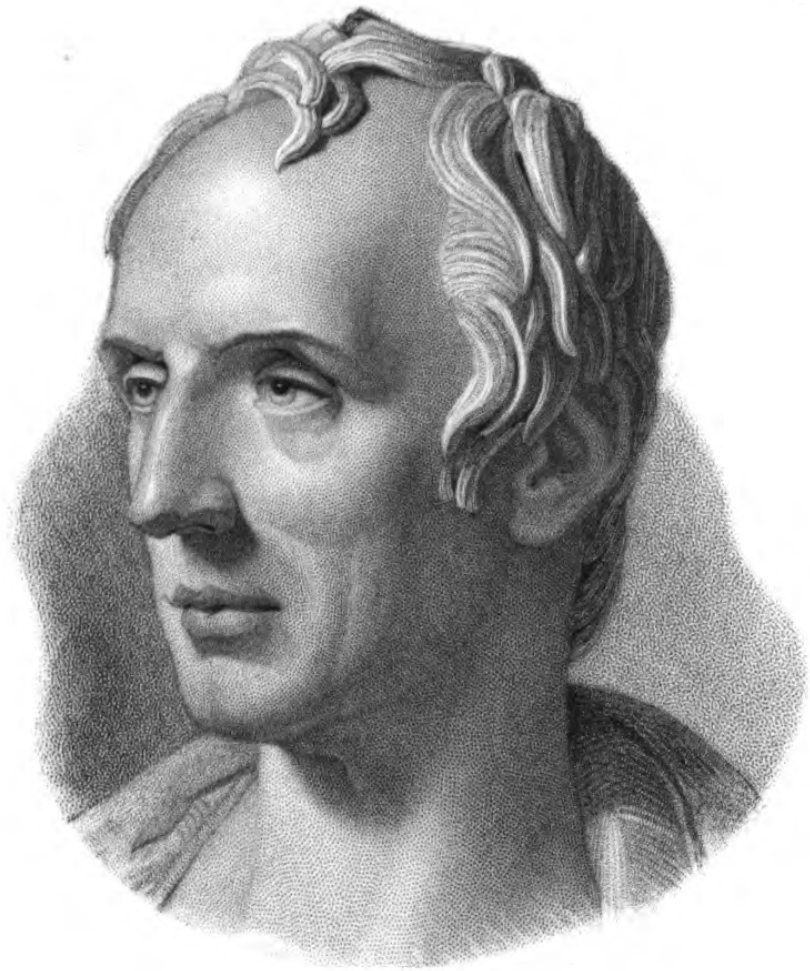




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MOXON'S MINIATURE POETS.

A
SELECTION FROM
THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,

POET LAUREATE.

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.



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BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

IT has been argued with some force that "a poet's verses are his life," and that he should hence be exempted from the intrusion of biography. The phrase quoted is emphatically true of William Wordsworth; and, upon this interpretation of it, would render a notice of his life superfluous. Yet the common feeling of mankind seems to have ruled otherwise; there has always been an interest in learning what manner of man the poet was, when and where he lived, and by what prominent circumstances his mind and heart were moulded. Indeed, it is probable that men have been guided in this by a judicious instinct; and that, if there is a certain identity between the writer and his writings, the fact may be rather found to invite a biography, though of a truer and deeper kind than that which generally bears the name, than to discourage it. If the poet's verses form his life, this must be because his life, in its essential or elementary features, has passed into his verses. For such examination as we

can make, shows that simply as he lived, can he think and write : that only from what may be within him of loftiness in imagination, of purity in feeling, of depth in sympathy, of quickness in observation ; from what he is, only, can he win the words which, so far as the epithet may apply to anything of human workmanship, are destined to immortality. This law appears to be absolute in all the Fine Arts, and if absoluteness admitted of degrees, would be most so in Poetry, as the first and greatest of them. We may read the man in the work ; but, were it possible to reverse the process, the poem might also be predicted from the poet. There would be no little value and interest in a biography so written : and, although it could not be attempted within the limits of a few pages, yet, having been entrusted by Wordsworth's family with the task of framing the following selection, the editor thinks that the most suitable preface towards a fit comprehension of the poems contained in it, will be, not so much a criticism on the poet's style and place in literature, as a short account of his life, viewed in relation to his writings.

The second son of respectable parents, and of a family which traced itself to the fourteenth century as landowners in the north, William Wordsworth was born (April 7, 1770) at Cockermouth in Cumberland, on the verge of that beautiful land of mountain and lake which will be always associated with his

memory, as it entered in no small degree into the education of his genius. "To those who live in the tame scenery of Cockermouth," says Mr. De Quincey, "the blue mountains in the distance, the sublime peaks of Borrowdale and of Buttermere, raise aloft a signal, as it were, of a new country, a country of romance and mystery, to which the thoughts are habitually turning. Children are fascinated and haunted with vague temptations, when standing on the frontiers of such a foreign land, and so was Wordsworth fascinated, so haunted." The Derwent, "fairest of all rivers," running near Cockermouth, seems to connect the little town with the chief of the Cumbrian lakes; and between Penrith and Cockermouth, Wordsworth passed his earliest years. Losing his parents while yet a child, and separated from the sister who became afterwards so much to him, the "stiff, moody, and violent temper" which he ascribes to himself was probably left to the correction of nature; and, united with the passion for solitude and observant meditativeness characteristic of the poetic disposition, may be traced in its effects throughout his youth. It is not meant that Wordsworth spent his days in abstraction. Whilst at the school of Hawkshead in Esthwaite Vale (1778), and at St. John's College, Cambridge (1787), his great physical strength and spirit, qualities which he retained through life, made him enjoy to the full the energetic sports of boyhood; he travelled much, and

much on foot, and may be reckoned among the first of the many Englishmen who have traversed the higher ranges of the Swiss mountains (1790).

Meanwhile the Poet's inner life had passed through at least one great revolution, which he has himself painted in the "Prelude," "Tintern," and "Ode on Intimations of Immortality." He who was afterwards to describe Nature as she is with a singular force of realization, had looked on her, at first, with an ideal eye which unconsciously reproduced the view of "things without" taken by the early philosophers of Greece. True Being he felt only within his mind: except here, nothing could be felt as veritably existing: all beyond was a mysterious vision, the reality of which lay in the depths of the human soul. "I was often unable," he writes, "to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality." Shadowy and transient as these strange influences of the childish imagination necessarily were, they lay at the root of that peculiarly spiritual tone with which Wordsworth always looked on the world; they inspired that noble and exquisitely poetic moderation which (even when he had travelled far from his younger opinions on many vital points) was ever ready to

soften and qualify the practical dogmatisms and narrower conclusions with which life encrusts the mind. When this "visionary gleam" passed from the yet unconscious poet's eyes, the same imaginative faculty, taking a new but analogous form, presented the world to him as itself actually interfused with living power :

He felt the sentiment of Being spread,
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still ;—
The presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth ; the Visions of the hills,
And Souls of lonely places.

This mood of the mind, in which all who have any sense of poetry share, held sway over men like Wordsworth or Shelley with an intensity proportioned to their poetical gift, working in them with a force that reminds us again of the spirit in which sea and sky, earth and the "heavenly bodies," were regarded by the early inhabitants of Hellas. The human race seems born again with every child of genius : he exhibits in himself, if his life be prolonged through all its stages, a kind of miniature repetition of man's gradual development. The soul which, as a child, Wordsworth had vaguely transferred from himself to Nature, now appeared to lie also in Nature herself. A more sacred name is often, perhaps too often, and in a mechanical spirit, used in reference to "the sum of things," as Lucretius called Nature, and Wordsworth, especially in

his later years, has used that name with Christian reverence ; yet throughout his life he was apparently faithful to the imaginative sentiment which led him to speak without hesitation of

The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves :—

Nor to his deeply, though liberally, religious mind was it possible for him to realize with less distinctness and fervour, that doctrine or instinct which seems a cold and abstract thing, when expressed as the Omnipresence of the Deity.

Wordsworth has thrown his heart so fully and freely into his writings, that it is impossible to pass over the peculiar tone of his religious philosophy in silence : although we need not linger here further than to observe, that he seems to share in that Pantheistic sentiment, (for such, however modified, it must be named), towards which a bias has always existed in the Teutonic or Northern imagination. And it may be a useful lesson to remark how this great thinker united such a sentiment with genuine Christianity.—Returning now to the Poet, let us note that this sense of a true life in Nature will influence a man's mind in two conspicuous directions. It will cause him to go as it were out of himself, viewing the landscape, for example, as something which by itself alone deserves the most minute and faithful painting : he will become a de-

scriber of nature for her own sake. On the other hand, the same sense will urge him to identify nature with the human heart more closely than the man who either, from inferior imaginative power, does not feel the inherent vitality in all things, or who regards them as simple subjects for scientific investigation. He will study man more (especially man, leading a simple and unsophisticated life) as the highest effort or manifestation of nature. This two-fold current of thought runs through Wordsworth's poetry, and explains at once its peculiar excellence and its limitations: limitations which must be distinctly recognized almost everywhere in Wordsworth. Only a Shakespeare can preserve throughout a golden moderation between such conflicting forces. It does not always happen that the identification of the lessons of nature and of the human heart is equal or entire, and when this is so, the poet is apt to become either too descriptive or too didactic, as the balance may incline. Why the didactic element marked itself most on the poetry of Wordsworth's later years, the sketch of his life may partly serve to explain.

A disposition such as his, and the turn of thought which he had nourished among the valleys of Cumberland, were not likely to render Wordsworth congenial as an undergraduate to Cambridge. Except in the "Prelude," that University is almost absent from the verse of one whose own experiences, as with Goethe,

almost exclusively form the groundwork of his poetry. Wordsworth's, however, was no nature for indolence ; and, besides mastering Italian, he appears to have pursued that careful study of the English and the Latin poets (in the Greek he never went far), which had been one passion of his boyhood. But the routine of college life and the favourite studies of the place were alien from him, and to this alienation the politics of the time soon added a graver colour. Already (1790) he had visited France, then at that stage in revolution when it seemed possible to unite Royalty with Liberty. Returning next year, he found a nation distracted between civil war and foreign invasion,—between those ready to die to restore a rejected past, and those ready to die for the inauguration of an impossible future. The energy of passion thus raised, under the rapid pressure of many circumstances, internal and external, expanded itself into the frenzy of September, 1792. Happily for himself (for he had intimate friends among the moderate republicans), Wordsworth left Paris before the massacre : but some part of the passionate impulse of the time had passed into him, as it passed into all sensitive minds, and he returned home with a strong sympathy for what France had aimed at in 1790, and a strong dissatisfaction with the policy pursued towards her by England in 1792. Unable to reconcile himself to the church or the law for a career, and ill at ease even in the smaller

London of those days, the master-currents of his soul gradually became predominant, and he turned to Nature and to Poetry as the purpose of his life:—publishing in 1793 his first works, “The Evening Walk,” and “Descriptive Sketches.” These little poems, written, it is curious to note, in the ten syllabled rhyming couplet which we associate with the school of Dryden and Pope, were brought out reluctantly, in the hope that they “might show he *could* do something.” Slightly noticed at the time, they exercised a great influence over Wordsworth’s life, by attracting to him the regard of his contemporary poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who judged them with the insight of a congenial imagination. “Seldom, if ever,” he wrote, “was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced.”

The little property of the Wordsworth family had been kept from the children, it is stated, by the injustice of Sir John Lowther, created Earl of Lonsdale, during whose lifetime (he died in 1802), no redress could be obtained. But at this juncture (1795), the opportune legacy of £900 from a young friend named Calvert gave Wordsworth an independence which could, however, only have been wrung by one devoted to “plain living and high thinking,” from the interest of so small a sum. Meanwhile another and a greater blessing was in store for him; his sister Dorothy was now grown up; they settled together at

Racedown in Dorsetshire (1796), and next year at Alfoxden in Somerset ; removing, after a residence of some months in Germany, to Grasmere in 1799. Coleridge was at this time much with Wordsworth ; he formed a friendship with Sir George Beaumont, Charles Lamb, Southey, and Walter Scott, and in 1802 entered upon a long marriage of unbroken happiness with Mary Hutchinson, a young lady whom he had known from childhood. Of all the powerful and salutary influences which thus affected the poet, that of his sister's presence was probably the most important :—

Where'er my footsteps turned
Her voice was like a hidden bird that sang,
The thought of her was like a flash of light
Or an unseen companionship,—a breath
Of fragrance independent of the wind.

There is no little likeness between the characters of the three poets, Dante, Milton, and Wordsworth : in each a powerful nature, apt to push self-dependence into harshness and isolation ; affections marked rather by depth than by geniality ; a habit of consistent and logical thought, which sometimes became dogmatism, and ranged them all on the “ opposition ” side of the politics of their age. It is on such natures that what Scott named the “ ministering ” function of women, to soothe, sustain, and moderate, may confer its most peculiar blessings ; and, more happy than his great

predecessors, these blessings fell from Heaven upon Wordsworth exactly at the crisis when, as we have just seen, they were especially required by the circumstances of his inner life ; when, also, the improvement in his income enabled him to profit by them. Add to this the particulars already mentioned,—that his mind had been powerfully charged, if the word may be permitted, with alternate sympathy and horror by the mighty struggles of the time, and the conflict embracing all the deepest interests of man which raged on every side ;—that, from the midst of this, he was suddenly transported to the most solitary and the most primitive regions of natural beauty which England could furnish ;—that, whilst here, again, and as if to restrain the narrowing influences of that “confirmed tranquillity,” he came into communion with some of the most highly-gifted minds among his contemporaries, and it will not appear surprizing that to the twelve years following 1796 we owe, either in execution or in idea, by far the largest portion of Wordsworth’s best and most characteristic poetry. And that this poetry should embody, in a thousand different phases, the influences which have been here briefly and imperfectly traced as operative upon the writer from his childhood, would seem to be the natural result of the law which makes a poet’s verse the reflection of his mind, character, and experiences.

The chronology of Wordsworth’s principal poems

must be now noticed. His first volume of "Lyrical Ballads" appeared in 1798; a second, with a reprint of the first, in 1800. Further editions followed in 1802 and 1805. It is noticeable that his earlier journeys supply comparatively few direct subjects to these volumes. The autobiographical poem, brought out after his death under the name "Prelude," was begun in Germany, and completed in 1805. A visit to Scotland furnished some materials for two fresh volumes (1807). The "Excursion" was published in 1814; the "White Doe of Rylstone" (written 1807), next year. Wordsworth removed to the house which he occupied till his death, "Rydal Mount," between Grasmere and Ambleside, and was appointed to a little office in the Lake district, in 1813. Meanwhile a memorable change had taken place in the political development of Western Europe, and in the attitude of England towards the Continent. That which had begun as the internal effort of one country to throw off the diseases which were destroying it, had apparently transmuted itself into the ambition of assimilating Europe to France, or even of converting Europe into the provinces of a French empire. Looking back now, with the experience of fifty years since the great struggle closed at Waterloo, we can indeed see, that much which the Revolution of 1790 attempted to do for France, was not less imperiously requisite for the well-being of other European races; and that, almost

everywhere, the people welcomed at first the power which, even under the guise of foreign invasion, promised to free them from intolerable evils. We can see also that, without denying the consummate ability of Napoleon, no small portion of his early successes was due to that secret popular concurrence in the idea which he and the armies of France seemed to represent. But it was inevitable or natural that one who had shared keenly in the noble enthusiasms of 1790, had mourned bitterly over the excesses of 1792, and had hailed the fall of the extreme revolutionary section as the pledge of a return to the ways of rational liberty, should, after a while, recognize only the worse side in the career of the Consul-Emperor, and regard him simply as a tyrant, abusing the great power of an acquiescent nation to destroy national existence and freedom itself, beyond and within the borders of France. This was an unfair judgment undoubtedly; yet the unfairness sprang from no ignoble source, if the recognition of what was really eminent and really representative in Napoleon absolutely effaced itself in view of his unbounded selfishness, unscrupulous dishonesty, and cynical charlatanerie, before the lofty mind of Wordsworth. There was much of the old Greek nature in the poet; what he sympathized with was rather national individuality and advance, than the cosmopolitan interests which so much governed his great contemporary, Goethe; rather the

moral elevation, simple grandeur, and personal purity of aim, which he read of in his favourite Plutarch, than the complexities of character which delight modern analysis, or that glorification of the successful "strong man" which sometimes receives and abuses the name Hero-worship. As the Athenian loved Athens, as the Roman revered Rome, such were his reverence and his love for England—

Ah ! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea's zone
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared
The ground where we were born and reared !

Let us briefly note, further, that taking what may be called the English side in the war against Napoleon, Wordsworth was led (a constant result in politics) to identify himself altogether with that side,—embracing hence its unalloyed hostility to France : that maturer years, although never shaking his profound sympathy with the people, yet brought with them their almost inevitable "something too much" of conservatism ; lastly, and in the case of his sensitive poetical nature, not to be neglected, that about this time he resumed that study of the ancient literature which reproduced itself in his noble "Laodamia," "Dion," "Lycoris," and other poems ;—and we may probably find here the key to that peculiar modification of sentiment which

marks his latter writings, in regard to human life and the aspects of nature, and is distinctly traceable in their style and diction. When trying to follow the developments in the mind of a great poet, we should rather aim at general suggestions than at rigorous definition; and these remarks must, therefore, not be pressed far; yet it may be useful to observe that something of (perhaps unconscious) republicanism was blended with the homeliness in choice of subject and simplicity in matter of words which Wordsworth professed, with rather indiscreet openness, in the Preface to his earlier lyrics; qualities which were naturally, though, perhaps, not altogether well, exchanged for the greater floridity and the more directly moralizing and dogmatic colour of the poems that followed the "Excursion."

At first, however, his renewed interest in politics found utterance itself in prose, and he composed an address on the so-called "Convention of Cintra" (1809), which expresses in manly terms his deep regard for national liberty, seriously menaced in the Spanish peninsula, as he thought, by that treaty with the French government. The excellence of a poet's prose is well known to those who care for excellence in literature; indeed, looking at literature from the beginning, it is comparatively rare to find a prose writer of the first rank who has not himself made a serious practice of poetry. The "Cintra" tract has not been reprinted; but the truth of the preceding

remarks may be easily verified by readers of Wordsworth's "Essay on Epitaphs," his "Prefaces," already noticed, and some of the "Letters" contained in his nephew's "Memorials."

A singular and almost unbroken felicity, seldom so well deserved, attended the last half of William Wordsworth's life, which was prolonged with vigour of mind and health of body to the age of eighty. An ideal picture, drawn in one of his own letters, might be fitly applied to himself: "This man was not the victim of his condition, he was not the spoiled child of worldly grandeur, the thought of himself did not take the lead in his enjoyments; he was, when he ought to be, lowly minded, and had human feeling; he had a true relish of simplicity, and therefore stood the best chance of being happy." "Profusion and extravagance had no hold over Wordsworth," says Mr. De Quincey, "by any one passion or taste. He was not luxurious in anything, was not vain or even careful of external appearances, was not even in the article of books expensive. Very few books sufficed him; he was careless habitually of all the current literature, or indeed of any literature that could not be considered as enshrining the very ideal, capital, and elementary grandeur of the human intellect." "What he gave to others, and what he most desired for himself," says another witness, "was love." He felt for his friends and family, neighbours and dependents, that intense

tenderness which his poetry expresses towards what, by a narrow phrase, we call Nature.—Frequent journeys through Great Britain or on the Continent,—Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy; the education of children, amongst whom the death of one, Dora, was the single great sorrow of his age (1847); the publication of some miscellaneous poems, founded in part upon his journeys; “honour and troops of friends,” with the assured blessings of home, such euthanasia, in a word, as human life admits of: these, and similar circumstances, accompanied his later days to a calm and Christian death-bed (April 23, 1850). He had overlived the chilling want of sympathy which original genius never fails to arouse among commonplace minds; he had out-lived the mis-estimation of some nobler spirits, and the over-partiality of indiscriminating worshippers; his work for his countrymen, wherever scattered over the world, was at length fairly judged, and found to rank in quality with the best to which England has given birth; and he now rests from his labours in the quiet churchyard of Grasmere, among neighbours and kinsmen, within the bosom of the hills he loved so heartily, and the Rotha running at his feet with a music hardly sweeter than his own.

Beati . . . ut requiescant à laboribus suis; opera enim illorum sequuntur illos.—This life would not have been worth recounting unless Wordsworth had left

some work behind him of the kind which men do not willingly let die. What is the speciality of that work? He has told us that "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." How far has the poet himself conformed to this high ideal?—Wordsworth somewhere has expressed what he thought or hoped might be the destiny of his poems: "To console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous: this is their office." And again, "There is scarcely one which does not aim to direct the attention to some moral sentiment, or to some general principle, or law of thought or of our intellectual constitution." Or we might give another application to a line in the "Prelude," and sum up his desire as one, "to Nature's self to oppose a deeper Nature;" or speak of

The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream:—

or take the phrase of his only distinguished follower in poetry, and, with the author of the "Christian Year," say that Wordsworth's work was "to raise us to holier things."—But Wordsworth, like his fellows in immortal verse, may not be compressed within the bounds

of a definition. It can be only through the aid of such suggestive expressions as have been quoted, or such circumstances of his life as have been here traced ; but, most of all, by the faithful study of his poetry, that a true image of what he was, by a happy natural growth, will form itself within the heart of the reader.

F. T. PALGRAVE

SEP. : 1865

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I

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine ;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A Traveller between life and death ;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command ;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light.

1804

II

LET other bards of angels sing,
 Bright suns without a spot ;
 But thou art no such perfect thing :
 Rejoice that thou art not !

Heed not tho' none should call thee fair ;
 So, Mary, let it be
 If nought in loveliness compare
 With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
 Whose veil is unremoved
 Till heart with heart in concord beats,
 And the lover is beloved.

1824

III

WHY art thou silent ! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair ?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant ?

Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.

Speak—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold

Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know !

IV

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
This Child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse : and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs ;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend ;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run !
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene ;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799

v

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love :

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye !
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be ;
 But she is in her grave, and, oh,
 The difference to me !

1799

VI

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
 I had no human fears :
 She seemed a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ;
 She neither hears nor sees ;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1799

VII

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
 In lands beyond the sea ;
 Nor, England ! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time ; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire ;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played ;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799

VIII

'Tis said, that some have died for love :
And here and there a church-yard grave is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known ;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side :
He loved—the pretty Barbara died ;
And thus he makes his moan :
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made :

“ Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak !
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke

May mount into the sky !
The clouds pass on ; they from the heavens depart :
I look—the sky is empty space ;
I know not what I trace ;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

O ! what a weight is in these shades ! Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it cease ?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit ;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

Roll back, sweet Rill ! back to thy mountain-bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chained !
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained ;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb !
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,
Thou one fair shrub, oh ! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.

For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear.”

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love ! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love ! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

1800

IX

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh ! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find ?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee ? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss ?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,

Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more ;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

x

FLOWERS

ERE yet our course was graced with social trees
It lacked not old remains of hawthorn bowers,
Where small birds warbled to their paramours ;
And, earlier still, was heard the hum of bees ;

I saw them ply their harmless robberies,
And caught the fragrance which the sundry flowers,
Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.

There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness ;
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue,
The thyme her purple, like the blush of Even ;

And if the breath of some to no caress
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view,
All kinds alike seemed favourites of Heaven.

XI

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company :
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

XII

TO THE DAISY

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
 Most pleased when most uneasy ;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake,
 Of Thee, sweet Daisy !

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs ;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee ;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right ;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight !
Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane ;
Pleased at his greeting thee again ;
 Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved if thou be set at nought :
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
 When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose ;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
 Her head impearling,
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame ;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
 The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
 Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare ;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art !—a friend at hand, to scare
 His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
 Some apprehension ;
Some steady love ; some brief delight ;
Some memory that had taken flight ;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right ;
 Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,

I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure ;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds ;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower ! my spirits play
With kindred gladness :
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing ;
An instinct call it, a blind sense ;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year ! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,

Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain ;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time ;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favourite.

1802

XIII

TO THE DAISY

WITH little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy ! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee !

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising :
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port ;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
 Of all temptations ;
A queen in crown of rubies drest ;
A starveling in a scanty vest ;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
 Thy appellations.

A little cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next—and instantly
 The freak is over,
The shape will vanish—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some faery bold
 In fight to cover !

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star ;
Not quite so fair as many are
 In heaven above thee !
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest ;—
May peace come never to his nest,
 Who shall reprove thee !

Bright *Flower* ! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,

I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature !
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature !

1805

XIV

TO THE DAISY

BRIGHT Flower ! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow ;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough !

Is it that Man is soon deprest ?
A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season ?

c

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing ;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.

1803

XV

THE SMALL CELANDINE

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain ;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again !

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distress,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
 "It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
 This neither is its courage nor its choice,
 But its necessity in being old.

The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
 It cannot help itself in its decay;
 Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
 And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal's Favourite—then, worse truth,
 A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
 O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
 Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

1804

XVI

THIS Lawn, a carpet all alive
 With shadows flung from leaves—to strive
 In dance, amid a press
 Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
 Of Worldlings revelling in the fields
 Of strenuous idleness;

Less quick the stir when tide and breeze
 Encounter, and to narrow seas
 Forbid a moment's rest;
 The medley less when boreal Lights
 Glance to and fro, like aery Sprites
 To feats of arms address!

C 2

Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the stedfast hours,
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers.

1829

XVII

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little Flowers were born to live,
Conscious of half the pleasure which they give ;

That to this mountain-daisy's self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone !

And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the Sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount !

So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made ;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade ;

And were the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight !

Fond fancies ! wheresoe'er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean, or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy ;

All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled,
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

XVIII

TO A SKY-LARK

ETHEREAL minstrel ! pilgrim of the sky !
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound ?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground ?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood ;
A privacy of glorious light is thine ;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine ;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam ;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home !

XIX

THE GREEN LINNET

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
 Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat !
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest :
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion !
Thou, Linnet ! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May ;
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment :
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair ;
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover ;
There ! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves ;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
 Pours forth his song in gushes ;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
 While fluttering in the bushes.

1803

XX

O NIGHTINGALE ! thou surely art
A creature of a ' fiery heart ' :—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce ;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce !
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine ;

A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night ;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day ;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come-at by the breeze :
He did not cease ; but cooed—and cooed ;
And somewhat pensively he wooed :
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending ;
Of serious faith, and inward glee ;
That was the song—the song for me !

1806

XXI

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE New-comer ! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring !
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery ;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to ; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place ;
That is fit home for Thee !

XXII

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF A FAVOURITE DOG

LIE here, without a record of thy worth,
Beneath a covering of the common earth !
It is not from unwillingness to praise,
Or want of love, that here no Stone we raise ;
More thou deserv'st ; but *this* man gives to man,
Brother to brother, *this* is all we can.
Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee dear
Shall find thee through all changes of the year :
This Oak points out thy grave ; the silent tree
Will gladly stand a monument of thee.

We grieved for thee, and wished thy end were past ;
And willingly have laid thee here at last :
For thou hadst lived till every thing that cheers
In thee had yielded to the weight of years ;
Extreme old age had wasted thee away,
And left thee but a glimmering of the day ;
Thy ears were deaf, and feeble were thy knees,—
I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
It came, and we were glad ; yet tears were shed ;
Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead ;
Not only for a thousand thoughts that were,

Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share ;
 But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
 Found scarcely any where in like degree !
 For love, that comes wherever life and sense
 Are given by God, in thee was most intense ;
 A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
 A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
 Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind :
 Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
 A soul of love, love's intellectual law :—
 Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame ;
 Our tears from passion and from reason came,
 And, therefore, shalt thou be an honoured name !

1805

XXIII

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838

LIFE with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
 Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
 Does joy approach? they meet the coming tide ;
 And sullenness avoid, as now they shun

Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in the sun
 Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied ;
 Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
 Varying its shape wherever he may run.

As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen ;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new ?

XXIV

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune ;

It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

XXV

NOT Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange—
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell ;

But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.

Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy ;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly ;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever ;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

XXVI

ADMONITION

Intended more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

WELL may'st thou halt—and gaze with brightening
eye !

The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply ; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky !

But covet not the Abode ;—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look ;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.

Think what the home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants !—Roof, window,
door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,

The roses to the porch which they entwine :
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

XXVII

TO MY SISTER

It is the first mild day of March :
Each minute sweeter than before
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign ;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you ;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar :
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth :
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason :
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey :
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls :
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister ! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

1798

XXVIII

ODE

COMPOSED ON MAY MORNING

WHILE from the purpling east departs
The star that led the dawn,
Blithe Flora from her couch upstarts,
For May is on the lawn.
A quickening hope, a freshening glee,
Foreran the expected Power,
Whose first-drawn breath, from bush and tree,
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway
Tempers the year's extremes ;
Who scattereth lustres o'er noon-day,
Like morning's dewy gleams ;

While mellow warble, sprightly trill,
The tremulous heart excite ;
And hums the balmy air to still
The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power ! when youths and maids
At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth, in forest glades
Thy birth to solemnize.
Though mute the song—to grace the rite
Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight ;
Man changes, but not Thou !

Thy feathered Lieges bill and wings
In love's disport employ ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
Awake to silent joy :
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
Where the slim wild deer roves ;
And served in depths were fishes haunt
Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
Instinctive homage pay ;
Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath
To honour thee, sweet May !

Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
Behold a smokeless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot-nursling dares
To open a bright eye.

And if, on this thy natal morn,
The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
Of song and dance and game ;
Still from the village-green a vow
Aspires to thee addrest,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
Or love within the breast.

Yes ! where Love nestles thou canst teach
The soul to love the more ;
Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
That never loved before.
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide,
In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre ! weak words refuse
The service to prolong !
To yon exulting thrush the Muse
Entrusts the imperfect song ;

His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
The sovereignty of May.

1826

XXIX

TO MAY

THOUGH many suns have risen and set
Since thou, blithe May, wert born,
And Bards, who hailed thee, may forget
Thy gifts, thy beauty scorn ;
There are who to a birthday strain
Confine not harp and voice,
But evermore throughout thy reign
Are grateful and rejoice !

Delicious odours ! music sweet,
Too sweet to pass away !
Oh for a deathless song to meet
The soul's desire—a lay
That, when a thousand years are told,
Should praise thee, genial Power !
Through summer heat, autumnal cold,
And winter's dreariest hour.

Earth, sea, thy presence feel—nor less,
If yon ethereal blue
With its soft smile the truth express,
The heavens have felt it too.
The inmost heart of man if glad
Partakes a livelier cheer ;
And eyes that cannot but be sad
Let fall a brightened tear.

Since thy return, through days and weeks
Of hope that grew by stealth,
How many wan and faded cheeks
Have kindled into health !
The Old, by thee revived, have said,
“ Another year is ours ; ”
And wayworn Wanderers, poorly fed,
Have smiled upon thy flowers.

Who tripping lisps a merry song
Amid his playful peers ?
The tender Infant who was long
A prisoner of fond fears ;
But now, when every sharp-edged blast
Is quiet in its sheath,
His Mother leaves him free to taste
Earth's sweetness in thy breath.

Thy help is with the weed that creeps
Along the humblest ground ;
No cliff so bare but on its steeps
Thy favours may be found ;
But most on some peculiar nook
That our own hands have drest,
Thou and thy train are proud to look,
And seem to love it best.

And yet how pleased we wander forth
When May is whispering, "Come !
"Choose from the bowers of virgin earth
"The happiest for your home ;
"Heaven's bounteous love through me is spread
"From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
"Drops on the mouldering turret's head,
"And on your turf-clad graves !"

Such greeting heard, away with sighs
For lilies that must fade,
Or ' the rathe primrose as it dies
Forsaken ' in the shade !
Vernal fruitions and desires
Are linked in endless chase ;
While, as one kindly growth retires,
Another takes its place.

And what if thou, sweet May, hast known
Mishap by worm and blight ;
If expectations newly blown
Have perished in thy sight ;
If loves and joys, while up they sprung,
Were caught as in a snare ;
Such is the lot of all the young,
However bright and fair.

Lo ! Streams that April could not check
Are patient of thy rule ;
Gurgling in foamy water-break,
Loitering in glassy pool :
By thee, thee only, could be sent
Such gentle mists as glide,
Curling with unconfirmed intent,
On that green mountain's side.

How delicate the leafy veil
Through which yon house of God
Gleams 'mid the peace of this deep dale
.By few but shepherds trod !
And lowly huts, near beaten ways,
No sooner stand attired
In thy fresh wreaths, than they for praise
Peep forth, and are admired.

Season of fancy and of hope,
Permit not for one hour,
A blossom from thy crown to drop,
Nor add to it a flower !
Keep, lovely May, as if by touch
Of self-restraining art,
This modest charm of not too much,
Part seen, imagined part !

1326—1834

XXX

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear

The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

XXXI

THE TROSACHS

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
 But were an apt confessional for One
 Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
 That Life is but a tale of morning grass

Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
 That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
 Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
 Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass

Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
 If from a golden perch of aspen spray
 (October's workmanship to rival May)
 The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
 That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
 Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest !

XXXII

SONNET

COMPOSED AT NIDPATH CASTLE

[The person alluded to was the then Duke of Queensbury. The fact was
 told me by Walter Scott.]

DEGENERATE Douglas ! oh, the unworthy Lord
 Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
 And love of havoc, (for with such disease
 Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word

To level with the dust a noble horde,
 A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
 Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
 Beggared and outraged !—Many hearts deplored

The fate of those old Trees ; and oft with pain
 The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
 On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed :

For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
 And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
 And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

1803

XXXIII

THE VALLEY OF DOVER

NOV. 1820

WHERE be the noisy followers of the game
 Which faction breeds ; the turmoil where ? that passed
 Through Europe, echoing from the newsman's blast,
 And filled our hearts with grief for England's shame.

Peace greets us ;—rambling on without an aim
 We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
 To ruminate, couched on the grassy lea ;
 And hear far-off the mellow horn proclaim

The Season's harmless pastime. Ruder sound
Stirs not ; enrapt I gaze with strange delight,
While consciousnesses, not to be disowned,
Here only serve a feeling to invite
That lifts the spirit to a calmer height,
And makes this rural stillness more profound.

XXXIV

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE

WHERE holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line ;
The turf unites, the pathways intertwine ;
And wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,

Garden, and that domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbours rest together, here confound
Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends

With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave ;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave

Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

XXXV

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 1820

HIGH on her speculative tower
Stood Science waiting for the hour
When Sol was destined to endure
That darkening of his radiant face
Which Superstition strove to chase,
Erewhile, with rites impure.

Afloat beneath Italian skies,
Through regions fair as Paradise
We gaily passed,—till Nature wrought
A silent and unlooked-for change,
That checked the desultory range
Of joy and sprightly thought.

Where'er was dipped the toiling oar,
The waves danced round us as before,
As lightly, though of altered hue,
Mid recent coolness, such as falls
At noontide from umbrageous walls
That screen the morning dew.

No vapour stretched its wings ; no cloud
Cast far or near a murky shroud ;

The sky an azure field displayed ;
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently charmed,
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,
And as in slumber laid,—

Or something night and day between,
Like moonshine—but the hue was green ;
Still moonshine, without shadow, spread
On jutting rock, and curvèd shore,
Where gazed the peasant from his door
And on the mountain's head.

It tinged the Julian steeps—it lay,
Lugano ! on thy ample bay ;
The solemnizing veil was drawn
O'er villas, terraces, and towers ;
To Albogasio's olive bowers,
Porlezza's verdant lawn.

But Fancy with the speed of fire
Hath past to Milan's loftiest spire,
And there alights 'mid that aërial host
Of Figures human and divine,
White as the snows of Apennine
Indúrated by frost.

Awe-stricken she beholds the array
That guards the Temple night and day ;

Angels she sees—that might from heaven have flown,
And Virgin-saints, who not in vain
Have striven by purity to gain
The beatific crown—

Sees long-drawn files, concentric rings
Each narrowing above each ;—the wings,
The uplifted palms, the silent marble lips
The starry zone of sovereign height—
All steeped in this portentous light !
All suffering dim eclipse !

Thus after Man had fallen (if aught
These perishable spheres have wrought
May with that issue be compared)
Throngs of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared.

Lo ! while I speak, the labouring Sun
His glad deliverance has begun :
The cypress waves her sombre plume
More cheerily ; and town and tower,
The vineyard and the olive-bower,
Their lustre re-assume !

O Ye, who guard and grace my home
While in far-distant lands we roam,

What countenance hath this Day put on for you?
While we looked round with favoured eyes,
Did sullen mists hide lake and skies
And mountains from your view?

Or was it given you to behold
Like vision, pensive though not cold,
From the smooth breast of gay Winandermere?
Saw ye the soft yet awful veil
Spread over Grasmere's lovely dale,
Helvellyn's brow severe?

I ask in vain—and know far less
If sickness, sorrow, or distress
Have spared my Dwelling to this hour;
Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love
And all-controlling power.

XXXVI

I

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON
HILLS, YORKSHIRE

DARK and more dark the shades of evening fell;
The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.

Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us ; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed—a place for bell

Or clock to toll from ! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast ! objects all for the eye

Of silent rapture ; but we felt the while
We should forget them ; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

II

———' they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

THOSE words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight :
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed !

But now upon this thought I cannot brood ;
It is unstable as a dream of night ;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.

Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
 Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
 Find in the heart of man no natural home :

The immortal Mind craves objects that endure :
 These cleave to it ; from these it cannot roam,
 Nor they from it : their fellowship is secure.

XXXVII

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE

CLOUDS, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
 Through the grey west ; and lo ! these waters, steeled
 By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
 A vivid repetition of the stars ;

Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
 Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
 At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
 Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.

Is it a mirror?—or the nether Sphere
 Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
 Her own calm fires?—But list ! a voice is near ;
 Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds
 “ Be thankful, thou ; for, if unholy deeds
 Ravage the world, tranquillity is here ! ”

XXXVIII

THE stars are mansions built by Nature's hand,
 And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
 Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest ;
 Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,

A habitation marvellously planned,
 For life to occupy in love and rest ;
 All that we see—is dome, or vault, or nest,
 Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.

Glad thought for every season ! but the Spring
 Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
 'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring ;
 And while the youthful year's prolific art—
 Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
 Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.

XXXIX

WANSFELL ! this Household has a favoured lot,
 Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
 To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
 Or when along thy breast serenely float

Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
 Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard !) thy praise
 For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
 Of glory lavished on our quiet days.

Bountiful Son of Earth ! when we are gone
 From every object dear to mortal sight,
 As soon we shall be, may these words attest

How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
 Thy visionary majesties of light,
 How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

Dec. 24, 1842

XL

TO SLEEP

I

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep !
 And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names ;
 The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
 When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep !

Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
 In rich reward all suffering ; Balm that tames
 All anguish ; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
 Takest away, and into souls dost creep,

Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
 I surely not a man ungently made,
 Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost ?

Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
 Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
 Still last to come where thou art wanted most !

TO SLEEP

II

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one ; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;

I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless ! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep ! by any stealth :
So do not let me wear to-night away :
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !

XLI

MARK the concentred hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns :—and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,

Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose

Among the lonely mountains.—Live, ye trees !
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep :

For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

XLII

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea :
Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :

Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

1802

XLIII

BY THE SEA-SIDE

THE sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest ;
Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives,
Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion ! soon will it be laid,
And by the tide alone the water swayed.
Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings mild
Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
The soothing recompence, the welcome change.
Where, now, the ships that drove before the blast,
Threatened by angry breakers as they passed ;
And by a train of flying clouds bemocked ;
Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked
As on a bed of death ? Some lodge in peace,
Saved by His care who bade the tempest cease ;
And some, too heedless of past danger, court
Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off port ;

But near, or hanging sea and sky between,
Not one of all those wingèd powers is seen,
Seen in her course, nor 'mid this quiet heard ;
Yet oh ! how gladly would the air be stirred
By some acknowledgment of thanks and praise,
Soft in its temper as those vesper lays
Sung to the Virgin while accordant oars
Urge the slow bark along Calabrian shores ;
A sea-born service through the mountains felt
Till into one loved vision all things melt :
Or like those hymns that soothe with graver sound
The gulfy coast of Norway iron-bound ;
And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise
With punctual care, Lutheran harmonies.
Hush, not a voice is here ! but why repine,
Now when the star of eve comes forth to shine
On British waters with that look benign ?
Ye mariners, that plough your onward way,
Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,
May silent thanks at least to God be given
With a full heart ; ' our thoughts are *heard* in heaven !'

1833

XLIV

BROOK ! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew ;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,

And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks ;
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,

Channels for tears ; no Naiad should'st thou be,—
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs :
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good ;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

XLV

THE RIVER DUDDON

I

O MOUNTAIN Stream ! the Shepherd and his Cot
Are privileged Inmates of deep solitude ;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot

Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine :—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon ! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.

Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few ;

And through this wilderness a passage cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue !

XLVI

AFTER-THOUGHT

II

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies !
For, backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide ;

Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide ;
The Form remains, the Function never dies ;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied

The elements, must vanish ;—be it so !
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour ;

And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
 Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent
 dower,
 We feel that we are greater than we know.

XLVII

YARROW UNVISITED

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the
 banks of the Yarrow ; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of
 Hamilton beginning

‘ Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
 Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow ! ’—

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
 The mazy Forth unravelled ;
 Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
 And with the Tweed had travelled ;
 And when we came to Clovenford,
 Then said my ‘ *winsome Marrow,*’
 “ Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,
 And see the Braes of Yarrow.”

“ Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
 Who have been buying, selling,
 Go back to Yarrow, ’tis their own ;
 Each maiden to her dwelling !

On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow !
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow :
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn ;
My True-love sighed for sorrow ;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !

"Oh ! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing !
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock* ,
But we will leave it growing.

* See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough ;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow ;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow !
We will not see them ; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow ;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown !
It must, or we shall rue it :
We have a vision of our own ;
Ah ! why should we undo it ?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow !
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow !

If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy ;

Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow !”

1803

XLVIII

MOST sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon ;

Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.

If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse :
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

XLIX

YARROW VISITED,

SEPTEMBER, 1814

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;

Mild dawn of promise ! that excludes
All profitless dejection ;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding ?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding :
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love ;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow !

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation :

Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy ;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature ;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary !
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in ;
For manhood to enjoy his strength ;
And age to wear away in !
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather !

And what if I enwreathed my own !
'Twere no offence to reason ;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee ;
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee !
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure ;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish ;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow !
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

L

YARROW REVISITED :

WITH SIR WALTER SCOTT, 1831

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a 'winsome Marrow,'
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow ;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border !

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling ;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden ;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation ;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation :

No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly,—
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy ;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing ;
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment !
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment ;

Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded ;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT ! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes ;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorrento's breezy waves ;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking !

O ! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
With Strength, her venturous brother ;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory !

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow ;

And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her ;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer ?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self ?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us ?

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections ;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections :

Ah, no ! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred ;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered ;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the 'last Minstrel,' (not the last !)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream !
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simpel hearts thy beauty ;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine !

LI

ELEGIAC STANZAS,

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM,
PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile !
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee :
I saw thee every day ; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air !
So like, so very like, was day to day !
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there ;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm ! it seemed no sleep ;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings :
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah ! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw ; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream ;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this !
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile ;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years ; a chronicle of heaven ;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife ;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made :
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more ;
I have submitted to a new control :
A power is gone, which nothing can restore ;
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been :
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old ;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend ! who would have been
the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend ;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work !—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind !
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied ; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne !
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

LII

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
 If such be Nature's holy plan,
 Have I not reason to lament
 What man has made of man ?

1798

LIII

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISIT-
 ING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.
 JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have past ; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters ! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 That on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines

Of sportive wood run wild : these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beautiful forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills ; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Wherever nature led : more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite ; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
Have followed ; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy : for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee : and, in after years,
When these wild ecstacies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together ; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came

Unwearied in that service : rather say
 With warmer love—oh ! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

1798

LIV

LINES

Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the lake of Esthwaite, on
 a desolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect

NAY, Traveller ! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
 Far from all human dwelling : what if here
 No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb ?
 What if the bee love not these barren boughs ?
 Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
 That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
 By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

————— Who he was
 That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
 First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
 With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
 I well remember.—He was one who owned
 No common soul. In youth by science nursed,

And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow ; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service ; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life :
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous ! Nor, that time,
When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and human life, appeared a scene

Of kindred loveliness : then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel : and so, lost Man !
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger ! henceforth be warned ; and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness ; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used ; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou !
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love ;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

LV

THERE was a Boy ; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander !—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake ;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled ; concourse wild
Of jocund din ! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill :
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents ; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died

In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
 Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
 Where he was born and bred : the church-yard hangs
 Upon a slope above the village-school ;
 And, through that church-yard when my way has led
 On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
 A long half-hour together I have stood
 Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies !

1799

LVI

TO THE CLOUDS

ARMY of Clouds ! ye wingèd Host in troops
 Ascending from behind the motionless brow
 Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
 O whither with such eagerness of speed ?
 What seek ye, or what shun ye ? of the gale
 Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
 Or racing o'er your blue ethereal field
 Contend ye with each other ? of the sea
 Children, thus post ye over vale and height
 To sink upon your mother's lap—and rest ?
 Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first mine eyes
 Beheld in your impetuous march the likeness
 Of a wide army pressing on to meet
 Or overtake some unknown enemy ?—

But your smooth motions suit a peaceful aim ;
And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, compares
Your squadrons to an endless flight of birds
Aerial, upon due migration bound
To milder climes ; or rather do ye urge
In caravan your hasty pilgrimage
To pause at last on more aspiring heights
Than these, and utter your devotion there
With thunderous voice ? Or are ye jubilant,
And would ye, tracking your proud lord the Sun,
Be present at his setting ; or the pomp
Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and stand
Poising your splendours high above the heads
Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen God ?
Whence, whence, ye Clouds ! this eagerness of speed ?
Speak, silent creatures.—They are gone, are fled,
Buried together in yon gloomy mass
That loads the middle heaven ; and clear and bright
And vacant doth the region which they thronged
Appear ; a calm descent of sky conducting
Down to the unapproachable abyss,
Down to that hidden gulf from which they rose
To vanish—fleet as days and months and years,
Fleet as the generations of mankind,
Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
The lingering world, when time hath ceased to be.
But the winds roar, shaking the rooted trees,
And see ! a bright precursor to a train

Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
That sullenly refuses to partake
Of the wild impulse. From a fount of life
Invisible, the long procession moves
Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
Which they are entering, welcome to mine eye
That sees them, to my soul that owns in them,
And in the bosom of the firmament
O'er which they move, wherein they are contained,
A type of her capacious self and all
Her restless progeny.

A humble walk

Here is my body doomed to tread, this path,
A little hoary line and faintly traced,
Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's foot
Or of his flock?—joint vestige of them both.
I pace it unrepining, for my thoughts
Admit no bondage and my words have wings.
Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid harp,
To accompany the verse? The mountain blast
Shall be our *hand* of music; he shall sweep
The rocks, and quivering trees, and billowy lake,
And search the fibres of the caves, and they
Shall answer, for our song is of the Clouds
And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales—
Which by their aid re-clothe the naked lawn
With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
And moisten the parched lips of thirsty flowers—

Love them ; and every idle breeze of air
Bends to the favourite burthen. Moon and stars
Keep their most solemn vigils when the Clouds
Watch also, shifting peaceably their place
Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when they lie,
As if some Protean art the change had wrought,
In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
And all degrees of beauty. O ye Lightnings !
Ye are their perilous offspring ; and the Sun—
Source inexhaustible of life and joy,
And type of man's far-darting reason, therefore
In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
A blazing intellectual deity—
Loves his own glory in their looks, and showers
Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
Visions with all but beatific light
Enriched—too transient were they not renewed
From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
In silent rapture, credulous desire
Nourish the hope that memory lacks not power
To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain thought !
Yet why repine, created as we are
For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
Lodged in the bosom of eternal things ?

LVII

A NIGHT-PIECE

——THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or
tower.

At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards ; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives : how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not !—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent ;—still they roll along
Inmeasurably distant ; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes ; and the mind,

Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

1798

LVIII

THE SIMPLON PASS

——— Brook and road

Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

1799

LIX

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY

——— Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are steadfast as the rocks ; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash ! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

LX

TO LYCONIS

ENOUGH of climbing toil !—Ambition treads
Here, as 'mid busier scenes, ground steep and rough,
Or slippery even to peril ! and each step,
As we for most uncertain recompence

Mount toward the empire of the fickle clouds,
 Each weary step, dwarfing the world below,
 Induces, for its old familiar sights,
 Unacceptable feelings of contempt,
 With wonder mixed—that Man could e'er be tied,
 In anxious bondage, to such nice array
 And formal fellowship of petty things!
 —Oh! 'tis the *heart* that magnifies this life,
 Making a truth and beauty of her own;
 And moss-grown alleys, circumscribing shades,
 And gurgling rills, assist her in the work
 More efficaciously than realms outspread,
 As in a map, before the adventurer's gaze—
 Ocean and Earth contending for regard.

The umbrageous woods are left—how far beneath!
 But lo! where darkness seems to guard the mouth
 Of yon wild cave, whose jagged brows are fringed
 With flaccid threads of ivy, in the still
 And sultry air, depending motionless.
 Yet cool the space within, and not uncheered
 (As whoso enters shall ere long perceive)
 By stealthy influx of the timid day
 Mingling with night, such twilight to compose
 As Numa loved; when, in the Egerian grot,
 From the sage Nymph appearing at his wish,
 He gained whate'er a regal mind might ask,
 Or need, of counsel breathed through lips divine.
 Long as the heat shall rage, let that dim cave

Protect us, there deciphering as we may
Diluvian records ; or the sighs of Earth
Interpreting ; or counting for old Time
His minutes, by reiterated drops,
Audible tears, from some invisible source
That deepens upon fancy—more and more
Drawn toward the centre whence those sighs creep forth
To awe the lightness of humanity :
Or, shutting up thyself within thyself,
There let me see thee sink into a mood
Of gentler thought, protracted till thine eye
Be calm as water when the winds are gone,
And no one can tell whither. Dearest Friend !
We too have known such happy hours together
That, were power granted to replace them (fetched
From out the pensive shadows where they lie)
In the first warmth of their original sunshine,
Loth should I be to use it : passing sweet
Are the domains of tender memory !

1817

LXI

YEW-TREES

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore ;
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched

To Scotland's heaths ; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree ! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay ;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove ;
Huge trunks ! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved ;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane ;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide ; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight ; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow ;—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship ; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

LXII

NUTTING

It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die ;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand ; and turned my steps
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation ; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene !—A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed

The banquet ;—or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played ;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye ;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with
crash
And merciless ravage : and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being : and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past ;
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,

I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

1799

LXIII

TO M. H.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees :
There was no road, nor any woodman's path ;
But a thick umbrage—checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches—of itself had made
A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone-basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment ; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself ;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them ; but it is beautiful ;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,

Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts :
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You !

1800

LXIV

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy :
And there myself and two belovèd Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
— Ill suits the road with one in haste ; but we
Played with our time ; and, as we strolled along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore—
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,

H

That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand !
And starting off again with freak as sudden ;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
—And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the queen Osmunda named ;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
—So fared we that bright morning : from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore ; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,

The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
"Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
"The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time."
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone ; whereat he turned his head
To greet us—and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
—Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,

My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
 The same admonishment, have called the place
 By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
 As e'er by mariner was given to bay
 Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast ;
 And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears.

1800

LXV

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
 The last that parleys with the setting sun ;
 We can behold it from our orchard-seat ;
 And, when at evening we pursue our walk
 Along the public way, this Peak, so high
 Above us, and so distant in its height,
 Is visible ; and often seems to send
 Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
 The meteors make of it a favourite haunt :
 The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
 In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
 As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
 The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
 And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
 With such communion, that no place on earth
 Can ever be a solitude to me,
 Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.

1800 .

LXVI

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE
YEARS OLD

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild ;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes ;
And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity ;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient ; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched :
Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images imprest
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

LXVII

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

THE little hedgerow birds,
 That peck along the roads, regard him not.
 He travels on, and in his face, his step,
 His gait, is one expression : every limb,
 His look and bending figure, all bespeak
 A man who does not move with pain, but moves
 With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
 To settled quiet : he is one by whom
 All effort seems forgotten ; one to whom
 Long patience hath such mild composure given,
 That patience now doth seem a thing of which
 He hath no need. He is by nature led
 To peace so perfect that the young behold
 With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

1798

LXVIII

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR

The class of Beggars, to which the Old Man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk ;
 And he was seated, by the highway side,

On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile ; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one ;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude :
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground ; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known ; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now ;
He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack
And careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man's hat ; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,

Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind ; and, if thus warned
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man ;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground ; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey ; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller !

His staff trails with him ; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust ; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he has passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by :
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen ! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances ; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth ! 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin ;
Without offence to God cast out of view ;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement

Worn out and worthless. While from door to door,
This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love ; and habit does the work
Of reason ; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle : even such minds
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solitudes of love can do !)

That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!

—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor ;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul ?
No—man is dear to man ; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings ; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head !
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him : and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers

To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head !
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys ; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows ;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive !—for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age !
Let him be free of mountain solitudes ;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures : if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal ; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die !

LXIX

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen ; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude ;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones !
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me

Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved ; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history,
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts ;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South

Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
'The winds are now devising work for me!'
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains : he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain ;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less ? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
His days had not been passed in singleness.

His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house : two wheels she had
Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;
That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease ; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side ; perhaps to card

Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.

Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,

And westward to the village near the lake ;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he

Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old ;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy ; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help ;

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up :
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. " Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
" I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us ; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ;

He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"

At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,

And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed :—" Well, Isabel ! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.

—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger ;—but this hope is a good hope.

—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night :

—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work : for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :

And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, " Thou must not go :

We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,

For if thou leave thy Father he will die."

The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,

Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring : at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over ; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
" He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold ; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.

With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him :—" My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories ; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains ; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."

Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, “ Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father : and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others’ hands ; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together : here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done ; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wish that thou shouldst live the life they lived :
But, ’tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me ;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should’st go.”

At this the old Man paused ;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :
“ This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part ;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee :
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy !
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes ; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love : when thou art gone,
What will be left to us !—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause

Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here : a covenant
'Twill be between us ; but, whatever fate
Befal thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept ;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing : and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on : and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now

Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at this Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses : ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would upset the brain, or break the heart :
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen

Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to time,
 He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband : at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
 On which it stood ; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighbourhood :—yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door ; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

1800

LXX

THE BROTHERS

“ THESE Tourists, heaven preserve us! needs must live
 A profitable life : some glance along,
 Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
 And they were butterflies to wheel about
 Long as the summer lasted : some, as wise,
 Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
 Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
 Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,

Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves.”

To Jane, his wife,

Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps,
Her large round wheel was turning. Towards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and, down the path
That from his cottage to the church-yard led,

He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.
'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad ; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters ; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner ;—and so had fared
Through twenty seasons ; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees :—and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze ;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains ; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,

And shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.*

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there ; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
—They were the last of all their race : and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him ; and, not venturing to enquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary church-yard turned ;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added.—He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-hour
He had remained ; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt ; and even to hope

* This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the Hurricane.

That he had seen this heap of turf before,—
That it was not another grave ; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to him :
And oh what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart ! he lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopped short,—and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone :
His arms have a perpetual holiday ;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead.—Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,

Approached ; he recognised the Priest at once,
 And, after greetings interchanged, and given
 By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
 Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life :
 Your years make up one peaceful family ;
 And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
 And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
 They cannot be remembered ? Scarce a funeral
 Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months ;
 And yet, some changes must take place among you :
 And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
 Can trace the finger of mortality,
 And see, that with our threescore years and ten
 We are not all that perish.—I remember,
 (For many years ago I passed this road)
 There was a foot-way all along the fields
 By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft !
 To me it does not seem to wear the face
 Which then it had !

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
 That chasm is much the same—

Leonard. But, surely, yonder—

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
 That does not play you false.—On that tall pike
 (It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
 There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
 As if they had been made that they might be

Companions for each other : the huge crag
Was rent with lightning—one hath disappeared ;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them ;—a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain ; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract ! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens ; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks :
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge ;
A wood is felled :—and then for our own homes !
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face ;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries,—one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side—
Yours was a stranger's judgment : for historians,
Commend me to these valleys !

Leonard. Yet your Church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past :
An orphan could not find his mother's grave :

Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull,—type of our earthly state
Nor emblem of our hopes : the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new to
me!

The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours ;
Yet our conclusion wanders from the truth :
We have no need of names and epitaphs ;
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then, for our immortal part ! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale :
The thought of death sits eásy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's
thoughts

Possess a kind of second life : no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves ?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might ; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round ;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,—

It looks just like the rest ; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

Leonard. 'Tis a common case.
We'll take another : who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves ?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

Priest. That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder ! and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little—yet a little,—and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages ; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter ! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale :
His pace was never that of an old man :

I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him :—but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel,—and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer—

Leonard. But those two Orphans !

Priest. Orphans !—Such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived : for, though their parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father : and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred !
Ay—you may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

Leonard. These boys—I hope
They loved this good old Man ?—

Priest. They did—and truly :
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,

With a more fond, familiar, tenderness ;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller : 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them !—From their house the school
Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side : and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—

Leonard.

It may be then—

Priest. Never did worthier lads break English bread ;
The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.

But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent ; when he died,
The estate and house were sold ; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years :—
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel*, down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival ;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see—
Hanging in the open air—but, O good Sir !
This is sad talk—they'll never sound for him—
Living or dead.—When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast.—'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit ; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed.—Poor Leonard ! when we parted,

* The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale : on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.

Leonard. If that day
Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him ;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him—

Priest. Happy ! Sir—

Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their
 graves,
And that he had one Brother—

Priest. That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate ;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked ; and, when his Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek ; he drooped, and pined, and
 pined—

Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-grown
 men !

Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away : we took him to us ;
He was the child of all the dale—he lived

Three months with one, and six months with another ;
 And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love :
 And many, many happy days were his.
 But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
 His absent Brother was still at his heart.
 And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found
 (A practice till this time unknown to him)
 That often, rising from his bed at night,
 He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
 He sought his brother Leonard.—You are moved !
 Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
 I judged you most unkindly.

Leonard.

But this Youth,

How did he die at last ?

Priest.

One sweet May-morning,
 (It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
 He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
 With two or three companions, whom their course
 Of occupation led from height to height
 Under a cloudless sun—till he, at length,
 Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
 The humour of the moment, lagged behind.
 You see yon precipice ;—it wears the shape
 Of a vast building made of many crags ;
 And in the midst is one particular rock
 That rises like a column from the vale,
 Whence by our shepherds it is called, THE PILLAR.
 Upon its aëry summit crowned with heath,

The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
Lay stretched at ease ; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared ; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day :
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened ; some ran to the lake : ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies !

Leonard. And that then *is* his grave !—Before his
death

You say that he saw many happy years ?

Priest. Ay, that he did—

Leonard. And all went well with him ?—

Priest. If he had one, the Youth had twenty homes.

Leonard. And you believe, then, that his mind was
easy ?—

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow ; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless
fortune,

He talked about him with a cheerful love.

Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed end !

Priest. Nay, God forbid !—You recollect I mentioned

A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him ; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath,—and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep ; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong :
And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasped, we think
His shepherd's staff ; for on that Pillar of rock
It had been caught mid way ; and there for years
It hung ;—and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended—

The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence ;
And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,—
And, looking at the grave, he said, “ My Brother ! ”
The Vicar did not hear the words : and now,
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
That Leonard would partake his homely fare :
The other thanked him with an earnest voice ;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road : he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed

All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him:—his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Egremont: and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them ;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

1800

LXXI

THE PILLAR OF TRAJAN

I HAD observed in the Newspaper, that the Pillar of Trajan was given as a subject for a prize-poem in English verse. I had a wish perhaps that my son, who was then an undergraduate at Oxford, should try his fortune, and I told him so ; but he, not having been accustomed to write verse, wisely declined to enter on the task ; whereupon I showed him these lines as a proof of what might, without difficulty, be done on such a subject.

WHERE towers are crushed, and unforbidden weeds
O'er mutilated arches shed their seeds ;
And temples, doomed to milder change, unfold
A new magnificence that vies with old ;

Firm in its pristine majesty hath stood
 A votive Column, spared by fire and flood :—
 And, though the passions of man's fretful race
 Have never ceased to eddy round its base,
 Not injured more by touch of meddling hands
 Than a lone obelisk, 'mid Nubian sands,
 Or aught in Syrian deserts left to save
 From death the memory of the good and brave.
 Historic figures round the shaft embost
 Ascend, with lineaments in air not lost :
 Still as he turns, the charmed spectator sees
 Group winding after group with dream-like ease ;
 Triumphs in sunbright gratitude displayed,
 Or softly stealing into modest shade.

—So, pleased with purple clusters to entwine
 Some lofty elm-tree, mounts the daring vine ;
 The woodbine so, with spiral grace, and breathes
 Wide-spreading odours from her flowery wreaths.

Borne by the Muse from rills in shepherds' ears
 Murmuring but one smooth story for all years,
 I gladly commune with the mind and heart
 Of him who thus survives by classic art,
 His actions witness, venerate his mien,
 And study Trajan as by Pliny seen ;
 Behold how fought the Chief whose conquering sword
 Stretched far as earth might own a single lord ;
 In the delight of moral prudence schooled,
 How feelingly at home the Sovereign ruled ;

Best of the good—in pagan faith allied
To more than Man, by virtue deified.

Memorial Pillar ! 'mid the wrecks of Time
Preserve thy charge with confidence sublime—
The exultations, pomps, and cares of Rome,
Whence half the breathing world received its doom ;
Things that recoil from language ; that, if shown
By apter pencil, from the light had flown.
A Pontiff, Trajan *here* the Gods implores,
There greets an Embassy from Indian shores ;
Lo ! he harangues his cohorts—*there* the storm
Of battle meets him in authentic form !
Unharnessed, naked, troops of Moorish horse
Sweep to the charge ; more high, the Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed ;—yet, high or low,
None bleed, and none lie prostrate but the foe ;
In every Roman, through all turns of fate,
Is Roman dignity inviolate ;
Spirit in him pre-eminent, who guides,
Supports, adorns, and over all presides ;
Distinguished only by inherent state
From honoured Instruments that round him wait ;
Rise as he may, his grandeur scorns the test
Of outward symbol, nor will deign to rest
On aught by which another is deprest.
—Alas ! that One thus disciplined could toil
To enslave whole nations on their native soil ;
So emulous of Macedonian fame,

That, when his age was measured with his aim,
 He drooped, 'mid else unclouded victories,
 And turned his eagles back with deep-drawn sighs :
 O weakness of the Great ! O folly of the Wise !

Where now the haughty Empire that was spread
 With such fond hope ? her very speech is dead ;
 Yet glorious Art the power of Time defies,
 And Trajan still, through various enterprise,
 Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the skies :
 Still are we present with the imperial Chief,
 Nor cease to gaze upon the bold Relief
 Till Rome, to silent marble unconfined,
 Becomes with all her years a vision of the Mind.

LXXII

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy Warrior ? Who is he
 That every man in arms should wish to be ?
 —It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
 Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
 Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought :
 Whose high endeavours are an inward light
 That makes the path before him always bright :
 Who, with a natural instinct to discern
 What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn ;
 Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
 But makes his moral being his prime care ;

Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train !
Turns his necessity to glorious gain ;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower ;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives :
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate ;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice ;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more ; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress ;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason ; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends ;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows :
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means ; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire ;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same

Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim ;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state ;
Whom they must follow ; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all :
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace ;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired ;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw ;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need :
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes ;
Sweet images ! which, wheresoe'r he be,
Are at his heart ; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve ;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love :—
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—

Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won :
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray ;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast :
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause ;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause :
This is the happy Warrior ; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

1806

LXXIII

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

“WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away ?

Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
 Conversing as I may,
 I sit upon this old grey stone,
 And dream my time away.”

1798

LXXIV

THE TABLES TURNED :

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT AS
 THE PRECEDING POEM

Up ! up ! my Friend, and quit your books ;
 Or surely you'll grow double :
 Up ! up ! my Friend, and clear your looks ;
 Why all this toil and trouble ?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
 A freshening lustre mellow
 Through all the long green fields has spread,
 His first sweet evening yellow.

Books ! 'tis a dull and endless strife :
 Come, hear the woodland linnet,
 How sweet his music ! on my life,
 There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark ! how blithe the throstle sings !
 He, too, is no mean preacher :
 Come forth into the light of things,
 Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings ;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things :—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art ;
Close up those barren leaves ;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

1798

LXXV

PERSONAL TALK

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight :

And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.

Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire ;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,

In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

II

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe ;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.

Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so ; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me !

Children are blest, and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
And part far from them : sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet ;

Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a slave ; the meanest we can meet !

III

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure : wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.

Dreams, books, are each a world ; and books, we
know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good :
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear ;

Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor ;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine ; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking ; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not ; malignant truth, or lie.

Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous
thought :

And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.

Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

LXXVI

GLEN-ALMAIN ;

OR, THE NARROW GLEN

IN this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN ;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one :
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death ;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last

Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent ;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled ;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet ;
But this is calm ; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed ?
Or is it but a groundless creed ?
What matters it ?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved ; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease ;
But something deeper far than these :
The separation that is here
Is of the grave ; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place.

LXXVII

MEMORIAL

NEAR THE OUTLET OF THE LAKE OF THUN :

*'DEM
ANDENKEN
MEINES FREUNDES
ALOYS REDING
MDCCCXVIII.'*

Aloys Reding, it will be remembered, was Captain-General of the Swiss forces, which, with a courage and perseverance worthy of the cause, opposed the flagitious and too successful attempt of Buonaparte to subjugate their country.

AROUND a wild and woody hill
A gravelled pathway treading,
We reached a votive Stone that bears
The name of Aloys Reding.

Well judged the Friend who placed it there
For silence and protection ;
And haply with a finer care
Of dutiful affection.

The Sun regards it from the West ;
And, while in summer glory
He sets, his sinking yields a type
Of that pathetic story :

And oft he tempts the patriot Swiss
Amid the grove to linger ;
Till all is dim, save this bright Stone
Touched by his golden finger.

LXXVIII

INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS

IN Brugès town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled ;
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet
The grass-grown pavement tread.
There heard we, halting in the shade
Flung from a Convent-tower,
A harp that tuneful prelude made
To a voice of thrilling power.

The measure, simple truth to tell,
Was fit for some gay throng ;
Though from the same grim turret fell
The shadow and the song.
When silent were both voice and chords,
The strain seemed doubly dear,
Yet sad as sweet,—for *English* words
Had fallen upon the ear.

It was a breezy hour of eve ;
And pinnacle and spire
Quivered and seemed almost to heave,
Clothed with innocuous fire ;
But, where we stood, the setting sun
Showed little of his state ;
And, if the glory reached the Nun,
'Twas through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,
Nor pity idly born,
If even a passing Stranger sighs
For them who do not mourn.
Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,
Captive, whoe'er thou be !
Oh ! what is beauty, what is love,
And opening life to thee ?

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,
A feeling sanctified
By one soft trickling tear that stole
From the Maiden at my side ;
Less tribute could she pay than this,
Borne gaily o'er the sea,
Fresh from the beauty and the bliss
Of English liberty ?

LXXIX

DISSOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH MONASTERIES

THREATS come which no submission may assuage,
No sacrifice avert, no power dispute ;
The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,

The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage ;
The gadding bramble hang her purple fruit ;
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.

The owl of evening and the woodland fox
For their abode the shrines of Waltham choose :
Proud Glastonbury can no more refuse
To stoop her head before these desperate shocks—
She whose high pomp displaced, as story tells,
Arimathean Joseph's wattled cells.

LXXX

MUTABILITY

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail ;
A musical but melancholy chime,

Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not ; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more ; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

LXXXI

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence !
Give all thou canst ; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more ;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells

Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die ;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

LXXXII

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF
SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !

There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven :
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be

That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !

LXXXIII

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in fee ;
And was the safeguard of the west : the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty,

She was a maiden City, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

LXXXIV

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men !
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den ;—

O miserable Chieftain ! where and when
Wilt thou find patience ? Yet die not ; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow :
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth, and skies ;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

LXXXV

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O FRIEND ! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom !—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
Plain living and high thinking are no more :

The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LXXXVI

LONDON, 1802

MILTON ! thou should'st be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee : she is a fen
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,

Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart :
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,

So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

LXXXVII

IT is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'

Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish ; and to evil and to good

Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old :
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake ; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

LXXXVIII

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed

I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.

For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:

What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

LXXXIX

HART-LEAP WELL

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
"Bring forth another horse!" he cried aloud.

“Another horse!”—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey ;
Sir Walter mounted him ; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes ;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair ;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar ;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all ;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain :
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern ;
But breath and eyesight fail ; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase ;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side ;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died ;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn ;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat ;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched :
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot !)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, " Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes :
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy ;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell !
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

And, gallant Stag ! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised ;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure ;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure !"

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
—Soon did the Knight perform what he had said;
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

THE moving accident is not my trade ;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts :
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square ;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine :
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head ;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green ;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“ Here in old time the hand of man hath been.”

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey ;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow :— him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
“ A jolly place,” said he, “ in times of old !
But something ails it now : the spot is curst.

You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower ; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms !

The arbour does its own condition tell ;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream ;
But as to the great Lodge ! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

What thoughts must through the creature's brain have
past !

Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
O Master ! it has been a cruel leap.

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide ;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone."

“ Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine :
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell ;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom ;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known ;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals ,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

XC

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night ;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods ;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright ;
The birds are singing in the distant woods ;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods ;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters ;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors ;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth ;
The grass is bright with rain-drops ;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth ;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy ;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar ;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy :

The pleasant season did my heart employ :
My old remembrances went from me wholly ;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low ;
To me that morning did it happen so ;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came ;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor
could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky ;
And I bethought me of the playful hare :
Even such a happy Child of earth am I ;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare ;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care ;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood ;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good ;

But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride ;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side :
By our own spirits are we deified :
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness ;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befel, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares :
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence ;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence ;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense :

Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age :
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage ;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had
cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood :
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he coned,
As if he had been reading in a book :
And now a stranger's privilege I took ;

And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
“ This morning gives us promise of a glorious day.”

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew :
And him with further words I thus bespake,
“ What occupation do you there pursue ?
This is a lonesome place for one like you.”
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men ; a stately speech ;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor :
Employment hazardous and wearisome !
And he had many hardships to endure :
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to
moor ;

Housing, with God's good help, by choice or
chance ;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side ;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard ; nor word from word could I divide ;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream ;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned : the fear that kills ;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed ;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills ;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
“ How is it that you live, and what is it you do ? ”

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat ;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled ; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
“ Once I could meet with them on every side ;

But they have dwindled long by slow decay ;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me :
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main ; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure ;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor !"

XCI

DION

SEE PLUTARCH

I

SERENE, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere—
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear and
shield,

Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on?—The anxious people see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corslet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
 In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine;—
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
 He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;
And flowers are on his person thrown
 In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were!

III

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn
Ilissus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!

For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws
Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right,
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with
stars)

Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight ;—
But He hath overleaped the eternal bars ;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain ;
And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go—
But whence that sudden check ? that fearful start !

He hears an uncouth sound—

Anon his lifted eyes

Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round !
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
Like Auster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try ;

Or Boreas when he scours the snow
 That skins the plains of Thessaly,
 Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
 His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
 The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
 Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—
 No pause admitted, no design avowed!
 “Avaunt, inexplicable Guest!—avaunt,”
 Exclaimed the Chieftain—“let me rather see
 The coronal that coiling vipers make;
 The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
 And the long train of doleful pageantry
 Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt;
 Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
 Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
 And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have
 borne!”

7

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
 Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
 Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
 Once raised, remains aghast, and will not fall!
 Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
 Obeys a mystical intent!

Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere ;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear ;
Whence angry perturbations,—and that look
Which no Philosophy can brook !

VI

Ill-fated Chief ! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name ;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim !
O matchless perfidy ! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime !—that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust !
Shuddered the walls—the marble city wept—
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh ;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity ;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change ; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate ;

‘ Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
 Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
 Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends.’

1816

XCII

LAODAMIA

“ WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
 Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired ;
 And from the infernal Gods, ’mid shades forlorn
 Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required :
 Celestial pity I again implore ;—
 Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore !”

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
 With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands ;
 While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
 Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands ;
 Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;
 And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror ! what hath she perceived ?—O joy !
 What doth she look on ?—whom doth she behold ?
 Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy ?
 His vital presence ? his corporeal mould ?

It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He !
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury !

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear ; “Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamía ! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air :
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space ;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face !”

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp ;
Again that consummation she essayed ;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

“Protesiláus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne ;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon ; and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamía ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.

And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die ; but me the threat could not withhold :
A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“ Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best !
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore ;
Thou found’st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave ;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should’st elude the malice of the grave :
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this ;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side !
Give, on this well known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride !”

Jove frowned in heaven : the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“ This visage tells thee that my doom is past :
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains :
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion : for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul ;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate ; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—”

“ Ah, wherefore ?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom ?
Medea’s spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth ’mid youthful peers.

The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent : for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,

Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

But if thou goest, I follow—"Peace!" he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry

Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night ;

And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

The wished-for wind was given :—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovèd Wife !
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers ;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
' Behold they tremble !—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die ?'
In soul I swept the indignity away :

Old frailties then recurred :—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow ;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised ;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end ;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled : her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”——

Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes re-appears !
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—’tis vain :
The hours are past—too brief had they been years ;
And him no mortal effort can detain :
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished ; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,

Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
 Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
 Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
 As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
 Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
 A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
 From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
 And ever, when such stature they had gained
 That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
 The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
 A constant interchange of growth and blight !

1814

XCIII

ODE TO DUTY

' Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eductus, ut non tantum rectè facere
 possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim.'

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God !
 O Duty ! if that name thou love
 Who art a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove ;

Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe ;
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them ; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do thy work, and know it not :
Oh ! if through confidence misplaced [cast.
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around them

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust :
And oft, when in my heart was heard

Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we any thing so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
I call thee : I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
Oh, let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise,

The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

1805

XCIV

TO ENTERPRISE

KEEP for the Young the impassioned smile
Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee stand
High on that chalky cliff of Briton's Isle,
A slender volume grasping in thy hand—
(Perchance the pages that relate
The various turns of Crusoe's fate)—
Ah, spare the exulting smile,
And drop thy pointing finger bright
As the first flash of beacon light ;
But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
Nor turn thy face away
From One who, in the evening of his day,
To thee would offer no presumptuous hymn !

I

Bold Spirit ! who art free to rove
Among the starry courts of Jove,
And oft in splendour dost appear
Embodied to poetic eyes,
While traversing this nether sphere,

Where Mortals call thee ENTERPRISE.
Daughter of Hope ! her favourite Child,
Whom she to young Ambition bore,
When hunter's arrow first defiled
The grove, and stained the turf with gore ;
Thee wingèd Fancy took, and nursed
On broad Euphrates' palmy shore,
And where the mightier Waters burst
From caves of Indian mountains hoar !
She wrapped thee in a panther's skin ;
And Thou, thy favourite food to win,
The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst scare
From her rock-fortress in mid air,
With infant shout ; and often sweep,
Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain ;
Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
Upon the couchant lion's mane !
With rolling years thy strength increased ;
And, far beyond thy native East,
To thee, by varying titles known
As variously thy power was shown,
Did incense-bearing altars rise,
Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
From suppliants panting for the skies !

II

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demi-god

Mounting from glorious deed to deed
As thou from clime to clime didst lead ;
Yet still, the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays,
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripling seeks the tented field ;
The aspiring Virgin kneels ; and, pale
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,
A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline ;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy,
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground,—or a couch of rest ;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser awed in vain
By chasm or dizzy precipice ;
And hast Thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight ?
How they, in bells of crystal, dive—
Where winds and waters cease to strive—

For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep ;
And all the sad and precious things
Which there in ghastly silence sleep ?
Or, adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calms no longer dreaded,
In never-slackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow ;
And, slighting sails and scorning oars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores ?
—Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste ;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead,
Nile trembles at his fountain head ;
Thou speak'st—and lo ! the polar Seas
Unbosom their last mysteries.
—But oh ! what transports, what sublime reward,
Won from the world of mind, dost thou prepare
For philosophic Sage ; or high-souled Bard
Who, for thy service trained in lonely woods,
Hath fed on pageants floating through the air,
Or calentured in depth of limpid floods ;
Nor grieves—tho' doomed thro' silent night to bear
The domination of his glorious themes,
Or struggle in the net-work of thy dreams !

III

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,

From source still deeper, and of higher worth,
 'Tis thine the quickening impulse to control,
 And in due season send the mandate forth ;
 Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
 When but a single Mind resolves to crouch no more.

IV

Dread Minister of wrath !
 Who to their destined punishment dost urge
 The Pharaohs of the earth, the men of hardened heart !
 Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
 Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
 When they in pomp depart
 With trampling horses and refulgent cars—
 Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge ;
 Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown strands ;
 Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands—
 An Army now, and now a living hill
 That a brief while heaves with convulsive throes—
 Then all is still ;
 Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
 Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless snows !

V

Back flows the willing current of my Song :
 If to provoke such doom the Impious dare,
 Why should it daunt a blameless prayer ?
 —Bold Goddess ! range our Youth among ;

Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat
 In hearts no longer young ;
 Still may a veteran Few have pride
 In thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet ;
 In fixed resolves by Reason justified ;
 That to their object cleave like sleet
 Whitening a pine tree's northern side,
 When fields are naked far and wide,
 And withered leaves, from earth's cold breast
 Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can find rest.

VI

But, if such homage thou disdain
 As doth with mellowing years agree,
 One rarely absent from thy train
 More humble favours may obtain
 For thy contented Votary.
 She, who incites the frolic lambs
 In presence of their heedless dams,
 And to the solitary fawn
 Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
 That wakes the breeze, the sparkling lymph
 Doth hurry to the lawn ;
 She, who inspires that strain of joyance holy
 Which the sweet Bird, misnamed the melancholy,
 Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead for me ;
 And vernal mornings opening bright
 With views of undefined delight,

And cheerful songs, and suns that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be mine.

VII

But thou, O Goddess ! in thy favourite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's store-house fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile !—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame ;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society ;
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with Thee !

XCV

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE :

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU ! whose fancies from afar are brought ;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol ;
Thou faery voyager ! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat

May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream ;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery ;
O blessed vision ! happy child !
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality ;
And Grief, uneasy lover ! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly !
O vain and causeless melancholy !
Nature will either end thee quite ;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow ?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth ;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives ;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

XCVI

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three
years:

Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her ? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail ;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade :
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes !

XCVII

GIPSIES

YET are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot !
 Men, women, children, yea the frame
 Of the whole spectacle the same !
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night ;
 That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
 Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
—Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone,
 while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
 Much witnessing of change and cheer,
 Yet as I left I find them here !
The weary Sun betook himself to rest ;—
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
 Outshining like a visible God
 The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
 Behold the mighty Moon ! this way
 She looks as if at them—but they
Regard not her :—oh better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life ;

Life which the very stars reprove
 As on their silent tasks they move !
 Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth !
 In scorn I speak not ;—they are what their birth
 And breeding suffer them to be ;
 Wild outcasts of society !

1807

XCVIII

A JEWISH FAMILY :

IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE
 RHINE

GENIUS of Raphael ! if thy wings
 Might bear thee to this glen,
 With faithful memory left of things
 To pencil dear and pen,
 Thou would'st forego the neighbouring Rhine,
 And all his majesty—
 A studious forehead to incline
 O'er this poor family.

The Mother—her thou must have seen,
 In spirit, ere she came
 To dwell these rifted rocks between,
 Or found on earth a name ;

P

An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give—
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies !
I speak as if of sense beguiled ;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within ;
The grace of parting Infancy
By blushes yet untamed ;
Age faithful to the mother's knee,
Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
As flowers, stand side by side ;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
The Christian of his pride :
Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
Upon them not forlorn,

Though of a lineage once abhorred,
Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light,
From Hebrew fountains sprung ;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem !

1828

XCIX

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower !
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head :
And these grey rocks ; that household lawn ;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn ;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake ;
This little bay ; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—

P 2

In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream ;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep !
But, O fair Creature ! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart ;
God shield thee to thy latest years !
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers ;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away :
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness :
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer :
A face with gladness overspread !
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred !
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;
With no restraint, but such as springs

From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech :
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life !
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful ?
O happy pleasure ! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell ;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess !
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality :
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea ; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see !
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee !
Now thanks to Heaven ! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had ; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize

Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes :
Then, why should I be loth to stir ?
I feel this place was made for her ;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl ! from thee to part :
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall ;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all !

C

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands

Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

CI

LYRE ! though such power do in thy magic live
As might from India's farthest plain
Recal the not unwilling Maid,
Assist me to detain
The lovely Fugitive :
Check with thy notes the impulse which, betrayed
By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to aid.
Here let me gaze enrapt upon that eye,
The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
Of contemplation, the calm port
By reason fenced from winds that sigh
Among the restless sails of vanity.
But if no wish be hers that we should part,
A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.
Where all things are so fair,
Enough by her dear side to breathe the air
Of this Elysian weather ;
And, on or in, or near, the brook, espy
Shade upon the sunshine lying
Faint and somewhat pensively ;
And downward Image gaily vying
With its upright living tree
Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue sky
As soft almost and deep as her cerulean eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance
 Cast up the Stream or down at her beseeching,
 To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily distrest
 By ever-changing shape and want of rest ;
 Or watch, with mutual teaching,
 The current as it plays
 In flashing leaps and stealthy creeps
 A down a rocky maze ;
 Or note (translucent summer's happiest chance !)
 In the slope-channel floored with pebbles bright,
 Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,
 So vivid that they take from keenest sight
 The liquid veil that seeks not to hide them.

CII

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM
 CASTLE,

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD,
 TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
 And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song.—
 The words of ancient time I thus translate,
 A festal strain that hath been silent long :—

“ From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last ;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming :
Both roses flourish, red and white :
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy ! joy to both ! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster !
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall ;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored !

They came with banner, spear, and shield ;
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood :
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north :
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,

Our streams proclaim a welcoming ;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted Tower ;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom :
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her !—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream ;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard ;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower :—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer—
Him, and his Lady-mother dear !

Oh ! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die !
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.

Who will take them from the light ?
—Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where ?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks ;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child !

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy ?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame ?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread !
God loves the Child ; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say :
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be ; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best !'

Alas ! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.

The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs ;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.

—Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise !
Hear it, good man, old in days !
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distress ;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear !
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth !
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill :
His garb is humble ; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien ;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state !
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,

Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear ;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty ;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him ;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality ;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant ;
He hath kenned them taking wing :
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered ; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be ;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom ;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book ;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls ;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance—

Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field ;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory !
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war !”

Alas ! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was
framed :

How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie ;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead :
Nor did he change ; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage-hearth ;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more ;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

1807

CIII

RUTH

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate ;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods ;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live ; her thoughts her own ;

Herself her own delight ;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay ;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest ;
He brought them from the Cherokees ;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung :
But no ! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name ;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak :
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth ! I guess
The panther in the wilderness

Was not so fair as he ;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear ;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout !
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long ;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues ;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head !

The cypress and her spire ;
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

“ How pleasant,” then he said, “ it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind ;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade !

What days and what bright years ! Ah me !
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while,” said he, “ to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this !”

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love :

“For there,” said he, “are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

Belovèd Ruth!”—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

“And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife.”
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think

That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,

Fair trees and gorgeous flowers ;
The breezes their own languor lent :
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favored bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent :
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known ;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires :
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night

Had loved her, night and morn :
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played ?
So kind and so forlorn !

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
“ O Ruth ! I have been worse than dead ;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly :
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

No more of this ; for now, by thee
Dear Ruth ! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn ;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return.”

Full soon that better mind was gone ;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—

They stirred him now no more ;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came, the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth !—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed ;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May ;
—They all were with her in her cell ;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain ;

She from her prison fled ;
But of the Vagrant none took thought ;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again :
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free ;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest ; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still ;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies ;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray !
And Ruth will, long before her day,

Be broken down and old :
Sore aches she needs must have ! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side ;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away ; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers :
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child !

Farewell ! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould

Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

1799

CIV

SIMON LEE,

THE OLD HUNTSMAN ;

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry ;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When Echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage ;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind ;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices ;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices !

But, oh the heavy change !—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see !
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor ;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead ;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick ;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick ;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,

Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger ;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer ?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do ;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader ! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,

O gentle Reader ! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it :
It is no tale ; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand ;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

“ You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool,” to him I said ;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought

They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning ;
Alas ! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

1798

CV

SEPTEMBER, 1819

DEPARTING summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring ;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays !
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough :—

Fall, rosy garlands, from my head!
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow!

Yet will I temperately rejoice;
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undiscordant themes;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than vernal ecstasies,
And passion's feverish dreams.

For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like Demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muses smile;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To enervate and defile.

Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent plains
In Britain's earliest dawn:
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn!

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Alcæus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong;

Woe! woe to Tyrants! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By wingèd Love inscribed, to assuage
The pangs of vain pursuit;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion swayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold?
Can haughty Time be just!

CVI

ODE TO LYCORIS:

MAY 1817

I

AN age hath been when Earth was proud
Of lustre too intense
To be sustained; and Mortals bowed
The front in self-defence.
Who *then*, if Dian's crescent gleamed,
Or Cupid's sparkling arrow streamed
While on the wing the Urchin played,
Could fearlessly approach the shade?
—Enough for one soft vernal day,
If I, a bard of ebbing time,
And nurtured in a fickle clime,
May haunt this hornèd bay;
Whose amorous water multiplies
The flitting halcyon's vivid dyes;
And smooths her liquid breast—to show
These swan-like specks of mountain snow,
White as the pair that slid along the plains
Of heaven, when Venus held the reins!

II

In youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owlet's wing;

Then, Twilight is preferred to Dawn,
And Autumn to the Spring.
Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect
To our own prodigal excess
Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (if such name befit
Thee, thee my life's celestial sign!)
When Nature marks the year's decline,
Be ours to welcome it;
Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns;
Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze;
Pleased when the sullen winds resound the knell
Of the resplendent miracle.

III

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris! life requires an *art*
To which our souls must bend;
A skill—to balance and supply;
And, ere the flowing fount be dry,
As soon it must, a sense to sip,
Or drink, with no fastidious lip.
Then welcome, above all, the Guest
Whose smiles, diffused o'er land and sea,

Seem to recal the Deity
Of youth into the breast :
May pensive Autumn ne'er present
A claim to her disparagement !
While blossoms and the budding spray
Inspire us in our own decay ;
Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
Be hopeful Spring the favourite of the Soul !

CVII

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

WE walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun ;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done !"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey ;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

“ Our work,” said I, “ was well begun,
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought ?”

A second time did Matthew stop ;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply :

“ Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale ;
And then she sang ;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again:
And did not wish her mine!"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

CVIII

THE FOUNTAIN :

A CONVERSATION

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat ;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

“ Now, Matthew ! ” said I, “ let us match
This water’s pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer’s noon ;

Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made ! ”

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree ;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee :

“ No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears ;
How merrily it goes !
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife ; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free :

But we are pressed by heavy laws ;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own ;
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

" Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains ;

And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee !"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
" Alas ! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side ;
 And down the smooth descent
 Of the green sheep-track did we glide ;
 And through the wood we went ;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
 He sang those witty rhymes
 About the crazy old church-clock,
 And the bewildered chimes.

1799

CIX

MATTHEW

In the School of — is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of the several persons who have been School-masters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite to one of those names the Author wrote the following lines.

If Nature, for a favourite child,
 In thee hath tempered so her clay,
 That every hour thy heart runs wild,
 Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines ; and then review
 This tablet, that thus humbly rears
 In such diversity of hue
 Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable ! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And, if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed :
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool ;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness ;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould !
Thou happy Soul ! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee ?

CX

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —.

I

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead ?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone !
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest ; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

II

Seven years, alas ! to have received
No tidings of an only child ;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled ;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
I catch at them, and then I miss ;
Was ever darkness like to this ?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold ;

Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base ;
And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah ! little doth the young-one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares !
He knows it not, he cannot guess :
Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

V

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
Said, ' Pride shall help me in my wrong ;
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed : ' and that is true ;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,

Oh ! do not dread thy mother's door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me : 'tis falsely said

That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

x

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass ;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass :
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind.

xi

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief :
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end ;
I have no other earthly friend !

CXI

THE CHILDLESS FATHER

“ UP, Timothy, up with your staff and away !
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay ;
The hare has just started from Hamilton’s grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.”

—Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six months before,
Filled the funeral basin at Timothy’s door ;
A coffin through Timothy’s threshold had past ;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the hark ! hark away !
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said ;
‘ The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead.’
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak ;
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

CXII

TO A SEXTON

LET thy wheel-barrow alone—
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid ;
These died in peace each with the other,—
Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point !
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint :
Andrew's whole fire-side is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness now, and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride—
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families !
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,

Thou, too heedless, art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality.
And, should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!

1799

CXIII

WE ARE SEVEN

———A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad :
Her eyes were fair, and very fair ;
—Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be ? ”
“ How many ? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they ? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “ Seven are we ;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“ You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven !—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“ Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“ You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive ;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

“ Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“ Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

The first that died was sister Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain ;
And then she went away.

So in the church-yard she was laid ;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,
 And I could run and slide,
 My brother John was forced to go,
 And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
 "If they two are in heaven?"
 Quick was the little Maid's reply,
 "O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
 Their spirits are in heaven!"
 'Twas throwing words away; for still
 The little Maid would have her will,
 And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

1798

CXIV

MEMORY

A PEN—to register; a key—
 That winds through secret wards;
 Are well assigned to Memory
 By allegoric Bards.

As aptly, also, might be given
 A Pencil to her hand;
 That, softening objects, sometimes even
 Outstrips the heart's demand;

That smoothes foregone distress, the lines
Of lingering care subdues,
Long-vanished happiness refines,
And clothes in brighter hues ;

Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

O ! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an Image of the past
Should fear that pencil's touch !

Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene ;

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening ;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

CXV

LINES

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

LOUD is the Vale ! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams !
Of all her Voices, One !

Loud is the Vale ;—this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea ;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load * !
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road ;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear ;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

* Importuna e grave salma.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss ;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return ?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn ?

1806

CXVI

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE
DEATH OF JAMES HOGG

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
Mid mouldering ruins low he lies ;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes :

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source ;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth :
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land !

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
“ Who next will drop and disappear ? ”

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe ! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before ; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh ?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep ;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid !
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

Nov. 1835

CXVII

A POET'S EPITAPH

ART thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred ?
—First learn to love one living man ;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou ?—draw not nigh !
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? one, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul, away!

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door ; press down the latch ;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust ;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown ?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove ;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed ;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak ; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land ;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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—Come hither in thy hour of strength ;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave !
Here stretch thy body at full length ;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

1799

CXVIII

IN these fair vales hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared ;
And from the builder's hand this Stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard :
So let it rest ; and time will come
When here the tender-hearted
May heave a gentle sigh for him,
As one of the departed.

1830

CXIX

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire !
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet

But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt

To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,

Depressed ; and then extinguished ; and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore !

CXX

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

CXXI

ODE :

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair ;
The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief :
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong :
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep ;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay ;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday ;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy !

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make ; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.

Oh evil day ! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
 On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm :—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone :
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

v

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar :
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes !

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song :
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part ;
 Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity ;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest,

Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by ;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

IX

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive !
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction : not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise ;

But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised :
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence : truths that wake,
 To perish never ;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy !
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound !

We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May !

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,

 Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind ;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be ;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering ;
 In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves !
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet ;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

1803-6

THE END.

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