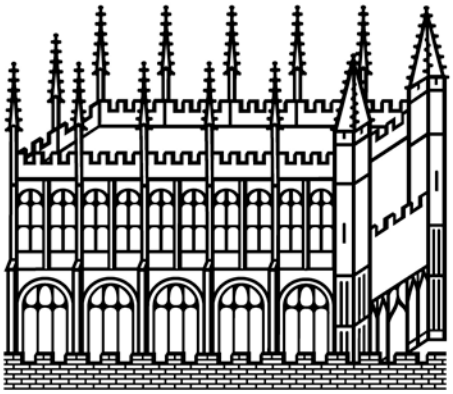

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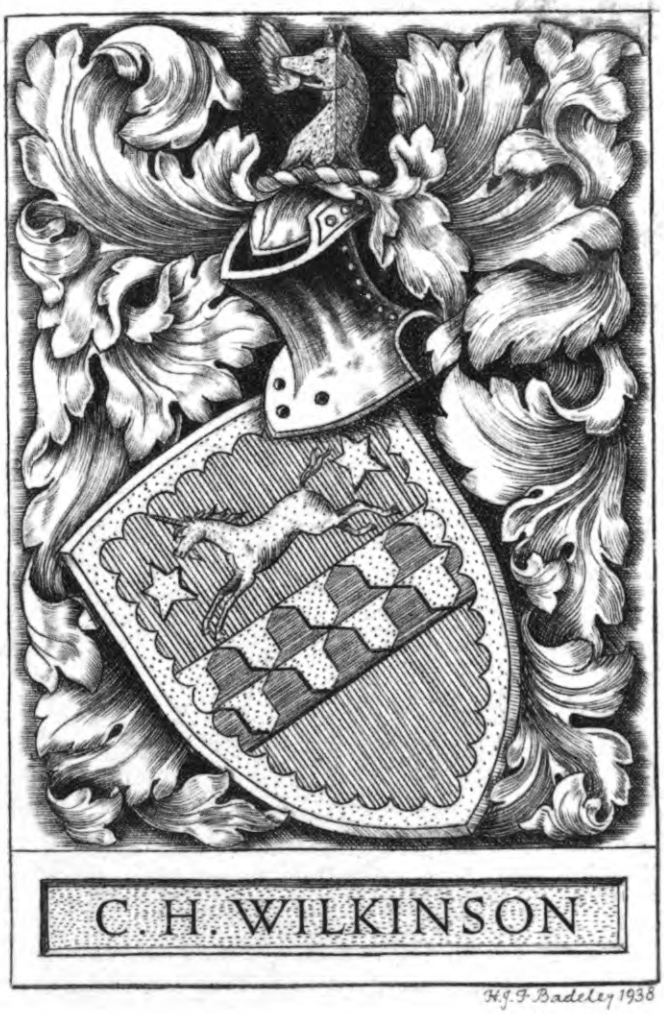

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Fawsley

PRAED'S POEMS.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED,

BY RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.

NEW-YORK:

HENRY G. LANGLEY, 8 ASTOR HOUSE.

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5 JA. 1961

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NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR.

Winthrop Mackworth Praed, we believe, was a native of London, where members of his family now reside, occupied with the business of banking. The author of "Lillian" was placed, when very young, at Eton, where John Moultrie, Henry Nelson Coleridge, and other clever men of kindred tastes, were his associates. He was principal editor of "The Etonian," one of the most spirited and piquant under-graduate magazines ever sent from a college. From Eton, he went to Cambridge, where he carried away an unprecedented number of prizes, obtained by Greek and Latin odes and epigrams, and English poems. On leaving Trinity College, he settled in London, and soon after became associated with Thomas Babbington Macaulay, and other young men, who have since been distinguished at the bar or in the senate, in the conduct of "Knight's Quarterly Magazine." After the discontinuance of the Miscellany, he occasionally wrote for the "New Monthly," and for the annuals; and a friend of his informs us that a large number of his playful lyrics, thrown off with infinite ease and readiness, are yet unprinted in the possession of his numerous friends. No collection of his effusions has ever been published before the present edition.

For a few years before his death, Mr. Praed was in Parliament, where he was considered a rising member, though his love of ease,

and social propensities, prevented the proper cultivation and devotion of his powers. He died on the 15th of July, 1839.

"Lillian," with the exception of Drake's "Culprit Fay," is the most purely imaginative poem with which we are acquainted. Praed delighted in themes of this sort, and "The Red Fisherman," the "Bridal of Belmont," and some of his other pieces, show the exceeding cleverness with which he reared upon them his fanciful and beautiful creations. "The Belle of the Ball," "The Vicar," "Palinodia," and a few more of the lively and graceful compositions in this volume have been widely known in this country through our periodicals, and we hope they will be no less welcome now that they are sent out in a body, with their fellows, to enliven all who may greet them, with their gaiety and quiet humour.

PHILADELPHIA, April, 1844.

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LILLIAN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE reader is requested to believe that the following statement is literally true; because the writer is well aware that the circumstances under which Lillian was composed are the only source of its merits, and the only apology for its faults.

At a small party at Cambridge, some malicious belles endeavoured to confound their sonnetteering friends, by setting unintelligible and inexplicable subjects for the exercise of their poetical talents. Among many others, the Thesis was given out which is the motto of Lillian:

> "A dragon's tail is flayed to warm
> A headless maiden's heart,"

and the following poem was an attempt to explain the riddle.

The partiality with which it had been honoured in manuscript, and the frequent applications which have been made to the author for copies, must be his excuse for having a few impressions struck off for private circulation among his friends.

It was written, however, with the sole view of amusing the ladies in whose circle the idea originated; and to them, with all due humility and devotion, it is inscribed.

Trinity College, Cambridge, October 26, 1822.

LILLIAN.

"A dragon's tail is flayed to warm
A headless maiden's heart." *Miss* ——.

"And he's cleckit this great muckle bird out o' this wee egg! he could wile the very flounders out o' the Frith! *Mr. Saddletree.*

CANTO I.

THERE was a dragon in Arthur's time,
When dragons and griffins were voted 'prime,'
Of monstrous reputation:
Up and down, and far and wide,
He roamed about in his scaly pride;
And ever, at morn and even-tide,
He made such rivers of blood to run
As shocked the sight of the blushing sun,
And deluged half the nation.
It was a pretty monster, too,
With a crimson head, and a body blue,
And wings of a warm and delicate hue,
Like the glow of a deep carnation:
And the terrible tail that lay behind,
Reached out so far as it twisted and twined,

That a couple of dwarfs, of wondrous strength,
Bore, when he travelled, the horrible length,
  Like a Duke's at the coronation.
His mouth had lost one ivory tooth,
Or the dragon had been, in very sooth,
  No insignificant charmer;
And that—alas! he had ruined it,
When on new-year's day, in a hungry fit,
He swallowed a tough and a terrible bit—
Sir Lob, in his brazen armour.
Swift and light were his steps on the ground,
Strong and smooth was his hide around,
For the weapons which the peasants flung
Ever unfelt or unheeded rung,
  Arrow, and stone, and spear,
As snow o'er Cynthia's window flits,
Or raillery of twenty wits
  On a fool's unshrinking ear.

In many a battle the beast had been,
  Many a blow he had felt and given:
Sir Digore came with a menacing mien,
  But he sent Sir Digore straight to Heaven;
Stiff and stour were the arms he wore,

Huge the sword he was wont to clasp;
But the sword was little, the armour brittle,
Locked in the coil of the dragon's grasp.

He came on Sir Florice of Sesseny Land,
Pretty Sir Florice from over the sea,
And smashed him all as he stepped on the sand,
Cracking his head like a nut from the tree.
No one till now, had found, I trow,
Any thing good in the scented youth,
Who had taken much pains to be rid of his brains,
Before they were sought by the dragon's tooth.

He came on the Sheriff of Hereford,
As he sat him down to his Sunday dinner;
And the Sheriff he spoke but this brief word:
"St. Francis, be good to a corpulent sinner!"
Fat was he, as a Sheriff might be,
From the crown of his head to the tip of his toe;
But the Sheriff was small, or nothing at all,
When put in the jaws of the dragon foe.

He came on the Abbot of Arnondale,
As he kneeled him down to his morning devotion;

But the dragon he shuddered, and turned his tail
About 'with a short uneasy motion.'
Iron and steel, for an early meal,
He stomached with ease, or the Muse is a liar;
But out of all question, he failed in digestion,
If ever he ventured to swallow a Friar!

Monstrous brute!—his dread renown
Made whispers and terrors in country and town;
Nothing was babbled by boor or knight,
But tales of his civic appetite.
At last, as after dinner he lay,
Hid from the heat of the solar ray,
By boughs that had woven an arbour shady,
He chanced to fall in with the Headless Lady.
Headless! alas! 't was a piteous gibe;
I'll drink Aganippe, and then describe.

Her father had been a stout yeoman,
Fond of his jest and fond of his can,
But never over-wise;
And once, when his cups had been many and deep,
He met with a dragon fast asleep,
'Twas a faery in disguise:

In a dragon's form she had ridden the storm,
The realm of the sky invading;
Sir Grahame's ship was stout and fast,
But the faery came on the rushing blast,
And shivered the sails, and shivered the mast,
And down went the gallant ship at last,
With all the crew and lading.
And the fay laughed out, to see the rout,
As the last dim hope was fading;
And this she had done in a love of fun,
And a love of masquerading.
She lay that night in a sunny vale,
And the yeoman found her sleeping;
Fiercely he smote her glittering tail,
But oh! his courage began to fail,
When the faery rose all weeping.
"Thou hast lopped," she said, "beshrew thine hand!—
The fairest foot in faery land!

"Thou hast an infant in thine home!
Never to her shall reason come,
For weeping or for wail,
Till she shall ride with a fearless face

On a living dragon's scale,
And fondly clasp to her heart's embrace
A living dragon's tail."
The faery's form from his shuddering sight
Flowed away in a stream of light.

Disconsolate that youth departed,
Disconsolate and poor;
And wended, chill and broken-hearted,
To his cottage on the moor;
Sadly and silently he knelt
His lonely hearth beside;
Alas! how desolate he felt
As he hid his face and cried.
The cradle where the babe was laid
Stood in its own dear nook,
But long—how long! he knelt, and prayed,
And did not dare to look.
He looked at last; his joy was there,
And slumbering with that placid air
Which only babes and angels wear.
Over the cradle he leaned his head:
The cheek was warm, and the lip was red;
And he felt, he felt, as he saw her lie,

A hope—which was a mockery.
The babe unclosed her eye's pale lid:—
Why doth he start from the sight it hid?
He hath seen in the dim and fitful ray,
That the light of the soul hath gone away!
Sigh nor prayer he uttered there,
In mute and motionless despair,
But he laid him down beside his child,
And LILLIAN saw him die—and smiled.
The mother! she had gone before;
And in the cottage on the moor,
With none to watch her and caress,
No arm to clasp, no voice to bless,
The witless child grew up alone,
And made all Nature's book her own.

If, in the warm and passionate hour
When Reason sleeps in Fancy's bower,
If thou hast ever, ever felt
A dream of delicate beauty melt
  Into the heart's recess,
Seen by the soul, and seen by the mind,
  But indistinct its loveliness,
Adored, and not defined;

A bright creation, a shadowy ray,
Fading and flitting in mist away,
Nothing to gaze on, and nothing to hear,
But something to cheat the eye and ear
With a fond conception and joy of both,
So that you might, that hour, be loth
To change for some one's sweetest kiss
The visions of unenduring bliss,
Or lose some one's sweetest tone,
The murmur thou drinkest all alone—
If such a vision hath ever been thine,
Thou hast a heart that may look on mine!

For, oh! the light of my saddened theme
Was like to nought but a poet's dream,
Or the forms that come on the twilight's wing,
Shaped by the soul's imagining.
Beautiful shade, with her tranquil air,
And her thin white arm, and her flowing hair,
And the light of her eye so boldly obscure,
And the hue of her cheek so pale and pure!
Reason and thought she had never known,
Her heart was as cold as a heart of stone;

So you might guess from her eyes' dim rays,
And her idiot laugh, and her vacant gaze.
She wandered about all lone on the heather,
She and the wild heath-birds together;
For Lillian seldom spoke or smiled,
But she sang as sweet as a little child.
Into her song her dreams would throng,
  Silly, and wild, and out of place;
And yet that wild and roving song
  Entranced the soul in its desolate grace.
And hence the story had ever run,
That the fairest of dames was a headless one.

The pilgrim in his foreign weeds
  Would falter in his prayer;
And the monk would pause in his half-told beads
  To breathe a blessing there;
The knight would loose his vizor-clasp,
And drop the rein from his nerveless grasp,
And pass his hand across his brow
With a sudden sigh, and a whispered vow,
And marvel Flattery's tale was told,
From a lip so young to an ear so cold.

She had seen her sixteenth winter out,
When she met with the beast I was singing about:
The dragon, I told you, had dined that day;
So he gazed upon her as he lay,
Earnestly looking, and looking long,
With his appetite weak and his wonder strong.
Silent he lay in his motionless coil;
And the song of the lady was sweet the while:—

"Nonny Nonny! I hear it float,
Innocent bird, thy tremulous note:
It comes from thy home in the eglantine,
And I stay this idle song of mine,
Nonny Nonny! to listen to thine!

"Nonny Nonny! 'LILLIAN sings
The sweetest of all living things!'
So Sir Launcelot averred;
But surely Sir Launcelot never heard
Nonny Nonny! the natural bird!"

The dragon he lay in mute amaze,
Till something of kindness crept into his gaze;

He drew the flames of his nostrils in,
He veiled his claws with their speckled skin,
He curled his fangs in a hideous smile;
And the song of the lady was sweet the while:—

" Nonny Nonny! who shall tell
Where the summer breezes dwell?
Lightly and brightly they breathe and blow,
But whence they come and whither they go,
Nonny Nonny! who shall know?

" Nonny Nonny! I hear your tone,
But I feel ye cannot read mine own;
And I lift my neck to your fond embraces,
But who hath seen in your resting-places,
Nonny Nonny! your beautiful faces?"

A moment! and the dragon came
Crouching down to the peerless dame,
With his fierce red eye so fondly shining,
And his terrible tail so meekly twining,
And the scales on his huge limbs gleaming o'er,
Gayer than ever they gleamed before.

She had won his heart, while she charmed his ear,
And Lillian smiled, and knew no fear.
And see, she mounts between his wings;
(Never a queen had a gaudier throne,)
And faery-like she sits and sings,
Guiding the steed with a touch and a tone.
Aloft, aloft in the clear blue ether,
The dame and the dragon they soared together;
He bore her away on the breath of the gale—
The two little dwarfs held fast by the tail.

Fanny! a pretty group for drawing;
My dragon like a war-horse pawing,
My dwarfs in a fright, and my girl in an attitude,
Patting the beast in her soulless gratitude.
There; you may try it if you will,
While I drink my coffee and nib my quill.

CANTO II.

The sun shone out on hill and grove;
It was a glorious day,
The lords and ladies were making love,
And the clowns were making hay;

But the town of Brentford marked with wonder
A lightning in the sky, and thunder,
And thinking ('t was a thinking town)
Some prodigy was coming down,
A mighty mob to Merlin went,
To learn the cause of this portent;
And he, a wizard sage, but comical,
Looked through his glasses astronomical,
And puzzled every foolish sconce
By this oracular response:

"Now the slayer doth not slay,
Weakness flings her fear away,
Power bears the powerless,
Pity rides the pityless;
Are ye lovers? are ye brave?
Hear ye this, and seek, and save!
He that would wed the loveliest maid,
Must don the stoutest mail,
For the rider shall never be sound in the head,
Till the ridden be maimed in the tail.
Hey diddle diddle! the cat and the fiddle!
None but the lover can read me my riddle!"

How kind art thou, and oh! how mighty,
Cupid! thou son of Aphrodite!
By thy sole aid, in old romance,
Heroes and heroines sing and dance;
Of cane and rod there's little need;
They never learn to write or read;
Yet often, by thy sudden light,
Enamoured dames contrive to write;
And often, in the hour of need,
Enamoured youths contrive to read.
(I make a small digression here:
I merely mean to make it clear,
That if Sir Eglamour had wit
To read and construe, bit by bit,
All that the wizard had expressed,
And start conjectures on the rest,
Cupid had sharpened his discerning,
The little god of love and learning.)
He revolved in his bed, what Merlin had said,
  Though Merlin had laboured to scatter a veil on't;
And found out the sense of the tail and the head,
  Though none of his neighbours could make head or
    tail on't.

Sir Eglamour was one o' the best
Of Arthur's table round;
He never set his spear in rest,
But a dozen went to the ground.
Clear and warm as the lightning flame,
His valour from his father came,
His cheek was like his mother's;
And his hazel eye more clearly shone
Than any I ever have looked upon,
Save Fanny's and two others!
With his spur so bright, and his reign so light,
And his steed so swift and ready,
And his skilful sword, to wound or ward,
And his spear so sure and steady;
He bore him like a British knight
From London to Penzance;
Avenged all weeping women's slight,
And made all giants dance.
And he had travelled far from home,
Had worn a mask at Venice,
Had kissed the Bishop's toe at Rome,
And beat the French at tennis:
Hence he had many a courtly play,
And jeerings and jibes in plenty,

And he wrote more rhymes in a single day
Than Byron or Bowles in twenty.

He clasped to his side his sword of pride,
His sword, whose native polish vied
With many a gory stain;
Keen and bright as a meteor-light;
But not so keen and not so bright,
As Moultrie's* jesting vein.
And his shield he bound his arm around,
His shield, whose dark and dingy round,
Nought human could get through;
Heavy and thick as a wall of brick,
But not so heavy and not so thick
As Roberts' Review.†
With a smile and a jest he set out on the quest,
Clad in his stoutest mail,
With his helm of the best, and his spear in the rest,
To flay the dragon's tail.

---

* Rev. John Moultrie, who, in 1823, (when many manuscript copies of 'Lillian' were in circulation,) wrote some beautiful and pathetic lyrics, some of which appeared in Knight's Quarterly Magazine.

† "My Grandmother's Review—the British."—*Don Juan.* Roberts was the editor.—*Vide Byron's celebrated Letter to him.*

The warrior travelled wearily,
Many a league and many a mile;
And the dragon sailed in the clear blue sky;
And the song of the lady was sweet the while:—

"My steed and I, my steed and I,
On in the path of the winds we fly,
And I chase the planets that wander at even,
And bathe my hair in the dews of heaven!
Beautiful stars, so thin and bright,
Exquisite visions of vapour and light,
I love ye all with a sister's love,
And I rove with ye wherever ye rove,
And I drink your changeless, endless song,
The music ye make as ye wander along!
Oh! let me be, as one of ye,
Floating for aye on your liquid sea;
And I'll feast with you on the purest rain,
To cool my weak and wildered brain,
And I'll give you the loveliest lock of my hair
For a little spot in your realm of air!"

The dragon came down when the morn shone bright,
And slept in the beam of the sun;

Fatigued, no doubt, with his airy flight,
As I with my jingling one.
With such a monstrous adversary
Sir Eglamour was far too weary
To think of bandying knocks;
He came on his foe as still as death,
Walking on tiptoe, and holding his breath,
And instead of drawing his sword from his sheath,
He drew a pepper-box!
The pepper was as hot as flame,
The box of a wondrous size;
He gazed one moment on the dame,
Then, with a sure and steady aim,
Full in the dragon's truculent phiz
He flung the scorching powder—whiz!
And darkened both his eyes!

Have you not seen a little kite
Rushing away on its paper wing,
To mix with the wild wind's quarrelling?
Up it soars with an arrowy flight,
Till, weak and unsteady,
Torn by the eddy,
It dashes to earth from its hideous height?

Such was the rise of the beast in his pain,
Such was his falling to earth again;
Upward he shot, but he saw not his path,
Blinded with pepper, and blinded with wrath;
One struggle—one vain one—of pain and emotion!
And he shot back again, 'like a bird of the ocean!'
Long he lay in a trance that day,
  And alas! he did not wake before
The cruel knight, with skill and might,
  Had lopped and flayed the tail he wore.

Twelve hours by the chime he lay in his slime,
  More utterly blind, I trow,
Than a Polypheme in the olden time,
  Or a politician now.
He sped, as soon as he could see,
To the Paynim bowers of Rosalie;
For there the dragon had hope to cure,
By the tinkling rivulets, ever pure,
By the glowing sun, and fragrant gale,
His wounded honour, and wounded tail!
He hied him away to the perfumed spot:
The little dwarfs clung—where the tail was not!

The damsel gazed on that young knight,
With something of terror, but more of delight;
Much she admired the gauntlets he wore,
Much the device that his buckler bore,
Much the feathers that danced on his crest,
But most the baldrick that shone on his breast.
She thought the dragon's pilfered scale
Was fairer far than the warrior's mail,
And she lifted it up with her weak white arm,
Unconscious of its hidden charm,
And round her throbbing bosom tied,
In mimicry of warlike pride.

Gone is the spell that bound her!
The talisman hath touched her heart,
And she leaps with a fearful and fawn-like start
As the shades of glamory depart—
Strange thoughts are glimmering round her;
Deeper and deeper her cheek is glowing,
Quicker and quicker her breath is flowing,
And her eye gleams out from its long dark lashes,
Fast and full, unnatural flashes;
For hurriedly and wild
Doth Reason pour her hidden treasures,

Of human griefs, and human pleasures,
Upon her new-found child.
And "oh!" she saith, "my spirit doth seem
To have risen to-day from a pleasant dream;
A long, long dream—but I feel it breaking!
Painfully sweet is the throb of waking;"
And then she laughed, and wept again:
While, gazing on her heart's first rain,
Bound in its turn by a magic chain,
The silent youth stood there:
Never had either been so blest;—
You that are young may picture the rest,
You that are young and fair.
Never before, on this warm land,
Came Love and Reason hand in hand.

When you are blest, in childhood's years,
With the brightest hopes and the lightest fears,
Have you not wandered, in your dream,
Where a greener glow was on the ground,
And a clearer breath in the air around,
And a purer life in the gay sunbeam,
And a tremulous murmur in every tree,
And a motionless sleep on the quiet sea?

And have you not lingered, lingered still,
All unfettered in thought and will,
A fair and cherished boy;
Until you felt it pain to part
From the wild creations of your art,
Until your young and innocent heart
Seemed bursting with its joy?
And then, oh then, hath your waking eye
Opened in all its ecstasy,
And seen your mother leaning o'er you,
The loved and loving one that bore you,
Giving her own, her fond caress,
And looking her eloquent tenderness?
Was it not heaven to fly from the scene
Where the heart in the vision of night had been,
And drink, in one o'erflowing kiss,
Your deep reality of bliss?
Such was LILLIA's passionate madness,
Such the calm of her waking gladness.

Enough! my tale is all too long:
Fair children, if the trifling song,
That flows for you to-night,
Hath stolen from you one gay laugh,

Or given your quiet hearts to quaff
  One cup of young delight,
Pay ye the rhymer for his toils
In the coinage of your golden smiles,
And treasure up his idle verse,
With the stories ye loved from the lips of your nurse.

THE BRIDAL OF BELMONT.

THE BRIDAL OF BELMONT.

A LEGEND OF THE RHINE.

WHERE foams and flows the glorious Rhine,
Many a ruin wan and gray
O'erlooks the corn-field and the vine,
Majestic in its dark decay.
Among their dim clouds, long ago,
They mocked the battles that raged below,
And greeted the guests in arms that came,
With hissing arrow, and scalding flame:
But there is not one, of the homes of pride
That frown on the breast of the peaceful tide,
Whose leafy walls more proudly tower
Than these, the walls of Belmont Tower.

Where foams and flows the glorious Rhine,
Many a fierce and fiery lord
Did carve the meat, and pour the wine,
For all that revelled at his board.
Father and son, they were all alike,
Firm to endure, and fast to strike;

Little they loved but a Frau or a feast,
Nothing they feared but a prayer or a priest;
But there was not one in all the land
More trusty of heart, or more stout of hand,
More valiant in field, or more courteous in bower,
Than Otto, the Lord of Belmont Tower.

Are you rich, single, and 'your Grace'?
I pity your unhappy case;
Before you leave your travelling carriage,
The women have arranged your marriage;
Where'er your weary wit may lead you,
They pet you, praise you, fret you, feed you;
Consult your taste in wreaths and laces,
And make you make their books at Races.
Your little pony, Tam O'Shanter,
Is found to have the sweetest canter;
Your curricle is quite reviving,
And Jane 's so bold when you are driving!
Some recollect your father's habits,
And know the warren, and the rabbits!
The place is really princely—only
They 're sure you 'll find it vastly lonely.

You go to Cheltenham for the waters,
And meet the Countess and her daughters;
You take a cottage at Geneva—
Lo! Lady Anne and Lady Eva.
In horror of another session,
You just surrender at discretion,
And live to curse the frauds of mothers,
And envy all your younger brothers.

Count Otto bowed, Count Otto smiled,
When My Lady praised her darling child;
Count Otto smiled, Count Otto bowed,
When the child those praises disavowed;
As a knight should gaze Count Otto gazed,
Where Bertha in all her beauty blazed;
As a knight should hear Count Otto heard,
When Liba sang like a forest bird—
But he thought, I trow, about as long
Of Bertha's beauty and Liba's song,
As the sun may think of the clouds that play
O'er his radiant path on a summer day.
Many a maid had dreams of state,
As the Count rode up to her father's gate;

Many a maid shed tears of pain,
As the Count rode back to his Tower again;
But little he cared, as it should seem,
For the sad, sad tear, or the fond, fond dream—
Alone he lived—alone, and free
As the owl that dwells in the hollow tree:
And the Baroness said, and the Baron swore,
There never was knight so shy before!

It was almost the first of May:
The sun all smiles had passed away;
The moon was beautifully bright;
Earth, heaven, as usual in such cases,
Looked up and down with happy faces;
In short, it was a charming night.
And all alone, at twelve o'clock,
The young Count clambered down the rock,
Unfurled the sail, unchained the oar,
And pushed the shallop from the shore.
The holiness that sweet time flings
Upon all human thoughts and things,
When Sorrow checks her idle sighs,
And care shuts fast her wearied eyes;

The splendour of the hues that played
Fantastical o'er hill and glade,
As verdant slope and barren cliff
Seemed darting by the tiny skiff;
The flowers, whose faint tips, here and there,
Breathed out such fragrance, you might swear
That every soundless gale that fanned
The tide came fresh from fairy land;
The music of the mountain rill,
Leaping in glee from hill to hill,
To which some wild bird, now and then,
Made answer from her darksome glen—
All this to him had rarer pleasure
Than jester's wit or minstrel's measure;
And, if you ever loved romancing,
Or felt extremely tired of dancing,
You will not wonder that Count Otto
Left Lady Hildegonde's ridotto.

What melody glides o'er the star-lit stream?
"Lurley! Lurley!"
Angels of grace! does the young Count dream?
"Lurley! Lurley!"

Or is the scene indeed so fair
That a nymph of the sea or a nymph of the air
Has left the home of her own delight,
To sing to our roses or rocks to-night?
"Lurley! Lurley!"
Words there are none; but the waves prolong
The notes of that mysterious song:
He listens, and listens, and all around
Ripple the echoes of that sweet sound—
"Lurley! Lurley!"
No form appears on the river side;
No boat is borne on the wandering tide;
And the tones ring on, with nought to show
Or whence they come or whither they go—
"Lurley! Lurley!"
As fades one murmur on the ear,
There comes another, just as clear;
And the present is like to the parted strain
As link to link of a golden chain:
"Lurley! Lurley!"
Whether the voice be sad or gay,
'T were very hard for the Count to say;
But pale are his cheeks and pained his brow,
And the boat drifts on he recks not how;

His pulse is quick and his heart is wild,
And he weeps, he weeps, like a little child.

O mighty music! they who know
The witchery of thy wondrous bow,
Forget, when thy strange spells have bound them,
The visible world that lies around them.
When Lady Mary sings Rossini,
Or stares at spectral Paganini,
To Lady Mary does it matter
Who laugh, who love, who frown, who flatter?
Oh no; she cannot heed or hear
Reason or rhyme from prince or peer:
In vain for her Sir Charles denounces
The horror of the last new flounces;
In vain the Doctor does his duty
By doubting of her rival's beauty;
And if My Lord, as usual, raves
About the sugar or the slaves,
Predicts the nation's future glories,
And chants the requiem of the Tories,
Good man! she minds him just as much
As Marshal Gerard minds the Dutch.

Hid was the bright heaven's loveliness
Beneath a sudden cloud,
As a bride might doff her bridal dress
To don her funeral shroud;
And over flood, and over fell,
With a wild and wicked shout,
From the secret cell, where in chains they dwell,
The joyous winds rushed out;
And the dark hills through, the thunder flew,
And down the fierce hail came;
And from peak to peak the lightning threw
Its shafts of liquid flame.
The boat went down; without delay,
The luckless boatman swooned away;
And when, as a clear Spring morning rose,
He woke in wonder from repose,
The river was calm as the river could be,
And the thrush was awake on the gladsome tree,
And there he lay, in a sunny cave,
On the margin of the tranquil wave,
Half deaf with that infernal din,
And wet, poor fellow, to the skin.
He looked to the left and he looked to the right—
Why hastened he not, the noble knight,

To dry his aged nurse's tears,
To calm the hoary butler's fears,
To listen to the prudent speeches
Of half a dozen loquacious leeches—
To swallow cordials circumspectly,
And change his dripping cloak directly ?
With foot outstretched, with hand upraised,
In vast surprise he gazed, and gazed :
Within a deep and damp recess
A maiden lay in her loveliness !
Lived she?—in sooth 't were hard to tell,
Sleep counterfeited Death so well.
A shelf of the rock was all her bed ;
A ceiling of crystal was o'er her head ;
Silken robe, nor satin vest,
Shrouded her form in its silent re
Only her long, long golden hair
About her lay like a thin robe there;
Up to her couch the young knight crept:
How very sound the maiden slept!
Fearful and faint the young knight sighed ;
The echoes of the cave replied.
He leaned to look upon her face;
He clasped her hand in wild embrace ;

Never was form of such fine mould—
But the hands and the face were as white and cold
As they of the Parian stone were made,
To which, in great Minerva's shade,
The Athenian sculptor's toilsome knife
Gave all of loveliness but life.
On her fair neck there seemed no stain,
Where the pure blood coursed thro' the delicate vein;
And her breath, if breath indeed it were,
Flowed in a current so soft and rare,
It would scarcely have stirred the young moth's wing
On the path of his noonday wandering;
Never on earth a creature trod,
Half so lovely, or half so odd.

Count Otto stares till his eyelids ache,
And wonders when she 'll please to wake;
While Fancy whispers strange suggestions,
And Wonder prompts a score of questions.
Is she a nymph of another sphere?
Whence came she hither?—what doth she here?
Or if the morning of her birth
Be registered on this our earth,

Why hath she fled from her father's halls ?
And where hath she left her cloaks and shawls ?
There was no time for Reason's lectures,
There was no time for Wit's conjectures ;
He threw his arm, with timid haste,
Around the maiden's slender waist,
And raised her up, in a modest way,
From the cold, bare rock on which she lay.
He was but a mile from his castle gate,
And the lady was scarcely five stone weight ;
He stopped, in less than half an hour,
With his beauteous burthen, at Belmont Tower.

Gay, I ween, was the chamber dressed,
As the Count gave order, for his guest ;
But scarcely on the couch 't is said,
That gentle guest was fairly laid,
When she opened at once her great blue eyes,
And, after a glance of brief surprise,
Ere she had spoken, and ere she had heard
Of wisdom or wit a single word,
She laughed so long, and laughed so loud,
That Dame Ulrica often vowed

A dirge is a merrier thing by half
Than such a senseless, soulless laugh.
Around the tower the elfin crew
Seemed shouting in mirthful concert too;
And echoed roof, and trembled rafter,
With that unsentimental laughter.

As soon as that droll tumult passed,
The maiden's tongue, unchained at last,
Asserted all its female right,
And talked and talked with all its might.
Oh, how her low and liquid voice
Made the rapt hearer's soul rejoice!
'T was full of those clear tones that start
From innocent childhood's happy heart,
Ere passion and sin disturb the well
In which their mirth and music dwell.
But man nor master could make out
What the eloquent maiden talked about;
The things she uttered like did seem
To the babbling waves of a limpid stream;
For the words of her speech, if words they might be,
Were the words of a speech of a far countrie;

And when she had said them o'er and o'er,
Count Otto understood no more
Than you or I of the slang that falls
From dukes and dupes at Tattersall's,
Of Hebrew from a bearded Jew,
Or metaphysics from a Blue.

Count Otto swore, (Count Otto's reading
Might well have taught him better breeding,)
That whether the maiden should fume or fret,
The maiden should not leave him yet;
And so he took prodigious pains
To make her happy in her chains:
From Paris came a pair of cooks,
From Gottingen a load of books;
From Venice stores of gorgeous suits,
From Florence minstrels and their lutes;
The youth himself had special pride
In breaking horses for his bride;
And his old tutor, Doctor Hermann,
Was brought from Bonn to teach her German.

And there in her beauty and her grace
The wayward maiden grew;

And every day, of her form or face
Some charm seemed fresh and new:
Over her cold and colourless cheek
The blush of the rose was shed,
And her quickened pulse began to speak
Of human hope and dread!
And soon she grasped the learned lore
The old gray pedant taught,
And turned from the volume to explore
The hidden mine of thought.
Alas! her bliss was not the same
As it was in other years,
For with new knowledge sorrow came,
And with new passion tears.
Oft, till the Count came up from wine,
She would sit by the lattice high,
And watch the windings of the Rhine
With a very wistful eye;
And oft on some rude cliff she stood,
Her light harp in her hand,
And still as she looked on the gurgling flood,
She sang of her native land.
And when Count Otto pleaded well
For priest, and ring, and vow,

She heard the knight that fond tale tell,
With a pale and pensive brow:
"Henceforth my spirit may not sleep,
As ever till now it slept;
Henceforth mine eyes have learned to weep,
As never till now they wept.
Twelve months, dear Otto, let me grieve
For my own, my childhood's home,
Where the sun at noon, or the frost at eve,
Did never dare to come;
And when the Spring its smiles recalls,
Thy maiden will resign
The holy hush of her father's halls
For the stormy joys of thine."
But where that father's halls?—vain, vain!
She threw her sad eyes down;
And if you dared to ask again,
She answered with a frown.

Some people have a knack, we know,
Of saying things mal-a-propos,
And making all the world reflect
On what it hates to recollect:

They talk to misers of their heir,
To women of the times that were,
To ruined gamblers of the box,
To thin defaulters of the stocks,
To cowards of their neighbours' duels,
To Hayne of Lady H.'s jewels,
To poets of the wrong Review,
And to the French of Waterloo.
The Count was not of these; he never
Was half so clumsy, half so clever;
And when he found the girl had rather
Say nothing more about her father,
He changed the subject—told a fable—
Believed that dinner was on the table—
Or whispered, with an air of sorrow,
That it would surely rain to-morrow.

The Winter storms went darkly by,
And, from a blue and cloudless sky,
Again the sun looked cheerfully
Upon the rolling Rhine;
And Spring brought back to the budding flowers
Its genial light and freshening showers,

And music to the shady bowers,
And verdure to the vine.

And now it was the First of May;
For twenty miles round all is gay;
Cottage and castle keep holiday;
For how should sorrow lower
On brow of rustic or of knight,
When heaven itself looks all so bright,
Where Otto's wedding feast is dight
In the hall of Belmont Tower?
Stately matron and warrior tall
Come to the joyous festival;
Good Count Otto welcomes all,
As through the gate they throng;
He fills to the brim the wassail cup;
In the bright wine Pleasure sparkles up,
And draughts and tales grow long;
But grizzly knights are still and mute,
And dames set down the untasted fruit,
When the bride takes up her golden lute,
And sings her solemn song:

"A voice ye hear not, in mine ear is crying;

What does the sad voice say?
'Dost thou not heed thy weary father's sighing?
Return, return to-day!
Twelve moons have faded now:
My daughter, where art thou?'

"Peace! in the silent evening we will meet thee,
Gray ruler of the tide!
Must not the lover with the loved one greet thee?
The bridegroom with his bride?
Deck the dim couch aright,
The bridal couch, to-night."

The nurses to the children say
That, as the maiden sang that day,
The Rhine to the heights of the beetling tower
Sent up a cry of fiercer power,
And again the maiden's cheek was grown
As white as ever was marble stone,
And the bridesmaid her hand could hardly hold,
Its fingers were so icy cold.

Rose Count Otto from the feast,
As entered the hall the hoary priest.

A stalwart warrior, well I ween,
That hoary priest in his youth had been;
But the might of his manhood he had given
To peace and prayer, the Church and Heaven.
For he had travelled o'er land and wave;
He had kneeled on many a martyr's grave;
He had prayed in the meek St. Jerome's cell,
And had tasted St. Anthony's blessed well.
And reliques round his neck had he,
Each worth a haughty kingdom's fee—
Scrapings of bones, and points of spears,
And vials of authentic tears—
From a prophet's coffin a hallowed nail,
And a precious shred of our Lady's veil;
And therefore, at his awful tread,
The powers of darkness shrank with dread;
And Satan felt that no disguise
Could hide him from those chastened eyes.
He looked on the bridegroom, he looked on the bride,
The young Count smiled, but the old priest sighed.

"Fields with the father I have won;
I am come in my cowl to bless the son;

Count Otto, ere thou bend thy knee,
What shall the hire of my service be?"

"Greedy hawk must gorge his prey,
Pious priest must win his pay;
Name the guerdon, and so to the task:
Thine it is, ere thy lips can ask."

He frowned as he answered—"Gold or gem,
Count Otto, little I reck of them;
But your bride has skill of the lute, they say:
Let her sing me the song I shall name to-day."

Loud laughed the Count: "And if she refuse
The ditty, Sir Priest, thy whim shall choose,
Row back to the house of old St. Goar;
I never bid priest to a bridal more."

Beside the maiden he took his stand,
He gave the lute to her trembling hand;
She gazed around with a troubled eye;
The guests all shuddered, and knew not why;
It seemed to them as if a gloom
Had shrouded all the banquet room,

Though over its boards, and over its beams,
Sunlight was glowing in merry streams.

The stern priest throws an angry glance
On that pale creature's countenance;
Unconsciously her white hand flings
Its soft touch o'er the answering strings;
The good man starts with a sudden thrill,
And half relents from his purposed will;
But he signs the cross on his aching brow
And arms his soul for its warfare now.
"Mortal maid or goblin fairy,
Sing me, I pray thee, an Ave-Mary!"

Suddenly the maiden bent
O'er the gorgeous instrument;
But of song, the listeners heard
Only one wild, mournful word—
"Lurley! Lurley!"
And when the sound, in the liquid air,
Of that brief hymn had faded,

Nothing was left of the nymph who there
For a year had masqueraded;
But the harp in the midst of the wide hall set,
Where her last strange word was spoken!
The golden frame with tears was wet,
And all the strings were broken!

THE RED FISHERMAN.

THE RED FISHERMAN.

Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!

Romeo and Juliet.

THE abbot arose, and closed his book,
And donned his sandal shoon,
And wandered forth, alone, to look
Upon the summer moon:
A starlight sky was o'er his head,
A quiet breeze around;
And the flowers a thrilling fragrance shed,
And the waves a soothing sound:
It was not an hour, nor a scene, for aught
But love and calm delight;
Yet the holy man had a cloud of thought
On his wrinkled brow that night.
He gazed on the river that gurgled by,
But he thought not of the reeds:
He clasped his gilded rosary,
But he did not tell the beads;
If he looked to the heaven, 'twas not to invoke
The Spirit that dwelleth there;

If he opened his lips, the words they spoke
Had never the tone of prayer.
A pious priest might the abbot seem,
He had swayed the crosier well;
But what was the theme of the abbot's dream,
The abbot were loth to tell.

Companionless, for a mile or more,
He traced the windings of the shore.
Oh, beauteous is that river still,
As it winds by many a sloping hill,
And many a dim o'erarching grove,
And many a flat and sunny cove,
And terraced lawns, whose bright arcades
The honeysuckle sweetly shades,
And rocks, whose very crags seem bowers,
So gay they are with grass and flowers!

But the abbot was thinking of scenery,
About as much, in sooth,
As a lover thinks of constancy,
Or an advocate of truth.

He did not mark how the skies in wrath
Grew dark above his head;
He did not mark how the mossy path
Grew damp beneath his tread;
And nearer he came, and still more near,
To a pool, in whose recess
The water had slept for many a year,
Unchanged and motionless;
From the river stream it spread away
The space of half a rood;
The surface had the hue of clay
And the scent of human blood;
The trees and the herbs that round it grew
Were venomous and foul;
And the birds that through the bushes flew
Were the vulture and the owl;
The water was as dark and rank
As ever a Company pumped;
And the perch, that was netted and laid on the bank,
Grew rotten while it jumped:
And bold was he who thither came
At midnight, man or boy;
For the place was cursed with an evil name,
And that name was the "The Devil's Decoy!"

The abbot was weary as abbot could be,
And he sat down to rest on the stump of a tree:
When suddenly rose a dismal tone—
Was it a song, or was it a moan?
"Oh, ho! Oh, ho!
Above, below!
Lightly and brightly they glide and go;
The hungry and keen on the top are leaping,
The lazy and fat in the depths are sleeping;
Fishing is fine when the pool is muddy,
Broiling is rich when the coals are ruddy!"
In a monstrous fright, by the murky light,
He looked to the left and he looked to the right,
And what was the vision close before him,
That flung such a sudden stupor o'er him?
'Twas a sight to make the hair uprise,
And the life-blood colder run:
The startled priest struck both his thighs,
And the abbey clock struck one!

All alone, by the side of the pool,
A tall man sat on a three-legged stool,
Kicking his heels on the dewy sod,
And putting in order his reel and rod;

Red were the rags his shoulders wore,
And a high red cap on his head he bore;
His arms and his legs were long and bare;
And two or three locks of long red hair
Were tossing about his scraggy neck,
Like a tattered flag o'er a splitting wreck.
It might be Time, or it might be trouble,
Had bent that stout back nearly double—
Sunk in their deep and hollow sockets
That blazing couple of Congreve rockets,
And shrunk and shrivelled that tawny skin,
Till it hardly covered the bones within.
The line the abbot saw him throw
Had been fashioned and formed long ages ago,
And the hands that worked his foreign vest
Long ages ago had gone to their rest:
You would have sworn, as you looked on them,
He had fished in the flood with Ham and Shem!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Minnow or gentle, worm or fly—
It seemed not such to the abbot's eye:

Gaily it glittered with jewel and gem,
And its shape was the shape of a diadem.
It was fastened a gleaming hook about,
By a chain within and a chain without;
The fisherman gave it a kick and a spin,
And the water fizzed as it tumbled in!

From the bowels of the earth,
Strange and varied sounds had birth—
Now the battle's bursting peal,
Neigh of steed, and clang of steel;
Now an old man's hollow groan
Echoed from the dungeon stone;
Now the weak and wailing cry
Of a stripling's agony!

Cold by this was the midnight air;
But the abbot's blood ran colder,
When he saw a gasping knight lie there,
With a gash beneath his clotted hair,
And a hump upon his shoulder.
And the loyal Churchman strove in vain
To mutter a Pater Noster;

For he who writhed in mortal pain
Was camped that night on Bosworth plain—
The cruel Duke of Glo'ster!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
It was a haunch of princely size,
Filling with fragrance earth and skies.
The corpulent abbot knew full well
The swelling form, and the steaming smell;
Never a monk that wore a hood
Could better have guessed the very wood
Where the noble hart had stood at bay,
Weary and wounded, at close of day.

Sounded then the noisy glee
Of a revelling company—
Sprightly story, wicked jest,
Rated servant, greeted guest,
Flow of wine, and flight of cork,
Stroke of knife, and thrust of fork:
But, where'er the board was spread,
Grace, I ween, was never said!

Pulling and tugging the fisherman sat;
And the priest was ready to vomit,
When he hauled out a gentleman, fine and fat,
With a belly as big as a brimming vat,
And a nose as red as a comet.
"A capital stew," the fisherman said,
"With cinnamon and sherry!"
And the abbot turned away his head,
For his brother was lying before him dead,
The mayor of St. Edmond's Bury!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box:
It was a bundle of beautiful things—
A peacock's tail, and a butterfly's wings,
A scarlet slipper, an auburn curl,
A mantle of silk, and a bracelet of pearl,
And a packet of letters, from whose sweet fold
Such a stream of delicate odours rolled,
That the abbot fell on his face, and fainted,
And deemed his spirit was half-way sainted.

Sounds seemed dropping from the skies,
Stifled whispers, smothered sighs,

And the breath of vernal gales,
And the voice of nightingales :
But the nightingales were mute,
Envious, when an unseen lute
Shaped the music of its chords
Into passion's thrilling words:

" Smile, lady, smile !—I will not set
Upon my brow the coronet,
Till thou wilt gather roses white
To wear around its gems of light.
Smile, lady, smile !—I will not see
Rivers and Hastings bend the knee,
Till those bewitching lips of thine
Will bid me rise in bliss from mine.
Smile, lady, smile !—for who would win
A loveless throne through guilt and sin ?
Or who would reign o'er vale and hill,
If woman's heart were rebel still ?"

One jerk, and there a lady lay,
A lady wondrous fair ;

But the rose of her lip had faded away,
And her cheek was as white and as cold as clay,
And torn was her raven hair.
"Ah, ha!" said the fisher, in merry guise,
"Her gallant was hooked before;"
And the abbot heaved some piteous sighs,
For oft he had blessed those deep blue eyes,
The eyes of Mistress Shore!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Many the cunning sportsman tried,
Many he flung with a frown aside;
A minstrel's harp, and a miser's chest,
A hermit's cowl, and a baron's crest,
Jewels of lustre, robes of price,
Tomes of heresy, loaded dice,
And golden cups of the brightest wine
That ever was pressed from the Burgundy vine;
There was a perfume of sulphur and nitre,
As he came at last to a bishop's mitre!
From top to toe the abbot shook,
As the fisherman armed his golden hook;

And awfully were his features wrought
By some dark dream or wakened thought.
Look how the fearful felon gazes
On the scaffold his country's vengeance raises,
When the lips are cracked and the jaws are dry
With the thirst which only in death shall die:
Mark the mariner's frenzied frown
As the swaling wherry settles down,
When peril has numbed the sense and will,
Though the hand and the foot may struggle still:
Wilder far was the abbot's glance,
Deeper far was the abbot's trance:
Fixed as a monument, still as air,
He bent no knee, and he breathed no prayer;
But he signed—he knew not why or how—
The sign of the Cross on his clammy brow.

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he stalked away with his iron box.
"Oh, ho! Oh, ho!
The cock doth crow;
It is time for the fisher to rise and go.
Fair luck to the abbot, fair luck to the shrine!
He hath knawed in twain my choicest line;

Let him swim to the north, let him swim to the south,
The abbot will carry my hook in his mouth!"

The abbot had preached for many years,
With as clear articulation
As ever was heard in the House of Peers
Against emancipation;
His words had made battalions quake,
Had roused the zeal of martyrs;
He kept the court an hour awake,
And the king himself three quarters:
But ever, from that hour, 'tis said,
He stammered and he stuttered,
As if an axe went through his head
With every word he uttered.
He stuttered o'er blessing, he stuttered o'er ban,
He stuttered, drunk or dry;
And none but he and the fisherman
Could tell the reason why!

THE LEGEND OF THE HAUNTED TREE.

THE LEGEND OF THE HAUNTED TREE.

"Deep is the bliss of the belted knight,
When he kisses at dawn the silken glove,
And rides, in his glittering armour dight,
To shiver a lance for his Lady-love!

"Lightly he couches the beaming spear;
His mistress sits with her maidens by,
Watching the speed of his swift career,
With a whispered prayer and a murmured sigh.

"Far from me is the gazing throng,
The blazoned shield, and the nodding plume;
Nothing is mine but a worthless song,
A joyless life, and a nameless tomb."

"Nay, dearest Wilfrid, lay like this
On such an eve is much amiss:
Our mirth beneath the new May moon
Should be echoed by a livelier tune.
What need to thee of mail and crest,
Of foot in stirrup, spear in rest?

Over far mountains and deep seas,
Earth hath no fairer fields than these;
And who, in Beauty's gaudiest bowers,
Can love thee with more love than ours?"

The minstrel turned with a moody look
From that sweet scene of guiltless glee;
From the old who talked beside the brook,
And the young who danced beneath the tree:
Coldly he shrank from the gentle maid,
From the chiding look and the pleading tone;
And he passed from the old elm's hoary shade,
And followed the forest path alone.
One little sigh, one pettish glance,
And the girl comes back to her playmates now,
And takes her place in the merry dance,
With a slower step and a sadder brow.

"My soul is sick," saith the wayward boy,
"Of the peasant's grief, and the peasant's joy;
I cannot breathe on from day to day,
Like the insects, which our wise men say
In the crevice of the cold rock dwell,
Till their shape is the shape of their dungeon's cell;

In the dull repose of our changeless life,
I long for passion, I long for strife,
As in the calm the mariner sighs
For rushing waves and groaning skies.
Oh for the lists, the lists of fame!
Oh for the herald's glad acclaim;
For floating pennon and prancing steed,
And Beauty's wonder at Manhood's deed!"

Beneath an ancient oak he lay;
More years than man can count, they say,
On the verge of the dim and solemn wood,
Through sunshine and storm, that oak had stood.
Many a loving, laughing sprite,
Tended the branches by day and by night;
And the leaves of its age were as fresh and green
As the leaves of its early youth had been.
Pure of thought should the mortal be
Who sleeps beneath the Haunted Tree;
That night the minstrel laid him down
Ere his brow relaxed its sullen frown;
And Slumber had bound its eyelids fast,
Ere the evil wish from his soul had passed.

And a song on the sleeper's ear descended,
A song it was pain to hear, and pleasure,
So strangely wrath and love were blended
In every tone of the mystic measure.

"I know thee, child of earth:
The morning of thy birth
In through the lattice did my chariot glide;
I saw thy father weep
Over thy first wild sleep,
I rocked thy cradle when thy mother died.

"And I have seen thee gaze
Upon these birks and braes,
Which are my kingdoms, with irreverent scorn;
And heard thee pour reproof
Upon the vine-clad roof,
Beneath whose peaceful shelter thou wert born.

"I bind thee in the snare
Of thine unholy prayer;
I seal thy forehead with a viewless seal:

I give into thine hand
The buckler and the brand,
And clasp the golden spur upon thy heel.
"When thou hast made thee wise
In the sad lore of sighs,
When the world's visions fail thee and forsake,
Return, return to me,
And to my Haunted Tree;
The charm hath bound thee now; Sir knight,
awake!"

Sir Isumbras, in doubt and dread,
From his feverish sleep awoke,
And started up from his grassy bed
Under the ancient oak.
And he called the page who held his spear,
And, "Tell me, boy," quoth he,
"How long have I been slumbering here,
Beneath the greenwood tree?"—
"Ere thou didst sleep, I chanced to throw
A stone into the rill;
And the ripple that disturbed its flow
Is on its surface still:

Ere thou didst sleep, thou bad'st me sing
King Arthur's favourite lay;
And the first echo of the string
Has hardly died away."

"How strange is sleep!" the young knight said,
As he clasped the helm upon his head,
And, mounting again his courser black,
To his gloomy tower rode slowly back:
"How strange is sleep! when his dark spell lies
On the drowsy lids of human eyes,
The years of a life will float along
In the compass of a page's song.
Methought I lived in a pleasant vale,
The haunt of the lark and the nightingale,
Where the summer rose had a brighter hue,
And the noon-day sky a clearer blue,
And the spirit of man in age and youth
A fonder love, and a firmer truth.
And I lived on, a fair-haired boy,
In that sweet vale of tranquil joy;
Until at last my vain caprice
Grew weary of its bliss and peace.

And one there was, most dear and fair,
Of all that smiled around me there—
A gentle maid, with a cloudless face,
And a form so full of fairy grace;
Who, when I turned with scornful spleen
From the feast in the bower, or the dance on the green,
Would humour all my wayward will
And love me, and forgive me still.
Even now, methinks, her smile of light
Is there before me, mild and bright;
And I hear her voice of fond reproof,
Between the beats of my palfrey's hoof.
'T is idle all: but I could weep;—
Alas!" said the knight, how strange is sleep!"

He struck with his spear the brazen plate
That hung before the castle gate;
The torch threw high its waves of flame
As forth the watchful menials came;
They lighted the way to the banquet hall,
They hung the shield upon the wall,
They spread the board, and they filled the bowl,
And the phantoms passed from his troubled soul.

Sir Isumbras was ever found
  Where blows were struck for glory;
There sate not at the Table Round
  A knight more famed in story:
The king on his throne would turn about
  To see his courser prancing;
And, when Sir Launcelot was out,
  The queen would praise his dancing:
He quite wore out his father's spurs,
  Performing valour's duties—
Destroying mighty sorcerers,
  Avenging injured beauties,
And crossing many a trackless sand,
  And rescuing people's daughters
From dragons that infest the land,
  And whales that walk the waters.
He throttled lions by the score,
  And giants by the dozen;
And, for his skill in lettered lore,
  They called him "Merlin's Cousin."

A score of steeds, with bit and rein,
  Stood ready in his stable;

An ox was every morning slain,
  And roasted for his table.
And he had friends, all brave and tall,
  And crowned with praise and laurel,
Who kindly feasted in his hall,
  And tilted in his quarrel;
And minstrels came and sang his fame
  In very rugged verses;
And they were paid with wine and game,
  And rings, and cups, and purses.

And he loved a Lady of high degree,
  Faith's fortress, Beauty's flower;
A countess for her maid had she,
  And a kingdom for her dower;
And a brow whose frowns were vastly grand,
  And an eye of sunlit brightness,
And a swan-like neck, and an arm and hand
  Of most bewitching whiteness;
And a voice of music, whose sweet tones
  Could most divinely prattle
Of battered casques, and broken bones,
  And all the bliss of battle.

He wore her scarf in many a fray,
He trained her hawks and ponies,
And filled her kitchen every day
With leverets and conies;
He loved, and he was loved again:—
I won't waste time in proving,
There is no pleasure like the pain
Of being loved, and loving.

Dame Fortune is a fickle gipsy,
And always blind, and often tipsy;
Sometimes, for years and years together,
She'll bless you with the sunniest weather,
Bestowing honour, pudding, pence,
You can't imagine why or whence;—
Then in a moment—Presto, Pass!—
Your joys are withered like the grass;
You find your constitution vanish,
Almost as quickly as the Spanish;
The murrain spoils your flocks and fleeces;
The dry-rot pulls your house to pieces;
Your garden raises only weeds;
Your agent steals your title-deeds;

Your banker's failure stuns the city ;
Your father's will makes Sugden witty ;
Your daughter, in her beauty's bloom,
Goes off to Gretna with the groom ;
And you, good man, are left alone,
To battle with the gout and stone.

Ere long, Sir Isumbras began
To be a sad and thoughtful man :
They said the glance of an evil eye
Had been on the knight's prosperity :
Less swift on the quarry his falcon went,
Less true was his hound on the wild deer's scent,
And thrice in the list he came to the earth,
By the luckless chance of a broken girth.
And Poverty soon in her rags was seen
At the board where Plenty erst had been ;
And the guests smiled not as they smiled before,
And the song of the minstrel was heard no more ;
And a base ingrate, who was his foe,
Because, a little month ago,
He had cut him down, with friendly ardour,
From a rusty hook in an Ogre's larder,

Invented an atrocious fable,
And libelled his fame at the Royal Table:
And she at last, the worshipped one,
For whom his valorous deeds were done,
Who had heard his vows, and worn his jewels,
And made him fight so many duels—
She, too, when Fate's relentless wheel
Deprived him of the Privy Seal,
Bestowed her smiles upon another,
And gave his letters to her mother.
Fortune and Fame—he had seen them depart,
With a silent pride of a valiant heart:
Traitorous friends—he had passed them by,
With a haughty brow and a stifled sigh.
Boundless and black might roll the sea,
O'er which the course of his bark must be;
But he saw, thro' the storms that frowned above,
One guiding star, and its light was Love.
Now all was dark; the doom was spoken!
His wealth all spent, and his heart half-broken;
Poor youth! he had no earthly hope,
Except in laudanum, or a rope.

He ordered out his horse, and tried,
As the Leech advised, a gentle ride.
A pleasant path he took,
Where the turf, all bright with the April showers,
Was spangled with a hundred flowers,
Beside a murmuring brook.
Never before had he roved that way;
And now, on a sunny first of May,
He chose the turning, you may guess,
Not for the laughing loveliness
Of turf, or flower, or stream; but only
Because it looked extremely lonely.

He had wandered, musing, scarce a mile,
In his melancholy mood,
When, peeping o'er a rustic stile,
He saw a little village smile,
Embowered in thick wood.
There were small cottages, arrayed
In the delicate jasmine's fragrant shade;
And gardens, whence the rose's bloom
Loaded the gale with rich perfume;
And there were happy hearts; for all
In that bright nook kept festival,

And welcomed in the merry May,
With banquet and with roundelay.
Sir Isumbras sate gazing there,
With folded arms, and mournful air;
He fancied—'twas an idle whim—
That the village looked like a home to him.

And now a gentle maiden came,
Leaving her sisters and their game,
And wandered up the vale;
Sir Isumbras had never seen
A thing so fair—except the Queen;—
But out on Passion's doubts and fears!
Her beautiful eyes were full of tears,
And her cheeks were wan and pale.
None courted her stay of the joyous throng,
As she passed from the group alone;
And he listened, which was very wrong,
And heard her singing a lively song,
In a very dismal tone:

"Deep is the bliss of the belted knight,
When he kisses at dawn the silken glove,
And goes, in his glittering armour dight,
To shiver a lance for his Lady-love!"

That thrilling voice, so soft and clear—
Was it familiar to his ear?
And those delicious, drooping eyes,
As blue and as pure as the summer skies—
Had he, indeed, in other days,
Been blessed in the light of their holy rays?

He knew not; but his knee he bent
Before her in most knightly fashion,
And grew superbly eloquent
About her beauty, and his passion.
He said that she was very fair,
And that she warbled like a linnet;
And that he loved her, though he ne'er
Had looked upon her till that minute.
He grieved to mention that a Jew
Had seized for debt his grand pavilion;
And he had little now, 'twas true,
To offer, but a heart and pillion:
But what was wealth? In many a fight—
Though he, who shouldn't say it, said it—
He still had borne him like a knight,
And had his share of blows and credit;

And, if she would but condescend
To meet him at the Priest's to-morrow,
And be henceforth his guide, his friend,
In every toil, in every sorrow,
They'd sail instanter from the Downs;
His hands just now were quite at leisure;
And, if she fancied foreign crowns,
He'd win them with the greatest pleasure.

"A year is gone"—the damsel sighed,
But blushed not, as she so replied—
"Since once I loved—alas! how well
He knew not, knows not—left our dell.
Time brings to his deserted cot
No tidings of his after lot;
But his weal or wo is still the theme
Of my daily thought and my nightly dream.
Poor Alice is not proud or coy;
But her heart is with her minstrel boy."

Away from his arms the damsel bounded,
And left him more and more confounded.
He mused of the present, he mused of the past,
And he felt that a spell was o'er him cast;

He shed hot tears, he knew not why,
And talked to himself and made reply,
Till a calm o'er his troubled senses crept,
And, as the daylight waned, he slept.
Poor gentleman !—I need not say,
Beneath an ancient oak he lay.

"He is welcome,"—o'er his bed,
Thus the beauteous Fairy said:
"He has conned the lesson now,
He has read the book of pain;
There are furrows on his brow,
I must make it smooth again.

"Lo, I knock the spurs away;
Lo, I loosen belt and brand;
Hark ! I hear the courser neigh
For his stall in Fairy-land.

"Bring the cap, and bring the vest,
Buckle on his sandal shoon;
Fetch his memory from the chest
In the treasury of the Moon.

"I have taught him to be wise,
For a little maiden's sake;—
Look, he opens his bright eyes,
Softly, slowly:—minstrel, wake!"

The sun has risen, and Wilfrid is come
To his early friends and his cottage home.
His hazel eyes and his locks of gold
Are just as they were in the time of old:
But a blessing has been on the soul within,
For that is won from its secret sin;
More loving now, and worthier love
Of men below and of saints above.
He reins a steed with a lordly air,
Which makes his country cousins stare:
And he speaks in a strange and courtly phrase,
Though his voice is the voice of other days:
But where he has learned to talk and ride,
He will tell to none but his bonny bride.

THE TROUBADOUR.

THE TROUBADOUR.

Le Troubadour
Brulant d'amour.

French Ballad.

CANTO I.

In sooth it was a glorious day
For vassal and for lord,
When Cœur de Lion had the sway
In battle and at board.
He was, indeed, a royal one,
A Prince of Paladins;
Hero of triumph and of tun,
Of noisy fray and noisy fun,
Broad shoulders and broad grins.
You might have looked from east to west,
And then from north to south,
And never found an ampler breast,
Never an ampler mouth,
A softer tone for lady's ear,
A daintier lip for syrup,
Or a ruder grasp for axe and spear,
Or a firmer foot in stirrup.

A ponderous thing was Richard's can,
And so was Richard's boot,
And Saracens and liquor ran,
Where'er he set his foot.
So fiddling here, and fighting there,
And murdering time and tune,
With sturdy limb, and listless air,
And gauntletted hand, and jewelled hair,
Half monarch, half buffoon,
He turned away from feast to fray,
From quarrelling to quaffing,
So great in prowess and in pranks,
So fierce and funny in the ranks,
That Saladin and Soldan said,
Whene'er that mad-cap Richard led,
Alla! he held his breath for dread,
And burst his sides for laughing!

At court, the humour of a king
Is always voted "quite the thing;"
Morals and cloaks are loose or laced
According to the Sovereign's taste,
And belles and banquets both are drest
Just as his majesty thinks best.

Of course in that delightful age,
When Richard ruled the roast,
Cracking of craniums was the rage,
And beauty was the toast.
Ay ! all was laugh, and life, and love ;
And lips and shrines were kiss'd ;
And vows were ventured in the grove,
And lances in the list ;
And boys roamed out in sunny weather
To weave a wreath and rhyme together ;
While dames, in silence, and in satin,
Lay listening to the soft French-Latin,
And flung their sashes and their sighs
From odour-breathing balconies.

From those bright days of love and glory,
I take the hero of my story.
A wandering Troubadour was he ;
He bore a name of high degree,
And learned betimes to slay and sue,
As knights of high degree should do.
While vigour nerved his buoyant arm,
And youth was his to cheat and charm,

Being immensely fond of dancing,
And somewhat given to romancing,
He roamed about through towers and towns,
Apostrophizing smiles and frowns,
Singing sweet staves to beads and bonnets,
And dying, day by day, in sonnets.
Flippant and fair, and fool enough,
And careless where he met rebuff,
Poco-curante in all cases
Of furious foes, or pretty faces,
With laughing lip, and jocund eye,
And studied tear, and practised sigh,
And ready sword, and ready verse,
And store of ducats in his purse,
He sinned few crimes, loved many times,
And wrote a hundred thousand rhymes!

Summers twice eight had passed away,
Since in his nurse's arms he lay,
A rosy, roaring child,
While all around was noisy mirth,
And logs blazed up upon the hearth,
And bonfires on the wild;

And vassals drank the brown bowl dry,
And cousins knew "the mother's eye,"
And wrinkled crones spoke prophecy,
And his brave father smiled.
Summers twice eight had passed away;
His sire's thin locks grew very gray;
He lost his song, and then his shout,
And seldom saw his bottle out.
Then all the menials straight began
To sorrow for "the poor old man,"
Took thought about his shirts and shoe-ties,
And pestered him with loves and duties:
Young Roger laced a crimson row
Of cushions on his saddle-bow;
Red Wyke at Christmas mingled up
More sugar in the wassail-cup;
Fair Margaret laid finer sheets;
Fat Catharine served richer sweets;
And all, from scullion up to squire,
Who stirred his cup or kitchen fire,
Seemed by their doings to determine
The knight should ne'er be food for vermin.
All would not do; the knight grew thinner,
And loved his bed, and loathed his dinner;

And when he muttered—"Becket—beast,
Bring me the posset—and a priest,"
Becket looked grave, and said "good lack!"
And went to ask the price of black.

Masses and medicines both were bought,
Masses and medicines both were nought;
Sir Hubert's race was run;
As best beseemed a warrior tall,
He died within his ancient hall:
And he was blest by Father Paul,
And buried by his son.
'Twere long to tell the motley gear,
That waited on Sir Hubert's bier;
For twenty good miles round,
Maiden and matron, knave and knight,
All rode or ran to see the sight;
Yeomen with horse and hound,
Gossips in grief and grogram clad,
Young warriors galloping like mad,
Priors and pedlers, pigs and pyxes,
Cooks, choristers, and crucifixes,
Wild urchins cutting jokes and capers,
And taper shapes, and shapely tapers.

The mighty barons of the land
Brought pain in heart, and four-in-hand;
And village maids, with looks of wo,
Turned out their mourning, and their toe.
The bell was rung, the hymn was sung,
On the oak chest the dust was flung;
And then, beneath the chapel-stones,
With a gilt 'scutcheon o'er his bones,
Escaped from feather-beds and fidget,
Sir Hubert slept with Lady Bridget.

The mob departed: cold and cloud
Shed on the vault their icy shroud,
And night came dark and dreary;
But there young Vidal lingered still,
And kept his fast and wept his fill,
Though the wind in the chapel was very chill,
And Vidal very weary.
Low moaned the bell; the torch-light fell
In fitful and faint flashes;
And he lay on the stones, where his father's bones
Were mouldering now to ashes;
And vowed to be, on earth and sea,

Whatever stars shone o'er him,
A trusty knight, in love and fight,
As his father had been before him.
Then in the silence of the night
Passionate grief was his delight;
He thought of all the brave and fair
Who slept their shadowy slumber there;
And that sweet dotage held him long,
Ere sorrow found her voice in song.

It was an ancient thing; a song
His heart had sung in other years,
When boyhood had its idle throng
Of guiltless smiles, and guileless tears;
But never had its music seemed
So sweet to him, as when to-night
All lorn and lone, he kneeled and dreamed,
Before the taper's holy light,
Of many and mysterious things,
His cradle's early visitings,
The melancholy tones, that blest
The pillow of his sinless rest,
The melody, whose magic numbers
Broke in by snatches on his slumbers,

When earth appeared so brightly dim,
And all was bliss, and all for him,
And every sight and every sound
Had heaven's own day-light flowing round.

"My mother's grave, my mother's grave!
Oh! dreamless in her slumber there,
And drowsily the banners wave
O'er her that was so chaste and fair;
Yea! love is dead, and memory faded!
But when the dew is on the brake,
And silence sleeps on earth and sea,
And mourners weep, and ghosts awake,
Oh! then she cometh back to me,
In her cold beauty darkly shaded!

"I cannot guess her face or form;
But what to me is form or face?
I do not ask the weary worm
To give me back each buried grace
Of glistening eyes, or trailing tresses!
I only feel that she is here,

And that we meet, and that we part;
And that I drink within mine ear,
And that I clasp around my heart,
Her sweet still voice, and soft caresses!

"Not in the waking thought by day,
Not in the sightless dream by night,
Do the mild tones and glances play,
Of her who was my cradle's light!
But in some twilight of calm weather,
She glides, by fancy dimly wrought,
A glittering cloud, a darkling beam,
With all the quiet of a thought,
And all the passion of a dream,
Linked in a golden spell together!"

Oh! Vidal's very soul did weep
Whene'er that music, like a charm,
Brought back from their unlistening sleep
The kissing lip and clasping arm.
But quiet tears are worth, to some,
The richest smiles in Christendom;
And Vidal, though in folly's ring
He seemed so weak and wild a thing,

Had yet an hour, when none were by,
For reason's thought, and passion's sigh,
And knew and felt, in heart and brain,
The Paradise of buried pain!

And Vidal rose at break of day,
  And found his heart unbroken;
And told his beads, and went away,
  On a steed he had bespoken;
His bonnet he drew his eyelids o'er,
  For tears were like to blind him;
And he spurred Sir Guy o'er mount and moor,
With a long dull journey all before,
  And a short gay squire behind him.
And the neighbourhood much marvel had;
  And all who saw did say,
The weather and the roads were bad,
And either Vidal had run mad,
  Or Guy had run away!
Oh! when a cheek is to be dried,
  All pharmacy is folly;
And Vidal knew, for he had tried,
There's nothing like a rattling ride
  For curing melancholy!

Three days he rode all mad and mute;
And when the sun did pass,
Three nights he supp'd upon dry fruit,
And slept upon wet grass.
Beneath an oak, whose hundred years
Had formed fit shade for talk or tears,
On the fourth day he lay at noon,
And put his gilt guitar in tune;
When suddenly swept by,
In gold and silver all arrayed,
A most resplendent cavalcade;
Baron and Beauty, Knave and Knight,
And lips of love, and eyes of light,
All blended dazzlingly.
Ay! all the world that day came out,
With horse and horn, and song and shout;
And belles and bouquets gayly bloomed,
And all were proud, and all perfumed,
And gallants, as the humour rose,
Talked any nonsense that they chose,
And damsel gave the reins for fun
Alike to palfrey and to pun.
It chanced no lady had been thrown,
No heir had cracked his collar-bone,

So pleasure laughed on every cheek,
And nought, save saddles, dreamed of pique.
And brightest of that brilliant train,
With jewelled bit, and gilded rein,
And pommel clothed in gorgeous netting,
And courser daintily curvetting,
Girt round with gallant Cavaliers,
Some deep in love, and some in years,
Half exquisites and half absurds,
All babbling of their beasts and birds,
Quite tired of trumpeting and talking,
The Baroness returned from hawking.

The lady halted; well she might;
For Vidal was so fair,
You would have thought some god of light
Had walked to take the air;
Bare were both his delicate hands,
And the hue on his cheek was high,
As woman's when she understands
Her first fond lover's sigh;
And desolate very, and very dumb,
And rolling his eyes of blue,

And rubbing his forehead, and biting his thumb,
As lyrists and lovers do.
Like Queen Titania's darling pet,
Or Oberon's wickedest elf,
He lay beside a rivulet,
And looked beside himself;
And belles full blown, and beaux full drest,
Stood there with smirk and smile,
And many a finger, and many a jest,
Were pointed all the while.

Then Vidal came, and bent his knees
Before the lady there,
And raised his bonnet, that the breeze
Might trifle with his hair;
And said, he was a nameless youth,
Had learned betimes to tell the truth,
Could greet a friend, and grasp a foe,
Could take a jest, and give a blow,
Had no idea of false pretences,
Had lost his father, and his senses,
Was travelling over land and sea,
Armed with guitar and gallantry;

And if her will found aught of pleasure
In trifling soul, and tinkling measure,
He prayed that she would call her own
His every thought, and every tone.

"Bonne grace, good Mary, and sweet St. John!"
That haughty dame did say;
"A goodly quarry I have won,
In this our sport to-day!
A precious page is this of mine,
To carve my meat, and pour my wine,
To loose my greyhound's ringing chain,
And hold my palfrey's gaudy rein,
And tell strange tales of moody sprites,
Around the hearth, on winter nights.
Marry! a wilful look, and wild!
But we shall tame the wayward child,
And dress his roving locks demurely,
And tie his jesses on securely."

She took from out her garment's fold
A dazzling gaud of twisted gold;

She raised him from his knee;
The diamond cross she gravely kiss'd,
And twined the links around his wrist
With such fine witchery,
That there he kneeled, and met her glance
In silence and a moveless trance,
And saw no sight, and heard no sound,
And knew himself more firmly bound
Than if a hundred weight of steel
Had fettered him from head to heel!

And from that moment Vidal gave
His childish fancy up,
Became her most peculiar slave,
And wore her scarf, and whipped her knave,
And filled her silver cup.
She was a widow: on this earth
It seemed her only task was mirth;
She had no nerves and no sensations,
No troubling friends nor poor relations;
No gnawing grief to feel a care for,
No living soul to breathe a prayer for.
Ten years ago her lord and master
Had chanced upon a sad disaster;

One night his servants found him lying
Speechless or senseless, dead or dying,
With shivered sword and dabbled crest,
And a small poniard in his breast,
And nothing further to supply
The slightest hint of how or why.
As usual, in such horrid cases,
The men made oath, the maids made faces;
All thought it most immensely funny
The murderer should have left the money,
And showed suspicions in dumb crambo,
And buried him with fear and flambeau.

Clotilda shrieked and swooned, of course,
Grew very ill, and very hoarse,
Put on a veil, put off a rout,
Turned all her cooks and courtiers out,
And lived two years on water-gruel,
And drank no wine, and used no fuel.
At last, when all the world had seen
How very virtuous she had been,
She left her chamber, dried her tears,
Kept open house for Cavaliers,

New furnished all the cob-webbed rooms,
And burned a fortune in perfumes.
She had seen six-and-thirty springs,
And still her blood's warm wanderings
Told tales in every throbbing vein
Of youth's high hope, and passion's reign,
And dreams, from which that lady's heart
Had parted, or had seemed to part.
She had no wiles from cunning France,
Too cold to sing, too tall to dance;
But yet, where'er her footsteps went,
She was the Queen of Merriment:
She called the quickest at the table,
For Courcy's song, or Comine's fable,
Bade Barons quarrel for her glove,
And talked with Squires of ladie-love,
And hawked and hunted in all weathers,
And stood six feet—including feathers.

Her suitors, men of swords and banners,
Were very guarded in their manners,
And e'en when heated by the jorum
Knew the strict limits of decorum.

Well had Clotilda learned the glance
That checks a lover's first advance;
That brow to her was given
That chills presumption in its birth,
And mars the madness of our mirth,
And wakes the reptile of the earth
From the vision he hath of Heaven.
And yet for Vidal she could find
No word or look that was not kind,
With him she walked in shine or shower,
And quite forgot the dinner hour,
And gazed upon him, till he smiled,
As doth a mother on a child.
Oh! when was dream so purely dreamed!
A mother and a child they seemed:
In warmer guise he loved her not;—
And if, beneath the stars and moon,
He lingered in some lonely spot
To play her fond and favourite tune,
And if he fed her petted mare,
And made acquaintance with her bear,
And kissed her hand whene'er she gave it,
And kneeled him down, sometimes, to crave it,

'Twas partly pride, and partly jest,
And partly 'twas a boyish whim,
And that he liked to see the rest
Look angrily on her and him.
And that—in short, he was a boy,
And doted on his last new toy.

It chanced that late, one summer's gloaming,
The lady and the youth were roaming,
In converse close of those and these,
Beneath a long arcade of trees;
Tall trunks stood up on left and right,
Like columns in the gloom of night,
Breezeless and voiceless; and on high,
Where those eternal pillars ended,
The silent boughs so closely blended
Their mirk, unstirring majesty,
That superstition well might run
To wander there from twelve to one,
And call strange shapes from heaven or hell,
Of cowl and candle, book and bell,
And kneel as in the vaulted aisle
Of some time-honoured Gothic pile,

To pay her weary worship there
Of counted beads, and pattered prayer.

Clotilda had, for once, the vapours,
And when the stars lit up their tapers,
She said that she was very weary—
She liked the place, it was so dreary—
The dew was down on grass and flower,
'Twas very wet—'twas very wrong—
But she *must* rest for half an hour,
And listen to another song.

Then many a tale did Vidal tell
Of warrior's spear, and wizard's spell;
How that Sir Brian le Bleu had been
Cup-bearer to a fairy queen;
And how that a hundred years did pass,
And left his brow as smooth as glass;
Time on his form marked no decay,
He stole not a single charm away,
He could not blight
That eye of light,
Nor turn those raven ringlets gray.

But Brian's love for a mortal maid,
Was written and read in a magic sign,
When Brian slipped on the moonlight glade,
And spilled the fairy's odorous wine;
And she dipped her fingers in the can,
And sprinkled him with seven sprinkles,
And he went from her presence a weary man,
A withering lump of rheum and wrinkles.

And how that Satan made a bond
With Armonell of Trebizond—
A bond that was written at first in tears,
And torn at last in laughter—
To be his slave for a thousand years,
And his sovereign ever after.

And oh! those years, they fleeted fast,
And a single year remained at last,
A year for crouching and for crying,
Between his frolic and his frying.

"Toil yet another toil," quoth he,
"Or else thy prey I will not be,

Come hither, come hither, servant mine,
And call me back
The faded track
Of years nine hundred and ninety-nine!"
And Satan hied to his home again
On the wings of a blasting hurricane,
And left old Armonell to die,
And sleep in the odour of sanctity.

In mockery of the Minstrel's skill
The Lady's brow grew darker still;
She trembled as she lay,
And o'er her face, like fitful flame,
The feverish colour went and came,
And, in the pauses of the tune,
Her black eyes stared upon the moon
With an unearthly ray.

"Good Vidal,"—as she spoke she leant
So wildly o'er the instrument
That wondering Vidal started back,
For fear the strings should go to wrack—

"Good Vidal, I have read and heard
Of many a haunted heath and dell,
Where potency of wand or word,
Or chanted rhyme, or written spell,
Hath burst, in such an hour as this,
The cerements of the rotting tomb,
And waked from wo, or torn from bliss,
The heritors of chill and gloom,
Until they walked upon the earth,
Unshrouded, in a ghastly mirth,
And frightened men with soundless cries,
And hueless cheeks, and rayless eyes.
Such power there is!—if such be thine,
Why, make to-night that sound or sign;
And while the vapoury sky looks mirk
In horror at our midnight work,
We two will sit on two green knolls,
And jest with unembodied souls,
And mock at every moody sprite
That wanders from his bed to-night."

The boy jumped up in vast surprise,
And rubbed his forehead and his eyes,

And quite unable to reflect,
Made answer much to this effect:
"Lady!—the saints befriend a sinner!
Lady!—she drank too much at dinner!
I know a rhyme, and—ghosts forsooth!
I used to sing it in my youth;
'Twas taught me—curse my foolish vanity!
By an old wizard—stark insanity!
Who came from Tunis—'tis the hock!
At a great age and—twelve o'clock!
He wore—oh, Lord!—a painted girdle,
For which they burnt him on a hurdle;
He had a charm, but—what the deuce!
It wasn't of the slightest use;
There's not a single ghost that cares
For——mercy on me! how she stares!"
And then again he sate him down,
For fiercer fell Clotilda's frown,
And played, abominably ill,
And horribly against his will.

"Spirits, that walk and wail to night,
I feel, I feel that ye are near;

There is a mist upon my sight,
There is a murmur in mine ear.
And a dark, dark dread
Of the lonely dead,
Creeps through the whispering atmosphere!

"Ye hover o'er the hoary trees,
And the old oaks stand bereft and bare;
Ye hover o'er the moonlight seas,
And the tall masts rot in the poisoned air;
Ye gaze on the gate
Of earthly state,
And the ban-dog shivers in silence there.

"Come hither to me upon your cloud,
And tell me of your bliss or pain,
And let me see your shadowy shroud,
And colourless lip, and bloodless vein;
Where do ye dwell,
In heaven or hell,
And why do ye wander on earth again?

"Tell to me where and how ye died,
Fell ye in darkness, or fell ye in day,

On lorn hill-side, or roaring tide,
In gorgeous feast, or rushing fray ?
By bowl or blow,
From friend or foe,
Hurried your angry souls away ?

" Mute ye come, and mute ye pass,
Your tale untold, your shrift unshriven ;
But ye have blighted the pale grass,
And scared the ghastly stars from heaven ;
And guilt hath known
Your voiceless moan,
And felt that the blood is unforgiven !"

He paused ; for silently and slow
The lady left his side ;
It seemed her blood had ceased to flow,
For her cheek was as white as the morning snow,
And the light of her eyes had died.
She gazed upon some form of fright—
But it was not seen of Vidal's sight ;
She drank some sound of hate or fear—
But it was not heard of Vidal's ear ;

"Look! look!" she said; and Vidal spoke—
"Why! zounds! it's nothing but an oak!"

"Valence!" she muttered, "I will rise;
Ay! turn not those dead orbs on mine;
Fearless to-night are these worn eyes,
And nerveless is that arm of thine.
Thrice hast thou fleeted o'er my path;
And I would hear thy dull lips say,
Is it in sorrow, or in wrath,
That thou dost haunt my lonely way?
Ay! frown not! heaven may blast me now,
In this dark hour, in this cold spot;
And then—I can but be as thou,
And hate thee still, and fear thee not!"
She strode two steps, and stretched her hand,
In attitude of stern command;
The tremour of her voice and tread
Had more of passion than of dread,
The net had parted from her hair,
The locks fell down in the powerless air,
Her frame with strange convulsion rocked—
And Vidal was intensely shocked.

The lady drew a long low sigh,
As if some voice had made reply,
Though Vidal could not catch a word,
And thought it horribly absurd.
"Remember it?—avenging power!
I ask no word, I need no sign,
To teach me of that withering hour,
That linked this wasted hand in thine!
He was not there!—I deemed him slain—
And thine the guilt—and mine the pain!
There are memorials of that day
Which time shall never blot away;
Unheeded prayer, unpardoned sin,
And smiles without, and flames within,
And broken heart, and ruined fame,
And glutted hate, and dreaded shame,
And late remorse, and dreams, and fears,
And bitter and enduring tears!"

She listened there another space,
And stirred no feature of her face,
Though big drops, ere she spoke again,
Fell from her clammy brow like rain:

At last she glanced a wilder stare,
And stamped her foot, and tore her hair.
"False fiend! thou liest, thou hast lied!
He was, what thou couldst never be—
In anguish true, in danger tried—
Their friend to all—my god to me!
He loved—as thou couldst never love—
Long years—and not, till then, in guilt;
Nay! point not to the wailing grove,
I know by whom the blood was spilt,
I saw the tomb, and heard the knell,
And life to me was lorn and blighted,
He died—and vengeance watches well!
He died—and thou wert well requited!"

Again she listened:—full five score
You might have counted duly o'er—
And then she laughed; so fierce and shrill
That laughter echoed o'er the hill,
That Vidal deemed the very ground
Did shake at its unearthly sound.
"I do not tremble! be it so!—
Or here or there! in bliss or wo!—

Yea! let it be! and we will meet,
Where never——" and at Vidal's feet
She sank, as senseless and as cold
As if her death were two days old;
And Vidal, who an hour before
Had voted it a horrid bore,
His silken sash with speed unlaced,
And bound it round her neck and waist,
And bore her to her castle-gate,
And never stopped to rest or bait,
Speeding as swiftly on his track
As if nine fiends were at his back.

Then rose from fifty furious lungs
A Babel of discordant tongues:
"Jesu! the Baroness is dead!—
Should'n't her Ladyship be bled?—
Her fingers are as cold as stone!—
And look how white her lips are grown!
A dreadful thing for all who love her!
'Tis ten to one she won't recover!—
Ten?—did you ever, Mrs. Anne?
Ten rogues against one honest man!—

How master Vidal must have fought!
It's what I never should have thought;
He seems the sickliest thing alive;—
They say he killed and wounded five!—
Is master Vidal killed or wounded?
I trust the story is unfounded!—
I saw him on his legs just now,—
What! sawed his legs off? well, I vow—
Peace, babbler, peace! you see you've shocked her!
Help! ho!—cold water for the Doctor!
Her eyes are open!—how they blink!
Why, Doctor, do you really think,——
My Lord, we never think at all;
I'll trouble you to clear the Hall,
And check all tendency to riot,
And keep the Castle very quiet;
Let none but little Bertha stay;
And—try to keep the Friar away!"
Poor Vidal, who, amid the rout,
Had crept in cautious silence out,
Reeled to his chamber in the staggers,
And thought of home, and dreamed of daggers.

Day dawned: the Baroness was able
To beam upon the breakfast table,
As well as could be well expected,
Before the guests were half collected.
"A fainting fit;—a thing of course;—
In sooth it might have ended worse;
Exceedingly obliged to Vidal;—
Pray, had the groom repaired her bridle?
She walked too late;—it was a warning;
And—who was for the chase this morning?"

Days past, and weeks: Clotilda's mien
Was gay as it before had been,
And only once or twice her glance
Fell darkly on his countenance,
And gazed into his eyes of blue,
As if she read his young heart through:
At length she mildly hinted—"Surely
"Vidal was looking very poorly—
He never talked—had parted quite
With spirits, and with appetite—
She thought he wanted change of air,
It was a shame to keep him there—

She had remarked the change with sorrow,
And——well, he should set out to-morrow."

The morrow came, 'twas glorious weather,
And all the household flocked together
To hold his stirrup and his rein,
And say, "Heaven speed!" with might and main.
Clotilda only said "Farewell!"
And gave her hand to kiss and clasp;
He thought it trembled, as it fell
In silence from his lip and grasp,
And yet upon her cheek and brow
There dwelt no flush of passion now;
Only the kind regret was there
Which severed friends at parting wear,
And the sad smile and glistening eye
Seemed nought to shun, and nought defy.

"Farewell!" she said, and so departed;
And Vidal from his reverie started,
And blessed his soul, and cleared his throat,
And crossed his forehead—and the moat.

CANTO II.

All milliners who start from bed
To gaze upon a coat of red,
  Or listen to a drum,
Know very well the Paphian Queen
Was never yet at Paphos seen,
  That Cupid's all a hum,
That minstrels forge confounded lies,
About the Deities and skies,
That torches all go out sometimes,
That flowers all fade except in rhymes,
That maids are seldom shot with arrows,
And coaches never drawn by sparrows.

And yet, fair cousin, do not deem
  That all is false which poets tell
Of Passion's first and dearest dream,
  Of haunted spot, and silent spell,
Of long low musing, such as suits
  The terrace on your own dark hill,
Of whispers which are sweet as lutes,
  And silence which is sweeter still;

Believe, believe—for May shall pass,
And summer sun and winter shower
Shall dim the freshness of the grass,
And mar the fragrance of the flower—
Believe it all, whate'er you hear
Of plighted vow, and treasured token,
And hues which only once appear,
And words which only once are spoken,
And prayers whose natural voice is song,
And schemes that die in wild endeavour,
And tears so pleasant, you will long
To weep such pleasant tears for ever.
Believe it all, believe it all!
Oh! Virtue's frown is all divine;
And Folly hides his happy thrall
In sneers as cold and false as mine;
And Reason prates of wrong and right,
And marvels hearts can break or bleed,
And flings on all that's warm and bright
The winter of his icy creed;
But when the soul has ceased to glow,
And years and cares are coming fast,
There's nothing like young love!—no, no!
There's nothing like young love at last!

The Convent of St. Ursula
Has been in a marvellous fright to-day ;
The nuns are all in a terrible pother
Scolding and screaming at one another ;
Two or three pale, and two or three red,
Two or three frightened to death in bed,
Two or three waging a wordy war
With the wide-eared Saints of the Calendar.
Beads and lies have both been told,
Tempers are hot, and dishes are cold ;
Celandine rends her last new veil,
Leonore babbles of horns and tail ;
Celandine proses of songs and slips,
Violette blushes and bites her lips :
Oh ! what is the matter, the matter to-day,
With the Convent of St. Ursula ?
But the Abbess has made the chiefest din,
And cried the loudest cry ;
She has pinned her cap with a crooked pin,
And talked of Satan and talked of sin,
And set her coif awry ;
And she can never quiet be ;
But ever since the Matins,
In gallery and scullery,

And kitchen and refectory,
She tramps it in her pattens;
Oh! what is the matter, the matter to-day
With the Abbess of St. Ursula?

Thrice in the silence of eventime
A desperate foot has dared to climb
Over the Convent gate;
Thrice a venturous voice and lute
Have dared to wake their amorous suit,
Among the Convent flowers and fruit,
Abominably late:
And thrice, the Beldames know it well,
From out the lattice of her cell,
To listen to that murmured measure
Of life, and love, and hope, and pleasure,
With throbbing heart and eyelid wet,
Hath leaned the novice Violette;
And oh! you may tell from her mournful gaze,
Her vision hath been of those dear days,
When happily o'er the quiet lawn,
Bright with the dew's most heavenly sprinkles,
She scared the pheasant, and chased the fawn,
Till a smile came o'er her father's wrinkles,

Or stood beside that water fair,
Where moonlight slept with a ray so tender,
That every star which glistened there,
Glistened, she thought, with a double splendour;
And oh! she loved the ripples' play,
As to her feet the truant rovers
Wandered, and went with a laugh away,
Kissing but once, like wayward lovers.
And oh! she loved the nightwind's moan,
And the dreary watch-dog's lonely yelling,
And the sentinel's unchanging tone,
And the chapel chime so sadly knelling,
And the echoes from the Castle hall,
Of circling song and noisy gladness,
And, in some silent interval,
The nightingale's deep voice of sadness.
Alas! there comes a winter bleak
On the lightest joy, and the loveliest flower:
And the smiles have faded on Violette's cheek,
And the roses have withered in Violette's bower.
But now by the beautiful turf and tide
Poor Violette's heart in silence lingers;
And the thrilling tears of memory glide
Thro' the trembling veil and the quivering fingers.

Yet not for these, for these alone,
That innocent heart beats high to-day;
And not for these the stifled moan
Is breathed in such thick passionate tone,
That not the lips appear to pray.
But you may deem those murmurs start
Forth from the life-strings of the heart,
So wild and strange is that long sigh,
So full of bliss and agony!

She thinks of him, the lovely boy,
Sweet Vidal, with his face of joy—
The careless mate of all the glee
That shone upon her infancy—
The baby-lover, who had been
The sceptred King, where she was Queen,
On Childhood's dream-encircled strand,
The undisputed Fairy-land!
She thinks of him, she thinks of him,
The lord of every wicked whim,
Who dared Sir Prinsamour to battle,
And drove away De Clifford's cattle,
And sang an Ave at the feast,
And made wry faces at the Priest,

And ducked the Dutchess in the sea,
And tore Sir Roland's pedigree.

She thinks of him—the forehead fair,
The ruddy lip, and glossy hair—
The mountains, where they roved together,
In life's most bright and witching weather—
The wreck they watched upon the coast—
The ruin where they saw the ghost—
The fairy tale he loved to tell—
The serenade he sang so well;
And then she turns and sees again
The naked wall, and grated pane,
And frequent winks and frequent frowns,
And 'broidered books, and 'broidered gowns,
And plaster saints, and plaster patrons,
And three impracticable matrons.

She was a very pretty Nun:
Sad, delicate, and five feet one;
Her face was oval, and her eye
Looked like the Heaven in Italy,
Serenely blue, and softly bright,
Made up of languish and of light!

And her neck, except where the locks of brown,
Like a sweet summer mist, fell droopingly down,
Was as chill and as white as the snow, ere the earth
Has sullied the hue of its heavenly birth;
And through the blue veins you might see
The pure blood wander silently,
Like noiseless eddies, that far below
In the glistening depths of a calm lake flow:
Her cold hands on her bosom lay;
And her ivory crucifix, cold as they,
Was clasped in a fearful and fond caress,
As if she shrank from its holiness,
And felt that hers was the only guilt
For which no healing blood was spilt:
And tears were bursting all the while;
Yet now and then a vacant smile
Over her lips would come and go—
A very mockery of wo—
A brief, wan smile—a piteous token
Of a warm love crush'd, and a young heart broken!

"Marry come up!" said Celandine,
Whose nose was ruby red,

"From venomous cates and wicked wine
A deadly sin is bred.
Darkness, and anti-phlogistic diet,
These will keep the pulses quiet;
Silence and solitude, bread and water—
So must we cure our erring daughter!"
I have dined at an Alderman's board,
I have drunk with a German lord,
But richer was Celandine's own paté
Than Sir William's soup on Christmas day,
And sweeter the flavour of Celandine's flask
Than the loveliest cup from a Rhenish cask!

"Saints keep us!" said old Winifrede,
"Saints keep and cure us all!
And let us hie to our book and bead,
Or sure the skies will fall!
Is she a Heathen, or is she a Hindo,
To talk with a silly boy out of the window?
Was ever such profaneness seen?
Pert minx!—and only just sixteen!"
I have talked with a fop who has fought twelve duels,
Six for an heiress, and six for her jewels;

I have prosed with a reckless bard, who rehearses
Every day a thousand verses;
But, oh! more marvellous twenty times
Than the bully's lies, or the blockhead's rhymes,
Were the scurrilous tales, which Scandal told
Of Winifrede's loves in the days of old!

The Abbess lifted up her eye,
And laid her rosary down,
And sigh'd a melancholy sigh,
And frown'd an angry frown.
"There is a cell in the dark cold ground,
Where sinful passions wither;
Vapory dews lie damp around,
And merriment of sight or sound
Can work no passage thither:
Other scene is there, I trow,
Than suits a love-sick maiden's vow;
For a death-watch makes a weary tune,
And a glimmering lamp is a joyless moon,
And a couch of stone is a dismal rest,
And an aching heart is a bitter guest!
Maiden of the bosom light,
There shall thy dwelling be to-night;

Mourn and meditate, fast and pray,
And drive the evil one away.
Axe and cord were fitter doom,
Desolate grave and mouldering tomb;
But the merciful faith, that speaks the sentence,
Joys in the dawn of a soul's repentance,
And the eyes may shed sweet tears for them,
Whom the hands chastise, and the lips condemn!"
I have set my foot on the hallowed spot,
Where the dungeon of trampled France is not;
I have heard men talk of Mr. Peel;
I have seen men walk on the Bixton wheel;
And 'twere better to feed on frogs and fears,
Guarded by griefs and grenadiers,
And 'twere better to tread all day and night,
With a rogue on the left, and a rogue on the right,
Than lend our persons or our purses
To that old lady's tender mercies!

"Ay! work your will!" the young girl said;
And as she spoke she raised her head,
And for a moment turned aside,
To check the tear she could not hide;——

"Ay! work your will!—I know you all,
Your holy aims and pious arts,
And how you love to fling a pall
On fading joys, and blighted hearts;
And if these quivering lips could tell
The story of our bliss and wo,
And how we loved—Oh! loved, as well
As ever mortals loved below——
And how in purity and truth
The flower of early joy was nurst,
Till sadness nipp'd its blushing youth,
And holy mummery call'd it curst——
You would but watch my sobs and sighs,
With shaking head, and silent sneers,
And deck with smiles those soulless eyes,
When mine should swell with bitter tears!
But work your will! Oh! life and limb
May wither in that house of dread,
Where horrid shapes and shadows dim
Walk nightly round the slumberer's head;
The sight may sink, the tongue may fail,
The shuddering spirit long for day,
And fear may make these features pale,
And turn these boasted ringlets gray;

But not for this, oh! not for this,
The heart will lose its dream of gladness;
And the fond thought of that last kiss
Will live in torture—yea! in madness!
And look! I will not fear or feel
The all your hate may dare or do;
And, if I ever pray and kneel,
I will not kneel and pray to you!"

If you had seen that tender cheek,
Those eyes of melting blue,
You would not have thought in a thing so weak,
Such a fiery spirit grew.
But the trees which summer's breezes shake,
Are shiver'd in winter's gale;
And a meek girl's heart will bear to break,
When a proud man's truth would fail.

Never a word she uttered more;
They have led her down the stair,
And left her on the dungeon floor,
To find repentance there;

And nought have they set beside her bed,
Within that chamber dull,
But a lonely lamp, and a loaf of bread,
A rosary and skull.
The breast is bold that grows not cold,
With a strong convulsive twinge,
As the slow door creeps to its sullen hold,
Upon its mouldering hinge.
That door was made by the cunning hand
Of an artist from a foreign land;
Human skill and heavenly thunder
Shall not win its wards asunder.
The chain is fix'd, and the bolt is fast,
And the kind old Abbess lingers last,
To mutter a prayer on her bended knee,
And clasp to her girdle the iron key.

But then, oh then began to run
Horrible whispers from nun to nun:
"Sister Amelia,"—"Sister Anne,"
"Do tell us how it all began;"
"The youth was a handsome youth, that's certain,
For Bertha peeped from behind the curtain:"

"As sure as I have human eyes,
It was the devil in disguise;
His hair hanging down like threads of wire—
And his mouth breathing smoke, like a haystack on fire—
And the ground beneath his footstep rocking,"—
"Lord! Isabel, how very shocking!"
"Poor Violette! she was *so* merry;
I'm very sorry for her!—very!"
"Well! it was worth a silver tester,
To see how she frown'd when the Abbess bless'd her;"—
"Was Father Anselm there to shrive?
For I'm sure she'll never come out alive!"
"Dear Elgitha, don't frighten us so!"
"It's just a hundred years ago,
Since Father Peter was put in the cell
For forgetting to ring the vesper bell;
Let us keep ourselves from mortal sin!
He went out as he went in!"
"No! and he lives there still, they say,
In his cloak of black, and his cowl of gray,
Weeping, and wailing, and walking about,
With an endless grief, and an endless gout,

And wiping his eyes with a kerchief of lawn,
And ringing his bell from dusk to dawn!"
"Let us pray to be saved from love and spectres!"—
"From the haunted cell!"—"and the abbess's lectures!"
The garish sun has gone away,
And taken with him the toils of day;
Foul ambition's hollow schemes,
Busy labour's golden dreams,
Angry strife, and cold debate,
Plodding care, and plotting hate.
But in the nunnery sleep is fled
From many a vigilant hand and head;
A watch is set of friars tall,
Jerome and Joseph, and Peter and Paul;
And the chattering girls are all lock'd up;
And the wrinkled old abbess is gone to sup
On mushrooms and sweet muscadel,
In the fallen one's deserted cell.

And now 'tis love's most lovely hour,
And silence sits on earth and sky,
And moonlight flings on turf and tower
A spell of deeper witchery;

And in the stillness and the shade
All things and colours seem to fade:
And the garden queen, the blushing rose,
Has bow'd her head in a soft repose;
And weary zephyr is gone to rest
In the flow'ry grove he loves the best.
Nothing is heard but the long, long snore,
Solemn and sad, of the watchmen four,
And the voice of the rivulet rippling by,
And the nightingale's evening melody,
And the drowsy wing of the sleepless bat,
And the mew of the gard'ner's tortoise-shell cat.

Dear cousin! a harp like yours has power
Over the soul in every hour;
And after breakfast, when Sir G.
Has been discussing news and tea,
And eulogized his coals and logs,
And told the breeding of his dogs,
And hurl'd anathemas of pith
Against the sect of Adam Smith,
And handed o'er to endless shame
The voters for the sale of game,

'Tis sweet to fly from him and vapours,
And those interminable papers,
And waste an idle hour or two
With dear Rossini, and with you.

But those sweet sounds are doubly sweet,
In the still nights of June,
When song and silence seem to meet,
Beneath the quiet moon;
When not a single leaf is stirr'd,
By playful breeze or joyous bird,
And echo shrinks as if afraid
Of the faint murmur she has made.
Oh! then the spirit of music roves,
With a delicate step through the myrtle groves,
And still wherever he flits, he flings
A thousand charms from his purple wings.
And where is that discourteous wight,
Who would not linger through the night
Listening ever, lone and mute,
To the murmur of his mistress' lute,
And courting those bright phantasies,
Which haunt the dreams of waking eyes?

He came that night, the Troubadour,
While the four fat friars slept secure,
And gazed on the lamp that sweetly glisten'd,
Where he thought his mistress listen'd;
Low and clear the silver note
On the thrill'd air seem'd to float;
Such might be an angel's moan,
Half a whisper, half a tone.

"So glad a life was never, love,
As that which childhood leads,
Before it learns to sever, love,
The roses from the weeds:
When to be very duteous, love,
Is all it has to do;
And every flower is beauteous, love,
And every folly true.

"And you can still remember, love,
The buds that decked our play,
Though destiny's December, love,
Has whirled those buds away:

And you can smile through tears, love,
And feel a joy in pain,
To think upon those years, love,
You may not see again.

"When we mimick'd the Friar's howls, love,
Cared nothing for his creeds,
Made bonnets of his cowls, love,
And bracelets of his beads;
And gray-beards looked not awful, love,
And grandames made no din,
And vows were not unlawful, love,
And kisses were no sin.

"And do you never dream, love,
Of that enchanted well,
Where under the moon-beam, love,
The Fairies wove their spell?
How oft we saw them greeting, love,
Beneath the blasted tree,
And heard their pale feet beating, love,
To their own minstrelsy!

"And do you never think, love,
Of the shallop, and the wave,
And the willow on the brink, love,
Over the poacher's grave?
Where always in the dark, love,
We heard a heavy sigh,
And the dogs were wont to bark, love,
Whenever they went by?

"Then gaily shone the Heaven, love,
On life's untroubled sea,
And Vidal's heart was given, love,
In happiness to thee;
The sea is all benighted, love,
The Heaven has ceased to shine;
The heart is seared and blighted, love,
But still the heart is thine!"

He paused and looked; he paused and sighed;
None appear'd, and none replied:
All was still but the water's wail,
And the tremulous voice of the nightingale,

And the insects buzzing among the briars,
And the nasal note of the four fat friars.

"Oh fly with me! 'tis passion's hour;
The world is gone to sleep;
And nothing wakes in brake or bower,
But those who love and weep:
This is the golden time and weather,
When songs and sighs go out together,
And minstrels pledge the rosy wine
To lutes like this, and lips like thine!

"Oh fly with me! my Courser's flight
Is like the rushing breeze,
And the kind moon has said 'Good night!'
And sunk behind the trees:
The lover's voice—the loved one's ear—
There's nothing else to speak and hear;
And we will say, as on we glide,
That nothing lives on earth beside!

"Oh fly with me! and we will wing
Our white skiff o'er the waves,

And hear the Tritons revelling,
Among their coral caves;
The envious Mermaid, when we pass,
Shall cease her song, and drop her glass;
For it will break her very heart,
To see how fair and dear thou art.

"Oh fly with me! and we will dwell
Far over the green seas,
Where sadness rings no parting knell
For moments such as these!
Where Italy's unclouded skies
Look brightly down on brighter eyes,
Or where the wave-wed City smiles,
Enthroned upon her hundred isles.

"Oh fly with me! by these sweet strings
Swept o'er by Passion's fingers—
By all the rocks, and vales, and springs—
Where Memory lives and lingers—
By all the tongue can never tell—
By all the heart has told so well—
By all that has been or may be—
And by Love's self—Oh fly with me!"

He paused again—no sight or sound!
The still air rested all around;
He look'd to the tower, and he look'd to the tree,
Night was as still as Night could be;
Something he mutter'd of Prelate and Pope
And took from his mantle a silken rope;
Love dares much, and Love climbs well!
He stands by the Abbess in Violette's cell.

He put on a mask, and he put out the light;
The Abbess was dressed in a veil of white;
Not a look he gave, not a word he said;
The pages are ready, the blanket is spread;
He has clasped his arm her waist about,
And lifted the screaming Abbess out:
"My horse is fleet, and my hand is true,
And my Squire has a bow of deadly yew;
Away, and away, over mountain and moor!
Good luck to the love of the gay Troubadour!"

"What! rode away with the Abbess behind?
Lord! sister! is the Devil blind?"
"Full fourscore winters!"—"Fast and pray!
For the powers of darkness fight to-day!"—

"I sha'nt get over the shock for a week!"—
"Did any one hear our Mother shriek?"—
"Do shut your mouth!"—"do shut the cell!"
"What a villanous, odious, sulphury smell!"
"Has the Evil One taken the Mass-book too?"
"Ah me! what will poor little Violette do?
She has but one loaf since seven o'clock;
And no one can open that horrible lock;
And Satan will grin with a fiendish glee,
When he finds the Abbess has kept the key!"
"How shall we manage to sleep to-night?"
"I wouldn't for worlds put out my light!"
"I'm sure I shall die if I hear but a mole stir!"
"I'll clap St. Ursula under my bolster!"

But oh! the pranks that Vidal played,
When he found what a bargain his blindness had made!
Wilful and wild—half in fun, half on fire,
He stared at the Abbess, and storm'd at the Squire!
Consigned to perdition all silly romancers,
Ask'd twenty strange questions, and staid for no answers,

Raving, and roaring, and laughing by fits,
And driving the old woman out of her wits.

There was a jousting at Chichester;
It had made in the country a mighty stir,
And all that was brave, and all that was fair,
And all that was neither, came trooping there;
Scarfs and scars, and frays and frowns,
And flow'ry speeches, and flow'ry crowns.
A hundred knights set spear in rest
For the lady they deemed the loveliest,
And Vidal broke a lance that day
For the Abbess of St. Ursula.

There was a feast at Arundel;
The town-clerk tolled a ponderous bell,
And nothing was there but row and rout,
And toil to get in, and toil to get out,
And Sheriffs fatter than their venison,
And Belles that never staid for benison.
The red, red wine was mantling there,
To the health of the fairest of the fair,
And Vidal drain'd the cup that day
To the Abbess of St. Ursula.

There was a wedding done at Bramber;
The town was full of myrrh and amber;
And the boors were roasting valorous beeves,
And the boys were gathering myrtle leaves,
And the bride was choosing her finest flounces,
And the bridegroom was scattering coin by ounces,
And every strippling danced on the green
With the girl he had made his idol queen;
And Vidal led the dance that day
With the Abbess of St. Ursula.

Three days had pass'd when the Abbess came back;
Her voice was out of tune,
And her new white veil was gone to wrack,
And so were her sandal shoon.
No word she said; they put her to bed,
With a pain in her heels, and a pain in her head,
And she talk'd in her delirious fever
Of a high-trotting horse, and a black deceiver;
Of music and merriment, love and lances,
Bridles and blasphemy, dishes and dances.

They went with speed to the dungeon-door;
The air was chill and damp;

And the pale girl lay on the marble floor,
Beside the dying lamp.
They kissed her lips, they called her name,
No kiss returned, no answer came;
Motionless, lifeless, there she lay,
Like a statue rent from its base away!
They said by famine she had died:
Yet the bread untasted lay beside;
And her cheek was as full, and fresh, and fair,
As it had been when warmth was there,
And her eyes were unclosed, and their glassy rays
Were fixed in a desolate, dreamy gaze,
As if before their orbs had gone
Some sight they could not close upon;
And her bright brown locks all gray were grown;
And her hands were clenched, and cold as stone;
And the veins upon her neck and brow——
But she was dead!—what boots it how?

In holy ground she was not laid;
For she had died in sin,
And good St. Ursula forbade
That such should enter in;

But in a calm and cold retreat
They made her place of rest,
And laid her in her winding-sheet,
And left her there unblest;
And set a small stone at her head,
Under a spreading tree;
"*Orate*"—that was all it said—
"*Orate hic pro me!*"

And Vidal came at night, alone,
And tore his shining hair,
And laid him down beside the stone,
And wept till day-break there.

"Fare thee well, fare thee well,
Most beautiful of earthly things,
I will not bid thy spirit stay,
Nor link to earth those glittering wings,
That burst, like light away!
I know that thou art gone to dwell
In the sunny home of the fresh-day beam,
Before decay's unpitying tread
Hath crept upon the dearest dream

That ever came and fled;
Fare thee well, fare thee well;
And go thy way, all pure and fair,
Into the starry firmament;
And wander there with the spirits of air,
As bright and innocent!

"Fare thee well, fare thee well!
Strange feet will be upon thy clay,
And never stop to sigh or sorrow;
Yet many wept for thee to-day,
And one will weep to-morrow:
Alas! that melancholy knell
Shall often wake my wondering ear,
And thou shalt greet me, for a while,
Too beautiful to make me fear,
Too sad to let me smile!
Fare thee well, fare thee well!
I know that heaven for thee is won;
And yet I feel I would resign
Whole ages of my life, for one—
One little hour, of thine!

"Fare thee well, fare thee well!
See, I have been to the sweetest bowers,
And cull'd from garden and from heath
The tenderest of all tender flowers,
And blended in my wreath
The violet and the blue harebell,
And one frail rose in its earliest bloom;
Alas! I meant it for thy hair,
And now I fling it on thy tomb,
To weep and wither there!
Fare ye well, fare ye well!
Sleep, sleep, my love, in fragrant shade,
Droop, droop to-night, thou blushing token;
A fairer flower shall never fade,
Nor a fonder heart be broken!

EVERY-DAY CHARACTERS.

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I.—THE VICAR.

Some years ago, ere Time and Taste
  Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
  And roads as little known as scurvy,
The man who lost his way between
  St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,
Was always shown across the Green,
  And guided to the Parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lisson lath;
  Fair Margaret in her tidy kirtle,
Led the lorn traveller up the path,
  Through clean-clipt rows of box and myrtle:
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,
  Upon the parlour steps collected,
Wagged all their tails and seemed to say,
  "Our master knows you; you're expected!"

Up rose the Reverend Dr. Brown,
  Up rose the Doctor's "winsome marrow;"

The lady lay her knitting down,
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow;
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,
He found a stable for his steed,
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
And warmed himself in court or college,
He had not gained an honest friend,
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge;—
If he departed as he came,
With no new light on love or liquor,—
Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
And not the Vicarage, or the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses:
It slipped from politics to puns:
It passed from Mahomet to Moses:
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd and sound divine,
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;
And when, by dint of page and line,
He 'stablished Truth, or started Error,
The Baptist found him far too deep;
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow;
And the lean Levite went to sleep,
And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.

His sermon never said or showed
That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,
Without refreshment on the road
From Jerome, or from Athanasius;
And sure a righteous zeal inspired
The hand and head that penned and planned them,
For all who understood, admired,
And some who did not understand them.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,
Small treatises, and smaller verses;
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
And hints to noble lords and nurses;

True histories of last year's ghost,
  Lines to a ringlet or a turban;
And trifles for the Morning Post,
  And nothing for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair,
  Although he had a knack of joking;
He did not make himself a bear,
  Although he had a taste for smoking:
And when religious sects ran mad,
  He held, in spite of all his learning,
That if a man's belief is bad,
  It will not be improved by burning.

And he was kind, and loved to sit
  In the low hut or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
  And share the widow's homelier pottage:
At his approach complaint grew mild,
  And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of Fever smiled
  The welcome, which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me
  Of Julius Cæsar or of Venus:
From him I learned the rule of three,
  Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and Quæ genus;
I used to singe his powdered wig,
  To steal the staff he put such trust in;
And make the puppy dance a jig
  When he began to quote Augustin.

Alack the change! in vain I look
  For haunts in which my boyhood trifled;
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
  The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled:
The church is larger than before;
  You reach it by a carriage entry:
It holds three hundred people more:
  And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat: you'll hear
  The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
  Whose tone is very Ciceronian.

Where is the old man laid?—look down,
And construe on the slab before you,
HIC JACET GULIELMUS BROWN,
VIR NULLA NON DONANDUS LAURA.

II.—QUINCE.

Fallentis semita vitæ. *Horace.*

NEAR a small village in the West,
Where many very worthy people
Eat, drink, play whist, and do their best
To guard from evil Church and Steeple,
There stood—alas! it stands no more!
A tenement of brick and plaster,
Of which, for forty years and four,
My good friend Quince was lord and master!

Welcome was he in hut and hall,
To maids and matrons, peers and peasants,
He won the sympathies of all,
By making puns and making presents;
Though all the parish was at strife,
He kept his counsel and his carriage,
And laughed and loved a quiet life,
And shrank from Chancery's suits and marriage.

Sound was his claret and his head;
Warm was his double ale and feelings—
His partners at the whist club said,
That he was faultless in his dealings—
He went to church but once a week;
Yet Dr. Poundtext always found him
An upright man, who studied Greek,
And liked to see his friends around him.

Asylums, hospitals, and schools,
He used to swear were made to cozen;
All who subscribed to them were fools,
And he subscribed to half a dozen;
It was his doctrine that the poor
Were always able, never willing;
And so the beggar at the door,
Had first abuse, and then a shilling.

Some public principles he had,
But was no flatterer, nor fretter;
He rapped his box when things were bad,
And said, "I cannot make them better!"

And much he loathed the patriot's snort,
And much he scorned the placeman's shuffle,
And cut the fiercest quarrels short,
With—"Patience, gentlemen, and shuffle."

For full ten years his pointer, Speed,
Had couched beneath his master's table;
For twice ten years his old white steed
Had fattened in his master's stable—
Old Quince averred, upon his troth,
They were the ugliest beasts in Devon;
And none knew why he fed them both,
With his own hands, six days in seven.

Whene'er they heard his ring or knock,
Quicker than thought, the village slatterns
Flung down the novel, smoothed the frock,
And took up Mrs. Glasse, and patterns;
Adine was studying baker's bills;
Louisa looked the queen of knitters;
Jane happened to be hemming frills;
And Bell, by chance, was making fritters.

But all was vain; and while decay
Came like a tranquil moonlight o'er him,
And found him gouty still, and gay,
With no fair nurse to bless or bore him;
His rugged smile, and easy chair,
His dread of matrimonial lectures,
His wig, his stick, his powdered hair,
Were themes for very strange conjectures.

Some sages thought the stars above
Had crazed him with excess of knowledge;
Some heard he had been crossed in love,
Before he came away from college—
Some darkly hinted, that his grace
Did nothing, great or small, without him,
Some whispered with a solemn face,
That there was something odd about him!

I found him at threescore and ten,
A single man, but bent quite double,
Sickness was coming on him then,
To take him from a world of trouble—

He prosed of sliding down the hill,
Discovered he grew older daily;
One frosty day he made his will—
The next he sent for Dr. Bailey!

And so he lived—and so he died;—
When last I sat beside his pillow,
He shook my hand—"Ah me!"—he cried,
"Penelope must wear the willow.
Tell her I hugged her rosy chain
While life was flickering in the socket:
And say, that when I call again,
I'll bring a license in my pocket.

"I've left my house and grounds to Fag—
(I hope his master's shoes will suit him;)
And I've bequeathed to you my nag,
To feed him for my sake—or shoot him.
The Vicar's wife will take old Fox—
She'll find him an uncommon mouser;
And let her husband have my box,
My Bible, and my Assmanshauser.

" Whether I ought to die or not
My doctors cannot quite determine ;
It's only clear that I shall rot,
And be, like Priam, food for vermin.
My debts are paid ;—but Nature's debt
Almost escaped my recollection !
Tom ! we shall meet again ; and yet
I cannot leave you my direction !"

III.—THE BELLE OF THE BALL.

YEARS—years ago—ere yet my dreams
Had been of being wise and witty;
Ere I had done with writing themes,
Or yawn'd o'er this infernal Chitty;
Years, years ago, while all my joys
Were in my fowling-piece and filly;
In short, while I was yet a boy,
I fell in love with Laura Lilly.

I saw her at a country ball;
There when the sound of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall,
Of hands across and down the middle,
Hers was the subtlest spell by far
Of all that sets young hearts romancing:
She was our queen, our rose, our star;
And when she danced—oh, heaven, her dancing!

Dark was her hair, her hand was white;
Her voice was exquisitely tender,

Her eyes were full of liquid light;
I never saw a waist so slender;
Her every look, her every smile,
Shot right and left a score of arrows;
I thought 'twas Venus from her isle,
I wondered where she'd left her sparrows.

She talk'd of politics or prayers;
Of Southey's prose, or Wordsworth's sonnets;
Of daggers or of dancing bears,
Of battles, or the last new bonnets;
By candle-light, at twelve o'clock,
To me it matter'd not a tittle,
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
I might have thought they murmured Little.

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
I loved her with a love eternal;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
I wrote them for the Sunday Journal.
My mother laughed; I soon found out
That ancient ladies have no feeling;
My father frown'd; but how should gout
Find any happiness in kneeling?

She was the daughter of a dean,
Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic ;
She had one brother just thirteen,
Whose colour was extremely hectic ;
Her grandmother, for many a year,
Had fed the parish with her bounty ;
Her second cousin was a peer,
And lord-lieutenant of the county.

But titles and the three per cents,
And mortgages, and great relations,
And India bonds, and tithes and rents,
Oh! what are they to love's sensations?
Black eyes, fair forehead, clustering locks,
Such wealth, such honours, Cupid chooses ;
He cares as little for the stocks,
As Baron Rothschild for the muses.

She sketch'd; the vale, the wood, the beach,
Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading ;
She botanized ; I envied each
Young blossom in her boudoir fading ;
She warbled Handel ; it was grand—
She made the Catalina jealous ;

She touch'd the organ; I could stand
For hours and hours and blow the bellows.

She kept an album, too, at home,
Well fill'd with all an album's glories;
Paintings of butterflies and Rome,
Patterns for trimming, Persian stories;
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo,
Fierce odes to famine and to slaughter;
And autographs of Prince Laboo,
And recipes of elder water.

And she was flatter'd, worship'd, bored,
Her steps were watch'd, her dress was noted,
Her poodle dog was quite adored,
Her sayings were extremely quoted.
She laugh'd, and every heart was glad,
As if the taxes were abolish'd;
She frown'd, and every look was sad,
As if the opera were demolish'd.

She smil'd on many just for fun—
I knew that there was nothing in it;

I was the first, the only one
Her heart had thought of for a minute;
I knew it, for she told me so,
In phrase which was divinely moulded;
She wrote a charming hand, and oh!
How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves—
A little glow, a little shiver;
A rosebud and a pair of gloves,
And "Fly Not Yet," upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted,
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows—and then we parted.

We parted—months and years roll'd by;
We met again four summers after;
Our parting was all sob and sigh—
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter;
For in my heart's most secret cell,
There had been many other lodgers;
And she was not the ball-room belle,
But only Mrs.—Something—Rogers.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

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UTOPIA.

——"I can dream, sir,
If I eat well and sleep well.
The Mad Lover.

If I could scare the sun away,
No light should ever shine;
If I could bid the clouds obey,
Thick darkness should be mine:
Where'er my weary footsteps roam,
I hate whate'er I see;
And Fancy builds a fairer home
In Slumber's hour for me.

I had a vision yesternight
Of a fairer land than this,
Where Heaven was clothed in warmth and light,
Where Earth was full of bliss;
And every tree was rich with fruits,
And every field with flowers,

And every zephyr wakened lutes
In passion-haunted bowers.

I clambered up a lofty rock,
And did not find it steep;
I read through a page and a half of Locke,
And did not fall asleep.
I said whate'er I may but feel,
I paid whate'er I owe;
And I danced one day an Irish reel
With the gout in every toe.

And I was more than six feet high,
And fortunate and wise;
And I had a voice of melody,
And beautiful black eyes;
My horses like the lightning went,
My barrels carried true;
And I held my tongue at an argument,
And winning cards at Loo.

I saw an old Italian priest,
Who spoke without disguise;

And I dined with a Judge who swore, like Best,
All libels should be lies.
I bought for a penny a two-penny loaf
Of wheat, and nothing more;
I danced with a female philosopher
Who was not quite a bore.

There was a crop of wheat which grew
Where plough was never brought;
There was a noble lord who knew
What he was never taught.
There was a scheme in the gazette
For a lottery without blanks;
And a Parliament had lately met,
Without a single Bankes.

And there were Kings who never went
To cuffs for half a crown;
And Lawyers who were eloquent
Without a wig or gown:
And Statesmen who forebore to praise
Their grayhounds and their guns;
And Poets who deserved the bays,
And did not dread the duns;

And Boroughs were bought without a test,
And no man feared the Pope;
And the Irish cabins were all possessed
Of Liberty and soap;
And the Chancellor, feeling very sick,
Had just resigned the seals;
And a clever little Catholic
Was hearing Scotch appeals.

There was no fraud in the penal code,
No dunce in the public schools,
No dust or dirt on a private road,
No shame in Wellesly Pole.
They showed me a figurante, whose name
Had never known disgrace;
And a gentleman of spotless fame,
With Mr. Bochsa's face.

It was an idle dream—but thou,
Beloved one! wert there;
With thy dark clear eyes and beaming brow,
White neck and floating hair:
And oh! I had an honest heart,
And a house of Portland Stone;

And thou wert dear, as still thou art;
And more than dear—my own.

Oh bitterness! the morning broke,
Alike for boor and bard;
And thou wert married when I woke,
And all the rest were marred:
And toil and trouble, noise and steam,
Came back with coming ray,
And if I thought the dead could dream,
I'd hang myself to-day.

PALINODIA.

Not mine this lesson—but experience's which it taught me.

THERE was a time when I could feel
All passion's hopes and fears,
And tell what tongues can ne'er reveal,
By smiles, and sighs, and tears.
The days are gone! no more! no more,
The cruel fates allow;
And though I'm hardly twenty-four,
I'm not a lover now!

Lady, the mist is on my sight,
The chill is on my brow;
My day is night, my bloom is blight,
I'm not a lover now!

I never talk about the clouds,
I laugh at girls and boys;
I'm growing rather fond of crowds,
And very fond of noise—

I never wander forth alone
Upon the mountain's brow;
I weighed last winter sixteen stone—
I'm not a lover now!

I never wish to raise a veil,
I never raise a sigh,
I never tell a tender tale,
I never tell a lie;
I cannot kneel as once I did,
I've quite forgot my bow,
I never do as I am bid—
I'm not a lover now.

I make strange blunders every day,
If I would be gallant—
Take smiles for wrinkles, black for gray,
And nieces for their aunt;
I fly from folly, though it flows
From lips of loveliest glow;
I don't object to length of nose—
I'm not a lover now!

The Muse's steed is very fleet—
I'd rather ride my mare;
The poet hunts a quaint conceit—
I'd rather hunt a hare;
I've learned to utter yours and you,
Instead of thine and thou;
And, oh! I can't endure a blue!
I'm not a lover now!

I don't encourage idle dreams
Of poison, or of ropes;
I cannot dine on airy schemes,
I cannot sup on hopes!
New milk I own is very fine,
Just foaming from the cow;
But yet, I want my pint of wine—
I'm not a lover now!

When Laura sings young hearts away,
I'm deafer than the deep;
When Leonora goes to play,
I sometimes go to sleep;
When Mary draws her white gloves out,
I never dance, I vow—

Too hot to kick one's heels about !—
I'm not a lover now !

I'm busy with the State affairs,
I prate of Pitt and Fox !
I ask the price of railroad shares,
I watch the turn of stocks.
And this is life—no verdure blooms
Upon the withered bough ;
I save a fortune in perfumes—
I'm not a lover now !

I may be yet what others are,
A boudoir's babbling fool ;
The flattered star of bench and bar,
A party's chief or tool.
Come shower or sunshine—hope or fear,
The palace or the plough,
My heart and lute are broken here—
I'm not a lover now !
Lady, the mist is on my sight,
The chill is on my brow,
My day is night, my bloom is blight,
I'm not a lover now !

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

TWELVE years ago I made a mock
  Of filthy trades and traffics :
I wondered what they meant by stock ;
  I wrote delightful sapphics :
I knew the streets of Rome and Troy,
  I supp'd with fates and furies ;
Twelve years ago I was a boy,
  A happy boy, at Drury's.

Twelve years ago !—how many a thought
  Of faded paints and pleasures
Those whispered syllables have brought
  From memory's hoarded treasures !
The fields, the forms, the beasts, the books,
  The glories and disgraces,
The voices of dear friends, the looks
  Of old familiar faces.

Where are my friends ?—I am alone,
  No playmate shares my beaker—

Some lie beneath the church-yard stone,
And some before the Speaker;
And some compose a tragedy,
And some compose a rondo;
And some draw sword for liberty,
And some draw pleas for John Doe.

Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes,
Without the fear of sessions;
Charles Medler loath'd false quantities,
As much as false professions;
Now Mill keeps order in the land,
A magistrate pedantic;
And Medler's feet repose unscann'd,
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

Wild Nick, whose oaths made such a din,
Does Dr. Martext's duty;
And Mullion, with that monstrous chin,
Is married to a beauty;
And Darrel studies, week by week,
His Mant and not his Manton;
And Ball, who was but poor at Greek,
Is very rich at Canton.

And I am eight-and-twenty now—
The world's cold chain has bound me;
And darker shades are on my brow,
And sadder scenes around me:
In Parliament I fill my seat,
With many other noodles;
And lay my head in Germyn-street,
And sip my hock at Boodle's.

But often when the cares of life
Have set my temples aching,
When visions haunt me of a wife,
When duns await my waking,
When lady Jane is in a pet,
Or Hobby in a hurry,
When Captain Hazard wins a bet,
Or Beaulieu spoils a curry:

For hours and hours, I think and talk
Of each remember'd hobby;
I long to lounge in Poet's Walk—
To shiver in the lobby;
I wish that I could run away
From house and court, and levee,

Where bearded men appear to-day,
Just Eton boys, grown heavy;

That I could bask in childhood's sun,
And dance o'er childhood's roses;
And find huge wealth in one pound one,
Vast wit and broken noses;
And pray Sir Giles at Datchet Lane,
And call the milk-maids Houris;
That I could be a boy again—
A happy boy at Drury's!

TO A LADY.

WHAT are you, lady ?—nought is here
To tell us of your name or story ;
To claim the gazer's smile or tear,
To dub you whig, or daub you tory.
It is beyond a poet's skill,
To form the slightest notion, whether
We e'er shall walk through one quadrille,
Or look upon one moon together.

You're very pretty !—all the world
Are talking of your bright brow's splendour,
And of your locks, so softly curled,
And of your hands, so white and slender :
Some think you're blooming in Bengal ;
Some say you're blowing in the city ;
Some know you're nobody at all ;
I only feel, you're very pretty.

But bless my heart ! it's very wrong :
You're making all our belles ferocious ;

Anne "never saw a chin so long;"
And Laura thinks your dress "atrocious;"
And Lady Jane, who now and then
Is taken for the village steeple,
Is sure you can't be four feet ten,
And "wonders at the taste of people."

Soon pass the praises of a face;
Swift fades the very best vermilion;
Fame rides a most prodigious pace;
Oblivion follows on the pillion;
And all, who, in these sultry rooms,
To-day have stared, and pushed, and fainted,
Will soon forget your pearls and plumes,
As if they never had been painted.

You'll be forgotten—as old debts
By persons who are used to borrow;
Forgotten—as the sun that sets,
When shines a new one on the morrow;
Forgotten—like the luscious peach,
That blessed the school-boy last September;
Forgotten—like a maiden speech,
Which all men praise, but none remember.

Yet, ere you sink into the stream,
That whelms alike, sage, saint, and martyr,
And soldier's sword, and minstrel's theme,
And Canning's wit, and Gatton's charter,
Here of the fortunes of your youth
My fancy weaves her dim conjectures,
Which have, perhaps, as much of truth
As Passion's vows, or Cobbett's lectures.

Was't in the north or in the south,
That summer-breezes rocked your cradle?
And had you in your baby mouth
A wooden or a silver ladle?
And was your first, unconscious sleep,
By Brownie banned, or blessed by fairy?
And did you wake to laugh or weep?
And were you christened Maud or Mary?

And was your father called "your grace?"
And did he bet at Ascot races?
And did he chatter common-place?
And did he fill a score of places?

And did your lady-mother's charms
Consist in picklings, broilings, bastings?
Or did she prate about the arms
Her brave forefather won at Hastings?

Where were you "finished?" tell me where!
Was it at Chelsea, or at Chiswick?
Had you the ordinary share
Of books and backboard, harp and physic?
And did they bid you banish pride,
And mind your oriental tinting?
And did you learn how Dido died,
And who found out the art of printing?

And are you fond of lanes and brooks,
A votary of the sylvan muses?
Or do you con the little books
Which Baron Brougham and Vaux diffuses?
Or do you love to knit and sew,
The fashionable world's Arachne?
Or do you canter down the Row,
Upon a very long-tailed hackney?

And do you love your brother James?
And do you pet his mares and setters?
And have your friends romantic names?
And do you write them long, long letters?
And are you—since the world began—
All women are—a little spiteful?
And don't you dote on Malibran?
And don't you think Tom Moore delightful?

I see they've brought you flowers to-day,
Delicious food for eyes and noses;
But carelessly you turn away
From all the pinks, and all the roses;
Say, is that fond look sent in search
Of one whose look as fondly answers?
And is he, fairest, in the church,
Or is he—aint he—in the Lancers?

And is your love a motley page
Of black and white, half joy, half sorrow?
Are you to wait till you're of age?
Or are you to be his to-morrow?
Or do they bid you, in their scorn,
Your pure and sinless flame to smother?

Is he so very meanly born ?
Or are you married to another ?

Whate'er you are, at last, adieu !
I think it is your bounden duty
To let the rhymes I coin for you,
Be prized by all who prize your beauty.
From you I seek nor gold nor fame ;
From you I fear no cruel strictures ;
I wish some girls that I could name
Were half as silent as their pictures ?

CONFESSIONS.

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT OF A SEXAGENARIAN.

In youth, when pen and fingers first
  Coined rhymes for all who choose to seek 'em,
Ere luring hope's gay bubbles burst,
  Or Chitty was my *vade mecum*,
Ere years had charactered my brow
  With the deep lines, that well become it,
Or told me that warm hearts could grow
  Cold as Mont Blanc's snow-covered summit.

When my slow step and solemn swing
  Were steadier and somewhat brisker,
When velvet collars were "the thing,"
  And long before I wore a whisker,
Ere I had measured six feet two,
  Or bought Havanas by the dozen,
I fell in love—as many do—
  She was an angel—hem—my cousin.

Sometimes my eye, its furtive glance
Cast back on memory's short-hand record;
I wonder—if by any chance
Life's future page will be so checkered!
My angel cousin!—ah! her form—
Her lofty brow—her curls of raven,
Eyes darker than the thunder storm,
Its lightnings flashing from their heaven.

Her lip, with music eloquent
As her own grand upright piano;
No—never yet was peri lent
To earth like thee, sweet Adriana.
I may not—dare not—call to mind
The joys that once my breast elated,
Though yet, methinks, the morning wind
Sweeps o'er my ear, with thy tones freighted;

And then I pause, and turn aside
From pleasure's throng of pangless-hearted,
To weep! No. Sentiment and pride
Are by each other always thwarted!
I press my hand upon my brow,
To still the throbbing pulse that heaves it,

Recall my boyhood's faltered vow,
And marvel—if she still believes it.

But she is woman—and her heart,
Like her tiara's brightest jewel,
Cold—hard—till kindled by some art,
Then quenchless burns—itself its fuel—
So poets say. Well, let it pass,
And those who list may yield it credit;
But as for constancy, alas!
I've never known—I've only read it.

Love! 'tis a roving fire, at most
The *cuerpo santa* of life's ocean;
Now flashing through the storm, now lost—
Who trust, 'tis said, rue their devotion.
It may be, 'tis a mooted creed—
I have my doubts, and it—believers,
Though one *is* faithless—where's the need
Of shunning all—as gay deceivers?

I said I loved. I did. But ours
Was felt, not growled hyæna fashion!

We wandered not at moonlight hours,
Some dignity restrained the passion!
We loved—I never stooped to woo;
We met—I always doffed my beaver;
She smiled a careless "how d'ye do—
Good morning, sir;"—I rose to leave her.

She loved—she never told me so;
I never asked—I could not doubt it;
For there were signs on cheek and brow;
And asking! Love is known without it!
'Twas understood—we were content,
And rode, and sung, and waltzed together!
Alone, without embarrassment
We talked of something—*not the weather!*

Time rolled along—the parting hour
With arrowy speed brought its distresses,
A kiss—a miniature—a flower—
A ringlet from those raven tresses;
And the tears that would unbidden start,
(An hour, perhaps, and they had perished,)
In the far chambers of *my* heart,
I swore her image should be cherished.

I've looked on peril—it has glared
In fashionable forms upon me,
From leveled aim—from weapon bared—
And doctors three attending on me!
But never did my sternness wane
At pang by shot or steel imparted,
I'd not recall that hour of pain
For years of bliss—it passed—we parted.

We parted—though her tear-gemmed cheeks,
Her heaving breast had thus unmanned me—
She quite forgot me in three weeks!
And other beauties soon trepanned me,
We met—and did not find it hard
Joy's overwhelming tide to smother—
There was a "Mrs." on my card,
And she—*was married to another!*

A LETTER OF ADVICE.

FROM MISS MEDORIA TREVILIAN, AT PADUA, TO MISS ARAMINTA VAVASOUR, IN LONDON.

"Enfin, Monsieur, un homme amiable :
Voila pourquoi je ne saurais l'aimer."

Scribe.

You tell me you're promised a lover,
My own Araminta, next week;
Why cannot my fancy discover
The hue of his coat and his cheek?
Alas! if he looks like another,
A vicar, a banker, a beau,
Be deaf to your father and mother,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he wears a top boot in his wooing,
If he comes to you riding a cob,
If he talks of his baking or brewing,
If he puts up his feet on the hob,
If he ever drinks port after dinner,
If his brow or his breeding is low,

If he calls himself "Thompson" or "Skinner,"
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he studies the news in the papers,
While you are preparing the tea,
If he talks of the damps and the vapours,
While moonlight lies soft on the sea,
If he's sleepy while you are capricious,
If he has not a musical "Oh!"
If he does not call Werter delicious,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he ever sets foot in the city,
Among the stockbrokers and Jews,
If he has not a heart full of pity,
If he don't stand six feet in his shoes,
If his lips are not redder than roses,
If his hands are not whiter than snow,
If he has not the model of noses—
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he speaks of a tax or a duty,
If he does not look grand on his knees,

If he's blind to a landscape of beauty,
  Hills, valleys, rocks, waters, and trees,
If he dotes not on desolate towers,
  If he likes not to hear the blast blow,
If he knows not the language of flowers—
  My own Araminta, say "No!"

He must walk like a god of old story,
  Come down from the home of his rest;
He must smile like the sun in its glory,
  On the buds he loves ever the best;
And, oh, from its ivory portal,
  Like music his soft speech must flow!—
If he speak, smile, or walk like a mortal—
  My own Araminta, say "No!"

Don't listen to tales of his beauty,
  Don't hear what they tell of his birth,
Don't look at his seat in the county,
  Don't calculate what he is worth;
But give him a theme to write verse on,
  And see if he turns out his toe;—
If he's only an excellent person,—
  My own Araminta, say "No!"

OUR BALL.

"Comment! c'est lui? que le je regards encore!—c'est que vraiment il est bien change; n'est ce pas, mon papa?"

LES PREMIERS AMOURS.

You'll come to our ball;—since we parted,
I've thought of you more than I'll say;
Indeed I was half broken-hearted
For a week, when they took you away.
Fond fancy brought back to my slumbers
Our walks on the Ness and the Den,
And echoed the musical numbers
Which you used to sing to me then.
I know the romance, since it's over,
'Twere idle, or worse, to recall;—
I know you're a terrible rover;
But, Clarence, you'll come to our Ball!

It's only a year since, at College,
You put on your cap and your gown;
But, Clarence, you've grown out of knowledge,
And changed from the spur to the crown:

The voice that was best when it faltered,
Is fuller and firmer in tone:
And the smile that should never have altered,—
Dear Clarence;—it is not your own;
Your cravat was badly selected,
Your coat don't become you at all;
And why is your hair so neglected?
You must have it curled for our Ball.

I've often been out upon Haldon
To look for a covey with Pup;
I've often been over to Shaldon,
To see how your boat is laid up.
In spite of the terrors of Aunty,
I've ridden the filly you broke;
And I've studied your sweet little Dante
In the shade of your favourite oak:
When I sat in July to Sir Lawrence,
I sat in your love of a shawl;
And I'll wear what you brought me from Florence,
Perhaps, if you'll come to our Ball.

You'll find us all changed since you vanished;
We've set up a National School;

And waltzing is utterly banished;
And Ellen has married a [redacted];
The Major is going to travel;
Miss Hyacinth threatens a rout;
The walk is laid down with fresh gravel;
Papa is laid up with the gout:
And Jane has gone on with her easels,
And Anne has gone off with Sir Paul;
And Fanny is sick with the measles,—
And I'll tell you the rest at the Ball.

You'll meet all your beauties;—the Lily
And the Fairy of Willowbrook Farm,
And Lucy, who made me so silly
At Dawlish, by taking your arm;
Miss Manners, who always abused you,
For talking so much about Hock;
And her sister who often amused you,
By raving of rebels and Rock;
And something which surely would answer,
An heiress quite fresh from Bengal;—
So, though you were seldom a dancer,
You'll dance, just for once, at our Ball.

But out on the world!—from the flowers
It shuts out the sunshine of truth:
It blights the green leaves in the bowers,
It makes an old age of our youth:
And the flow of our feeling, once in it,
Like a streamlet beginning to freeze,
Though it cannot turn ice in a minute,
Grows harder by sudden degrees.
Time treads o'er the graves of affection;
Sweet honey is turned into gall;
Perhaps you have no recollection
That ever you danced at our Ball.

You once could be pleased with our ballads;—
To-day you have critical ears;
You once could be charmed with our salads;
Alas! you've been dining with Peers;
You trifled and flirted with many;
You've forgotten the when and the how;
There was one you liked better than any;
Perhaps you've forgotten her now.
But of those you remember most newly,
Of those who delight or enthral,

None love you a quarter so truly
As some you will find at our Ball.

They tell me you've many who flatter,
Because of your wit and your song;
They tell me (and what does it matter?)
You like to be praised by the throng:
They tell me you're shadowed with laurel,
They tell me you're loved by a Blue;
They tell me you're sadly immoral—
Dear Clarence, that cannot be true!
But to me you are still what I found you
Before you grew clever and tall;
And you'll think of the spell that once bound you:
And you'll come, WON'T you come? to our Ball?

MY PARTNER.

"There is, perhaps, no subject of more universal interest in the whole range of natural knowledge, than that of the unceasing fluctuations which take place in the atmosphere in which we are immersed."

At Cheltenham, where one drinks one's fill
Of folly and cold water,
I danced, last year, my first quadrille,
With old Sir Geoffrey's daughter.
Her cheek with summer's rose might vie,
When summer's rose is newest;
Her eyes were blue as autumn's sky,
When autumn's sky is bluest;
And well my heart might deem her one
Of life's most precious flowers,
For half her thoughts were of its sun,
And half were of its showers.

I spoke of novels:—"Vivian Grey"
Was positively charming,
And "Almack's" infinitely gay,
And "Frankenstein" alarming;

I said "De Vere" was chastely told,
Thought well of "Herbert Lacy,"
Called Mr. Banim's sketches "bold,"
And Lady Morgan's "racy;"
I vowed the last new thing of Hook's
Was vastly entertaining;
And Laura said—"I dote on books,
Because it's always raining!"

I talked of music's gorgeous fane,
I raved about Rossini,
Hoped Ronzo would come back again,
And criticised Pacini;
I wished the chorus singers dumb,
The trumpets more pacific,
And eulogised Brocard's *a plomb*,
And voted Paul "terrific."
What cared she for Medea's pride
Or Desdemona's sorrow?
"Alas!" my beauteous listener sighed,
"We *must* have storms to-morrow!

I told her tales of other lands;
Of ever-boiling fountains,

Of poisonous lakes, and barren sands,
Vast forests, trackless mountains;
I painted bright Italian skies,
I lauded Persian roses,
Coined similes for Spanish eyes,
And jests for Indian noses;
I laughed at Lisbon's love of mass,
And Vienna's dread of treason;
And Laura asked me where the glass,
Stood at Madrid last season.

I broached whate'er had gone its rounds,
The week before, of scandal;
What made Sir Luke lay down his hounds,
And Jane take up her Handel;
Why Julia walked upon the heath,
With the pale moon above her;
Where Flora lost her false front teeth,
And Anne her false lover;
How Lord de B. and Mrs. L.
Had crossed the sea together;
My shuddering partner cried— "Oh, Ceil!
How *could* they in such weather?

Was she a blue?—I put my trust
In strata, petals, gases;
A boudoir-pedant?—I discussed
The toga and the fasces;
A cockney-muse?—I mouthed a deal
Of folly from Endymion;
A saint?—I praised the pious zeal
Of Messrs. Way and Simeon;
A politician?—It was vain
To quote the morning paper;
The horrid phantoms come again,
Rain, hail, and snow, and vapour.

Flat flattery was my only chance,
I acted deep devotion,
Found magic in her every glance,
Grace in her every motion;
I wasted all a stripling's lore,
Prayer, passion, folly, feeling;
And wildly looked upon the floor,
And wildly on the ceiling;
I envied gloves upon her arm,
And shawls upon her shoulder;

And when my worship was most warm,
She "never found it colder."

I don't object to wealth or land:
And she will have the giving
Of an extremely pretty hand,
Some thousands, and a living.
She makes silk purses, broiders stools,
Sings sweetly, dances finely,
Paints screens, subscribes to Sunday schools,
And sits a horse divinely,
But to be linked for life to her!—
The desperate man who tried it,
Might marry a barometer,
And hang himself beside it!

LETTER FROM

MISS AMELIA JANE MORTIMER, LONDON,

TO SIR HENRY CLIFFORD, PARIS.

Dear Harry you owe me a letter—
Nay, I really believe it is two ;
But I make you still farther my debtor—
I send you this brief *billet-doux*.
The shock was so great when we parted,
I can't overcome my regret :
At first I was quite broken-hearted,
And have never recovered it yet !

I have scarcely been out to a party,
But have sent an excuse, or been ill ;
I have played but three times at ecarte,
And danced but a single quadrille ;
And then I was sad, for my heart ne'er
One moment ceased thinking of thee—
I'd a handsome young man for a partner,
And a handsomer still *vis-a-vis*.

But I had such a pain in my forehead,
And I felt so ennuied and so tired,
I must have looked perfectly horrid—
Yet they say I was really admired!
You'll smile—but mamma heard a lancer,
As he whispered his friend, and, said he,
"The best and most beautiful dancer
Is the lady in white"—meaning me!

I've been once to Lord Dorival's *soirees*,
Whose daughter in music excels—
Do they still wear the silk they call *moirees?*
They will know if you ask at Pardel's—
She begged me to join in a duett,
But the melody died on my tongue;
And I thought I should never get through it,
It was one we so often have sung.

In your last you desire me to mention
The news of the court and the town;
But there's nothing new worth your attention,
Or deserving of my noting down.
They say things are bad in the city,
And pa thinks they'll only get worse;

And they say new bonnets are pretty,
But I think them quite the reverse.

Lady Black has brought out her three daughters,
Good figures but timid and shy;
Mrs. White's gone to Bath for the waters,
And the doctors declare she will die.
It's all off 'twixt Miss Brown and Sir Stephen,
He found they could never agree;
Her temper's so very uneven,
I always said how it would be.

The Miss Whites are grown very fine creatures,
Though they look rather large in a room;
Miss Grey is gone off in her features,
Miss Green has gone off—with her groom!
Lord Littleford's dead, and that noodle
His son has succeeded his sire;
And her ladyship's lost the fine poodle,
That you and I used to admire.

Little Joe is advancing in knowledge,
He begs me to send his regard,

And Charles goes on Monday to college,
But mamma thinks he studies too hard.
We are loosing our man-cook, he marries
My French *femme de chambre*, Baptiste;
Pa wishes you'd send one from Paris,
But he must be a first rate *artiste*.

I don't like my last new piano,
Its tones are so terribly sharp;
I think I must give it to Anna,
And get pa to buy me a harp,
Little Gerald is growing quite mannish,
He was smoking just now a cigar!
And I'm lugging hard at the Spanish,
And Lucy has learned the guitar.

I suppose you can talk like an artist,
Of statues, busts, paintings, *virtu*;
But pray, love, don't turn Bonapartist,
Pa will never consent if you do!
"You were born," he will say, "Sir, a Briton,"
But forgive me so foolish a fear;
If I thought you could blame what I've written,
I would soon wash it out with a tear!

I pray, sir, how like you the ladies,
  Since you've quitted the land of your birth?
I have heard the dark donnas of Cadiz
  Are the loveliest women on earth.
The Italians are lively and witty,
  But I ne'er could their manners endure;
Nor do I think French women pretty,
  Though they have a most charming *tournure!*

I was told you were flirting at Calais,
  And next were intriguing at Rome;
But I smiled at their impotent malice,
  Yet I must say I wished you at home!
Though I kept what I fancied *in petto*,
  And felt you would ever be true,
Yet I dreamed of the murderer's stiletto
  Each night—and its victim was you!

I'm arrived at the end of my paper,
  So, dearest, you'll not think it rude,
If I ring for my seal and a taper,
  And think it high time to conclude.

Adieu then—dejected and lonely,
Till I see you I still shall remain,
Addio mio caro—yours only—
Yours ever, AMELIA JANE.

P. S.—You may buy me a dress like Selina's,
Her complexion's so much like my own ;
And don't fail to call at Farina's
For a case of his Eau de Cologne.
And whate'er your next letter announces,
Let it also intelligence bring,
If the French have left off the deep flounces,
And what will be worn for the Spring !

TIME'S CHANGES.

I saw her once—so freshly fair
That, like a blossom just unfolding,
She open'd to Life's cloudless air;
And Nature joy'd to view its moulding:
Her smile it haunts my memory yet—
Her cheeks fine hue divinely glowing—
Her rosebud mouth—her eyes of jet—
Around on all their light bestowing:
Oh! who could look on such a form,
So nobly free, so softly tender,
And darkly dream that earthly storm
Should dim such sweet, delicious splendour!
For in her mein, and in her face,
And in her young step's fairy lightness,
Nought could the raptured gazer trace
But Beauty's glow, and Pleasure's brightness.

I saw her twice—an alter'd charm—
But still of magic, richest, rarest,
Than girlhood's talisman less warm,
Though yet of earthly sights the fairest:

Upon her breast she held a child,
The very image of its mother;
Which ever to her smiling smiled,
They seem'd to live but in each other :—
But matron cares, or lurking wo,
Her thoughtless, sinless look had banish'd,
And from her cheek the roseate glow
Of girlhood's balmy morn had vanish'd;
Within her eyes, upon her brow,
Lay something softer, fonder, deeper,
As if in dreams some vision'd wo
Had broke the Elysium of the sleeper.

I saw her thrice—Fate's dark decree
In widow's garments had array'd her,
Yet beautiful she seem'd to be,
As even my reveries portrayed her ;
The glow, the glance had pass'd away,
The sunshine, and the sparkling glitter ;
Still, though I noted pale decay,
The retrospect was scarcely bitter ;
For, in their place a calmness dwelt,
Serene, subduing, soothing, holy ;

In feeling which, the bosom felt
That every louder mirth is folly—
A pensiveness, which is not grief,
A stillness—as of sunset streaming—
A fairy glow on flower and leaf,
Till earth looks on like a landscape dreaming.

A last time—and unmoved she lay,
Beyond Life's dim, uncertain river,
A glorious mould of fading clay,
From whence the spark had fled for ever!
I gazed—my breast was like to burst—
And, as I thought of years departed,
The years wherein I saw her first,
When she, a girl, was tender-hearted—
And, when I mused on later days,
As moved she in her matron duty,
A happy mother, in the blaze
Of ripen'd hope, and sunny beauty—
I felt the chill—I turn d aside—
Bleak Desolation's cloud came o'er me,
And Being seem'd a troubled tide,
Whose wrecks in darkness swam before me!

GOOD NIGHT.

Good night to thee, lady!—though many
Have join'd in the dance to-night,
Thy form was the fairest of any,
Where all was seducing and bright;
Thy smile was the softest and dearest,
Thy form the most sylph-like of all,
And thy voice the most gladsome and clearest
That e'er held a partner in thrall.

Good night to thee, lady!—'tis over—
The waltz, the quadrille, and the song—
The whisper'd farewell of the lover,
The heartless adieu of the throng;
The heart that was throbbing with pleasure,
The eye-lid that long'd for repose—
The beaux that were dreaming of treasure,
The girls that were dreaming of beaux.

'Tis over—the lights are all dying,
The coaches all driving away;

And many a fair one is sighing,
And many a false one is gay;
And Beauty counts over her numbers
Of conquests, as homeward she drives—
And some are gone home to their slumbers,
And some are gone home to their wives.

And I, while my cab in the shower
Is waiting, the last at the door,
Am looking all round for the flower
That fell from your wreath on the floor.
I'll keep it—if but to remind me,
Though withered and faded its hue—
Wherever next season may find me—
Of England—of Almack's—and you!

There are tones that will haunt us, though lonely
Our path be o'er mountain or sea;
There are looks that will part from us only
When memory ceases to be;
There are hopes which our burden can lighten,
Though toilsome and steep be the way;
And dreams that, like moonlight, can brighten
With a light that is clearer than day.

There are names that we cherish, though nameless;
For aye on the lip they may be;
There are hearts that, though fetter'd, are tameless,
And thoughts unexpress'd, but still free!
And some are too grave for a rover,
And some for a husband too light.
—The ball and my dream are all over—
Good night to thee, lady! good night!

JOSEPHINE.

We did not meet in courtly hall,
  Where Birth and Beauty throng,
Where Luxury holds festival,
  And wit awakes the song;
We met where darker spirits meet,
  In the home of Sin and Shame,
Where Satan shows his cloven feet,
  And hides his titled name;
And she knew she could not be, Love,
  What once she might have been,
But she was kind to me, Love,
  My pretty Josephine.

We did not part beneath the sky,
  As warmer lovers part,
Where Night conceals the glistening eye,
  But not the throbbing heart;
We parted on the spot of ground
  Where we first had laughed at love,
And ever the jests were loud around,
  And the lamps were bright above:

"The heaven is very dark, Love,
The blast is very keen,
But merrily rides my bark, Love—
Good night, my Josephine!"

She did not speak of ring or vow,
But filled the cup of wine,
And took the roses from her brow
To make a wreath for mine;
And bade me, when the gale should lift
My light skiff on the wave,
To think as little of the gift
As of the hand that gave:
"Go gaily o'er the sea, Love,
And find your own heart's queen;
And look not back to me, Love,
Your humble Josephine!"

That garland breathes and blooms no more,
Past are those idle hours;
I would not, could I choose, restore
The fondness or the flowers;
Yet oft their withered witchery
Revives its wonted thrill,

Remembered—not with Passion's sigh,
But oh! remembered still:
And even from your side, Love,
And even from this scene,
One look is o'er the tide, Love,
One thought with Josephine!

Alas! your lips are rosier,
Your eyes of softer blue,
And I have never felt for her
As I have felt for you;
Our love was like the snow-flakes,
Which melt before you pass—
Or the bubble on the wine, which breaks
Before you lip the glass.
You saw these eye-lids wet, Love,
Which she has never seen;
But bid me not forget, Love,
My poor Josephine!

TWENTY-EIGHT AND TWENTY-NINE.

I HEARD a sick man's dying sigh,
And an infant's idle laughter,
The Old Year went with mourning by—
The New came dancing after!
Let Sorrow shed her lonely tear,
Let Revelry hold her ladle;
Bring boughs of cypress for the bier,
Fling roses on the cradle;
Mutes to wait on the funeral state;
Pages to pour the wine;
A requiem for Twenty-Eight,
And a health to Twenty-Nine!

Alas for human happiness!
Alas for human sorrow!
Our yesterday is nothingness,
What else will be our morrow?
Still Beauty must be stealing hearts,
And Knavery stealing purses;
Still cooks must live by making tarts,
And wits by making verses;

While sages prate and courts debate,
The same stars set and shine;
And the world as it rolled through Twenty-Eight,
Must roll through Twenty-Nine.

Some King will come, in Heaven's good time,
To the tomb his father came to;
Some Thief will wade through blood and crime
To a crown he has no claim to;
Some suffering land will rend in twain
The manacles that bound her;
And gather the links of the broken chain
To fasten them proudly round her;
The grand and great will love and hate,
And combat and combine;
And much where we were in Twenty-Eight,
We shall be in Twenty-Nine.

O'Connell will toil to raise the Rent,
And Kenyon to sink the Nation;
And Shiel will abuse the Parliament,
And Peel the Association;
And thought of bayonets and swords
Will make ex-Chancellors merry;

And jokes will be cut in the House of Lords,
And throats in the County of Kerry;
And writers of weight will speculate
On the Cabinet's design;
And just what it did in Twenty-Eight
It will do in Twenty-Nine.

And the Goddess of Love will keep her smiles,
And the God of Cups his orgies;
And there'll be riots in St. Giles,
And weddings in St. George's;
And mendicants will sup like Kings,
And Lords will swear like lacqueys;
And black eyes oft will lead to rings,
And rings will lead to black eyes;
And pretty Kate will scold her mate,
In a dialect all divine;
Alas! they married in Twenty-Eight,
They will part in Twenty-Nine.

My uncle will swathe his gouty limbs,
And talk of his oils and blubbers;
My aunt, Miss Dobbs, will play longer hymns,
And rather longer rubbers;

My cousin in Parliament will prove
How utterly ruined Trade is:
My brother, at Eton, will fall in love
With half a hundred ladies;
My patron will sate his pride from plate,
And his thirst from Bordeaux wine:
His nose was red in Twenty-Eight,
'Twill be redder in Twenty-Nine.

And O! I shall find how, day by day,
All thoughts and things look older;
How the laugh of Pleasure grows less gay,
And the heart of Friendship colder;
But still I shall be what I have been,
Sworn foe to Lady Reason,
And seldom troubled with the spleen,
And fond of talking treason;
I shall buckle my skait, and leap my gate,
And throw and write my line;
And the woman I worshipped in Twenty-Eight
I shall worship in Twenty-Nine.

HOW SHALL I WOO HER?

L'on n'aime bien qu'une seule fois: c'est la premiere.
Les amours qui suivent sont moins involontaires!

La Bruyere.

I.

How shall I woo her?—I will stand
Beside her when she sings;
And watch that fine and fairy hand
Flit o'er the quivering strings:
And I will tell her, I have heard,
Though sweet her song may be,
A voice, whose every whispered word
Was more than song to me!

II.

How shall I woo her?—I will gaze,
In sad and silent trance,
On those blue eyes, whose liquid rays
Look love in every glance:
And I will tell her, eyes more bright,
Though bright her own may beam,

Will fling a deeper spell to-night
  Upon me in my dream.

III.

How shall I woo her?—I will try
  The charms of olden time,
And swear by earth and sea and sky,
  And rave in prose and rhyme;—
And I will tell her when I bent
  My knee in other years,
I was not half so eloquent,—
  I could not speak for tears!

IV.

How shall I woo her?—I will bow
  Before the holy shrine;
And pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
  And press her lips to mine;
And I will tell her, when she parts
  From passion's thrilling kiss,
That memory to many hearts
  Is dearer far than bliss.

V.

Away! away! the chords are mute,
The bond is rent in twain;—
You cannot wake that silent lute,
Nor clasp those links again:
Love's toil I know is little cost,
Love's perjury is light sin;
But souls that lose what I have lost,—
What have they left to win?

STANZAS.

The lady of his love, oh, she was changed,
As by the sickness of the soul!

Byron.

Go thou, while in thy soul, and fill a throne
Of innocence and purity, in Heaven!

Ford.

I KNOW that it must be,
Yea! thou art changed—all worshipped as thou art—
Mourned as thou shalt be! Sickness of the heart
Hath done its work on thee!

Thy dim eyes tell a tale,
A pitious tale, of vigils; and the trace
Of bitter tears is on thy beauteous face,
Beauteous, and yet so pale!

Changed love! but not alone!
I am not what they think me; though my cheek
Wear but its last year's furrow, though I speak
Thus in my natural tone.

The temple of my youth
Was strong in moral purpose: once I felt
The glory of philosophy, and knelt
In the pure shrine of truth.

I went into the storm,
And mocked the billows of the tossing sea;
I said to Fate, "What wilt thou do to me?
I have not harmed a worm!"

Vainly the heart is steeled
In Wisdom's armour; let her burn her books!
I look upon them as the soldier looks
Upon his cloven shield.

Virtue and Virtue's rest,
How have they perished! Through my onward course
Repentance dogs my footsteps! black Remorse
Is my familiar guest!

The glory and the glow
Of the world's loveliness have passed away;
And Fate hath little to inflict, to-day,
And nothing to bestow!

Is not the damning line
Of guilt and grief engraven on me now?
And the fierce passion which hath scathed thy brow,
Hath it not blasted mine?

No matter! I will turn
To the straight path of duty; I have wrought,
At last, my wayward spirit to be taught
What it hath yet to learn.

Labour shall be my lot;
My kindred shall be joyful in my praise;
And Fame shall twine for me, in after days,
A wreath I covet not.

And if I cannot make,
Dearest! thy hope my hope, thy trust my trust,
Yet will I study to be good, and just,
And blameless, for thy sake.

Thou may'st have comfort yet!
Whate'er the source from which those waters glide,
Thou hast found healing mercy in their tide;
Be happy and forget!

Forget me—and farewell!
But say not that in me new hopes and fears,
Or absence, or the lapse of gradual years,
Will break thy memory's spell!

Indelibly, within,
All I have lost is written; and the theme
Which Silence whispers to my thoughts and dreams
Is sorrow still—and sin!

THE CONFESSION OF DON CARLOS.

O TELL not me of broken vow—
I speak a firmer passion now;
O! tell not me of shattered chain—
The link shall never burst again;
My soul is fix'd as firmly here
As the red Sun in his career;
As Victory on Mina's crest,
Or Tendernesss in Rosa's breast,
Then do not tell me, while we part,
Of fickle flame, and roving heart;
While Youth shall bow at Beauty's shrine,
That flame shall glow—that heart be thine.

Then wherefore dost thou bid me tell
The tale thy malice knows so well?
I may not disobey thee!—Yes!
Thou bidst me,—and I *will* confess:—
See how adoringly I kneel—
Hear how my folly I reveal;
My folly!—chide me if thou wilt,
Thou shalt not—canst not call it—*guilt.*

And when my faithlessness is told,
Ere thou hast time to play the scold,
I'll haste the fond rebuke to check,
And lean upon thy snowy neck,
Play with its glossy auburn hair,
And hide the blush of falsehood there.

Inez, the innocent and young,
First snared my heart, and waked my song;
We both were harmless, and untaught
To *love* as fashionables ought;
With all the modesty of youth,
We talk'd of constancy and truth;
Grew fond of Music, and the Moon,
And wander'd on the nights of June,
To sit beneath the chestnut-tree,
While the lonely stars shone mellowly,
Shedding a pale and dancing beam
On the wave of Guadalquivir's stream.
And aye we talk'd of faith and feelings,
With no distrustings, no concealings;
And aye we joy'd in stolen glances,
And sigh'd, and blush'd, and read romances.

Our love was ardent and sincere,—
And lasted, Rosa—half a year!
And then the maid grew fickle-hearted,
Married Don Jose—so we parted.
At twenty-one, I've often heard,
My bashfulness was quite absurd;
For, with a squeamishness uncommon,
I fear'd to love a married woman.

Fair Leonora's laughing eye
Again awaked my song and sigh:
A gay intriguing dame was she;
And fifty Dons of high degree,
That came and went as they were bid,
Dubb'd her the Beauty of Madrid.
Alas! what constant pains I took
To merit one approving look:
I courted Valour—and the Muse,
Wrote challenges—and billet-doux;
Paid for Sherbet and Serenade,
Fenced with Pegru and Alvarade;
Fought at the Bull-fights like a hero,
Studied small-talk,—and the Bolero;

Play'd the guitar—and play'd the fool;
This out of tune—that out of rule.
I oft at midnight wander'd out,
Wrapt up in love—and my capote,
To muse on beauty—and the skies,
Cold winds—and Leonora's eyes.
Alas! when all my gains were told,
I'd caught a Tartar*—and a cold.
And yet perchance that lovely brow
Had still detain'd my captive vow;
That clear blue eye's enchanting roll
Had still enthrall'd my yielding soul;
But suddenly a vision bright
Came o'er me in a veil of light,
And burst the bond whose fetters bound me,
And broke the spell that hung around me,
Recall'd the heart that madly roved,
And bade me love, and be beloved.
Who was it broke the chain and spell?
Dark-eyed Castilian!—*thou* canst tell!

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* The original was a Spanish idiom which we found it impossible to render literally; we believe it comes very near to the English expression which we have substituted.

And am I faithless ?—wo the while,
What vow but melts at Rosa's smile ?
For broken vows, and faith betrayed,
The guilt is thine, Castilian maid !

The tale is told—and I am gone :—
Think of me, loved and lovely one,
When none on earth shall care beside
How Carlos lived, or loved, or died !
Thy love on earth shall be to me
A bird upon a leafless tree—
A bark upon a hopeless wave—
A lily on a tombless grave—
A cheering hope—a living ray,
To light me on a weary way.

And thus is Love's Confession done ;
Give me thy parting benison ;
And ere I rise from bended knee,
To wander o'er a foreign sea,
Alone and friendless,—ere I don
My pilgrim's hat, and sandal shoon—

Dark-eyed Castilian! let me win
Forgiveness sweet for venial sin;
Let lonely sighs and dreams of thee,
Be penance for my perjury.

TO JULIA,

PREPARING FOR HER FIRST SEASON IN TOWN.

JULIA, while London's fancied bliss
Bids you despise a life like this,
While —— and its joys you leave,
For hopes, that flatter to deceive,
You will not scornfully refuse,
(Though dull the theme, and weak the Muse,)
To look upon my line, and hear
What Friendship sends to Beauty's ear.

Four miles from Town, a neat abode
O'erlooks a rose-bush, and a road ;
A paling, clean'd with constant care,
Surrounds ten yards of neat parterre,
Where dusty ivy strives to crawl
Five inches up the whiten'd wall.
The open window, thickly set
With myrtle, and with mignionette,
Behind whose cultivated row
A brace of globes peep out for show ;

The avenue—the burnish'd plate,
That decks the would-be rustic gate,
Denote the fane where Fashion dwells,
—"Lyce's Academy for Belles."

'Twas here, in earlier, happier days,
Retired from Pleasure's weary maze,
You found, unknown to care or pain,
The peace you will not find again.
Here Friendships, far too fond to last,
A bright, but fleeting radiance cast,
On every sport that Mirth devised,
And every scene that Childhood prized,
And every bliss, that bids you yet
Recall those moments with regret.

Those friends have mingled in the strife
That fills the busy scene of life,
And Pride and Folly—Cares and Fears,
Look dark upon their future years:
But by their wrecks may Julia learn,
Whither her fragile bark to turn;
And, o'er the troubled sea of fate,
Avoid the rocks they found too late.

You know Camilla—o'er the plain
She guides the fiery hunter's rein;
First in the chase she sounds the horn,
Trampling to earth the farmer's corn,
That hardly deign'd to bend its head,
Beneath her namesake's lighter tread.
With Bob the Squire, her polish'd lover,
She wields the gun, or beats the cover;
And then her steed!—why! every clown
Tells how she rubs Smolensko down,
And combs the mane, and cleans the hoof,
While wondering hostlers stand aloof.

At night, before the Christmas fire
She plays backgammon with the Squire;
Shares in his laugh, and his liquor,
Mimics her father and the Vicar;
Swears at the grooms—without a blush
Dips in her ale the captured brush,
Until —— her father duly tired—
The parson's wig as duly fired—
The dogs all still—the Squire asleep,
And dreaming of his usual leap—

She leaves the dregs of white and red,
And lounges languidly to bed;
And still in nightly visions borne,
She gallops o'er the rustic's corn;
Still wields the lash—still shakes the box,
Dreaming of "sixes"—and the fox.

And this is bliss—the story runs,
Camilla never wept—save once;
Yes! once indeed Camilla cried—
'Twas when her dear Blue-stockings died.

Pretty Cordelia thinks she's ill—
She seeks her med'cine at Quadrille;
With hope, and fear, and envy sick,
She gazes on the dubious trick,
As if Eternity were laid
Upon a diamond, or a spade.
And I have seen a transient pique
Wake, o'er that soft and girlish cheek,
A chilly and a feverish hue,
Blighting the soil where Beauty grew,
And bidding Hate and Malice rove
In eyes that ought to beam with love.

Turn we to Fannia—she was fair
As the soft fleeting forms of air,
Shaped by the fancy—fitting theme
For youthful bard's enamour'd dream.
The neck, on whose transparent glow
The auburn ringlets sweetly flow,
The eye that swims in liquid fire,
The brow that frowns in playful ire;
All these, when Fannia's early youth
Look'd lovely in its native truth,
Diffused a bright, unconscious grace,
Almost divine, o'er form and face.

Her lip has lost its fragrant dew,
Her cheek has lost its rosy hue,
Her eye the glad enlivening rays
That glitter'd there in happier days,
Her heart the ignorance of woe
Which Fashion's votaries may not know.

The city's smoke—the noxious air—
The constant crowd—the torch's glare—
The morning sleep—the noonday call—
The late repast—the midnight ball,

Bid Faith and Beauty die, and taint
Her heart with fraud, her face with paint.

And what the boon, the prize enjoy'd,
For fame defaced, and peace destroyed!
Why ask we this? With conscious grace
She criticises silk and lace;
Queen of the modes, she reigns alike
O'er sarcenet, bobbin, net, vandyke,
O'er rouge and ribbons, combs and curls,
Perfumes and patches, pins and pearls;
Feelings and faintings, songs and sighs,
Small-talk and scandal, love and lies.

Circled by beaux behold her sit,
While Dandies tremble at her wit;
The Captain hates "a woman's gab;"
"A devil!" cries the shy Cantab;
The young Etonian strives to fly
The glance of her sarcastic eye,
For well he knows she looks him o'er,
To stamp him "buck," or dub him "bore."

Such is her life—a life of waste,
A life of wretchedness—and *taste.*
And all the glory Fannia boasts,
And all the price that glory costs,
At once are reckon'd up, in one—
One word of bliss and folly——*Ton.*

Not these the thoughts that could perplex
The fancies of our fickle sex,
When England's favourite, good Queen Bess,
Was Queen alike o'er war and dress.
Then ladies gay play'd *chesse*—and ballads,
And learnt to dress their hair—and salads;
Sweets—and sweet looks were studied then,
And both were pleasing to the men;
For cookery was allied to taste,
And girls were taught to blush—and baste.
Dishes were bright—and so were eyes,
And lords made love—and ladies, pies.

Then Valour won the wavering field,
By dint of hauberk, and of shield;
And Beauty won the wavering heart,
By dint of pickle, and of tart.

The minuet was the favourite dance,
Girls loved the needle—boys the lance;
And Cupid took his constant post
At dinner, by the boil'd and roast,
Or secretly was wont to lurk,
In tournament, or needle-work.
Oh! 'twas a reign of all delights,
Of hot *Sir*-loins,—and hot *Sir* knights;
Feasting and fighting, hand in hand,
Fatten'd, and glorified the land;
And noble chiefs had noble cheer,
And knights grew strong upon strong beer;
Honour and oxen both were nourish'd,
And chivalry—and pudding flourish'd.

I'd rather see that magic face,
That look of love, that form of grace,
Circled by whalebone, and by ruffs,
Intent on puddings, and on puffs,
I'd rather view thee thus, than see
"A Fashionable" rise in thee.
If Life is dark, 'tis not for you,
(If partial Friendship's voice is true)

To cure its griefs, and drown its cares,
By leaping gates, and murdering hares,
Nor to confine that feeling soul,
To winning lovers—or the vole.

If these, and such pursuits are thine,
Julia! thou art no friend of mine!
I love plain dress—I eat plain joints,
I cannot play ten guinea points,
I make no study of a pin,
And hate a female whipper-in.

LINES TO FLORENCE.

Long years have pass'd with silent pace,
Florence! since you and I have met;
Yet—when that meeting I retrace,
My cheek is pale, my eye is wet;
For I was doom'd from thence to rove,
O'er distant tracts of earth and sea,
Unaided, Florence!——save by love;
And unremember'd—save by thee!
We met! and hope beguiled our fears,
Hope, ever bright, and ever vain;
We parted thence in silent tears,
Never to meet—in life—again.
The myrtle that I gaze upon,
Sad token by thy love devised,
Is all the record left of one
So long bewail'd—so dearly prized.
You gave it in an hour of grief,
When gifts of love are doubly dear;
You gave it—and one tender leaf
Glisten'd the while with Beauty's tear.

A tear—oh! lovelier far to me,
Shed for me in my saddest hour,
Than bright and flattering smiles could be,
In courtly hall, or summer bower,
You strove my anguish to beguile,
With distant hopes of future weal;
You strove!—alas! you could not smile,
Nor speak the hope you did not feel.
I bore the gift Affection gave,
O'er desert sand and thorny brake,
O'er rugged rock and stormy wave,
I loved it for the giver's sake;
And often in my happiest day,
In scenes of bliss and hours of pride,
When all around was glad and gay,
I look'd upon the gift—and sigh'd:
And when on ocean, or on clift,
Forth strode the Spirit of the Storm,
I gazed upon thy fading gift,
I thought upon thy fading form;
Forgot the lightning's vivid dart,
Forgot the rage of sky and sea,
Forgot the doom that bade us part—
And only lived to love and thee.

Florence! thy myrtle blooms! but thou,
Beneath thy cold and lowly stone,
Forgetful of our mutual vow,
And of a heart—still all thine own,
Art laid in that unconscious sleep,
Which he that wails thee soon must know,
Where none may smile, and none may weep,
None dream of bliss,—or wake to woe.
If e'er, as Fancy oft will feign,
To that dear spot which gave thee birth
Thy fleeting shade returns again,
To look on him thou lov'dst on earth,
It may a moment's joy impart,
To know that this, thy favourite tree,
Is to my desolated heart
Almost as dear as thou could'st be.
My Florence!—soon—the thought is sweet!
The turf that wraps thee I shall press;
Again, my Florence! we shall meet,
In bliss—or in forgetfulness.
With thee in Death's oblivion laid,
I will not have the cypress gloom
To throw its sickly, sullen shade,
Over the stillness of my tomb:

And there the 'scutcheon shall not shine,
And there the banner shall not wave;
The treasures of the glittering mine
Would ill become a lover's grave:
But when from this abode of strife
My liberated shade shall roam,
Thy myrtle, that has cheer'd my life
Shall decorate my narrow home:
And it shall bloom in beauty there,
Like Florence in her early day;
Or, nipp'd by cold December's air,
Wither—like Hope and thee—away.

STANZAS.

O'ER yon Churchyard the storm may lower;
But, heedless of the wintry air,
One little bud shall linger there,
A still and trembling flower.

Unscathed by long revolving years,
Its tender leaves shall flourish yet,
And sparkle in the moonlight, wet
With the pale dew of tears.

And where thine humble ashes lie,
Instead of 'scutcheon or of stone,
It rises o'er thee, lonely one,
Child of obscurity!

Mild was thy voice as Zephyr's breath,
Thy cheek with flowing locks was shaded!
But the voice hath died, the cheek hath faded
In the cold breeze of death!

Brightly thine eye was smiling, Sweet!
But now Decay hath still'd its glancing;
Warmly thy little heart was dancing,
But it hath ceased to beat!

A few short months—and thou wert here!
Hope sat upon thy youthful brow;
And what is thy memorial now?
A Flower—and a Tear.

SONNET TO ADA.

The touching pathos of thy low sweet voice
Fell on my heart, like dew on wither'd flowers,
And brought such memory of departed hours
As made me weep—yet in my tears rejoice.
For one I loved—now lost to me for ever—
Breathed even so the soul of melody,
And—since that voice has perish'd—never, never,
Till I heard thine, such sounds had greeted me.
E'en now thy tones, recall'd by night and day,
Linger in Memory's echo-haunted cell,
Thrilling sweet agony: nor know I well
Whether to chide them, or to bid them stay.
At times I scarce can bear the pain'd regret
Which they excite—then cry, O do not leave me yet!

MEMORY.

Nessun magglor dolore,
Che recordarsi del tempe felici,
Nella miseria.

Dante.

I.

STAND on a funeral mound,
Far, far from all that love thee;
With a barren heath around,
And a cypress bower above thee:
And think, while the sad wind frets,
And the night in cold gloom closes,
Of spring, and spring's sweet violets,
Of summer, and summer's roses.

II.

Sleep where the thunders fly
Across the tossing billow;
Thy canopy the sky,
And the lonely deck thy pillow:

And dream, while the chill sea-foam
In mockery dashes o'er thee,
Of the cheerful hearth, and the quiet home,
And the kiss of her that bore thee.

III.

Watch in the deepest cell
Of the foeman's dungeon tower,
Till hope's most cherished spell
Has lost its cheering power;
And sing, while the galling chain
On every stiff limb freezes,
Of the huntsman hurrying o'er the plain,
Of the breath of the mountain breezes.

IV.

Talk of the minstrel's lute,
The warrior's high endeavour,
When the honied lips are mute,
And the strong arm crushed for ever:
Look back to the summer sun,
From the mist of dark December;
Then say to the broken-hearted one,
"'Tis pleasant to remember!"

TELL HIM I LOVE HIM YET.

Tell him, I love him yet,
Ah, in that joyous time!
Tell him, I ne'er forget,
Though memory now be crime.

Tell him, when fades the light
Upon the earth and sea,
I dream of him by night—
He must not dream of me!

Green, green upon his brow
The laurel wreath shall be—
Although that laurel now
Must not be shared with me!

Tell him to smile again
In pleasure's dazzling throng,
To wear another's chain,
To praise another's song!

Before the loveliest there,
I'd have him bend the knee,

And breathe to her the prayer
He used to breathe to me!

Tell him, that day by day,
Life looks to me more dim—
I falter when I pray—
Although I pray for him.

And bid him when I die,
Come to our fav'rite tree—
I shall not hear him sigh—
—Nor let him sigh for me!

I REMEMBER HOW MY CHILDHOOD FLEETED.

I remember, I remember,
  How my childhood fleeted by—
The mirth of its December,
  And the warmth of its July ;
On my brow, love, on my brow, love,
  There are no signs of care,
But my pleasure's are not now, love,
  What childhood's pleasure's were :

Then the bowers, then the bowers,
  Were as blithe as blithe could be,
And all their radiant flowers
  Were coronals for me :
Gems to-night, love, gems to-night, love,
  Are gleaming in my hair ;
But they are not half so bright, love,
  As childhood's roses were.

I was merry, I was merry,
  When my little lovers came—
With a lily, or a cherry,
  Or a new invented game :
Now I've you, love, now I've you, love,
  To kneel before me there ;
But you know you're not so true, love,
  As childhood's lovers were.

CHARADES.

CHARADES.

I.

THERE *was* a time young Roland thought
  His huntsman's call was worth a dozen
Of those sweet notes his ear had caught
  In boyhood, from his blue-eyed cousin.
How is it *now*, that by my First
  Silent he sits, nor cares to follow
His deep-mouth'd stag-hound's matin burst,
  His clear-ton'd huntsman's joyous hollo?

How is it now, when Isabel
  Breathes one low note of those sweet numbers,
That every thought of hill and dell,
  And *all*—save that sweet minstrel—slumbers.
Why does he feel that long, dull pain
  Within my Second when she leaves him?
When shall his falcon fly again?
  When shall he break the spell that grieves him?

And Isabel—how is it, too,
That sadness o'er that young brow closes?
How hath her eye lost half its blue?
How have her cheeks lost all their roses?
Still on her lute sweet numbers dwell,
Still magic seems the breath that sways it;
But, oh! how changed the tone and spell,
If Roland be not there to praise it!

One summer's eve, while Isabel
Sang till the starlight came to greet her,
A tear from Roland's eyelid fell,
And warp'd the string and spoil'd the metre.
She could not sing another note;
Wherefore, or why, I've not a notion;
And *he*—the swelling in *his* throat
Seemed working from some poisonous potion.

I know not—I—how sigh or tear
Cause these hysterical effusions;
But from that eve, one little year
Witnessed, you'll say, such strange conclusion.
Beside my All I saw them sit;
And that same lute of song so tender—

A little child was thumping it
With all his might—against the fender!

And Isabel—she sang no more,
But ever that small urchin followed;
Who, with the lute upon the floor,
Like a young dryad, whooped and holloed!
And Roland's hound is heard again,
And Roland's hawk hath loosened jesses!
But Roland's smile is brightest when
Beside my All his boy he presses.

II.

Sir Harry is famed for his amiable way
Of talking a deal, when he's nothing to say:
Sir Harry will sit by our Rosalie's side,
And whisper from morn until eventide;
Yet, if you would ask of that maiden fair
What Sir Harry said while he lingered there;
Were the maiden as clever as L. E. L.
Not a word that he said could the maiden tell!

Sir Harry has ears, and Sir Harry has eyes,
And Sir Harry has teeth of the usual size;
His nose is a nose of the every-day sort—
Not exceedingly long, nor excessively short;
And his breath, tho' resembling in nought the "sweet south,"
Is inhaled through his lips, and exhaled from his mouth;
And yet, from the hour that Sir Harry was nursed,
People said that his *head* was no more than my *First!*

Sir Harry has ringlets he curls every day,
And a fortune he spends in pomatums, they say;
He is just such a youth as our Rosalie bides with,
When she hasn't got *me* to take waltzes or rides with;
But not such a one as, I ween, she would choose,
Were a youth that *I* know to be caught in the noose;
For I've oft heard her say—tho' so flighty she's reckoned—
That she'd ne'er take a bridegroom who hadn't my *Second!*

Sir Harry sat out, the last visit he paid,
From when breakfast was over, till dinner was laid!
He talked, in his usual lady-like way,
Of the ball and the ballet—the park and the play.

Little Rosa, who hoped, ere the *whole* day had passed,
That the youth would speak out, to the purpose, at last,
When evening at length was beginning to fall,
Declared that Sir Harry was nought but my *All!*

III.

Morning is beaming o'er brake and bower,
Hark! to the chimes from yonder tower,
Call ye my First from her chamber now,
With her snowy veil and her jewelled brow.

Lo! where my Second, in gorgeous array,
Leads from his stable her beautiful bay,
Looking for her, as he curvets by,
With an arching neck, and a glancing eye.

Spread is the banquet, and studied the song;
Ranged in meet order the menial throng,
Jerome is ready with book and stole,
And the maidens fling flowers, but where is my
Whole.

Look to the hill, is he climbing its side?
Look to the stream—is he crossing its tide?
Out on the false one! he comes not yet—
Lady, forget him, yea, scorn and forget.

"My first was dark o'er earth and air,
As dark as she could be!
The stars that gemmed her ebon hair
Were only two or three:
King Cole saw twice as many there
As you or I could see.

"'Away, King Cole,' mine hostess said,
'Flaggon and flask are dry;
Your nag is neighing in the shed,
For he knows a storm is nigh.'
She set my Second on his head,
And she set it all awry."

IV.

Come from my First, ay, come!
The battle dawn is nigh;
And the screaming trump and the thund'ring drum
Are calling thee to die!
Fight as thy father fought,
Fall as thy father fell,
Thy task is taught, thy shroud is wrought;
So—forward! and farewell!

Toll ye, my Second! toll!
Fling high the flambeau's light;
And sing the hymn for a parted soul,
Beneath the silent night!
The wreath upon his head,
The cross upon his breast,
Let the prayer be said, and the tear be shed:
So—take him to his rest!

Call ye my Whole, ay, call!
The lord of lute and lay;
And let him greet the sable pall
With a noble song to-day;

Go, call him by his name;
No fitter hand may crave
To light the flame of a soldier's fame
On the turf of a soldier's grave.

V.

He talked of daggers and of darts,
Of passions and of pains,
Of weeping eyes and wounded hearts,
Of kisses and of chains;
He said, though love was kin to grief,
He was not born to grieve;
He said, though many rued belief,
She safely might believe;
But still the lady shook her head,
And swore, by yea and nay,
My Whole was all that he had said,
And all that he could say.

He said, my First—whose silent car
Was slowly wandering by,

Veiled in a vapour faint and far
  Through the unfathomed sky—
Was like the smile whose rosy light
  Across her young lips passed,
Yet oh! it was not half so bright,
  It changed not half so fast;
But still the lady shook her head,
  And swore, by yea and nay,
My Whole was all that he had said,
  And all that he could say.

And then he set a cypress wreath
  Upon his raven hair,
And drew his rapier from its sheath,
  Which made the lady stare;
And said, his life-blood's purple flow
  My second there should dim,
If she he loved and worshipped so
  Would only weep for him;
But still the lady shook her head,
  And swore by yea and nay,
My Whole was all that he had said,
  And all that he could say.

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