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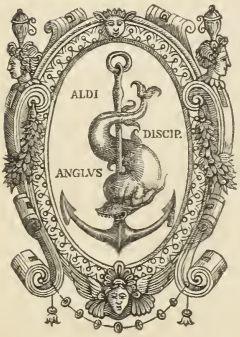
THE DREAM OF LIFE

LAYS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

AND OTHER POEMS

BY JOHN MOULTRIE



LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING
1843

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The first and longest Poem in the present Volume was written at intervals in the course of the two last summers. The others are, for the most part, of an earlier date;—many of them, indeed, having been composed previously to the publication of my former volume. In the series which (perhaps too ambitiously) I have entitled 'Lays of the English Church,' it was my original design to produce, if I could, a succession of Poems, founded upon the Epistles and Gospels of our Anglican Liturgy, which might supply what seems to me a desideratum in our popular literature;—a volume which might be, in some degree, to general and unlearned readers what 'The Christian Year' and other works of that fine school are to persons of cultivated and imaginative minds. The plan was not long very rigorously adhered to, and the attempt ultimately abandoned, as (by me, at least,) impracticable. The portion now published, and extending from the first Sunday in Advent to

Ash Wednesday, contains all the pieces which were written, with the exception of one, which seemed disproportionately long, and otherwise out of keeping with the remainder of the series.

In the Poem of 'The Dream of Life,' I have introduced (what from the nature of the subject I could scarcely avoid) various sketches of real character, the originals of some of which are still living, and others will be locally (a few, perhaps, generally) recognised. With regard to these, it has been invariably my object and endeavour to communicate to the mind of my reader the impression of my own pleasant and kindly and, very often, affectionate recollections. I have done my best (such as that is) to make my portraits worthy of their originals. If in any instance, failing to effect this, I shall be found to have produced a less agreeable likeness than was intended, I shall much regret—what I cannot plead as an excuse—the clumsiness of the artist.

Rectory, Rugby,
Easter Monday, 1843.

I. M.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 82, line 3 from bottom, *for* "sturdy" *read* "spirit's."
103, line 5 from bottom, *for* "bright-eyed" *read* "beauteous."
122, line 7, *for* "serious" *read* "sportive."
138, line 9 from bottom, *for* "well" *read* "much."
138, line 6 from bottom, *for* "years" *read* "days."
183, line 14, *for* "virgin's" *read* "virgin."
281, line 11, *for* "which" *read* "whom."
282, line 6, *for* "worthier" *read* "daintier."

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK I.

CHILDHOOD.

INSCRIBED TO MY PARENTS.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy."
WORDSWORTH.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK I.

CHILDHOOD.

Once more among my earliest haunts!—once more
A solitary man, from home delights
Familiar, and the sounds of childish mirth,
And sweet endearments of connubial love,
Secluded for awhile;—beneath the roof
Which shelter'd me in childhood, and which still
Shelters my parents' age, for some few days,
A welcome guest, I sojourn. Years long past,—
The pleasant spring, and seed-time of my life,—
Revisit my mind's eye, with all their train
Of youthful thoughts and feelings, by these scenes
Mysteriously revived. Nor meets me here
One outward token from that newer world
Of cares and duties, fears and hopes and aims,
Sorrows and joys, in which I live and move,
A husband and a parent. Far away,
On the green banks of her beloved Doon,
My wife imbues our children's opening minds
With love of Caledonia's hills and glens;
Meanwhile inhaling, near her native coast,
From the bold mountains, and the breezy sea,

New health and vigour,—by her childhood's friends,
As I by mine, surrounded. So complete
Is thus my separation from all cares
Domestic and parental, that almost,
Methinks, by strong imagination led,
I might forget the two and twenty years
Of life, long since mature, which time hath stolen,
Since I, as boyhood melted into youth,
Bade sad farewell to Eton's long loved shades,
And these fair scenes together;—might forget
What all those years have made me,—what rich gifts
Their course hath brought,—what cares those gifts
produce,—
And be once more the dreaming, brain-sick boy
That then I was. And what if I give scope
To memory's pensive rovings?—What if now,
In this calm interim between the calls
Of active duty and of worldly care,
I bid my heart keep holiday,—forget
The Present and the Future in the Past,—
Live o'er again my long departed years
In tranquil meditation,—and perchance,
Comparing what I was with what I am,
Amidst that multitudinous array
Of thoughts and feelings which have come and gone,
Discern, in twilight gaze, the embryo state
Of what is now my being?—Haply thus
My time may not be lost;—Not for myself,
Nor for some gentle spirits, who may find,
Nor scorn to learn, a lesson from my lay,

Such as all records of Man's life might teach.
Dim and mysterious to the dreamer's eye,
Retracing the first gleams of consciousness,
Is Infancy and Childhood's fairy-land.
Scarce through the glory, as of other worlds,
Enveloping its outline, is discern'd,
At intervals distinctly, here and there,
A streak of clear reality,—some fact,
Or feeling, or sensation,—some event
To Childhood's eyes momentous, and thenceforth
Indelibly inscribed on Memory's page,
Only with life to be expunged. Even here,
Surrounded, as I am, by objects fraught
With old associations, and none else—
Wandering, at will, through old familiar rooms,
And gazing on old hills, and fields, and lanes,
And human forms, the first I ever knew,
And faces which I loved ere I could speak—
Even here, my first remembrances of life
Seem dim and distant. Scarce at intervals,
Events and epochs, few and far between,
Stand forth in clear relief;—a colour'd frock,—
A picture-book replete with marvels strange
To young imagination;—a quaint tale
Told by my grandam;—my first cloth pelisse,
With rows of glittering buttons all ablaze,
The envy of my infantine compeers;
And mix'd with these, at times, a tender gleam
Of somewhat (whether fantasy or love
I know not,)—a strange instinct lighting up

My heart beneath the glance of woman's eyes;—
A sense of beauty and mysterious power,
By beauty wielded, stirring to its depths
The soul of man, while he is yet a child.
So fares the world within;—around me crowd
Familiar objects;—our old nursery stands
Unalter'd, save that now it bears no trace
Of infantine or childish tenantry;—
Cradle, or crib, or tiny chair, or store
Of scatter'd toys, or window fenced with bars,
Or fire-place, guarded close from rash approach,
By lofty fender. Time's relentless march
Hath made strange havoc with the furniture
Once consecrate to childhood's mimic sports.
The chairs which, yoked and harness'd, served as steeds
To whirl us, on imaginary cars,
In pomp and pride of glorious coachmanship,
At length have disappear'd through slow decay;
Their wood-work fractured, and their horsehair seats
Worn bare by long attrition. Many a year,—
Yea, far into my manhood's lusty prime,
They stood where they were wont, and seem'd to bear
A charmed life. In sooth, I could have named
Each individual courser,—told the marks
Which once distinguish'd, to our childish thought,
The chestnut from the grey, the bay from brown;—
Which to each several brother was assign'd,
His own especial property;—which work'd
As wheeler,—which as leader. All are gone,—

The steeds, and they who drove them. Many a change,
Within doors and without, hath changed the face
Of the old dwelling, e'en within the span
Of my remembrance. Casements, which sufficed
The vicars of a less luxurious age,
First from the old stone frontage disappear'd,
Supplanted by broad panes.—A few years pass'd,
Riches increased, and lo! a pile arose
Of bright red brick, with slate cerulean roof'd,
Encroaching on the garden, and but ill
Consorting with the grey, time-mellow'd stone,
To which 'twas wedded. On the study's site,
Somewhat extended, straightway there appear'd
A gay and gilded drawing-room, o'er which,
Piled, story above story, tier on tier,
New bed-rooms tower'd, in ample space and height
Mocking the old and humble vicarage.
With pride we mark'd the building, as it grew,
(I and my brothers) deeming that at last
Our mansion should eclipse the squire's itself,
And we be counted greater than the squire.
Yet when the work was finish'd, and we dwelt
Like nobles, as we deem'd,—methinks, we found
Small compensation in our ceiled state,
For old associations swept away
With our abolish'd play-room—for the fall
Of shrubbery laurels, underneath whose thick
And sun-proof foliage we were wont to frame
Our mimic houses, with inventive skill

Arranging and imagining;—nor lack'd
To those umbrageous mansions aught that taste
Or ingenuity of modish art
Might fashion, or caprice of luxury
Deem needful for convenience. Banquet-halls
Were there, with banquets spread, from time to time,
Of sugar'd cakes and gingerbread, served up
On fragments of crack'd china; Drawing-rooms
Well furnish'd, and adorn'd with stately couch,
And ottoman and sofa, soft repose
Inviting and prolonging; closets cramm'd
With household stores; kitchen and scullery range,
With culinary implements complete;
And overhead, among the thickleaved boughs,
Our verdant dormitories. Oh! how well
Wrought then imagination, by strange art,
Enduing her creations with what seem'd
Most absolute reality. Our sports
To us were scarcely sports, but still appear'd
Our gravest occupations.—In our world,
(That fairy world created by ourselves),
We lived and had our being. All day long,
(Our tasks once ended) how we toil'd and toil'd
At that fantastic architecture!—how,
Absorb'd, and reckless of all outward things,
We shaped and moulded our whole dream of life
To match our habitation! Our desires
Roam'd not beyond that garden's narrow bounds.
There was our universe.—Reluctantly
We left its pastimes for a daily walk

Through the green fields and pleasant shelter'd lanes
Of this delicious region; for, in us,
The sense of beauty, with majestic forms
And glorious hues investing hill and wood,
As yet was undevelop'd, and it seem'd
Dire interruption of important toil
And business which allow'd of no delay,
To force us from our fair ideal realm
E'en to the pleasures of reality.
And yet, from time to time, strange pleasures came;
Some by succession of the seasons brought,
Or revolution of the calendar;
Some at uncertain epochs, racier still
Because unlook'd-for. First, the spring produced
Its primrose tufts and constellated stalks
Of cowslip, which, with eager chase, we sought,
And strung together into fragrant balls;
Or (proud of such unwonted usefulness)
Heap'd for the flowery vintage. Summer shone
(Summer seem'd then all sunshine, and as yet
Asthma was not) on fields of new-mown grass,
And us among the haymakers. Ah me!
The raptures of that season!—with what pride
(Our tiny rakes and pitchforks in our hands)
We follow'd, with the rest, the mower's track,
And spread the levell'd crop beneath the sun!
At noon, with what keen appetite we shared
The rustic luncheon,—feasted to the full,
Beside some hedge, on piles of bread and cheese,
And from its wooden flagon quaff'd the beer,

Listening meanwhile to tale and homely jest,
Pass'd round by jovial peasants. Then, at eve,
When the day's toil was ended, home we rode
In the returning waggon,—joy of joys!
The world hath now none such. With autumn came
The village wake, and (if remembrance serves)
The fair, with stalls of tempting gingerbread,
And glittering toys, and shows majestical;
While, (for 'twas then the stirring time of war)
Recruiting sergeants gaily to and fro
Paraded, to the sound of drum and fife,
Their colours and cockades. To us they seem'd
Almost like gods of war, and oft our hearts
Beat high, to think how blest a fate it were
To fight old England's enemies, and die
Victorious on some well-won battle-field.
'Twas then that on the Nation's startled ear
Burst the glad news of naval victory,
Sadden'd by Nelson's death. Those news awoke,
Methinks, in me, my first ideal sense
Of warlike triumph, of heroic deeds,
And glory by a nation lost or won.
Then first I felt that 'twas a noble lot
To be a Briton;—then, with earnest heart,
Rejoiced at England's joy, and wept her griefs,
A patriot five years old. Some nameless fears
Had stirr'd my soul already, when I heard
(What then was widely bruited in men's mouths)
Of near invasion, of impending strife,

And danger and defeat. The might of France
Was, to my heart, a dark, mysterious thought,
More hateful from the vagueness of alarm
With which 'twas blended, and my midnight dreams
Would oft reverberate Napoleon's name,
Dreadful as Dæmogorgon's. Oft, in sleep,
I heard the thrilling cry, "The French are come,"
And straightway through the street, in long array,
With shout of hostile triumph, with deep roll
Of drum, and peal of trump, and clang of arms,
Battalion on battalion, host on host,
Defiled the invading myriads;—Britain's fight,
Men said, was fought and lost, and she was now
In bondage to her foes. Ere long the scene
Grew darker; in my father's house appear'd
Strange faces,—heralds by the victors sent
To cite my parents to the judgment seat,
And haply to the scaffold. In that fear
Grim and perplex'd, the bonds of sleep were burst,
And I, in agony of tears, awoke!
Such terrors, waking or asleep, were mine,
Till news of victory came:—oh, then at once
My breast was lighten'd. Ne'er shall I forget
The fervour, the wild frenzy of delight,
Which, when the news first reach'd our little town,
Thrill'd through its English heart. That week had seen
A daughter born into my Father's house;
And, I remember, in my Mother's room
We stood, and from the silent window gazed

On bonfires blazing in the street, and crowds
Of villagers and peasants round the flame
Promiscuously group'd.—The ruddy light
Flash'd fitfully on faces bright with joy,
And forms in active motion. To the sky
Rockets, from time to time, in fiery track
Soar'd, blazed, and, bursting, scatter'd, high in air,
Bright showers of stars; while ever and anon,
From the near steeple, our six bells rang out
Their loud and lusty changes,—now in notes
Harmoniously attuned to concord sweet
With the deep stream of joy in every heart,—
Now mimicking, with simultaneous clang,
The cannons' deafening roar. At intervals,
From every quarter, musket-shots were heard,
Follow'd by shout, and cheer, and loud huzzah!
From congregated throats. The nation's voice,
Even among us, arose from Earth to Heaven
In chorus of exultant jubilee,
Yet with religious fervour not unmix'd,
Nor thankless to the God of victories
For triumph thus bestow'd.—Men's warlike pride,
By recollection of their hero's death,
Was soften'd and subdued. It was a night
Greatly to be remember'd. With our dreams,
When we, with hearts untired, reluctantly
Had gone to rest, the tumult of the street
Still mingled, and awoke a phantom world
Of imagery in the mysterious depths
Of Childhood's spirit, shedding wondrous gleams

Of glory on the visions of the night.
Since then have five and thirty years flown by,
And boyhood, youth, and early manhood pass'd,
With all their changes; yet even now a peal
Of merry village bells recalls to mind
The raptures of that night, and conjures up
The ghosts of thoughts and feelings, in my heart
Long buried;—thus with joys of rustic life—
A birth, a wedding, or a festival,
Associating the glories of the Past.
I was not born ambitious;—never long'd
For honour to be won by warlike deeds,
Nor wish'd myself a hero;—else, methinks,
The atmosphere of war, in childhood breathed,
Had fed such fancies bravely, and perchance
Made me unlike, in all things, what I am.
For scarce a village in old England, then,
But dared heroic enterprize. The threat
Of near invasion had awoke all hearts
To simultaneous valour. Peasants beat
Their pruninghooks and ploughshares into swords;
And pale-faced artisans forsook the loom
And shuttle, to encumber their spare limbs
With the grim garb of war. The smith exchanged
His hammer for a halberd. Tailors, fired
With martial ardour, from the shop-board leap'd,
And let their needles rust, to grasp the spear
With fingers which of late the thimble wore.
Shortwinded, pursy men forgot their fat
And scantiness of breath, in tight-drawn belt

Bracing their bulk abdominal, to serve
As lusty volunteers in some new corps
Raised for the nonce. We too, albeit the least
Among Britannia's thousands, furnish'd forth
Our sixty musqueteers—a gallant band
In uniform complete;—to me they seem'd
A host invincible, prepared to hurl
Napoleon from his throne. Sublime they shone
In scarlet regimentals faced with green;
Their military caps by towering plumes
Surmounted, while their burnish'd firelocks flash'd,
Like lightning, in the sun, with bayonets fix'd,
Bristling in bright array. The squire himself,
Forsaking for awhile his mimick war
With birds and beasts, and buckling on his arms,
Was proud to be their captain. Next in rank,
Nor less in arms illustrious—passing then
Life's vigorous prime, and by his portly shape
And peaceful air, less fitted, as it seem'd,
For martial prowess than luxurious ease,
Our neighbour, the attorney, took the field.
Him, not unfit at social boards to shine,—
A man of easy humour and frank mirth,—
Sluggish withal, and simple as a child
In this world's ways, had fortune's wild caprice
First doom'd to be a lawyer, and next thrust
Into the full accoutrements of war
And regimental lace. Alike unfit
Was he for scarlet, and for chancery suit;
Alike unskill'd in pleadings and in war;

In deeds of arms and deeds of law alike
Ill-graced and awkward; for his nature, pure
And harmless as the dove's, could never learn
The serpent's wisdom;—gentle as the lamb,
He lack'd the lion's valour.—He was form'd
For upright acts of honest friendliness,
For charity and bland good neighbourhood,
Not for the tumult of the battle-field,
Or trickery of the law-court. Mild, sedate,
His usual air;—few were the words he spoke,
And slow his utterance; but when friend met friend
Around his hospitable board, and wine,
After the fashion of those ruder days,
In circling brimmers flow'd,—oh, who was then
His match for fun and frolic? Then his eye
(Dull and professionally grave before)
Twinkled and gleam'd with humour;—then (all care
For formal rules of etiquette cast off)
His mirth ran riot in wild, boylike freaks
Of unrestrain'd extravagance. But now,
Silent and grave, beside his corps he march'd;
And if,—when cups were sparkling on the board
Of absent friends, while he, on full parade,
Did active service,—nature would at times
Grow weary of manœuvres manifold,
Marchings and counter-marchings, mimick-fights,
Retreats and charges, ambuscades, assaults,
Volleys of awkward musketry, and balls
Shot wide of targets,—he, with noble pride
Of self-control, repress'd all outward signs

And tokens of impatience,—proud to be
In Albion's cause a martyr. Him of late
I mark'd, an aged man, well-nigh fourscore,
Still, in the parish church, his wonted seat
Maintaining, and himself but little changed
In all these years from that which he appear'd
When first I knew him ;—undiminish'd still
His lusty bulk,—unwrinkled still his brow,—
Unspectacled his nose ;—yet Death's grim shades
Must soon be closing round him, and the friends,—
The boon companions of his earlier days,—
His comrades in the field and at the feast,—
Have, one by one, departed from his side,
And dropp'd into the grave. His housekeeper
(For never hath he worn connubial yoke),
Large as himself, and rosy, and rotund,
The despot of his house, hath gone the way
Appointed for all flesh ;—his well-fed steed
Hath vacated the true prebendal stall
In which he lived to eat, asthmatic long
And martyr to repletion ;—his lank pair
Of greyhounds (sole lank things in all that house)
Sleep, with their old companion, side by side,—
Their last course run and ended. Be their lord's
Decease, when it shall come, as calm as theirs,
But not, like theirs, uncheer'd by Christian hope
Of immortality and endless bliss.

With him there march'd, as ensign of the corps,
A tall, spare man, his kinsman, some ten years
His senior, whose high forehead, silver'd o'er,

At fifty-five, with eighty winters' snow,
Assumed, beneath his feather'd, fierce cock'd hat,
A veteran aspect ;—yet a peaceful man
Was he, and had, in Gloucester's busy vales,
Been bred a manufacturer. The mill,
Embosom'd yonder between wooded banks,
Was built, and many years possess'd by him ;
Till, with an ample store of this world's wealth,
He and his wife, with none to be their heirs,
(For theirs had ever been a childless home)
Retired to spend their calm decline of life
In affluent ease and leisure. Twenty years
Were they our next-door neighbours. As a child,
I well remember, when the parsonage
On rare occasions oped its festal doors
To guests invited, how, amidst the throng,
His was the gravest face, the stateliest step,
The hoariest head ; with what a solemn grace
He at quadrille or whist would take his seat,
Confronted with some bulky dowager,
Or spinster of threescore. The dark brown coat,
White waistcoat, breeches of demurest drab,
And hose of spotless cotton, (for as yet
Silk was, with us, a luxury only known
To clergymen and squires,) the polish'd shoes
Of rustic make, and thicker than need was,
Still dwell in my remembrance. On his arm
Hung his good-humour'd partner, all bedight
In finery, such as fifty years before
Had shone in metropolitan saloons.

Herself ungraced by the accomplishments
Of modish education, and, in truth,
What some call vulgar, but, beyond her peers,
From all vulgarity of soul exempt;—
Kind-hearted, full of charity, unchill'd
By niggard thrift,—for all the neighbouring poor
Prompt ever both to spend and to be spent;
Alike unfit to hear and to repeat
The scandal of the tea-table. They lived
(She and her mate) a blameless, peaceful life,
Through fifty years of wedlock, till at last
Disease, in cancerous shape, assail'd the wife,
Marring her features, and extending wide
Its fibres through her flesh.—For some few years
She pined and wasted, with assiduous care
Still tended by her husband, whose whole life
Was so entwined with hers, that, when she died,
The old man's heart seem'd broken.—From that hour
He never cross'd the threshold of his door,
Save when he went to church,—but sat and sat
Beside his lonely hearth from morn to night;
Now poring o'er his Bible,—now absorb'd
In dreamy thought,—his eyes suffused with tears,—
His heart with her whom he had lost,—in Heaven.
Nor sought he other company; though oft,
When friends or neighbours came to visit him,
He would converse in no uncheerful tone,
Nor close his heart to sympathy with those
Who sympathized with him. Some habits, form'd

In happier days,—some customs, shared with her,
He still retain'd;—still every Sunday eve
(The service done) he with his kinsman dined,
Whose jovial humour, soften'd now by years,
Was, in his presence, temper'd to a grave
And reverential sadness:—each with each
Held soothing fellowship, till life's frail thread
At last, in one, gave way. His race is run;
His story told;—he rests with her he loved.
A melancholy joy, in truth, it is,
When half a life has fled, to see once more
Places long loved;—to mark how Nature's face
Remains unchanged,—how little Art has wrought
Of transformation in insensate things,
While human forms familiar—men who lived,
Thought, felt, rejoiced, and sorrow'd, hoped and fear'd,
Hated and loved, in time's relentless flight,
Have been, by generations, swept away,
Like shadows, from the earth. But sadder still,
Methinks, the alteration wrought by age
In those who yet remain. These thirty years
A house hath scarce been built, a tree cut down,
A new shop open'd,—scarce a public-house
Been deck'd with a new sign, or changed as yet
Ought but its owner's name, in all this street.
The castle ditch alone, (last remnant left
Of feudal recollections,) hath indeed
Long since, by hands barbarian, been plough'd up
And planted with potatoes; its rich shade

Of beeches levell'd, and the fair alcove
Which crown'd its spacious bowling-green, pull'd
down.
Nought else seems alter'd, save the face of man;
But that, how strangely! Yesterday I pass'd
An infant school-room, echoing to the hum
Of children's voices on their tasks intent;
And, through the open window, could discern
The features of their mistress. 'Twas a face,
Almost the first which Memory, looking back
Through forty years, remembers to have loved;—
The face of one long since our nursery-maid,
The beauty of the village. Around her
Our young imaginations fondly clung,
And, in her features, seem'd to recognize
The bright ideals of our fairy tales
Mysteriously embodied. In our eyes,
She was the princess Eglantine, adored
Of Valentine and Orson;—we the twins
Contending for her hand. The Sabra she
Who loved St. George of England, and by him
Was lost amidst the forest; then straightway
Protected by a lion. She alone
Seem'd gentle Graciosa's living type,
Through depths unknown of trouble and distress,
Still constant to her Percinet.—Nor lack'd
Our spite a fitting representative
Of old malicious Grognon,—that foul hag
Who persecuted beauty, youth, and love,
For very ugliness. Her, to the life,

We found depicted in a spinster sour,
The despot of our nursery;—one whose tried
And unimpeach'd devotion to her charge
Compensated, in fond parental eyes,
For all her inborn crabbedness; who ruled
With undisputed, arbitrary sway
The rising generation, and the risen;
Queen'd it supreme o'er mistress and o'er maid;
And thus, by rigour of tyrannic rule,
Combined in close-knit league against herself,
Us and our pretty play-mate. In revenge
Of wrongs, supposed or real, her we named
Witch, ogre, wicked fairy, goblin, imp,
Giantess, evil genius, Afrit, goule,
And whatsoever abhorr'd and hateful thing
Imagination of the East or West
Hath ever bodied forth. And yet, in truth,
Much cause had we to love her, could the love
Of children be obtain'd by honest zeal
Apart from gentleness;—and if sometimes
She yielded to infirmity,—if years,
Approaching to threescore, had fail'd to quench,
In her, the wish to be a wife, and thus
Made her too oft the dupe of needy men,
Seeking not her but hers, and furnish'd food
For laughter even to us,—be that forgot
In the remembrance of her faithful life
And melancholy death. For,—after years
In strict discharge of anxious duty spent,
Worn out at last by the incessant fret

And fever of a spirit ill at ease,
And, haply, vex'd by our perversity
Almost beyond endurance,—she resolved
To quit our parents' service, and retire,
On the small savings by long labour earn'd,
To end her days in peace;—then changed her mind,
Through love for us and ours;—again resolved,—
And yet again repented;—till at last,
Wearied by what, in her, appear'd caprice,
Our parents lost all patience, and resolved
She should indeed depart. Thenceforth no more
She lifted up her head, nor could regain
Her full command of reason:—from her home
She wander'd and return'd not:—in the end,
After long, anxious search, her corpse was found
Beneath the Severn waters.

But the maid,—
The dark-eyed heroine of fairy-land,—
How hath her fortune sped? Alas! her tale
Is one of kindred sorrow. Long ago
(So long that I can scarce remember when)
She married; and had he, to whom she gave
Her hand and heart, been worthy of the gift,
Might now have held her head above the crowd
With decent self respect:—alas! he proved
A drunkard and a brute. Soon ruin came,
And gaunt-eyed famine stared them in the face:
Her children proved rebellious, and she lived
A broken-hearted woman, struggling still,
In unsubdued nobility of soul,

With care, and want, and sorrow; till at length
Compassion and respect for her meek worth,
From those whom she had served in early youth,
Made her the mistress of that infant school
Where yesterday I found her;—but alas!
How should a wounded spirit, such as hers,
Bear up against her task?—what energy,
In her, remains to vary and sustain
Perpetual sallies of exciting sport,
And stimulative effort?—how should she,
Whose heart is bleeding for her husband's sin,
Her offspring lost, her home left desolate—
How should she feel the interest, here required,
In children not her own? With listless air
She sits, in dull, mechanical routine,
Dragging along her weary load of tasks;
Dispensing vain rewards and punishments;
Dispirited and jaded by the sound
Of voices which she heeds not; till the clock,
With wish'd-for stroke, announces her release,
Emancipating from ungrateful toil
The teacher and the taught.—Thus Life's romance
Begins and ends:—its moral,—that our world
Is, was, and, till redemption's closing day,
Must evermore remain a vale of tears.

Yet there are spots of sunshine even on Earth;—
Green islands in the desart, which the sands
Entomb not, nor the tempests overwhelm:—
Spots which, long cherish'd in our heart of hearts,
Then, after many years revisited,

We find still fresh and fragrant. Yonder lane,
Which,—from the church-yard gate commencing, skirts
The school enclosure and the castle ditch,—
Leads, in the space of some two hundred yards,
Beside a lonely cottage, from the path
Divided by a wicket. It was once,
(Far within my remembrance,) the abode
Of a kind aged couple, who, when years
Had made the man unfit to earn his bread
At that mechanic craft which he had learnt
And practised, as a builder, all his life,
From business and its cares at length withdrew,
Surrendering to a son-in-law their trade
And daily occupation. In their home,
The latter with his wife, their only child,—
(Themselves, in middle age, a childless pair,)
Came to reside; and though her husband seem'd
To some a vain and consequential man,
The frank and noble nature of his wife
Made more than full amends for what appear'd
Deficiencies in him. There seem'd to rest
A blessing on that house;—Content was there,
And filial duty, with connubial love
Holding, in one warm bosom, constant sway,
And spreading through the home in which it dwelt
Perpetual sunshine. Between them and us
(The cottage and the vicarage) grew up
A friendship, such as we had sought in vain
Beneath less humble roofs. Nature had set

On that old man and woman, at their birth,
The seal of true gentility, which they
Transmitted to their daughter. Oft in her,
When other sources fail'd, was found advice
And consolation, sympathy and help,
Amidst those worldly troubles which must fall
On rich and poor alike. Full oft was she
The confidante of sorrows, to no ear
But hers entrusted; and, for us, whose age
Reck'd of no nice distinction between ranks,
But clung to kindness, wheresoever found,
With instinct true and keen,—in all the world
There was no heart like hers. Day after day,
In pairs or singly,—sometimes all at once,—
We stole from home, to prattle and to play
In that old cottage and the timber-yard
Adjacent. I shall never, while I live,
Forget the old man's cheerful countenance,
Lit up with gleams of humour, as he sat
And welcomed us in his accustomed seat
Within the chimney corner;—his broad jests,—
His cordial fun,—his brown, close, curly wig,
His straight blue coat with monstrous buttons
starr'd,—
His nether garments, plush or velveteen,—
The sky-blue worsted stockings on his shanks,—
The buckles in his shoes. His busy wife,
Unbroken by the weight of fourscore years,
Meanwhile, with ceaseless footsteps, roam'd about,
And plied her household tasks, with ready tact

Assisted by her daughter, and by us
Impeded sorely;—yet they never lost
Patience or kindness, but still bore our freaks
And follies with a spirit imperturb'd;
Nor wearied of such pert impertinence
As would have wearied Job. On baking-days,
Which we by instinct knew, their batch contain'd
(Nor ever fail'd) one smoking cake for us,—
One smoking, butter'd cake!—Their cider-press
Ream'd with rich draughts for us;—their garden teem'd
With gooseberries and currants, which to us
Yielded unstintingly their luscious juice.
We were the lords of all that fair domain,—
Too oft, perhaps, the tyrants. Time roll'd on;
We left the place and country,—nor return'd,
Till thirteen years had pass'd. The old man then
Had, in the ripeness of full ninety years,
Been gather'd to his fathers; and his wife
Slept with him side by side. The cottage still
Shelters the younger pair, who, in their turn,
Themselves have sunk into the vale of years;
And to our children are, what once, to us,
Their parents used to be. Nay, so robust
Their age appears, that haply they may see
Another generation. To their house
Our steps still daily turn, when we renew
Our visits to the neighbourhood, and still
They welcome us as they were ever wont,
And spoil our children with as right good will

As once they spoil'd the parents. All remains
Beneath that roof unchanged;—upon the shelves
The clean, white rows of plates, and in the midst,
One of green wedgwood, still uncrack'd; above
The chimney-piece, its old abundant store
Of tin and pewter, amidst which appears
(Chief ornament) a glittering brazen cross,
Which, fifty years ago, the husband bore,
Surmounting the blue staff, on festal days,
Borne by the members of the Friendly Club.
The wife (except that threescore years and ten
Have silver'd o'er her hair) continues still
The same in form and feature. Age hath tamed
The loftier spirit of her partner down;
Who, when I visited their cottage last,
Was reading, with a fix'd, abstracted look,
The Olney hymns. To me it seems as though
That couple and the world must live and die
Together; and whene'er their humble roof
Shall shelter other tenants, 'twill be time
For me to close, for ever, Memory's book,
And cease to think on scenes and days gone by.
With feelings different far, yet not unmix'd
With melancholy interest, I behold
Yon square-built house, by jealous walls and gates
(Enclosing, in its front, a spacious court,)
Shut out and barricaded from the street.
A proud, aristocratic Hall it seems,
Not courting, but, discouraging approach,
Save from a favour'd few. For many a year

That house hath been to me a place forbid,—
Impervious, inaccessible. And yet
Few are there with remembrances more rich
Of young enjoyment in my thought combined;
Enjoyment brief, but pure. 'Twas long the home
Of one with deepest sorrow conversant;
A wife and mother, o'er whose later years,
Blameless, yet broken-hearted, be a veil
Of reverential silence drawn by me.
Her elder sons and daughters had grown up
Almost to youthful prime, while I was yet
A boy unbreech'd,—the youngest, some few years
My senior;—we could scarce be playfellows,
And yet were oft companions. 'Twas to them
A dignified delight to guide our sports,
And teach us new ones;—to protect and aid
Our tender age;—and well did they discharge
Such duty, self-imposed. On Sunday noons,
As we return'd from church, we never fail'd
To greet each other in the street,—and then,
To us, it was the proudest joy on earth
To be invited, (as full oft we were,)
To end the day with them:—at will we roam'd
Around their spacious garden, and at will
Wander'd, with them, about the fields at eve,
Until the sun had set:—then, to beguile
The twilight hours, the book of Common Prayer,
Adorn'd with wondrous prints, was summon'd in;
And sometimes hymns were sung, which still, me-
thought,

Sounded most sweetly from that Lady's lips.
So pass'd our Sunday blameless; nor alone
Our Sunday,—for on week-days too we met
Not rarely, nor with stinted intercourse;
Until between our parents discord fell,
From pastoral duty faithfully perform'd,
And marr'd our old companionship.—Not ours
The fault,—and yet to us the fruits it bore
Appear'd most bitter. I remember well,
The evening when (all prospect being past
Of reconciliation) our young friends
Came, at their father's bidding, to our house,
To bid their last farewell. A sad one 'twas;
And, from that time, a strange unnatural state
Of separation between house and house
For years and years continued. We, became
The village Capulets and Montagus;
Yet all save one—(the master of one house)
Most anxious for re-union;—nor, perhaps,
Could his sole pleasure (e'en had he so will'd)
Have ended all communion between those
Whom inclination join'd. From time to time
We met and talk'd together;—it befell,
Day after day, by strangest accident,
That they and we both walk'd at the same hour,
Both hit on the same walks. As years pass'd on,
And youth began to dawn, those walks assumed
A more romantic air. Love-rhymes were writ,
And assignations made, and duly kept,
With more deliberate purpose:—then commenced

The nightly serenade,—the moonlight stroll;
And, but for some disparity of years,
Perchance the hostile houses had not lack'd
A Romeo or a Juliet.—
Those wild days
Have long been over, and the grave hath closed
Above both wife and husband; yet even now
Dark sorrow seems to brood upon that house,
Enwrapping it in gloom—through which appear
Gleams, not, I trust, delusive, of that light
Which shineth more and more to perfect day.
But all, too long this retrospective mood
I cherish,—with a fond garrulity
Babbling, at life's full noon, of morning dreams.
'Tis time I should awake:—and yet each spot
Around me teems with recollections, such
As I would fain indulge. There's nought so mean
And insignificant in all this place,
But is endued with power to strike some chord
Of old associations. Yonder barn,
Secluded from the street a little space,
And in no wise distinguish'd outwardly
From others of its class, was once to me
A scene of strange enchantment; for a troop
Of strolling players built up beneath its roof
Their rude and rustic theatre. Till then
The drama was, to us, an unknown world,
Save that when last our family had gone
To visit the metropolis, (a rare
And wonderful occurrence) we all went

To Sadler's Wells and Astley's. Ne'er again
Was such intense illusion to beguile
Our senses and our souls as seized us then.
We were at once translated from this world
Of sober daylight to a fairy realm,
Mysteriously existing in the midst
Of human habitations, yet from all
Distinct and self-compact, by human laws
Ungovern'd, and to rules conventional
Of human custom unamenable.
The theatre itself appear'd to us
A palace of enchantment,—its gay tiers
Of gilded boxes semicircular—
Its mirror'd columns—its glass chandeliers,—
The central lustre, by some means unknown,
But necromantic, as appear'd to us,
Drawn up into the ceiling, and again
Descending to its place—the row of lights,
With sudden blaze emerging from the floor,—
The dark green curtain, veiling from our sight
An unknown world, mysterious,—the first note
Prelusive of the tuning orchestra,
Soon bursting, with sublime and swelling crash,
Into full concord of harmonious sound,—
The rising of the curtain, all at once
Disclosing to our sight transcendent scenes
Of brilliancy and bliss, surpassing all
Our young imagination e'er had dream'd
Of fairy-land—our fairy tales themselves
(For so it chanced) no longer by the mind

Imperfectly received, but to the eye
Reveal'd distinctly—Beauty and the Beast,
Tom Thumb, and Cinderella, by strange art
Converted from mere phantoms of the thought
To visible realities—all this
Was, to our minds, a new creation, fraught
With glory from some brighter world derived.
The very orange-women seem'd to us
Scarce of this earth,—scarce earthly. Such had
been
Our earliest joys theatrical: but now
The full illusion was, in part, to cease;
And nature, stripp'd of pomp and circumstance,
To supersede enchantment. Small and low,—
Hung round with tapestry of worn out scenes,
And, by a thin partition, into pit
And gallery scarce divided—its whole band
One solitary fiddle—sometimes two,—
Its stage cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined—with few
And paltry decorations,—dresses, scenes,
All suited each to each,—that theatre
E'en at first sight, gave warning, by its looks,
That histrionic art within those walls,
Apart from all appliances and means,
Must, by its strength or weakness, stand or fall.
Yet there did mimick talent, with all aid
Of outward show dispensing, in our hearts
Awaken childhood's earnest sympathies.
There we rejoiced with them that did rejoice,
And wept with them that wept;—there learnt to feel

The dignity of Virtue in distress,
And with her triumphs sympathize;—there grieved
For Woman's bitter wrong, and burnt with zeal
Heroic to avenge it. Were such thoughts
And feelings sinful all? In sober truth,
When I review those hours, I deem them not
Mispent or useless;—and if riper years,
Instructing me more fully in the lore
Of good and evil, have reveal'd a world
Of mischief in the stage,—if I forbear
To breathe its dangerous atmosphere, or soil
My priestly garments with the taint it bears,—
Such sacrifice I grudge not, but exult
With thankfulness that I have better joys
To gladden me on Earth:—but then no doubt
Or dim misgiving e'er had cross'd my mind;
No dark suspicion of inherent guilt
Estranged me from its magic:—all the ill
(If ill there was) by me was unperceived;
The good, I think, remain'd with me:—some
thoughts
And feelings were develop'd, which perchance,
In after years, have sway'd my inner man
With no unwholesome influence;—some power
Was given me to perform my task on Earth.
Fair valley, verdant pastures, gentle stream
Winding along thy bold and wooded banks,
With most melodious murmur;—noble hills,
Mountains almost, o'ershadowing, with your dark
And craggy grandeur, scenes than which our isle

Can scarcely boast more beauteous;—tranquil
town;—
Grey, venerable Church, with steeple white
Up tapering to the dim and distant sky;—
Church in whose gothic aisles I first beheld
And join'd, as childhood could, the solemn forms
Of Christian worship;—thou, too, noble Hall—
Crowning yon wooded hill in gorgeous state
Of architectural magnificence;—
Hall long deserted, and, for many a day,
Connected in our fancies with dark tales
Of Romish priestcraft,—visited sometimes,
And view'd, by me and mine, through all thy suites
Of empty rooms and mouldering furniture,
With somewhat of a superstitious awe;—
And, last and dearest, my paternal roof,
Not yet—not soon, I trust, to pass away,
With this frail life's continuance, from the pair
Whom still it shelters;—each and all, farewell!
There is no spot in all that span of earth
By me best known, to which with livelier grief
I speak that parting word, than this wherein
Ye congregate and crowd upon my sight.
And yet, for me, is Britain studded o'er
With spots to memory dear,—and some almost
As beautiful as this. E'en now I go
To join, in haunts which I have loved for years,
Those whom I love still better:—nothing loth,
And yet with swelling heart, I take my leave
Of this sweet region, in my inmost heart

Cherish'd through life, revisited with joy
Still fresh, still pure as ever!—not for long,
Not, as I trust, for many tedious months
I now depart:—Home of my earliest years!
My heart's first home!—once more—farewell! farewell!

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK II.

BOYHOOD.

INSCRIBED TO MY CHILDREN.

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.

WORDSWORTH.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK II.

BOYHOOD.

My sons—and ye especially, my first
And second born, whose years already pass
That term which to the schoolboys dignity
Advances, for the most part, your compeers—
To you this second lay, design'd to tell
A schoolboy's tale, I dedicate.—Ere long,
Or singly, or together, you must launch
Your untried skiffs from this calm harbour, home,
On school's tempestuous sea;—not all unfit,—
Not unprepared by previous discipline,
I trust, albeit home-nurtúred, to essay
Such voyage;—for not delicately rear'd
In mind or body, not in nursery cage
Too long immured, nor pamper'd have ye been
With drawing-room delights, nor train'd to trip
In lady-like gymnastics, nor imbued
With lore alone which ladies love to teach;
But, from your tender years, to sports robust
Inured, and manly studies.—Ye could climb,
Ere seven years old, with toil of hands and knees,
The loftiest peak of Arran's mountain ridge,
Where eagles train their nestlings;—ye can breast

The ocean-waves, and buffet them away
With lusty strokes;—on horseback or afoot,
Ye shrink from no fatigue;—thro' Doon's clear pools,
Reckless how deep, the livelong summer day,
With rod in hand ye plunge, nor quit your sport
E'en though the inclement skies should pelt and pour
A deluge on your heads;—and when the frost
With panoply of thickest ice hath mail'd
Our Avon's bosom, ye on trenchant skates
Athwart the glassy surface, swift as light,
Curve within curve describe,—not inexpert
E'en at the "outside edge:"—Nor have your minds
Been all untutor'd, nor with ancient lore
And modern unimbued:—but chiefly ye
Have, by the wisdom of a mother's heart,
And that most holy tenderness of love,
Which none but mothers feel, been taught to know
And reverence Truth and Virtue:—ye have spent
Your infancy and childhood, and the dawn
Of thoughtful life, by impulses to good,
And many a pure, religious influence
Surrounded and impell'd:—no morn hath risen,
No night closed round the world, but ye have knelt
(And oft, I trust, with no unthoughtful prayer,)
Spreading the open volume of your hearts
Before God's throne, in words first taught by her
To whom you owe your earthly, and whate'er
Of heavenly life, is yours:—Her solemn tones
Discoursing, ere you slept, at your bedsides,
Of righteousness, of judgment, and of sin,

Of Providence and duty, oft and oft
Have mingled with your dreams, excluding thence
All foul and hateful images :—your tasks,
Your pleasures, your employments, have by her
Been ruled and guided, sweeten'd and applied
With most prevailing wisdom, to those ends
Which she hath most at heart :—your home hath been
A happy one—the centre and the source
Of healthful joys, which ye have minister'd
Each to the other, or together shared ;
And thus have learnt, through mutual self-restraint,
And mutual joy, imparted and received,
To love each other dearly.—I am sure
That—whatsoever may in after years
Befall you,—both will always love your home,—
Your childhood's home,—and that the thought of it
Will be a purifying thought to both,
When we are in our grave. Nor will you lose
E'en yet, I trust, its shelter :—School, to you,
Will bring no exile from the haunts you love,
From cheering and familiar looks and words,
Or from parental aid :—amidst the cares,
The conflicts, and the interests, new and strange,
The doubts and the distresses, which, ere long,
Must chequer your school life, you will retain
One harbour and sure hold ;—unlike your sire,
Who, in old times, when railways yet were not,
And coaches travell'd scarce six miles an hour,
At eight years old was sent away to school
A hundred miles from home.

In after life,
With all its ebbs and flows of joy and grief,
Its tears and smiles, its welcomes and farewells,
There is no separation like that first
Between the child and parent.—I can still
Remember how, when it had been resolved
That I should go to school, it seem'd to me
As though some fearful evil, undefined,
Mysterious, vague, hung over me;—my heart
Presaged, it knew not what,—disruption dire
Of old home ties and sympathies,—dread loss
Of comforts and of kindness, ne'er till then
Esteem'd or valued, and, in place of these,
Harsh treatment, stern restraint, relentless law,
Inexorable justice.—Fearful tales
Of academic discipline severe,
Stripes and starvation, and imprisonment,
Rose up from memory's cells in grim array,
To scare imagination.—Well for me,
It chanced that on our road we were to halt
(My father and myself) for some few days
At an ancestral mansion, there to meet
A cousin, who (my senior by five years,)
Was, at the school to which we both were bound,
To act as my protector.—The last boon
Vouchsafed me was to fix the fatal day
On which we should leave home; and I, who oft
Had been most happy in that ancient Hall,
Of two proposed, decided on the first,
There to prolong my stay; but when I saw

My mother's grieved and disappointed look,
Though she spoke not, I felt my choice was wrong,
And the next moment, would have barter'd worlds
For leave to change it,—yet, through pride or shame,
Still held my peace perversely :—so we went
As it had been resolved, and in few days,
(Our passing visit ended) reach'd the town
Where dwelt my future pedagogue. E'en now
I well remember, how, with lingering wheels,
Our chaise approach'd the house :—it was a low
White plaister'd vicarage, in front of which,
A row of close-trimm'd limes, which interlaced
Their topmost branches, form'd a sort of fence
Between it and the churchyard :—not far off
Stood the old church itself, against whose broad
And battlemented tower, some striplings tall
(Grown men they seem'd to me) were playing then,
Irreverently, I thought, a game at fives.
The master, a pale man of sixty years,
In curl'd and powder'd and full bottom'd wig,
(The symbol, then, of pedagogues) advanced
Beneath the limes to welcome us, and soon,
Within a comfortable parlour housed,
We with his wife, himself, and his two sons,
Assistants and joint partners in the school,
Were holding fearless converse :—the dread spell
Was broken ;—school seem'd not so dread a place
As I had still conceived it ;—half the weight
That lay upon my heart was taken off ;
And not until the parting moment came,—

Not till my parent, seated in the chaise,
Which was to bear him homeward, turn'd him round
To take his farewell look, did I, at last,
Feel all my desolation.—There I stood,
Surrounded by strange faces, each and all
Impertinently curious—every tongue
Let loose in countless questionings;—my name,
Age, parentage, condition, birth-place, home,
Proficiency in Latin—with swift haste,
Ask'd, answer'd, and reported;—I meanwhile
Awkward and shy, and grievously perplex'd
By such unceasing cannonade of talk,
Stood helpless;—here and there a face express'd
Compassion, as I thought, and sympathy:
Nor was I, with my kinsman at my side,
Bereft of all protection;—yet it seem'd
That when, with sudden clang, the bell rang out
Which summon'd us to supper, I was freed,
As by a friendly voice, from the assaults
Of reckless persecution.—But, that meal!—
That first school supper!—how unlike it seem'd
The comfortable board with tea-cups graced,
The glory of my home!—those tables rough,
Unconscious of a table-cloth, with ink
Profusely flooded, and by pocket-knives,
In characters of every size and shape,
With names of generations past inscribed;—
Those masses, huge and square, of flaccid cheese,
And bread unbutter'd, which each ravenous boy,
Plateless and forkless, seized with eager grasp

And carved, like hungry ploughman, with a knife
Drawn from his pouch ;—those tall white earthen
quarts
Of drink, by men call'd beer, but swipes by boys ;—
Such fare, so served, demanded hungrier maw
Than mine yet was, to relish it.—Full soon
The meal was ended, and—without a word
Of grace, or vesper service offer'd up,—
We were dismiss'd to bed ;—so prayerless then
Were all our English schools ;—but ere I slept,
The thought of home and habits home-instill'd
Came fresh upon my heart :—with bended knee
And clear articulation, undismay'd,
I said my wonted prayer.—Our master's wife,
Who stood beside me, I remember well,
Seem'd touch'd by such unwonted fear of Heaven ;
And, bidding me good night, devoutly pray'd
That I might long remain what then I was.
Vain hope !—a martyr's spirit would have quail'd
(Had such been mine) beneath the unpitying
storm
Of ridicule and insult, rude reproach,
And scorn contemptuous, which, from that wild
rout
Of boisterous urchins burst upon the head
Of such as, like myself, retain'd as yet
Some remnant of home-feelings—some faint
trace
Of care for holy things.—It was their pride,—
Their never failing sport, to drag to light

The secret thoughts of each most gentle heart,
And then, with rude, sarcastic ribaldry,
To set them up for laughing-stocks.—The soul,
Thus outraged, sunk into itself aghast,
And brooded o'er its treasure silently,
Not without deep resentment.—Some there were,
Who, with deceitful show of sympathy,
Would worm their way into the confidence
Of unsuspecting victims,—win complete
An unreserved disclosure of whate'er
Lay nearest to their hearts,—the names they loved,
Their fond remembrances of home-delights,—
The hopes they cherish'd—all that was the food,
The pure refreshment of their inner life ;—
Then straight betray the secrets, darkly won,
And, with demoniac insult, rend and crush
The feelings and affections thus evoked
From the soul's inmost depths.—It had been strange
Had spirits, thus abused, retain'd unchill'd
Their innate tenderness.—Ere long, a new
And less confiding nature crusted o'er
The surface of the old :—their hearts were sear'd
And harden'd to the blows they had to bear ;
And what they lost in tenderness, perchance
They gain'd in firm endurance,—thus prepared
To grapple with the world, and breathe, unhurt,
Its chilling atmosphere.—Such lot was mine ;
Such must be yours, my children.—Be it so ;
I seek not to avert what I lament,
But know to be the inevitable doom

Of Man in this rude Earth;—perchance 'tis well
That this, your first collision with the world,
Should also be your bitterest.
Yet think not
That, when that shock is o'er, the schoolboy life
Is otherwise than happy. Time heals o'er
The wounds which the young heart so keenly feels:
Our nature soon conforms itself to that
Of each new world in which it is to dwell,
And takes its form and impress:—such at least
Was my experience;—casting off my shy
Home-nurtured meekness, I began, ere long,
To rough it with my fellows, and soon won
From persecution clear immunity.
Nor, when I now look back on those old days,
Can I discern much real grief mix'd up
With their abundant gladness.—In that school,
Terror and pain and punishment were known
So little, that, ere many days had past,
I learnt to deem the tales, which I had heard
Of magisterial tyranny, profane
And old wives fables:—birchen rods appear'd
Mere figments of the brain; and weeks elapsed
Ere execution on one luckless wight
Duly perform'd, proved that, beyond all doubt,
Such tales were fundamentally correct,
And true at bottom.—Thus our school-hours pass'd,
Not often sadly; and, when school was o'er,
We had abundant change of joyous sports;—
Fives, cricket, foot-ball, in its season each;

And (what to horticultural adepts
Yielded a graver joy) to each his plot
Of garden ground assign'd, producing crops
Of choicest salad-herbs,—green lettuces,
Mustard and cress, and radishes, oblong
Or turnip-shaped, which graced our evening meal,
And added to its relish.—Once a year
Each gather'd of green gooseberries, wherewithal,
From his own garden, to compound a pie,
Which, baked at the adjacent pastry-cook's,
Supplied a crowning feast.—On summer eves,
Conducted by our masters, and with them
Sharing the rapturous pleasure, we were wont
In Kennet's silver stream to plunge amain.
Ah me! to think how sorely, at the first,
My heart misgave me!—what a weight of fear
I hid beneath a bold and cheerful brow,
When on the river's grassy marge I stood,
And heard the mill-dam waters, through their gates
Let loose, with thundering torrent rage and roar!
Brief terror! soon succeeded by delight
Extatic. Nor were more romantic joys
Denied us;—to a neighbouring forest, ranged
By herds of the red deer, sometimes we went
On holidays, and underneath an oak
(The forest monarch) spread upon the grass
Our sylvan banquet:—there, from branch to branch
We chased the squirrels, and sometimes, athirst
For manlier sport, assail'd the herd itself,

Like Robin Hood's bold outlaws in the glades
Of Sherwood;—but such holidays were rare:
Our every-day diversions were confined
Almost within the churchyard's narrow bounds.
Amidst the graves we sported, rarely touch'd
By aught of solemn feeling, to the place
Accordant—save that never, after dark,
We loved to pass near one mysterious part
Of the old church—a kind of catacomb
Or mausoleum on the northern side,
Encompassing a single marble tomb,—
A tomb without a name, inscriptionless.
Of him who slept beneath it fearful things
Were rumour'd and believed—a dark, strange tale
Of infant murder—of acquittal gain'd
Through legal subtlety—of large estates,
Held by the owner of a neighbouring Hall,
For service by an ancestor perform'd,
In dread forensic strife for life or death,
To that mysterious tenant of the grave.
'Twas seldom that the door of that dread vault
Was open'd;—when it was, with shuddering awe
Sometimes we ventured in, and there beheld,
Suspended on the wall, the mouldering lines
Of a pale portrait, and what seem'd to us
The etching of some dark mysterious deed
Cut rudely upon brass.

But 'twas not long
Before that churchyard in our eyes assumed
An interest more impressive:—in her home,

After long years of patient slow decline,
Our master's daughter died. Her once I saw
White as a sheeted ghost, with thin blue lips
Emaciate—Death's dread seal upon her brow,—
Yet not, methought, unlovely :—with a friend,—
A female friend, the solace and support
Of her long weary sickness, she conversed
In whisper'd accents,—for her voice was gone ;
And when I look'd upon her face, even I
Could tell her end was near :—full soon it came :—
We heard that she was dead, and, in few days,
Were summon'd to attend her to the grave.
That long procession of dejected boys
Following the corpse of one almost as young
As some among themselves, and to the dust
Beholding her, with solemn rites, consign'd,—
That was my first near intercourse with death.
But few months pass'd ere to the daughter's tomb
The mother too was borne, and, with his sons,
Unbroken still, although by grief sore tried,
The father lived a widower.
Shades like these,
Gloomy but transient, swept across the heart
Even of that childish, gay community ;
But soon their trace wore off, and joy return'd,
Brighter from brief suspension :—yet, though grief
To us was a rare visitant,—though scarce
Could we, in conscience, whisper to ourselves
That we could well be happier than we were—
With what intense expectant eagerness

We look'd for our deliverance ; and when June
Brought back the roses, or December bound
The earth in frosty chains, with what parade
Of science arithmetical we framed
Our calendars of weeks, and days, and hours ;
Computing the minutest point of time
Which must elapse before the holidays.
Then, when the wish'd-for morning had arrived,
How we awoke ere sunrise !—if 'twas dark,
How eagerly we watch'd for the first streak
Of candle-light beneath our bed-room doors
Significantly stealing !—in what haste
We huddled on our clothes !—with ears how keen
We listen'd for the roll of distant wheels !
And when, before the gate, the long array
Of chaises from the neighbouring town dispatch'd
To bear us to our homes, assembled stood,
Who could restrain his transport ?—Then what din
Of horns arose !—what ceaseless cannonade
Of pea-shooters and pop-guns !—with what zeal
Of emulative mischief shots were aim'd
At windows which we pass'd !—how proud was he
Who crack'd the largest number !—but even these,
Though joys indeed, were joys of small account
Compared to that intensity of bliss
Which I at least enjoy'd, when I approach'd
Once more my wish'd for home.—Some three
miles off,
Familiar haunts and walks which I had loved,
And spots connected, in my heart of hearts,

With pleasant recollections, by degrees
Stole on me in succession ;—nor, I think,
Shall I, as long as I exist, forget
How, at one well-known angle in the road,
My Father, who on horseback had come forth
To welcome me, appear'd;—next, some small space
Behind, in mirthful and expectant group,
Brothers and sisters, in full progress all,
To meet and ride home with me in the chaise.
That night I slept once more in my old bed,—
My own old darling bed ;—its site unchanged,
The pattern of its curtains still the same ;
And if unmix'd contentment e'er was mine,
'Twas in the sober certainty I felt
Of its complete identity.
But Time,
Jealous of day-dreams at life's sober noon,
Forbids me to enlarge upon the joys
And sorrows of those early schoolboy years.
Scarce noticed I pass o'er the Christmas sports
Of multifarious cousins, round one hearth,
From the four quarters of the compass met,
Filling one spacious ancestorial Hall
With the loud uproar of their merriment ;
The childrens' dance—the game at blind man's buff,—
The courtships and flirtations, three parts jest,
And one part earnest, between boy and girl
Already knit in bonds of cousinhood ;—
Then,—with a breath dissolving love's light chains,—

Black Monday, and his heart-breaking farewells;—
The swift transition from the land of dreams
Ethereal, bright, Elysian, to the dull
And working-day realities of school;—
The qualms of sad home-sickness, soon dispell'd
By studies and diversions in swift round
Alternating, yet still, from time to time,
Admitting to the mind's abstracted gaze
Bright glimpses of remember'd looks and forms;—
These, and ten thousand griefs and joys like
these,—
Successes, disappointments, hopes fulfill'd,
And expectations blighted, friendships form'd
And enmities incurr'd—the good and ill
Strangely commix'd and blended, which make up
The schoolboy's portion—must I leave unsung:
Yet not without a word of grateful praise
And frank acknowledgment of good received,
Would I cast off the thought of that old school
And all its recollections.—I believe
That, not for rudiments of classic lore
Alone, or other knowledge ably taught,
Do I remain its debtor, but for much
Of what is now least blamable, and bad
In all my moral Being.—We were school'd
Not by mere pedants—academic dolts,
With heart and soul all syntax, but by men
With hearts and souls of men, who loved to make
Their pupils their companions,—ate and drank
At the same board, and in their presence spoke

Of what concern'd themselves.—Of open heart
They were, and if the boldness of their speech
And humour sometimes overstepp'd the bounds
Of clerical decorum—if they seem'd
Less strict in their conformity to rules
Conventional—less careful of the shows
Which the world's voice exacts of clergymen,
Than friends desired, or foes could fail to wish—
There was in them a manliness of soul—
A blunt contempt for the world's hollow forms,
And seemings hypocritical, which taught
Us also how to think and act like men.
The spirit of the masters was, in part,
Diffused among the scholars;—we became
Attach'd to them, and to their dwelling-place;
Nor less to one another;—and at last,
When the time came which summon'd me away
For ever, I went forth like one who leaves
His native land and kindred:—sad farewells
Given and received, and benedictions breathed
From no unfervent hearts—pressure of hands,
Sad looks and tears that could not be restrain'd,
Attended my departure as I pass'd
Forth from the door which never more should ope
To me as to an inmate. Once again,
When near twelve years had pass'd, I saw that house,
And spent a day and night beneath its roof,
And slept where I had slept, and traced once more
Each of my boyhood's haunts.—I scarcely think

That now, when others dwell there—now, when life
With me hath reach'd its zenith, and must soon
Begin to sink into the vale of years,—
I e'er again could find it in my heart
There to repeat my visit.

But I turn
To scenes more famous, nor to me less dear,—
Nay dearer, and with feelings more profound
And holy in remembrance close entwined;—
Birth-place, to me, of poesy and love,
Amidst whose classic shades, in after years,
Tarrying, I found and woo'd, and proudly won
Her who, for sixteen years, hath been the stay
And solace of my pilgrimage on earth;
The mother of my children, the unchanged,
Unwearied partner of my joys and griefs.
Fair art thou, with thy crown of ancient towers,
Thy cloister'd dim arcades, thy spacious courts,
Thy verdant fields and venerable trees,
Reflected in the mirror broad and clear
Of thy præterfluent Thames.—With what a calm
Proud confidence thou seem'st to nestle close
Beneath yon castle's overshadowing wing!
As conscious of the loyalty thou lov'st
To cherish in thy sons.—With reverent heart
I greet thee—not unmindful of the good
For which I am thy debtor; nor, if aught
Of evil was mix'd up with it, upbraid
Thee and thy noble nurture for a fault
In part or all my own.—Etona, hail!

And mayst thou flourish ever!—Far removed
From thy fair shades, which yet, from year to year,
I visit, and with love for ever fresh,
And keen enjoyment, wander thro' and thro',—
I summon from my heart's sepulchral depths
Thy buried image.—Rise, as when I first
Beheld thee, half expectant, half in fear
Of that new world mysterious, unexplored,
Within thy walls awaiting me.—Far off
I saw thee—the grey pinnacles and spires
Of thy majestic chapel o'er the pile
Of dull, brick, massive ivy-mantled towers,
Rising in Gothic pride—thy verdant meads
Sprinkled with youthful cricketers, and bright
With vernal sunshine.—Beautiful thou wast,
And with thy loveliest smiles didst welcome me,
A stranger, to thy bosom;—yet not then
(Albeit a stranger) simple or unversed
In all the ways of schoolboys, but with front
Bold and defiant, and with spirit prompt
To meet, and, if need were, repel the assaults
Of tyrannous oppression:—to such pitch
Of rude blunt valour had experience, gain'd
Through previous buffets, strung me, though in sooth,
By nature not a brawler, nor inclined
To pugilistic exploit:—but amidst
Thy peaceful dwellings slender need I found
Of such heroic daring:—there, enthroned
On meet gradations of ascending ranks,
Reign'd Order;—there, by firmest law secured,

Right triumph'd over Might;—not strength alone,
Nor skill to give, nor stubbornness to bear
Black eye and bloody nose and bruise uncouth,
Won station and respect,—nor kept them, won.
A more mysterious, more majestic power
Diffused through, and controlling, every rank
Of that small commonwealth, was recognised,
Felt, and obey'd.—No robber horde were we,
Anarchical, self-will'd, by force alone
From mutual wrong and violence restrain'd;
But a well-govern'd people, proud to own
Legitimate control, and to maintain
Our glorious constitution unimpair'd.
And what if aristocracy, upheld
By right prescriptive, ruled with feudal sway
Her unenfranchised vassals,—still her yoke
Was milder and less grievous to be borne
Than arbitrary bondage, forced elsewhere
By strength of fist, on the reluctant necks
Of trembling urchins, all too weak to win
The freedom which they sigh'd for.—Hard it seem'd,
No doubt, on summer evenings, when the Thames
Was all alive with skiffs, to toil and pant
With infinite expenditure of breath,
And reeking limbs and weariness of heart,
Fetching and flinging home the volant ball
Of some unflagging cricketer:—hard 'twas
To rise before the lark, on menial tasks
Intent, discharging with one pair of hands
The offices of valet, footman, cook,

Housemaid, and shoeblack ;—passing hard to spread,
Hungry oneself and breakfastless, the board
Of some luxurious despot,—he meanwhile
Snoring supine ;—and oft would flesh rebel
When summon'd by the cry of ' Lower Boy,'
To do the bidding of an autocrat.
Yet all such hardships, springing as they did
Not from a tyrant's arbitrary will,
But from the fix'd authority of law
And immemorial custom, were endured
With patience, nay with cheerfulness, as ills
Essential to the state in which we lived,
And not therefrom to be exterminate
Without disruption dire of social bonds
And urgent danger to the common weal :
Transient withal, and soon to be exchanged,
In due succession, for the sweets of power.
Nor lack'd that state of vassalage its rights
And privileges, by the weaker crowd
Not to be lightly valued ;—some defence
Against oppression,—patronage and aid
In trouble or distress,—assistance lent
In toils scholastic :—ne'er did thraldom wear
A yoke less galling :—strong attachment oft
Grew up between the master and the serf;
And each, from the relation held to each,
Derived some moral discipline—was taught
Lessons which else he might have never learnt,
Of kindness and forbearance, self-restraint,
Submission and obedience.—Would that I,

With my rash humour and impetuous blood,
Had learnt those lessons better than I did!
Swift flew, on pleasure's wings, those early months,
The months of my noviciate :—slavery seem'd,
(If slave I was) on that enchanted ground,
Freer than freedom elsewhere :—I had broke
A hundred galling fetters of restraint,
For one (and that a light one) on my will
Newly imposed :—a mighty change had past
Across the spirit of my dream of life.
It seem'd as though a new and ampler world
Of Being to my vision was disclosed,
Or that my soul had burst the embryo bonds
Which held it, like the caterpillar, cramp'd,
Till then, in grovelling form, to soar aloft
On wings of new-born joyance. Now no more
Within a playground's narrow bounds confined,
Not without peril to be overpass'd,—
Fetter'd no more to the despised routine
Of sports and occupations which befit
The pre-existent state of private school,—
My spirit might expatiate, uncontroll'd,
Through boundless realms of pleasure :—Space was free—
Time only had its limits ;—field and grove,
Water and land,—almost the air itself
Lay open—the whole world before us smiled,
Our portion and inheritance! Nor lack'd
The energies and faculties within

Proportionate development:—our sports
Plans, enterprises, aspirations, aims,
Were all of manhood, manly:—tops and taws
Were things forgotten;—even the cricket-ground
And fives-court held but secondary rank
Among our recreations:—on the breast
Of Thames, it was our pride in trim-built skiffs
To shoot amain—now singly, now in crews,
With lusty tug of oar, in eager race
Contending;—now along the river's marge
Exploring unknown regions;—and when June
Brought round the birth-day of the good old king,
(Our own especial patron,)—with what pride
And pomp aquatic, in procession long,
Our galleys clave the water!—what wild rout
Of horsemen on the banks!—what jovial glee
Of banqueters!—and when a rocket's blaze,
Scattering its fiery spangles on the sky,
Gave notice that the ten-oar was in sight,
How was each coign of vantage—bank and bridge,
Boatyard and terraced garden, wharf and quay,
Window and roof, with congregated crowds
Of gazers peopled!—what sublime display
Of pyrotechnic wonders seem'd to mock
The all too tardy twilight!—But even this,
For some adventurous spirits, was too dull
And spiritless a joy!—Such burnt to win
The sportsman's noble fame, albeit alloy'd
By ill report of poacher:—with the dawn,
O'erleaping the restraint of bolts and bars,

They ranged, with dog and gun, the near preserves,
Or from forbidden waters bore the lines
Rich with nocturnal spoil :—the river swans,
Breasting, with snow-white swell of downy plumes,
The silvery stream, themselves were not exempt
From rude assault, but stricken through and through
By murderous volleys, yielded up their lives
To daring marksmen ; then beneath the shade
Of favouring night brought home, and for the spit
With pomp of culinary skill prepared,
Were roasted and served up—their savoury steam
Provoking the keen appetites of those
Who, like myself, eschewing sportsman craft,
Shared not the sportsman's banquet :—on the turf
Meanwhile athletic cricketers, for strife
With the pick'd champions of some neighbouring club
Preparing, plied the bat and drove the ball
In lusty sport.—Oh ! who can e'er forget,
When the day fix'd for final conflict came,
How breathlessly we rush'd, from school let loose,
To view the mighty game !—how, from afar,
Between the umbrageous trees of Poet's walk,
The slim white figures of the combatants
Glanced on our eager sight !—with what suspense,—
What alternations swift of hope and fear,
We watch'd the progress of the game !—and when
On Eton's side the fatal wicket fell,
Or aught occurr'd presaging her defeat,—
How keen a pang of anguish and dismay

Thrill'd through our trembling ranks!—then, if at last
The fortune of the day declared for us,—
With what a maddening shout of victory
We rent the welkin!—Waterloo itself,
(For Waterloo was fought in those wild days)
Scarce seem'd a mightier triumph than some match
Won against Epsom.
But to loftier strains
Tune we our harp!—Descend, O Muse, and sing
The glories of Long Chamber, ere its name,
By march of innovation, from the earth
Be, with itself, erased.—Ere I became
Its denizen, dire tales had reach'd my ear
Of horrors by its dreadful walls conceal'd;
Of slavery more oppressive than aught known
Or e'en imagined by inventive thought,
Among the happy dwellers in the town;
Of penal torments by no living tongue
Divulged, nor e'er, beyond those prison walls,
Known or conceived;—myself the destined thrall
Of one the most despotic of a race
Of most imperious despots.—Time sped on;
The day arrived on which I was to don
The gownsman's sable garb,—and after due
Examination held, and solemn course
Of ceremonial forms, on bended knee
Observed with silent awe, night saw me housed
Beneath that dreaded roof.—It was an hour
Not soon to be forgotten.—Amidst sounds
Discordant, multifarious,—song and shout,—

Imperious summons and responsive cry
Reciprocal of master and of slave,—
And long shrill whistle through the darkness heard—
(Darkness scarce pierced by the thin glimmering light
Of candle, here and there its feeble ray
Emitting through the interminable gloom
Of that long spectral vault,)—with heart perplex'd,
I sought my destined resting place:—but where
Might resting-place be found?—forlorn I gazed
On all that endless row of bedsteads rude,
Each bearing what appear'd a mattress coarse,
Cover'd by coarser rug, alternating
With rude mis-shapen semblance of bureaus,
Square, upright, with cerulean paint bedaub'd,—
(Cerulean once, now with ten thousand hues
Distain'd)—sole furniture in that grim den,
Save tapestry of cobwebs, which had seen
The days of the sixth Henry,—here in threads
Of gossamer dependent from the roof,
There curtaining, with folds of filmy mist,
The smash'd and flapping casements:—chair was none;
No, not a three-legg'd stool, nor oaken bench,
Nor aught which ingenuity of need
Might mould into a seat;—no separate nook,
Withdrawn and shelter'd from the public gaze,
Where the poor novice might brief refuge find
From tumult and bewilderment;—all seem'd

A maze of restless motion :—but ere long
From out that weltering chaos was evolv'd
A world distinct and orderly ;—the din
And hubbub had subsided ;—lights appear'd
Forth starting in succession ;—beds arranged
By nice precision of experienced hands,
Were ready, at the apartment's upper end,
For rest luxurious of aristocrats,
Who, in their studies pent, or far apart
In separate chambers, with each other held
Exclusive converse, or with book and pen
Beguiled the lingering hours :—the middle ranks,
In pairs or cluster'd groups, paced to and fro,
Or lounged on unmade beds :—the vulgar herd
(Their menial service done) in haste arranged
Their own hard pallets, pillowless, and soon
Sank into dreamless sleep,—some six or eight
Alone excepted, from the rest in turn
For servitorial functions, week by week,
Selected, on the lordly board to spread
The nightly meal, and do the high behests
Of sixth-form revellers ;—to each his task
Duly prescribed, as academic rank
Defined his office ;—some, the upper mess,
(So named) above the rest pre-eminent,
Brought from the neighbouring buttery meat and
bread,
With foaming cans of beer ;—to some 'twas given
To tend the nightly fire, and in their gowns
(Ne'er meant for such base service) to bring home

A ponderous load of coals, upon their backs
Artistically piled ;—some, clerkly-wise,
Noted, on tablets fair, with pen and ink
The mandates of their lords,—by one, who watch'd
Outside our prison bars, to be convey'd
Into the farthest town, and thence evoke
Luxurious freightage of nocturnal cheer.
It were a work o'ertasking my poor strength
To tell of half the feats within those walls
Nightly perform'd ;—to paint the winter fire,
By signal of the clock at half-past nine,
Fenced round with bedsteads, for the middle ranks
Forming a snug enclosure, within which,
Story, and song, and jest, and laugh went round,
Till bed-time came ;—to tell how, many an hour,
While our proud seniors half the livelong night
Conversed, until the embers died away,
We lay awake and listen'd to their talk,
Now serious, now jocose,—with classic lore,
Or speculation philosophical,
Sometimes enrich'd,—sometimes with baser stuff
Degraded and defiled ;—and how, on nights
Of revelry, when coolest brains grew hot
With wine and wassail, we, in trembling dread,
Beneath our bed-clothes cower'd, till (every light
Quench'd suddenly) in mad, tyrannic sport,
Bedstead and bed, hurl'd suddenly aloft,
Dislodged their luckless tenant, in dire plight,
Heels upward on the floor.—But these were rare
And soon forgotten hardships :—other sports

More genial, nor exclusively enjoy'd
By the patrician few, from time to time
Cheer'd our imprisonment:—in motley form
Of merry masquerade, our mirth full oft
Broke loose and ran mad riot:—High and low,
With Saturnalian licence, burst their bonds
Conventional, and gamboll'd out the night
In frolic unrestrain'd:—sometimes arose,
(As by strange magic of Aladdin's lamp,)
A theatre, complete in all its parts,
With marvellous diversity of scene
And gorgeous decorations, and bright blaze
Of cunningly disposed and countless lights,
Embellishing the histrionic craft
Of our Collegian Roscii:—nor, in sooth,
Lack'd we or comic humour, or, at times,
Some touch of natural pathos;—and, if these
E'er flagg'd, rich compensation still we found
In our grotesque apparel:—'twas a sight
Worthy of more fastidious eyes than ours—
That motley pageant of fantastic garbs
Assembled in our green-room;—boyhood's limbs
Robed in the grave habiliments of age;—
The corpulent round paunch of monk or friar,—
The rustic with red mass of hair unkempt,
Smock frock, and scarlet hose, and nether vest
Of buckskin, begg'd or borrow'd, for the nonce,
E'en from the haunch of veritable clown—
And, (stranger, more fantastic than all else)
The garb, shape, face, and voice of womanhood,

Aped by some beardless boy—his burly waist
Mocking the close imprisonment of stays ;
His bust by cunning artifice swoln out
To feminine proportions, and his brow
O'ershadow'd by profusion, rich and rare,
Of borrow'd ringlets, while with mincing gait
Affected, and his voice's tenor pipe
Reduced to a shrill treble, he assumed
The gestures of a maiden—by applause
Obstreperous of the congregated crowd
Not scantily rewarded.—All alike,
Actors and audience, willing both to please
And to be pleased, received and gave, by turns,
Reciprocal enjoyment ;—well I wot
None such was ever felt in Drury Lane !
And was this Eton ?—in no better lore
Than this doth she instruct the ripening mind,
And train the expanding heart ?—Nay, deem
not so,
But, in the lengthening retrospect of years,
The sports and conflicts of the schoolboy world,—
Its microcosmic cares, and joys, and griefs,—
The daily intercourse of boy with boy,—
Appear the true realities ;—all else,
Which, when 'twas present, seem'd important, now
Looks dim and dwindled :—even the daily task,—
The weekly verses,—the whole grave routine
Of studies, with their prizes and rewards,—
Seem insignificant, minutest spots
In memory's landscape, which the limner's touch

Passes unnoticed.—Yet, among my peers,
(Albeit no sleepless student,) I enjoy'd
A scholar's reputation, nor disdain'd
The accomplishment of verse ;—and now, me-
thinks,
Amidst those preludings of boyish thought
And those young classic studies, I discern
The germs of much, which, growing with my
growth,
And strengthen'd with my strength, hath since
become
A portion of my Being.—If my song
Hath ever found its way to gentle hearts,—
'Twas by the nurture and developement
Of dormant powers, then first and only found,
That its wild notes were fashion'd to express
A natural tenderness.—To me, no tale
Of martial prowess, or renown'd exploit,
By poet or historian told of yore,
Was e'er attractive ;—little, in my heart,
Responded to the burst of trumpet blast,
Or host with host conflicting ;—but I loved
('Twas the first poetry I ever *felt*)
That ode of Horace, which relates the doom
Of Hypermnestra, daring bonds and death,
For her young bride-groom's sake,—and Ovid's tale
Of grief domestic, that heart-breaking night
Appointed for his exile :—I admired,
With most intense and earnest sympathy,
Alcestis' self-devotion, and rejoiced

With an exceeding joy, when Hercules
Restored her from the grave to life and bliss
And his embraces for whose sake she died.
Among such images of household love
My fancy fondly revell'd, and my heart
Responded to my fancy.—I ne'er form'd
An abstract scheme of bliss, which was not based
On the calm comfort of a home and hearth
Surrounded by bright faces rich with love
Connubial and parental.—Bounteous Heaven,
Exceeding whatsoever hope pourtray'd,
Or young imagination fondly dream'd,
Hath given me more than all my boyish heart
E'er sigh'd for.—Fancy's picture-world is now
To me less glorious than reality.
But my brain teems with spectral forms of thought
Evoked from sleep sepulchral—long withdrawn
From the mind's eye, but unforgotten still
And fresh as heretofore.—I must perforce
Disperse the wildering vision.—Fair retreat,—
Thou cradle of my boyish phantasy,—
Farewell!—with deep and undiminish'd love
I cherish thy remembrance, and rejoice
That o'er thy courts a brighter day hath risen
Than my young eyes beheld;—for thou hast felt
The impulse of the spirit now awake
In the deep bosom of thy mother Church,
And, strong in thy re-animated faith,
Art, as I trust, become a schoolmistress

To bring young hearts to Christ.—Beneath thy
towers
Religion, long obscured, once more uplifts
Her venerable head,—not now disguised
And sore degraded by low-mutter'd charm
Of Latin prayers, which, with indecent haste,
Impatient urchins gabbled, unreproved
By teachers as impatient—but infused
Into the fountains and fresh springs of thought,
And mingling her pure essence with its stream,
Which widens as it flows. Nor let me grieve
(Though haply there be cause of real grief)
For old associations, soon to pass
Into the number of the things that were,—
When even Long Chamber from the world's wide
face
Shall have been swept for ever.—Be its sins
(Not few, nor venial) with its joys forgot;
And may a better generation find
At least no meaner shelter where it stood!
I have a friend—almost the only one
Who, from our schoolboy days to life's full noon,
Hath kept his heart unchanged and true to me,
Though many a year hath past since last we met,
And more may pass before we meet again;—
One friend—almost one only—faithful found.
To him, in distant vales a sojourner,
Far in the pleasant south, I now commend
(What to my children hath already been
With dedication more express consign'd)

This song—brief record of those early days
In which we were companions.—Different cares
And sympathies have gather'd around each;
And yet I think, if e'er we meet again,
We shall not feel estranged:—meanwhile to him
And those who love him, though to me unknown,
Be this my pledge of boyish vows unbroke,
And friendship by the world as yet unchill'd.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK III.

YOUTH.

INSCRIBED TO DERWENT COLERIDGE.

The youth who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended. WORDSWORTH.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK III.

YOUTH.

With Friendship's sacred name my song broke off;—
With Friendship's sacred name shall it resume
Its onward course,—not now on boyish sports,
And boyish cares intent, but borne along
(If from its subject it may yet receive
A kindred impulse) by the swelling flood
Of youthful passion through the veins diffused,
And vigorous thought new-born, and hope unquench'd
By sad experience, lighting up the eye
With gleams which seem prophetic—and are not.
Friend, whom in Granta's academic halls
First met, soon loved—thenceforward to my side
Fast bound by poesy's free-masonry
And mutual veneration for a name
To me most sacred, and by thee beloved
With all a son's affection—Friend, who now
These more than twenty years, with thy profound
And fervent spirit, hast supported mine,—
Transferring whatsoe'er can be transferr'd
From thy rich depths of intellectual wealth
Into this lighter and more sterile soil,

Which yields but scant return;—to thee this strain,
A monument to long departed youth,
I consecrate:—To whom indeed on Earth
If not to thee, my earliest Poet-friend,
Should song of mine be offer'd?—Who but thou,
With earnest converse and assiduous zeal
Of sympathy,—neglectful of the gift
On thee more richly lavish'd,—fann'd in me
The spark of youthful phantasy?—to whom,
If not to thee, is due on my behalf
A debt of deepest gratitude for all
That, in time past, my soul hath ever felt
Of hope and joy poetic?—Small indeed
The fruit of all thy culture:—those long years
Of absence, during which we lived and wrought
In distant vineyards, seem'd to wither up
Whate'er brief promise of more healthful song
Thy care had caused to germinate;—and now,—
When Providence once more hath brought us near
Each to the other,—'tis too late to call
Lost seasons back:—but I have deeper debts
To thee than such as these, and there are bonds
More sacred, knitting fast thy heart to mine,
Than even the electric chain of phantasy:—
Warm sympathies cementing each with each
In joys and sorrows of the world that is;—
Remembrances, now sweet, of conflicts once
Most bitter, but at length with triumph crown'd,
And still imparting to our noon of life
Its best of earthly joys;—the mutual love

Of those respectively beloved by both
Beyond all else that breathes;—and (more than all)
Our hope in worlds to come—our task in this;
For we are, both, ambassadors for Christ,
And thou high honour'd in His English Church
Among her theologians;—in thyself,
No meanly skill'd expounder of her creed,—
Nor worthy of less honour, for that thou
Interpretest the mystic mind of One,
The mightiest thinker of these latter days.
For such, thy late achievements — how much more
Than for whate'er of high philosophy
Or art poetic, in our youthful days,
I from thy lips derived—am I become
Thy glad and grateful debtor.—Thou alone,
With stedfast gaze intent, hast well discern'd,
Through all the mists of error which bedim
Her heavenly features, the true spouse of Christ:—
Not that stern phantom, which, on Isis banks,
Enthusiasts have beheld, and in devout
And abject error worshipp'd—a severe
And loveless idol, from men's sympathies
And craving hearts estranged,—in garb of power
And terrible authority array'd,—
O'erbearing Reason's clear uplifted voice
With frown dogmatic, and converting Faith
Itself into a blind credulity
Most slavish and idolatrous;—not such
The vision thou hast seen, nor (falser yet)

That hard-eyed spectre, by the will of man
Engender'd,—altogether of the earth
And earthy,—which the laws of human realms
Create, and can at pleasure uncreate.
Not this,—not such as this, the Church of Christ,
Seen and with master hand pourtray'd by thee,—
But one, who on her fair and ample brow
Bears the bright impress of Divinity;—
No step-dame, but a mother of brave sons
With all a mother's heart,—the nurse and guide
Of Faith and Reason,—of celestial Truth
The guardian and the witness.—In thy page,
Well reason'd, pregnant with profoundest thought,
I, an unworthy student, seem to hold
Communion with thy spirit afar off;
And sitting at thy feet, as I was wont
In earlier days, with willing mind imbibe
Instruction which makes smooth the way to death.
We are alone:—none other now on Earth
Shares our full bond of friendship.—One there was,
Beloved by both, and who repaid our love
As only natures of the purest mould
Repay the love of others.—Full two years
Have past since we consign'd him to the grave
In life's unripen'd prime,—and still it seems
As if we could not think of him as dead;—
The immortality which dwelt in him
So swallow'd up the mortal.—Yet 'tis true,
"The good die first;" and his celestial part
Was purged so nearly of all earth's alloy,

That 'twere, in us, most selfish to have wish'd
That he would tarry in our homes of clay.
Yet few there were, perchance, but thou and I,
And one,—his own by more especial ties,—
One fondlier cherish'd in his heart of hearts,—
Few but we three, who knew the wondrous depths
Of that mysterious spirit.—To the world
He veil'd, beneath a smooth and smiling brow,
Its fathomless abyss,—with flippant jest,
And poignant sarcasm, and sly equivoque,
And many a coruscation, bright though brief,
Of wit, and humour more akin than wit
To genius—drawing off intrusive eyes
From that intensity of human love
And that most deep and tender sympathy
Close guarded in the chambers of his heart.
His generation knew him not;—he seem'd
To worldly men a trifler,—and when years,
Correcting the rash fervour of his youth,
Taught him to honour much which once he scorn'd,
And guard what he had panted to o'erthrow—
Men deem'd such seeming fickleness the fruit
Of falsehood or caprice, and factious tongues
Were busy to defame him:—he, meanwhile,
Through honour and dishonour, through report
Evil and good,—by rash, misjudging men
Accounted a deceiver, though most true
And strong in his integrity,—maintain'd
His course unalter'd, and in vain assail'd
By obloquy and slander.—Death hath nipp'd

His promise in the bud, or he had rank'd
Among our noblest statesmen, and perchance
Proved to the Church, in this distracted realm,
Her ablest champion in her utmost need.
As such let Her bewail him!—but to us
He leaves a deeper sorrow:—Can that hour
E'er pass away from memory, when we two
With that highminded lady, hand in hand
Knelt by his coffin, till her deeper grief
At last found vent in tears, and we conversed
Of him, and what he was, and what he is,
In words of solemn calmness?—or that morn,
When, one by one, into the room of death,
Hung with funereal black, the mourners stole,—
A sad and silent crowd, by various ties,
Public and private, join'd to him in life,—
All grieving for him dead.—The statesman there
Forgot the war of factions, nor refused
To his untimely loss some natural tears;—
The pale-eyed scholar side by side was seen
With men of wordy strife, who for a day
Suspended their forensic rivalries
To weep upon his grave;—the merchant left
His counting-house,—and friends who had not met
For many a year before, met there to mourn
A nobler friend than all.—She too, his own—
His almost more than wife, (if more there be
In this cold world,) regardless of the laws
Of tyrant custom, came with tearless eye
And brow erect, though pale almost as his,

To give him to the grave:—through busy streets
Slowly and sadly moved the funeral train,
Until within the cemetery gates
At length it halted, and the solemn words
Of our sublimest ritual rendered back
Dust to its dust—the spirit to the hands
Of Him who gave it:—painful to the ear
Was that dull, grinding, subterraneous sound
Of some unseen machinery, which, with slow
Scarce visible descent, received the Dead
Into the opening bosom of the earth;
And deep the desolation which oppress'd
Our spirits—the dejection which we felt,
When we (the three who loved and mourn'd him most)
Together bent our steps into the vault
To bid our last farewell.—Between long rows
Of dead, each coffin'd in its separate niche,
Tier above tier—a subterranean vault
Of sepulchres—we walk'd, until we came
To his dark narrow home;—the charnel gusts
Smote close and chill,—our tread, with hollow sound,
Fell echoing, till (the wholesome upper air
And cheerful light of day once more regain'd)
With aching hearts we parted, to renew
Our troubled Dream of Life.
A dream indeed,—
A feverish waking dream—more shadowy still
The longer that it lasts!—Whate'er in youth

Seem'd real, ere our middle age arrives,
Even like a phantom vanishes away,
Or crumbles in our grasp.—Our life itself—
Which once appear'd as if 'twould never end—
Is found to be a shadow, soon to flit
Away, and be forgotten;—even the schemes—
The air-built castles of our early days—
That vigorous hope with which we look'd abroad
Into the opening world—that confidence
In the bright-seeming future, by no fear
Of change or chance diminish'd—were in truth
More tangible possessions in themselves
Than the realities of later life.
And such were thine and mine when first we met
(A freshman thou, and I a junior soph,)
In the Old Court at King's. Unlike, till then,
Had been our several nurtures, each to each;
Thou, from thy birth, a hardy mountaineer,
A poet's child, thyself a Poet born,
And cradled among minds of giant mould,
Hadst, almost with my mother's milk, imbibed
Philosophy, which with thy growth had grown,
And with thy strength been strengthen'd:—in the north—
A wanderer among lakes and mighty hills—
Scarce conscious e'en of such restraint as curbs
The southern schoolboy—thou hadst kept unstain'd
Thy sturdy freshness and simplicity;
And, in thy native strength of intellect,
O'erleaping the strait bounds of puny thought

Which circumscribed the realm in which we moved,
(Weak jinglers of hexameters,) could'st breathe
In worlds beyond our ken;—I, train'd and taught
In academic craft, and, for my feats
Poetic, with Etonian laurel crown'd—
A schoolboy bard, with schoolboy lore imbued,
And thinking like a schoolboy—what was I,
That I should match with thee?—yet match'd we were,
If not in genius, yet in sympathy;
Each reverencing what the other reverenced—each
Still loving whatsoe'er the other loved;
Our hopes, our aspirations, our desires,
Our plans and projects for the years to come,
Akin, if not identical:—the world
As yet was all before us—the young blood
Ran riot in our veins,—we felt our life
Strong, buoyant, full of hope—and we were free
To "frame" whate'er "high purposes" we would
Of intellectual enterprise, "at war
With fleshly shame;"—so sang thy muse to mine,
Who tuned her chords responsive.—What more blest
Could either of us wish, than to pursue
Together the green paths of poesy,
And cultivate the fair domains of thought
Which nature had assign'd us? Of renown
And rank among our country's sons of song
Methinks we dream'd but little:—fame was not
Our idol, nor the prize for which we strove.

Our phantasy should be its own reward;
Or if we needed other, that should be
The love of woman :—we would pitch our tent
In some sequester'd valley, and there dwell—
We and two gentle beings, who would link
Their lot with ours, and in our arms repose,
And, with serene and fervent sympathy
Sharing and sweetening all our toils and cares,
Diffuse perpetual sunshine through our souls,
Which, by that warmth impregnated, should teem
With most abundant growth of noble thoughts
And lofty speculations, and rich store
Of sweet and bitter fancies.—Dreams like these
At times beguiled us, but our daily talk
Was of more serious matter;—of the laws
Which govern the mysterious heart of man;—
Of dogmas transcendental, to my ear
A theme, till then unknown, though long to thee
Familiar, and with earnest zeal explored;—
Of all the wild and wondrous world of song,
And those who hold its empire—chiefly Him
The myriad-minded;—nor were they forgot,
The mighty masters of our later day,
And Him their Coryphæus, then not yet
Enthroned, as now, on England's inmost heart,
But by a few (the true poetic Church,
As they esteem'd themselves) with earnest zeal
And somewhat of a fond idolatry
Revered, nay, almost worshipp'd.—With such
themes

Were mingled yet profounder;—Truth divine
Reveal'd to erring man—Redemptive love,
In all its breadth, and length, and depth, and
height,
By thee with theologic gaze intent
Contemplated;—and if from the routine
Of academic study we diverged
Too oft, and were forgetful of the claims
Of curves and squares, and parallelograms,
Cones, angles, sines and cosines, ordinates,
Abscissæ, and the like—methinks, our time,
Though sore mispent, was yet not wholly lost
In converse such as this.
Not wholly lost—
And yet my loss was grievous;—not perchance
So much for the amount of actual lore
Neglected, or of science unattain'd,
As for the loss of discipline incurr'd,
Moral and intellectual,—self-control,
And self-denial,—patience in pursuit
Of knowledge,—perseverance to surmount
Impediments—and firmness to withstand
Temptation, unacquired.—If I am now
Too much an idler—prone to leave undone
My daily task of ministerial toil,
And loiter in my study o'er some page
Of theologic trifling—or forsake
Even that for lighter reading such as charm'd
My young imagination—to those strolls
In part I owe it, which, from day to day,

We two were wont to take, in hours by right
To academic study set apart.
Pleasant they were, and pleasant was the talk
By which they were beguiled ;—to me oft rich
In knowledge newly gain'd.—We walk'd and
walk'd
As chance directed—by the river side
To Granchester—along the lanes which lead
To Cherry Hinton—out by Trumpington—
And Madingley, sole village from the plague
Of ugliness, in that drear land, exempt:
The Gogmagogs were conscious of our talk ;
And I may say that seldom I came home
No wiser than I went.—But in the days
Of early spring, when even those treeless fields
Look'd pleasant in the sunshine, and the lanes
With constellations of bright primrose tufts
Were here and there bestudded,—when the scent
Of the cinque-spotted cowslip was exhaled
From the low meadow grass,—and in the woods
The nightingale (more fitly heard by night)
Sang lustily all day—with what a bound
Of vernal exultation forth we sprang
Into the clear, fresh air !—how recklessly,
Spurning the narrow bounds of space and time,
We rambled in the ways of our own hearts
And sight of our own eyes !—with what dispatch
Of keen and craving hunger, we assail'd
Our mid-day luncheon in the village inn,
Served haply by the fair domestic hands

Of her, the maid of Quy—that saint whose shrine
By many a Cantabrigian pilgrimage,
(By none more zealous or more pure than ours)
Was, in those days, frequented!—then at eve,
As, homeward bound, through the suburban streets
We wended in grotesque and careless guise—
The very tassels of our trencher caps
With cowslips interlaced,—how cheap we held
The laughter of the mob!—how little fear'd
The frown of Dean or Proctor!—then our meal
Together shared,—the savoury steak sent hot
From the cook's shop—the amber-flowing ale
Of Trinity,—the spare dessert,—the wine
With olives relish'd—and our day's discourse
Prolong'd till midnight!—College life alone
Can boast such joys as these.

Nor let me pass
Unsung, those nights and suppers of the gods—
Feasts of the hungry soul, when, at the close
Of some well argued, eloquent debate
Held in the "Union," which with lengthen'd roar
Of cheers had shaken Petty Cury's roofs,
Startling the jaded shopman from his sleep,—
The leaders of the war on either side,
(Their strife suspended) to my neighbouring rooms
Adjourn'd, to sup on oysters.—Aid me now,
O Muse, to tell who first, who last engaged
In those keen conflicts of contending wit
And appetite as keen;—who (since renown'd
In senatorial or forensic war)

From their first proof and exercise of arms
Offensive and defensive, came to wield
Less cumbrous weapons in colloquial sport,
At those repasts, with us. First, He whose praise
This song already, though in feeble notes,
Unworthily, hath sung—he, then a youth
Fresh from Etonian discipline, well skill'd
In all her classic craft, and therewithal
Known, ere his sun in Granta's sky arose,
For many a boyish feat, unlike a boy's,
Of sparkling prose and verse,—he graced our board
With that rich vein of fine and subtle wit—
That tone of reckless levity—that keen
And polish'd sarcasm—arm'd with which he waged
A war of dexterous sword-play, wherein few
Encounter'd, none o'ercame him:—by his side
Sat One of ampler brow and ruder frame,—
A presence with gigantic power instinct,
Though outwardly, in truth, but little graced
With aught of manly beauty—short, obese,
Rough-featured, coarse complexion'd, with lank
hair,
And small grey eyes,—in face (so many said)
Not much unlike myself,—his voice abrupt,
Unmusical;—yet, when he spake, the ear
Was charm'd into attention, and the eye
Forgot the visible and outward frame
Of the rich mind within; with such swift flow
Of full, spontaneous utterance, the tongue
Interpreted the deep impassion'd thought,

And pour'd upon our sense exhaustless store
Of multifarious learning;—for his mind
Had been, from earliest childhood up to youth,
Insatiable of knowledge, and his brain,—
Not like a pedant's, cumber'd and confused
With ill-digested, heterogeneous hoards
Of intellectual matter, but endued
With power to shape and mould its gather'd wealth
As need suggested,—turn'd, with ready tact,
Its huge artillery on whatever point
It pleased him to assail,—and (sooth to say)
He was not over-scrupulous;—to him
There was no pain like silence—no constraint
So dull as unanimity:—he breathed
An atmosphere of argument, nor shrank
From making, where he could not find, excuse
For controversial fight:—yet when the fit
Was off him, and he gave his mind free scope
To follow Nature's bidding—who so full
Of genial thought and feeling?—who so keen
To separate truth from error—to detect
The fallacy in specious terms involved,
Or in the realms of Fiction to discern
The beautiful and just?—He was, in truth,
(So transcendental sages would affirm)
The king of Understanding—unapproach'd,
Unrivall'd in his own particular range
Of thought;—and if that range was not the first—
If there were regions into which his gaze
Pierced not—an intuition more profound

Than he affected—such deficiency
Found ample compensation in the strength
And full perfection of his actual powers,
And the quick tact which wielded them.—Meanwhile
His heart was pure and simple as a child's,
Unbreathed on by the world,—in friendship warm,
Confiding, generous, constant; and though now
He ranks among the great-ones of the earth,
And hath achieved such glory, as will last
To future generations—he, I think,
Would sup on oysters with as right good will
In this poor home of mine, as e'er he did
On Petty Cury's classical first floor
Some twenty years ago.
With him in bonds
Of mutual friendship link'd—in classic lore
His equal, though of less voracious maw,
And slower to digest what he devour'd
Of intellectual food—appear'd a youth
Of comeliest presence, though of brow, perchance,
Less lofty and projecting than the brain
Beneath it would have taught phrenologists
To look for in its owner:—grave he was,
And prone to silence; and whene'er he spake,
'Twas with a slow, sententious utterance,
As if each word that dropp'd was first well weigh'd,
And licensed to go forth;—his manner shy
And somewhat puritanical;—yet none
Possess'd a mind with richer humour fraught,
Or saw, with so acute and quick a glance,

The ludicrous in all things:—not in vain
He woo'd the Muse—with no ungraceful steps
Walk'd through the land of Fancy in its length
And in its breadth; but with more earnest love
He sought profounder lore:—his mind severe,
Patient, exact, with most tenacious grasp
Held fast, and grappled with, and overcame
Whate'er of difficult impediment
Beset his path to knowledge;—nor was truth,
Thus hardly won, less resolutely kept.
The rash vagaries of erratic thought
And venturous speculation, which seduced
More sanguine minds, ne'er raised a doubt in his,
Nor shook the deep foundations of his faith
Even for a moment.—Now, a learned man,
In professorial chair he holds his state
Didactic, and with classic lore imbues
Another generation.

Turn we next
To one but rarely, on those nights, our guest;—
To him—thy kinsman, once my schoolfellow,
And more than most of my compeers at school,
Or thy collateral kindred, to us both
By close-knit bonds united;—in those days
A comely youth, though prematurely grey,
And long ere manhood's noon upon his brow
To wear the stainless silver of old age.
Graceful he was in person and in mind,
Enrich'd with classical accomplishments,
And stores of various study—apt to learn,

And with intense susceptibility
Of soul and sense endued. Some deem'd him proud,
And in himself too confident.—In truth,
'Twas not his nature to dissemble powers
With which he had been gifted, nor the lore
To which he had attain'd; and envious men,
Who hated him for both, were prompt to blame
That which they could not imitate:—yet few
Were cast by nature in a finer mould,
Or arm'd with apprehensions more acute,
And exquisite of beauty and of truth,
Moral and intellectual. To create
Was not his province; but his mind received,
And treasured, and retain'd, with ready tact,
The lessons by profounder minds instill'd,
Which, with expressive utterance, to the taste
And apprehensions of the world at large
He skilfully adapted.—Hence his task
Was rightly chosen, when, in after years,
He to the teaching of that Master Mind
Subjected his whole soul—content to share
The glory which must rest, in time to come,
On those outpourings of immortal thought
By his sole pen preserved, or by his toil
Collected and arranged. His was, in truth,
A proud and happy lot, to have imbibed
Those lessons, while he lived, and after death
To link his own remembrance with the name
Of Earth's profoundest Teacher:—happier still
In that his toils were sweeten'd and sustain'd

By such rich treasure of connubial wealth
As few have e'er possess'd. Not mine the task
To seize and fix the ethereal lineaments
Of that majestic spirit, which illumed
With rays intense of intellectual light,
Corporeal beauty far surpassing aught
That to the painter's, or the poet's eye,
Imagination ever yet reveal'd
Of loveliness ideal—while the heart,
Unchill'd and unsophisticate, still throbb'd
With woman's deepest love—still sympathized
With whatsoe'er of human joy or grief
Demands or merits sympathy—still shared,
With unaffected, frank simplicity,
The interests and the cares, the healthful sports,
The mingled smiles and tears, which mark the course
Of ordinary life—suggesting thus,
To the discerning and observant mind,
How far inventive phantasy falls short
Of Nature's actual handiwork !—not now—
Not in such strains as these, be her high praise
Attempted;—nor let step of mine invade,
With reckless tread, the still, sepulchral gloom
Which shrouds her recent sorrow.—For the Dead—
For Him, the gentle and the pure of heart,
The generous, the affectionate—from Earth
At life's full noon removed—for him, be tears
Of true and reverential sorrow shed !—
For Her—what more can sympathy desire
Than those divinest gifts already hers ?—

Patience and faith to bear the will of Heaven,
And power, while yet on earth, to breathe in worlds
Of pure celestial thought, and cheering hope
Of future bliss, and memory of the Past,
To soothe the o'erburden'd Present.
Next appear'd,
In that superb array of noble minds,
A pale, spare man, of high and massive brow,
Already furrow'd with deep lines of thought
And speculative effort—grave, sedate,
And (if the looks may indicate the age)
Our senior some few years:—no keener wit,
No intellect more subtle, none more bold
Was found in all our host; none deeplier fraught
With stores of various learning;—but, in him,
Imagination, fancy, feeling, taste,
And reverential faith and fervent zeal
Were overlaid by huge incumbent weight
Of understanding—so, of late, defined—
The faculty which judgeth after sense.
With poesy and poets still he waged
Relentless war—deeming all such, in sooth,
Mere cumberers of the ground, or haply worse—
Despisers of plain truth—mad mountebanks,
Who led the minds of simple folk astray
By their fantastic juggleries, and drown'd
The voice of reason with their jingling rhymes.
Such craft to him was hateful;—Truth alone,
Truth tangible and palpable;—such truth
As might be weigh'd and measured,—truth deduced

By logical conclusion, close, severe,
From premises incontrovertible—
This was the mistress of his fond desire—
His first, his only love;—of aught more fair
Or wonderful he dream'd not;—nought to him
Existed, in the whole wide world of thought,
Save what could be defined, mapp'd out, survey'd,
Adjusted to his liking;—to his eye,
Whatever was ideal, seem'd untrue:
The hopes which he profess'd of earthly good
Were limited to that which he could see,
Hear, taste, or feel—ease—pleasure—all the joys
Which wait on wealth—the exercise and use
Of intellect:—in all things he appear'd
A strict utilitarian;—yet the Man
Was nobler than his creed, and though he mock'd
At things, which, to us poets, seem'd almost
The breath of human life—romantic love—
Chivalrous honour—patriotic zeal—
And loyal self-devotion—there were times
When even these very themes would kindle up
The better soul within, and he became,
Unconsciously, the enthusiast he despised.
Courteous he was and gentle, even to those
Whose intellectual rank beneath his own
Lay lowest,—and remembrance, looking back
Through twenty years, still rests upon his name,
As on a pleasant thought.
Unlike him far
In character—in intellect no less,

The pair that follows; for a pair in heart
So closely join'd, so comely each in form,
My song must not divorce;—the first, a youth,
Tall, graceful, well-proportion'd, noble-mien'd,
Tho' something in his air might have been thought
Almost effeminate,—the look of one
Who, delicately nurtured, ne'er had felt
The shocks and buffets which the world inflicts
Even on our boyish years;—and such, indeed,
Had been his earlier lot, for he was born
Heir of a wealthy house, and, from his birth
To dawning manhood, in luxurious ease
And careless affluence rear'd;—his mind untrain'd
By any rigorous discipline—unstored
With much of school-boy learning—ill prepared
(So men might think) to face the frowning world
And grapple with adversity;—and yet,
When fortune changed—as in a moment's time
She did, and hurl'd him from his pinnacle
Of prosperous expectation down almost
To a despised estate—no strongest mind
E'er bore such fall more bravely:—even like one
Who estimates this world at its true worth,
And, loving not its treasures while they last,
Laments them not departed—he address'd
His spirit to its destiny with firm
And tranquil equanimity—content
To do and suffer all the will of Heaven
In his appointed sphere.—And, to speak truth,
Tho' wealth and this world's smiles had pass'd away,

Still, in the costliest treasure Earth can yield,
He was most rich ;—for one confiding heart
Still clave to him with woman's deepest love,
And pour'd into his wounds (if wounds he had)
The balm of its affection. She was one—
(That gentle maid)—a foreigner by birth,
Of humbler fortunes, who had loved him long,
But never told her love ; for while the world
Look'd bright around him, and the proudest dames
Grew prouder in his smile, she durst not lift
Her heart so high as to indulge a hope
That he would think of her ; but when his lot
Was darken'd, and the frivolous, false crowd
Deserted him—O then what rapturous hope
Thrill'd through her bosom, that his loss might prove
Her gain,—and she, who never could have shared
His prouder, might console his humbler lot,
And shed upon his path the tender light
Of her devoted love ! Ere I threw off
The purple gown of Trinity, to don
The graduate's sable garb, their wedding day
Arrived, and I remember how they came,
A happy bride and bridegroom, to rebuke
In our own courts, or haply to stir up
To emulation of their better lot
Our Academic celibate.

But He—
The friend so like a brother—in what nook
Lies he conceal'd ?—he should not be ashamed.

Methinks, to shew his face ; for few have seen
A fairer one on earth ;—the Nireus he
Of all our host, though rarely in this field
A combatant,—no man of wordy strife,
Or wrangling disputation, but best pleased
With mild discourse and thought contemplative,
And the luxurious witcheries of art :—
Himself a poet born, and, from a child,
With all a poet's sensibilities,
Even to excess endued :—for him, a boy,
The boisterous sports of boyhood were too rough,—
The sympathy of schoolfellows too coarse,
Save of some few like-minded with himself,
With whom he roam'd apart—to all the rest
A by-word and a laughing-stock ;—now climb'd
Some favourite hill—now ranged the vernal woods
In search of wild-flowers.—With advancing youth
Such weakness had worn off, and though he still
Retain'd a woman's beauty, manly thought
Was his, and manly feeling.—Still the paths
Of quiet contemplation—the wild haunts
Of phantasy—and the mysterious realms
Of painting and of music were his choice,—
The world in which his spirit loved to dwell ;
And, I believe, no truer eye than his,
No finer ear for concord of sweet sounds,
No spirit more susceptible of pain
Or pleasure from the spells of either art,
Or their diviner sister Poesy,
Was found, that day, among us. Years have since

Develop'd, and expanded, and matured
His intellectual strength :—through many a field
Of art, of science, of philosophy,
With firm and fearless step, he walks at will ;
A bold, adventurous thinker, but withal
In heart and hope a Christian.
Last appears
In this long muster-roll, One o'er whose mind
Majestic, deep, imaginative, pure
From aught of worldly taint, which might debase
Or mar its noble energies, the Muse
Laments as lost ;—by what mysterious bane
Of physical or mental malady
Disorder'd, none can tell ; but so o'erthrown,
That genius, learning, wisdom, the rich gift
Of song, on none, in these our later days,
More bountifully lavish'd, have, in him,
Become a shapeless wreck.—May brighter days
Arise on that dark waste, and heavenly light,
Piercing its spectral gloom, create anew
The wondrous world beneath it !
But 'tis time
To change this lengthen'd scene, and bid farewell
To all its passing phantoms, though the mind
Still grasps them with a fond tenacity.
Not all in vain,—not all in vain,—I trust,
O Granta, though thy wild and wayward son,
And little heedful of the lore which thou
Best lov'st to teach thy children—not in vain
Spent I the spring and seed-time of my youth

Beneath thy reverend towers ;—no slender gain
I count it to have known whom I have known,
And with the noblest spirits of my day
Beheld the dawn of manhood ;—not ill timed
My sojourn in thy courts—for 'twas my lot
To know a generation nobler far
Than that which went before it—more athirst
For knowledge—more intent on loftiest schemes
And purposes of good—and if more prone
To daring speculation,—apt to tread
More venturous paths—yet purer from the stain
Of gross and sensual vice—which among those,
Our predecessors in the steep ascent
Of academic honour, still had been,
Too oft, allied with genius. 'Twas the note
And token of a scholar, in their day,
To be a jocund reveller,—to spend
The night in mad carousals—then, perchance,
(The wineflush still upon the burning brow,)
To reel into the lecture-room ;—not such
Our folly—though our follies were not few,
Nor all innocuous—for the springs of thought
Had then been newly stirr'd—and Truth, who since
Hath claim'd and won her old supremacy,
Was still at war with error, not, as now,
Unveil'd and understood.
The scene is changed;
The towers and courts of Granta disappear
With all that they contain—and lo, instead,

Green trees, and spacious lawns, and shrubbery-walks
Umbrageous, amidst which is dimly seen
A shelter'd dwelling, with thick-clustering vine
And intermingled ivy overgrown.
In front, not two miles off, majestic spires
Shoot up their tapering outline;—on the left
A castle frowns, with massive towers antique
Cresting a gentle eminence;—hard by
The Severn, scarce yet navigable, rolls
Its waters—and blue undulating hills
Sweep round the dim horizon.—'Tis a scene
On which a poet's eye may rest well pleased;
Nor lacks it such inspection—From yon house
Even now two youthful brethren of the lyre
Look forth, and in their intervals of rest
From toil (if toil it be to court the Muse,)
Refresh their sense of beauty on that rich
And boldly varied landscape.—We have met
That pair before;—what do they in this land?—
In truth they do but little—though withdrawn
Awhile from academic conflicts dire
To this, the calm sequester'd home of one,
With high intent and purpose to devote
The livelong summer to sublime pursuit
Of science mathematical.—And now
In separate, though adjacent, rooms immured,
Each on his own peculiar task intent,
They commune with Mathesis.—Is it so?
Then hath she brought her geometric craft

To marvellous perfection—hath contrived
To measure worlds that spread beyond all space;—
Hath spann'd Imagination's boundless realm,
And ascertain'd the laws, impell'd by which
Creative thought explores its wondrous way
Even to the Heaven of Heavens.—In those two rooms
Two worlds are now contain'd—two phantom worlds,
Diverse in kind and excellence, but each
A world of beauty,—each a pleasant home
For him whose fancy framed it, (like the web
Spun by the silk-worm,) to protect and house
His spirit from the pressure of the world.
High is the theme of one;—in burning strains
He sings ideal Beauty, to his soul
Reveal'd in trance-like vision;—her he seeks,
In passionate wild flight, through all the realms
Of earth, and air, and sea—and, having found,
Leads her through fairy palaces—prepares
A home, and spreads a couch for her, amidst
The pathless clouds, beneath the green sea waves,
In woody vales, and deep secluded glens—
Infusing still into her heart of hearts
The strong enchantment of his dreamy love.
The other, less ambitious, and endued
With genius less creative, less intense,
Hath, from the beaming regions of the East
Stolen a wild-hearted Fay, with whom, at will,
He wanders through the world from night to morn,
And in her mischievous and magic feats
Finds infinite amusement;—yet his song,

Now gay, and now sarcastic—now in bursts
Of broad rough humour recklessly let loose—
Prefers to linger in the quiet haunts
Of peace and love domestic—knows no world,
In all Imagination's universe,
So blessed as a bright and blazing hearth
Surrounded by glad faces :—joyously
Those two, careering on the wings of song,
Pursue their several paths, from time to time
Relaxing their swift flight, to interchange
Encouragement and counsel, each with each.
Nor lack they recreation, such as soothes
The brain o'erwrought with toil, or by the throng
Of fancies multitudinous inflamed
To over-much excitement—gentle looks
And voices, and the pleasant intercourse
Of brothers and of sisters, shelter'd still
Beneath that roof parental, and the joy
Sedate, although expectant, calm, yet deep,
Of plighted lovers, at the altar soon
To seal their mutual vows :—what lack they more ?
—That, without which, even Poesy and youth
Are cold and lifeless—the first dream of love :
Nor shall that long be wanting ;—while we gaze,
The scene is changed ;—they wander side by side,
Each with a bright-eyed girl—one ample brow'd
And eagle-eyed—the other light of heart
And simple-minded ;—let them dream their dream,
Their short-lived dream of passion, while it lasts :
For theirs, in very deed, is but dream-love :

Not of the heart and will, but of the brain;
—Fantastic, fleeting, which shall pass away
Ere long, and leave the spirit all unchanged,
The fountains of affection undisturb'd,
And fresh as ever:—let them dream their dream,
Till dawn dispel the illusion:—Nobler love
Awaits them, when the fancies and wild freaks
Of youth shall have been tamed by the approach
Of sober manhood, and connubial bliss—
Calm, deep, contented, with life's daily toil
And duty intermix'd—shall put to flight
Those phantoms of unripe and restless thought;
For each, amidst the tumult and turmoil
Of worldly and unworldly cares and aims,
Erecting a sure refuge, housed wherein
The heart may take its rest, and gather strength
To bear its daily burden, and fulfil,
As best it may, the daily task imposed
By love divine on Man, that he, on Earth,
May win the crown which he shall wear in Heaven.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK IV.

MANHOOD.

INSCRIBED TO MY WIFE.

At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

WORDSWORTH.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

BOOK IV.

MANHOOD.

It is a shameless thing, when poets chaunt
The praises of their wives!—so some aver,
Whose judgment I dispute not—rather own
My full assent, albeit in this respect
Myself an old offender.—Hymen's bonds,
And that most deep contentment of chaste love
Within their magic links enclosed and bound,
Are holier things than that a man should sport
With them, as with the gay fantastic gawds
Of wanton gallantry, or to the gaze
Of public curiosity, with rude
And reckless hand, unveil them.—The whole world
Hath scarce a coarser spectacle to show,
Than your fond, foolish, amorous wedded pair
Betraying to all eyes, by act and look,
The giddy transports of their honey moon!
From such may we for ever dwell apart,
Bride of my youth, and now, in middle age,
Ten thousand-fold beyond a bride beloved,—
My own true-hearted wife!—no sympathy,
And slender toleration can we yield

To such transgressors of love's holy laws,
To such profaners of pure Hymen's bliss.
Yet, not the less, must I inscribe to thee
This portion of my song, design'd to tell
Of manhood's sober cares and temperate joys,
Its sorrows, and their solaces ;—for thou
Art still the centre around which revolve
My earthly hopes and fears—to which converge
My yearnings and affections :—there is nought
Within the compass of my daily life,
But takes, in part, its character and form
From thy pervading influence ;—nor now
Is this a bridegroom's fondness ;—sixteen years
Have spent their noiseless flight since, each to each,
We pledged our nuptial faith.—Our eldest boy
Hath almost reach'd his teens, which were, in thee,
Still incomplete, when thou becam'st a wife ;
And, in the full meridian of Life's day,
A staid and sober pair, we now look back
To the gay freaks and follies of our youth,
And forward to the late decline of years,
As worlds which have been and which are to be—
Diverse alike in form from that which is :—
The first remote and dwindling, day by day,
In the still lengthening retrospect—the last
Just looming through the mists of unknown Time,
And daily seen less distant, less unlike
The swiftly changing Present. Years have laid
A gentle hand on thee ;—not I alone,

But all who knew thee in the days long past,
Still recognize, unchanged in face or form,
The bride of gay nineteen :—scarce, here and there,
Amidst the clusters of thy raven curls,
Close-peering eyes may trace a silver streak
Threading their ebon gloss ;—thy full dark eye
Is yet undimm'd and lustrous, and thy form
Sylphlike, as when the brisk and tingling-blood
Of eighteen summers coursed along thy veins,
And thou, amidst our graver English girls,
In pride and strength of Scottish art elate,
Wast foremost in the dance.—In ruder sort,
Yet not ungently, Time hath dealt with me—
Working perchance but little outward change,
For I, since earliest youth, have look'd so old,
I scarce look older now ;—but, as my years
Cross their meridian, I discern and feel
The wane of life within :—the reckless strength
And confidence of health, which knew no change,
Are gone for ever :—Death appears no more
A dim and distant phantom—nor this world,
With all its charms for ear, and eye, and heart,
The permanent abode which once it seem'd.
My old acquaintance, Asthma, pays me still
His annual visit—but not now alone ;—
With him his daughter, pale Dyspepsia, comes,
And shows me, in her train, approaching fast,
Gout and his grimmer brother, her twin sons
More hideous than their parent !—It may be
That thou, ere long, wilt have to nurse and tend

With all the patience of thy Woman's love,
A fractious invalid;—and thou wilt do
That office nobly, though with small return
Of gratitude, perchance, from thy self-will'd
And all too froward charge.—But we will not
Anticipate, in thought, impending ills:
Rather, while health suffices, let me seize
And fix, if that may be, the form and hue
Of this existing Present, which, ere long,
Must swell the increasing Past, and be, with it,
From memory's page erased, unless the Muse
Shall, in ambrosial song, embalm it now,
And cause it to become, to me and mine,
An heritage for ever.

I described,
Of late, how poets, in their lusty youth,
Sport with the world of Phantasy:—such sport
In me was past its height, and had begun
To sadden into toil and daily care,
And all the unblest anxieties of life,
When thou and I first met:—young love's first dream
(A dream indeed, unreal, shadowy, brief,)
Was done and ended—and my heart, so far,
Not much the worse for wear:—a heavier blow
Had done it deeper mischief;—Friendship's bonds,
Holy and pure as e'er bound heart to heart,
Had, in the rash and headstrong war of thought—
The conflict of opinions, old and new,—
Been snapp'd, as seem'd, for ever.—I had lost
A mistress, and a friend—and in the void

Of objectless affection, sought in vain
For sympathy and solace—yet even then
Was not forsaken wholly :—I had kept,
Though not unscathed, the faith and hope in which
I had been nurtured, and although not yet,
By ordination and its solemn vows,
Expressly set apart to be a priest
And steward of the mysteries of Christ,
Was storing knowledge, and, with studious thought,
Preparing to devote my after life
To that high office ;—Youth, and youth's wild dreams,
Gorgeous and gloomy, sorrowful and gay,
Were fading in the clear and sober light
Of ripening manhood, and the world become
A working place for me.—Then 'twas that thou
Didst rise, a prosperous star, upon my path,
Discern'd at once among the sparkling throng
Of more ignoble fires—discern'd and loved,
And by the Muse's aid (who never yet
Did bard more blessed service) woo'd and won.
Not smooth, nor altogether unbeset
By trouble or perplexity, to us
Was true love's course ;—we shared the common lot
Of such as deem that life is more than meat,
The body more than raiment, and the mind,
With its inborn capacities of bliss,
Than all the wealth of this world.—Yet, in truth,
Our conflict with adversity was short,
Though stubborn while it lasted—and, that done,
Sweet were the days of courtship,—fair the haunts

Through which we wander'd, a wild-hearted pair,
Framing our pleasant plans of future life,
Its duties and employments. O'er our heads,
The forest oaks of Windsor interlaced
Their dark umbrageous branches, as we roam'd
Through many a brake and dell and bosky bourn,
Arm link'd in arm,—or, on our gallant steeds,
With fleet and fearless gallop, plunged amain
Into the forest's heart.—Along the marge
Of that majestic river, dear to me
From boyhood, as to thee romantic Doon—
Through Datchet's fabled mead—beyond that grey
And ivy-mantled tower, sole relic left
Of what was Upton Church—across the lane
Misnamed of cut-throats,—o'er that well-known stile
Where first our faith was pledged, (supplanted since
By a trim upstart lodge)—thence through the fields
Of Eton, with remembrances intense
Of early joy and sorrow in my heart
Indissolubly link'd,—we roam'd and roam'd;
While thou, with patient ear, to many a tale
Of boyhood, by those well-known scenes recall'd,
Didst listen, and in turn, with earnest speech,
Discourse of all that thou hadst known and loved
In thy own mountain land. So pass'd the months—
The pleasant months of courtship, till, at length,
The Day of days arrived, for many a year
With fond anticipation imaged forth
To Hope's keen earnest gaze—Life's crowning day,

The blest fulfilment of the purest dreams
On which young Fancy feeds.—Without a cloud,
Calm, clear, serene, the summer's loveliest child,
(A summer such as England seldom knows,)
It rose, and shone, and set!—Before the lark
I left the lonely couch of my unrest,
And to the river's bank, as I was wont,
But in far other than my wonted mood,
Directed my wild steps:—the clear cold stream
Received me in its bosom, cooling thus
The fever of my own;—with practised arms
I clave the waters, and from shore to shore
Cross'd and recross'd,—now striving with the stream,
Which mock'd and overbore my puny strength,—
Now floating down its current,—now supine
On the smooth surface of some tranquil pool,
With face upturn'd to the blue, cloudless sky,
Lay gazing on its beauty, and inhaled
The freshness and the fragrance of the morn
From air, and earth, and water,—to myself
Repeating oft "It is my wedding day!—
No dream, but a reality!" And now
The hour was come;—before the altar-rails
We two stood side by side;—the solemn vows
Were utter'd,—and I wonder'd, while we knelt,
That I should feel so calm!—The wedding peal
Rang briskly out,—around the well-spread board
The wedding guests assembled,—all due rites
Were decently perform'd,—and, ere 'twas noon,
(Friends, kinsfolk, feasters, bridemaids, thy old home

And all who dwelt within it left behind)
We were alone, and with our faces set
Toward Cambria's mountain region.—Till 'twas eve,
Conversing in such sort as lovers use,
We journey'd;—then above the horizon rose
The towers of Oxford—spire and pinnacle,
And stately dome, and cupola, relieved
In outline clear against the cloudless sky
With sunset tints suffused.
—Our hasty meal
Dispatch'd—till twilight faded into night,
We roam'd amidst those silent palaces:—
Through broad and spacious courts, deserted then,
Nor echoing to the students' sober tread,
Nor (as sometimes) by bacchanalian roar
Of revellers profaned—through long arcades,
And many a pillar'd aisle, and cloister dim,
We stroll'd, and mark'd the moonbeams, as they stole
Through gorgeous panes of stain'd and storied glass,
Gild the rich fretted roofs and marble floors
Of those time-hallow'd temples.—On our hearts
The spirit of the place descended, calm
And solemn, and the day which rose in smiles
Accordant to our sunbright morn of hope
And hymeneal gladness, closed at last
(Meet emblem of a Christian life's decline)
In contemplations tranquil and serene,
Of life, of death, and of eternity.
And we were wedded!—and life's young romance

Henceforth to fade away and be dissolved
In the clear daylight of reality!
Yet, for the space of some three years, or more,
The vision seem'd to tarry:—household cares
So long we knew not, nor the pleasant sound
Of children's voices, nor had yet commenced
Those pastoral duties, amidst which hath past,
Since then, the prime of life:—my daily task
Employ'd, but not oppress'd me, nor engross'd
So large a space of time but more remain'd
For pleasant studies and amusements, such
As we might share together:—Life was still
Almost a constant holiday to us;
And when the waning summer set us free
Even from that gentle yoke which gall'd us not,
With what exultant eagerness we broke
Our bondage, and, uncheck'd by nursery ties,
Shaped our swift flight, as fancy might direct,
Or old affection urge—now skimm'd the lakes
And climb'd the mountains of thy native land;
Now, on green Devon's slopes, forgot the ways
Of artificial life, and grew adepts
At old Arcadian usages; and now
In deep Salopian vales, amidst the homes
And habitations of my kindred, shared
Familiar joys, feeding our gaze meanwhile
On nature's richest beauty!—Dreamlike still,—
A trance Elysian,—was our Dream of Life.

It is not good that years should pass away
Unburden'd by the weight of care and toil

Which is Man's lot and portion here on Earth.
Those years—I mourn them not—nor wish them back,
Though pleasant in the retrospect—unlike
(O how unlike!) the round of varied tasks,
And duties which employ my noon of life!—
The daily load of ministerial care,—
The parent's anxious toil of head and heart,—
The ceaseless stir and tumult of the world!—
It is by these that men must live—in these
Our Father's spirit breathes. No easier lot
I covet,—only ask for heartier zeal,
And strength according to my need, and faith
Working by love, to do and to endure
Whatever Heaven may will, till the day close,
And the night come wherein no man can work.

There is a little town, within short space
Of England's central point, of various brick
Irregularly built, nor much adorn'd
By architectural craft—save that, indeed,
As you approach it from the south, a pile
Of questionable Gothic lifts its head
With somewhat of a grave collegiate air,
Not unbefitting what, in truth, it is,—
A seat of academic discipline
And classic education:—at its base
Stretches a broad expanse of verdant turf
With stately trees bestudded—the resort
Of schoolboys from their studious toil released,
And bent on sport athletic:—but for this,

The place might pass unnoticed—to speak truth,
As insignificant a market-town
As may be seen in England. Far around
Extends a pastoral glade, to numerous herds
Yielding abundant herbage, but ungraced
By much of rural beauty—featureless,
And to the poet's and the painter's eye
Alike insipid;—a wide, weary tract
Of hedgerow upon hedgerow.—Rock nor hill,—
Nor graceful undulation here is seen;
The very stream which waters the fat meads
(Shaksperian Avon) hath not yet attain'd
The breadth and beauty of his later course,
But winds between his flat and reedy banks,
A thin, meandering, melancholy thread
Of slow, dull, slimy water:—the sole charms
Of which, with truth, the unvaried landscape boasts,
Are verdure and fertility:—the grass
Grows freshly, and the hedgerow trees present
Masses of summer foliage, with rich tints
Diversified in Autumn:—there is nought
To seek or shun, to hate or fondly love,
For miles and miles around! Amidst such scenes,
The lines are fallen to me;—amidst such scenes
I own a goodly heritage—content,
In the fulfilment of allotted tasks,
Here, if Heaven will, to live, and here to die.
Strange to the youthful minister of Christ,
Yet not unmixt with pleasure, is the awe
And anxious curiosity with which

He first approaches his appointed sphere
Of pastoral duty—first inspects the fold
Of which he is the shepherd, and looks round
On faces which henceforth he is to know
In joy and grief, in sickness and in health,
Through many a chance and change of mortal life,
In many a close relation; he meanwhile—
(Though haply versed in theologic lore)—
Unpractised, inexperienced in the ways
Of Man's mysterious heart,—unused to guide,
To comfort, to reprove, exhort, convince,
Or do the thousand offices of love
And Christian wisdom at his hands required,
And pressing on his heart. With what keen sense
Of high responsibilities, incurr'd
By weakness (then, if ever, deeply felt,)
He first ascends the pulpit!—first surveys
The motley congregation closely pack'd,
And all intent, with curious eye and ear,
To see, hear, criticise—some few to learn
And welcome, with devout and docile hearts,
Him, their commission'd teacher! In their homes,
And by their hospitable hearths, for him
With festal fires ablaze,—at social board,
Or cheerful tea-table, whence fairest hands
Dispense the nectarous fluid, to his taste
With nicest art adapted—each new face
Arrests his anxious eye; each voice conveys
To his awaken'd and attentive ear
Some token, faint perchance, of fear or hope,

Of comfort or discouragement.—To whom,
Among these cordial guests, in years to come,
Shall he resort for counsel? Which shall aid,
With sympathy and solace pure and true,
His ministerial toil—and which oppose,
Impede, embarrass,—sometimes haply mar
His all too feeble efforts to promote
The welfare of his flock?—Which shall be found
His friend, and which his enemy?—With whom,
At intervals of rest from pastoral care,
Shall he take pleasant counsel, and converse
On subjects which unbend, but not unnerve
The else o'er-labour'd mind?—Such thoughts, perchance,
Flit swiftly thro' his brain:—Meanwhile he knows
Himself the mark of scrutinizing eyes,
And curious observation:—apt remarks
Are ventured—subtle questions ask'd, to probe
And fathom his opinions:—"Is he Whig
In Politics, or Tory?—Orthodox
In creed, or Evangelical?—What sect
Within the Church,—what party in the State,
Minutely in the parish imaged forth,
Shall find him its ally?—Will he adhere
To old establish'd customs, and uphold
The right prescriptive of a parish priest
To hunt, and shoot, and fish, and be the first
In all convivial revels?—strong at whist,
And matchless at back-gammon?—or, imbued
With puritanic scruples, will he shun

The world and all its pleasures—in their stead
Frequenting the resort of serious folk,
Committee-rooms and platforms—where the stage
And its profane excitements are eclipsed
(As some aver) by oratoric feats
Of reverend men, who spurn alike the rules
Of grammar and the Church, and, in glib phrase,
Clip the Queen's English,—worthily repaid
For such achievements by the breath and bruit
Of popular applause?—Or will he prove
A stern ascetic, in Tractarian lore
Profoundly versed, entangling simple souls
In bonds from which the Gospel sets them free—
Enjoining strict observance of the round
Of festivals and fasts and daily prayers,
And inconvenient alms-deeds,—apt himself
To fast and watch and mortify the flesh
With superstitious rigour,—teaching much
By precept and example, against which
We must perforce contend?"—With such profound
And profitable queries, others mix
Less abstract speculations—"Is he one
Accessible as yet to Beauty's charms?—
A prize to be contested by the skill
Of mothers and their daughters?—the church glebe
Is rich and ample, and the Parsonage
(Judiciously enlarged) might well be made
A comfortable mansion."—Cease, fair dames,
Such musings, which the invulnerable man
With grim, sly smile suspects.—In distant bowers,

The lady of his love already twines
Her nuptial wreath, and, ere six months have flown,
The bells from yon grey tower, with deafening peal,
Shall blithely welcome to their destined home
The Rector and his Bride.
It ill beseems
The poet—him especially whose crown
Of laurel must surmount the sober garb
For reverend clerks appointed—to select,
Amidst the present scenes of actual life,
The subjects of his song. This week-day world—
Its cares—its toils—its sharp anxieties—
The friends and foes of living flesh and blood,
With whom we sympathise and strive by turns—
These to Reality's dull realm belong,
And scarcely from that realm can be transferr'd
To Phantasy's domain, without neglect
Or partial violation of the laws
Of social life.—Such fault be far from me!
Not in the Present, but the dreamy Past,
And not among the Living, but the Dead—
The unforgotten tenants of the grave—
The men o'er whose infirmities and faults
Remembrance draws a veil of shadowy haze,
Which glorifies their virtues—among such
Would I once more, in retrospective thought,
Live over my young days of pastoral care,
And interweave with this historic song
Some faint reflection of departed worth
And excellence still honour'd, which perchance,

Not by surviving eyes unrecognized,
May to surviving hearts recall a train
Of pleasant recollections, nor incur
Reproach or censure—rather, let me hope,
Awaken kind and not unthankful thoughts
Tow'rd him who, if he could, would thus embalm,
In unguent mix'd of grave and serious verse,
Their loved and lost on Earth.
At the town's end
There is a neat and unpretending house,
Which you approach through a low wooden gate
Beneath an arch of laurel ;—a small porch
Of trellis-work, with odorous jessamine
And most luxuriant clematis entwined,
Shelters the expectant visitor, whose knock
Is yet unanswer'd ;—a bay window, fill'd
With flowering shrubs, on the left hand, admits
The late effulgence of the western Sun
To what, when first I knew it, long had been
The favourite room of one in many a heart
Still honour'd and remember'd—then my kind
And hospitable host. An aged man,
Already on the verge of full fourscore,
Was he, and, in his youth and middle age,
Had on the seas, beneath old England's flag,
Fought and commanded ; but for many a year
(The toils and perils of the deep foregone)
Had led a quiet and secluded life
In that snug dwelling, by the general voice
Of friends and neighbours quaintly named, from
him,

"The Admiralty." Seldom hath a heart
So frank and simple dwelt within a frame
So burly and gigantic; lustier voice
Than his, on shipboard, never yet outroar'd
The thunder, or was heard above the din
Of battle:—he was, all in all, compact,
Heart, voice, soul, sinews, bulk;—colossal—vast,
As of the race of Anak,—yet, withal
As gentle as a lamb:—no kindlier smile
Than his e'er beam'd on childhood—(and, in truth,
He had his share of grandchildren;)—no brow
Was e'er unbent on Woman with more bland
And guileless show of love; and if his laugh
Was somewhat over-boisterous, and his jest
Couch'd in sea-phrase, and, like a seaman's speech,
Blunt and unpolish'd,—if fastidious ears
Might shrink from his sea-ditties, thunder'd forth
As though a broadside roar'd—the daintiest dame
Forgot such venial trespass in the sense
Of that inborn benignity which glow'd
And glisten'd in his look, and was diffused
Through his whole soul and spirit. Him all ranks
And classes loved and honour'd;—to his house
Gentle and simple, country squire and clown,
Scholar and tradesman, pedagogue and peer,
Each sure of his appropriate welcome, came.
The nobles of the land were not ashamed
To leave awhile their lordly palace halls,
And spend an hour beneath that humble roof
In pleased, familiar talk with the old man,

Who on his part received them with blunt phrase
Of unaffected courtesy ;—the poor
Flock'd to him as their friend :—in grief and joy
He sympathized with all.—Two serving-maids,
Some twenty years his juniors,—one obese
And rubicund,—the other spare and lean,—
With a red-nosed, ill-manner'd serving-man,
Who rather ruled than served his easy lord,—
These form'd his household :—an asthmatic steed
Was, like his master, pension'd on half-pay,
Or rarely into active service call'd
From the near paddock. Such, for some few years
From the first date of my incumbency,
Continued his establishment, by laws
Most primitive and patriarchal ruled,
And unprofaned by aught of modish taste
Or over-costly luxury, though rich
In whatsoever to the incorrupt
And unsophisticated heart affords
Repose and satisfaction.—At the end
Of that brief time, with little outward change,
Or more decided symptom of decay,
After some days of sickness, meekly borne,
With calm expression of a Christian's hope
The old man fell asleep. Light lie the turf
On that stout heart, as simple and sincere,
As gentle and as brave as ever throbb'd
Beneath a sailor's bosom !—be his sleep
The sleep of Paradise, till the last trump
To resurrection and their final doom

Summon the awaken'd dead!
Nor let me pass
Unnoticed or unhonour'd in this lay
One who, by me but little known, hath yet
Left on my memory the abiding trace
Of his urbane and cordial courtesy,
By scholarship and classic taste refined;
—A courtly, polish'd man, of bland address,
And clerical attire with rigorous taste
Adjusted and adorn'd—his reverend head
Well powder'd and pomatum'd—even the crown,
Which five and fifty winters had made bald,
With scrupulous exactness frosted o'er;—
His central bulk, spruce, dapper, and rotund,
In silk and broadcloth of correctest cut
And sablest hue array'd;—his nether parts
In hose unwrinkled of the finest woof,
And breeches, silver-buckled at the knee,
Display'd their plump proportions:—voice and look,
Gesture and phrase, to the discerning mind,
Proclaim'd the pedagogue—one of a race
Now passing from the earth;—no man of thought,
Deep, earnest, serious, seething in the brain
Incessantly;—no framer of vague plans
And purposes, imperfect, ever new,
From the rich depths of an exhaustless mind,
By the strong working of a Christian heart
Evolved;—no rash enthusiast, labouring still
To purify, exalt, and bless mankind,
And using education as the means

By Heaven, beyond all other means, ordain'd
To accomplish that high task.—Such men our age,
In this beyond preceding ages blest,
Hath seen, and loved, and mourn'd;—but unlike these
The generation which preceded ours,—
The teachers of our sires and of ourselves.
Less lofty was their aim;—more moderate praise
Contented their ambition.—The dead tongues—
Their prosody and syntax—the nice rules
Of composition—the mysterious craft
Of metres—these to them were all in all—
The end of education, not the means.
Nor be it held dispraise to speak of one
Not last, nor least distinguish'd in his day,
As walking in the ways of his compeers
With steps which equall'd theirs, but not outstripp'd.
It was enough, for him of whom I speak,
To guard, with rigid and punctilious zeal,
That which he found establish'd;—to maintain,
Unchanged and unimpair'd, the old, tried course
Of classic education, handed down
From those who went before him. This he did
With firm, unbending purpose, and became
The perfect model of a schoolmaster,
Such as our sires respected—such as we,
In the vain pride of our conceited age,
Are prone to undervalue—blind alike
To what exalts the Present—what the Past.

Far juster was the estimate which he
Form'd of himself:—proud was he of his craft,
Nor would abate one tittle of its claims
To honour and respect:—his air and tone
Were those of one who felt himself high raised
Above unlearned, unscholastic men;
And, in or out of school, with equal pomp,
Right stately did he bear himself:—all rules
Of etiquette—all nice formalities,
He practised and exacted—was, in truth,
In discipline a very martinet;
And when, in annual chair of state enthroned—
Surrounded by aristocratic groupes,
The county's high nobility,—he sat
Dispensing prizes—the world could not shew
A prouder, happier man! Yet deem him not
Haughty or arrogant,—in manners stiff,
Cold, and repulsive:—kindly was his heart,
Gentle he was and affable to all;
And, when the labour of the day was done,
Loved with his neighbours at the social board
To spend a joyous hour, well pleased to reign
Supreme o'er mirth and music, whist and wit,—
Assuming and receiving at all hands
Precedency of place, and recognized
As absolute Dictator.

Yet such rank
Was not, without resistance and dispute,
At once assign'd him:—Our Republic found
A Brutus for this Cæsar.—One there was

Whom Nature's hand had moulded to resist
Unconstitutional autocracy,
And hold it at defiance—a true son
Of Albion—all her dauntless Saxon blood
Careering in his veins—a brave, blunt man,
Laborious, energetic, shrewd of wit,
And resolute of action:—no adept
Was he at rules conventional—no slave
To forms of etiquette—no worshipper
Of rank or sounding titles:—small respect
He own'd or felt for academic grade,
Or dignity ecclesiastical,
Save as the visible and outward garb
Of solid worth within:—his piercing eye,
Disdaining shows and seemings, ever sought
That which was real:—he esteem'd the man,
And not the cloak—the kernel, not the husk.
Whate'er himself possess'd of place, or wealth,
Or credit with the world, had been acquired
By the innate and energetic strength
And vigour of his mind,—by industry
And persevering toil of head and heart—
By due discharge of honourable trust
In the far Indies, whence he had return'd,
After few years in public duties spent,
A rich and prosperous man. Such energy,
Moral and intellectual, as could work
What he had wrought,—could bear what he had borne,
And gain what he had gain'd—and such alone,
He honour'd and esteem'd in other men.

All else—diplomas—dignities—degrees—
Hereditary rank—ancestral pride—
Whate'er weak minds revere—he held dirt cheap,
And view'd, with somewhat of a jealous eye,
Monopolies of homage from of old,
In this aristocratic land, assign'd
To place, and station, and official rank,
Or well or ill maintain'd, with small regard
To aught which truly dignifies them all,
And gives them actual value:—hence he grew,
Almost by Nature's strong necessity,
Antagonistic to the Powers that were—
A stout and sturdy oppositionist,
Obstructing, by all lawful ways and means,
What seem'd encroachments of despotic sway;
Asserting and maintaining the plain rights
Of social independence against all
Which look'd like usurpation. Hence arose
Occasional sedition—tart debate
Colloquial—insurrection, to restrain,
Within legitimate and wholesome bounds,
Monarchical prerogative.—Meanwhile
The Monarch was not slow to take the field,
With such offensive and defensive arms
As courteous scholars use—grave irony—
Sarcastic repartee—serenest smile
Of dignified compassion. Thus they two
(If old, traditionary tales speak truth
Of times beyond the memory of the Bard)
For many a year contended, yet broke not

The bonds of social neighbourhood, nor lost
Their sense of mutual good-will. O'er both
The grave long since hath closed:—the petty feuds
And jealousies of earth divide them not
In that good land where both, we trust, have found
Acceptance and repose.
But all too long,
Methinks, we dwell among remembrances
Of days and things gone by:—'tis meet we turn,
Beloved, to the Present.—Our abode—
The tabernacle of our earthly joys
And sorrows, hopes and fears—this home of ours—
Is it not pleasant?—Is there one elsewhere
For which we would exchange it?—Fourteen years,
Well nigh elapsed, have rear'd the puny trees
We planted at our coming, to a screen
And somewhat of a shade;—our small domain,
Compact within itself, nor overlook'd,
(Albeit well nigh on every side begirt
By new and upstart dwellings,) forms a nook
In which the meek and unambitious heart
May live and die contented:—within doors
We have enough of comfort—and, without,
Of verdure, and bright sunshine, and fresh air,
To make our dwelling cheerful:—yon green field,
Between us and intrusion interposed,
Forms for our children a broad ample realm
Of undisturb'd enjoyment:—that tall pair
Of venerable elms, beneath whose shade
Lie buried those old favourites canine

Whose race, had we been childless, might perchance
E'en now have shared our hearth—those elms, methinks,
May serve us for apt emblems of ourselves—
A hale, green pair, not yet much past their prime,
And from their grassy mound, in reverend state,
On a new generation looking down
Of young and hopeful plants.—By Fancy's aid
We might suppose them representatives
Of the successive tenants of this house—
The pastors of the parish and their wives,
Whose spirits, from the burden of the flesh
And all its toil released, have migrated,
Like Baucis and Philemon's in old time,
Into those leafy tenements, and there,
Fast by the mansion of their earthly life,
Await the body's waking.—But such sport
Of wilful Fancy haply ill accords
With the sad aspect of yon burial-ground
Contiguous to our garden—the long home
Of vanish'd generations, and in which
Both thou and I, ere many years have pass'd,
Must look to lay our bones. We lack not here
Mementos of mortality:—no knell
Proclaims the passing of a neighbour's soul,
But we are first to hear it;—not a corpse
Is carried to its resting-place, but I
Do the last sacred offices;—no week,—
Scarce a day passes, but some bed of death,

Or long consuming sickness, summons me
To minister beside it:—nor art thou
With sorrow less familiar, or less apt
To do thy part as comforter, and yield
Such help as woman only can dispense
To sickness and affliction. Strange 'twould be,
If all that we behold of chance and change,
Of sorrow and mortality, should leave
No trace upon our spirits, nor impress
On our remembrance ineffaceably
The lesson of the Church, that "in the midst
Of life we are in death."—Yet more perhaps
Than most of those with whom our lot is cast,
We lack such admonition:—life to us
Is fill'd, by bounteous Providence, so full
Of purest comfort! Since this house became
Our habitation, it hath seen more bliss
Than many a life of threescore years and ten
Brings to another dwelling—less of grief
Than one brief month hath brought to not a few.
There's scarce a room, beneath our roof, unmark'd
By some distinction of remember'd joy;—
Of friends, whose visits, though too much like those
Of angels—passing short and far between—
Almost like those of angels gladden'd us;—
Of pleasant and endearing intercourse
With neighbours whom we love;—of home-content,
Enliven'd by those studies and pursuits
Which purify and strengthen, while they soothe
The weary mind. Here, in this study, cramm'd

With strangest piles of heterogeneous lore,
O'er Shakspere's magic pages we have laugh'd
And wept by turns, while fairest fingers plied
The busy needle, and the reader's art
Repaid their cheerful toil:—on yonder chair,
Honour'd beyond its drawing-room compeers,
Sate once the mighty Poet of the Lakes,
And in his deep, sonorous voice conversed
On themes of loftiest import:—in this house
Six children have been born to us—of whom
Five until now, by Heaven's rich grace, remain,
And one hath fallen asleep.—My boyish dreams
Of happiness (though passing bright they were)
Fell short of the reality which still
Beneath this roof abides—reality
Too bright to be enduring.—May we wait
In thoughtful preparation, and endure
With patience, whatsoever change shall come!
High theme it were—(too high for verse like mine)—
To tell the toils, the pleasures, and the cares
Of ministerial duty;—to set forth
The life of an ambassador for Christ
Such as it is—alas! how much unlike
That which it ought to be! Else there were food
For musing not unfruitful, not unblest,
In that long retrospect of years elapsed
Amidst parochial cares and toils and plans,
Which teems, as I survey it, with strange forms
Of human joy and sorrow. In the town

There's scarce a house but to my mind recalls
Some sad or pleasing image of past days—
Some consolation offer'd—some sick bed
Sooth'd or alarm'd—some confidence enjoy'd—
Some doubt dispell'd—alas! some vain assault
On some strong-hold of Satan—some defeat
Encounter'd—some discomfiture sustain'd
Through lack of faith or courage.—Of such things
Let me not lightly speak, but speak in words
Recorded ere remembrance yet had lost
Its first impression.—Two such homely lays
I framed in other years;—the first a tale
(If tale it may be call'd) of grievous pain,
Through faith and patience wondrously endured,
And by endurance vanquish'd;—a wild strain
The other, in Spenserian rhyme jocose
Recounting rustic feats of boisterous glee
And festal recreation, with a cause
Connected, righteous once, though since, alas!
By erring and fanatic zeal profaned,
And fitly, to sectarian patronage
Abandon'd by the Church.—Elsewhere than here
Be those twin songs recorded, and preserve
(If that perchance may be) to after days
Some memory of the English pastor's cares
And pastimes in this nineteenth century!*
So end my Dream of Life!—for life is now

* See "Lays of the Parish," at the end of the present volume.

Less dream-like than it has been;—save, indeed,
That with a swifter and yet swifter course
The years begin and end—their hopes and fears
Blossom and fade—their sorrows and their joys
Are born and buried. While I strive to grasp
What seems the Present, it becomes the Past.
All things appear more fugitive, and yet
Less lovely than they did. The gorgeous hues
In which imagination clothed the world
While life was young, have faded:—what remains
Is, in its proper lineaments, discern'd,
And felt to be precarious—a brief dream,
Without a dream's magnificence:—and yet
To this the heart still cleaves, as in its youth
It clave to Fancy's daintiest imagery;
Still as one joy dissolves and fades away,
Reposing on a new one. Death and Change
Are found to teach but slowly that sad truth,
That no continuing city have we here—
No rest for our foot-sole.—And yet their school,
Severe and stern, allows few holidays
From grief and disappointment!—while I weave
This meditative lay, how rich a source
Of present solace, and of hope that gave
Bright promise for the future, with a stroke
Hath been cut off for ever!—HE is dead!—
He, whom all England honour'd as her first
Of Christian teachers;—He, by whom her youth
Were train'd and lesson'd with most earnest zeal,
And depth unknown of wisdom from above,

In Christ's all-perfect rule, and taught to take
His yoke upon them, and to bear His cross,
As Men who, with divine and human lore
Rightly imbued—in intellect and heart
Well disciplined—with heavenly arms equipp'd—
And knowing both the prize for which they strove,
And how it must be won—should, in this world,
Fight the good fight of faith.—Alas! for us!
His townsmen and near neighbours!—us, whose hopes
Parental with his life were close entwined!
Who deem'd our children's the most blessed lot
By Providence to children e'er assign'd,
In that, by him, their young intelligence,
Develop'd and inform'd, should first expand
Its fresh and tender blossoms,—that in him,
Their teacher and their guide, they should behold
A model of what Christians ought to be!
Alas! for us!—but not for us alone!—
Britain—all Europe—Christendom itself
Mourns his untimely loss:—the Church bewails,
In him, the best and bravest of her sons;
Him, if sometimes an erring, never found
A weak or craven champion in her cause:
For ne'er were truth and goodness loved and sought
With more devoted fervour than by him;
Nor oft have noblest intellectual gifts
Been sanctified by loftier piety
Than in his bosom dwelt. His inward eye,
Clear, rapid, comprehensive, at a glance

Discern'd—if not the perfect form of Truth—
At least her shadowy lineaments—which straight
With stedfast gaze he follow'd, in his course
Flashing swift gleams of unexpected light
On whatsoever subject of high thought
Cross'd or approach'd his path. For human ills—
The want and woe—the ignorance and sin—
The bondage of corruption beneath which
The creature, in its anguish and unrest,
Still groans and travails—for whatever wrong
The feeble suffer and the strong inflict—
His was the sorrow of a Christian saint—
His were the projects of a Christian sage.—
For Britain's helpless millions above all,
Writhing in dumb, blind pain—untaught, unfed—
With earnest heart, and brain, and tongue, and pen,
He toil'd to achieve deliverance;—to his end,
Through honour and dishonour, through report
Evil and good, still constant.—Yet, in him,
Philanthropy (too oft in feebler minds
Destructive of less liberal sympathies)
Marr'd not one home affection, but enhanced
And purified them all:—no happier hearth
Than his e'er flung its winter evening blaze
On groupes of joyous faces;—there was not
In all the world a parent, husband, friend,
More excellent than he! Nor was the face
Of Nature—her mysterious loveliness—
To him indifferent;—flowers, and trees, and fruits,—
Beast, insect, feather'd fowl, and creeping thing—

Whatever God hath made—the mountain ridge
Embosoming the lake, near which he spent
His intervals of rest from lifelong toil—
The primrose on the bank—the hawthorn hedge,
With woodbines and wild roses intertwined—
He loved them all! Majestic was his soul,
And gentle in its majesty—alive
To whatsoe'er in this material world
Reveals the presence of Divinity,
And therefore full of love! Alas for us!
Who knew him—who beheld and felt the power
Of goodness which abode in him—and yet
Scarce loved it till 'twas lost!—Alas for thee!
Poor town, in which he sojourn'd for a time,
And which his sojourn dignified!—Alas!
For what thou art and hast been!—Ichabod!
Thy glory hath departed!
—Fare thee well!—
Henceforth, though I shall know thee as my home,
I will not view thee with a Poet's eye,
Nor wed thy name to verse.—And yet indeed
I love thee well, unlovely as thou art,
And in thy featureless repose of look,
Reflecting well that uneventful course
Of the mid life of man, to which my years
Have now attain'd;—and though thou must become
Less pleasant, less endear'd to me, as years
Roll onward—though this house, now musical
With voices which I love, as I grow old
Must lose them, one by one, till we are left—

(If death by swifter stroke divide us not)
—I and my partner—inmates of a home
Childless at last—not therefore will I now
Grudge thee such love as thou hast well deserv'd—
Such as thou still deserv'st. When I am gone,
May better and more gifted pastors dwell
Where I have dwelt so pleasantly!—Yon Church,
Not even by Rickman's genius, in late years,
Reclaim'd from that unblushing ugliness
And degradation of deformity
By parsimonious thrift inflicted once—
May a new generation, more devout
Than we and than our fathers—pull it down,
As what defies amendment, and erect
A temple, worthier of the name it bears,
On what is now its site!—But till it fall,
Still may the worship of our English Church,
As now, within its walls, in solemn pomp
Liturgical, with full accordant strains
Of the deep organ and symphonious chaunt
Of choristers, ascend from it to Heaven,
Wafting the aspirations pure and deep
Of Christian hearts!—may never sound of hymn,
Such as these latter days have spawn'd in shoals—
Doggrel, prosaic, puritanical,
Quintessence of flat balderdash—pollute
Its sacred walls, suggesting to the mind
Of worshippers, who wish to be devout,
Involuntary thoughts which curl the lip
Perforce into a smile!—may all who there

Kneel at one altar, be hereafter One
In heart and spirit!—the whole Church on Earth
Anticipating, as the dawn draws nigh,
The eternal concord of the Church in Heaven!

LAYS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

LAYS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

THROUGH the dreary night of ages,
  While the world's gross dreamers slept,
Wakeful eyes of saints and sages
  Have their lifelong vigil kept.
While long ages wax and wane,
Still they wake and weep in vain.

II.

Were thy words too boldly spoken,
  Heralding salvation near,
Holy Paul?—alas! no token
  Of the dawn doth yet appear.
Through thick clouds of grief and sin
Breaks no gleam of twilight in.

III.

Hath the Lord his Church forsaken?
  Nay!—to faith's quick ear and eye,
Signs, too clear to be mistaken,
  Tell of his redemption nigh.
Though gross darkness gird us round,
We an inner light have found.

IV.

As the fleshly eye grows dimmer,
And the brow besprent with grey—
Nearer we discern the glimmer
Of the soul's eternal day.
As the grave begins to yawn,
Clear and perfect grows our dawn.

V.

Lo! the eastern mountains kindle
With upshooting beams afar!
Lo! already droop and dwindle
Waning moon and morning star!
Christ, the Sun of Righteousness,
Soon our weary eyes shall bless.

VI.

Christ himself!—make haste to meet him!
Cast your robes of sin away;
Clothed in light, go forth to greet him,
Children of the sober day;
Not o'ercharged with foul excess,
Not in lust and wantonness;

VII.

Not in wrath and fierce vexation,
Not in envying, not in strife,
Chaunt your hymns of gratulation
To the Lord of light and life.
Changed by Him, in heart and will,
Let not flesh its lusts fulfil.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

Our Lord came once in humble state,
And poor and mean array,
While crowds did on his advent wait,
And strew'd with boughs his way.
Upon a colt, an ass's foal,
He rode in lowly guise,
While shouts and songs, that mock'd control,
Peal'd round him to the skies.

II.

" Hosannah to the mighty King
Of David's royal stem!
Whom, in Jehovah's name, we bring
To his Jerusalem!"
So ran the shout from tongue to tongue,
While He in peace drew near—
Those tongues which soon foul insult flung
Upon his cross and bier!

III.

And many a weary age hath past
Since those dark deeds were done—
And men would fain believe at last
His reign almost begun.
That day, 'tis said, shall dawn ere long,
When He o'er Earth shall ride,
Begirt by Heaven's angelic throng,
And martyrs glorified.

IV.

So dream we, and with venturous skill
Heaven's times and seasons guess—
Yet cleave to this world's follies still,
Nor love its bawbles less.
Alas! and sensual lust and hate,
And wasting strife and care,
Pollute and vex, from gate to gate,
Our Father's House of prayer!

V.

With garb and gauds of harlot pride
And loveless smiles bedeck'd,
The Church, unlike a virgin bride,
Her bridegroom doth expect:
And we, who those blind hearts condemn,
Which Life's own Lord could slay,—
Should haply, had we lived with them,
Have been as blind as they!

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

A WORLD of deep and fervent thought
God's word doth to our gaze unfold—
Whate'er was done, or felt, or taught,
By saints and holy men of old;
Their faith and patience, hope and love,—
Their trials in this nether sphere—

And how they won their crown above
Through purifying sorrow here.

II.

Nor is this all; for God hath given,
To bless the mind's believing eye,
And lead the loving heart to heaven,
The sunbright scroll of prophecy:—
Blest glimpses of the bliss to come
Hereafter to this world below,
When Truth and Love shall build their home
Where sin dwells now with shame and woe.

III.

Six thousand years, in toil and pain,
Hath all Creation travail'd sore;—
Six thousand years, alas! in vain,
Nor yet that weary travail o'er!
And well might strongest hearts give way
Beneath the incumbent weight of ill,
Which grows and gathers day by day,
Uncheck'd, unheal'd, triumphant still!

IV.

Yet this must end;—deceit and guile,
And violence, and lust, and hate
Shall not, for aye, God's world defile,
Nor lay its glories desolate.
We look for a new Earth and Heaven,
Where righteousness in peace shall dwell,
When He to penal flames hath given
This globe of ours, with death and hell.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

SONNET.

THOUGH Heaven and Earth, like dreams, should pass away,
Christ's word remaineth stedfast:—from their base
The hills may be up-rent, and know their place
No longer,—the great light which rules the day
Be quench'd,—the seas, burnt up, no more obey
Their rayless mistress,—each created race
Of beast, bird, insect, vanish from the face
Of Nature, sunk, herself, in deep decay;—
But nought which He hath spoken e'er shall fail;—
Truth, goodness, mercy, wisdom, cannot die,
Nor aught in Earth or Heaven or Hell prevail
To mar His word, who from his throne on high
Came down and suffer'd in this tearful vale,
To save lost Man through all eternity.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

As ministers of Christ, with high commission
Entrusted, his rich bounties to dispense,
And win, (if that may be,) from lost condition
To faith and hope, the slaves of sin and sense,—

As pledged to preach, or in or out of season,
His truth to ears which hearken or reject,—
To guide, console, rebuke, and mildly reason—
Of us account, and yield us due respect.

II.

By us affused, the pure baptismal water
Doth to repentant souls rich gifts convey,
Sealing, to Heaven's adopted son or daughter,
Grace which shall wash the inborn sin away.
'Tis ours to dress the board, to crown the chalice,
With rich regalement of celestial food,—
From lips profane, deep stain'd with fraud or malice,
Withholding still Christ's body and his blood.

III.

Respect our office,—but insist, meanwhile,
That we should to our trust be faithful found;
Not marring truth with flatteries base and vile—
Not fearing to reprove where sins abound,—
As duty calls, the cross still meekly bearing,—
Ne'er shunning God's whole counsel to make known,—
Ourselves, our flocks, with equal zeal preparing
To meet the summons to His judgment throne.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

FAST bound in darksome prison
The saintly Baptist lay,
While on the world had risen
Redemption's vernal day:
And many a wondrous story
To cheer his spirit came,
Of Christ's increasing glory,
And ever spreading fame.

II.

Then spake he in his gladness—
"Go forth, my brethren twain,
Who soothe my dungeon's sadness,
And glory in my chain—
Go ask this godlike seemer,
Of whom such things we hear,—
Art thou the true Redeemer,
Or must a third appear?"

III.

Our Lord, in his deep kindness,
When they this message brought,
On sickness, pain, and blindness,
His healing mercies wrought;
And while each dark disaster
Before him seem'd to flee,
"Go tell, he said, your master,
The things ye hear and see.

IV.

" The lame their strength recover,
The lepers lose their stain,
The blind man's night is over,
The deaf can hear again;
From Heaven hath light descended
To men of low degree;—
Whoso is not offended,
The same is blest in me."

V.

So spake our great Redeemer,—
So let our hearts reply!
For who so blind a dreamer,
So dull of heart and eye,
As not to see around him,
As not to feel within,
That Satan's chain hath bound him—
That Christ hath conquer'd sin?—

VI.

We ask not signs and wonders—
We go not forth to find
Rocks split by volleying thunders,
Reeds shaken by the wind.
By peace in Earth and Heaven,
By blissful hearth and home,
By all His grace hath given—
We *know* that Christ hath come.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

Rejoice in Christ alway—
When Earth looks heavenly bright,
When joy makes glad the livelong day,
And peace shuts in the night.
Rejoice, when care and woe
The fainting soul oppress,—
When tears at wakeful midnight flow,
And morn brings heaviness.

II.

Rejoice, when festal boughs
Our winter walls adorn,
And Christians greet, with hymns and vows,
The Saviour's natal morn.
Rejoice, when mourning weeds
The widow'd Church doth wear
In memory of her Lord who bleeds,
While Christians fast to prayer.

III.

Rejoice in hope and fear,—
Rejoice in life and death,—
Rejoice, when threatening storms are near,
And comfort languisheth.
When should not they rejoice,
Whom Christ his brethren calls—

Who hear and know his guiding voice
When on their hearts it falls?

IV.

Yet not to rash excess
Let joy like ours prevail;—
Feast not on Earth's deliciousness,
Till faith begin to fail.
Our temperate use of bliss—
Let it to all appear;
And be our constant watchword this—
"The Lord himself is near!"

V.

Take anxious care for nought,—
To God your wants make known,
And soar, on wings of heavenly thought,
Tow'rd His eternal throne.
So, though our path is steep,
And many a tempest lours,
Shall His own peace our spirits keep,
And Christ's dear love be ours.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

"Wanderer in the desart bare,—
Man of pale and thoughtful brow,
With thy robe of camel's hair—
Tell us who and what art thou?
Art thou He for whom we wait—

He who, as we fondly deem,
From their low and lost estate
Shall our weary tribes redeem?"

II.

"Not Messiah's self am I,"
(Straight the Baptist did confess,)
"But a voice that loud doth cry
In the echoing wilderness—
Haste, prepare Jehovah's way—
Such the message which I bear;—
Disobedient hearts obey!
Stubborn knees be bent in prayer!"

III.

"Thou art not Elias then,
Nor the prophet yet to be;
Wherefore should the sons of men
Come to be baptized of thee?"
Thus, in proud and taunting ire,
Did the Pharisees reply;—
Straightway gleams of heavenly fire
Kindled in the Baptist's eye.

IV.

"Yea," he cried, "right well ye say,
I with water now baptize;
But among you stands to-day
One, yet hidden from your eyes—
One who doth all worlds control,
Heavenly Son of heavenly Sire;
He shall wash the sinful soul
With the Holy Ghost and fire."

v.

Jesu !—the baptismal rite,
Ere we knew thee, made us thine ;
With thy Spirit's gentle might
Come, our carnal hearts refine !
Purify and light and heat
All the darksome depths within ;
Heal, in nature's last retreat,
All her sickness—all her sin !

CHRISTMAS DAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

By vision clear and truthlike dream—
By awful voices heard from Heaven,—
By many a brief, but glorious gleam
Of his own brightness faintly given,—
By type and emblem, rite and law,—
By prophets' voices stern and bold,—
By all they felt, by all they saw,—
God to our fathers spake of old.

II.

But dreams are vague, and visions dim,
And e'en the heavenly sounds, that flow
From holiest lips of Seraphim,
To sinful hearts seem faint and low ;
And types—we scarce know what they mean,
And little heed we sage or seer,

Compared with what our eyes have seen,—
Compared with what our ears may hear.

III.

For God's own Son, to whom is given
Dominion o'er all worlds that are,—
Whose power upholds both Earth and Heaven,—
Who guides and governs sun and star,—
In whose refulgent person shine
His Father's lineaments express,—
Hath come on Earth, through love divine
To purge our human sinfulness.

IV.

And through the deeds His love hath done,
—Though heir himself of Heaven—hath He
A throne above the angels won,
Beside the Eternal Majesty.
And they—the beautiful—the bright,
Who ride upon the lightning's flame,
And guide at will the whirlwind's might,
Fall down and worship at his Name.

V.

O Lord! eternal is thy throne—
Thee Heaven's immortal myriads bless;
And men, and saints, and angels own
The sceptre of thy righteousness.
And, ere this frame was yet begun,
Of earth and ocean, sky and sea,
God's word went forth, "Thou art my Son,—
This day have I begotten thee!"

VI.

They, as a garment, shall wax old—
Earth, air, and ocean, sun and sky,—
Till, like a vesture, shalt thou fold
Creation up, and cast it by.
But thou shalt still the same remain,
Triumphant over death and hell,—
Secure from grief, remote from pain,
Eternal and unchangeable.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

In the beginning there was God alone:
His immaterial glory fill'd all space,
Its ancient and illimitable throne:—
Substance was none;—no colour, form, or place;
Not one of all night's countless orbs had shone
As yet upon her still and rayless face;
No sound had pierced the silence lone and deep,
Telling of life, which still in Time's vast womb did sleep.

II.

Then was the Word with God—the Word was God;
Co-equal—co-eternal—co-divine,
Myriads of ages ere Earth's soil was trod
By man or seraph,—ere a sun did shine,
Impregnating with heat her teeming sod,

And filling with rich ore the virgin mine—
Even then, in glory such as heart ne'er felt,
Tongue spake, or thought conceived, the Son and
Father dwelt.

III.

Earth was created:—the great fiat pass'd,
'Let there be light:'—that fiat spake the Word—
Himself the light on each man's spirit cast;
And when into our nostrils life was pour'd,
He was that life;—yet when He came at last
To his own world—its Maker and its Lord,—
That world received him not, and he was fain
Over a few poor, faithful, scatter'd hearts to reign.

IV.

Yet, to as many as received him, He
Gave power, e'en then, to be the sons of God;
Not through the pride of mortal ancestry—
Not for that they Earth's sacred places trode—
Not for that men had will'd it so to be—
But that His grace, who quickeneth stone and clod,
Made them partakers of a second birth,
And denizens of Heaven, while yet they dwelt on
Earth.

V.

Thus was the Word made flesh, and with us dwelt,
Here sojourning among the sons of men,—
And all our joys and all our sorrows felt,
Revealing daily to our mortal ken
The glory of his Father,—so to melt
Our stubborn hearts, and win them home again

E'en to Himself;—for us he felt such ruth—
He, God's own image, full of heavenly grace and truth!

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

Our mortal eyes are all too dim
To see Heaven's countless seraphim
Encamp'd Christ's Church around;
Our mortal ears too dull to hear
Angelic voices, close and clear,
But in Earth's uproar drown'd.

II.

We know not what bright myriads stand
Invisible, but near at hand,
To guard our narrow way;—
What banners o'er us are unfurl'd,—
How weak is he who rules the world
To Him whom we obey!

III.

And so a timorous war we wage,
And plod through life's dull pilgrimage
With laggard steps and slow;
Beset by perils dark and drear,
Trouble and toil, and doubt and fear,
And ever varying woe.

IV.

Yet moments, few and brief, have been
When faith's enfranchised eye hath seen
Beyond this mortal night;—
When some strong effort of the heart
Hath rent Earth's shadowy veil apart,
And brought all Heaven in sight.

V.

First of the martyrs!—thus to thee
'Twas given thy Saviour's self to see
At God's right hand reveal'd;
Whom once beheld, what marvel thou
With patient cheer and stedfast brow
Thy saintly soul shouldst yield?

VI.

But we!—our eyes are dark with sin,—
Mists, rising from foul depths within,
Their else keen vision blind;
And so in vain we struggle still
With sluggish heart, and slavish will,
And gross and sensual mind.

VII.

Lord! on our darkling spirits shine
With those refulgent beams of thine,
Which kindle faith and love;
That we thy presence may discern,
And so, through earth's afflictions, learn
To win our crown above.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

A BEAUTEOUS world is this of ours,
Though dimm'd by sin's polluting stain;
The earth looks bright with fruits and flowers,
The skies with shifting sun and rain:
The air is fresh with fragrant scent,
And many a pleasant voice and sound
Tells sweetly of deep-felt content
In homes where peace and love abound.

II.

Who would not say, if this were all,
"The temple of God's love is here;
Gleams of his brightest glory fall
From Heaven upon this favour'd sphere"?
And yet—behold the lightning's path—
The blazing roof, the blasted tree—
The tokens of avenging wrath—
Plague, famine, death, and misery!

III.

Alas! from this, our beauteous earth,
The cry of guilt to God hath risen;
The world, which smiled on Adam's birth,
Is now his sinful offspring's prison.
There's not a green and flowery vale,
There's not a pleasant grove or dell,
But has its own peculiar tale
Of agony and crime to tell.

IV.

And yet o'er all our deeds of shame,—
Of hate and vengeance, wrath and lust,—
Of plunder'd cities wrapt in flame—
Of towers and temples ground to dust,—
Of maids' and matrons' foulest wrong—
Of ruin'd hearth and reeking sod,—
One cry arises, loud and long,—
The death-cry of the saints of God!

V.

The earth has drunk their gentle blood,
And closed above their scatter'd bones;
Rock, hill, and cavern, vale, and wood,
Have echoed back their dying groans.
In dungeons dark, in tortures dire,
By axe and fagot, stone and sword,
In whelming floods, in scorching fire,
Their lives they yielded for their Lord.

VI.

Through woods and wilds, o'er pathless rocks,
They roam'd to shun the rage of men;
They found a shelter with the fox,
They dared the hungry lion's den;
They sought and shared the raven's food,
They slept beside the eagle's nest;
By human hatred still pursued,
And only in the grave at rest.

VII.

And years and ages wax and wane,—
But that fierce hate is quenchless still;

And martyrs toil and bleed in vain
To free mankind from grief and ill.
The thirst of Cain for Abel's blood,
The hate that slew the Lord of heaven,
Still persecute the wise and good—
Those sole offenders ne'er forgiven!

VIII.

And shall not God avenge his own?
—Look up—in all the louring sky
The tokens of his wrath are shown—
He *will* avenge them speedily.
For ruthless deeds of days long past,
For saintly blood like water shed,
Those gathering clouds shall burst at last,
Ere many another age hath fled.

IX.

The curse deferr'd at length draws nigh,
Our guilty world beneath it shakes;
It blights the earth, it blasts the sky,
All flesh before its advent quakes.
All human faces gather gloom,
Fear hideth in the hearts of kings;—
O Lord, protect thy Church from doom,
Beneath thy mercy's sheltering wings.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

A BLESSED lot was yours,
Who dwelt with Christ below,
And saw him work his heavenly cures
On mortal pain and woe!
Into whose charmed ears
His human accents sank;
Whose heart, oppress'd with griefs and fears,
His looks of pity drank!

II.

Those words of his we read,
And feel their countless worth;
And gladly yet our spirits feed
On all he wrought on Earth.
From Bethlehem's manger mean
To Calvary's awful hill,
We track him through each wondrous scene,
As faith discerns it still.

III.

But faith's intensest gaze
Is all too weak and cold
To pierce the thick and sensual haze
Which doth our hearts enfold.
Almost God's written word
Those craving hearts despise—

It cannot give the tones ye heard,
The looks that bless'd your eyes.

IV.

Unkind and selfish men!
Ye might have told us more
(For God's own Spirit warm'd your pen)
Of Him whom all adore.
His voice—his form—his glance—
His stature fair and tall,—
The glories of his countenance—
Ye might have told them all.

V.

Among your tribes was none,—
Not one poor limner found,
Who might pourtray that heavenly One
With Earth's rich beauty crown'd?
Could no kind art have left
The strains of that last hymn,
Whose parting tones your bosoms cleft
Near Cedron's hallow'd brim?

VI.

So might our eyes have dwelt
On that divinest brow;
So might our thrilling hearts have felt
Those heavenly accents now.
That face o'er home and hearth
Might cheering light have flung,
And Christians still enjoy'd on Earth
The strains their Saviour sung.

VII.

"O! murmurs base and vain!
(Heaven's martyr'd saints reply)
And foolish tongues that thus complain!
And foolish hearts that sigh!
What lack ye now of all
That we enjoy'd of old?
What light could on our spirits fall
Which yours may not behold?"

VIII.

He spake with us on Earth—
He speaks to you from Heaven;
Is with you in your grief and mirth—
Hath all your sins forgiven:
To bear his words to you
Our strength and lives we gave;
That ye might know what once we knew,
We dared the martyr's grave.

IX.

Our toils are over now,
And yours will soon be done;
Keep patient heart and stedfast brow
Till faith's good fight be won.
Walk boldly in the light,
And so your prize pursue,
For God's own glory gilds the night
Which yet looks dark for you.

X.

Deem not the gospel's sway
As yet hath slain your sin,

Nor wash'd its crimson stains away,
Nor cleansed the founts within.
Before God's altar kneel,
To Him your sins confess,
And He your hearts shall cleanse and heal
From all unrighteousness.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

I.

Art thou still on Earth a rover?
Shar'st thou still some mortal home,
Though life's task hath long been over,
Tarrying till thy Lord shall come?
Still unchanged in human beauty,
Breathing still our human breath,
Stedfast still at all Earth's duty,
Only free from pain and death?

II.

Thou whom once the Lord of glory
Chose his earthly friend to be—
Meekest saint of Christian story,
Gentle child of Zebedee—
Still do Earth's gross fetters bind thee?
Is thy rest not yet begun?
Where, O where, may Christians find thee?
In what land beneath the sun?

III.

Art thou still, unheeded, roaming
On the Galilean shore,
Where Gennesareth's waves are foaming,
Which thy bark so often bore?
Dost thou still delight to wander
Through the paths thy Saviour trod;
Where with thee he loved to ponder
On the ways and works of God?

IV.

In the city sad and saintly,—
On the Temple's blasted site,—
When the stars are burning faintly,
Dost thou oft outwatch the night?
How must Salem's ruins move thee!—
All is changed on Zion's hill;
Heaven alone is bright above thee,
And its fires unfaded still.

V.

Or, in Patmos isle secluded,
View'st thou, with prophetic eye,
Things whereinto ne'er intruded
Holiest angel known on high?
Swiftly now the days are waning
Which thy mystic lips foretold;
Soon thy Lord, in glory reigning,
Shall thy weary eyes behold.

VI.

Hath our own bright isle beheld thee,
Shrouded in some garb obscure?

Have we from our doors repell'd thee,
For that thou wast old and poor?
Faint, perchance, and worn and weary,
Toiling on from clime to clime—
Still thou view'st one prospect dreary,—
Waning faith and waxing crime.

VII.

Sick, perchance, in heart and spirit
At the ceaseless strife and change
Which Earth's ancient realms inherit—
Westward thou hast turn'd to range.
There, where nature's smiles are kindest—
Where our race is in its youth—
Tell us if, e'en there, thou findest
Holier love or purer truth?

VIII.

Doth thy bark, with gentlest motion,
Where the smooth Pacific smiles,
Bear thee o'er the breast of ocean,
Visiting its myriad isles?
There, in joy and triumph sailing,
Dost thou pass from shore to shore,
Where young faith is yet prevailing,
Where false gods are found no more?

IX.

Idle dreams! though passing pleasant
To the fond and foolish heart,
Which on Earth would deem thee present,
Though in heavenly bliss thou art.
He who here vouchsafed to love thee,

He who held thee on his breast,
Breathes eternal peace above thee,
In the chambers of his rest.

X.

Dreamy sounds, from earth ascending,
Tell thee of our strife below;
How the Church is still contending
With unvanquish'd sin and woe.
Heaven's remotest depths must hide thee,
Till her victory be won;—
There may we repose beside thee,
When our earthly toils are done!

THE INNOCENTS' DAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

THROUGH Heaven's bright depths profound
Float waves of golden sound—
Voices of mingled love, and joy and wonder;
Like harps that smite the ear,
'Midst waters murmuring near,
And the deep rolling of the distant thunder.
Seraphs and saints are chaunting some new song,
Which, round Jehovah's throne, Heaven's echoing vaults prolong.

II.

On Zion's topmost brow
Bright hosts are gathering now—
Twelve times twelve thousand, each a sceptred saint!
Each bears his Father's name
In lines of dazzling flame,
Writ on his forehead;—yet that blaze grows faint
Beneath the o'erpowering glory of the Lamb
Throned in the midst—the One—the infinite I AM.

III.

And hark! with one accord,
To greet Heaven's sovereign Lord,
That countless host its mighty voice doth raise;
A loud and thrilling song
Peals through the immortal throng—
A song of holy love, and joy and praise:
A song which none may learn but such as be
Enroll'd among that bright and blessed company.

IV.

Those blissful sounds to hear,
Heaven stoops its charmed ear,—
Angels themselves their choral songs suspending;
While blessed souls that sleep
In peace serene and deep,
Feel the wild music with their visions blending.
But even angelic voices are too dull
To imitate those strains—so wild and wonderful.

V.

Ye crowned heads that wait

In calm and saintly state,
(White-vested elders) round the eternal throne;
Declare, if that ye may,
What glorious hosts are they,
From whose bright lips these wond'rous sounds have flown?
Why can none learn the words of that strange song,
Nor chaunt the heavenly notes which waft those words along?

VI.

"Earth's holiest sons are these,
Who (so their Lord to please)
Refrain'd on earth from joys of earthly love;
By woman undefiled,
Each like a sinless child
Follow'd his Master to his rest above;
Nor e'er did passion's sensual paths pursue,
Nor e'er the wanton joys of amorous dalliance knew.

VII.

"These calm'd, with stedfast will,
Desire's intemperate thrill,
E'en in the May of their impetuous blood;
Nor let vain Fancy's play
Their senses steal away;
Nor sank beneath the might of womanhood.
But firmly put Earth's baser love aside,
So best to live to Him for them on Earth who died.

VIII.

" No feverish hopes and fears
Disturb'd their prime of years,
Nor from their heart's serene devotion drave ;
Nor foul suspicion's breath,
Nor passion, strong as death,
Nor jealousy, more cruel than the grave,
Marr'd the composure of their tranquil mind,
Nor could their eagle wings of heavenly musing bind.

IX.

" Nor knew they the turmoil
Of household cares or toil,
For wife and children daily bread to win ;
Nor love's capricious wiles
And shifting frowns and smiles,
Once snared them into act or thought of sin,
While, with fond zeal, to please a wife they strove,
Neglecting His high cause who claim'd their hearts above.

X.

" Therefore, with perfect will,
They served their Master still,
Nor e'er, on Earth, forgot their heavenly prize ;
Through clouds of trouble dim,
By faith, discerning Him
Whom yet they saw not with their fleshly eyes :
For his dear sake Earth's fiercest hate defied,—
Lived but to work his will, and for his glory died.

XI.

" Now all their toils are o'er,
And sense and lust no more
Disturb or sadden their serene repose;
But, with Heaven's glories crown'd,
They near the Lamb are found,
And track his footsteps wheresoe'er he goes;
Still in his wake, with rapturous flight, ascending,
Through worlds of dazzling light and bliss that knows no ending.

XII.

" And that blest song, they sing,
With which Heaven's chambers ring,
As with the fabled music of the spheres,
Breathes no dull tone of earth—
No thought that e'er had birth
In the gross world of carnal hopes and fears:
But hymns the passion of a virgin love,
Which such alone conceive even in these realms above."

XIII.

Ah! woe!—must only they,—
(White-vested elders say,)
Must only they their Lord's pure joy partake?
And we, who toil below
Through mortal grief and woe,
Bearing the cross for his beloved sake—
Must we ne'er learn the wonders of that strain,
For that we wore, on earth, soft wedlock's easy chain?

XIV.

And that, around our hearth,
The laugh of childhood's mirth
And matron voices of meek rule were heard;
And that the nuptial bed
Was in our chambers spread,
And that our hearts were innocently stirr'd
By woman's gentle words and cheering smile;
And that her tender love did all our cares beguile?

XV.

Is it our sin, that we,
In gentlest sympathy,
Thro' life's dark paths each other cheer'd along,
And felt the bitter dearth
Of children snatch'd from Earth,
To join their voices to that choral song?
Can chastest love our path so foully mar,
As e'en Heaven's brightest courts against our souls to bar?

XVI.

"O base and foolish plaints!"—
(Thus those white-vested saints
With dreamlike voice upbraidingly reply;)
"O murmurs base and vain,
Which Heaven's high will arraign!
And sinful hearts which with the sinless vie!
Low, sensual spirits, which would take your fill
Of Earth's most luscious joys, yet reign with martyrs still!

XVII.

"Is't not enough that ye
Have power on earth to be
Emblems and types of Christ's eternal love;
Fond husband and chaste wife,
In pure connubial life,
The Church pourtraying and her spouse above?
Is't not enough to know that you shall share
In heaven the fullest bliss that blessed souls can bear?

XVIII.

"Your own hard task fulfil,
And meekly do God's will,
Cheer'd by the comforts which his love hath given;
It may be that the hours
Here spent in wedlock's bowers,
Shall shed rich fragrance o'er your homes in heaven;
And love's bright flowers, which bloom so feebly here,
Burst into full-blown bliss in Heaven's congenial sphere.

XIX.

"So let each soul possess,
In faith and holiness,
Its proper gift of God—and still let all,
With reverence due, give place
To those whom ampler grace
Doth to sublimer self-denial call;

Who, self-subdued, best purge from earthly
leaven
Those founts of holy thought which fit the soul for
Heaven."

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

"THROUGH the desart wild and dreary,
Following tracks explored by few,
Sad at heart, and worn and weary,
We our toilsome march pursue.
O'er our heads, with blaze unclouded,
Burns the fierce and fiery noon;
Pestilence, in darkness shrouded,
Near us walks beneath the moon.

II.

"O'er the steep and pathless mountain
Oft with bleeding feet we climb;
Scarce to taste the desart fountain
Human hate allows us time.
Israel's homes lie far behind us,
Yet we pause not to look back,
Lest the keen pursuer find us,
Lest grim murder scent our track.

III.

"Eagles o'er our heads are wheeling,
Each careering towards her nest;
E'en the wolf and fox are stealing

To the covert of their rest;
Every foul and noxious creature
Finds on earth its lair and bed;—
But the infant Lord of Nature
Hath not where to lay his head.

IV.

"Yet, my babe, sweet sleep enfolds thee
On thy fainting mother's arm;
God, in his great love, beholds thee,
Angels guard thy rest from harm;
Earth and hell in vain beset thee,
Kings against thy life conspire;
But our God can ne'er forget thee,
Nor His arm, that shields thee, tire.

V.

"Where is now our peaceful dwelling?
—Wrapt perchance in vengeful flame;
Ruffian voices round it yelling,
Curses on thy gentle name.
Woe to Bethlehem's matrons, keeping
Tenderest watch above their dead!
Rachel, for her children weeping,
Knows not to be comforted.

VI.

"Woe to them!—and yet their anguish
Fades before what mine must be;
Doom'd to see my loved one languish
Through this life's long misery.
Doom'd to see Earth's hate expended
On his meek and lowly head,

Till his weary task is ended—
Till his sinless blood is shed.

VII.

" Heavenly hope shall soothe their sorrow,
When the grass begins to wave,
After many a dreary morrow,
Freshly o'er each infant grave.
I alone, to rest a stranger,
Must behold, with aching eye,
O'er my child distress and danger
Gathering still incessantly.

VIII.

" But forbear, my sinful spirit,
Of thy chastening to complain;
Gladly let me here inherit
Toil and sorrow, care and pain!
Welcome Earth's most dread vexations!
Welcome anguish and distress!
Since my name all generations
For a Saviour's love shall bless!"

THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

The childhood of our race is o'er,
Its youthful prime hath faded long;
Man's ripening mind delights no more
In dream and vision, tale and song.

The dawning hope, the fond belief,
The novelty of life are fled;
And all is sober, joy and grief,
And phantasy and faith are dead.

II.

The rites which pleased our Nature's youth,
While heart and mind were childish still—
The earthly types of heavenly truth,—
The altars of the grove and hill,—
The saintly pomp—the annual feast—
The sounds of sacred dance and hymn,—
The sacrifice of bird and beast—
These rites are o'er—these splendours dim.

III.

Our reason, disenthrall'd at length
From youthful fancies, fond and vain,
Comes forth, released by manhood's strength,
From governor's and tutor's reign.
The shadowy types of mystic lore
Content not now our mental eye,
Whose quenchless gaze would fain explore
All wonders of all worlds on high.

IV.

And must man's spirit vainly pant
For purest truth to learn and love?
Still groan beneath its earthly want
Of fellowship with things above?
—Not so!—the teeming womb of Time
Hath travail'd with a wondrous birth;

God's Son hath come, in love sublime,
  His brethren to redeem on earth.

V.

And for that we, through sin subdued,
  Are sons of God and heirs of heaven,
Our Father, to each heart renew'd,
  The spirit of a son hath given.
The soul's long servitude hath ceased,—
  Not now, like slaves, we crouch and cower,
But on our Father's bounty feast,—
  Enjoy His love, adore His power.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

"Thou wast to me the brightest dream
  That e'er upon my spirit shone;
Alas! and is that heavenly gleam
  For ever lost and gone?
And do I live?—and can it be
  That thou a shameless wanton art,
Who wast the type of purity
  To this fond, foolish heart?

II.

"I thought, ere yet I dared to love,
  That thou wast scarce an earth-born thing;
Thy mortal grace so tower'd above
  Earth's best imagining.
Almost it seem'd profane to press

The ground on which thy feet had trod,—
Their path was mark'd with holiness,
As by the steps of God.

III.

" And when my heart grew bold at last,
And perfect love had banish'd fear,
And gentle hope grew fair and fast
For many a pleasant year—
It was a joy I may not tell
The beauty of thy soul to see,
And, in my fondest thought, to dwell
On its pure harmony.

IV.

" Ah me !—how like a glimpse of Heaven
The day of our betrothal seem'd,
When first a pledge to love was given
Of all that hope had dream'd !
And I thenceforth might think of thee
When to my daily toil I went,
As doom'd in after years to be
My star of home content !

V.

" Can she, (I thought) so fair and good,
Partake a base mechanic's lot,
The light of loveliest womanhood
Diffusing through his cot ?
Can she, whose heart is all above,
A poor man's bride consent to be,
And rear, with meek and patient love,
His lowly progeny ?

VI.

" But thou didst so benignly smile,
And speak with such a gentle tone—
Ah! me—that voice might sure beguile
An angel from his throne!
And all thy words, and all thy ways,
And all thy looks so heavenly were;
'Twas heaven into thine eyes to gaze—
Thy mortal love to share!

VII.

" And wast thou then a sensual thing,—
A heartless wanton, light and vain?—
Such thoughts o'erwhelm my heart, and fling
Distraction on my brain.
No, no—it must not, cannot be—
Thy looks bespeak a virgin's heart,
The wanton's gestures suit not thee,
Nor yet the wanton's art.

VIII.

" Thou dost not quail before my glance—
And yet thine own is modest still;
Thy calm and radiant countenance
Betrays no thought of ill.
I cannot scan thy secret soul,
Nor read the unfathom'd depths within;
But ne'er did looks like those controul
The restless pulse of sin.

IX.

" And yet—those fatal proofs of guilt!—
Alas! too plain a tale they tell;—

O ! that my life-blood had been spilt
Ere thus my loved one fell !
And I!—shall I that fall proclaim ?
Make public all her guilty deeds ?
Consigning Her to scorn and shame
For whom my spirit bleeds ?

x.

" No, Mary—my crush'd heart may break,
But thou shalt still uninjured be ;
If vengeance e'er thy faults o'ertake,
It shall not come from me.
Thou wast my hope—my pride—my bliss,
I will not now divulge thy shame,
Nor point the common scoffer's hiss
At thy beloved name."

xi.

Such thoughts, perchance, in turbid stream
O'er Joseph's burden'd spirit crept ;
But that same night a blessed dream
Came to him as he slept :—
And when he from his sleep arose,
With stedfast heart and cheerful brow,
Like one whose hopes on God repose,
He pledged his nuptial vow.

xii.

In pure and reverent love he dwelt
With her his own, his chosen bride ;
Nor all a bridegroom's fervour felt,
Nor slumber'd by her side.
He shared with her his peasant's cot,

He watch'd her fondly night and morn,
But still approach'd her chamber not
Until her babe was born.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

The world may look serene and bright,
Our path bestrewn with choicest flowers;
And days of love and home-delight,
And nights of healthful rest be ours.
From worldly strife and worldly care
The heart a safe repose may win,
And yet feel all too weak to bear
The burden of unpardon'd sin.

II.

The mists of grief but rarely dim
The glorious light of childhood's skies;
Life tingles in its every limb,
Health speaks and sparkles in its eyes:
Yet, e'en among its sports and toys
A cloud is gathering on its brow;
Stern conscience soon will blast the joys
Which steep the soul in gladness now.

III.

Through many a green, secluded walk,
In life and hope's delicious May,
Engross'd in love's unwearying talk,

Fond youths and happy maidens stray.
Earth hath not a diviner bliss
On gentle spirits to bestow;
Yet boast not—for alas! e'en this
Unpardon'd sin converts to woe.

IV.

The pleasant noise of children's mirth
Makes glad our sober middle age;
Bright faces, round the evening hearth,
The day's heart-wasting cares assuage.
But wife and children's sweetest smile—
The light that on our hearts doth fall—
The love that doth our griefs beguile—
Unpardon'd sin can poison all.

V.

With stedfast thought and cheerful toil
The mines of learning we explore,
And waste our patient midnight oil
O'er many a page of ancient lore.
We seek and earn the sage's name,
We feel the sage's pride within;
But all our wisdom, all our fame,
Lie crush'd beneath unpardon'd sin.

VI.

We give our hearts to humankind,
With liberal bounty we dispense
To fainting flesh and weary mind
The streams of our benevolence.
And poor men's tongues our kindness bless,
And earth and air our praises fill;

But, in the spirit's loneliness,
Unpardon'd sin consumes it still.

VII.

He—he alone is truly blest
Whom God hath from this burden freed;
Whose doubts and fears are lull'd to rest,
Whose peace of heart is peace indeed:
Who, strong in faith, can lift to heaven
A tranquil and undaunted brow;
Who knows and feels his sin forgiven,
His soul's dark warfare ended now.

VIII.

And who are they on whom alone
Descends this blessing from above?
To whom their Father hath made known
These tokens of especial love?
The Jew by circumcision's rite?—
The Christian by baptismal sign?—
On these doth more celestial light
Than on less favour'd spirits shine?

IX.

Nor outward sign, nor mystic rite,
Alone such blessings can confer;—
To walk by faith, and not by sight—
Like Abraham's self a worshipper,—
To count all earthly gain but loss,—
To look and long to be forgiven
Through Him who died upon the cross—
This—this unlocks the gates of heaven.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

THE angels' song was ended,
Sweet stillness fill'd the air,
Through which to Heaven ascended
The shepherds' silent prayer.
They gazed on one another,—
Strange thoughts were rife in them;
Then each cried, "Up, my brother!
Away to Bethlehem!

II.

"Our sheep, in safety feeding
Upon the mountain side,
Beneath the watch-dog's leading
May wander far and wide.
From heat, and frost, and thunder,
God shelter flock and fold!
While we this work of wonder
Are journeying to behold."

III.

Forthwith each sturdy ranger
To Bethlehem took his way;
And soon they found the manger
Wherein the Saviour lay.
They bow'd the knee before him,
Those simple men and true;
They bless'd the womb that bore him,
The breast whose milk he drew.

IV.

No sign of kingly splendour
Did that poor hovel grace;
But love, devout and tender,
Had sanctified the place:
For there the saintly mother,
The virgin undefiled,
In bliss she could not smother,
Was gazing on her child.

V.

And, keeping watch above her,
In rapt and heavenly mood,
Her husband, friend, and lover,
Stout-hearted Joseph stood.
Such bliss no mortal father
E'er felt for his first-born,
As faith began to gather
In his pure soul that morn.

VI.

And, as in smiling slumber
That blessed infant lay,
Bright visions without number
About him seem'd to play.
And in that lowly dwelling
A stillness, hush'd and dim,
Seem'd of the presence telling
Of viewless seraphim.

VII.

They came and they departed,
Those simple, holy men;

And each felt joyful-hearted
As home he fared again:
But oft in thought they wander'd
To all they left behind;
While Mary kept and ponder'd
Their visit in her mind.

THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

Angelic tongues would be too weak,
Angelic hearts too cold,
The wonders of God's love to speak,
So deep and manifold.
Heaven's principalities and powers
Are gazing on this world of ours,
His counsel to behold,
Which, since creation's morn, hath been
Unfolding on this mortal scene.

II.

The strife in which we here engage
With Hell's rebellious host,
The warfare which the Church doth wage,
Hath Heaven's whole heart engross'd:
E'en as the news of foes' descent,
In fierce invading armament,
On some far island coast,

With one intense, tumultuous thrill
May rouse an empire's heart and will.

III.

We know not but each brave repulse
Which foils the Tempter here,
Forbids his legions to convulse
Full many a brighter sphere.
But this we know—that since, on Earth,
Sin's foul and monstrous womb gave birth
To grief, and pain, and fear,
The wisdom and deep love of Heaven
Against hell's noxious brood have striven.

IV.

At first, in dark mysterious guise,
That wisdom lay conceal'd;
Obscurely to prophetic eyes
As in a glass reveal'd.
But now the veil of Hebrew lore
Can dim its glorious light no more;
And Abraham's race must yield
The rights, which theirs no more may be,
To all Earth's countless progeny.

V.

And, day and night, o'er land and sea,
Is spreading, far and fast,
The knowledge of Christ's mystery,
Close hid in ages past.
And who are they who tell the tale?
Who, heaven-commission'd, rend the veil
O'er all the nations cast?

And cause the light of truth divine
On man's sin-darken'd soul to shine?

VI.

Not seraphs, as ye well might deem,
With souls and tongues of flame;
Whose utterance yet too weak would seem
That mystery to proclaim:
Not prophets from the grave arisen,
To groan once more in fleshly prison;
Not saints, who overcame,
Through Jesus' blood, the infernal powers
Which yet besiege these hearts of ours.

VII.

Ah! no!—the messengers of peace
Themselves are sinners still;
Who scarce, e'en yet, have found release
For weary heart and will.
Fast bound in Satan's devilish thrall,
Christ's love aroused them, one and all,
And sent them forth to fill
His marriage-feast with guests, and tell
Of his rich love, unsearchable.

VIII.

The words they speak are faint and few,
And scarce, at times, find vent;
Yet can the strongest hearts subdue,
With might omnipotent.
For from the spirit's depths they start,
And wing their way from heart to heart,
As though the speaker meant,

In that deep utterance, to reveal
A love he cannot choose but feel.

IX.

And through that love, sent down from Heaven
To dwell in hearts new-born,
Shall sin at last from Earth be driven,
And Death of terror shorn.
The weapons of our warfare here
Are faith, and hope, and holy fear;
—Let these our souls adorn;
And Earth shall soon, like Heaven, confess
Christ's reign of peace and righteousness.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

Fair Star! whose orient beauty,
In patient love and duty,
Thro' many a sultry clime the pilgrim-sages led;
Whose beams, serene and tender,
First stay'd their waning splendour
Above the lowly stable where our Lord had laid his head;—

II.

Bright, tranquil child of morning!
Who gav'st the earliest warning
Of that more glorious Sun, e'en then about to rise;—
From light's eternal fountains,

O'er Earth's remotest mountains,
First heralding the blaze of day, which soon should fill the skies!

III.

What wast thou, wandering planet?
—Thy course,—O! whence began it?
In what dim, distant tract of unimagined space
Did thy Creator form thee?
Did first the sunbeams warm thee?
Did Nature's law project thee on thy swift and ceaseless race?

IV.

Ah! sure, no glimmering meteor
Wast thou—Earth's noxious creature,
From dank, unwholesome dews and fetid vapours bred;
No comet fiercely glaring,
Men's hearts for war preparing,
And shaking, from its horrid hair, hate, pestilence, and dread.

V.

Faith's eye alone could view thee—
Faith's foot alone pursue thee—
So thou didst safely guide those pilgrims on their way;
While yet thou wouldst not render
One glimpse of faintest splendour
To light stern Herod's ruffian bands to seize their infant prey.

VI.

Perchance some new creation,
By sudden revelation
Wast thou, to mortal eyes, then first made manifest;
Some home of souls departed,
The holy, humble-hearted,
For ever floating blissfully,—an island of the blest!

VII.

And when thy task was over,
Thy beauty thou didst cover
With azure folds of sky, and, hid from mortal eyes,
O'er ether's boundless ocean
Resume thy destined motion
Through space where other systems roll, and other suns arise.

VIII.

Ah! wherefore thus forsake us?
When pain and grief o'ertake us,
Why not, from time to time, thy cheering light unveil?
On many a night of sorrow
Presaging glad to-morrow
To hearts that faint beneath their load, and eyes that, weeping, fail?

IX.

Where lonely saints are kneeling,
From godless eyes concealing
The weight which this world's sin doth on their spirits lay—

Where, in prophetic study,
Until the east grows ruddy,
All night pale scholars wake and watch for Christ's long promised day—

X.

Where ships, in endless motion,
Plough through the plains of ocean,
The messengers of peace to heathen lands to bear—
Where, English homes forsaking,
Brave hearts are slowly waking,
In savage haunts and gloomy wilds, the voice of Christian prayer—

XI.

Where Heaven's elect assemble—
Where sinful spirits tremble—
Where first the stricken soul finds strength and voice to pray—
Where, round some widow'd father,
Half orphan'd children gather
Beside their sainted mother's grave—O why withhold thy ray?

XII.

For what more blessed token
To hearts, by sorrow broken,
Of pardon seal'd in heaven and future rest could be?
What surer sign could find us,
In trouble to remind us
Of Christ's protecting light and love—than that reveal'd in thee?

XIII.

Soul!—soul!—forbear such questions,—
Poor fancy's wild suggestions,—
Vain longings of the sense to feed its carnal eye;
What boots it that Man's spirit
Faith's treasures doth inherit,
If yet it cleaves so fondly to its old idolatry?

XIV.

No blaze of sensual glory,
Intense but transitory,
Could the heart's craving thirst for purer light allay;
Even thine, fair star, returning,
Would but increase our yearning,
Which nought on earth could satisfy, for Heaven's unclouded day.

XV.

Yet fond imagination,
By many a bright creation,
With shadowy types of Heaven can people Earth's domain;
Still shaping and combining,
From all things sweet and shining,
Memorials of immortal love to soothe our mortal pain.

XVI.

The rainbow, in its splendour,
To hearts devout and tender
Still yields a glorious pledge of deepest sin forgiven
The dawn's outbreaking whiteness,

The sunset's fading brightness,
Shed gleams of glory on the earth as from our
homes in Heaven.

XVII.

And when morn's star ascending,
Its pearly light is blending
With the pale, silver tints of the still sunless sky,
May fancy's eye discover
Thine orb, blest star, above her,
Bright as when first it usher'd in the day-spring
from on high.

XVIII.

Thus air, and earth, and ocean,
To hearts of calm devotion,
Rich founts of cheering thought and holy comfort
prove;
All things are theirs for ever,
Nor life nor death shall sever
Their faith and patience here below from Christ's
eternal love.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

HAST thou believed, poor mortal child of sorrow,—
O! hast thou *felt* thy grievous plague within?
Hath thy crush'd heart e'er vainly long'd to borrow
Rest and relief from the dull weight of sin?

Hast thou retraced, with shame and consternation,
The paths thy spirit, since its birth, hath trod?
Hast thou conceived, in faint imagination,
The wrath of God?

II.

Know'st thou His power—His works of fear and wonder,
Creator of all worlds, sole Lord of Heaven,
Whose glance is lightning, and whose voice is thunder;
Beneath whose breath hills quake, and rocks are riven?
Kings lick the dust before Him,—mightiest nations,
Thrones, empires, at his pleasure, wax and wane;
Man's countless tribes, through all their generations,
Confess His reign.

III.

Know'st thou His holiness?—Behold! before Him
The angels veil their brows of living light;
Heaven's holiest children tremblingly adore Him;
Not Heaven itself is spotless in his sight.
No sinful thought, no wandering dream of folly,
The terrors of his presence may endure;
The King of saints is He—the Lord most holy,
And just, and pure!

IV.

And what art thou, poor sinful human creature,
Inheritor of guilt, and shame, and woe?
Thy brightness soil'd, defaced each glorious feature,
Which once His image on thy soul did show?

Despiser of his laws! insane reviler
Of His great name! wild rebel to His will!
Of thine own soul the unrestrain'd defiler!
Yet scatheless still!

V.

Why art thou spared?—what potent intercessor
Averts from thee His oft uplifted arm?
Why, on this earth, so reckless a transgressor,
Liv'st thou and breathest, free from mortal harm?
The sun shines on, the rains still fall to bless thee;
Heaven's brightness—Earth's affections still are thine;
Fond bosoms heave, and gentle arms caress thee
In tenderest twine.

VI.

And ever and anon, amidst Earth's pleasures,
Thou hear'st a voice—a still small voice of love,
From these vain pomps and these decaying treasures
Wooing thy soul to fairer hopes above:
And, midst thy darkest deeds of shame and terror,
God's Spirit whispers to thy secret ear,
"This is the way—oh! quit those paths of error,
And walk thou here!"

VII.

And thou art still encompass'd by His people,
And saints, perchance, weep for thee, night and day;
And Sabbath chimes ring out from tower and steeple,
In His own house inviting thee to pray.

And Christ still sends thee his appointed teachers,
Still proffers to thee his own flesh and blood;
Entreats, persuades, by pastors and by preachers,
Thy wayward mood.

VIII.

O! close not thou thine ear, nor madly darken
Thy heart by reckless counsel, vain and wild;
But to those words of mercy meekly hearken,
E'en like a gentle and submissive child.
Think how all heaven hath been convulsed to save thee,
Vile as thou art, from hell's eternal death!
Think how God's Son—his sole begotten, gave thee
His dying breath!

IX.

Think on the Virgin's womb!—on Bethlehem's manger!
God condescending to a peasant's birth!
Think on that life of grief, distress, and danger!—
His toils, his tears, his troubles here on Earth!
Think on that desert fast!—that lone temptation!—
Think on the anguish of Gethsemane!—
Think on the bitter cup, to win salvation,
Endured for thee!

X.

For thee!—for thee!—the lost—the unconverted,—
The grief of angels—hell's close-guarded prize!—
But for his love by Heaven itself deserted!
Doom'd prey to that fierce worm which never dies!

And wilt thou still resist his deep compassion?
By new rebellions his slow wrath provoke?
Nay!—to His will thy spirit meekly fashion,
And bear his yoke.

XI.

Yield up thy body, once sin's willing servant,
To Him a living sacrifice—to Him
Give heart, soul, thought, in love devout and fervent;
Join, with thy voice, His choir of seraphim.
Thy health, thy strength, the glory and the beauty
Of all thine inner man, with stedfast will,
Submit henceforth to the calm rule of duty,
And serve Him still.

XII.

Be not conform'd to this world's varying humour,
Its love, its hate, its folly, or its pride;
Court not, and fear not, the foul breath of rumour;
Be to Earth's pomps and pleasures crucified.
Bow thy soul meekly to the Spirit's guiding,
Welcome his pure transforming influence;
Till Christ shall reign, in power and grace abiding,
O'er soul and sense.

XIII.

Walk humbly before God, and with thy neighbour;
Be wisdom's lowliest and most docile child;
Counting it ample fruit of all thy labour
That thou to God, through Christ, art reconciled.

Be One in faith and hope, in heart and spirit,
With His true members, and in patient love
Do thine own task, that so thou may'st inherit
Their bliss above.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

The solemn joyance of the paschal feast
In Salem's thousand homes was over now;
The melody of Psalms had sunk and ceased,
And sacrifice, and prayer, and offer'd vow
Were mute on Zion's Temple-crested brow;
Through the throng'd gates was passing many a train
Of pilgrims, who had come their knees to bow,
In annual homage, at Jehovah's fane,
And now with peaceful steps were wending home again.

II.

At that year's feast men's spirits had been stirr'd
Beyond their wonted fervour;—far and near,
Throughout the city, grave discourse was heard,
Breathing expectance not unmix'd with fear;
And friends, who met around their paschal cheer,
Spake each to each, in low and solemn tone,
Of Him who, all were hoping, should appear,
Ere many another passover had flown,
O'er Israel's race redeem'd to rear his promised throne.

III.

And hoary rabbis, who had spent their youth
And the calm fervour of their middle age
In learned study of prophetic truth,
Met and conversed, in conference deep and sage,
On what God's oracles did now presage;
Computing how the years were nigh fulfill'd,
Foreshown long since in Daniel's mystic page,
Whereon high hopes did men securely build,
That soon Messiah's star should now the horizon gild.

IV.

And hearts which long had for deliverance sigh'd
From the stern pressure of Rome's iron sway,
Felt as if soon they should not need to hide
The swelling hope, which deep within them lay,
That Israel's bondage now should pass away,
And brighter glory than her morn had seen
Gladden the progress of her later day,
When she of all the nations should be Queen,
And to Earth's utmost bounds extend her sway serene.

V.

And among those of the unlearned sort,
The wild fore-shadowing of their hearts' desire
Found copious vent in many a strange report
Of signs in Heaven,—of blood and smoke, and fire,
Betokening to the Earth convulsion dire;
Of meteors kindling all the Eastern sky;

Of yawning graves, and ghosts in bright attire,
Who through the city walk'd nocturnally,
And spake of change to come, and freedom drawing nigh.

VI.

And thus, on all the city's mighty heart,
A breathless hush of expectation dwelt;
And tears, unbidden, to men's eyes would start
As they, in fervent supplication, knelt
Before God's altar; and what each man felt
His neighbour in his eyes full well might read,
Till into words fond hope began to melt—
"Is Christ then born?—hath he been seen indeed?
Doth God vouchsafe at last to heal his people's need?"

VII.

But the feast ended, and Christ had not come;
So, by degrees, hope's fever was allay'd,
And all dispersed—each rustic to his home,
Each townsman to his craft or to his trade.
Such termination life's dull labours made
To anxious speculation;—they meanwhile,
The dwellers afar off, began to lade
Their beasts, and homeward fared for many a mile,
In cheerful, pleasant talk, which did the way beguile.

VIII.

And thus tow'rd East and West, and South and North,

Thro' Salem's every gate, from morn to night,
Youth, manhood, and old age were issuing forth;
In sooth a solemn and affecting sight!
Beneath those myriads hill and dale were white
As unto harvest, while each several breast
With its own treasure of glad thoughts felt light;
For each had done Jehovah's high behest,
So winning for itself abiding peace and rest.

IX.

Amidst the humbler wayfarers were two,
Husband and wife—a noticeable pair,
Who northward their long journey did pursue;
Calm and devout their aspect and their air;
She, amidst Judah's daughters, passing fair,
And now in the full bloom of matron prime;
Yet, on her saintly forehead, did she bear
Traces of thought more holy and sublime
Than our dull hearts can reach in all their mortal time.

X.

Upon an ass sedately did she ride,
Which for their travel scant provision bore;
While, staff in hand, her husband by her side
Cheer'd her with loving solace evermore.
—Thus pleasantly away the daylight wore,
And now, for weary beast and wearier man,
Until the morrow, must their toil be o'er;
And, halting for the night, the caravan
To pitch its lowly tents right joyfully began.

XI.

Then suddenly, amidst that motley crowd,
A strange yet pleasant turmoil might be seen;
And busy voices, clamouring long and loud,
Lent their shrill discord to a wilder scene
Than e'er our quiet clime beheld, I ween;
As each small groupe its own encampment chose,
By bubbling fount or palm-tree broad and green,
Where each, or ere the gathering shades should close,
Prepared its evening meal and night's secure repose.

XII.

To each his separate province was assign'd;
Some spread the viands forth in neat array;
Some for their beasts the freshest pasture find;
Some kindle watchfires, so to scare away
From the small camp each prowling beast of prey;
Some for the outposts choose their turns by lot,
That so the rest may sleep secure till day:
No separate charge or caution was forgot,
To guard from foes' assault that lone, sequester'd spot.

XIII.

Meanwhile that grave-eyed couple, each for each,
Their coarse and scanty supper did prepare,
With gentle interchange of loving speech,—
Sweet condiment, I ween, to sorriest fare!
Then spake the matron, "Much I marvel where
Tarrieth our child, who never, till to-night,
Hath fail'd our labour, or our meal, to share;

Why comes he not to bless our longing sight?
Strange he should leave us now in this wayfaring plight!

XIV.

"Fair as he is beyond the sons of Earth,
In form and feature, as in heart and will,—
Divine in wisdom, as divine by birth;
Yet hath he been, in love and duty, still
The meekest child that ever did fulfil
A parent's bidding; nor hath either heart
(Thine, Joseph, or mine own) been fain to thrill,
Since he was born, with one such grievous smart
As oft, for children's sins, makes parents tears to start.

XV

"Why comes he not?—why now, at last, neglect
His parents' needs?—why leave us thus to bring
(As if through heedless sloth or disrespect)
Leaves for our couch, and water from the spring
To quench our thirst?—why suffer us to fling
Our weary limbs upon their earthy bed
Without a blessing?—sure, he would not wring
Our hearts with wilful wrong or causeless dread;—
O! lives he yet on earth, or rests among the dead?"

XVI.

Thus the pale mother, in her anguish, spake,
With trembling voice and tear-suffused eye;
To whom her husband: "O! forbear to make
Thy fond heart sad with causeless agony.
His time, thou know'st, is not yet come to die;

His earthly trials scarcely are begun :—
Somewhere he loiters in our company;
For few there be who joy not to have won,
By most enticing arts, the presence of thy son.

XVII.

" Haply with gracious and persuasive speech,
And wisdom riper than his tender age,
Tho' all unlearn'd, some neighbour doth he teach
The import deep of some prophetic page;—
Or, it may be, less serious tasks engage
His gentle spirit;—on the beaten track
He may have wander'd from our pilgrimage,
To feed his thought, which food doth never lack,
On Nature's wondrous works—and soon will he
come back."

XVIII.

Thus he his anxious consort mildly cheer'd:
But the sun set, and moon and stars arose,
While yet their missing child had not appear'd;
And now the caravan in deep repose
At length was hush'd;—they only could not close
Their aching eyelids;—the fond mother's breast
Then first experienced all a mother's woes,
And, as each lay in comfortless unrest,
Did many a wild surmise their anxious minds molest.

XIX.

Scarce did the dawn above the mountains peep
Ere these sad mourners from their couch had
sprung,

When scarce an eye, save theirs, had banish'd
sleep—
And, with imploring looks and anxious tongue,
Wander'd from tent to tent their friends among.
—"O! tarrieth not our gentle child with you?"
Thus still they ask'd, and still their hearts were
wrung
With bitterest disappointment, and anew
Did they their restless search, with faltering steps,
pursue.

XX.

In vain!—no eye had seen that glorious boy
Since from the city gates the train had past,
And other cares did now all thoughts employ;
—Each to his own loved home was hastening fast.
The weary parents stay'd their search at last,
And toward Jerusalem retraced their way,
While many an anxious glance to Heaven they
cast,
And ever and anon did humbly pray
That from their feverish lips this cup might pass
away.

XXI.

So to the Holy City back they went,
Fearless, though unprotected; for what dread
E'er touch'd a parent's spirit while intent
On a child's loss, perchance untimely dead?
And they moreover on their journey sped,
Trusting, with all their hearts, to Heaven's high
love,
Which still had saved them, when of old they fled

Before fierce Herod's wrath, and from above
Warn'd them, in dreams, which way and when their steps should move.

XXII.

But vain was all their toil:—in crowded street,
In lonely grove and garden, mount and hill,
In mart where buyers and where sellers meet,
On Cedron's marge, by clear Siloam's rill,—
They search'd and search'd with fruitless labour still;
Their truant child could nowhere yet be found,
And deeper awe began their hearts to fill:—
"Hath God removed him beyond this world's bound?—
Was he too pure and good to tread our mortal ground?

XXIII.

"Is he withdrawn to some less sinful sphere,—
There to be train'd and nurtured for the strife
Which he with Satan must encounter here,
So to redeem our race from death to life?"
Thus wildly ask'd the husband and the wife,
While hope within their hearts was fading fast,
And dark imaginations there were rife,
And faith half sank beneath the bitter blast
Which o'er their sky of peace such clouds of darkness cast.

XXIV.

Yet fail'd not, in that dark and trying hour,
Their gentle patience or confiding love;
And e'en 'midst pangs which did their souls devour,

Their thoughts rose freely to God's throne above.
So, ere their weary steps had ceased to rove
Thro' the wide city, they would spread their grief
Before His altar, thus perchance to move
His pity, and by prayer devout, though brief,
From this exceeding woe obtain divine relief.

XXV.

So toward the Temple, up the sacred brow
Of Zion, pass'd they on their weary way,
And stay'd their steps beside the portal now
Through which men pass to sacrifice or pray:
Throng'd was the gate with busy feet that day,
For thither, at the feast, did crowds resort
To hear the rabbis, who, in learn'd array,
Were wont to fill the Temple's outer court,
Expounding Moses' law to those of simpler sort.

XXVI.

Onward they pass'd to where a circle stood
Around a knot of doctors, then intent
On some deep question, learnedly pursued
With reason sound and specious argument,
Whereto a curious ear the hearers lent,
Silent and moveless, while on every brow
Sat thought perplex'd and deepest wonderment;
—But ah! what voice disturbs that silence now?
Wake, Mary, from thy grief!—ah, well indeed mayst thou!

XXVII.

The centre of that circle, close begirt
With grave-eyed rabbis, erudite and sage,

A stripling stood, whose high and strange desert
All ears, all hearts, all voices did engage ;
Scarce twelve years old, (so tender was his age !)
Yet with profoundest questions did he ply
Those reverend men, and from the scripture page
Cull close and cogent arguments, whereby
He foil'd the subtlest skill of all their casuistry.

XXVIII.

Never, till then, had disputant so keen
Opposed and baffled those divines profound ;
Full sorely were their wits perplex'd, I ween,
Against such wisdom to maintain their ground
As in his fervent pleadings did abound ;
Yet was there nought of youth's presumption rude,
Or flippant scorn in his demeanour found ;
Modest he was, and meek of eye and mood,
With more than mortal grace and gentleness endued.

XXIX.

In simplest phrase, and yet like one who bore
Commission from on high, did he refute
Those grave professors of rabbinic lore—
Doctor, and scribe, and learned priest to boot ;
—Not one was found who could with Him dispute ;
The Pharisaic bigot stood aghast,—
The flippant Sadducee for once was mute,
Seeing and feeling all his triumphs past,
And almost deeming now Messias come at last.

XXX.

And, on some faces, rising scorn and hate,

On others fervent interest you might read;
While many a listener to the keen debate
Did on that stripling's words, like manna, feed,
Feeling them full of grace and truth indeed;
So well he reason'd upon things divine,
So warm'd with life the letter of their creed,
Bringing rich gems from truth's exhaustless mine,
Whose brightness on all hearts, with quenchless light, did shine.

XXXI.

His voice once heard, those wanderers forward rush'd—
—The listening crowd divided as they came,
And, for a space, the strife of words was hush'd—
Ah! can it be?—it is,—it is the same!—
Their own dear son!—his mother shriek'd his name,
As sudden joy took place of grief and fear;
Ah me!—my child, whom yet I dare not blame,—
Why deal'st thou with us thus?—what dost thou here,
While we, with sorrowing hearts, have sought thee far and near?

XXXII.

"To whom our Lord, with look serene and mild,—
Wherefore thus seek me?—know ye not that I,
E'en like a duteous and obedient child,
Must do my Father's business?" From his eye
A smile broke forth like sunshine from the sky,
And his whole face with love celestial glow'd,

—Then straightway turn'd he, and submissively
Follow'd his joyful parents on their road,
And home with them return'd, and shared their
mean abode.

XXXIII.

There, in a poor man's cot, the Lord of Heaven
In meekness and in love vouchsafed to dwell,
To lowly tasks of rule parental given,—
Nor once against it did in thought rebel,
E'en when his heavenly heart began to swell
With holiest aspirations ;—thus he grew
In wisdom and in stature, loved full well
By God in Heaven,—on Earth by all the few
Who of his gentle life the grace and goodness
knew.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

With patient toil and thought profound,
There are, who can all depths explore,
And, in didactic phrase, expound
The wondrous things of sacred lore.
High privilege is theirs—to hold
The torch which lights our narrow way,
And to unlearned hearts unfold
The hidden life, the word, the way.

II.

But woe to such! if learned pride,
Or fancy, with her restless eye,
Still searching, still unsatisfied,
Where holiest angels fear to pry—
If bigot's hate, or zealot's ire,
Corrupt the faith which God hath given
To kindle in their hearts the fire
That leads and lights mankind to Heaven!

III.

And others are there, set apart
Through gifts which heavenly grace confers,
To heal the bruised and sunken heart,
Of peace and love blest ministers.
The soothing tone—the cheering smile—
The heart with kindness brimming o'er—
The speech which doth all griefs beguile—
The looks which banish'd peace restore—

IV.

The liberal hand—the patient zeal—
The sympathy in darkest cares—
The pleasant ways to help and heal—
The death-bed solace—all are theirs!
Through this world's haunts of shame and sin
With love unwearied, let them roam,
Men's hearts, by gentlest lures, to win,
And lead them, to their Father, home.

V.

Each hath his proper gift of God—
His own peculiar taste assign'd—

His path of duty to be trod—
  His debt of service to mankind.
Do thou, in simple trust, thy part—
  Teach, toil, give, suffer, hope and pray,
And He, who sees thy secret heart,
  Thy work shall bless—thy pains repay.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

Wondrous was thy path on Earth,
'Midst our human grief and mirth;
All our good, and all our ill,
Feeling, Lord, yet sinless still!

II.

Though thy hand upholds the spheres,
Thou could'st pity children's tears:
Though to thee Death yields his prey,
Thou could'st gaze on children's play.

III.

At our feasts of sober glee
Thou would'st oft vouchsafe to be:
When thou cam'st thy friend to save,
Thou could'st weep beside his grave.

IV.

At thy bidding, social mirth
And heart-gladdening cheer had birth,
When thou bad'st the goblets shine
With pure water turn'd to wine.

V.

Then, in humble love's abode,
Livelier pleasure gleam'd and glow'd;
Then, from rustic lips devout,
Songs of joyous praise brake out:

VI.

And thy glistening eyes might see,
In their blithe festivity,
What our earthly feasts had been
But for death and but for sin.

VII.

Fie on unrestrain'd excess!
Fie on hateful drunkenness!
Fie on each unhallow'd feast
Whence thy love and name have ceased!

VIII.

For thou still dost condescend
To our hearths and homes to send
Blessings on the social cheer
Of the hearts that love thee here.

IX.

Thy transforming influence still
Into good turns all our ill;
Or, from weak and worthless things,
Holy joy and comfort brings.

X.

Sensual passion, lust obscene,
Wrath and hatred fierce and keen,
Thy pure presence doth transmute
To the Spirit's choicest fruit.

XI.

When the sacred nuptial rite
Doth pure heart to heart unite,
Thou canst make permitted love
Pure as that of saints above.

XII.

What to our gross sense doth seem
Water of the fontal stream,
Thou canst change, by power divine,
To celestial milk and wine.

XIII.

But for thee, sin's hateful gloom
Soon would make this Earth a tomb;
But where thy bright face hath shone,
Grief and fear at once are gone.

XIV.

In thy path all things look bright,
Mortal darkness turns to light,
And, e'en here, our mental eye
Heavenly glories may descry.

XV.

O be with us, gracious Lord,
Near our bed and at our board,—
By our fireside's pleasant cheer,
When the winter nights are drear.

XVI.

Through the livelong summer day,
When our hearts are blithe and gay,
From all taint of fleshly ill
Purify our gladness still.

XVII.

All that doth our hearts estrange,
From thy service—come and change
Into fervent love of thee,
By thy potent alchymy.

XVIII.

So that when new Heavens and Earth
At thy bidding shall have birth,
Purged from all our dross of sin,
We may dwell with thee therein.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

SONNET.

VENGEANCE is mine! saith God; I will repay;
Yet would we madly arrogate His power,
Worms as we are!—poor reptiles of an hour!
And so, with many a fierce, vindictive fray,
Shake and o'erthrow our fragile homes of clay,
And each his foe, with bitter rage, devour,
When on his head rich blessings we should shower,
And with our kindness melt his wrath away!
Thou, if thine enemy hunger, give him food,
And to his thirst refreshing streams supply;
Still overcome his evil with thy good;
So, if his stubborn hate refuse to die,
God shall chastise his unrelenting mood
By sharp affliction's penal ministry.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

SONNET I.

"LORD! if thou wilt, thy power can make me clean!"
So spake the leper, and our Lord straightway
Put forth his hand, and "be thou clean," did say;
—Immediately he rose with alter'd mien,
For on his body might no more be seen
A vestige of the plague, which, many a day,
From Man's abodes had driven him far astray,
To dwell with dark despair and anguish keen.
Thus by thy swift, mysterious grace, O Lord,
Cleanse thou our fouler leprosies within,
That so, from exile hateful and abhorr'd,
We may at length our full deliverance win,
And (to thy presence in thy Church restored)
Bring daily gifts of love for pardon'd sin.

SONNET II.

WITH cheerful self-surrender, to rely
On the sure rock of thy omnipotence;—
To rest our free, undoubting confidence,
On thy deep love;—to deem thee ever nigh;—
To know that Hell's dark hosts retreat and fly
Even at thy beck;—to feel thee our defence

When most we groan beneath the whelming sense
Of our own sin—our deep iniquity;—
Is not this faith?—the faith thou dost approve;
Such faith as dwelt in that centurion's breast,
The burden of whose grief thou didst remove,
Healing his servant at his meek request?—
Such faith, O Lord, as still draws down thy love
On homes which dare not claim thee for a guest?

SONNET III.

From East and West, and North and South, shall come
Unnumber'd myriads to Christ's marriage feast;—
Souls, by his gospel, from their sins released,
And call'd, to His and their great Father, home!
From torrid Ind, from frigid Greenland some—
A motley crowd, but in whose hearts hath ceased
The empire of the demon or the beast,
And peace and love have built their temple dome.
But we—the children of the kingdom—we
From earliest childhood train'd to truth and right,
Where, at that day, if faithless, shall we be?—
Alas! excluded from our Father's sight,
For foul neglect of grace so rich and free,
Gnashing our teeth in darkness day and night.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

SONNET I.

THE powers that be are God's—from Him derive
Their functions and their rights;—so we maintain,
O'er whom Christ doth, as willing subjects, reign;
Whence, whosoever with such powers shall strive,
Striveth with God, and doth himself contrive
His own damnation. Meekly wear thy chain,
Servant of Christ, nor e'er, in heart or brain,
At the fierce deeds of headstrong men connive.
Thine 'tis, while furious anarchs rant and rage,
Filling the air with turbulence and hate,
To shame the license of this latter age,
Still faithful found to God and to the State;
And rendering still, with spirit meek and sage,
Love to the good and honour to the great.

SONNET II.

NOT in the foul and pestilential den
Of plotting treason;—not where brawlers meet
In fierce assemblies, with seditious heat
To rail at monarchs;—not where evil men
Slander the great and good with tongue and pen;
Not where, in crowded mart and public street,

Vile demagogues their ribald slang repeat—
Spirit of Christ! thy presence meets our ken.
Better thou lov'st the tranquil home and hearth
Of those whom such mean-spirited esteem;—
The gentle and submissive of the earth,
Who glide securely down life's quiet stream,
Safe, in their meek and unobtrusive worth
From fears which haunt the evil-doer's dream.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

With sails full spread and bending mast,
Like one who bounds with glee,
A fisher's bark was sailing fast
Across Gennesareth's sea.
Freshly and keenly blew the blast
From the shore of Galilee.

II.

A precious freight it was, I trow,
Which that frail galley bore;
But angry waves, from stern to prow,
Her deck were sweeping o'er;
And loud and louder bellow'd now
The tempest's gathering roar.

III.

But still, as on the vessel swept
Through waters foaming wild,
One toil-worn man lay still and slept

As calmly as a child,
Whose eyes for sin have never wept,
Whose heart is undefiled.

IV.

Full soundly slept he,—for in sooth
A weary man was he;
A wanderer since his noon of youth,
By land and lake and sea,
To spread the rays of light and truth,
Where darkness wont to be.

V.

Awhile that vessel's thoughtful crew
Stood gazing on his rest,
With awe profound and reverence due
In all their looks exprest;
Till fiercer yet the tempest blew
From the dark and cloudy west.

VI.

Then straight a fearful toil began
The vessel's course to keep;
So wildly with the wind she ran
O'er the black and boiling deep;
—Yet still he slept (that weary man)
A calm, unstartled sleep.

VII.

But fiercer still the surges roar'd,
And fiercer blew the blast;
And now, in each bold heart on board,
Dark fears were gathering fast,

As the winds and waves their fury pour'd
On shatter'd sail and mast.

VIII.

Then came they, in their utmost need,
To where that sleeper lay;—
"Lord, sleep'st thou still and tak'st no heed—
Betide our lives what may?"
They spake—and at their words, with speed,
The sleeper rose straightway.

IX.

"Oh! ye of little faith!"—he stood,
And calmly waved his hand;
At once the tempest's wrathful mood
Was hush'd at his command.
And the waters, in a waveless flood,
Roll'd smoothly to the strand.

X.

No cloud obscured the deep blue sky,
No ripple curl'd the sea;
Earth, air, and water, far and nigh,
Were calm as calm could be.
The vessel's track you scarce might spy,
She rode so peacefully.

XI.

The vessel's track you scarce might spy,—
And yet she wins her way,
With sails untorn and cordage dry,
Through the smooth and smiling bay;
"Now, who is this," the shipmen cry,
"Whom the sea and the wind obey?"

XII.

Dear Lord ! a lowly life was thine,
While thou with Man didst dwell ;
Yet winds and waves obey'd thy sign,
And knew their Maker well.
Thy voice could tame, with a charm divine,
All powers of Earth and Hell.

XIII.

Incarnate fiends, beneath thine eye,
From human dwellings fled,
With a terrified and wailing cry,
To the fields where swine were fed ;
And the sick were heal'd at the point to die,
And the graves gave up their dead.

XIV.

And is thy power less wondrous now ?
Or is thy love less kind
Than when they made Hell's demons bow,
And still'd the waves and wind ?
May prayer no more, and whisper'd vow,
From thee such mercy find ?

XV.

Nay, still, though oft thou seem'st to sleep,
Thy love directs the helm,
And guides thy Church from deep to deep,
O'er this world's billowy realm ;
And a tender watch doth o'er it keep,
Lest storms should overwhelm.

XVI.

And still do Hell's dark legions flee

From the heart where thou dost reign,
And the sinner is cleansed from his leprosy,
And the prisoner breaks his chain,
And the soul, which was dead as dead could be,
Is raised to life again.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

SONNET I.

Servants of Christ! in men's misjudging eyes
Ye seem of little price, and proud men scorn
Your lowliness of heart; but ye are born
Of God, and made partakers of a prize
Unknown, undream'd of by the worldly-wise,
—A crown which none but saintly brows have worn,—
A robe which doth Christ's wedding guests adorn,—
Laid up, till His great day, beyond the skies.
This shall be yours in Heaven,—but now, on Earth,
Think it not strange if men account you vile;
Nor seek their plaudits, vain and nothing worth,
Nor quail at this world's frown, nor court its smile,
Clouding the glories of your own new birth
With such gross aims as sensual hearts defile.

SONNET II.

Soldiers and patriots ! votaries of the vine !
And brain-sick lovers ! ye have each your lay,
Martial or melting, wanton, grave, or gay,
As best befits each several idol's shrine ;
The drunkard shouts wild catches o'er his wine ;
The lover sighs his passionate soul away
In tenderest ditties ; and, while trumpets bray,
Fierce war-songs animate the charging line.
Each mood and humour of the sensual mind
Hath its appropriate music ;—and can we,
Chosen of Christ, and by his love design'd
To join hereafter heaven's high minstrelsy,
Fail, here on earth, for our great theme to find
Numbers, or words, or fitting melody ?

SONNET III. (CONTINUED).

Nay !—to the organ wed the voice of song,
And let the potent master of sweet sound,
Majestic Handel, till the sense be drown'd
In dream-like rapture, heavenliest strains prolong !
While the full chorus of the white-robed throng
Doth from the dim cathedral's roof rebound !
Nor yet, with censure harsh, the less profound
And tuneful skill of village minstrels wrong :

The heart alone makes melody to Heaven
Such as it loves; and angels oft are mute,
While simplest words of praise for sin forgiven,
Sung to rude notes of viol, pipe, and flute,
From parish choir, at Sabbath morn and even,
With grateful hymns the Omnipotent salute.

SONNET IV.

THERE are, whose faith is as a thing remote
From the world's common use; who, day by day,
Must from their narrow rule of duty stray,
For that, as worldly and misspent, they note
All hours which men to this world's cares devote,—
All labours and all pleasures—work and play—
Save what may speed the spirit on its way
O'er the calm waves of prayer and praise afloat.
Not such, O Lord, the lessons thou hast taught—
Not such thy law of worship undefiled;
For that pervades all action and all thought—
The man's grave toils, the pastimes of the child,
Bids us eat, drink, work, sport, as Christians ought,
Whom thy dear blood to God hath reconciled.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

SONNET.

'TWERE pleasant to true Christians, when they meet
At their dear Master's board, to know that there
All hearts, with one accord, combine in prayer
Deep, pure, sincere, before Heaven's mercy-seat,
Aright discerning what they drink and eat.
Nor some to taunt our English Church forbear,
For that she guards, say they, with slender care,
Her altars from approach of reckless feet.
Such laxity to error is akin;
Yet error—all, like this, on mercy's side,
Methinks, can scarce deserve the brand of sin;
For who, without dire mischief, shall divide
From the pure wheat, till it be gather'd in,
The tares, their roots extending deep and wide?

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

SONNET I.

DIVERSE in clime and country, wealth and birth,
Lowly and lofty, rich and poor are we,
Brethren, in Christ, of one great family—
Heirs to a treasure of uncounted worth
In Heaven, yet oft dishonour'd here on Earth,

For that men know us not—too blind to see
That inner light's serene effulgency
Which cheers the humblest Christian's home and hearth.
Yet fear we not their scorn, nor shun their hate,
Knowing that love, eternal and divine,
Even here hath raised us to a higher state
Than this world to its noblest can assign;
If to be sons of God is to be great
Beyond the greatness of Earth's princeliest line.

SONNET II. (CONTINUED.)

Yes!—we are sons of God, though still beset
By sorrow and infirmity and sin,
Fightings without, and grievous fears within;
And oft with bitter tears our cheeks are wet.
Such are we now; nor may we guess as yet
What we shall be, when (this world's stormy din
Once ended) we our final rest shall win,
Where souls redeem'd all earthly griefs forget:
But this we know, that when He shall appear
Who is our life—whatever change shall be
In these frail bodies we inhabit here—
In these weak souls not yet from bondage free—
We shall be like Him—since, unveil'd and near,
Even as He is, our Master we shall see.

SONNET III. (CONTINUED.)

SUCH is our hope, which maketh not ashamed,
Our souls sustaining with that daily bread
Whereon the cold dull world hath never fed;
By all but saints, unseen, unknown, unnamed;
Then let not such for carnal sloth be blamed
In their high calling, but, till lust be dead,
Their master's path of self-denial tread;
To his high model let their lives be framed.
So, strength from Him deriving, let them wage
Unceasing war with still unvanquish'd sin,
Quelling the lusts that in their members rage,
Till by degrees they cleanse the world within,
And, in the Book of Life's eternal page,
Triumphantly their high enrolment win.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

IN patient faith, till Christ shall come
To call his duteous servants home,
Our hearts and minds we keep;
Still looking for that glorious day
When Heaven and Earth shall melt away
And saints awake from sleep.

II.

And still—as years roll swiftly by,
And signs fulfill'd of prophecy

Declare Christ's coming near—
O'er Heaven and Earth our spirits range,
Noting if signs of coming change,
And brighter days appear.

III.

And signs there be, in this late time,
Once more of hope's reviving prime,
As in redemption's morn;
The feverous earth doth shake again,
Groaning and travailing in pain,
Till some new change be born.

IV.

And still, as empires reel and quake,
Doth longing expectation wake
In questions deep engross'd;
Seeking the place, the day, the hour,
Of Christ's approach in all his power,
With heaven's abundant host.

V.

Vain search!—yet vainer and less blest
Is theirs who would our faith molest
With fancies strange and new;
False prophets who men's hearts deceive,
For dark and slippery paths to leave
The ancient and the true.

VI.

We will not heed them, though they preach
False Christs with most persuasive speech,
And godless gospels frame,
Well skill'd the unstable to beguile,

In freedom's name, themselves the while
Sworn slaves of sin and shame!

VII.

"Lo! here"—the sensual zealots cry—
"Is man's supreme felicity;—
Leave dreaming and be wise;
Pleasure and love's free laws obey,
Nor cast Earth's solid joys away
For hopes beyond the skies.

VIII.

"Man's full-grown mind hath burst its prison—
On superstition's night hath risen
The wish'd for dawn of truth;
Nations and empires break the sleep
Of centuries, and from darkness leap
To life and hope and youth.

IX.

"Indulge the fond conceits no more
Which fed the heart, ere yet was o'er
The childhood of our race;
Unheard let priests and poets tell
Fantastic tales of Heaven and Hell!—
Be Earth our resting place!

X.

"Let reason's sober light dispel
The dreams that nature loved so well—
Whate'er young fancy drew:
Her shadowy world at once destroy,
Nor barter for ideal joy
The tangible and true."

XI.

So let them prate!—we will not heed
The dogmas of their loveless creed,
Nor cast our hope away;
But calmly still in patience rest,
Till, lightning-like, from east to west
Breaks in the promised day.

XII.

With no unheedful hearts we hear
The mutterings of convulsion near,
And terror soon to be;
Hosts gathering for the final strife
Of light and darkness, death and life,
With breathless awe we see.

XIII.

We know that fearful darkness soon
Shall veil the face of sun and moon,
The stars forsake their spheres;—
The powers of heaven, with fear aghast,
Tremble and quake, until at last
Christ's sign in heaven appears.

XIV.

Then Earth's rebellious tribes shall wail,
And sinful hearts with terror fail;
While saints despised so long,
From east and west, and south and north,
By angel trumpets summon'd forth—
Raise one triumphant song.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

Ceaseless is the race we run—
All who live beneath the sun,
For some tinsel prize of earth,
Hardly won and little worth,
Brother striving still with brother—
Fain within his breast to smother
Rage and hate, and jealous fear;—
So we toil from year to year;
Some for wealth in gold and gems,
Some for gorgeous diadems;
Some, a rival to beguile
Of capricious beauty's smile;
Some to win the warrior's name;
Some to share the poet's fame;
Some, perchance, to guide the helm
Of the toss'd and foundering realm:
But amidst the toil and din,
Few, I guess, there be that win;
Thousands still, who faint and fall,
Ere the wish'd-for coronal
Round their fever'd brows they twine;
—Thus doth manhood waste and pine,
While the sweets which life imparts
To discerning minds and hearts,

Unperceived around us lie,
Waste their sweetness, droop and die;
And our haste no pause allows
With Heaven's gale to fan our brows,
Of the wayside brook to drink,
Or, beside the fountain's brink
Stretch'd awhile, the breath inhale
Of the fresh and flower-sweet gale;
Or to bless our aching eyes
With the beauty of the skies,
And the glories which have birth
In the fresh and fragrant earth;
Or, reclined beneath the shade
By thick-clustering arches made,
To life's joyous sounds to listen,
Till our eyes with pleasure glisten,
And a voice within replies
To those outward harmonies,
With a silent song of love—
Silent here—but heard above!
Few there be who loiter so
In this restless race below;
Few who gladden soul and sense
With this world's magnificence;
Fewer who such freedom win
From the bonds of lust and sin,
That, with an untroubled ear,
They the distant music hear,
Which the spirits of the blest
Make in their eternal rest.

So it is in this strange earth—
Outward wealth makes inward dearth.
Labour drains the spirit dry,
Fades the cheek, and dims the eye—
Labour and fierce strife to win
Food for lust and food for sin;—
So we waste our actual store,
While we vainly brawl for more;
Envying still, and still contending,
In turmoil that knows no ending;
Restless, though our cup we fill,
While Earth holds a fuller still:
Sad, though we an empire gain,
While more potent monarchs reign.
Yet was ever earthly crown
Which grim death could not beat down?—
Gold which we could hoard and save
In the chambers of the grave?—
Beauty by no change invaded,
Which nor time nor sickness faded?—
Is not all we love so well,
Like ourselves, corruptible?—
Do we not, for worthless things,
Barter the delight that springs
From the soul's eternal health?—
Still exchanging peace for wealth,—
Wearing out the life and strength—
Only to possess at length,
Through our endless toil and care,
Raiment for the flesh to wear

When the flesh itself is wasted—
Food, then only to be tasted
When no more the exhausted sense
Can discern its excellence?

Brethren! meet it is that we
Wiser far and happier be;—
Wiser than to waste, on earth,
All its bliss and all its mirth,
That, for life-long pains and cost
Heaven and it may both be lost.
Yet have we a race to run,—
Glory—to be lost or won,
Brighter than, since earth began,
Cheer'd the waking sense of man,
Or, in nightly visions, stole
On the slumbers of his soul.
Sharp that race to sensual flesh,
Though the spirit may be fresh;
And, until its toil hath ceased,
Still our vigour is increased;
While—as nearer still we come
To our goal and to our home—
Lovelier landscapes round us glow,
Sweeter breezes breathe and blow,
Brighter sunshine cheers our eyes,
And the choral symphonies
Of the heavenly legions ring
Audibly our welcoming.

Wouldst thou win yon heavenly crown?—
Christian, tame thy spirit down;
Loiter not in sensual bowers,
Flush'd with wine and crown'd with flowers;
Nor of Comus and his train
Join the revels wild and vain.
Let not love's delicious play
Steal thy soul and sense away,
Till thou canst no longer learn
Wisdom's lessons pure and stern.
Pleasure's cup may luscious be,
But it is not mix'd for thee.
If thou wouldst thy spirit train
For its heavenly race, refrain
From whate'er regalements bring
Foul excess and surfeiting.
Keep each power of heart and will
Clear, and free, and vigorous still.
Though thy toil be sharp and sore,
Soon, full soon, it will be o'er,
And thy weary brain and breast
Taste of Heaven's eternal rest.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

THROUGH the world's frequented places—
Busy street and broad high-way—
Midst the throng of human faces,
Year by year and day by day—
Wisdom's earnest voice is calling
To the slaves whom sloth and sin
Hold, in sensual chains enthralling,
"Come ye, to my vineyard, in!"

II.

Happy, in life's cloudless morning,
Yea, of all men happiest they
Who receive that heavenly warning,
Hear it and at once obey!
They, ere lust hath dimm'd the splendour
Of the opening world within—
Ere the heart hath grown less tender,—
Break the bonds of sense and sin.

III.

Them no sore avulsion rendeth
From this world's vain hopes and fears;
No unheal'd remembrance blendeth
Anguish with their after years.
Time by them hath ne'er been wasted;—
Ere life's tempting paths they trod,—
Ere life's poison'd cup they tasted,—
They became the sons of God.

IV.

Them no storm of woe compelleth
To their Father's arms to flee;
In their hearts His Spirit dwelleth
Richly e'en from infancy.
Christ to love's unceasing duty
Them with silken cords constrains,
And with gleams of heavenly beauty
Soothes their sorrows, charms their pains.

V.

Happy they! but few in number!—
Till mid age the millions lie
Wrapt in dreams of sensual slumber,
While life's brightest hours go by.
Them, amidst their cares or pleasures,
Wisdom's voice again invites;
"Come—secure your heavenly treasures,
Flee from Earth's impure delights!"

VI.

Some there be who heed and hearken,
Cast their worthless gauds away,
Ere life's noon begins to darken,
Shade by shade, to twilight grey.
Wealth to them becomes a bubble,
Honour but an empty name;
—Farewell now life's toil and trouble,
Fraud and folly, sin and shame!

VII.

Nobler hopes have stirr'd within them,
Loftier aims engage the breast;

Heaven and heavenly labours win them
From this feverish world's unrest.
They the better part have chosen,
Late, but not too late to toil;
Years not yet the heart have frozen,
Though rank weeds o'erspread its soil.

VIII.

Noon hath past;—life's fervour waneth;
O'er the temperate heart and will
Sensual lust less blindly reigneth,
Yet the spirit slumbereth still.
Wisdom's voice again upbraideth—
"Haste—life's sun will soon go down;
Ere its light for ever fadeth,
Wake and win your heavenly crown."

IX.

Fainter now that voice appeareth,
Yet it will not cease to plead,
Till the awaken'd sleeper heareth,
Till his heart is touch'd indeed.
From life's evening rest he starteth,
Eager some few hours to save
(Ere the time for work departeth)
From the darkness of the grave.

X.

Eve is gone;—grey twilight's glimmer
Veileth life's cold cloudy sky;—
Soul and sense are now grown dimmer,—
Fadeth ear and heart and eye.
In the wreck of thought and feeling

Earthly love is waxing cold;
Yet are Wisdom's accents stealing
To the soul in sin grown old.

XI.

Lo!—the hoary sinner turneth
Feebly to the awakening sound;
In his heart strange fervour burneth,
Love hath sin's strong chain unwound.
Little hath he now to proffer,—
Time and strength and health are gone;—
What remains behold him offer—
"Lord! in me thy will be done!"

XII.

Yea! even so:—thy ways, O Father!
Are not as our mortal ways;
Thou canst life's whole harvest gather
From its worst and weakest days.
To thy just decision bending,
At thy feet our works we cast;
Though, in bliss all thought transcending,
Last be first, and first be last!

SONNET.

FROM THE SAME.

Our lot hath fallen upon the latter time—
The cloudless evening of the Church's day;
Whose burden and fierce heat have past away,
That scarce we need that faith and zeal sublime,
Which, in her pure and persecuted prime,

Taught tender maids and matrons old and grey,
Smiling defiance in death's grim array,
To the proud heights of martyrdom to climb.
Beneath our fig-trees and our vines we dwell
At ease.—What claim then to their bliss have we
Who with the fiercest powers of Earth and Hell
Warr'd, and so won their immortality?
Ask not:—but wage thine own poor warfare well—
E'en as thy striving thy reward shall be.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

SONNET.

Thou wouldst have been, had all thy hopes died here,
Of mortal men most wretched, Holy Paul!
For thou didst cast away thine earthly all—
Wealth, comfort, reputation bright and clear,
Yea, whatsoever carnal men hold dear,
To be what, in their blindness, they miscall
A low fanatic,—superstition's thrall,
Then most contemptible when most sincere.
The Gentile sophist mock'd thy simple creed,
The bigot Jew pursued thee with fierce hate;
E'en faithless brethren, in thine utmost need,
Forsook thee;—thou, meanwhile, didst calmly wait
God's time, content on Earth to toil and bleed,
Till martyrdom should ope Heaven's narrow gate.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

God! who dost the increase grant
To thy labourers here below,
When they water, when they plant,
When the Heavenly seed they sow;
Bless, O Father, bless our toil,
With the sunshine of thy face;—
Fertilize this barren soil
With the dews of love and grace.

II.

Thine the harvest, thine the praise,
When the crops are gather'd in,
Which, with life-long pains we raise
In this world of shame and sin.
Where we sow 'tis thine to reap—
All our days are seed-time here;—
Ceaselessly at work we keep,
Month by month and year by year.

III.

Spring and autumn toil we still—
Through the long midsummer light;
Through the winter, dark and chill,
Scattering seed from morn till night.
Now, with zeal's persuasive power,
Life-infusing truth we preach;
Now, for many a patient hour,
In the village schoolroom teach.

IV.

Oft beside the social hearth
Stealthily the seed we sow,—
Oft when hearts are light with mirth—
Oftener when oppress'd with woe.
Times and seasons watch we still—
Still the best occasions seek,
When to bend the stubborn will,
When the awakening word to speak.

V.

So we toil, but toil in vain
When the dews of grace are dry;
When the fertilizing rain
Lingers in the drouthy sky.
Now in rocky soils we sow—
Hearts from Heaven so far astray,
That, or ere the blade can grow,
Satan steals the seed away.

VI.

Some in light and shallow mould
Doth, with fairer promise, fall,—
Ardent minds and uncontroll'd—
Sensitive—but weak withal.
Such, anon, with joy embrace,
Hear and ponder, weep and pray,
Till—when trouble shews its face—
Straight their flimsy faith gives way.

VII.

Other seed in deeper soil
Sinks, and takes abiding root;

But rank thorns the produce spoil,
Choke and mar the genuine fruit.
Worldly care and lust and pride,
Wealth and luxury creep in,
Till the life of life hath died,
Stifled by insidious sin.

VIII.

Thou, the harvest's sovereign Lord!
For the seed the soil prepare,
Sun and rain and dews afford,
Till the wish'd-for crop it bear.
Good and honest hearts create,
Swift to hear and firm to hold;
Make our tillage, soon or late,
Bring forth fruit an hundred-fold.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FROM THE GOSPEL.

I.

'Twas when our Lord was journeying tow'rd stately Jericho,
And multitudes around his path did gather still and grow;
For wondrous were the words he spake—pure words of truth and grace,
And all the love of Earth and Heaven was beaming from his face;
And miracles of healing might his blessed hand had done,

Proclaiming Him, to faithful eyes, the Lord's anointed Son.

II.

Now as he to the city gate, in earnest speech, drew nigh,
A blind man sat beside the road, and begg'd of passers by ;
He heard the hum of multitudes—the myriad-footed tread—
And in his darkness, anxiously, " What meaneth this ?" he said ;—
" What mean these sounds of thronging crowds?" —and thus men made reply—
" Jesus, the blessed Nazarene—'tis He who passeth by."

III.

Then suddenly a gleam of light shot through the beggar's mind,
His inward eye was lighten'd, and his heart no longer blind ;
Faith brought him back the world without, in blissful vision shown,
And said it might, by Heaven's rich grace, become once more his own.
So straight he raised his eager voice, and piteously cried he—
" Jesus ! thou Son of David ! have mercy upon me !"

IV.

His cry disturb'd the listening groupes, the foremost in the way—

" Now hold thy peace, bold beggar—trouble not
our Lord," said they.
But little heeded he their words, for in his mental
eye
Familiar faces—youthful scenes, long lost, were
passing by;
And still he raised his earnest voice, and piteously
cried he—
" Jesus! thou Son of David! have mercy upon me!"

V.

Our Lord stood still, and fix'd on him a mild, ap-
proving glance,
Till the blind man felt the sunshine of his beaming
countenance;—
" Forbid him not, but rather guide his steps to me,"
he said,—
And the beggar to his presence straight by pitying
hands was led;
And as he knelt before Him, with raised hands and
bended knee—
" Tell me," he said, " what wilt thou that I should
do for thee?"

VI.

That voice of heavenly mercy through the blind
man's bosom thrill'd
As sweetly as the dew of Heaven on Hermon's brow
distill'd.
He felt the pressure of the grief that on his spirit lay,
But felt that soon, at His dear word, that grief would
pass away;

Nor paused he for a moment's space, but cried, in deep delight,
"Lord! this I would—that, from thy hand, I might receive my sight!"

VII.

"Receive thy sight," our Lord replied,—"thy faith hath made thee whole"—
And the blind man rose, with sight restored to body and to soul;
And blithely in his Saviour's track, with eager steps, he trod,
And bless'd him for his healing grace, and glorified his God.—
And all the crowds, that throng'd around, with echoing hearts replied—
"Our God, and Jesus Christ, his Son, for this be glorified!"

ASH WEDNESDAY.

FROM THE EPISTLE.

I.

When our hearts with grief are sore,
When our path looks dark and sad,
When Hope's star appears no more,
When our foes are proud and glad—
When our steps have gone astray,
Till we feel the chastening rod,

Wherefore should the godless say—
" Where is now their God ?"

II.

In our grief of heart is He—
In the darkness of our path—
Him in Hope's eclipse we see,
Robed in mercy, not in wrath.
Thus he warns us from the way—
Sins wild way, which we have trod;—
Why should then the godless say—
" Where is now their God ?"

III.

While in this dark world we roam,
Out of sight His judgments lie;
Stay till we have reach'd our home—
That bright home beyond the sky.
When, in Time's last awful day,
We of Earth throw off the sod—
How shall then the godless say—
" Where is now their God ?"

SUNDAY IN THE MOUNTAINS.

SUNDAY IN THE MOUNTAINS.

CANTO I.

I.

'Tis Sunday morn!—a summer Sunday morn!—
And should be full of sunshine, for July,
Queen of the circling months, to-day is born;
Yet o'er yon mountain peaks, which pierce the sky,
Dark louring clouds in densest masses lie,
Which though, all night, the rain in torrents pour'd,
Seem yet unspent, and to the inquiring eye
A dark presage of coming storms afford—
Signs to wayfaring wight most hateful and abhorr'd!

II.

But not, though skies should lour or tempests rage,
To-day must Brodick's sturdy mountaineer
Grudge through the grimmest moors stout pilgrimage;
For 'tis that single Sunday in the year,
When crowds together flock, from far and near,
Around the holy board to take their seat;

And 'twere a shameless thing to loiter here,
While friends and brethren, flocks and pastors meet
In Kirk of far Lamlash, to bless that bread and eat.

III.

Unhappy he whom sickness now detains
Close pent in bed, or crouching o'er his fire,
Safe from the gathering war of winds and rains;
And he whose aged limbs no more aspire
To thrid the mountain moors and never tire;
And she, whom nursery or domestic cares
Forbid to satisfy her heart's desire,
By mingling, with the Kirk's, her vows and prayers.—
Ah!—well-a-day for them!—a dismal lot is theirs!

IV.

No more for them, till full twelve months are o'er,
With heavenly food that table shall be spread;
For them the cup divine be fill'd no more,
Nor blest, nor broken the mysterious bread,
E'en though they lay upon their dying bed.
So Calvinistic rigour hath decreed;
Withholding that by which the soul is fed
From saintly sufferers in their utmost need;—
Ah! better far her sons doth our dear Mother feed!

V.

Solemn and sweet thy monthly feasts, I ween,
Church of our fathers; yet even they too few;
Better, by far, and wiser had it been,
Thy children's faith each Sunday to renew,

And with fresh strength their fainting souls endue;
So best the ancient Apostolic rites
Maintaining still in form and order due;
Yet dear thy call which to that board invites,
Which all pure hearts with all, and all in One, unites!

VI.

Yea, sweet thy monthly feasts!—yet scarce than these
Less sweet the board in sick man's chamber spread,
Where weeping friends and children on their knees
Are meekly gather'd round the dying bed;
And tears, almost into the chalice shed,
The o'er-burden'd hearts full agony relieve,
While each and all the mystic wine and bread
From pastoral hands, in pious faith, receive,
Nor now, like hopeless men, for death's new victim grieve.

VII.

No comforts, such as these, O Scotland, cheer
Thy saints in life's last moments;—yet not this
Speak we in scorn;—the dying mountaineer
By custom school'd, and strong in hope of bliss,
May ne'er, perchance, the last dear ritual miss,
Whereby the expiring Southron well sustains
His parting soul;—nor thou account amiss
The rites which soften death in English plains,
As though they proved us bound even now in Popish chains.

VIII.

Such thoughts yon stout pedestrian's breast have cross'd,
Who climbs, with steady pace and stedfast will,
That mountain path, and tow'rd the peaks, half lost
In eddying clouds, looks back, admiring still;
For vaster far seems each majestic hill
Through the dense veil of mist which sweeps away
Distinctness from its outline, and each rill,
Swoln to a foaming cataract to-day,
Makes music, loud and wild, to cheer him on his way.

IX.

A wanderer he from England's midland vales,
Wooing sweet health in this fair wilderness,
Where, shunning the soft breath of southern gales,
Which him with suffocation sore oppress,
He finds secure relief from long distress;
And now a glad and mirthful man is he,
And doth the waves and breezy mountains bless
That they from that dire plague have set him free,
'Neath which, since early youth, he groan'd perpetually.

X.

O thou unhappy wight, whoe'er thou art,
Whom the bright skies and balmy gales torment
With toil of lungs and weariness of heart,

Till thou, almost with lack of breath o'erspent
To barter life for ease wouldst be content—
Throw physic to the dogs;—not opium's power,
Nor the inhaled stramonium's reeky scent,
Nor subtlest ether will, for one brief hour,
Soothe the convulsive gasps which strength and life devour.

XI.

Nor to the lancet bare thy passive arm,
Nor to the blister ope thy labouring breast;
Vain all their spells the dire disease to charm,
Or scare the incumbent vampyre from thy chest;
Nor yet will pill, persuasive to digest,
Nor snuff prepared by skill of Lundy Foot,
Nor ipecacuanha give thee rest,
(Expectorative drug)—nor rhubarb's root
Provoking nausea dire, and cholic pangs to boot.

XII.

Long were the labour, in melodious verse,
The nostrums strange prescribed by quack and crone,
(Nauseous alike, and poisonous) to rehearse!
Abominable things—untried—unknown!
One remedy there is, and one alone;—
Come, breathe the mountain breezes pure and free,
Climb once a week old Goatfell's craggy cone,
Bathe once a day in Brodick's crystal sea,—
Full soon, from spells like these, the baffled fiend will flee.

XIII.

Haply some grim Hippocrates hath starved
Thy craving stomach with prescription drear,
All pleasant meats forbidding to be carved
For thee, nor e'en permitting thee to cheer
Thy drooping spirits with the smallest beer—
(Thee, little to abstemious rules inclined;)
Come then—spare diet may be spared thee here,
Nor need'st thou dread on dainties to have dined,
If dainties thou shalt chance in this lean isle to find.

XIV.

But where is he, our lone wayfaring wight,
Whom late we left upon the mountain side?
Through the wild moors he plods from height to height,
Surveying still the landscape far and wide;
Though little there, to-day, can be descried,
So thick and dark the clouds around him lour;
Yet will he dare, all cloakless, to abide
The utmost rage of driving wind and shower,
So strong and proud he feels in health's recover'd power.

XV.

And sorely would his soul be grieved, I ween,
To miss that solemn spectacle to-day;
To him a new, though not unheard of scene;
Used as he is in English forms to pray,
And England's rule episcopal obey;—
A presbyter himself, as from the dress

Clerkly and grave, which doth his limbs array,
And eke from his demeanour you may guess,
Albeit, in this strict land, convict of carelessness.

XV.

For he, untaught in puritanic school,
And little heedful of the forms that bind
The subjects grave of presbyterian rule,
Walks, as his fancy leads him, unconfined
By pedant laws in body as in mind;
Nor deems it unbecoming pastoral state
His pleasure by the lone sea-side to find,
Or e'en with timely mirth to recreate
His spirits, sunk sometimes by care's oppressive weight.

XVII.

Ah! reckless man, and all unfit to bear
The scrutiny of keen domestic eyes!
Now whistling, as he walks, with absent air,
Now singing (if perchance an infant cries)
Wild nursery rhymes and heathenish lullabies;
Unconscious all the while what scandal thence
Among the simple mountaineers shall rise;—
Scandal most foul, and unforeseen offence,
Branding his church and him with righteous vehemence!

XVIII.

But worst of all—provoking direst wrath—
His Southron scorn of Scottish sabbath-day!
For, kirk-ward as he climbs the mountain path,
He, with his cane, full oft doth prostrate lay

The thistle-heads that grow beside the way;
And eke, descending once the gallery stair,
Was heard (as all the congregation say)
To hum aloud a Psalm's remember'd air;—
Such crime, in Scottish kirk, could shameless Southron dare!

XIX.

But now, midway on yonder steep ascent
Halting awhile, he views with curious eyes
Groups from each quarter of the firmament
Converging, numberless as summer flies—
In cart, in car, of every shape and size,
Afoot—on horseback;—grandames old and grey,
In sober mutch and cloak of tartan dyes,
By sons or grandsons in their best array,
In vehicles close-pack'd, help'd forward on their way.

XX.

And there are sturdy swains on bony jades,
In low grave converse journeying side by side;
And there are comely youths and comelier maids,
The future bridegroom with his plighted bride;
Bare-headed she and bare-foot—the close plaid*
Shielding her gentle bosom from the rain;
Her braided locks confined, in decent pride,
With virgin snood, which must unloosed remain
Till she, in wedlock's bonds, a holier name shall gain.

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* Pronounced, in Scotland, *plide*.

XXI.

Graceful her garb, and passing well doth suit
Her native mountains; yet, to Southron eye,
Unpleasing is the soil'd and shoeless foot,
Which through the mire its daily toil doth ply,
Heedless alike if it be wet or dry—
And haply swathed in rag's unseemly fold,
Telling dark tales that underneath doth lie
Afflictive corn, or blain produced by cold—
Most hateful to conceive—most hideous to behold!

XXII.

Dear to the youthful poet's phantasy
Is female foot, in dream or vision seen;
The well-turn'd ankle's shapely symmetry—
The skin's soft texture and its snowy sheen;
But adverse all to phantasy, I ween,
The sun-burnt limb by highland lassie shown—
Not plump, soft, white, but muscular and lean,
A ponderous mass of sinew, skin, and bone—
Broad—bulky—to rude shape, thro' long exposure, grown.

XXIII.

O maidens, richly with all else endow'd,
Healthy in mind and body, pure and free
As the clear stream, or as the wandering cloud,
Which swathes the mountains where ye love to be,—
Hide but in shoes, what few unshod would see,
And ye by many a poet shall be sung
In worthier lays than e'er were penn'd by me,

A wedded bard, and now no longer young,
Who roam, with heart unscathed, your pastoral
glens among.

XXIV.

Strange, of a truth, that o'er these rocky ways
Women alone with naked feet should fare!
While the rough Gael his nether man arrays
In fleecy garb, nor ventures now to bare
His hardier skin to cutting mountain air;
Ah! why should he alone such luxury know,
When gentle maids, the fearless and the fair,
Barelegg'd o'er rugged peaks securely go,
Nor heed what hurts assail the unprotected toe?

XXV.

But they perchance, in bareness of attire,
With their own treeless mountains aptly vie,
And 'twere, in us, as idle to desire
In northern clime the cloudless southern sky,
As to expect, in Gaelic damselry,
The trimness of an English maiden's dress;
The hose of cotton woof and snowy dye—
The polish'd shoe, which closely doth compress
The small and delicate foot's minuter shapeliness.

XXVI.

And who the pure simplicity shall blame
Of Highland maiden, when in mountain stream
Knee-deep immersed, she bareth without shame
Her dainty limbs to the meridian beam,
Faultless in shape, and white as whitest cream,—
—First glancing round lest stranger eyes be near,

(Though curst were he who any ill should dream
Gazing on her)—then swift as mountain deer
Plungeth into the burn, and crosseth without fear?

XXVII.

Or who, with frown censorious, would impeach
The mysteries grave and deep of laundress skill,
When the white linen with bare feet they bleach,
In tub which they with purest water fill
From the clear depths of neighbouring tarn or rill,
Trampling the soaking mass with maiden mirth,
And thus their daily task performing still;
Fashion most strange to maids of English birth—
The daintiest race and eke the proudest upon Earth!

XXVIII.

Blessings on both, the Saxon and the Gael!
The maid of highland hut and English cot!
The glory of the glen and of the vale!
To each her separate charms let Truth allot;
For praise is blame when it exalteth not,
Save by disparagement of others good;
And let the poet's lay be soon forgot,
Who, in sarcastic or contemptuous mood,
Shall mar the equal fame of British womanhood.

XXIX.

But we, methinks, have wander'd all too long
From the grave tenour of our purposed theme;
Back from thy flights discursive, O my song,
To where our wanderer, lost in thoughtful dream,
Through the bleak moor, across the mountain stream,

Up to the topmost point hath wound his way,
Which to retreat before him long did seem;
And now discerns, far off, Lamlash's bay,
And hears its breakers roar, and sees their glittering spray.

XXX.

Not loth is he to mark his journey's end,
Bedew'd with Scottish mist for many a mile;
And soon, with quicken'd footstep, doth descend
The downward slope, contemplating meanwhile
The pyramid abrupt of Holy Isle
Cresting the narrow strait which girds the shore,
And now, thro' flooded creek, and cove, and kyle,
Doth, in full tide, its swelling surges pour,
And sweep the ribb'd sea sand with thundering rush and roar.

XXXI.

Not tame the view to eyes long used to gaze
On England's level meads and hedgerows green,
And streams meandering through their sluggish maze,
And waving woods, whose foliage dark between
Tall spires up-pointing to the skies are seen,
And stately mansions their proud summits rear
O'er sunny slopes;—yet doth this sea-girt scene
Meagre and mean and spiritless appear
To favour'd swains who dwell in Brodick's mountain sphere.

XXXII.

For there, begirt by Nature's noblest forms,

Doth Caledonia's genius proudly dwell
In the mid region of the winds and storms,
Enthroned on cloudy peak and pinnacle;
While, far below, the ocean-surges swell,
Laving a shore with spreading woods o'ergrown;
For Art hath there bestow'd her labour well,
And o'er the glens a leafy verdure thrown,
While here, in barren state, doth Nature reign alone.—

XXXIII.

—In barren state, nor that with grandeur graced
Of form or outline;—upward from the sea
Slopes the bare coast, bleak, featureless, and waste,
A mountain tract—yet void of majesty;
Such as, from time to time, sore vex'd, we see
In Scottish region, with unpleasant change
Succeeding to the beauty, bold and free,
Of lake, and rocky glen, and mountain range,
Of aspect ever new, and form abrupt and strange.

XXXIV.

Nor yet more cheerful, to an English eye,
The long, straight village, which no rustic taste
Hath toil'd, with patient skill, to beautify;
Where never yet the cot's outside was graced
By woodbine, with dark ivy interlaced,
Nor rose nor lily did the air perfume;
Nor e'er was porch by clematis embraced,
Nor e'er did jasmine round the windows bloom,
And from its silver cups shed fragrance thro' the room.

XXXV.

Strange seems it that, in region far renown'd
For horticultural skill, such lack should be
Of decoration, rife on English ground,
E'en in the mean abodes of penury;
Where little else, save cleanliness, we see
That tells of comfort;—and not small amends
Yields it for lack of mountain majesty,
That neatness there on poverty attends,
And industry and taste together dwell like friends.

XXXVI.

But lovelier yet than ivy-mantled cot,
Or garden musical with hum of bees,
The grey Church tower on green sequester'd spot,
Half hidden by its dark embowering trees,
With merry bells that fill the evening breeze
With music best befitting English vales;—
O! might such temples grace such glens as these!
O! might such music on these mountain gales
Repeat to Highland hearts their sweet and solemn tales!

XXXVII.

But vain the wish! for here, on hill, in glen,
Religion wears her simplest, rudest dress,
Spurning each fond device of carnal men
To clothe her in external gracefulness:
And well doth Scottish architect impress
On stone and morter the severest guise
Of the old Orthodox unloveliness,

Offending vain Episcopalian eyes
With kirks of hideous shape, proportion, hue, and size.

XXXVIII.

Scarce more perversely doth Wesleyan pile,
Such as in English village we behold,
With ostentatious ugliness defile
The beauty of the land, in contrast bold
Rearing its front near church of Gothic mould,
As though in scorn of what fond hearts revere—
The grace and grandeur of the days of old—
The shrines by ancient piety held dear,
Where saintliest knees have knelt in faith and love sincere.

XXXIX.

And, for the music of the belfry chime,
One sullen bell in Scottish kirk doth hang,
The call to prayer, at stated service time,
Reverberating hoarse with iron clang:
But never here the mountain echoes rang
With wedding peal, whose merry silver sound,
In sweeter notes than ever Syren sang,
Told its fond tale of bliss and love profound,
Which cavern, rock and hill repeated round and round.

XL.

Nor ever here on ear expectant broke
The knell which told a neighbour's soul had fled,
Conveying, with its sad and solemn stroke,
Brief message to the living from the dead;

Bidding them think how swift life's current sped,
How near the summons to the judgment throne,
How short the passage to the wormy bed,
How none could know when that might be their own—
How death's sharp sting is heal'd by Christian faith alone.

XLI.

Such customs, long with Popish rites combined,
Doth Scotland's rigorous kirk hold Popish still,—
Abominations once, even here, enshrined,
As, of old time, in heathen grove and hill,
The principalities and powers of Ill;
And, tho' they speak to nature's heart of heart,
And oft, with holiest glow, men's spirits fill,
She from her children keeps them far apart,
As hellish snares devised by Rome's malignant art.

XLII.

Even be it so!—from Scotland's simple shrines
Still let her simpler psalms to Heaven ascend,
While the wind, whistling thro' the mountain pines,
Doth to the strain accordant music lend,
With which their thundering voices cataracts blend;
But where, on English plains, cathedral spire
Lifts its tall height, let organ-peal attend
With notes symphonious the full chaunting choir,

Whose anthems breathe to heaven the heavenly soul's desire.

XLIII.

And be the graceful garniture retain'd
Of cunning workmanship in stone and wood,
And fair large window, gothic-shaped and stain'd
With richest dyes, thro' which, in glareless flood,
Streams the dim light;—and still let scarf and hood,
And surplice white, and academic gown
Enrobe her priests, the gracious and the good,
Well-train'd and arm'd to beat proud error down,
And spread religion's reign and learning's fair renown.

XLIV.

Time was when Church with Kirk,—Geneva cloak
With robe and mitre, in fierce wrath have striven,
And love's pure law, with mutual rancour, broke,
Till, in the name and for the sake of Heaven,
The holiest bonds of Earth were rent and riven;
But time and wiser thoughts have quell'd that fray;
Let each by turns forgiving and forgiven,
And each forbearing each, await the day,
When truth, more clearly seen, shall drive debate away.

XLV.

Each needs her strength, in this distemper'd age,
For other conflicts;—around either wait

The sceptic's scoff, the atheist's impious rage,
The hot sectarian's indissembled hate,
The cold half-friendship of the wavering State,
The brawling demagogue's coarse, ribald yell,
The lust of plunder with fierce hope elate;
Sad is their doom, in Kedar's tents to dwell,
'Midst enemies to peace who 'gainst all good rebel!

XLVI.

Here pause we,—for the swiftly gathering crowd
Thro' the church doors are thronging, and the rain,
From the dark bosom of yon thunder-cloud,
In big round drops falls audibly amain;
Safe shelter found, our wayfarer is fain,
As best he may, his garments drench'd to dry;
There let him rest, observing, till again
Our song begin, with grave, attentive eye,
Whate'er, to him, new sights to-day he may espy.

CANTO II.

I.

Sweet! to the wanderer's heart, in foreign land,
Whate'er reminds him of that spot of earth
Where the tall trees which shade his dwelling stand—
The evening light which glimmers round his hearth—
The chamber which beheld his children's birth—
The Church, within whose walls he first became
Acknowledged heir of Heaven's uncourted worth—
The altar where his bride, with maiden shame,
Pledged herself his till death, in body, soul, and name.

II.

Sweet, and yet sorrowful, each sight and sound
Telling his heart of home's far distant bliss,
E'en as the ranz des vaches, on foreign ground,
O'erwhelms the martial spirit of the Swiss,
In thought restoring his wife's farewell kiss,
His children's voices, and his mountain cot;
Till waking from his dream, he starts to miss
Those cherish'd joys, and loathes his soldier lot,
Fame—honour—fortune—hope—in that fond grief forgot!

III.

Not alien thou, O Scotland, to the heart
Of England, but long since, by many a tie
Of law, religion, language, custom, art
And mutual service done in days gone by,
—Yea, by remembrance of past enmity,
Each link'd to each;—for still the noblest foe
Becomes the truest friend and best ally
When discord's bitter blasts have ceased to blow,
And each the other's worth doth, thro' long conflict, know.

IV.

A noble pair are ye, allied no less
By contrast than resemblance;—each doth wear
A diverse garb of outward loveliness;—
Thou, with thy giant lakes and mountains bare,
Where the storms bellow and the lightnings glare,
Art robed in grandeur,—while her softer grace
Of vale, and verdant wood, and pasture fair,
Smiles on thy rude sublimity of face,
E'en like a gentle bride in a brave man's embrace.

V.

And yet, though dear to wandering Southron's breast,
And, e'en when most unlike, resembling still
The pleasant land which he must needs love best,
That land thou art not, nor its place canst fill
So, in his heart, that it shall cease to thrill
With fond home-thoughts;—but oft as he hath found

In the wild region of the lake and hill,
Aught which appears the growth of English ground,
How doth its every pulse with new-born pleasure bound!

VI.

Sweet 'twas to him, amidst Edina's fanes,
That Gothic pile episcopal to find,
Where the pure form of English worship reigns,
In graceful pomp and circumstance enshrined;
And there, once more, the willing heart unbind,
To alien rites, for many a recent week,
Amidst the mountains and wild glens confined,—
And hear the English pastor's accent meek,
The music, long unheard, of forms liturgic speak!

VII.

Sweet 'twas to note the reverential air
Of each new worshipper who bent the knee,
Shading his brow meanwhile in silent prayer—
While the deep organ, in accordant key,
Sent forth a low, melodious symphony,
Prelusive to the swell of choral hymn,—
And o'er the soul a hush'd solemnity,
Stealing from pillar'd arch and window dim,
Raised it to Heaven, as seem'd, on wings of seraphim.

VIII.

O say not this is superstition all—
This solemn awe from solemn places caught—
This reverence grave which doth man's heart enthrall—
This tuning of the soul to pious thought;—

Albeit, perchance, by shrewd contrivance wrought
Through architectural grace and music's power.
Deem not that lesson all unwisely taught,
Which lifts the enfranchised spirit, for an hour,
Above those cares of earth, which its best life devour.

IX.

Is it a guilty weakness to have felt
A present spirit in the house of God?
To love the shrine where saintly knees have knelt—
The marble floor which saintly feet have trod?—
To press, with softer tread, the churchyard sod,
Beneath whose grassy verdure saints repose
Till the last trump shall wake the kneaded clod,
And once again the shrouded eyes unclose,
To crown with heavenly bliss life's long-forgotten woes?

X.

Would not the soul which felt no reverent awe
In Earth's most holy places, still be cold,
E'en if reveal'd, Heaven's blissful depths it saw,
Throng'd with the spirits of just men of old;
And still unmoved, and confidently bold,
Gaze with composure on the dreadful throne
Whereon his final judgment Christ shall hold,
And the dread secrets of all hearts make known,
And all his foes condemn, and his redeem'd ones own?

XI.

And yet not so,—for many a pious heart
Hath come to worship in yon kirk to-day,

And of that holy feast receive its part,
And bear rich blessing to its home away,
Which yet no decent reverence deigns to pay
To aught which here the mental eye may trace
Sacred or solemn;—as they will or may,
The groups drop in—no outward sign of grace—
But each, with hat undoff'd, squats down upon his place.

XII.

Ah! well-a-day!—but this seems wondrous strange!
Is this a mart where gossips sell and buy?—
A room for lectures, or a stock exchange?—
Is that, which seems a pulpit to the eye,
A desk where auctioneers their labour ply?
Nay—ill the day such rash conjectures suit;—
Ask not, O Southron gazer, whence or why
The Northern vine bears such unshapely fruit;—
'Tis wholesome food, though coarse;—the tree is sound at root.

XIII.

Now cast thine eyes attentively around;—
The Temple and its worshippers survey;—
Rude is the first as may on Earth be found;
No vain adornments its white walls array,
—Carving of oak, or stonework old and gray,—
Nor monumental slab, nor sculptured tomb,
Where their huge length recumbent warriors lay,—
Nor painted glass sheds round cathedral gloom,
Nor aught of outward pomp may find permitted room.

XIV.

Oblong the shape ;—an area cramm'd with pews,
Close, narrow, low, which, at a glance, you see
Are such as sturdy Presbyterians use,
Who never, e'en in worship, bend the knee.
Back'd by the western wall, which fronts the sea,
Frowns the grim pulpit, cushionless and bare
Of all vain gauds of *Popish* frippery,—
Unlined the sides, uncarpeted the stair,—
Wore never hermit's cell a less luxurious air.

XV.

So 'tis most fitting :—so shall issue thence,
In strains accordant both to place and theme,
The deep-toned flood of Gaelic eloquence,
Clear, strong, and rapid, like a mountain stream;
Dispersing, in its rush, sin's sensual dream.
Ah how unlike the soft luxurious shrine,
Which fashion's sickly brood sublimest deem!
Where, throned in velvet state, the smug divine
Doth his thin, filmy woof of polish'd periods twine.

XVI.

Fronting the pulpit, with capacious span,
Yawns a broad arch, through which the wandering eye
A separate portion of the kirk may scan;
The floor close-pew'd, o'er which extends on high,
From side to side, a spacious gallery
Assign'd to worshippers of higher class,
Where fluttering scarf and gorgeous shawl you spy,

Mix'd with such male attire as doth surpass
Aught that below appears in all that motley mass.

XVII.

Vacant as yet the seats, for scarce the chime
Of neighbouring clock the hour of twelve hath told;
Nor oft the rich anticipate the time
Of worship; but below you may behold,
Assembling slowly, forms of coarser mould;
The lowly dwellers in the moor and glen;—
Shepherds and hinds, and cottars young and old,
And sailors rough, and simple fishermen,
Which fitly to describe o'ertasks poetic pen.

XVIII.

Silent they sit, expectant all and each,
When he who leads their worship shall appear;
No time for idle thought or idler speech,
Or nod of mutual recognition here:
No sound, save that of slamming doors, you hear,
As the new comers, one by one, stalk in,
And take their seats with grave and sturdy cheer—
None breathing, till the service shall begin,
A whisper which could drown the dropping of a pin.

XIX.

And some, the lingering moments to beguile,
On scripture page with gaze abstracted pore,
Or Psalter turn'd to rhyme in homeliest style,
Conning each well-known metre o'er and o'er.
Ah! well I wot would David's heart be sore,

Could he, return'd to Earth, the wrong behold
Done to the strains divine he sung of yore,
By British bards, in version new and old,
So marr'd with phrase uncouth, and rhyme of rugged mould.

XX.

But neither those twin jinglers of harsh wire,
Sternhold and Hopkins, nor that worthier pair,
Brady and Tate, have stripp'd the Hebrew lyre
Of poesy and music quite so bare
(If doggrel we with doggrel may compare)
As Scottish bards, whom yet the kirks decree,
Expelling hymns profane with pious care,
Hath throned in David's seat, that they may be
Sole lords throughout the land of song and psalmody.

XI.

Ah! why forbid the tuneful soul to soar
Heavenward, unless on inspiration's wings?
Why cramp its flight with chains of Jewish lore?
Why blame the music of those later strings,
To which the Church her song majestic sings,
Attuned to themes of yet diviner strain
Than bless'd the ear of prophets or of kings,
Before the Son of man, with toil and pain,
Had freed our ransom'd race from Hell's oppressive chain?

XXII.

By seer and psalmist, darkly at the best,
Messiah's face, as in a glass, was seen;
Dimly, by them, in shadowy lines exprest—

The incarnate glory of its god-like mien
Veil'd from our gaze by clouds that float between;
Yet not unrecognized by saintly eye,
Whether of hind unletter'd, poor and mean,
Or studious scholar, skilful to descry
Whate'er of old was taught in type and prophecy.

XXIII.

But who shall thus discern, of modern men,
The form reveal'd to Hebrew seer sublime,
When marr'd and mangled by the reckless pen
Of versifier rude, with measured chime
Twisting the strain prophetic into rhyme,
In parish churches to be shriek'd, not sung,
By untaught throats that murder tune and time,
In nasal drone and broad provincial tongue,
With twang of viols harsh to perfect discord strung?

XXIV.

But Scotland's kirk this last foul murder yet
Hath ne'er committed her strict walls within;
But loathes the sound of flute and clarionet,
Hautboy, and hoarse bassoon and violin,
And gruff bass viol with commingled din
Deafening the ear;—their own harmonious notes
Her children raise to heaven, and deem it sin
To mar the natural music of their throats
With instrumental clang, on which Hell's monarch dotes.

XXV.

And deep and sweet and solemn is the swell
Of congregated voices, when they raise

The simple strains which Scotland loves so well,
Attuned to words, tho' rude, of prayer and praise;
Upborne by which the soaring spirit strays
Through worlds beyond the bounds of space and time;—
Oh! could some bard but lend accordant lays
To notes so sweet and utterance so sublime,
Methinks e'en Knox's shade might pardon such a crime.

XXVI.

Bolder herein have Wesley's flocks been found,
Though far unlike, in all things else, they be
The Calvinistic growth of Scottish ground,—
Weak, stunted off-shoots of a goodly tree:
Yet they, with venturous daring, have set free
Both verse and music from those irksome chains
Which cramp the wing of statelier psalmody;
Recalling banish'd song from sin's domains
To praise redeeming love in blithe trochaic strains.

XXVII.

But worthier far to greet angelic ears
The hymns in Rome's apostate temples sung
To music like the music of the spheres—
Hymns of past ages, when the church was young!
Ah! why still shrouded in a foreign tongue?
Or why, since purer faith's reviving day,
Hath none been found, Britannia's sons among,
To cheer her churches with an equal lay?—
Arise some bard, and wipe the foul reproach away!

XXVIII.

And yet, (so quickly is the gentle heart
By simplest things to keen emotion stirr'd)
E'en this rude mockery of poetic art
May be to loftiest minstrelsy preferr'd
By those who first, from lips maternal, heard
Its rugged rhymes, in tenderest accents, sung;—
Lo! where intently scanning line and word,
Yon matron sits, a radiant group among
Of children, all her own—yet she both fair and young.

XXIX.

Silent she sits, and yet her lips are moving,
In measured cadence, to the psalm she sings
To her own heart, whose thoughts meanwhile are roving
Through worlds unseen on faith's ethereal wings;
Nought marks she now of sublunary things,—
The congregating crowd—the rustic fane—
The infant group around her knees that clings;
No sense hath she of mortal joy or pain;—
O! might she thus dream on, nor ever wake again!

XXX.

Yet is she rich in this world's purest joy;
Heaven hath, with liberal bounty, blest her lot;
Witness each bright-eyed girl and blooming boy—
Witness their sire, whose neat sequester'd cot
Her smile makes glad;—in truth she needeth not

Aught more of earthly bliss than God hath
given ;
Yet never, amidst all, hath she forgot
To lay up treasure, costlier far, in Heaven,
And prize o'er Earth's best joys the peace of sin
forgiven.

XXXI.

But see ! the pastor of the flock appears,—
A man of rosy cheek and cheerful eye,
His age now verging close on fifty years,
Which, you may deem, have smoothly glided by ;
For not a vestige on his brow you spy
Of over-anxious care, or thought too deep :
Sound doctrine doth he preach, but passing dry,—
Which as he drones, o'er hearers' sense doth creep
Such calm that some 'gin nod, and some have fallen
asleep.

XXXII.

His hour, and with the hour his sermon done,
From dreamy doze at once the slumberers start,
And loudly all the final psalm intone,
Which and the service closed, the larger part
Forsake the church, while those of contrite heart
Or strict profession, still their seats retain.
—Our wanderer with the former shall depart,
Deeming it now intrusion rash and vain,
Amidst the bidden guests, unbidden, to remain.

XXXIII.

Meanwhile, without the walls, a countless crowd
Yon shelter'd pulpit, misnamed tent, surround,

Where with alternate rhetoric, long and loud,
Saxon and Gael successive texts expound;
And ever and anon the solemn sound
Of psalms, in Gaelic and in Saxon tongue,
Doth from the mountains and huge rocks
rebound,
As, by a sea of voices old and young,
A chorus like the roar of ocean-waves is sung.

XXXV.

A solemn sound!—a sweet and solemn sight!—
The psalm—the choir—the temple vast and fair
In which all voices with all hearts unite,—
Its floor the turf—its roof the boundless air—
Its altar Man's deep heart—its offering prayer,
Attuned to melody of sacred song;—
In truth, devotion lacks not utterance there,
But breathes to Heaven, in accents clear and
strong,
Strains scarce unfit to sound angelic choirs among.

XXXV.

Thus, between mingled acts of prayer and praise,
The day wears on, till lengthen'd shadows fall,
And still fresh crowds their solemn chorus raise,
And still fresh preachers, with repeated call,
Reprove, rebuke, exhort them, one and all;
And still new hearers, as the old retire,
Fill up of space each vacant interval;
Sooner, it seems, the daylight shall expire
Than psalm and sermon cease—than flesh or spirit
tire.

XXXVI.

'Tis good for Southron wight to have been here,—
Good to have felt the spirit of the place,
And witness'd the devotion, deep, sincere,
Which fires this sturdy Presbyterian race;
Nor deems he that henceforth shall aught efface
Remembrance of their worship from his mind:
Yet, as he turns, his footsteps to retrace,
Is this, thinks he, the holy rite design'd,
True Christian hearts in one with heavenly love to bind?

XXXVII.

This countless crowd—this myriad-throated roar
Of voices, echoed back from rock and hill,—
Comport they with a spirit sad and sore?—
A heart self judged—a meek and chasten'd will?
A conscience troubled by its load of ill?
This festival of feeling, wild and high,
Ah!—how unlike that upper chamber still!—
That hush of hearts, which felt the hour draw nigh,
When on the atoning cross the Son of man must die!

XXXVIII.

Far better with that hallow'd feast agree
The church embosom'd deep in peaceful vale,—
The silent groups which humbly bow the knee,
In suppliant guise, before the altar rail,—
The lowly voice of pastor meek and pale,
Who to his hungering flock doth there impart
The living bread from heaven which cannot fail—

The deep-drawn sighs, which ease the contrite heart,
The penitential tears, which there unbidden start.

XXXIX.

So deems our wanderer, and with thoughtful brow
Wends homeward through the wind and pelting rain,
Which, (through brief rest its strength recover'd now)
From masses of black cloud descends again;
Gladly shall he his mountain cot regain,
Where wife and children his return desire;
Nor let him deem this Sunday spent in vain,
When, cheer'd by food and clothed in dry attire,
He tells what he has seen by summer evening fire.

OCCASIONAL POEMS.

OCCASIONAL POEMS.

STANZAS.

WRITTEN IN THE ISLE OF ARRAN.

1838.

I.

THERE was a time when scenes like these
Which from our cottage door we see—
Those peaks which seem the clouds to kiss—
The sunlight on that crystal sea—
The solemn gloom of yon pine wood—
This burn which glides, in music, by,
Had charm'd me to that wish'd-for mood
Which oft gives birth to poesy.

II.

'Tis not so now;—I gaze and gaze,
And feed my pleased corporeal sense,
As gladly as in earlier days,
On Nature's rude magnificence.
Each feature of this glorious scene
Looks glorious as it look'd of yore,
But I am not as I have been,—
The spells, which charm'd me, charm no more.

III.

'Tis not that now, in manhood's prime,
My powers have sunk in swift decay;—
I rather deem the scythe of Time
Hath lopp'd their rank misgrowths away.
'Tis not that now, with soberer will,
I shun the visions loved so long;—
Full oft my heart is yearning still
To mingle with the sons of song.

IV.

It is that life hath lost, for me,
The shadowy veil of doubt and fear;
That depths, once hid in mystery,
Now lie before me close and clear.
It is that I can use no more
The workings of young Hope within
To gild each outward object o'er
With glory to herself akin.

V.

Long since when, in the spring of youth,
My spirit wrought on airy themes,
Investing with the hues of truth
The substance of its wildest dreams,—
Then wood and hill and mountain-head,
And murmuring stream and billowy sea,
With draughts of pure enjoyment fed
The inner life of Phantasy.

VI.

Each form of earthly beauty seem'd
With its own substance to endue

The emptiest joys that Fancy dream'd,
Or Hope's delusive pencil drew.
And thus, while Earth look'd heavenly-bright,
And Hope and Fancy still were strong,
Well might I soar, with venturous flight,
Through many a dizzy path of song.

VII.

But now—on life's sunshiny noon
There rests a clear, unclouded ray;
The lights and shades of star and moon
Have faded from the sober day.
My heart no more delights to dwell
In treacherous dreams of bliss to come;—
My present joys—I love them well,
But they are, with myself, at home.

VIII.

And Nature's face is now to me
No prophecy of times more fair;
It speaks no more of things to be,
But tells of lovelier things that were.
Yon mountain-peaks—those sea-girt isles—
This sky, too oft with clouds o'ercast,
Remind me of life's varying smiles,
Its hopes, its fears, its interest past.

IX.

Therefore, albeit I love to muse,
In dreamy mood, on days gone by,
And still, well-pleased, the face peruse
Of stream and mountain, sea and sky,—
Not these, nor sights like these awake,

In me, the slumbering soul of song,
Nor those benumbing fetters break
Which Fancy's wing hath felt so long.

X.

My days of tuneful thought are o'er,
Nor need I at their loss repine;
Since home-content and letter'd lore,
And love and friendship still are mine:
And pastoral duties, not unblest,
With tranquil toil my powers employ;
And heavenly hope yields peace and rest
Sweeter than Earth's unquiet joy.

OUR WEDDING-DAY!

1838.

I.

Our wedding-day! our wedding-day!—
And 'tis a bright and balmy morn;
But thou, alas! art far away,
And I, in home and heart, forlorn!
This thirteenth year of love and peace,
With small alloy of squally weather,
(Ah! why must good old customs cease?)
Should find us, like past years, together.

II.

But happier is thy lot than mine,
For thou hast those dear younglings near thee,
Round whom thy heartstrings twist and twine,

Whose smiles with ceaseless sunshine cheer thee.
There's Gerard with his calm grave eye,
And Geolly's cheeks as red as may be;
And curly-pated, saucy Ty,
And May, the loveliest earthly baby.

III.

And in the dear old house thou art,
My childhood's home, my manhood's vision,
Whose every chamber to my heart
Recalls past joys and dreams Elysian.
And both my parents lavish smiles
On thee, their own adopted daughter;
And Nature's face thine eye beguiles
With rock and hill and wood and water.

IV.

But I!—about my house I roam,—
My lonely house, my cheerless dwelling,
Which wears no more the look of home,
Though still of home's lost comforts telling.
My children's toys lie scatter'd round,—
Their hoops and balls and rakes and rattles,
And flags, about the garden found,
Memorials brave of mimic battles!

V.

The garden!—how its borders look!
Rank weeds are trailing round their edges;
The pair, who late its charge forsook,
Were not exactly *garden* Hedges.
The roof is rent from off the bower,
And sun and stars and sky look through it,

And thunder-storm and summer shower
In seat and floor and side bedew it.

VI.

And Fanny's voice seems tuneless now,
Although she sings as sweet as ever;
And Jess has lost her blithe bow-wow,
And Pam has caught a nervous fever.
E'en Sally's smiles no more delight,—
E'en Dulcy's brow is cold and clouded;—
In short, whatever once look'd bright
Is now in gloom completely shrouded.

VII.

At night, when I to bed repair,
I find but one poor, lonely pillow;
And round my brows am fain to wear,
For nuptial wreath, the weeping willow.
And Tiny's crib is at my side,
And for its company I thank it;
But it has lost its crown and pride,—
Yea, e'en its counterpane and blanket!

VIII.

Our wedding day! our wedding day!
How dismal 'tis!—how dull and stupid!
Alas! that wives from home should stray,
And Hymen prove as false as Cupid!
Return, return, thou spouse of mine,
Bring all our olive-buds about thee,
And cheer, with those bright smiles of thine,
This heart so dreary-dark without thee.

INSCRIPTION FOR A BUST

OF THE LATE WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.

Not that in him, whom these poor praises wrong,
Gifts, rare themselves, in rarest union dwelt;
Not that, reveal'd through eloquence and song,
In him the Bard and Statesman breathed and felt;—

Not that his nature, graciously endued
With feelings and affections pure and high,
Was purged from worldly taint, and self-subdued,
Till soul o'er sense gain'd perfect mastery;—

Not for this only we lament his loss,—
Not for this chiefly we account him blest;
But that all this he cast beneath the Cross,
Content for Christ to live, in Christ to rest.

HYMN

FOR THE OPENING OF A CHURCH ORGAN.

I.

Throughout all earth, and air, and sea,
Sweet sounds our Father bless,
In hymns of natural harmony
From voices numberless.

II.

The carol shrill of joyous bird,—
The hum of honey-bee,—
The leaves, by summer breezes stirr'd,
Which whisper on the tree—

III.

The cataract's rush,—the ocean's roar
Unite with one accord,
In ceaseless chorus to adore
Their own—all Nature's Lord.

IV.

The Church, with pipes and keys combined
By Man's profounder art,
Appropriate utterance strives to find
For music in her heart.

V.

Father! to-day accept our gift,
And by thy presence bless
The hymns thy children here uplift
To praise thy bounteousness.

SONNET I.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Not with solemnities of festal mirth,—
The well-spread board, the wine-cup sparkling clear,
The laugh of neighbours o'er their Christmas cheer,
The gibe and gambol round the blazing hearth,—
Not with such rites we celebrate thy birth,

And bid thee blithe God-speed! O infant year:
Nor yet, in thoughtful mood, with brow severe,
Mourning thine elder sisters lost on earth;
But with leave-takings, and the bustling care
Of packing and of parting:—sad employ!
Yet not unmingled with a sober joy;
For we, who part, to separate homes repair,
So greeting well thy birth; since none may share
Life's pleasures undebased by pain's alloy.

1838.

SONNET II.

Once more the tardy progress of the spring
Brings round, beloved, our betrothal day,
Rich heretofore in all the sweets which May
Did from her teeming lap, prolific, fling;
But now the lingering Zephyr's crippled wing
Thro' boughs all bare and blossomless doth stray,
And scarce have winter's hoar-frosts pass'd away,
Or vernal birds begun as yet to sing.
But let the laggard and distemper'd year
Frown as it lists;—we two have sunshine still,
Warming with love sweet wedlock's atmosphere;
And many a bubbling fount and sparkling rill
Of joy and peace makes music sweet and clear
For us, scarce yet descending life's steep hill.

1838.

SONNET III.

Cousin, the phantom voice of other years
Spake to me, as I sat by thee once more,
And saw thee what thou wast in days of yore,
Unfaded yet by life's thick-gushing tears—
While thy loved voice made music in my ears,
Such as it did ere boyhood's dream was o'er,
Or manhood yet had found its present store
Of household joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.
Now in two worlds we dwell, by different cares
And sympathies begirt;—yet each, I trust,
Employ'd in tasks through which high Heaven prepares
For its own bliss the faithful and the just.
There may our spirits meet, as now our prayers,
When our dust, cousin, hath return'd to dust.

1837.

SONNET IV.

WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Through islet-sprinkled lakes, embosom'd deep
In mountains crown'd with yet unmelted snow,
While o'er their heathery sides bright wild-flowers grow,—
Through rocky glens, in which, from steep to steep,
With rush and roar, the mountain torrents leap,—

O'er Inverara's heights,—through wild Glencroe—
(Delight and wonder kindling as we go)
From Arran's distant isle our course we keep.
But ask me not to paint what here we see,
With graphic pen, though all be passing dear
To memory;—for this outward world, to me,
Hath never been of tuneful thought the sphere;
My realm of song is human hope and fear,
Joy, grief, domestic peace and fireside glee.

1839.

SONNET V.

LOCH RANZA.

From Brodick's matchless bay, along the shore
Of Arran northward, past the Sannox glen,
Her freight of sketching dames and wondering men
Our crowded steamboat to Loch Ranza bore;
Which when we enter'd—all my hopes were o'er;
Nought found I there to task poetic pen:
But one there was, who with an artist's ken
Gazed at the scene, and straight began to pour
Artistic raptures about light and shade—
And how effectively these tints would lie,
And how much of those outlines might be made;
Yet he, with slender notice, had pass'd by
Glen-Sannox gorge.—How unlike mine his trade!
How far the painter's from the poet's eye!

1839.

SONNET VI.

TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER.

My daughter!—in that name appear fulfill'd
The cherish'd dreams of many wedded years;
Child of as many wishes, hopes and fears,
As e'er through poet's restless bosom thrill'd,
How doth thy rising star serenely gild,
For me, the horizon of this vale of tears!
Which, in its tender light, almost appears
A place where Hope her final home might build.
But with a deeper joy I greet thy birth,
For that hereafter, as I fondly trust,
Thou shalt make glad thy mother's home and hearth,
When she shall mourn (as soon or late she must)
Her lack-land sons dispers'd throughout the earth,—
Her husband, and his follies, in the dust.

1837.

SONNET VII.

TO MY YOUNGEST CHILD.

I would not have it said that thou alone,
My latest-born, hast been unsung by me,
Of six whom I have dandled on my knee,
Some among whom have, many a year, outgrown

Parental dandling:—therefore, for thine own,
Take now this sonnet,—though perchance to thee,
But little versed in lore of A, B, C,
'Twill seem a mystery better left unknown.
Right glad am I that thou art thus devoid
Of erudition;—that thy tender age
Hath been in healthier toil, till now, employ'd
Than poring o'er some spelling-book's dull page;—
That thou, a poet's daughter, hast enjoy'd
Life's early dawn unpent in schoolroom cage.

1843.

SONNET VIII.

With fond parental pride did I devote
This pair of sister Sonnets to the press;—
Short-sighted dreamer!—little did I guess
That, at the moment when the words I wrote,
Did Azrael's dusky wing already float
O'er both those gentle heads!—That sore distress—
Those long, long weeks of death's own bitterness
Are past—the Arm, thrice lifted, never smote.
For this deep mercy be the Chastener blest!
And ye, my children, from the grave's embrace
Deliver'd—our lost treasure repossest—
May ye, henceforth, by yet diviner grace
Made doubly His, so run your earthly race
That ye in Heaven with holiest saints may rest!

1843.

SONNET IX.

Six weeks of anxious watching and suspense,
With ceaseless ebbs and flows of hope and dread,
A tinge of silver o'er thy locks hath shed,
Dimming, in part, their dark magnificence,
Which else perchance had, many a summer hence,
As in time past, still graced thy matron head;
Grey hast thou grown beside our children's bed,
Raised, through thy care, from stroke of pestilence:
Therefore, O best-belov'd, more deeply now
Those streaks of summer snow do I hold dear
Than the pure jet which shaded thy young brow
When, at the altar's rail, with hearts sincere
We plighted, each to each, our nuptial vow;
—Mother and wife on Earth without a peer!

1843.

SONNET X.

TO THE AUTHORESS OF "I WATCH'D THE HEAVENS."

Within two miles of glorious dale and hill,
Lady, we two from infancy were bred;
And bravely (doubt not) were our spirits fed
On forms and hues which there with beauty fill
Meadow and valley, rock, and wood, and rill;
Each, by a guidance which we knew not, led

Through discipline, which train'd both heart and
head
The Bard's mysterious mission to fulfil.
Nor grudge I, but rejoice, that Heaven to thee
Allots the loftier task, the nobler powers,
Teaching thy wing to soar, thine eye to see
Beyond the bounds of this gross world of ours;
While I, confined to Earths' green banks and bowers,
Pipe my wild notes of human grief and glee.

1843.

STANZAS.

TO THE SAME.

I.

Some five and twenty years have past—
(It may be more—it may be less—)
Since first we met—and parted last,—
A poet and a poetess.

II.

That first and last and only time
Did we (whose hearts e'en then were swelling
With thoughts, ere long to bloom in rhyme)
Converse within one earthly dwelling.

III.

A dark-hair'd girl—a stripling tall—
(For then no lath than I was thinner)
We sat within thy Father's Hall,
Among sedater guests, at dinner.

IV.

We talk'd, as youthful poets use,
Of high imaginative matters;
Of Scott's and Moore's and Byron's Muse,—
Of Odes and Epics—Songs and Satires;—

V.

Of Music and the sister arts,
Save one—alas! denied to thee,
Though mostly dear to female hearts—
The art of gay Terpsichore.

VI.

To Her, in that same festive Hall,
Had I, in strange, fantastic motion,
Obedient to the fiddle's call,
Paid, oft ere then, my young devotion.

VII.

And graceful forms and eyes of light,
Before my raptured vision glancing,
Had held me through the livelong night,
In love's wild dreams my soul entrancing.

VIII.

Each form—each face—each thrilling tone,
Which charm'd me then, is now forgot;
One face remains,—one voice alone
From Memory's ear departeth not.

IX.

A Presence of mysterious power
(But dimly then discern'd by me)
Had through my spirit, in that hour,
Diffused itself insensibly.

X.

And hence that hour of converse still,
While years have faded, seemeth near;
Like some sun-gilded, distant hill
Seen through a rain-fraught atmosphere.

XI.

And if no more we meet on Earth,
'Twill be a pleasant thought to me,
That the same haunts which gave thee birth
Were mine from tenderest infancy.

XII.

The bold Clee Hill—the winding Teme—
The glorious woods of Mawley Hall—
The banks of Rea's romantic stream—
We both have known and loved them all.

XIII.

Yes!—*both* have loved them;—thou no less
Than I (though thine no earthly strain)
Dost, from that region's loveliness,
Pure springs of inspiration drain.

XIV.

Heaven speed thee, lady, in thy flight
Through worlds of song beyond my ken!
Heaven guide that wing of female might
Where few can soar of mightiest men!

XV.

And though thou fall'st on evil days
For daughters, as for sons, of Song,
Doubt not the echo of thy lays
In many a heart shall linger long.

XVI.

Nor now this cordial praise repel
From one who glories that, in thee,
Amidst the scenes he loves so well
Was born a nobler Bard than he.

1843.

LAMENT FOR THE DOON.

Air.—The Rhine! the Rhine!

I.

The Doon!—the Doon!—our own romantic river!
We tread thy banks no more—we tread thy banks no more;
Thy stream's bright gush is lost to us for ever,
Its home-sweet music o'er—its home-sweet music o'er.

CHORUS.

The Doon!—the Doon!—mourn, sires grown old before us,
Your birthright lost too soon—your birthright lost too soon;
Youths, maidens, wives, take up our wailing chorus!
Weep, children, for the Doon!—weep, children, for the Doon!

II.

The Doon!—the Doon!—thine own great Bard hath made thee

Of Earth's famed rivers one—of Earth's famed
rivers one;
Thy banks, thy braes, each tree that droops to shade
thee,
Immortal praise hath won—immortal praise hath
won.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

III.

But Doon, fair Doon—why doth *my* memory hover
O'er thee in tearful thought—o'er thee in tear-
ful thought?
Boyhood had past, and youth's best days were over,
Ere thou to me wast aught—ere thou to me wast
aught.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

IV.

But Doon, bright Doon, thy waters leapt to greet
me,
When wedded love was young—when wedded
love was young;
And on thy banks new friends came forth to meet
me,—
Warm heart and cordial tongue—warm heart and
cordial tongue.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

V.

The Doon!—the Doon!—remembrance yet re-
joices
O'er bliss beside thee felt—o'er bliss beside thee
felt;—

The old plain home—the cheerful looks and voices
Which round its hearthstone dwelt—which round its hearthstone dwelt.
The Doon!—the Doon, &c.

VI.

The Doon!—the Doon!—those looks no more shall cheer me
On thy deserted shore—on thy deserted shore;
Those tones which told what friendly hearts beat near me,
Shall bless mine own no more—shall bless mine own no more.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

VII.

But Doon, sweet Doon! untouch'd some hearts behold thee,
For whom thy bright waves ran—for whom thy bright waves ran;
One, long thy lord, to alien hands hath sold thee—
That calm, grey-headed man—that calm, grey-headed man.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

VIII.

Yet, Doon, lost Doon—the love of thy clear waters
Must still his spirit sway—must still his spirit sway;
Woe!—woe for him!—his sons!—his blooming daughters!—
Their birthright cast away!—their birthright cast away!
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

IX.

But Doon, sweet Doon!—thy murmurs will not reach them,
Where Fashion rules their lot—where Fashion rules their lot;
Strange are their hearts to lore which thou wouldst teach them;—
Sweet Doon, they love thee not—sweet Doon, they love thee not.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

X.

But woe for Her whose home hath been beside thee
For many an anxious year—for many an anxious year!
From whose deep love no change shall e'er divide thee,
Nor make thy banks less dear—nor make thy banks less dear.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

XI.

And woe for those, whose weary footsteps wander
Far in the burning East—far in the burning East!
Whose hearts e'en now, perchance, still vainly ponder
O'er hopes which here have ceased—o'er hopes which here have ceased.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

XII.

And woe for Her o'er whom, as lost, we sorrow,—

Our once loved meetings o'er—our once loved meetings o'er!
'Midst alien cares, her grief, perchance, shall borrow
A voice from mine once more—a voice from mine once more.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

XIII.

Yes, woe for her!—sound sleeps her virgin sister
Beneath our Southern sod—beneath our Southern sod;
Joy to her now!—long, long our homes have miss'd her;—
But hers hath been with God—but hers hath been with God.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

XIV.

The Doon!—the Doon!—along thy banks, sweet river,
My first-born's steps have stray'd—my first-born's steps have stray'd;
Thy voice, I trust, shall haunt his thought for ever,
Till Memory's self shall fade—till Memory's self shall fade.
The Doon!—the Doon! &c.

XV.

The Doon!—the Doon!—still, still to sons and daughters
Fond tales of thee we'll tell—fond tales of thee we'll tell;

Though we no more must gaze upon thy waters ;—
Our own sweet Doon, farewell !—our own sweet
Doon, farewell !

CHORUS.

The Doon !—the Doon !—mourn, sires grown old
before us,
Your birthright lost too soon—your birthright
lost too soon.
Youths, maidens, wives, take up our wailing chorus !
Weep, children, for the Doon !—weep, children,
for the Doon !

1837.

LAYS OF THE PARISH.

I. EUTHANASIA.

II. THE SONG OF THE KETTLE.

LAYS OF THE PARISH.

EUTHANASIA.

I.

The world is full of lovely things ;
We need not borrow Fancy's wings
To waft us through the sky
In quest of change, through any dearth
Of glorious objects here on Earth
To feed our inward eye.

II.

Nor deem I that all-bounteous Heaven
Hath, to the poet only, given
A power which doth reveal,
In Nature's every sound and sight,
Deeper and more intense delight
Than common souls can feel.

III.

'Tis holy Love—'tis Faith and Hope,
Which Beauty's secret chambers ope
To minds of humblest mould ;
And paths of heavenly light are trod
On Earth by every child of God,
Which no gross eyes behold.

IV.

And he—there's not a spot so sad
But he can make it bright and glad;
No scene so dark and drear,
But he therein doth well discern
Celestial lights, which blaze and burn
Through its thick atmosphere.

V.

In towns or woods, on towers or trees,
The impress of God's hand he sees,
And hears his well-known voice;
In hope and fear, in woe and weal,
His presence doth he ever feel,
And in His smile rejoice.

VI.

With searching glance 'tis his to scan
The deep, mysterious heart of man—
Its secret movements trace;
The spirit's silent growth to mark,
And track, through windings dim and dark,
The wondrous stream of grace.

VII.

The griefs and joys which others feel
More closely to his heart appeal
Than godless minds can guess;
'Tis his with all to smile and weep,
And share, with fervour kind and deep,
Their joy and their distress.

VIII.

And thus,—whate'er his walk may be,—

Full of sweet sympathies is he
With pleasure and with pain;
Wherever human hearts are found,
Feeling and thought for him abound;—
The world is his domain.

IX.

In court or camp, in hall or cot,
Rich contemplations fail him not;—
A peasant at the plough—
A soldier—or a merchant grave—
A monarch—or a menial slave—
His heart hath range enow.

X.

And yet, methinks, one task there is
More sweetly and more truly his
Than other tasks can be;—
The gospel message to convey
To souls from Heaven still far astray;—
The task assign'd to me.

XI.

To us, and to our pastoral care,
Is many a human heart laid bare
In many a varying mood;
All human sorrows, doubts and fears,
All cares and troubles, smiles and tears,
Supply our mental food.

XII.

To us the wounded spirit flees
For words of comfort to appease
Its own afflictive smart;

The penitent, by fears opprest,
Comes to us, and asks ease and rest
For his o'er-burden'd heart.

XIII.

Our aid is lent, our prayers are said
By saint and sinner's dying bed;
To us, in life's last hour,
Confidingly both young and old
The soul's mysterious depths unfold—
Its weakness and its power.

XIV.

Then, if I may revive once more
The powers, which, ere life's spring was o'er,
Were mine, or seem'd to be,—
What need to urge, beyond the sphere
Of vision which surrounds me here,
My light-wing'd phantasy?

XV.

Nought care I for heroic strains;—
I leave to bolder hearts and brains
The lofty epic style;
Enough for me what I can win
Of calm and tender thought, within
The space of one square mile!

XVI.

Here, in this quiet shelter'd spot,
Where Providence hath cast my lot,
In love and peace, so long,—
This spot which saw my children's birth—
Here, by my own still blissful hearth,
Shall be my world of song.

XVII.

From things which gladden or which grieve
Familiar hearts, my Muse shall weave
Such garlands as she can;
Noting, in this her narrow sphere,
All storms which shake, all gleams which cheer
The troublous soul of Man.

XVIII.

So now to hearts of gentle mould
A simple tale will I unfold—
A tale of humble love,
Of suffering long and faith intense,
In one who late departed hence
To dwell with Christ above.

XIX.

Of humble parentage was she,
And yet not born in poverty,
No child of want or shame;
Her parents still in comfort dwell,
And earn a decent living well,
And bear an honest name.

XX.

Herself—in sooth I would not speak
Of beaming eye or blooming cheek,
Fine form, or noble mien,
Had such been hers:—'twould suit as well
The unromantic tale I tell,
Had she an Ethiop been.

XXI.

There are, whose chance-caught looks express
An intellectual loveliness,

Which makes us turn and start,
Even when no outward sign we trace
Of beauty in the form and face—
Looks kindled from the heart.

XXII.

But such were not her looks or mien—
No token in her face was seen
Of genius rich and rare;
Even though you sought, you scarce would find
A symptom of superior mind,
Or high-wrought feeling there.

XXIII.

She was a meek and simple maid
As ever roam'd in greenwood shade,
Or sat in summer bower;
Though little of green shades or woods,
Lone dells or silent solitudes,
Knew she, or felt the power.

XXIV.

Scant store of sentiment refined
Had she—her pure but humble mind
Small culture e'er had known;
Few were her books, nor much she sought,
Through knowledge gain'd of others' thought,
To elevate her own.

XXV.

So fares it oft with those design'd
The loftiest place midst human kind
In other worlds to hold;
Though here they seem, to human eye,

Compass'd with much infirmity—
The feeblest of the fold.

XXVI.

We see not how their spirits grow,
We know not whence the breezes blow
Which life to them convey;
Through what dim workings of the thought
The silent work of grace is wrought,
And error purged away.

XXVII.

But mark them well—in lowliest hut,
Or, poorest among paupers, shut
Within a workhouse walls;
And you will own that heavenly light,
In streams of glory pure and bright,
On their weak spirits falls.

XXVIII.

No doubts have they through learned pride;
They hear God's promise and confide,—
Their faith is faith indeed;
And thus from height to height they go
Of hope and love, while we, below,
Plod on with laggard speed.

XXIX.

Yet was not she, of whom I speak,
Left all her little lore to seek,
Or rear her own poor thought;
But placed beneath the Christian rule
Of one who kept a daily school,
And Christ's pure lessons taught.

XXX.

Nor may we deem the years mis-spent,
In which, from day to day, she went
To that instructress kind;
Though then no goodly growth was rear'd,
No promise of rich grace appear'd
To blossom in her mind.

XXXI.

Her teacher plough'd the virgin ground,
And scatter'd in its soil profound
The seed of truth divine;
Which there unseen, unnoticed lay,
Till on her heart, with quickening ray,
Religion's sun should shine.

XXXII.

And thus her tender years were past—
Until the time arrived at last
When she, a woman grown,
Should, as the Church's laws allow,
Renewing the baptismal vow,
Confirm it as her own.

XXXIII.

A blessed time is that to me,—
Of all my pastoral ministry
To toil most pleasant given;
When, face to face, in conference sweet,
The younglings of my flock I meet,
To speak of Christ and Heaven.

XXXIV.

A blessed time, when heavenly truth

Press'd firmly on the mind of youth
In many a close appeal,
Lays bare undreamt-of depths within,
And the whole mystery of sin
Doth startlingly reveal.

XXXV.

A time of fresh and fervent thought,
When Heaven and Hell at once are brought
Before the young mind's eye;
And the thick veil is rent in twain
Which on the wondrous world had lain
Of immortality.

XXXVI.

So fell it in that maiden's case;
The deep, mysterious work of grace
Seem'd then, in her, begun;
The seeds, in childhood sown, then first
To life and sudden vigour burst,
Beneath religion's sun.

XXXVII.

With thoughtful brow and tearful eye
She heard, and in her heart laid by
The lessons then instill'd;
Truths known, but never felt before,
Which now she ponder'd o'er and o'er,
Through soul and spirit thrill'd.

XXXVIII.

And when the holy rite was done,
And from the altar, one by one,
Her young companions pass'd,

Whatever thoughts in them might stir—
Some had, that day, been waked in her,
  Which would for ever last.

XXXIX.

The emptiness she now had learn'd
Of things below—had well discern'd
  The worth of things not seen,
And, in the Everlasting arms,
From Earth's temptations, Hell's alarms,
  Received and shelter'd been.

XL.

Strange passage! from youth's dreams of bliss
Investing such a world as this
  With glory most untrue,
To calmest faith and sober love,
Which almost bring the world above
  Within the Christian's view.

XLI.

Strange passage!—and to her, most blest!—
For so she found a place of rest
  And comfort all her own,
When on her gentle head did rain
A storm of such fierce grief and pain
  As few on Earth have known.

XLII.

When summer leaves were on the boughs,
She ratified her Christian vows,
  Began her Christian race;
But long ere winter's icy chain
Was broke, disease and bitterest pain
  Had paled her patient face.

XLIII.

She came to church on Christmas day,
The homage of her love to pay,
And celebrate His birth,
Who, eighteen hundred years ago,
Exchanged Heaven's bliss for human woe,
And dwelt with Man on Earth.

XLIV.

That morn what peaceful joy was hers,
As with his chosen worshippers
She at his altar knelt!
But ere another sabbath day,
Ah me! how like a corpse she lay!
And yet what anguish felt!

XLV.

Hard lot, ye think, my readers young,
While every heart and every tongue
Save hers was full of glee,
And friends and neighbours vied in mirth
By well-spread board and blazing hearth,
To groan with agony.

XLVI.

Hard lot, ye think, was that for her;
And yet was she (I dare aver)
Far happier where she lay,
Than could the loudest laugher be
Of any joyous company
Which then kept holiday.

XLVII.

Far happier—for her Saviour stood
Beside her in her solitude,—

Beside her stood and smiled;
And sounds were to her soul convey'd,
Which seem'd to say "Be not afraid,
Mine own adopted child."

XLVIII.

A peace seraphic, night and day,
Upon her gentle spirit lay,—
Peace, sent her from above,
Which told that nought which might betide
Thence-forward should her soul divide
From Heaven's eternal love.

XLIX.

And think ye, while she felt this peace,
Nor fear'd lest it should ever cease—
That she could wish to be
Once more with a light-hearted crowd,
Midst roars of laughter long and loud,
And boisterous revelry?

XL.

Would she one glimpse of Heaven forego
For all Earth's merriment?—ah no!
Her ties to Earth are burst;
She listens to the angels' song,
In draughts of rapture, deep and long,
She slakes her spirit's thirst.

XLI.

Whoso had look'd on that sick bed
With thoughtful eye, must needs have said
A contrast strange was there;
Disease and racking pain without—

Within—a soul from fear and doubt
Made free as summer air.

LII.

And yet 'twas pitiful to see
With what extreme severity
Heaven chasten'd its dear child;
What pangs did that weak frame devour,
From day to day, from hour to hour,
Made fiercer and more wild.

LIII.

In sooth but slender skill have I
In phrase of learn'd anatomy;
Nor know I how to name
Whatever tortures urge the pulse
To wildest throbbings, or convulse
Our sinful human frame.

LIV.

Yet I may say no limb was free
From its peculiar agony,
But, downward from the face,
Through all her frame convulsions went,
Which every separate fibre rent
In swift and ceaseless race.

LV.

From year to year did she sustain
A dread diversity of pain,
Still gathering more and more;
And this physicians did declare—
That all which flesh and blood can bear
Their gentle patient bore.

LVI.

So three years pass'd;—the fourth begun—
We deem'd that now her race was run,
  Her conflict nearly o'er;
For then a storm of pain did pierce
Each part, more fiery and more fierce
  Than she had felt before.

LVII.

Nor was this all;—the light of day
Was now for ever swept away,
  And ceaseless night began;
Her eyelids closed, nor might she trace
Thenceforward any friendly face
  Or form beloved of Man.

LVIII.

You deem perhaps that then she found
Some compensation from the sound
  Of living voices near;
That friends would from a distance walk,
With pleasant and familiar talk
  Her loneliness to cheer.

LIX.

And that beside her dying bed
From morn to night her sisters read
  Sweet words of truth divine;
And prayers were said, and hymns were sung,
And comfort dropp'd from many a tongue
  More eloquent than mine.

LX.

Ah no!—so fierce her tortures were

That she could now no longer bear
The softest human tone;
A footstep, though it trod on down,—
The rustle of a silken gown
Thrill'd through her to the bone.

LXI.

And thus they lay (her pain and she)
In sorrowful society,
While twelve months more roll'd by;
She wasting silently away
With imperceptible decay,
And yet too strong to die.

LXII.

'Twas the meek patience of her heart
Which, through such fierce and fiery smart,
Her life did long sustain;
And had her faith and love been less,
She had escaped the bitterness
Of many a month of pain.

LXIII.

Throughout that time full oft did I
For entrance to her room apply,
Which mostly was denied;
Such were her pangs, she could not bear
A soothing word, a whisper'd prayer
Put up at her bedside.

LXIV.

At last the final conflict came,
Each part of her exhausted frame
Had borne its share of woe;

The lungs with inflammation dire
Were last attack'd, and raging fire
In every vein did glow.

LXV.

Then 'twas that me they came to call
In her last tranquil interval
Of partial rest from pain;
Such rest as lulls the wintry deep,
When the spent storms at evening sleep,
Ere morn to wake again.

LXVI.

I came;—her quick and struggling breath
Told of the near approach of death,
As by her side I stood;
Her painful toil was nearly done,
The conflict o'er, the victory won,
The sinful soul renew'd.

LXVII.

A glorious sight it is to see
A dying saint's felicity,
When death draws gently nigh,
And no sharp pangs disturb the peace
Preceding the glad soul's release,
Or clog the parting sigh.

LXVIII.

A glorious sight!—for then Heaven's field
Seems to be visibly reveal'd
To faith's expiring gaze;
And we almost can hear the hymn
Which cherubim and seraphim
For its new inmate raise.

LXIX.

But deaths like this, I deem, are rare,
For mortal weakness, pain and care,
Cleave to us to the last;
And few of saintliest souls there be
From all life's galling bonds set free
Till life itself is past.

LXX.

O! shame! eternal shame to them
Who would the penitent condemn
In his expiring hour,
Because his fainting soul is toss'd
By waves of doubt, nor yet hath lost
All sense of hellish power.

LXXI.

O! shame to such! they little know
The warfare to be waged below,—
The mystery, dark and strange,
Of inextinguishable sin,
Subjecting the whole world within
To doubt and fear and change.

LXXII.

By many a death-bed have I stood
Both of the wicked and the good,
And this will I maintain,—
That while the former smile on death,
The latter oft yield up their breath
In trouble, fear, and pain.

LXXIII.

But such was not our sister's doom,—
Strong pains she had, but care and gloom

And fear had fled for aye ;
One toilsome fight was still to win,
And then—farewell to grief and sin !
And welcome endless day !

LXXIV.

And yet no rapturous flights had she
Of feeling or of phantasy,
No visions heavenly-bright ;
'Twas patience all, and faith and love,
Which with her giant sufferings strove,
And triumph'd through God's might.

LXXV.

Once, as I bent above her bed—
" Now, Mary, you approach," I said,
" Death's dark and shadowy vale ;"—
" It is not dark"—was her reply,
And a faint smile pass'd radiantly
Across her features pale.

LXXVII.

No more she spoke ;—her anguish grew
Fiercer and fiercer, till we knew
The final strife was come ;
At length the web of life was rent,
And, with a sigh, her spirit went
To its eternal home.

LXXVII.

But was this all ?—to mortal eye
No more 'twas granted to descry ;
And yet the soul within
Had felt a more stupendous strife,—

The struggle between death and life,
Heaven's grace and human sin.

LXXVIII.

By prayer intense and fervent thought,
Strange transformation had been wrought
In all the inner man ;
And ever, as the flesh decay'd,
The spirit was more heavenly made,
A steadier race she run.

LXXIX.

Yet think not that her sainted soul
Of peace and joy attain'd the goal
By easy steps and few ;
Or that from height to height she went
With swift and regular ascent,
As happy angels do.

LXXX.

Ah no !—though now, for many a year,
She to her Saviour had been dear,
And in his flock received,—
The Tempter's power was not yet past,
But still assail'd her to the last,
As ere she first believed.

LXXXI.

Full surely, all the time, he knew
That all his legions were too few,
His subtlest efforts vain,
The ranks of that bright host to stir,
Invisibly encamp'd round her,
As on a battle plain.

LXXXII.

Yet though he could not overcome,
Nor lure her from her heavenly home,
Dread power he wielded still;
Power to disturb, to haunt, to vex,
Confuse and fearfully perplex
With dreams obscure of ill.

LXXXIII.

The sin which still was unsubdued,
In many a dark and dreary mood,
He show'd to her mind's eye
In frightful forms and hues intense,
O'erwhelming her bewilder'd sense
With fear and agony.

LXXXIV.

Doubts and dark thoughts did he suggest,
Robbing her soul of peace and rest;—
"O am I Christ's indeed,—
So weak of faith, so cold in love?—
Could he who lives and reigns above
For such a sinner bleed?—

LXXXV.

"Hath all this sharp and bitter pain,
Borne for long years, been borne in vain?—
Is all this woe for nought?—
Is this vile heart e'en now unchanged?
From Him—from hope—from Heaven estranged?"
—Thus darkly fancy wrought.

LXXXVI.

But soon such terrors pass'd away,

And then in bliss untold she lay,
Though still in grievous pain;
Heaven's gates once more were open thrown,
And Faith and Hope and Love came down
To dwell with her again.

LXXXVII.

Nor lack'd she, ere her anguish grew
Too deadly, friends, nor cold nor few,
Who daily to her came,
Spake with her of Christ's dying love,
And soar'd with her, in thought, above
This world of sin and shame.

LXXXVIII.

And blest, to her, those seasons were,
When to her chamber did repair
Souls touch'd by grace divine;
And the Lord's table there we spread,
And bless'd and brake the living bread,
And shared the mystic wine.

LXXXIX.

Thus joy and grief together wrought
To purify her springs of thought,
Her heart for Heaven to train;
Thus was her spirit cleansed from guilt,
And God therein a temple built
Where he might ever reign.

XC.

Nor did her faith and patience (shown
Thus sweetly) to herself alone
Most rich in blessing prove;

For few to her sick chamber came
In whom she kindled not the flame
Of her celestial love.

XCI.

The careless, when her pangs they view'd
So meekly borne, with hearts subdued
And sadden'd went away;
The weak grew strong, the timid bold,
Her patient warfare to behold
With suffering and decay.

XCII.

She was a silent preacher, sent
(Silent, but O! most eloquent!)
To teach us how to die;
Showing o'er what fierce depths of pain
A tender maiden's soul can gain,
Through faith, the victory.

XCIII.

But little now remains to say;
She died ere dawn upon the day
Of last St. Valentine;
And on the following Monday morn,
With reverence, to her grave was borne;—
The last sad office mine.

XCIV.

Few mourners at her burial were,
In truth, the day was far from fair;
And while along the street
The scant and slow procession pass'd,
The thickening clouds pour'd down full fast
A storm of rain and sleet.

XCV.

Yet One there was whom all respect,—
A man of noblest intellect,
Great heart, and station high,
Who, that day, all his toils forsook,
And on her funeral came to look
With sad and reverent eye.

XCVI.

For service high perform'd to truth,
For Christian lessons taught to youth,
Deep thanks to him are due;
And I, for one, may truly say
How happy I esteem the day
When first his worth I knew.

XCVII.

Yet ne'er, methinks, for him I felt
Respect so deep as when we knelt
Together by her bier,
And I beheld him not too proud,
Amidst the meanest of the crowd,
To drop a parting tear.

XCVIII.

To him, with cordial heart, to-day,*
I dedicate this humble lay,
Which he will not despise,
But treasure as a record true
Of one whose faith on earth he knew,
Now throned above the skies.

* Written in 1834.

THE SONG OF THE KETTLE.

I.

What decks our sober parsonage to-day
With this unusual pomp of festal show?
What mean these tents, bedight with streamers gay?
These tables, spread in long continuous row?—
This throng of busy peasants to and fro?
Yon maypole wreathed with yet unfaded flowers,
Braving the blasts that all too wintry blow,
And ever and anon, with sleety showers,
Bemock the cold mid-May of this wild clime of ours?*

II.

Not without previous care and tasteful toil
Hath all this rural pageantry been wrought;
But yesternight the meadows' flowery spoil,
By children's hands with childish ardour sought,
Was to our pastor's busy parlour brought,
And then and there did gentle ladies twine
Those flowery wreaths, and, with fantastic thought,
Primrose and cowslip and blue bell combine
In forms and hues so rich as mock this verse of mine.

III.

And here, all day, since earliest peep of dawn,
Hath rustic labour preparation made

* Written in 1839.

For feats gymnastic on the wanton lawn,
With stroke and thrust of hammer, saw, and spade;
Here tilters deft shall dextrously evade
The quintain's swift and ignominious blow;—
Here shall the wrestler at his length be laid,
Lock'd in the gripe of his victorious foe;
Here youths and maids shall point the light fantastic toe.

IV.

But wherefore *here?* where solemn thought should dwell,
And heavenly contemplation oft be found,
And silence house, as in a hermit's cell,
And pious cares and studies aye abound,
Untroubled by the world's intrusive sound?—
Why all this coil of boisterous frolick *here?*
Startling the tenants of the graves around,
And ever bursting on the living ear
With uproar meeter sure for some less sober sphere?

V.

'Tis not our pastor's wont, nor e'er hath been,
Since first in Christian fold a flock he fed,
To mingle with gay crowds in festal scene;—
Full surely to the world we deem'd him dead,
A life so grave and sober hath he led,
Shunning whate'er to puritanic eye
Might cause offence;—so much he seem'd to dread,
Lest keen schismatics should in him espy
Occasion to impeach and mar his ministry.

VI.

No feaster he, nor sportsman, nor alert
At feats athletic—save that, in his day,
At England's game of games he was expert,
And loved with jovial cricketers to play,
So wasting many a summer holiday;
But now that pastime too he doth forego,
Nor e'er in flannel garb his loins array,
Nor arm his foot with iron spikes below,
Nor wield the ponderous bat with skilful block and blow.

VII.

A graver interest warms his heart to-day,
Grave meaning lurks beneath his mirthful mood,
Some graver purpose owns this trim array
Of tents and tables piled with daintiest food—
These garlands wreath'd by tasteful womanhood—
This preparation for athletic sport;—
Mock not, ye graceless—marvel not, ye good;—
Here Temperance holds to-day her solemn court,
Whereto her liegemen true, in festive pomp, resort.

VIII.

A Power benignant she, and once on Earth
Well known and honour'd;—health's secure ally,
Sworn friend of household peace and social mirth,
And happiness, and love, and liberty;
Sedate her mien and modest is her eye,
From meretricious wiles exempt and pure;
No care hath she, the casual passer by
With smiles of harlot blandishment to lure,
But wins by quiet worth, and knows her triumph sure.

IX.

Small store of season'd viands loads her board,
No sparkling wine-cup at her feasts is seen;
Yet she the choicest dainties doth afford
To healthful tastes, and reigns in state serene,
Of true convivial joys the sovereign queen:
Hers is the cheerful home, the fire-side glee,
The rustic game, the dance upon the green;—
And eke the kettle's song, the toast, the tea,
The gleam of household smiles, from guilt and sorrow free.

X.

Ah me! that ever nymph so fair and good
Men should have banish'd from our luckless isle,
Through lust of tempting drink and luscious food,
Duped and enslaved by that enchanter vile,
Accursed Comus, who doth yet defile
Our homes and hearths with riotous excess,
Stealing the heart and brain with treacherous guile,
And breeding deadlier woe than thought can guess,
Through brutish sensual waste and filthy drunkenness.

XI.

O shun his proffer'd draught, unthinking swains,
In whom not yet is appetite subdued
To Reason's temperate rule;—that cup contains
Circean juice with poisonous drugs imbued;
Whereof who freely drinks, albeit endued
With natural graces manifold, casts off

His better self, grows sensual, wild and lewd,
And doth at life's true pleasures rail and scoff,
Herding with human swine, and wallowing in their trough.

XII.

Yet sweet, at first, the luscious beverage seems,
Which, like an adder, stingeth at the last,—
The wine that sparkles in rich ruby gleams,
The ale by amber's clearness unsurpass'd;—
And pleasures throng around it thick and fast—
Gay spirits—generous feelings—social glee,
And blithe good humour by no cloud o'ercast,—
Frolic and song and laughter loud and free—
Yea, all the joys that wait on jocund jollity.

XIII.

Right pleasant 'twere to quaff that charmed cup,
And feel its inspiration rich and fine,
Were no sharp bitters with the dregs mix'd up,
Were social gladness all that flows from wine;
Then Bacchus were indeed a god divine,
And Circe's son a welcome guest on Earth;
But soon, alas! those giddy joys decline,
And furious folly takes the place of mirth,
And fever'd brain and blood to lust and rage give birth.

XIV.

Strange sight it is, I ween, at lordly feast,
Or alehouse revel, (as the case may be)
To mark the gradual change of man to beast,
The quick transition from convivial glee
To tipsy fun and senseless ribaldry;

Thence to mad riot and unseemly brawl,
Or brutish, base insensibility,
As, in their strength or weakness, one and all,
Beneath the enchanter's spell, in swift succession, fall.

XV.

Gentle at first his stealthy influence seems;
He opens the shut heart, and frees the tongue
Of shy reserve, and lights the eye with gleams
Of kindling humour round the table flung,
And cheers the drooping soul which seem'd unstrung
For boisterous joys, and tunes the timid voice
To jovial ditties in full chorus sung,
And charms the ear with talk so quaint and choice
As makes the dull applaud—the sorrowful rejoice.

XVI.

Anon a change doth o'er this spirit pass,
Discourse more freely, but less clearly, flows;
This grows a pert, and *that* a solemn ass,
And maudlin fervour makes sworn friends of foes,
Till from embraces straight they come to blows,
(Extremes so nearly meet,) and you may see
Black eye, and broken head, and bloody nose,
Marring the mirth of this fair company;—
Sure Circe's swine themselves could scarce more swinish be.

XVII.

And one, with solemn air and swimming eyes,
Drawls saws of tipsy morals to deaf ears;
One, at full length, beneath the table lies

In most unsavoury plight, nor sees nor hears
The brawls or babble of his drunk compeers,
So well the wine hath done its work on him;
There let him lie till sober morn appears,
Then wake with throbbing brow and aching limb;—
Woke never mortal wight in more unseemly trim.

XVIII.

Time was when scenes like these you might be-hold
E'en in the Palace-Halls of Albion's isle;
So closely did the curst Enchanter hold
Peasant and prince in bondage base and vile,
And all the virtues of all ranks defile;
Nor Learning's cloister'd shades withstood his power,
Nor shrank he back abash'd from Beauty's smile,
But durst, with steps profane, invade her bower,
Reeling from revels gross, prolong'd for many an hour.

XIX.

Then without shame on drawing-rooms' retreat,
Whereto, ere wine grows wanton, dames retire,
Would sots intrude, who scarce could keep their feet,—
The drunken lord and doubly drunken squire,
Their brains bewilder'd, and their blood on fire.
Then felt the enamour'd youth, thro' hot excess,
His bashful love transform'd to bold desire,
And gazed upon his fair one's loveliness
With looks from which she shrank as from a fiend's caress.

XX.

Those days are past;—but tho' at length expell'd
From courtly halls, or there with chains fast bound,
And wand reversed,—the miscreant, yet unquell'd,
In lowlier homes and meaner haunts is found,
Still too triumphant upon British ground;
Him taverns worship, him the alehouse owns
Lord of each loathsome sight and bestial sound;
Him the gin-palace in full state enthrones—
That charnel, fair without, but fill'd with dead men's bones.

XXI.

And in the streets, at midnight, you may hear
His votaries from their orgies staggering out,
Flush'd high with brandy or ignoble beer,
And roaming, like enfranchised fiends, about,
With many a wanton song and deafening shout,
Startling the sober citizen from sleep,
Who haply opes his casement, and thereout
At those mad revels doth affrighted peep,
Which they, in frantic sport, right mischievously keep.

XXII.

Then from obnoxious doors are knockers wrung,
And pannels with incongruous paint o'erspread,
And signs torn down, till watchmen's rattles sprung,
Sound to the charge, and soon some senseless head,
Split by the official staff's congenial lead,

Discloses to men's eyes its lack of brains;
And one, self-rescued, staggers home to bed,
And one, all night, in durance vile remains,
Consign'd to watch-house base—fit guerdon for his pains.

XXIII.

These, Comus, are thy triumphs—but alas!
Not these alone—ah would that these were all!
For thou all fiends in mischief dost surpass,
Plague most accurst of this terrestrial ball!
Health, fortune, reputation, conscience fall
Beneath thy blasting spell;—alas for those
Whom thou, with fatal witcheries, dost enthrall!
No more shall they in peaceful homes repose,
But waste in swift decay, pierced through with many woes.

XXIV.

Theirs is the trembling hand, the pimpled cheek,
The purple nose, the lean and shrunken limb,
The bloated trunk, the gait infirm and weak,
The palsied head, the eyeball blear'd and dim.
Woe to the sot! yet not alone to him;
Woe, woe to those whom once he held most dear!—
His little ones a prey to famine grim,
His wife left weeping in her chamber drear,
Yet waiting his return with less of hope than fear.

XXV.

Ah wretched she! more wretched for the peace
Which once was hers, and which, when life was young,
She fondly hoped with life alone should cease,

When he upon her neck, enamour'd, hung,
And vow'd, with winning and persuasive tongue,
His life, himself, his body, soul and sense
Hers until death ;—nor were such pleasures flung
At random from his lips in base pretence,
But breathed in honest truth and frankest confidence.

XXVI.

Nor lack'd their early years of wedded love
The choicest pleasures which that state can yield,
Until strong drink seduced his steps to rove
From duty's path, and soon his bosom steel'd
Against all power which Love and Hymen yield ;
For he, of pious parents born and bred,
His vows devoutly at the altar seal'd,
And long the tenderest husband's life had led ;
Seem'd never mortal pair with brighter hopes to wed.

XXVII.

And blessed was their basket and their store,
For industry and honest thrift were theirs ;
And still they loved each other more and more,
For that joint burden of parental cares
Which grew and gather'd round them unawares
As sons and daughters, year by year, were born,—
Dear subjects of new hopes, and fears, and prayers ;
Alas that e'er such home should be forlorn,
Or heart so fond as hers by such fierce anguish torn !

XXVIII.

Sly was the fiend's approach ;—in friendship's guise,

And hand in hand with "Auld lang syne" he came;
And if the victim's heart, more warm than wise,
Too freely open'd, few would harshly blame,—
Few, in his place, but would have done the same.
Yet there the first and fatal fault crept in,
And at its heels came sorrow, guilt, and shame,
Remorse in liquor quench'd, and deepening sin,
So steep is Hell's descent when we to err begin!

XXIX.

First tyrant Custom fill'd the dangerous cup
In Friendship's name, and thus the alehouse dire
Was, in his thoughts, with holier things mix'd up;
Then, by degrees, insatiable desire
Of that fell poison set his throat on fire,
Weaning his heart from his pure peaceful home,
Till, day by day, would he from work retire
To that foul den, nor near his cottage come,
Its pleasures now appear'd so tame and wearisome.

XXX.

His home-spent hours—ah! wherefore flag they now?
They flagg'd not when a life of toil he led,
By daily sweat of his industrious brow
Earning his wife's, his children's daily bread;
And now by whom shall they be clothed and fed?
What shelter shall they find from winter's cold?
Alas for them!—far better were they dead!—
Their food withheld—their raiment pawn'd or sold,—

Their mother sick and weak, for very grief grown old.

XXXI.

No hope for her!—with hard and ceaseless toil
Early she labours, and but late takes rest;
In vilest drudgery doth her beauty soil,—
No murmur utter'd, no complaint express'd,
Though wasting anguish is her daily guest;
And still her needful food doth she forego,
To calm their hunger whom she loveth best;
And still, thro' wintry frost and driving snow,
Ill shod and scantly clothed, to daily labour go.

XXXII.

No hope for her!—scarce all her toil can win
A scanty pittance of the coarsest bread;
And when, sore spent, at evening, she comes in,
Cowering she sits, and trembles, pale with dread,
If she but hear her husband's coming tread,
Lest he that pittance from her children tear,
And barter it for drink;—their marriage-bed
Long since was sold;—of table, stool, and chair,
Yea all, save mouldering walls, her wretched hut is bare.

XXXIII.

Cowering she sits beside her fireless hearth,
Her children shivering in their straw with cold,—
Till, with a sudden shout of brutal mirth,
The crazy door is shatter'd, and behold!
Him whom her youthful arms were wont to fold
In tenderest transport, now, in drunken ire,

Showering fierce blows and curses uncontroll'd
On her—on *her* so long his heart's desire,—
For whose dear sake he toil'd, with zeal which nought could tire.

XXXIV.

No hope for her!—the subtle fiend in him
Hath done its perfect work, and he hath grown
A reckless tyrant, sensual, sullen, grim;
His heart, once flesh, is now transform'd to stone.
Deaf is he to his famish'd children's moan,
And if benigner death should set them free
From life-long woes, would mock their dying groan
With drunken shouts of most unnatural glee;—
So lost to human love—to human shame is he.

XXXV.

No hope for her!—yes, one, she thinks, is left—
O! if perchance in some long wish'd-for hour,
When, not of sense and feeling quite bereft
By dire intoxication's deadly power,
He yet might ope his bosom to a shower
Of loving words, kind looks, and gentle smiles,
Still might she lead her lost one to a tower
Of sure defence against temptation's wiles,
And quell the enchanter curst who now his soul beguiles.

XXXVI.

O! could she tempt him, by persuasion bland,
To join this sober festival to-day,
And see convivial pleasure hand in hand

With peace domestic, chasing grief away,
With sport, and dance, and jocund roundelay—
Or could she ope his sluggish ears to hear
What that good man will in his lecture say—
His better mind might yet unquench'd appear,
And he, from guilt reclaim'd, be more than ever dear.

XXXVII.

But hark!—the near church clock with sudden stroke
Proclaims the long expected hour of one,
And straight the tents are throng'd with hungry folk,
And (grace first said) the banquet hath begun:
Joints roast and boil'd, to nice perfection done,
With multifarious garden-stuff combined—
Plumb-puddings which no epicure would shun,
With thin potations of the choicest kind—
Furnish a feast at which Apicius might have dined.

XXXVIII.

Nor lack we music to regale the ear,
And keener relish to our meat impart,
For brethren skill'd in minstrelsy are here,
Each well-prepared, with willing hand and heart,
In instrumental clang to bear his part;—
Clarion and fife and double drum have we,
And hautboy blown with no ignoble art;
Hark! how attuned to blithe triumphant key,
They breathe (what could they less?) the soul of social glee!

XXXIX.

Brief is the meal, as Earth's best pleasures are;
Few condiments the flagging taste provoke,
No Bacchanalian toasts the banquet mar,
For our unfetter'd banqueters have broke
The tyrant Custom's arbitrary yoke,
And eat as hunger, drink as thirst impels;
But hark! once more with swift, repeated stroke,
The solemn music of the vesper bells
The hour of public prayer, now fast approaching, tells.

XL.

And at the signal, in procession long,
Our men in office marshal their array,
With trump and timbrel and low-murmur'd song,
And parti-colour'd streamers bright and gay;
—Brief compass fetch'd—they crowd the queen's highway,—
Aloft the Temperance banners are unroll'd,
And emblems meet and mottoes quaint display,
Emblazon'd with devices manifold,
Which well, with quaking hearts, may publicans behold.

XLI.

And now, defiling through the churchyard gate,
The music hush'd at once, in order due
Within the church they crowd and congregate;
Well fill'd, ere long, I ween, is every pew—
With gazers all, with sneerers not a few:
Meanwhile, the organ's deep, harmonious swell

With notes prelusive gives the choir their cue,
And they the Psalm intone which sings so well
How sweet for brethren 'tis in unity to dwell.

XLII.

And soon each heart is wrapt, or seems to be,
In solemn worship by our pastor led;—
Well with the occasion by strange chance agree
The lessons in the daily service read;—
"Destroy not him for whom Christ's blood was shed
By meat and drink;—all things indeed are pure;
Yet is it good e'en lawful meat to dread,
Which makes a brother's walking insecure;"
Thus saith St. Paul to-day, and what he saith is sure.

XLIII.

—The prayer concluded and the priest retired
To doff the surplice and to don the gown,—
Once more the choir, by tuneful zeal inspired,
With choral hymn the solemn service crown;
While rustic voices the full organ drown,
Swelling from aisle and gallery, loud and clear,
That hymn let us, who hearken, here set down,
Albeit, uncouth and rugged it appear,
And all unfit to please a critic's dainty ear.

HYMN.

1.

God of this fair creation!
In whom we live and move;

With hymns of adoration
We own that Thou art love;
Before thine altar kneeling
Thy gracious name we bless
For life, for health, for feeling,
For all Earth's plenteousness.

2.

For all that soothes our sorrows,
And gives our sickness ease,—
For corn that fills our furrows,
For fruit that bends our trees,—
For wine, its balm diffusing
Through souls by pain opprest,
Which use as not abusing,—
O Lord, thy name be blest!

3.

May food which nature needeth
To us be daily given,
While still the spirit feedeth
On bread sent down from heaven!
From streams by drought unwasted
May we those draughts obtain,
Which he who once hath tasted
Shall never thirst again!

XLIV.

And now, full arm'd for controversial fight,
Yet more by mild persuasion bent to win,
Our pastor climbs the pulpit's well-known height,
And (prayer first duly utter'd,) doth begin

With scripture phrase, well cull'd, to usher in
His theme, repulsive to the public maw;
Nor heeds the sneerer's ill-dissembled grin,
Nor much of fair objectors stands in awe,
So he may fence his cause with Heaven's expounded law.

XLV.

Calmly he shows how Christian men should look
Each to his neighbour's welfare as his own;
How Paul himself permitted meat forsook,
Lest brethren's souls thereby might be o'er-thrown;
Yet all harsh judgment strictly does disown
Of those who use what God for use hath given;
Deeming, in sooth, small sense or wisdom shown
By those grim zealots of fanatic leaven,
Who fain to all who taste would bar the gates of Heaven.

XLVI.

—The sermon ended—from the Church once more
In proud procession moves the long array;
Some haply not displeased that (service o'er)
They as they list may now keep holiday;
Again drums thunder, and loud trumpets bray,
And now the tented lawn is throng'd apace
With squire and peasant, lord and lady gay,
Plebeian beauty and patrician grace;
Was ne'er such motley crowd beheld in such a place.

XLVII.

Within the tents again the festive board,
But now with daintier fare, hath been supplied;
Soul-cheering Tea, by fairest fingers pour'd,
And piles of bread and butter, side by side
With cakes which friends with liberal zeal provide;
Around, domestic, happy groups appear,—
Husband and wife, each now the other's pride,
With children to both parents grown more dear;
All former wrongs effaced, all grief forgotten here.

XLVIII.

Elsewhere athletic youths, with strength adroit,
In sports gymnastic sturdily contend;
Some strike the quintain, and some hurl the quoit,
Some, with firm grasp, the slippery rope ascend
'Midst favouring shouts and laughter without end;
And round the maypole, with bright garlands hung,
Age, rank and sex, in circling dances blend—
Scholar and clown—the aged and the young;
Meanwhile, in lusty notes, is this blithe chorus sung.

SONG.

1.

Come brothers, be hearty! our Teetotal party
Should surely the mirth of the alehouse outvie,

Where sots o'er their liquor grow duller and sicker,
And fools mimick fun with a drop in their eye.
Better pleasures are ours—blue skies and green bowers,
And merry tea-tables set out on the grass;
With sunshine above us, and faces that love us,
The wife with her husband—the lad with his lass.

2.

Let blockheads too stupid for Hymen or Cupid
To charm with a sweetheart or bless with a spouse,
Their addle-brains muddle with publican's puddle,
And drink themselves dumb in a sulky carouse.
We've daughters and spouses, the joy of our houses,
To share all our pleasures as blithely as we;
In bumpers o'er-brimming, come—health to the women!
And thanks for their company!—drink it in Tea!

3.

'Tis they who best cheer us, when sorrow comes near us,
And would not their absence our revels condemn?
Let's banquet like brothers, with sisters, wives, mothers,—
Shame, shame on the churl who would feast without *them!*
The brawls and brute quarrels which flow from beer barrels
We leave to the slave of the bottle and bowl;

No strife shall divide us, while *they* sit beside us,
To smile on our frolics and yet to control.

4.

Let sots in deep swilling who spend their last shilling,
Lose food for the belly and clothes for the back;
With coats all in tatters and puddingless platters,
And health gone to ruin and home gone to rack.
So end their carouses;—*we've* peace in our houses,
Glad smiles to receive us, and family glee;
So a fig for ale-bottles!—let tee-total throttles
Shout Glory for ever to Temperance Tea!

XLIX.

But daylight waneth, and our sports must end,
For moderation best befits the wise;
Nor would our brethren by excess offend
Foes who malign or friends who patronize;
Anon, at signal sounded, all arise;
Tent, maypole, quintain are deserted straight,
And soon upon the ear the music dies,
Even the last straggler follows through the gate,
And all is silence now, where all was mirth so late.

L.

Is all then o'er?—and shall our revel fade
E'en like a dream, and leave no trace behind?
Nay, yet one final effort must be made
To shake the stubborn, fix the wavering mind,
And weak resolve by strengthening pledge to bind.

Lo ! where to yonder schoolroom crowds repair
Each on the alert to gain the foremost place,
For one well-known to-night will lecture there ;
And now the room is full ;—our pastor takes the chair.

LI.

At first some meaner orators, with speech
Simple and rude, the attentive crowd address ;
Themselves reclaim'd, would fain their brethren teach
How small indulgence leads to sure excess ;
And many a homely tale, as you may guess,
They tell, and many a pungent jest essay,
Mocking each phase of filthy drunkenness,
The alehouse gabble and the tipsy fray,
The pains and sickness dire which topers feel next day.

LII.

" Somewhat too much of this—but now 'tis past ;"
A murmur of impatience, quickly heard,
Dies into silence ;—lo ! he comes at last,
The speaker to all speakers far preferr'd :—
He rises, but, or ere he speaks a word,
The echoing walls with loud applause are rent ;
One cheer has sunk,—a second—then a third
Rise, roar, and fall—till all their breath have spent,
And hang upon his words with eager looks intent.

LIII.

A noticeable man is he, with brow
High and projecting, and of broad expanse,

Plough'd, by long thought, in deepening furrows now,
As past life's middle stage his years advance;
From his benign and manly countenance
Intelligence and mild good-humour beam;
Around the room he casts one kindling glance,
And straight, when hush'd and still the hearers seem,
Lets loose his deep-toned voice in full, continuous stream.

LIV.

At first, in gentlest phrase, with utterance low,
And half, it seems, in earnest, half in jest,
He courts attention both from friend and foe,
And lays unwilling prejudice to rest,
Which else with rude disturbance might molest
His after speech; and now some tale he tells,
Now on some caustic apologue, express'd
With dry, grave humour, for a moment dwells,
Till, roused by its own rush, the soul within him swells.

LV.

Anon, in fearful colours, he portrays
The drunkard's headlong course of sin and shame,—
His short and bitter term of evil days,—
His frantic joys unworthy of the name,—
His children beggar'd, or of ruin'd fame—
To guilty deeds by grinding hunger driven,—
Yet he in heart and conduct still the same,—
His every hope long lost in Earth and Heaven,—

For how should slave so curst repent and be forgiven?

LVI.

In vigorous contrast he exhibits next
The abstainer's blameless life and blissful lot;
His days of peaceful industry, unvex'd
By guilt or fear,—his clean, well-furnish'd cot,—
The plenteous meal, well dress'd and smoking hot,—
The jocund circle round his evening fire,—
His marriage-vow unstain'd by speck or blot,
But bless'd by mutual love and chaste desire,
And sweet domestic joys too pure to fade or tire.

LVII.

Nor ends the contrast with expiring Time;—
Eternity's dark veil is rent in twain,
And lo! the direful fruit of sensual crime!
The deep damnation—the immortal pain
In which the drunkard must for aye remain!
The fire unquench'd!—the worm which never dies!
And Heaven discern'd far off distinct and plain,
Throng'd with the spirits of the just, who rise
From death's sepulchral sleep to reign above the skies!

LVIII.

"Now look on these twin pictures, ye who doubt,
And choose," quoth he, "the better while ye may;
Beware lest appetite drive reason out,
Or rash indulgence Heaven's whole bliss betray;

Now, in the sunshine of your mortal day,
By strong resolve the insidious Tempter shun,
Cast from your lips the dangerous cup away,
And half life's battle is already won,
And half its direst troubles ended ere begun.

LIX.

"Strong is the magic of our Temperance pledge,
The pledge of brethren against evil bound,
Fencing, with an impenetrable hedge,
Each weak and wavering brother round and round;
Sole aid against the spells of Bacchus found,—
Religion's handmaid, Virtue's friend secure,—
Extirpator of vice from British ground,—
Firm aid of all things lovely, good, and pure,—
Heaven's instrument it seems, all social ills to cure.

LX.

"Once bound and circled in its mystic chain,
The timid become bold, the feeble strong,
The self-indulgent can, thenceforth, refrain
From sinful pleasure, loved and cherish'd long:
Man's tyranny and woman's bitter wrong
Its potent influence quickly doth allay;
And, where 'tis kept, domestic pleasures throng,
And social joyance makes all faces gay;—
Witness the mirthful crowds assembled here to-day!"

LXI.

Our festival is o'er;—the crowds disperse,
And silence dwells in the deserted room;

A few remain, who from the avenging curse,
And all the dreadful depths of guilt and gloom,
To which intemperance doth her victims doom,
Would, in that vaunted pledge, safe shelter find.
For such let Earth's least fading garlands bloom,—
Love, joy, and peace, from sensual dross refined;—
And theirs be vigorous health of body and of mind!

LXII.

Nor need our pastor grieve with vain regret,
Tho' he no more the inspiring glass should drain,
His throat no more with port or sherry wet,—
No more his lips, at costlier tables, stain
With ruddy claret or the pink champagne:
In sooth, such draughts were never sweet to him;
Better he loves the juice of British grain—
The porter, foaming o'er the tankard's brim—
The ale, whose dazzling gleam makes e'en the topaz dim.

LXIII.

Nor thankless he, of old, for cyder press'd
From the rich growth of Worcester's fruitful shire;
Nor scorn'd on Sunday evenings, when at rest
From pulpit toils (for pulpit toils will tire)
With wine and egg, commingled o'er the fire,
His drooping strength and spirits to restore,—
Well pleased to think the body might require
Such aid;—these thoughts are, for the present, o'er,

And he, on thinnest drinks, grows lustier than before.

LXIV.

And if, ere long, by sore experience taught,
That which he now upholds he must oppose,
'Twill yet to him be no unpleasant thought,
That vice and he were here, as ever, foes.
But, for the present, thus our song we close,—
For hark! the urn is hissing, and the tea
In fragrant streams for our regalement flows,—
While Fanny's voice, in clear, melodious key,
Warbles prelusive strains of choicest minstrelsy.

FINIS.

C. Whittingham, Tooks Court, Chancery Lane.