Selected Poems
of
R. W. Dixon

With a Memoir
by
Robert Bridges

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

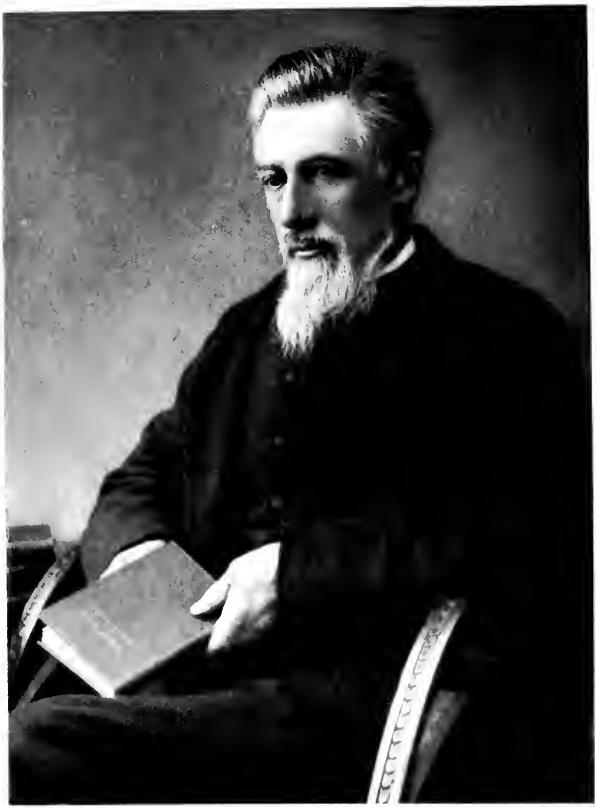
This book is supplied by MESSRS. SMITH, ELDER & CO. to Booksellers on terms which will not admit of their allowing a discount from the advertised price.

SELECTED POEMS

OF

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

D.D.



R. W. Dixon

POEMS

BY THE LATE REV. DR.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

A SELECTION WITH PORTRAIT & A

MEMOIR

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE
1909

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES.

INDEX TO THE POEMS

POEMS FROM CHRIST'S COMPANY, 1861

FROM HISTORIC ODES, ETC., 1864

FROM ODES AND ECLOGUES, 1884

FROM LYRICAL POEMS, 1887

POSTHUMOUS POEMS

FROM MANO, 1883

SELECTION

MEMOIR

FREQUENTLY as I had been asked to edit a selection of Canon Dixon's poetry, I had always hitherto refused, or had rather deferred doing this office for my friend, because I could not see in the public taste the sign of any feeling that would welcome the book, or even regard it with the respect necessary to its acceptance. The blank result of the one experiment which I confidently did make, when some of his most beautiful lyrics were reprinted in Mr. Elkin Mathews' Shilling Garland, rebuffed me; but during the last year there have been indications of a more favourable attitude, and the present volume actually owes its being to the enthusiasm of another admirer, who would unwittingly have forestalled me had not a fortunate intervention enabled us to combine our action. The resultant selection is in every respect what I approve for the purpose, and I have undertaken to preface it with some account of the poetry, and some personal record of my friendship with the author.

Every good artist has especial marks of his own ; indeed, it is his individual conception of beauty which impels him to create, and justifies his creations when they are successful. And this distinction of his work bears, especially in poetry, a very true and near relation to his personal character and life-history ; so that those who admire or love a poet's work are instinctively drawn to the man, and are eager to learn anything that may deepen their intimacy. Dixon's poetry possesses this attraction, and I might be expected in some measure to gratify the desire which it must awaken ; but our close friendship of twenty years was confined to the end of his life, and my competence to tell of that does not entitle me to speak of his younger days, when his taste and style were formed, and most of his verse was written. It is needful to reckon with that period in criticising the poems, but I shall limit myself to general data. I have neither the confidence of a biographer nor the space to supplement my own memories with what is written elsewhere.

The main facts of Richard Watson Dixon's life have been gathered by Canon Beeching in the Supplement to the Dictionary of National Biography. There is also, prefixed to the fifth volume of his "History of the Church of England," a memoir by the Rev. Dr. Gee, and a picturesque appreciation by the late Mary Coleridge in her *Non*

Sequitur. Moreover, in the "Life of Burne-Jones" there is a vivid account; and in Mr. Caine's "Life of Rossetti," and in Mr. Mackail's "Life of William Morris," are memories contributed by Dixon himself of his undergraduate days, when that little Brotherhood was formed which afterwards came to influence national taste by the poems and decorative art of Morris and the pictures of Burne-Jones.

Whatever special excellence or success the several members of the Brotherhood subsequently attained, it was nothing so incomparable and perfect in its kind as the happiness of their young days of promise, and this ever remained an indestructible foundation of delight for all their lives. Happiness cannot be measured nor even described, but its conditions at least seemed here complete.

In one of the loveliest cities of the world—for almost all that may now hinder Oxford from holding her title is the work of the last fifty years—in a university whose antiquity and slumbering pre-eminence encourage her scholars to consider themselves the *élite* of the nation, there stood apart a company of enthusiastic spirits, in the flourish and flower of their youth, united in an ideal conspiracy to reform society by means of beauty. In the frankest friendship that man can know, when its ecstasy seems eternal, and time only an unlimited opportunity for agreeable endeavour, before experience has sobered enterprise or thought

has troubled faith, these young men devoted the intention and hope of their lives to the most congenial task that they could imagine. Their lightheartedness never questioned their wisdom, and to their self-confidence all appeared as easy as the prospect was pleasant. They inherited the devotion that had built their schools and temples, and regarding the beauty that had been handed down to their enjoyment as peculiarly their own, since they alone worthily loved and adored it, they aspired to enrol themselves in the same consecration and rekindle a torpid generation with the fire that burned in their souls. Almost every one of the group was intending to take Holy Orders, and looked to pursue his vocation within the Ministry of the Church. We are warned that Morris was in those days an aristocratical High Churchman, and Burne-Jones tells us of himself that he knew nothing of Painting; but it was the liberty of their ideal, the vagueness of their aspiration, the rebellion against convention, the boyish contempt for authority and discipline that animated their mutual affection and made the charm of their life.

No well-organised seminary, however liberally provided, could adapt itself to the indulgence of such self-sufficient idiosyncrasies; but the Oxford of 1850 was singularly unsympathetic. Dean Stanley, speaking at that time, lamented that he could detect no expression of embodied emotion of any

kind in the University, except that there was on the part of the young men a bitter distrust and dislike of the authorities as idle pedants. Considering the marvellous history of mankind, and the rich material which his intellectual activity has accumulated, this stagnation at the focus was portentous. Science had not well emerged from her corners ; of Music, the great living art, we hear little save of some dark backward gropings after plain-song ; Painting was hardly represented, nor was it possible then to educate one's self into true historic touch with architecture and the plastic arts by means of the trustworthy representations which photography now squanders on catch-penny advertisements. And it cannot be said that these enthusiasts put themselves much about to grasp the facilities which they could command. The measure of the technical ignorance of the Brotherhood is defined in the amazing story of the decoration of the Union, when they undertook, after Rossetti's designs and instruction, to "fresco" the interior of the debating-room by painting in common water-colours on the lime-wash of a rough brick wall, and that, too, in positions where the pictures could only be seen by artificial light. But their chief production was literary. The common notion that poetry is the one of all the arts which can dispense with apprenticeship—and William Morris's first poems are sometimes cited

as an example—arises from not appreciating the effect of the omnipresence of the best models, and the characteristic virtue of books. A boy who has a turn for poetry is acquainted with it from his cradle; and these men were students of literature more than of anything else. They met to read Tennyson and Browning aloud together; indeed, their despised college-lectures were on the classical authors of antiquity, whose masterpieces are the grammar of literary art; and these were almost the only masterpieces with which they were familiar.

It was the influence of Dante Rossetti that led off some of them to believe that the world could better be regenerated by Painting than by Poetry; and Dixon himself was for awhile a childish convert to the Pre-raphaelite gospel, and handled a brush at the "frescos." There exists, also, an easel-picture by him; this, hanging on the wall, might pass at a distance for one of the coloured prints published by the Arundel Society; if you go near, it reveals, indeed, a faith that should remove mountains, but also a very impressive view of the mountains which no faith can remove. And when the Brotherhood dispersed to take their several ways in the world, there can have been little to tempt Dixon to renounce their first ideal, which was also the tradition of his family, and he was duly ordained deacon of the English Church.

Both his father and maternal grandfather (after whom he was christened) won high distinction as intellectual teachers and leaders in the Wesleyan communion, and his father, whose Life he wrote, was a man of heroic type. When first I saw his bust in his son's home, I disregarded it from a conviction that the sculptor's intention had been foolishly preoccupied with an ideal borrowed from the Roman copies of the Greek Zeus. My hasty suspicion, however, was only praising the artist, for his work has the qualities of true portraiture, and there is abundant evidence that the sitter was made somewhat after that god's image; indeed, the epithet "Jovian" was actually used to describe him during life.* My friend Sir Thomas Barlow tells me that once when a boy he saw the old Wesleyan, and that the occasion has remained a salient memory in his life. He said that among all the faces of distinguished churchmen of all ages Dr. Dixon would have held his own. He was then blind, his long white hair flowing over his shoulders. He was a man, too, of saintly character, and in the full Ciceronian sense an orator, influencing opinion in the main ethical reforms of his day, intolerant against slavery, a high-principled Tory and warm patriot, minutely interested and informed in history

* And as a matter of fact "Adams Acton took a good deal of pains to get ideas; even going to chapels to hear and watch him preaching."—R. W. D., Dec. '95.

and politics. The elder portraits of the poet are not unworthy of such parentage, yet the dignity, pathos, and serious melancholy of his features lacked the strength, attainment, and command, which made his father's aged head so magnificent.

We have now to think of Dixon as a curate in London: a most unusual curate. Unfortunately the idea of unlikeness to other curates gives no positive picture. His vicar, the present Dean of St. Paul's, recollects only his shyness and lack of practical common sense, which shows that he was misunderstood. But if his congregation had known him better they would have understood him less. If they could not attend to his sermon on St. Paul, what would they have thought of his poem, wherein Gallio describes to Seneca his meeting with the apostle? Gallio writes thus—

> "He seemed
> A fire-calm soul: a something dreamed
> Between us;"

and, warning England from Rome, shows himself indifferent indeed to—

> "Our business-like supremacy,"

but a type of that indifference which was athirst for the new tidings of salvation. And thus he muses—

> "Oh, brother, my soul's voice against the rout
> Of unbeliefs a man doth nurse within,

Arising and protesting wild,
Spake, speaking out untruth defiled;
Spake, speaking in the truth exiled;
Spake, Little head and weary child,
Come home, God loves, God loves through sin and shame;
Come home, God loves his world: and thy so-styled
Instincts, which whispered this even in the name
Of doubts and of carnalities,
Were true conclusions, nature-wise;
In thy old scorned formalities
And creeds, God looks thee in thine eyes!"

And he concludes in a philosophy that under any interpretation was not current in his day, and which appears to me strangely akin to what are now recent speculations in psychology, thus—

"Paul spake of One: what man is He,
We ask; what other could He be
Save whom I saw, whom all may see
Of us—another and the Me?
* * * * *
"My dream I tell to thee;
I saw another striving to become
Myself in self; this was the Christ."

And what would the congregation or even the vicar have made of *St. Mary Magdalen* (see p. 1)? Yet this was what that unpractical curate was writing in his lodgings, and verses like the following:—

"The bliss renews itself in visions still,
And urges me for ever to aspire
To that great knowledge which drew out my will
To ecstasy, as fire to flame draws fire;

And thus last night the triple period
Saw I of love; beheld I love in man,
In angels, and in God; that love began

"In agony, lived in service, but in God
Existed in a wise no tongue may tell;
That, as flowers issue from the underclod,
Man's anguish gives angelic love its shell
Of service; whence the angels owe to man
Much bliss; of love and anguish God doth mix
Peace, which He gives His world in golden pyx."

"Christ's Company" is wholly of this date or before it, and these stanzas are from the long poem *St. John*, in which the Apostle of love, waiting for a vision, narrates his vision of the past night, when he was rapt to heaven and saw the Bride of Christ and the Archangels, and received his mission to write the Apocalypse. It is indescribably strange, and reveals a mind revelling to excess in transcendental beauty and mystical meditation.

But all this was before my time, for I never heard of Dixon until the year 1878, when my friend Gerard Hopkins told me of his poetry; and after a few letters had passed between us, I proposed, in 1879, to visit him at his rectory at Hayton near Carlisle.

I have already commemorated my visit in a poem which begins, "Man hath with man on earth no holier bond." The sentiment there is from life, but the incidents and scene are fictitious.

The facts were that, after staying with my friend Mandell Creighton at Embleton, I proposed to explore the Roman Wall on foot from Newcastle to Carlisle, and conclude my holiday under the poet's roof. The summer of that year was wet in the North, and the persistent rain delaying my start made me relinquish the western end of my ramble, so it was by train that I arrived one afternoon, and first saw Dixon awaiting me on the platform of How Mill station. Emotion graved the scene on my memory: a tallish, elderly figure, its litheness lost in a slight, scholarly stoop which gave to the shoulders an appearance of heaviness, wearing unimpeachable black cloth negligently, and a low-crowned clerical hat banded with twisted silk. His attitude and gait as he walked on the platform were those of a man who, through abstraction or indifference, is but half aware of his surroundings, and his attention to the train as he gazed along the carriages to discover me had that sort of awkwardness that comes from the body not expressing the intention of the mind. His face, I saw, was dark and solemn, and as he drew near I could see that the full lips gave it a tender expression, for the beard did not hide the mouth. Nothing further could be read, only the old mystery and melancholy of the earth, and that under the heavy black brows his eyes did their angelic service to the soul without distraction.

His hearty welcome was in a voice that startled me with its sonority and depth; but in its convincing sincerity there was nothing expansive or avenant. He then became so silent that I half suspected him of common tactics, and was slow to interpret his silence as mere courtesy, which it was; indeed, he would never speak unless he were assured that he was not preventing another, a habit which made a singularly untrue disguise of his eager, ingenuous temper. However, as we approached the village it was his call to talk, and he set me wondering by his anxiety that I should admire the church. It was a dreary, modern stone building with roundheaded windows and a wide slate roof; the shrunken degradation of a tower stuck on to one end and the after-concession of a brick chancel at the other. I have a letter from him, dated 1895, where, in narrating a visit to Carlisle from Warkworth, he writes—

"I also went to Hayton, and as I walked from the station I thought of my first sight of you there. . . . The church is externally the same, but it has a clock now; internally it is translated from the consistent ugliness and Presbyterian arrangement of sittings which you saw, into a sort of music-hall or sacred concert-room; nothing of the old preserved, and entirely devoid of interest."

It is as if he remembered how he had praised the church on that day. I suppose he loved it as

the home of his ministry, and perhaps from the link which it made with the Wesleyanism of his family. He would, too, have preferred the simplicity and spiritual ease of making the best of poor circumstances to the labour of ineffectively exploiting luxurious opportunities. There is surely not one of our meanest churches that has not been sanctified by loving service, but few can have known such poetical idealisation as Dixon lavished on Hayton.

He was then a widower, living with his two grown-up stepdaughters a simple life full of professional engagements. The domestic round closed early, and he and I would then repair to his study upstairs, and chat by the unseasonable but comforting fire until the small hours. Like his father he was a clerical smoker indoors, and, I think, valued the use of tobacco too much to count it a luxury. His pipe lay on his writing-table in careless brotherhood with his old quill pens. Of the many nights spent thus, I can recall little but the inexhaustible pleasure of our conversation, and the reluctance with which we dutifully separated for our beds. He had many poems to show, and I could read them with the excitement which the likelihood of discovering treasure always brings. His muse, too, was then new to me, and its strangeness drew our unencumbered discourse far afield. Those nights I remember better than the

days, of which, however, some distinct pictures remain: one is of Dixon's favourite walk in a deep combe, where the trees grew thickly and a little stream flowed by the foundations of old Roman masonry; another is a game of lawn-tennis—it could have no other name, for only the implements of that game or their approximate substitutes were used. The scene after thirty years is undimmed; I am standing with Dixon and two ladies in the bright sunlight on a small plot of grass surrounded by high laurestinus bushes in full flower, and crossed by festoons of light netting. I am more spectator than player, lazily from time to time endeavouring to place a ball where Dixon might be likely to reach it, or mischievously screwing it in order to perplex him. He like a terrier after a rat, as if there were nothing else in the world, in such rapturous earnestness that I wonder we did not play oftener. He was not, even at school, much given to games, and only the tennis-racquet betrayed to me, what few of his most intimate friends knew, that he was left-handed.

As a parting gift he presented me with the first volume of his History. This I found so readable that I got through nearly the whole of it in the train between Cumberland and Worcestershire, and my warm admiration led him to make use of my residence in London to hunt out information for

him at the Record Office and British Museum. His letters to me, even after I left London, are often full of questions for research ; and the accuracy of his method and of his knowledge of the archives could have no better testimony than that they enabled one so ignorant of historical documents as I was to do his work for him. Writing three hundred miles away from his original authorities he contrived by journeying to London two or three times in the year for visits of five days to supply the constantly recurring lacunae in his information ; and the History that he wrote is not a philosophising of other men's investigations, nor an epitome of various authors by comparison, but a genuine record of events as they happened from day to day, and these carried on in such lively narration by the mastery of his dispassionate style, that there can hardly be a finer example of method conquering difficulties. Well-read as he was in the period of which he was writing, his task was only made possible by his extraordinary faculty of insight, to which its success must ultimately be traced. He was seldom on a false scent ; and this right simple insight was, I think, the same gift that marked his conduct with the air of nobility, for (though I would here speak with reserve) I never saw that he deliberated on any matter of conduct ; he might afterwards question whether he had acted rightly, but in the moment of action he seemed to react

automatically to the circumstances. And it was the same faculty, I suppose, that decided his spontaneous method of writing. He needed to be in the mood, and observed the golden rule of never forcing it; but when he was in the vein, and sat down to write, he wrote, whenever I saw him, with fluency. He spoke of composition as "an excitement that can only be borne by health," and it was this native flush that lent to his prose the strong, steady current which floats the solidity of his matter without effort; and to his poetry, again, gave its rare truth of temper and sentiment—for this can come only of the live blending of feeling with idea—as also it may have been indirectly the cause of his poetical defects, since these are generally of the kind that it requires technical deliberation to avoid. His character is amply written in the style of his History; a few actual occurrences may aid to paint the man.

We were sitting together, I remember, one morning in my study in Bedford Square, when a visitor was admitted. He was an old clergyman who, being in London for a few hours, had looked in upon me. We had intimate associations, and chatted together affectionately for the few minutes that he had to spare, Dixon saying nothing. As soon as he had left, Dixon looked at me concernedly and said with oracular emphasis, "That man is a saint." I responded merely "ἔγνωκα," and

we returned to what we had been engaged on before the interruption.

So when we went together to the Tudor Exhibition, where there were contemporary portraits which he was anxious to see of men with whom he was dealing in his History, he did not stand for so long as one minute before any one of them, seeming to absorb at a first gaze whatever he had to learn, and his remarks showed that the pictures tallied well with his mental images.

At another time I had, with his approval, invited an historical theologian to meet him, to aid, it was hoped, in the resolution of some disputed point concerning the doctrinal motives of the Reformation. Observing that when they sat together over the wine they spoke only on common topics, I inquired of Dixon afterwards why he had neglected his opportunity. "I asked him one question," said Dixon, "and his answer showed that he did not understand the situation."

The characteristic of Dixon which was most outwardly apparent was his humility. With many it passed for shyness or gaucherie, whereas he was at his ease in any company, with sympathy and observation both actively engaged. This modesty was entirely natural, and so excessive as to reach the pitch where modest manners assume distinction and a position of veritable advantage. Thus he always took the lowest room, and involved his host

in the trouble of bidding him come up higher, or in the shame of neglecting to do so. When I rallied him on this, saying that he must at heart be very proud, since true modesty would shrink from giving needless trouble, and from going out of the way to occupy a conspicuously wrong position, he would laugh at himself, but was evidently unaware that he was ever advantaged by his mode of conduct; while, on the other hand, of his being unpleasantly imposed upon he had experience enough and to spare. In place of enlivening my reminiscences with any personal anecdotes of this kind, I must be content to testify that no man could appreciate a comical or wrong situation with more enjoyment than he, nor tell a humorous story with drier salt. His life was lightened by his humour, the mirth of which was enhanced by his natural gravity, intellectual power, and habitual concentration.

The sympathetic letters which he now frequently received from Father Hopkins, and his friendship, I am glad to think, with me greatly encouraged his poetry. He had striven to use his poetic gift as an entrusted talent, and yet, beyond the narrow circle of his old Oxford friends, it had met with no recognition.* Now, we were friends whom his

* It must be remembered, however, that this circle was widened to include D. G. Rossetti, who was older, and

poetry had brought to him, and it may be that our praise spurred him afresh to composition, for though there is very little of his verse that can be dated as begun after 1881, some of his best later pieces seem to have been composed between that date and the time of my first visit. The lists of 1881 contain almost all the known poems, and show also how many were held back and eventually destroyed. He told me under what discouragements he had written *Mano*. Fearing that the isolation of his clerical routine at Hayton was weaning him from the effort of composition, he determined to bind himself to write at least one canto of this epic every month and bring it with him to the monthly clerical meeting to deposit with a brother parson, whose confidence and sympathy were assured. He punctually executed his task—I cannot say over how long a time it extended—and on the day when he brought the final canto (an extract from which is given on p. 174), he then for the first time ventured to inquire of his friend what opinion he had formed of the poem. He found that his friend had never had the curiosity to read a line of it; so he took his sheaves home with him, and garnered them in his cupboard with other poems and epics that slept on the shelf

Swinburne, who was younger, than his actual contemporaries, and that both these poets encouraged him with very high praise.

gathering grime. Those older epics, like the immature epic that Tennyson tells us of, were destroyed. I do not know that I am right in speaking of them in the plural number, but remember reams of *Northern Saga*, and that I did not say a word to rescue them. *Mano* was on a different model, and at a higher level, and contains much admirable poetry. The tangle of its plot and the historical importunities must forbid popular favour, yet the elevation of style sets the fine passages on a height that has very rarely been reached by the best narrative poems in our language, and even the dullest places have a true and forceful touch which gives pleasure to a classical taste.

For Dixon, though he did not always harmonise his learning, was a learned writer; even his use of obsolete words, for which Gerard Hopkins said that his poems needed a "Dixonary," is chosen and studied for legitimate poetic effect, and must be admitted as an indispensable means, however it may on occasion be disapproved. His mediaevalism came plainly from the Oxford Brotherhood with Morris's first volume; and its economic value can be seen in the scheme of Dixon's *Love Tales*. In October, 1880, he wrote thus to me, "My original notion was to get stories to illustrate some point in the course of hapless love, as Concealment (done), Perversity (done), Cross Purposes (done),

Too much Friendship (done), Rivalry, Mischance (like Romeo and Juliet), Jealousy, Treachery, Absence, Delay, Care." That the tales should all be of hapless or thwarted love is reasonable ; for just as in drama the force of passion cannot easily be exhibited without crime, so the passion of love cannot well be depicted in narrative without obstacles, and the more varied the obstacles the greater the poet's opportunity. The distinction of the stories by the nature of the obstacle is what might be expected of Dixon's philosophy. Love itself is conceived of as an irrational passion ; it is man's fate, a mystical influence with its physiological basis put out of sight ; it is—

> " A deadly charm and irresistible."

And it is thus that Mano's disastrous passion for Blanche suddenly sprang on him. The monk is narrating—

> " Now in the chapel, ye shall understand,
> When sat those knights and ladies gazing all
> On one another, ranged on either hand,
> Ere that the chants began, it did befall
> That Mano cast his eyes on Blanche the Fair,
> And of a bitter love became the thrall."

And the whole of that admirable canto tells how a Churchman like Fergant reconciled his human sympathies and affection with his ascetic creed. To him (and his philosophy is the poet's) love is a

pitiable and pardonable disaster into which man's celestial spirit is ensnared. The overwhelming force of his earthly conditions is assumed; no account need therefore be given of it, and no situation can be too strange. But the protracted indulgence in a passion which can be neither justified nor satisfied embarrasses the narration in two difficulties. The manner in which the lovers' passion can be expressed becomes foolish and tedious and often mawkish; while the characters themselves suffer indignity from the perpetual exhibition of futile behaviour, and forfeit pity for the catastrophe which they "bring upon themselves by a selfish and injurious indulgence of passion." Now, to throw such a situation back into the Middle Ages has many advantages; silken banners and samite and the rest will dress up an illusion that modern fashions would explode, and the dialogue can be cast in a language with which we have no practical associations. Moreover, the faintness and swooniness is in some sort akin to the remoteness and misty atmosphere of antiquity, and with the movement of persons who have been long dead or who never existed. Natheles (as they say), the situation is often desperately ludicrous and almost always weak; and it is for that reason that weakness is glorified, as we find it also in Keats—

"In truth that very love makes faint and weak."

Love's Consolation, a great favourite with many, is free from most of the objections that my temperament feels to all these love-tales. The explanation of their method may serve as some apology for their mannerisms.

If, as Father Hopkins maintained, schools of poetry are best and most easily defined by their furnitures and paraphernalia, including in this the kinds of imagery and the sort of taste or convention which they use to produce their keeping, then Dixon is of the same Pre-raphaelite school as William Morris, and they both derive from Keats; and one may add that both of them were early influenced by Browning. But Dixon is of a very different calibre from Morris.* If we take as a typical example of Morris's early style this line—

"Two red roses across the moon,"

and then quote from Blake—

"With happiness stretched across the hills,"

the sudden advent of spiritual meaning is startling. The strangeness common to both falls in Blake to

* I mean, of course, that I think that Dixon exhibited far higher poetic gifts; but if Morris had fulfilled the promise of his first book there might have been another story to tell. As it is, there is so little to compare, that were it not for their common associations and personal friendship, comparison would be uncalled for.

a subordinate rank, doing humble service as the happy expression of a wide imagination. Now, Dixon is in this respect entirely like Blake, and not at all like Morris.

Again, Gerard Hopkins compared Dixon with Wordsworth. He said that he did not think that there was any one who had so much of Wordsworth's insight into Nature as he had. "Then, it seems to me" (he goes on, criticising *The Spirit Wooed*), "the *temper* is exactly right, a thing most rare, which of Tennyson and Browning and most of your modern poets can by no means be said. . . . The directness (of this poem) distinguishes it and others from Wordsworth's in the same kind: his are works of reflection, they are self-conscious and less spontaneous; but then the philosophy in them explains itself the clearer on that account."

Now, it is, of course, impossible that any one should ever dream of holding such a comparison between Wordsworth and Morris; and it must be recognised that Dixon is scarcely excelled by any poet in the richness of this particular inspiration, "the excellence of pure imagination either arising from images in Nature (as in the Rainbow poem), or expressing itself in them."

The distinction above made is true, but Dixon in his earlier and later work often philosophised in Wordsworth's manner. The Odes to Sympathy and Rapture in the second volume are flagrant

examples, and the self-conscious method also creeps into the beautiful Ode on Conflicting Claims, and into other poems of the same later date. These define their intention very clearly; but to dispel any vagueness which may lurk about the phrase "Poetry of Nature," I will give Dixon's own exposition of it from an unpublished poem which he calls *The Unanswered Question*. It is in two parts, and the second is entitled "The Answer Attempted." What, then, exactly is this question which he thought unanswerable, and of which he attempted the answer? It is this: it asks the meaning of natural phenomena considered as data from which man's mind may deduce or conjecture his relation to the mind of the universe. Do they show Nature kind towards us? Or is the evidence so balanced that we cannot decide upon it? Or is it even untrustworthy? His answer attempts no further decision than this, that Nature is grave, and rebuking man's frivolity forbids any bad solution. The poem begins—

"Art thou deceptive, Nature? forming still
Thy ceaseless changeful pictures to the sense
Promisest thou that thou canst not fulfil?
When thy skies gather with such proud dispense
A frosty blush, a hurried wind-moved bourne,
A white that lags on blue one shade more dense . . .
. . . . : (the sun) that makes
Thy hours, thy glories, thy superbest state.

. . . . . he awakes
To beauty all thy speedy winds purvey;
'Tis his to gild thy clouds, to light thy lakes.
* * * * *
Anon comes night, if dark she hath redeemed
Unto suspense the question . . ."

And thus he answers it in Part II.—

"But if thou scorn us not, though keeping stil
Thy silence to our askings, even herein
Some part at least our quest thou dost fulfil,
Thy gravity charms us from man's world of sin.
* * * * *
"O thou art grave; pointest with steadfast aim
At us a warning hand, and in our eyes
Thou lookest with but one look, ever the same.
The shafted beam that breaks from summer skies,
The unclouded sun, all things 'twixt sun and shade,
That into that which we call thee arise,
They are thy temple, builded and displayed
For worship fair. . . ."

This, then, is the simple basis that underlies all the Nature poems. The unanswerable question defies logic, and any plain statement of it quickly takes it out of poetry; but the indescribable mystery of the emotions that compose the poetical argument and influence our convictions appears to us in some moods to be the only worthy subject for poetry, and it can be indicated only by that imaginative mastery of words which Hopkins claims for Dixon, and

it is the field alike of his beauties, when he is successful; when unsuccessful, of his obscurities.

It is seen in the above lines how readily Dixon's muse flies off to these descriptions. Examples will be seen among the quotations which I will now make at random from poems not included in this selection. And first I will choose another stanza from the vision in *St. John* to illustrate Dixon's pictorial Pre-raphaelitism. It is as if Keats had turned Pre-raphaelite. The spare places in the main design are filled up with an excess of beauty which escapes the reader—

"Ranged row on row they come; the light of love
Burned softly in their eyes, row ranged on row
Of men in heavenly panoply, a grove
Of violet plumes and lifted swords; below
And through, 'twixt arm and shoulder, and between
Plumed helm and helm, wild eyes and golden hair
And passionate lips; with throngings here and there."

I will now quote without remark or gloss.

"I came beside a still lagoon
Of inky blackness, whereupon,
Like a lake-lily, lay the moon,
White, ere her reign of gold begun."

* * * *

"I heard the music of the leaves
Unto the night wind's fingering,
I saw the dropping forest eaves
Make in the mere their water-ring."

* * * *

"But day by day about the marge
Of this slow-brooding dreaminess,
The shadow of the past lay large,
And brooded low and lustreless;
Then vanished as I looked on it,
Yet back returned with wider sweep,
And broad upon my soul would sit,
Like a storm-cloud above the deep."

* * * *

"... her eyes gaze far beyond the hills
In meditation how the deep air fills
With sea-like purple all the hollow land."

* * * * *

"Until the lion-colour, which had skinned
The nether clouds, had left them black and vast
In the moon's setting; then too paled and thinned
The unshaped purpose which had bound me fast;
And all was withered, dark, and gray again;"

* * * * *

"His icicle upon the frozen bough
Stern winter hangs, where hung the leaf ere now:
In soft diffusion doth the morning creep
Along the clouded heaven from mound to mound,
So faint and wan, the woods are still asleep,
And pallid shadows scarcely mark the ground."

* * * * *

"The white and crumbling clouds leave bare the blue;
Shines out the central sun with golden hue;
And all the fruit-trees, rolling blossom-boughed,
Are white and billowy as the rolling cloud.
The warm beam bedded sleeps upon the trees,
The springing thickets and the gorse-bound leas;
Sleeps where I lie at ease,

Pulling the ruby orchis and the pale
Half-withered cowslip from the hill-side grass,
Midway the brow that overhangs the vale,
Where the sleepy shadows pass,
And the sunbeam sleeps till all is grown
Into one burning sapphire stone,
All air, all earth, each violet-deepened zone.

It sleeps and broods upon the moss-mapped stone,
The thready mosses and the plumy weeds ;
Numbers the veined flowers one after one,
Their colours and their leaves and ripening seeds :
Above, around, its influence proceeds ;
It tracks in gleams the stream through crowding bush,
And beds of sworded flags and bearded rush,
Where slow it creeps along the lower ground ;
The ridges far above are all embrowned,
The golden heavens over all are ploughed
In furrows of fine tissue that abound,
And melting fragments of the whitest cloud."

Dixon's poetry cannot be defended against the charge of inequality, the occurrence of poor and faulty passages of various defect, which easily offend a taste that cannot relish his excellencies ; they work also to discredit him with those who are merely impatient and inattentive, and it is fair to add that he does not command in his poetry, as he does in the History, the art of making attention easy. His appeal, moreover, was to an audience whom Tennyson educated to be specially observant of blemishes, and who came to regard

finish not only as indispensable, but as the one satisfying positive quality. The lack of it in Dixon was due to the artistic deficiencies of his Oxford training, which the distractions of his professional life never allowed him to supply. It is thus that he varies his form more than he masters it, and when he encounters a technical difficulty he is content to override it with the readiest means at command, neither avoiding nor fearing detection. That he commanded unusual and learned resources may have satisfied his artistic conscience, but this often only makes matters worse, for what might have been overlooked or condoned as a mere weakness, becomes remarkable as a pedantic queerness or an awkward obscurity.

And not only was Dixon not a poet by profession, but another Muse had been at his cradle, who could borrow freely from her sister but could repay nothing. It is manifest that his great historical work owes its charm and brilliance to his poetic faculty, whereas his poetry is sometimes deadened by historical predilection. The historical cantos are the heaviest parts of *Mano*, and in the Historical Odes he went entirely astray.

Besides (1) the unfulfilled scheme of love-tales given above, and (2) the incomplete series of poems on Christ's company, and (3) his contribution to the Historical Odes just mentioned, poems on English heroism written in promised collaboration

with a friend who seems to have had more discretion than industry in his enthusiasm, there was (4) a series of Eclogues, or Idylls, on Greek subjects in the manner of the narrative fragments in the miscellany attributed to Theocritus, and (5) a series of Odes, mainly of reflective or philosophical cast. Adding to these (6) the Epics, of which only *Mano* survived, the rest of the poems (7) may be termed Miscellaneous, and are of very varied character, including the songs and a few sonnets. All these different sorts of poems, with the exception of the Historical Odes, were carried on or returned to until he practically ceased to write poetry, and examples of them will be found in this book. The principle of selection has been to confine it as much as possible to complete poems, and remembering what difficulty I myself found in appreciating Dixon's early work, I have given preference to the poems that I first grew to like. Mary Coleridge, in her preface to the so-called "Last Poems," says truly, "The first feeling of nine readers out of ten will be *disappointment*, the second will be *surprise*, the third *ecstasy*;" and she meant poetical readers. Them I can assure that, if they like nothing in this book, there is nothing omitted from it which they would have liked; but if they follow Miss Coleridge in her surprise and ecstasy, then they will find the same pleasure in many others of Dixon's poems, and may not unjustly blame this

selection for omitting some of his most remarkable work.

Dixon was nine years at Hayton, and altogether fifteen in the diocese of Carlisle. In the year before he left, February, 1882, he married Miss Routledge, daughter of George Routledge, Esq., a Cumberland man, who rented Stone House in the parish, and to whom, as High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant of the County, Dixon was Chaplain. In the next year, December, 1883, he was presented by his bishop to the living of Warkworth, in Northumberland, where he remained till his death in 1900. Warkworth was in many ways more congenial to him; he liked the people, it was a worthier habitation, he lived now a little more comfortably by the gospel, though there was nothing to make his glorying void. He still had difficulty in finding money to print his History. He saw, however, more society, and had distinguished neighbours and visitors. There I visited him many times, and have spent so many days that the dilapidated arm-chair under Severn's little drawing of Keats by the study fire seemed to belong to me. It was in this room that most of the History was written, and most of his letters to me are dated thence; but it was the birthplace of very few poems. Diocesan work crowded on him; before he had been a year in Northumberland, Creighton left Embleton for Cambridge, and Dixon succeeded him as Rural

Dean. He was also Examining Chaplain to the Bishop, and these and other offices occupied him so persistently that it was only by determined efforts at spare intervals that he could proceed with his History. The climate, too, cannot have suited him so well as he at first hoped, and the long Sunday morning services in the big cold church, and the fatiguing journeys and exposure in all weathers, were exactly what he should have been preserved from. In 1887 and the two following years he had five attacks of pneumonia or bronchitis, and in 1890 he went to the South of Europe for his health, and saw Rome for the first time. On his return he was proposed for the Dixie Professorship, which Creighton was then vacating for the Episcopate; but after a few days' demur he determined not to stand, feeling, I think, that with his years and health he might expect an appointment free from the worry and uncertainty of competition. He was now, as people say, asthmatic, and when in the end of the same year he took the epidemic influenza, he was not in a condition to resist it. He was delirious in the fever, and as he recovered it was seen that he was somewhat altered in mind. Change of scene being the only medicine, he left his parish in other hands, and travelled in various parts of England, was for several months together in London, and made later a tour in Ireland; gradually, under the indefatigable care

and attendance of his wife, he made a good recovery.

Through those long dreary months his mind was obsessed by religious despondency, whose melancholy convictions were probably determined by physical debility provoking, as I think, some anticipation of that natural decay when the first strong impressions of childhood revive and supplant the habits of maturity, like a tyrant arisen from his grave to oppress a democracy. And yet beneath this cloud one might find him still the same, and after a little congenial talk the demon would depart for a while. The cloud, too, was sensibly lifting; in 1892 he was busily occupied in revising his History, his letters of this date are again full of varied interest, and seldom distinguishable from those written before his illness.

After a tour in Belgium in 1893, he returned to reassume his parochial charge in the North, and in 1894 was settled down to the last two volumes of his History, which occupied him till his death. I visited him there again, and he paid me three or four visits at Yattendon. He was now far more frequently in London, and after another attack of bronchitis in 1898 made some stay there and also visited Holland. To find himself again at his accustomed work, with all his old interests and spirits restored, gave him great happiness. He eagerly assisted me in some poetical criticism, and

reciprocally sent me from time to time minor questions arising in his own work which he thought I might help to resolve. In October, 1899, he came to London and Oxford, and visited me for the last time; the object of this journey was that he might be admitted Honorary Fellow of his old College, and again two months later he made another visit to Oxford to be presented this time with the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. These were the only honours that he ever received, and late as they came they caused him great pleasure. But he returned home only to take the influenza a second time, and died in January, 1900.

Unambitious as Dixon was, he yet felt very keenly the wrong done him when his superiors, who valued him well enough to overburden him with every kind of responsible work, would give their promotion away to younger men of abilities often as conspicuously inferior to his as their palpable claims were. Not even his humility could ignore actual wide differences of age, records of residence and office in the diocese, and the emptiness of his titular canonry. He submitted to injustice, however, without bitterness or ill-feeling. It should be recorded that this reproach to the Church would have been done away but for his unfortunate illness, which incapacitated him at the very moment when he was to have received suitable preferment. This he never knew.

When he died he was almost the last survivor of the undergraduate Brotherhood. Hatch had died in 1889, Morris in 1896, Jones in 1898. His old boyish affections had remained unimpaired, and each blow as it came was like a death in a family. And he had for all of them an admiration which his affection did not allow anything to impair. His friendship was of the sort that will not see a fault in a friend. It was absolutely generous and ideal, and would admit of no abatement whatever. It was possible to inveigle him into just criticism, and intellectually he could be fair enough, but when it led to detraction, it withered away, and left his deep feeling unaffected. In July, 1898, he wrote to me of Burne-Jones's death, "It is, as you say, a shock to me and a loss to the world. I heard it in Holland the day before my return, and found myself in Westminster Abbey on the day of the memorial service there; heard when it was to be held, and attended it. I feel his loss. I suppose that his drawings (to say nothing of his paintings) are the finest ever done by an English hand, and to be put among the first of the world, even by those of M. Angelo. But I must not write criticism. There are only two left of our Oxford set now, C. Price and myself. It is curious what an effect his death has on me. It is that all life appears to have gone out of art. All is but toys: renown and grace is dead."

Some characters give the idea of a personality that has attained to certain qualities; in others we seem to see qualities composing a character. Without assuming the validity of this distinction one may use it as a real description. Dixon was of the latter type. His imagination, since that is an inborn gift beyond conscious control, would, of course, have this effect, and seem a visitation from without, and he merely the happy dispenser of it. His insight, clear judgment, and memory were gifts of a similar kind; but even in his humility he did not appear like a man who had put it on, but as an incarnation of the quality, whose essence was distilled or reflected in him. And so with his good temper, humour, patience, tenderness, and sympathy, which made up his social aspect, all seemed to flow from the deeper perennial sources, uncontaminated and inexhaustible. This great ingenuous being went about among men almost unrecognised, though influencing nearly every one with whom he came in contact. As he respected every man, he won respect from all, and any lengthened intercourse with him awoke the best affinities of his associates, who became infected with his grace. One might see around him the common Christian virtues propagating themselves in a natural state like healthy plants that, without a gardener's care, flourish and multiply from year to year. He was truly revered, and where he

bestowed his affection the gift was so unmeasured that the mere flattery of it must have been injurious, were it not that spiritual love has no excess, but is always beneficent. It was more than any one could repay, and, however I have rejoiced in it, the remembrance, now that he is taken away, shames me with the thought of my unworthiness.

R. B.

NOTE.—At the end of this volume, among the miscellaneous notes, are some in need of this explanation of their presence, namely, that they are mere records of facts only known to myself. My thanks are due to Miss Simkin for copying for the press the poems that are here printed from the rare and valuable Daniel volumes: also to Miss Hopkins for her copies of the hitherto unpublished poems, for which there is no other source than her late brother's MSS.; and to Mr. Cornell Price and other friends who have kindly read the Memoir or corrected the proofs of the poems.

CHILSWELL,
Nov. 12, 1908.

POEMS FROM CHRIST'S COMPANY, 1861

ST. MARY MAGDALENE

KNEELING before the altar step,
  Her white face stretched above her hands ;
In one great line her body thin
Rose robed right upwards to her chin ;
Her hair rebelled in golden bands,
    And filled her hands ;

Which likewise held a casket rare
  Of alabaster at that tide ;
Simeon was there and looked at her,
Trancedly kneeling, sick and fair ;
Three parts the light her features tried,
    The rest implied.

Strong singing reached her from within,
Discordant, but with weighty rhymes ;
Her swaying body kept the stave ;
Then all the woods about her wave,
She heard, and saw, in mystic mimes,
Herself three times.

Once, in the doorway of a house,
With yellow lintels painted fair,
Very far off, where no men pass,
Green and red banners hung in mass
Above scorched woodwork wormed and bare,
And spider's snare.

She, scarlet in her form and gold,
Fallen down upon her hands and knees,
Her arms and bosom bare and white,
Her long hair streaming wild with light,
Felt all the waving of the trees,
And hum of bees.

A rout of mirth within the house,
Upon the ear of madness fell,
Stunned with its dread, yet made intense ;
A moment, and might issue thence
Upon the prey they quested well,
Seven fiends of hell.

She grovelled on her hands and knees,
She bit her breath against that rout ;
Seven devils inhabited within,
Each acting upon each his sin,
Limb locked in limb, snout turning snout,
And these would out.

Twice, and the woods lay far behind,
Gold corn spread broad from slope to slope
The copses rounded in faint light,
Far from her pathway gleaming white,
Which gleamed and wound in narrow scope,
Her narrow hope.

She on the valley stood and hung,
  Then downward swept with steady haste;
The steady wind behind her sent
Her robe before her as she went;
Descending on the wind, she chased
    The form she traced.

She, with her blue eyes blind with flight,
  Rising and falling in their cells,
Hands held as though she played a harp,
Teeth glistening as in laughter sharp,
Flew ghostly on, a strength like hell's,
    When it rebels,

Behind her, flaming on and on,
  Rushing and streaming as she flew;
Moved over hill as if through vale,
Through vale as if o'er hill, no fail;
Her bosom trembled as she drew
    Her long breath through.

Thrice, with an archway overhead,
Beneath, what might have seemed a tomb ;
White garments fallen fold on fold,
As if limbs yet were in their hold,
Drew the light further in the gloom,
Of the dark room.

She, fallen without thought or care,
Heard, as it were, a ceaseless flow
Of converse muttered in her ear,
Like waters sobbing wide and near,
About things happened long ago
Of utter woe.

EUNICE

WHEN her holy life was ended
  Eunice lay upon her side ;
When her holy death was ended
  Eunice died.

Then a spirit raised her spirit
  From the urn of dripping tears ;
And a spirit from her spirit
  Soothed the fears.

And upon her spirit lightly—
  Spirit upon spirit-wrote ;
And she rose to worlds eternal,
  Taking note.

First she joined the world eternal
Which is never seen of men ;
Through its climes she wandered lightly
Happy then.

Then she learned a song of comfort
For the loves she left behind,
Children kissing one another,
Husband kind.

I have joined the world of spirit,
Which the flesh does never see ;
But to you a realm is open
As to me.

World invisible of spirit
Doth invisible remain
Not less certainly to angels
Than to men.

As you see it not on earth
I behold it not in heaven ;
Yet to both of us alike
It is given.

For we both may walk within it,
And meet blindfolded above;
'Tis the world of thought and feeling
And of love.

Enter then this world of spirit ;
It is yours by right of birth,
Mine by death : let heaven possess it,
And let earth.

DREAM

I

WITH camel's hair I clothed my skin,
I fed my mouth with honey wild ;
And set me scarlet wool to spin,
And all my breast with hyssop filled ;
Upon my brow and cheeks and chin
A bird's blood spilled.

I took a broken reed to hold,
I took a sponge of gall to press ;
I took weak water-weeds to fold
About my sacrificial dress.

I took the grasses of the field,
The flax was bolled upon my crine ;
And ivy thorn and wild grapes healed
To make good wine.

I took my scrip of manna sweet,
My cruse of water did I bless ;
I took the white dove by the feet,
And flew into the wilderness.

II

The tiger came and played ;
Uprose the lion in his mane ;
The jackal's tawny nose
And sanguine dripping tongue
Out of the desert rose
And plunged its sands among ;
The bear came striding o'er the desert plain.

Uprose the horn and eyes
And quivering flank of the great unicorn,
And galloped round and round ;
Uprose the gleaming claw
Of the leviathan, and wound
In steadfast march did draw
Its course away beyond the desert's bourn.

I stood within a maze
Woven round about me by a magic art,
And ordered circle-wise :
The bear more near did tread,
And with two fiery eyes,
And with a wolfish head,
Did close the circle round in every part.

III

With scarlet corded horn,
With frail wrecked knees and stumbling pace,
The scapegoat came :
His eyes took flesh and spirit dread in flame
At once, and he died looking towards my face.

THE WIZARD'S FUNERAL

FOR me, for me, two horses wait,
Two horses stand before my gate :
Their vast black plumes on high are cast,
Their black manes swing in the midnight blast,
Red sparkles from their eyes fly fast.
But can they drag the hearse behind,
Whose black plumes mystify the wind ?
What a thing for this heap of bones and hair !
Despair, despair !
Yet think of half the world's winged shapes
Which have come to thee wondering :
At thee the terrible idiot gapes,
At thee the running devil japes,
And angels stoop to thee and sing

From the soft midnight that enwraps
Their limbs, so gently, sadly fair ;—
Thou seest the stars shine through their hair.
The blast again, ho, ho, the blast !
I go to a mansion that shall outlast ;
And the stoled priest who steps before
Shall turn and welcome me at the door.

THE SOUL'S WORLD

ART thou standing on the shore
Which the spirits tremble o'er,
Ere they take the plunge for ever
In the bottomless receiver :
This commencing dissidence
Ere it cleave us hence and hence ;
Ere the first hour stays its sands
Since the life-pulse left thy hands ;
Art thou there, and dost thou cast
Thy strange glance, the first and last,
On the world which thou didst fill
With thy essence : on my will—
'Twas an ocean, and its tide
Ruled by thee : therein did ride

Fruitful reason—'twas an isle
Rendered happy by thy smile ;
On each process of my brain
'Twas the travailing in pain
Of creations which uprose,
Founded each on other's close ;
On my hopes, my joys, my pains ;—
These were mountains, valleys, plains ;
On my intellect which fed ;—
'Twas a river's sinuous head
Eating out into the sea :
On my spirit's entity ;
Which embraced as its own essence
Thy whole mystery of presence ;—
'Twas the full and rounded sphere
In its ether bright and clear.
Many a chasm in this thy world
Mayest thou view in crystal furled,
Many a rent and gristly knot,
Many a melting lava grot,

Many a white and ghastly waste
In thy smiling garden placed,
Many an earthquake catching breath
From the savage fires beneath.
Many a seam of pain and crime,
Much of wreck and much of time.
Ah, sweet soul of all, then turn
From the dark things thou must discern ;
Quit me not in hate for ever,
Plunge not in the deathless river
Of the bottomless receiver.

DAWNING

OVER the hill I have watched the dawning,
I have watched the dawn of morning light,
Because I cannot well sleep by night,
Every day I have watched the dawning.
And to-day very early my window shook
With the cold wind fresh from the ghastly brook,
And I left my bed to watch the dawning.
Very cold was the light, very pale, very still,
And the wind blew great clouds over the hill
Towards the wet place of the dying dawning;
It blew them over towards the east
In heavier charge as the light increased,
From the very death of the dying dawning.
Whence did the clouds come over the hill?
I cannot tell, for no clouds did fill

The clear space opposite the dawning
Right over the hill, long, low, and pearl-grey
Set in the wind to live as it may ;
And as the light increased from the dawning,
The cold, cold brook unto my seeming
Did intermit its ghastly gleaming
And ran forth brighter in the dawning.
The wall-fruit stretched along the wall,
The pear-tree waved its banners tall ;
Then close beside me in the dawning,
I saw thy face so stonily grey,
And the close lips no word did say,
The eyes confessed not in the dawning.
I saw a man ride through the light
Upon the hill-top, out of sight
Of me and thee and all the dawning.

SONNET

GIVE me the darkest corner of a cloud,
Placed high upon some lonely mountain's head,
Craggy and harsh with ruin ; let me shroud
My life in horror, for I wish me dead.
No gentle lowland known and loved of old,
Lure me to life back through the gate of tears ;
But long time drenched with rain and numb with cold,
May I forget the solace of the years :
No trees by streams, no light and warmth of day,
No white clouds pausing o'er the happy town ;

But wind and rain, and fogbanks slow and gray,
And stony wastes, and uplands scalped and brown ;
No life, but only death in life : a grave
As cold and bleak as thine, dear soul, I crave.

LOVE'S CONSOLATION

BY THE MONK OF OSNEYFORD

THE thorn-tree keeps its leaves for ever green
All the year round; and when the wind blows keen,
And strips all trees the summer's pride and chief,
This holdeth fast, and will not quit one leaf.
Likewise when Christ had worn the thorny crown,
That year the sorry thorn-tree trickled down
With drops of blood, and ever since hath worn
Those bleeding berries in its leaves of thorn.
Wherefore all doleful lovers prize that tree,
Both for its sorrow and its constancy;

And all they say that it is good to wear
Its leaves so sharp and green upon their hair,
As Christ did then; for Christ who loved us died
In love of us, and whoso would abide
His baptism, must in loving die also,
That life may rise again from deathly woe.
It is great marvel to me that I keep
My hand in writing tales of love and sleep,
And life and God; for long ago has ceased
The stir of things in me; I stand released
A long time now from all that coil severe
Which knitteth heart to heart: I have grown clear
Perchance in watching our old Abbot's eyes,
Burn softly like a dove's, when he replies
To us who ask his blessing in the hall:
He gives the same old gift to great and small,
Just peering with his old mouth and white hair
At what you are, a moment; and, you swear,

As instantly forgetting : howsoe'er
The quiet of our life here day by day
Has somehow won on me to put away
All other thought save to write on and on,
Between the prayer-times, as if life were gone
In threescore years for me as from the rest ;
Alas ! that earnest e'er should grow a jest !
  So let me reason how I first began
To write my tales in praise of those who ran
Furthest in love ; of what did set me on
To make my body lean, and my face wan
In praising that which was my utter woe
A long time past : hear, and ye well shall know
That I fulfil my life in writing well
Of love and God, and life, the tales I tell.
  It being then the happy Christmas time,
And all the orchards thick with frosty rime,
I took me by the happy paths that go
Along the dumb and frozen river, so

That I might taste the goodness of the day ;
Passing through many meadows on my way,
Where all the grass and flowers were dead asleep,
Through many sheepfolds full of bleating sheep,
By many watercourses, whereby grew
The little-headed willows, two and two,
And also poplars : onward thus I sped,
Until the pathway reached a little head
Of brushwood, screening up a wicket gate,
Whereat I entered, and beheld elate
A wide and scattered wood of late-leaved beech
And oaks and thorn-trees, standing on the reach
Of long-withdrawing glades : at sight of these
And the snow-dabbled grass, and broken knees
Of large red ferns in patches, as I went,
Felt I great exaltation and consent
Unto the sweetness of the place and day :
The robin called the merle, who was away,

And yet the robin answered from his bough :
The squirrel dropt from branch to branch, although
Few leaves did screen him ; and with frequent bounds
The rabbits visited each others' mounds,
And o'er the dead leaves pattered. Thus I went
Until I reached a little thorn-tree bent—
A thorn-tree knotted like a human throat,
Set so, and all its leaves together smote
Out the resemblance of a saddened face
Raised on two knotty arms, thrust, as for grace,
Among wild hair : the tree was such I saw,
And crossed the glades for, thinking with much awe
About the time of year ; for in seven days
Would be the shortest day ; and last year's haze

Rose all about me then ; last year that day
Found I that I was given all away
For nought ; and all that winter had I gone
In loneliness, and when the summer shone,
Sadder was I to see the buds drawn out
On the long branches till they tossed about
In perfect flower ; making me but more sad
To see the sweet completeness all things had.
And I remember, sleeping in my bed,
A mighty clap of thunder shook my head
About laburnum time ; and I awoke
And watched the lightning make a great white stroke
Three hours above the poplar tops, and then
Came morning and the writing of a pen
Telling me that my love and reverence
Three days before had sold herself for pence
Unto a clown who riches had in store ;
Yea, sold herself for that three days before.

Ah! Lord, thy lightnings should have wakened
me
Three nights before they did: more bitterly
Was nothing ever done; and all the moons
The golden apples ripened, came long swoons
Of utter woe and trouble, shot across
By roaring and sad weeping for my loss.
Nor found I quiet till the autumn time
Was finished, and brought back the frosty
rime;
And knights rode forth to quest upon the leas,
And seek adventure underneath the keys
Of the bare ash-trees, and by wayside stones,
And where roads met; and then I thought my
moans
Had been ill-spent, and half my pain was
crime;
For while I was lamenting all the time,
I might have been at tennis, or have made
Six pictures, or twelve stories; so I said.

Love hath great store of sweetness, and 'tis well;
A moment's heaven pays back an age of hell:
All who have loved, be sure of this from me,
That to have touched one little ripple free
Of golden hair, or held a little hand
Very long since, is better than to stand
Rolled up in vestures stiff with golden thread,
Upon a throne o'er many a bowing head
Of adulators; yea, and to have seen
Thy lady walking in a garden green,
Mid apple blossoms and green twisted boughs,
Along the golden gravel path, to house
Herself, where thou art watching far below,
Deep in thy bower impervious, even though
Thou never give her kisses after that,
Is sweeter than to never break the flat
Of thy soul's rising, like a river tide
That never foams; yea, if thy lady chide

Cruelly thy service, and indeed becomes
A wretch, whose false eyes haunt thee in all rooms,
'Tis better so, than never to have been
An hour in love ; than never to have seen
Thine own heart's worthiness to shrink and shake,
Like silver quick, all for thy lady's sake,
Weighty with truth, with gentleness as bright.
Moreover, let sad lovers take delight
In this, that time will bring at last their peace:
We watch great passions in their huge increase,
Until they fill our hearts, so that we say,
" Let go this, and I die ; " yet nay and nay,
We find them leave us strangely quiet then,
When they must quit ; one lion leaves the den,
Another enters ; wherefore thus I cross
All lovers pale and starving with their loss.
And yet, and yet, and yet, how long I tore
My heart, O love ! how long, O love ! before

I could endure to think of peace, and call
For remedy, from what time thou didst all
Shatter with one bad word, and bitter ruth
Didst mete me for my patience and my truth.
That way thou hadst: once, cutting like a knife,
Thy hand sheared off what seemed my very life,
And I felt outside coldness bite within:
The lumpish axe that scales away false skin
Of some corruption clumped upon the bark,
Leaves the tree aching with the pale round mark,
And sweating till the wound be overshot
By the gums swelling out into a blot,
Where the bees lose their wings, and dead leaves stick.
Even so, O love, my flesh was sore and quick
From that astonishment, when I seemed flayed,
Torn piecemeal up, and shred abroad, and made

A victim to some brutal lack of skill ;
Yet kissing still the hand so rough to kill.
So, so ; I never meant but to live on
The old, old way ; now the old life is gone—
Has it ?—and left me living ! This I thought,
Kneeling before the thorn-bush, over fraught
With many memories, when I saw the sweet
Red berries hanging in it, and its feet
Rolled up in withered moss ; also I saw
Birds sit among its sharp green leaves and caw
Gently I drew a branch of berries down,
And severed it to be my very own,
And on a pine log, lying full hard by,
Cast I myself and looked upon the sky.
Oh, then behold a glorious vision fair,
Which came to comfort me in that despair ;
Branched in the clouds I saw a mighty tree
As dearly twisted as the thorn, as free,
As kindly wild, clear springing through the green
Fields of the frosty Orient, and between

Four great hills rooted, where the earth up-reared
Herself into the sky ; and as this cleared
I looked towards the thorn-tree standing there,
So happy, with the woods about all bare,
And then nine gentle forms did I behold—
Five men and four sweet ladies, as I told—
All walking towards me, with a gentle pace,
Round from the thorn, all with full solemn face,
And head bent solemnly : to me they came,
One led the band, the rest led each his dame.
The first who came waved forth a long green wand,
Whereat the others in fair show did stand
Divided, four on either side, a knight
And queen together, on the left and right.
Those knights had golden crowns upon their heads,
And their long hair drawn out with golden threads,

And rightly were they harnessed, and each bore
A coronal of thorn-leaves, with good store
Of berries red, which shone like drops of wine
Amongst the green leaves and the gold wire fine.
Those four queens wore the thorn-leaves ; I saw there
Red berries spread about upon their hair :
Their crisped tresses hung more clear and fine
Than yellow amber holding gold-red wine ;
Their looks were wildly gentle, and more fair
Than full-eyed fawn just shaken from her lair ;
Wild looks of sorrow, wildly worn and past ;
Wild looks of wild peace, wildly won at last :
One wore a white robe, like a thin white cloud,
Through which strange drops of crimson slowly ploughed ;
One wore a white robe with a crimson seam,
In which strange quivering shapes did hang and gleam ;

One wore a robe of dark deep violet,
In which, like eyes, gold passion-flowers were set;
One wore a robe of saffron, shot and stained
With willow leaves, and wolfsbane purple-veined:
Each stood contented, with a tender white
Hand in the reverent holding of a knight.
At sight of this fair worship I had dropped
Upon my knees, and then uprose and stopped,
Until they stood more near, and then again
Knelt down before them, being very fain
To gaze upon their glory all so nigh.
Then he who led them, with a bitter sigh,
Began to chide me gently for my fault
In leaving love, and making that revolt
From him, since not a man shall miss reward
From love, who pays true service and regard.
"Ah, sir," said I, "how in God's truth and mine,
How I have loved, never canst thou divine.

If I blame love I do not scorn his might,
And have no other done in love than right.
Nay, I so truly dealt with my false dame,
And spent such pains, that many cried her shame
Because she paid me nought for my long quest.
I hold that love lights love in gentle breast;
Now hath she left me nought but scorn and loss.
Oh, never meet with love; oh, never cross
A fair false face to torture all your thoughts,
For ever brooding, fiend-like, on the thwarts
Of all the paths you move in; better far
To wage with fortune such a cruel war
As makes all joy to be a sin and crime:
Oh, to live rankly were a blessed time
In such a beggar's filth and press of wants
As gives no leave for wasting royal grants
Of love upon some brainless beauty-snare,
As sweet as false: so he is sure to fare,
Who trusts a woman,—save the worship sweet
Of these dear ladies, who with pity meet

My cursed complaining : can I not suppress
Some bitterness of soul, this tide and stress ? "
" Thou shalt not need," replied his sovereign voice ;
" Behold how they with pity droop in poise
Of their sweet heads ; for drop by drop thy rain
Has filled their cups, until they stoop and drain
Upon the ground their fulness—thy bestowing ;
Then rise,—unemptied, but no more o'erflowing.
Ah ! lilies, ah ! sweet friends, weep not so sore;
He who can rail in love hath yet good store
Of lightness left him, whensoe'er he take
Good counsel, good advisement, and awake
Unto himself, see what he hath, let pass
This frenzy, this lewd mist blown on the glass
Wherein his clear eyes should behold themselves.
Now take this counsel from me : wise man delves

In his own heart for comforts; never seeks
Outside himself; and falls not when fate wreaks
Herself on what he hath, but cannot smutch
That which he is: he hath his creed; not much
To say, but cons it shortly, and so holds:
Being forearmed, 'tis drawing fast the folds
Of mail that hung unrivetted for air.
Hast not thou such a creed? thou hast? prepare
To hear me con it to thee, lest thou cause
Ladies weep for thee; nay, shouldst make a pause
In nature's kindness for thee, and go mad,
And swash about in madness, thinly clad,
A violent creature sinning. Think this o'er:
Wouldst in a vase of many crannies pour
And say the liquor should not flow throughout,
But keep in certain hollows? Have no doubt
Up to its level it will flood the whole:
So does the tide of love o'erflood the soul

Admitting it, and so to dumbness fill
With very fulness ; thou canst not distil
Into the air one sound not muffled up
In love ; as after being filled, the cup
Gives not its crystal echo to the stroke
The same as empty : now in furious smoke
Thy love hath whirled itself away, and left
The vessel of thy nature all bereft
And emptied quite : now therefore it is due,
That it ring out its ancient tone as true
As at the first, ring loud and merrily,
Singing of old things in the time gone by,
Most precious to thy heart, recalling all,
With little pain for what is past recall."
"O gentle ladies ! I have worship done,"
I answered, "even when I made my moan ;
O knights ! I long had known your name and state,
Had not this lay prevented, with debate

Of my sad lot : now tell me who ye be,
Which I in part already seem to see."
" Nine lovers are we, who have lost our loves
Alike we are in that, and us behoves
To hold together, for by unhappiness,
Not by our fault, we fell beneath the press
Of the monster time, that ever coils about
The universe, and beats life in and out,
Being one living flail, and quick and fierce,
And full of hideous fancies : sometimes steers
His bulk straight onwards to the flying life,
With blood-fret head produced before the grife
Wave of his monster trunk, as shoots a spar
Of some wave-wallowing wreck before the far
Rush of the savage tides that urge it on ;
Sometimes o'ertakes his prey, and straight is gone
In one quick flash of serpent head, and tongue,
And eyes, and then surrounds, and lashes strong

His sinewy tail before the victim's eyes,
In hideous gambols ; all the while snake-wise,
His head is japing close behind. Now we
Were played with thus : Jules there, who secretly
Torments the hand of Ellen till he grow
To feel a need of her, enough to know
That no one can replace his need of needs ;
And Ellen, knowing well that still she feeds
With her own heart a fire that Jules can ne'er
Become the food for ; Mark, who in despair
Long ago calm holds only by the cross
Upon his sword, and thinks not of his loss,
Save joined with all that God must be ; Lucrece,
Whose eyes now gain beginnings of great peace,
Watching her thin hands and the flowers they hold ;
Gilbert, who stands half ruffled, feeling bold
To say and do what he would never do
Were the time come ; Madoline looking so

Having done great self-sacrifice in love,
Yet thinking rather of the cost than of
The joy that should be hers from nobleness ;
Miles, whose eyes pale before the glorious tress
Of Columbe's hair, but she means nought for him,
Nor he indeed for her ; they scarcely dream.
All these are waiting ever—we all wait—
For some completion to fill up the date
Of life as yet unfinished ; yet I say,
Perhaps in vain, as thou too ; best are they
Who love their life in all things : is not life
Its own fulfilment? Steadfast marble rife
With knotty veins, like thoughts, inscrutable,
Broods on the altar's frontel, takes the spell
Of every taper pure caressing it,
Of every sun that warms the shadow-fit
From its pale, tranquil, capable, cold face ;
Lives under sun and shadow, lets light trace

Its crumbled grain, and darkness thicken on't,
Struck blind by neither, neither is its want.
Man should do more than marble ; make meet change
For day and night within himself, estrange
His heart from nought that meets him, even laugh
When bitter roots are given him to graff
Upon joy's stem, yea, even if it bear
Yew leaves and berries weighty on the air,
And dropping on the sleek soil underneath,
Where dead things rankle,—'tis a bloom from Death,
And true souls always are hilarious,
They see the way-marks on their exodus
From better unto better ; still they say,
Lo ! the new law, when old things pass away ;
Still keep themselves well guarded, nothing swerve
From the great purposes to which they serve

Scarce knowingly ; still smile and take delight
In arduous things, as brave men when they fight
Take joy in feeling one another's might.
Ah ! now, poor wounded man, drag not thy coils
In shattered volume sadly through the toils,
Backward and forward, tearing more and more
Each torn quick part, and adding to the sore
That earth-clods stick in, like a mangled worm.
There is one way for thee ; but one ; inform
Thyself of it ; pursue it ; one way each
Soul hath by which the infinite in reach
Lieth before him ; seek and ye shall find :
To each the way is plain ; that way the wind
Points all the trees along ; that way run down
Loud singing streams ; that way pour on and on
A thousand headlands with their cataracts
Of toppling flowers ; that way the sun enacts

His travel, and the moon and all the stars
Soar; and the tides move towards it; nothing bars
A man who goes the way that he should go;
That which comes soonest is the thing to do.
Thousand light-shadows in the rippling sand
Joy the true soul; the waves along the strand
Whiten beyond his eyes; the trees tossed back
Show him the sky; or, heaped upon his track
In a black wave, wind-heaped, point onward still
His one, one way. O joy, joy, joy, to fill
The day with leagues! Go thy way, all things say,
Thou hast thy way to go, thou hast thy day
To live; thou hast thy need of thee to make
In the hearts of others; do thy thing; yes slake
The world's great thirst for yet another man!
And be thou sure of this; no other can

Do for thee that appointed thee of God ;
Not any light shall shine upon thy road
For other eyes ; and thou mayest not pursue
The track of other feet, although they drew
Lucidly o'er wide waters, like the dip
Of speeding paddles, like the diamond drip
Of a white wing upon a lake struck dead
With shadows ; no, though the innumerous head
Of flowers should curtain up the foot that falls.
Thou shalt not follow ; thee the angel calls,
As he calls others ; and thy life to thee
Is precious as the greatest's life can be
To him ; so live thy life, and go thy way.
Now we have gained this knowledge by essay,
In part ; some struggling yet, for we all thought
To gain another, hand in hand, upcaught,
Drawn onwards our soul's path ; and of us some
About our hearts meshed the loved hair with comb

Of our great love, to twine and glisten there,
And when 'twas stiffened in our life blood dear
Then was it rent away; (ah! so with thee;)
We learn to pardon those who could not be
A part of us, their way lying different;
And learn to waste no grief on our intent
Thus warped; but live on bravely; tend the sore
Just at odd moments, when it oozes gore
Less sufferably: how our eyes draw fire
From the fire-fount of pain! Our wounds grow drier,
And memories walk beside us, as a shade
Walks by a great magician in his trade,
When deep night falls on all the paths, and he
Discourses to his friend, invisibly
Accompanied; our memories walk by us,
Stand by us, when we look on others thus,
Face upon face; steal from us half our thoughts
Flake after flake; us therefore it imports

To make them our good servants, as the mage
Uses his shadows upon service sage.
O faithful gobetweens! knit each to each;
O memories! give to dead lips living speech,
Limbs motion, eyes their spirit pulse; bestow
On everything its value; grow and glow
A white intensity of chastest flame,
That all things may but seem to make the same
Great undulation of a wave of heaven
That flowed to us; so giving and so given,
May we pass on to death!
Now, therefore, write
Tales of our true love; both of those who quite
Bootlessly thought that love unto their love
Must knit itself; and those who, happier, strove
Only with fortune, overcast at length
By death alone, and walking in the strength
Of meat long eaten in the desert since.
First act is over, and the next begins,
Yet proves the same again, for us and thee.

What next? Why, all is ended."

"Plaudite

Remains," I cried, "though your five tragic acts
That should have been, are shortened: fate enacts
A two-act farce, the dream and the awaking."
"Farewell," said he, "give largely; we are staking
A little on thy mercy. Do thou write;
Let thine eye soften o'er the page; let spite,
And hate, and over-sadness die away;
Thou shalt see others calming in the sway
Of all within them. Love, too, blossoms out
More perfectly from agony and doubt;
Hath wider ranges, and a kind of laugh
At human things in him; in short, can quaff
Easier of joy; can grasp the world and use;
Is kindlier to all living life; would lose
Not one process of nature; but o'erspreads
In genial current all things; hath no dreads,

No hates, no self-tormenting ; cherishes,
Blesses, and gives great teaching, for it frees :
Thus much more precious is love's after-birth."
Wind and much wintry blue then swept the
earth.

TO SHADOW

If ever thou didst creep
From out the world of sleep,
When the sun slips and the moon dips,
If ever thou wast born;
Or upon the starving lips
Of the gray uncoloured morn.

If ever thou didst fly
In the darkness of the sky,
When it was shaded and cloud-invaded,
And thou didst form and flit
By the wild wind aided,
Like a phantom shed from it.

If ever thou didst fall
Less and less upon the wall,
When the noon heat gathered and beat ;
And if thou didst grow amain
To thy former size complete,
As the hours increased again.

If ever thou didst hover
Large and larger, till thy cover
Hid all things hence from the world's sense,
So that we said no more
(In thy total prevalence)
Art thou here as before.

If ever thou wast broken
By the moon which gave her token,
When she broke thee, that she woke thee,
And restored thee to our sight
By the many rays which stroke thee
Of her interfluent light.

If ever thou didst pass
Into blue along the grass,
And into blue the long wood through,
When the sunset lay within 't,
And thou hast touched anew
Into softness every tint.

If ever thou didst fling
Omens from the bird's grey wing,
(As certain these as Oscines,)
If there be a lover dying,
And he sigh upon his knees,
Bring him comfort in his sighing.

If ever thou didst scance
In a wayward wistful dance
Up and down like a frown,
On the wall with giant scrawl,
Till the soul would sink and drown
In the waste and glimmering wall :

If ever thou didst stand
In a staircase stark and grand,
And on that spot in ghastly knot
Didst seem to stir and squeak ;
Affright that lover not,
If he with death be weak.

For if his love should weep
In some violet-lidded sleep,
The tears arise in her sweet eyes
Like a golden shadow-fit ;
And her blush it flits and flies
As the shadows fly and flit.

And what is likest thee?
What makes thee dear to me?
The blush and tremble which fain dissemble
How much of mine is hers ;
The very blush and tremble
Which her sweet pride demurs.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE MAY

COME to the judgment, golden threads
Upon golden hair in rich array ;
Many a chestnut shakes its heads,
Many a lupine at this day,
Many a white rose in our beds
Waits the judgment of the May.

Oh, like white roses, great white queen,
Come to the judgment, come to-day.
The white stars on thy robes of green
Are like white roses on trees in May :
By me thy stars and flowers are seen,
But now thou seemest far away.

FROM HISTORIC ODES, ETC., 1864

MERCY

EARTH, sad earth, thou roamest
  Through the day and night;
Weary with the darkness,
  Weary with the light.

Clouds of hanging judgment,
  And the cloud that weeps for me,
Swell above the mountain,
  Strive above the sea.

But, sad earth, thou knowest
  All my love for thee;
Therefore thou dost welcome
  The cloud that weeps for me.

INSCIENCE

THE wind, like mist of purple grain
Arises o'er the Arab plain ;
Strange constellations flashing soar
Above the dreadful Boreal shore.

But never purple cloud I see
Swelling above immensity ;
And never galaxy doth peer
Through the thick mists that wrap me here :
Hard is the way, shut is the gate,
And life is in a narrow strait.
Once only did my soul aspire
To scale the Orient dropping fire ;

Once only floated in the ways
Of heaven apart from earthly haze:
And then it was a foolish soul
And knew not how the heavens do roll.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SPHERE

By the sun's irradiate car,
  By the yellow-faced moon ;
By the magic of each star,
  We may find thee very soon.

Thou art light and thou art free,
And to live rejoiceth thee,
Where the splendours greatest be.

By the flaming zodiac,
  By the cloud that looms with fire,
By the fierce equator's track,
  Thou art found to our desire.

Thou a seraph art to go
All undaunted to and fro
Where the fiercest ardours glow.

By the butterflies that fold
  Little weary wings in sleep,
Ere the moon is made of gold,
  We perceive thy presence deep.

Thou an angel art, and well
It sufficeth thee to dwell
In the smallest creature's cell.

By the burnished beech that spreads
  Shining leaves in summer's hour,
By the thistle's dancing heads,
  We may see thy lovely power.

Thou a spirit art most sweet,
And to make all life complete
Everywhere thou hast thy seat.

BY THE SEA

In tottering row, like shadows, silently
The old pier-timbers struggle from the sea ;
Strained in old storms by those wild waves that creep
So gently now, no longer do they keep
The pier that on them rested long ago,
But stand as driven piles in tottering row.
The sky sails downward, upward creeps the wave,
For countless clouds toward the sun's bright grave
Move curiously with grey and misty wing ;
So thickly all the sky environing,
That only by one pale bright spot is known
Where still the sunken light is upward thrown,

And lately sunk the weary king of day :
Still on the sands below in stealthy play
Arise the billows of the nightly tide ;
Each with its own clear layer doth override
The spreaded calm where its last brother rolled ;
Each upon other rippling draws the fold
Of its thin edge along the soakëd sand,
And stirs the spongy foam 'twixt sea and land,
And lifts the dark waifs higher on the shore.
Yet in this quietness resides the roar
Of ocean floods ; one rising of that wind,
And those slow clouds would leave the night behind
In bitter clearness ; those cold waves would roll
In snarling billows white. So of the soul.

SUNSET

A TRACT of light divides on either hand
The darkness of the clouds and of the land,
Low-stretched across the sky, like yellow sand ;

Like yellow sand upon the billowy shore ;
Of all the sunset there remains no more,
The sand is threatened by the breaker's roar.

TO SUMMER

THOU who dost set the prop to crooked arms
  Of apple-trees that labour with their store ;
Who givest sunshine to the nestling farms
  Along the valley, that their roofs may pore
More placidly upon the open sky ;
Thou who dost bid the poplars swing so high
  Through thy sweet breath, and pourest rustling waves
Of air along the forest-fledged hill ;
  Who by the shore dost froth the ocean caves
With green translucent billows, coming still
Till the clear reefs and hollows sob and thrill ;
    Imperial summer, thou art nigh ;
    Giver of sweetness, thou art come ;

Magician of the soul's melodious gloom,
Whisperer of heaven, great queen of poesy.

I see thee lead the weeping morning up,
That thy bright sun may kiss away her tears ;
I see thee drench thy moon in dewy cup,
Which from the roses Hebe evening bears ;
High in the heaven is set thy smouldering tower
Of cloudy watch for many a noontide hour ;
Whence thou descendest on the misty vale
Far off, and in green hollows all thine own
Leanest thy brow, for loving languor pale,
While some sweet lay of love is let alone,
Or some sweet whisper dies away unknown :
Then with the sunset thou dost rise,
And mournfully dost mark
Thy softening clouds subdued into the dark,
The shutting of thy flowers, and thy bereaved skies.

Yet thou must fade, sweet nurse of budded boughs ;
Thy beauty hath the tenderness of death ;
Thy fickle sun is riding from thine house ;
Thy perfect fulness waits for withering breat
Already, see, the broad-leaved sycamore
Drops one by one his honours to the floor :
For his wide mouths thou canst no longer find,
Poor mother that thou art, the needful food ;
The air doth less abound with nectar kind ;
And soon his brethren of the prosperous wood
Shall paler grow ; thou shalt be sallow-hued,
Mother, too soon ; dies too
The aspiration thou hast sent,
The thrilling joy, the sweet content
That live with trees so green and heavens so blue.

THE HUMAN DESTINY

A Sonnet

As run the rivers on through shade and sun,
  As flow the hours of time through day and night,
As through her swelling year the earth rolls on,
  Each part in alternation dark and light:
So rolls and flows with more prodigious change
  The human destiny; in gloom profound
And horror of great darkness, or made strange
  By sudden light that shines from heaven around:
Now in it works a fate inopportune,
  Deadly, malicious; now the mortal scene
Smiles comforted with some eternal boon,
  And blood is turned to dew of roseate sheen:
But whether weal or woe, life onward flows:
Whither, oh, whither? Not an angel knows.

HUMANITY

A Sonnet

THERE is a soul above the soul of each,
A mightier soul, which yet to each belongs :
There is a sound made of all human speech,
And numerous as the concourse of all songs :
And in that soul lives each, in each that soul,
Though all the ages are its lifetime vast ;
Each soul that dies, in its most sacred whole
Receiveth life that shall for ever last.
And thus for ever with a wider span
Humanity o'erarches time and death ;
Man can elect the universal man,
And live in life that ends not with his breath,
And gather glory that increaseth still
Till Time his glass with Death's last dust shall fill.

DEATH

I GRIEVE not at the thought of pain,
I wear no eye of gloom,
Though with the halting funeral train
I stand beside the tomb ;
And in the fading of earth's light
My torch becomes a plume.

Besides the perished form do I
Preserving balms inter ;
I burn the costly spicery
Of rosemary and myrrh ;
I bind about my happy brow
The ever-during fir.

Upon the hillock of the grave
I plant the living sod ;
Each atom of earth's dust I save
To be returned to God :
There is an angel great and dread
In each revered clod.

SONG

THE feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
  Above the swelling stream ;
And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
  And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
  His head is white as snow ;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
  The robin pipeth now.

FROM ODES AND ECLOGUES, 1884

ODE ON CONFLICTING CLAIMS

HAST thou no right to joy,
Oh youth grown old, who palest with the thought
Of the measureless annoy,
The pain and havoc wrought
By Fate on man : and of the many men,
The unfed, the untaught,
Who groan beneath that adamantine chain
Whose tightness kills, whose slackness whips
the flow
Of waves of futile woe :
Hast thou no right to joy?

Thou thinkest in thy mind
In thee it were unkind

To revel in the liquid Hyblian store,
While more and more the horror and the shame,
The pity and the woe grow more and more,
Persistent still to claim
The filling of thy mind.

Thou thinkest that if none in all the rout
Who compass thee about
Turn full their soul to that which thou desirest,
Nor seek to gain thy goal,
Beauty, the heart of beauty,
The sweetness, yea, the thoughtful sweetness,
The one right way in each, the best,
Which satisfies the soul,
The firmness lost in softness, the touch of typical
meetness,
Which lets the soul have rest ;
Those things to which thyself aspirest :—

That they, though born to quaff the bowl divine,
As thou art, yield to the strict law of duty ;
And thou from them must thine example take,
Leave the amaranthine vine,
And the prized joy forsake.

Oh thou, foregone in this,
Long struggling with a world that is amiss,
Reach some old volume down,
Some poet's book, which in thy bygone years
Thou hast consumed with joys as keen as fears,
When o'er it thou would'st hang with rapturous
frown,
Admiring with sweet envy all
The exquisite of words, the lance-like fall
Of mighty verses, each on each,
The sweetness which did never cloy,
(So wrought of thought ere touched with speech),
And ask again, Hast thou no right to joy.

Take the most precious tones that thunder-
struck thine ears
In gentler days gone by :
And if they yield no more the old ecstasy,
Then give thyself to tears.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

RISE in their place the woods: the trees have
cast,
Like earth to earth, their children: now they
stand
Above the graves where lie their very last:
Each pointing with her empty hand
And mourning o'er the russet floor,
Naked and dispossessed:
The queenly sycamore,
The linden, and the aspen, and the rest.

But thou, fair birch, doubtful to laugh or weep,
Who timorously dost keep

From the sad fallen ring thy face away ;
Would'st thou look to the heavens which wander
grey,
The unstilled clouds, slow mounting on their
way?
They not regard thee, neither do they send
One breath to wake thy sighs, nor gently tend
Thy sorrow or thy smile to passion's end.

Lo, there on high the unlighted moon is hung,
A cloud among the clouds: she giveth pledge,
Which none from hope debars,
Of hours that shall the naked boughs re-fledge
In seasons high : her drifted train among
Musing she leads the silent song,
Grave mistress of white clouds, as lucid queen
of stars.

CEPHALUS AND PROCRIS

DEAD ferns were on the hill: a hunter there
Stood in bright garments and with shining hair,
Wistfully looking on the wood below:
The wood, which o'er the slopes went rolling slow,
And stretched at large along the mighty plain.
There was a river wandering to the main,
Seeking his way by many a laggard twist,
And still companioned by the grey-winged mist.
The pale sea lay beyond, and had gone back
O'er many a fathom of his daily track,
And still was ebbing; when a touch of flame
From the sun-shrouding cloud escaped and came,

And raised that watcher's face to the mild sky.
But back upon the wood he turned his eye ;
And presently, as one forgetting hope,
Turned nightwards down Hymettus' eastern slope.

It was unhappy Cephalus, who slew
His jealous Procris, when he seemed to woo
Another mistress, as the poets tell.
" Come, gentle gale," he cried in forest dell,
" Come, Aura," when with toils foredone he sank
After the chase upon yon forest bank.
And she, who loved him best, crept nigh to see
What mortal maid or forest deity
He called to him by name ; and this the more
Because Aurora stole his love before :
And, when she heard him, with great eagerness
Forth through the rustling branches she did press ;
And the next moment came the crushing spear,
And pinned her down : and after it anear

Leaped Cephalus, who had cast it at the sound,
Deeming a wild beast there : alas, he found
No forest creature, but his dying love.
Whom then he left at last, and went above,
Mounting the Attic hill in agony:
And thenceforth wandered over land and sea.
But in the wood lay Procris slain : her breast
Transfixed, and her half-naked limbs at rest.
And first there stole a little satyr out,
Aware of death and beauty, who about
Limped on his elvish hooves: anon, anon
Behold another, who came creeping on
With doggish look : but when each saw his mate,
At distance from the beauteous corpse they sate,
And waited quivering : then was begun
A talk betwixt that and the other one.
Said First, "Go thou, and tell old Erechtheus
That in the wood his daughter lieth thus."

Said Second, "Go thou, tell her sister dear,
Orithyia, that Procris lieth here."
Said First, "One messenger may both achieve."
Said Second, "Go thou, and on guard me leave."
Said First, "Orithyia since Boreas sped,
She and her father stay not in one sted."
Said Second, "One child fled, and one now slain,
Shall I bid that old king have double pain?"
And they had wrangled more: but with a blaze
Came Artemis from out the cloud-spread rays
Sudden upon the green: great Artemis,
Who gave at first the spear that could not miss,
And by her gift had wrought this piteous deed.
Then ran they fast away, and leaped with speed
Into the bush: but to the body straight
In her brave buskins walked the goddess great:

And with her bugle called her nymphs ; who came
By the wood paths, and stood around the dame.
Then Artemis : "Girls, her who here lies slain
Oft have ye seen on mountain and on plain
At mortal huntings bear away the spoils.
Such gifts I gave : a dog, into the toils
Who still for her should drive the herding deer :
And none escaped my other gift, the spear.
I gave them that she might her love reclaim
From false Aurora : but she thought no shame
Perversely with a man my gifts to part,
And from his arm received the deadly dart.
Take warning hence : with lovers never share
The dreadful arms which by my gift ye bear.
Oft false Aurora tempted Cephalus,
Saying that his poor wife was traitorous,
That she might win him to herself : and he
At last to make this trial did agree—

He went away long time : and came at last
Disguised like one by tempest thither cast :
And tempted her with gold and vestures rare
To make her to himself her faith forswear.
Fool ! She despite his vestures and his gold
Faith to his present absence long did hold :
Yet lastly, so like Cephalus he seemed,
So bright of cheer, that sin she scarce it deemed,
Since Cephalus must sure be dead, to yield.
Then, in her yielding hour, he stood revealed,
And shame thence drove her into woody Crete.
Now, next in turn, she used the same deceit :
For, giving her my dog and spear, I laid
A charm on her to seem a stranger maid,
And bore her back to the Athenian shore.
There at the hunts the prize she ever bore :
Till Cephalus, (whom now Aurora held,)
Begged for the dog and spear : which she withheld,

Unless he promised love to her alone :
Which promised, in that moment she was known,
And Cephalus ashamed.—But now ye see
The sad conclusion of this history.
Wherefore take up the body : and our care
Shall bury her : nor need we to prepare
The pourings which the mortal give the dead :
Nor after burning shall there need be shed
The honied milk, nor purple froth of wine,
Nor first-cut hair : for she shall be divine,
Not sinking to the weary ghosts beneath :
Because that by my gifts she met her death."
She said, and from a cloud that swept the ground
Her chariot half appeared ; whose back was bound
With studs of brass : the mighty wheels appeared :
And from within the large white cloud was heard

The neighing of the horses. The soft weight
Of Procris to the car was lifted straight,
And all passed thence, ascending heavenward,
Leaving the trees, which eyed the blood-bent sward.

Thenceforth sad Cephalus in many lands
Won fame enough : for still fell to his hands
The monsters, by the heroes hunted then,
Which devastated the fair works of men.
But joyless was his might : and still he mourned
The gift by which, wherever he sojourned,
Glory was won, the never-erring spear.
At length in his long travel he drew near
The shrine of Loxias, the Delphic rock :
Where, while a sleep divine his sense did lock,
The brother of great Artemis stood plain,
Bidding him go far as the western main
To find deliverance : and he rose, and bent
His steps across the boundless continent

O'er the Etolian hills : until he stood
On the Leucadian cliff above the flood.
But the great Bather in the sea was there
Before him : all the west was in a flare
Of liquid fire from the down-rushing day :
A hasty joy of death upon him lay ;
And, even whenas the sun first touched the sea,
He went to Procris, fading utterly.

POLYPHEMUS

RUDE rocks o'erhung the shore : as rude as they
The mighty shepherd wandered round the bay.
The tumbled uplands, all his mountain home,
In his distempered woe had seen him roam.
The single eye amid his forehead placed,
The cause of dread, that from him all things chased,
Suffused with fury now, and swollen with pain,
Shewed red, the fleck of madness in each vein.
Alas for him ! how monstrously did peer,
Crowning his front, that uncouth sign of fear !
His narrow forehead, splayed on either side,
To mould that middle feature high did ride ;
And large the fleecy beard, beneath his face
Which spread, and seemed of that strange tower the base.

So, meteor-like, o'er combing waves hath stood
With turning lamp the tower that lights the flood ;
The combing waves, far as the light had power,
Have spread, a tossing fleece, beneath the tower.
Alas for him ! never might he divine
That but one orb did in his forehead shine :
For when across his brow his hand he drew
The touch deceptive told that there were two :
So that he deemed himself like others made,
Although his form an ampler grace displayed :
Nor therefore knew the cause that everywhere,
Go where he might, he woke the excess of fear.
First when mid fauns, dryads and satyrs strong
He would have danced, ere he could join their throng,
Their ring they broke, and leaped into the glades,
And quaked long time beneath their closest shades.

Next with mankind he would consorted be :
But whether he drew near a company,
Or strode toward some lone shepherd on the hills,
The hardiest bosom shook with coward chills.
No man encountered once but feared again
To view that portent rising o'er the plain :
None turned the summits in those regions high,
But hung in doubt, and instantly would fly,
If in the opening valley he descried
That blick tremendous borne with rood-long stride.
So that at length amid his flocks alone
He thought to live : and other friends had none
Than the mild host that to his pipes obeyed :
Which, mild as they, he tuned for them, and played.
Pleased with himself, he led them day by day,
To the uncropt wilds that by high freshes lay ;

Nor in his deep contentment felt despite
That gods and men fell from him: this the right
Which his vast force compelled he deemed to be,
And the due homage of his sovereignty.
And so he fared till lastly frustrate love
Did from the shepherd e'en his flock remove:
And of that fatal hour 'tis now to tell
When on his head the last amazement fell,
Adding such terrors to his visage grim,
That even the beasts the monster knew in him.
That day he led them far among the hills,
By folded gorges, the high birth of rills,
O'er shadowy wastes, pale quags, morasses grey,
Unto a level stretched, where herbage lay
Full green: they plucked with joyous snatch the grass;
He, leaving them, with peaceful pace did pass

To view what height beyond their field might be ;
When lo, oh, lo !
A brake of reed and tree
Thickly enwrapped a tarn of water clear,
Which faint of colour seemed, and far, though near,
In the breathless highland air : beside whose pool
A nymph, new risen whence she had sought to cool
Her beauty, stood upon the further shore.
'Twas she whom Doris to mild Nereus bore,
Whom not far-haunted Ocean would suffice
To bathe : but secret springs her beauty nice
Often beheld, earth's fountains and sweet springs,
Which she ascended from sea-openings.
'Twas she who one fair youth loved secretly
Of all who roved through high-hilled Sicily,

The nymph-born Acis ; whom she wont to meet
In shoreward caverns mossed for gentle feet.
Whom when he saw, the giant through the brake
Crashed, and cried loud along the shuddering lake,
" Ah, fairest ! then these ready arms behold ! "
But not more swiftly from the cloud's dark fold
The hissing bolt doth bending zodiacs smite :
Not shrieking swifts more sudden dash from sight
In autumn eves, than she, but seen, was gone.
Her shriek of fear rang on his ears alone,
Her white limbs mixed with leaping waves were seen ;
Down sank her fount, and left the sallow green.
Astonishment the shepherd seized, who stood
Twixt the protesting trees and bubbling flood.

And blankness, poured on expectation new,
Begat that rage which soon to madness grew.
He started, peered, drew backward, laughed
and leapt
Into the ooze which late the waters swept.
And as a worm, unearthed, that round and
round
In anguish flings, but cannot quit the ground
He searched the reedy fen : alas, no more
Beauty's perfection blessed the settling shore :
Nor aught remained of all the wonder there,
And wild fen rushes glanced in sunny air.
Then lifted he his hands (it is love's cross
To make unadded gain seem perfect loss) ;
Fury ! he raged (it is love's wont to give
All ills in this, one good to not receive) :
And seeking thence his flock with footsteps fleet,
Ere he came nigh, the dams began to bleat ;
Him come more near his sheep no longer knew,
But crowding eyed ; and thence in terror flew

With countless rustling feet : he scarce pursued
Them lessening o'er the slopes, but in wild mood
One lamb he caught, the which in two he plucked
With mighty wrench, and the sweet bowels sucked :
Then, issuing shoreward from the mountain land,
At length amid the pumice rocks did stand.
Alone, but more consoled, and softer now
He weeps : the tears drop from beneath his brow
Singly, but diversely their channels make,
Alas for him ! and separate courses take :
Out of the fount suffused roll heavily,
And break in two, each half a flashing sea.
So oft the arrived wave, that falters o'er
The cataract's verge, a double stream doth pour,
Split by some midway rock : still fall below
The jetted waters with divided flow.

Anon he stints the flood: and, sorrow past,
Sets to a smile superb his features vast:
For other thoughts, restoring equal mind,
Return in wandering flaws, and entrance find.
He thinks upon his pipes, whose compact row
Of whistling sweetness part was broken now
Through his first rage: this marking not, he lays
The organ to his mighty mouth and plays.
Then, in some way conceiving it not kind,
Into one hole alone he blows his wind,
Breath after breath, long time: until no more
Patient, he flings the tubes upon the shore.
His voice alone could reach the tone of love,
And accents speak the mind that in him strove.
Sounds like to bleatings round the copses rang,
And thus the enamoured Polyphemus sang.

"Oh fair and timid as the trembling lymph,
Soon shalt thou bid me soothe thee, sweetest nymph.

Whom wherefore should I fray? The fairest fair
Can with the strongest strong alone compare:
And I acknowledge thee. If others flee,
No cause hast thou, be sure, to shrink from me.
When I am near, the boldest satyrs run;
The fairest dryads my approaches shun:
My force to try if still no satyr dare,
Yet thee I call beyond the dryads fair.

"Oh, what befel, when I thy form beheld,
By that fair fount that in the mountains welled?
Pale trees around the margin hung their screen,
And lovely lake-birds flew about, between
The reeds and tree tops: but my eyes were bent
On thee alone, thou dainty ravishment.
The Acidalian fountain, in whose wave
Their unimagined sweets the graces lave,
Is not so fair as thy demure retreat:
Nor that, whereby the Muses have their seat:

And thou than they art fairer : it is said
That oft beside their sacred fountain's head
Mighty Apollo (I am mighty too)
Is wont to dance, to please those maidens due
To science most and wisdom : to his lyre
He dances, and his rapid feet do twire.
Oh, bid me dance, and half the rocks shall fall,
The trees bow down, my notes resound o'er all.
Fairer art thou than the Pierian choir,
And I Apollo's rapid feet could tire.
"Whiter than wool, sweeter than milk, more mild
Than suckling lambs! I, swift as storms and wild,
Owning thy beauty, lo, will kiss thy feet.
Wildness in thee with sweetness well may meet.
But fly not still, when thy fair eyes shall see
To answer thee not one like me to be
In all the land. Ah, if I ever thought
That by another thy embrace were sought,

These hands should rend the quaking wretch
from thee,
And strew his empty body o'er the sea."
Thus he began those cantilenes, which soon
More desperate grew, when moon succeeding
moon
No answer brought from hill or grottoed shore,
Or billow falling white : and he no more
The perfect form beheld that caused his woe.
Yet not unheard were they : and now, even now
Fair Galatea fled beneath the wave,
And Acis issued trembling from their cave.

FROM LYRICAL POEMS, 1887

MERCURY TO PROMETHEUS

LIKE a star I fly,
  Till the storm I near
Of the agony
  Which from far I hear.

Where the eagle screams
  On the frozen air,
Where like ghostly dreams
  Stand the mountains bare:

Their tempestuous throng
  Darkly set to drive,
With the northwinds strong
  Where the storm-clouds strive,

While they closer fold
  That gigantic form,
Bathed in rain of cold,
  Sunk in shock of storm.

Titan, look on me:
  Like a star I fly:
Thou too mightest be
  Such a god as I.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BODY

SMILING with a pliant grace
  Rose on me a learned face :
Smiled the soul when smiled the eyes?—
  Up when ran the traceries
Of the forehead arching high,
Did the inner faculty
Tempering the hidden nerve
Mould the momentary curve,
Waking motions strange between
Spirit fine and fleshly screen?
  May I then a likeness find
In the features of the mind
And the antic of the flesh?
Wherefore should the wrinkled mesh
Of the forehead arching high
Image the soul's pleasantry?

LIFE AND DEATH

Life—

I am the daughter of Time
And twin to my brother Death :
Where I am, there is he.

Space to the star, to the earth her clime,
I make by my breath :
To the heart its beat.
The world's circumference
I take for my seat :
Nor less man's pageantry,
His ring of sense.

Round the one on guard
The stars keep burning ward :
The other is made sure
By phantoms I conjure.

Vermillion, saffron, white,
Weave ever my delight,
Lest Death should disenchant
Those whom I fain would haunt.

Death—

I am the brother of Life :
Of old she named me Strife.
In sorrow and in tears
I ruin what she rears.
She is a sorceress
Of might, of skill not less :
Who by her magic power
Gathers from hour to hour
Grains from the infinite :
And in them skills to write
The knowledge that they are.
Then pain and pleasure war
Within them, till I come
And redissolve her sum.

Forth from her painted hall
Her slaves I disenthrall :
But when I come to break
The subtle bond, they shriek.

ODE: THE SPIRIT WOOED

ART thou gone so far,
Beyond the poplar tops, beyond the sunset-bar,
Beyond the purple cloud that swells on high
In the tender fields of sky?

Leanest thou thy head
On sunset's golden breadth? is thy wide hair
spread
To his solemn kisses? Yet grow thou not pale
As he pales and dies: nor more my eyes avail
To search his cloud-drawn bed.

O come thou again!
Be seen on the falling slope: let thy footsteps
pass
Where the river cuts with his blue scythe the
grass:

Be heard in the voice that across the river comes
From the distant wood, even when the stilly rain
Is made to cease by light winds: come again,
As out of yon grey glooms,
When the cloud grows luminous and shiftily riven,
Forth comes the moon, the sweet surprise of heaven:
And her footfall light
Drops on the multiplied wave: her face is seen
In evening's pallor green:
And she waxes bright
With the death of the tinted air: yea, brighter grows
In sunset's gradual close.
To earth from heaven comes she,
So come thou to me.

Oh, lay thou thy head
On sunset's breadth of gold, thy hair bespread
In his solemn kisses: but grow thou not pale
As he pales and dies, lest eye no more avail
To search thy cloud-drawn bed.

Can the weeping eye
Always feel light through mists that never dry?
Can empty arms alone for ever fill
Enough the breast? Can echo answer still,
When the voice has ceased to cry?

NATURE AND MAN

BLUE in the mists all day
The hills slept far away,
Skiddaw, Blencathra, all :
But now that eve 'gins fall,
They all seem drawing near
In giant shapes of fear :
While o'er the winding walks
The mighty darkness stalks,
Quenching the rich gorse-gold
On purple-deepened wold,
The coloured pines their plumes
More blackly wave : then comes
The night, the rising wind.

Oh, Nature, art thou kind
From fair to fair to range
In never ceasing change
Beyond our power to feel?
For still dost thou unseal
Thy glories numberless
In changeful recklessness,
But givest us no power
To take the varied hour.
O'erweighed by all, we lose
Thy glories, or confuse.
E'en now this changeful sight
Of slow-advancing night,
The sleeping fields, the sweep
Of redness on the steep,
And o'er the hills and meads
The darkness which succeeds,
E'en now this change is lost,
Or by dull urgents crossed.

So, on the smooth sea-sand
Spread by the ebb's last hand,
And warmed by sunset's fire,
Walking to me desire
Has come to bear away
Each precious grain that lay
Ere the cold wave again
Should mix and drown the plain :
So have I felt desire
Insatiably expire.

To mock us thus with change
From fair to fair to range,
Dissolving thy most fair
Into a change as rare,
Leaving our hearts behind,
Oh, Nature, art thou kind ?
Thou walkest by our side,
Looking with eyes full wide
With laughter at our woe,

Because we would keep so
What is most fair to us.—
That bud how tremulous,
Which hangeth on the bough !
Ah, would'st thou but allow
That it should hang there still !
Not so ; with wanton will
Thou clappest to thy hands,
And the burst bud expands
Into a flower as sweet.
With laughter thou dost greet
The human sigh and groan
That mourns the thing that's gone.
Thou laughest, for thy store
Holds beauty evermore :
Nor loss to thee the pain
Of our heart-dizzied brain.
Then thou thyself dost tire
Of the unfilled desire
With which we thee pursue :

Therefore, with sudden view
Thou shewest us a glass
To see ourselves—Alas,
Grey we are grown, and old :
Our fancied heat is cold,
Our shaking limbs are dry :
We see ourselves, and die.

A COUNTRY PLACE REVISITED

My foot returns : the same wild tree
Waves in the hedgerow over me.
I knew not then, I know not now
The leaves that hang upon her bough.
But I recall her wind-vexed form
Tossed in a sort of mimic storm,
And threatening all those leaves to cast
If wilder grew the sportive blast.
And how the bold and merry wind
Grew silent suddenly, I mind :
The wind, that summer's sweets had made
More bold to dare the silvan maid.
  The summer breeze still plays as free,
And shakes the ringlets of the tree :

But I, who watched them then as now,
Turn I to them as calm a brow ;
Or can I smile to see their play
As blithe as on the former day ?
Thought, that comes first as fantasy,
Sadly returns as memory.
She looks with question from the eyes
Whence first she laughed with glad surprise :
And thence descending to the heart
Ends with a sigh her former part ;
Filling the sketch that first she drew
With graver touch than then she knew.

BOTH LESS AND MORE

I RODE my horse to the hostel gate,
And the landlord fed it with corn and hay :
His eyes were blear, he limped in his gait,
His lip hung down, his hair was grey.

I entered in the wayside inn ;
And the landlady met me without a smile ;
Her dreary dress was old and thin,
Her face was full of piteous guile.

There they had been for threescore years :
There was none to tell them they were great :
Not one to tell of our hopes and fears ;
And not far off was the churchyard gate.

THE HAND OF MAN

In vivid greens the budded year
  Spread fresh and fair and bold and gay:
Fair waved the grasses far and near,
  Fair waved the bough with tasselled spray.

The mountains rose on either hand,
  As large and free as piled cloud:
Down flowed the undulating land,
  Down flowed the watercourses loud.

But sadness bound my eyes alway,
  And nothing gave my heart delight,
Until I saw a wall of clay,
  O'er which some flowering grass grew bright.

Twas man's bold hand had built the wall,
And trained the grass to level height,
With every wind to rise and fall :
At this my heart felt some delight.

UNREST

Day is again begun
By the unresting sun:
Morning o'er all the lands
Rises with clasped hands:
And in the increasing light
Sickens the Moon of night:
For darkness leaves her there
To linger pale and bare,
Till fullest light, more kind,
From view her form shall wind.
  But in this rising morn
Muse not on things forlorn,
Knowing thyself the thrall
Of life beyond them all.
Another day shall pass
Like yesterday that was;

Another night shall come,
Like the last perished gloom :
And thou shalt never rest,
Nor yet attain thy quest :
But, like thy very earth,
Betwixt dark death, dark birth,
Speed, and not know thy speed,
While days and nights recede :
Thy seeming rest to be
Gyres in immensity ;
The paces of thy strength
Small measures of fate's length :
Thy waste or use of powers
Predestined to their hours :
And thou thyself?—The sob
Of pallid lips, the throb
Of every heart this day,
By which life ebbs away,
And yet by which life lives,—
Ah, this thy emblem gives.

MAN'S COMING

THE world was gay and blithe :
  Again the world was sad :
Time moved his ceaseless scythe,
  Time, neither sad nor glad.

Then dragon dragon tore ;
  Then swept their sheeted breath :
A spasm was at the core,
  From the rent flesh rose Death.

No more than this there was—
  Pain, rage, and Death through pain :
No more than this had cause
  To be in land or main.

'Twas thus before man came :
He came, and with him guilt :
He bent a brow of shame
On blood that had been spilt.

He cast an eye of care
On pain, on rage through pain :
And these were made aware
How awful was their reign.

And Death, that was at most
Carcase and skeleton,
Became a shadowy host
After the flesh and bone.

"WINTER WILL FOLLOW"

THE heaving roses of the hedge are stirred
By the sweet breath of summer, and the bird
Makes from within his jocund voice be heard.

The winds that kiss the roses sweep the sea
Of uncut grass, whose billows rolling free
Half drown the hedges which part lea from lea.

But soon shall look the wondering roses down
Upon an empty field cut close and brown,
That lifts no more its height against their own.

And in a little while those roses bright,
Leaf after leaf, shall flutter from their height,
And on the reaped field lie pink and white.

And yet again the bird that sings so high
Shall ask the snow for alms with piteous cry,
Take fright in his bewildering bower, and
die.

ODE ON ADVANCING AGE

THOU goest more and more
To the silent things: thy hair is hoar,
Emptier thy weary face: like to the shore
Far-ruined, and the desolate billow white,
That recedes and leaves it waif-wrinkled, gap-rocked, weak.
The shore and the billow white
Groan, they cry and rest not: they would speak,
And call the eternal Night
To cease them for ever, bidding new things issue
From her cold tissue:
Night, that is ever young, nor knows decay,
Though older by eternity than they.

Go down upon the shore.
The breakers dash, the smitten spray drops to
the roar ;
The spit upsprings, and drops again,
Where'er the white waves clash in the main.
Their sound is but one : 'tis the cry
That has risen from of old to the sky,
'Tis their silence !

Go now from the shore
Far-ruined: the grey shingly floor
To thy crashing step answers ; the doteril
cries,
And on dipping wing flies :
'Tis their silence !

And thou, oh thou
To that wild silence sinkest now.
No more remains to thee than the cry of silence,
the cry
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird to the sky.

Thy bald eyes 'neath as bald a brow
Ask but what Nature gives
To the inarticulate cries
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird.
Earth in earth thou art being interred :
No longer in thee lives
The lordly essence which was unlike all,
That was thy flower of soul, the imperial
Glory that separated thee
From all others that might be.

Thy dog hath died before.
Didst thou not mark him ? did he not neglect
What roused his rapture once, but still loved thee ?
Till, weaker grown, was he not fain reject
Thy pitying hand, thy meat and drink,
For all thou could'st implore ?
Then, at the last, how mournfully
Did not his eyelids sink

With wearied sighs?
He sought at last that never-moving night
Which is the same in darkness as in light,
The closing of the eyes.

So, Age, thou dealest us
To the elements: but no! Resume thy pride,
Oh man, that musest thus.
Be to the end what thou hast been before:
The ancient joy shall wrap thee still—the tide
Return upon the shore.

TO FANCY

I AM here for thee,
Art thou there for me?
Or, traitress to my watchful heart,
Dost thou from rock and wave depart,
And from the desolate sea?

I am here for thee,
Art thou there for me?
Or, Fancy, with thy wondrous smile
Wilt thou no more my eyes beguile
Betwixt the clouds and sea?

I am here for thee,
Art thou there for me?
Spirit of brightness, shy and sweet!
My eyes thy glimmering robe would meet
Above the glimmering sea.

My little skill,
My passionate will
Are here : where art thou ? Spirit, bow
From darkening cloud thy heavenly brow,
Ere sinks the ebbing sea.

SONG

In the heart of the thorn is the thrush,
  On its breast is the flower of the May:
On its knees is the head of the rush,
  At its feet are the buttercups gay.

SONG

If thou wast still, O stream,
  Thou would'st be frozen now :
And 'neath an icy shield
  Thy current warm would flow.

But wild thou art and rough ;
  And so the bitter breeze,
That chafes thy shuddering waves
  May never bid thee freeze.

SONG

WHY fadest thou in death,
Oh yellow waning tree?
Gentle is autumn's breath,
And green the oak by thee.

But with each wind that sighs
The leaves from thee take wing;
And bare thy branches rise
Above their drifted ring.

SONG

THROUGH the clearness of heaven to the north
The sun casts his ceaseless rays :
And all day the clouds come forth
To float in the azure blaze.

They come o'er the long, long hill,
That is yellow with corn to see,
Whose head wears the merry windmill,
Whose foot turns the watermill free.

SONG

Oh, what shall lift the night,
  The lightning or the moon?
There is no other light,
  The day is gone too soon.

The lightning with his flash
  An instant and no more,
Is as an angel's lash
  Smiting the dusk-loved shore.

The moon with trembling light
  From her pale shell of sleep
Shall kindlier break the night
  Of yon thick clouds that weep.

WAYWARD WATER

Sky, that rollest ever,
It is given to thee
To roll above the river
Rolling to the sea.

Truer is thy mirror
In the lake or sea ;
But thou lovest error
More than constancy.

And the river running
Fast into the sea,
His wild hurry shunning
All thy love and thee ;

Not a moment staying
To return thy smiles,
Sees thee still displaying
All thy sunny wiles :

Till thou fallest weeping :
Then more furiously
All his wild waves leaping
Rush into the sea.

POSTHUMOUS POEMS

RUFFLING WIND

DOES the south wind ever know
That he makes the lily blow?
Does the north wind hear the cry
Of the leaf he whirls on high?

Do the strong winds fear the rage
Of the ocean they engage?
Do the light winds on the lake
Love the ripple that they make?

O would they then come to spoil
Sad Earth's image of her toil?
O would they more make to cease
Sweet Earth's mirror of her peace?

FALLEN RAIN

SILENT fell the rain
To the earthly ground;
Then arose a sound
To complain:

Why am I cast down
From the cloud so sweet,
Trampled by the feet
Of the clown?

Why was I drawn through
All the Rainbow bright,
Who her smile did light
Me to woo?

Then my tremblings ceased ;
To the smile I bowed,
And the weeping cloud
Me released :—

Then the cruel smile
Flashed like agony,
And I fall and die
Through a wile.

O UBI? NUSQUAM

SHE comes not: in the summer night
The trembling river runneth bright.
O look again, fond heart of love,
On darkling earth, on heaven above.

Behold, the poplar trees divide
The long-drawn space where sunset died:
There still is the redly ebbing light
Dying beneath the hand of night.

The cloud-bars now with solemn pain
Upclose, and all is wrapped in rain:
Ah no, that sky holds not her form;
It is the altar of the storm.—

Earth, that so many flowers hast,
So many fields, such meadows vast,
So many paths for gentle feet,
Hast thou no place for her, most sweet?

No, no: night's wimple creeps apace
Upon thy coldly darkling face;
Thy wind-swept trees bow low to me,
Waving their hands in mockery.

DEATH AND VICTORY

He wept, he wept: there came a wind
Out of the cloud heavy and blind:
  The angel of human thoughts had joy—
And water dropped from the cloud's hair,
The sun shone on the green leaves fair,
The wood-side sparkled everywhere.

He moaned: great pain weighed down his eyes;
His knees were bent, thick came his sighs:
  The angel of human wounds had joy—
The sad Earth was bemired with rain,
The ditches rose and stormed the plain,
The eddying wind blew round again.

He died : his head to earth was bowed,
Then sudden lifted to the cloud :
  The angel of broken wings had joy—
The sun grew strong in the thick air,
The rainbow fled ; half heaven was bare,
The storm went off with wings aflare.

TO HOPE

A Sonnet

Fair Hope, that once, fair Hope, my prisoned heart
Delightedst with thy lustre, piercing night
With eyelet twinkle, now thy former part
Renew, with thy one beam my heart delight;
Starlike, not sunlike, not scattering the dark,
Spreading in prisons, thee I ask to shine;
Only to pierce, not scatter, with thy spark
As stars the night, such night wherein I pine.

Then move some space in heaven: but let thy beam
Solace me still: and I shall know and feel
Thy cluster near, the sisters of thy team,
Which in the night above our day do wheel:

Faith, love are there, where Hope on high doth glide,
Though further, fainter, in heaven's depth they ride.

TO PEACE

A Sonnet

O Peace, O Dove, O shape of the Holy Ghost,
I would not vex thee with too subtle thought,
Put thee in fear by hopes, send thee to coast
Regions unknown for what I dearest sought
To rough delights I would not open course,
Nor thy composure fray with vague desire,
Nor aspiration hold that did thee force,
Nor move a step that I could not retire.

Nay, nay, I pray thee, close thy startled eye,
Compose again thy self-stirred plumes, nor aim

At other station, in timidity
Of fancied plots, which here I all disclaim.
Well, fly then! for perchance from heavenward flight
Gentler on me thou mayst again alight.

SONG

OH, bid my tongue be still,
  Oh, bid mine eyes be dry :
And I will force them till
  They seem to mean a lie.

But bid me not forget :
  Thought is nor tongue nor eye :
Or, if thou bid me yet,
  Then dost thou bid me die.

EXEAT

THOU hast neither laugh nor quip
Longer on thy closed lip :
All thy comrades say Depart,
For they love a merry heart.
Weary too thy host become
Bids thee quit his ruddy room.

TERROR

TOUCH me not with fiery wand,
For a spell is in thine hand :
Neither drag me by the wrist
Through the valley full of mist.
I will sit with thee beneath
The arbour of the trees of death,
Where from the spotted laurel bower
Creeps the henbane's snakey flower.

TO SLEEP

O THOU that, Sleep, stillest the infant's cries,
And servest him on his mother's lap, his throne,
Wrapping in balm his lordly suffering eyes,
Binding his limbs, that fight with wants unknown;
Thou, that the world-worn man too oft invites
With druggist anodyne's perfidious spell,
When the drear bell that tells the waste of nights
Becomes too soon the summoning matin-bell;
Come thou to me; but not with forced weight
To palsy sense and leave the mind forlorn:

Dreamful or dreamless come, irradiate
Of infinite life, smiling to leave at morn :
On me, as infant still, and worn, descend :
Life's press, that smothers cries, awhile suspend.

THE WORLD AND ITS WORKERS

THE world, which of itself knows more and more,
Not to be frighted now with any fear :
Which runs its race with quicker beating core,
The faster, that it seems the end to near :
Which, when it finds the race has ne'er a goal,
But in a circle ended as begun,
From everlasting evermore will roll,
Smiles only and more fiercely on doth run :
A world at ease with Fate, at one with Death,
Which in museums hangs the chains it bore,

Accepts its own conditions, measureth
All by itself, and sets by each less store,
Such a world asks—if any may be seers—
Poets who wait not the Horatian years.

HYMN

O LORD my God, when sore bested
  My evil life I do bewail,
What times the life I might have led
  Arising smites me like a flail:

When I regard the past of sin,
  Till sorrow drown me like despair;
The saint in me that might have been
  With that I am when I compare:

Then grant the life that might have been
  To be in fact through penitence;
All my past years discharged of sin,
  And spent in grace and innocence:

And grant that I, when I forecast,
  And shrink in fear of coming things,
May take this comfort of the past,
  And lay it on my imaginings. Amen.

FROM MANO, 1883

SELECTION

TO THE READER

* * * *

And I, O Reader, filled with hope and awe,
To try the sketched metre of such song,
Shall tell in brief the cause that me did draw.

Upon occasion given, being then young,
It chanced me to read the histories
Which to the thousandth year from Christ belong.

Chronicles read I, filled with prodigies,
Wars, tumults, earthquake, famine, pestilence,
Which ran round that dread sum of centuries:

For all looked that the world should cease from thence,

Then dreadful expectation hung in air,
And excitation quickened mortal sense.
Wherefore, as in the sunset's reddening glare
The shapes of earth stand stronger on the sky,
So saw I life enhanced, as it were,
And lifted in that light of misery :
And thought to set my thoughts of man's estate
The better in those colours wild and high :
To track the dark intricate coils of Fate,
The infinite of pain, the brief of joy,
The better round that far and mystic date.
And if thou marvel, if thou feel annoy,
Marking how garrulous and low the style
Which for such argument I dare employ,
Bethink thee of those chroniclers erewhile ;
How their thin words drop portents, like a vein

Too weak to hold the blood: and thou wilt
smile.
For one of them, imagined of their train,
Is for the writer of the history shown,
An old monk, filled with memories of pain.

II. 9

CONCERNING A KNIGHT WHOM MANO MET IN THE BATTLE

* * * *

So parted they: and, be it well believed,
The Italian knight rode to his death that
day.
For travelling alone, in spirit grieved,
Far from the Ungrians, who were fled away,
Unto his lodging lone he weened to ride,
Where the false woman, whom he cherished,
lay.

He found himself upon a country wide,
Travelling a road paven with stones full great,
Through which the long grass grew with lonely pride.
So went he, till the night grew very late,
And met with none: till last he saw a tomb,
Which by the roadside stood with ruined gate.
Like a bastile it stood with spacious room
And rounded rampires high, which had been made
By the old pagans in the days of Rome:
And evil spirits there their dwelling had.
He entered, since no better might be found,
Stabling his beast within the noisome shade;
And went to sleep lodged in the thick-walled mound.
But in the night (whether by secret ways
She issued, or by passage underground,
Or by the fiends carried through cloudy haze;

And whether knowing of his altered mind,
Or of his love grown weary, nothing says
The history) she whom with purpose blind
He meant to slay, with bursting laughter woke
His sleep : certain she was of hellish kind :
And in the morning with his bones y-broke
Thus was he found by men who came that way,
Whose fearful ears gathered the words he spoke,
Ere that he died : and thus that fiend did slay
Those brothers three, and Mano's sister dear :
And over Mano by her evil play
Wove a dark web of wretchlessness and fear.

II. 12

OF A VISION OF HELL, WHICH A MONK HAD

Out of this town there riseth a high hill,
About whose sides live many anchorites
In cells cut in the rock with curious skill,
And laid in terraces along the heights;
This holy hill with that where stands the town
The ancient Roman aqueduct unites;
And passing o'er the vale her chain of stone,
Cuts it in two with line indelible;
A work right marvellous to gaze upon.
To one of those grave hermits there befell
A curious thing, whereof the fame was new
In our sojourn; the which I here will tell.
He found himself, when night had shed her dew,
In a long valley, narrow, deep, and straight,
Like that which lay all day beneath his view.

On each hand mountains rose precipitate,
Whose tops for darkness he could nowise see,
Though wistful that high gloom to penetrate ;
And through this hollow, one, who seemed to be
Of calm and quiet mien, was leading him
In friendly converse and society :
But whom he wist not : neither could he trim
Memory's spent torch to know what things were said,
Nor about what, in that long way and dim.
But as the valley still before him spread,
He saw a line, that did the same divide
Across in halves : which made him feel great dread.
For he beheld fire burning on one side
Unto the mountains from the midmost vale ;
On the other, ice the empire did discide,
Fed from the opposing hill with snow and hail.

So dreary was that haunt of fire and cold,
That nought on earth to equal might avail.
Fire ended where began the frozen mould,
Both in extreme at their conjunction :
So close were they, no severance might be told :
No thinnest line of separation,
Like that which is by painter drawn to part
One colour in his piece from other one,
So fine as that which held these realms apart.
And through the vale the souls of men in pain
From one to the other side did leap and dart,
From heat to cold, from cold to heat again :
And not an instant through their anguish great
In either element might they remain.
So great the multitude thus tossed by fate,
That as a mist they seemed in the dark air.
No shrimper, who at half-tide takes his freight,

When high his pole-net seaward he doth bear,
Ever beheld so thick a swarm to leap
Out of the brine on evening still and fair,
Waking a mist mile-long 'twixt shore and deep.
Now while his mind was filled with ruth and fear,
And with great horror stood his eyeballs steep,
Deeming that hell before him did appear,
And souls in torment tossed from brink to brink :
Upon him looked the one who set him there,
And said : "This is not hell, as thou dost think,
Neither those torments of the cold and heat
Are those wherewith the damned wail and shrink."
And therewith from that place he turned his feet ;

And sometime on they walked, the while this man
In aguish shuddering did the effect repeat :
Such spasms of horror through his body ran,
Walking with stumbling, and with glazed eyes
Whither he knew not led, ghastly and wan.
Then said the other : " In those agonies
No more than hell's beginning know : behold,
The doom of hell itself is otherwise."
Therewith he drew aside his vesture's fold,
And showed his heart : than fire more hot it burned
One half : the rest was ice than ice more cold.
A moment showed he this : and then he turned,
And in his going all the vision went :
And he, who in his mind these things discerned
Came to himself with long astonishment.

IV. 11

DESCRIPTION OF JOANNA

* * * *

FAIR was Joanna ever, I avise:
But I have heard of certain that e'en now
Her day of fairest beauty seemed to rise,
When sorrow and long love had made her brow
Tenderly radiant, as the hanging skies
When the south wind moves every wingèd bough:
Such o'er the changing wood the May cloud flies,
Soft, bright, and light, was she: one lovely fold,
That seemed to gather to grave thought her eyes,
Of bygone sorrow and old anguish told,
One sweet contraction, delicate and fine:
But youth to bear love's burden still is bold:—

Her looks were strong ('tis age that has to pine)
Her eyes were quick, and lightsome as of yore,
Her rounded cheeks as perfect in their line :
Her step was like the deer on ferny floor,
Her figure tall, and like a balanced tower,
Which from his place seems stepping evermore,
So wondrously 'tis fashioned through art's power.—

* * * *

THE END

I FERGANT, living now my latest days
Have brought to term this heavy history,
Showing how all things pass, and nothing stays :
How Fate may mar, and evil destiny.
And my last hand in age and sickness weak
Setting hereto, to God great thanks give I.

For God hath granted me so far to speak ;
Yea He who showed the purpose to be sought,
Made straight the way, and gave the strength
to seek
That I by serving might be served of thought.
In living might the life of others try,
And at the cost of pain to truth be brought :

* * * *

Much have I overpassed in my poor dearth
Of words and memory and method true ;
But let me not have failed to heaven and earth
In setting forth with order not undue
The mighty workers of this world's affairs,
Fatality, infinity, these two,
The one the only yoke the other wears.

NOTES

P. xiii.—*William Morris's first poems.* His first volume, "The Defence of Guenevere," was published in 1858. It can be bought now of Messrs. Longman for 1*s.* 6*d.* His first-born poem, with which he startled the Brotherhood (the story is in Mackail's Life) still exists; it abundantly refutes the notion that he appeared on that occasion as a full-fledged poet. It is absurdly incompetent; worse than Dixon's easel-picture. The wonder about it is that the Brothers should have taken it seriously; but Dixon preserved a copy, and he had won the prize for poetry at school, and knew Milton by heart; and it follows that there is something in the poem, though we cannot now see it, which at that moment of time was original and remarkable, and truly in touch with the mood of the Brotherhood, and they must have the credit of perceiving it. It certainly proves that Morris had never attempted poetry before, and that between this venture and his first book he must have studied and practised hard to some purpose. As the poem

will never be published—unless it should unfortunately fall into the hands of a certain gentleman who need not put on this little cap of mine unless it should fit him—I have therefore so far described it. There is a Thornbush prominent in it, which is no doubt actual father to the Thornbush in *Love's Consolation*, but they have no likeness.

P. xv.—*Whose Life he wrote.* "Life of James Dixon, D.D.," etc., published at the Wesleyan Conference Office, 1874. The drawing of the bust in this book is not to be trusted. The writer wears no disguise, but is reticent concerning himself. He has fortunately given the following letter, written to him by his father: "Richmond, Sept. 1, 1847. My very dear Richard,—I have been at this lovely spot since Monday, and have now taken my last ramble. By a strange and mysterious power I have found you connected with everything, and I could not move anywhere or do anything but I saw, I heard, I felt your presence. On essaying my first walk on Monday night, when I got to the park gate I hesitated as to the way I should take till I thought that the last time I was there you were with me, and we went together through the beautiful avenue of trees, in the midst of fern and deer, to the house once occupied by Lord Sidmouth. This recollection determined me to take the same line of road by myself. I seemed with melancholy pleasure to live and talk over again the

sweet and interesting walk. I thought of our conversation about the Duke of York, Nelson, War, Genius, and felt distressed at the idea that I should never take the same walk with you again. I have been to-day along the other path, that is, along the terrace, Lord John Russell's, through the gate into Ham Common, down the road where we looked at two beautiful cottages with roses and flowers in full bloom in front, and offered some useless wishes for such an abode for ourselves; then past the good tailor's where you bought the buttons, and so on up the road below the Star and Garter, and found my way home for dinner. But yesterday I went with Sally and James up the river-side, above Pope's Villa, Eel-pie Island, Ham House, and all the beautiful places on that enchanted ground. It is now growing dusk, and I have finished, most likely for ever, my connection with this beautiful place. The walks have ended, and the associations are broken up. I shall see you no more here at this lovely spot; and I, and you too, must hasten to plunge into new and untried scenes. May God prepare and be with us! I have been reminded of another thing respecting you, my dear Richard. In reading Channing's 'Review of Milton,' I was strongly reminded of your deep interest in *Paradise Lost*, your ready quotations, and opinions of the poetry and sentiment, when you were at Poplar. I thought perhaps

that you had lost some of your relish for this sublime and glorious poem, now that you are in better health, and can associate more with the world. I hope, if it should be so, you will return to the region of poetry and religion, as the most pure and ennobling. What are all external things compared with the spiritual, the holy, the invisible, the eternal? You had a strong impression of the supremacy and glory of such things, I am persuaded, at the time in question, and such feelings and impressions should never be lost. To converse with God, with the heavenly world, with all the divine and mighty influences and agencies which are abroad in the universe, with the angelical and spiritual world, with Jesus Christ, His apostles, martyrs, confessors, and followers; with the great truths and designs of the Gospel and Kingdom of God—to think on these things, and fill the mind with noble sentiments and feelings from these great fountains of truth and purity, is much more elevating than anything else can be. Keep to Milton, and the spirit and grandeur of poetry. I am, my dear Richard, your most affectionate Father."

P. xv.—*An orator:* and of the sort who, in the absence of a verbatim reporter, do not leave a fair record; his practice being to prepare the heads only of his oration, and then to speak on them as he was moved. The following description of

Richard Watson, his father-in-law, indicates his own capacities more fully than any short samples from his speeches could do. He writes thus: "He had not the earnestness and force of Chalmers, but he possessed much more thought, philosophy, calm ratiocination, and harmonious fulness. He had not perhaps the metaphysical subtlety and rapid combination, the burning affections and elegant diction of Hall; but he possessed as keen a reason, a more lofty imagination, an equal or superior power of painting, and, as we think, a much more vivid perception of the spiritual world, and a richer leaven of evangelical sentiment. Owen's oratory seemed to be more flowing, spontaneous, and impassioned than that of Watson; but the latter exceeded Owen in stretch of thought, sublimity, beautiful imagery, and deep and touching pathos."

P. xvi.—*The elder portraits.* What was thought to be the best of these was reproduced as frontispiece to "The Last Poems." The portrait in this book is, however, a better likeness. It is reproduced from a photograph that the photographer had worked upon, so that I was averse to its being used; but the result is surprisingly successful. The smoothening has done away with the prominence and irregularity of the eyebrows, and has thus tamed the expression of the eyes; but this feature, which was most observable in life, does not come out strongly in any of the pictures; there

is something of it in Mr. Rothenstein's drawing, which, however, as I am sure that artist would admit, was not done in a happy moment. In this picture the attitude and general expression are excellent, and what likeness there was in Dixon's face to the portrait of Chaucer is well seen, and, indeed, rather increased by the photographer's "improvements."

P. xviii.—*Christ's Company.* Dixon's poetical publications are: 1. "Christ's Company and other poems," Smith Elder, 1861; 2. "St. John in Patmos," the prize poem on a sacred subject (same), 1863; 3. "Historical Odes and other poems" (same), 1864; 4. "Mano," Routledge, 1883; 5. "Odes and Eclogues," Daniel, 1884; 6. "Lyrical Poems" (same), 1887; 7. "The Story of Eudocia and her Brothers" (same), 1888; 8. "Last Poems" (see note to p. xxxix.), Frowde, 1905.

P. xviii.—*Mystical meditation.* And he must have been in the spirit on that Lord's Day, when, having to offer thanks for the churchwarden who was sitting in his pew again for the first time after a dangerous illness, he proclaimed in a mighty voice that that gentleman desired to give praises to God for his safe deliverance from pain and peril of child-birth. It was Dixon who told me the story, how for the rest of the service he and his victim were the only two persons in the church who maintained a decent gravity; and he imitated,

without a smile on his own countenance, the stuttering and spluttering of the Vicar, who could not bring his trembling lips together to pronounce the p's in "The Epistle is taken from the Epistle of Paul the Apostle." When the end came, Dixon avoided the congregation by traversing the bye-streets, but a like motive and knowledge of the locality prompted the churchwarden to make a somewhat similar détour, and their courses brought them together alone at a corner face to face. This incident was of the kind that did not assist Dixon's worldly progress, but I cannot imagine him wishing that it had not occurred, or that it should not be recorded.

P. xxvi.—*Letters from Father Hopkins.* The Rev. Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. R. W. D. preserved all these letters (see also the next note), and they came into my hands after his death, I think in 1902. I have used them in this memoir, and the criticism in it marked by inverted commas is quoted from them. G.M.H. was one of the best of letter writers, and I am glad to be able to print here the first letter that he wrote to Dixon; it is as follows: "June 4, 1878. Very Rev. Sir,—I take a liberty as a stranger in addressing you, nevertheless I did once have some slight acquaintance with you. You will not remember me but you will remember taking a mastership for some months at Highgate School, the Cholmondeley School, where

I then was. When you went away you gave, as I recollect, a copy of your book 'Christ's Company' to one of the masters, a Mr. Law if I am not mistaken. By this means coming to know its name I was curious to read it, which when I went to Oxford I did. At first I was surprised at it, then pleased, at last I became so fond of it that I made it, so far as that could be, a part of my own mind. I got your other volume and your little prize essay too. I introduced your poems to my friends, and, if they did not share my own enthusiasm, made them at all events admire. And to show you how greatly I prized them, when I entered my present state of life, in which I knew I could have no books of my own and was unlikely to meet with your works in the libraries I should have access to, I copied out *St. Paul*, *St. John*, *Love's Consolation*, and others from both volumes and keep them by me. What I am saying now I might, it is true, have written any time these many years back, but partly I hesitated, partly I was not sure you were yet living; lately however I saw in the *Athenæum* a review of your historical work newly published and since have made up my mind to write to you—which, to be sure, is an impertinence if you like to think it so, but I seemed to owe you something or a great deal, and then I knew what I should feel myself in your position, if I had written and published works, the extreme

beauty of which the author himself the most keenly feels, and they had fallen out of sight at once and been (you will not mind my saying it, as it is, I suppose, plainly true) almost wholly unknown; then, I say, I should feel a certain comfort to be told they had been deeply appreciated by some one person, a stranger, at all events and had not been published quite in vain. Many beautiful works have been almost unknown and then have gained fame at last, as Mr. Wells's poem of *Joseph*, which is said to be very fine, and his friend Keats' own, but many more must have been lost sight of altogether. I do not know of course whether your books are going to have a revival, it seems not likely, but not for want of deserving. It is not that I think a man is really the less happy because he has missed the renown which was his due, but still when this happens it is an evil in itself and a thing which ought not to be and that I deplore for the good work's sake rather than the author's. Your poems had a mediæval colouring like William Morris's and the Rossetti's and others, but none seemed to me to have it so unaffectedly. I thought the tenderness of *Love's Consolation* no one living could surpass, nor the richness of colouring in the *Wolfsbane* and other passages (it is a mistake, I think, and you meant henbane) in that and *Mark and Rosalys*, nor the brightness of the apple-orchard landscape in *Mother and Daughter*. And

the *Tale of Dauphiny* and 'It is the time to tell of fatal love' (I forget the title) in the other book are purer in style, as it seems to me, and quite as fine in colouring and drawing as Morris's stories in the *Paradise*, so far as I have read them, fine as those are. And if I were making up a book of English poetry I should put your *Ode to Summer* next to Keats' on *Autumn* and the *Nightingale* and *Grecian Urn*. I do not think anywhere two stanzas so crowded with the pathos of nature and landscape could be found (except perhaps there are some in Wordsworth) as the little song of the *Feathers of the Willow:* a tune to it came to me quite naturally. The extreme delight I felt when I read the line 'Her eyes like lilies shaken by the bees' was more than any single line in poetry ever gave me and now that I am older I could not be so strongly moved by it if I were to read it for the first time. I have said all this, and could if there were any use say more, as a sort of duty of charity to make up, so far as one voice can do, for the disappointment you must, at least at times, I think, have felt over your rich and exquisite work almost thrown away. You will therefore feel no offence, though you may surprise, at my writing. I am, very Rev. Sir, your obedient servant Gerard M. Hopkins, S.J."

P. xxvii.—*The lists of* 1881. These are in G.M.H.'s letters. In that year Dixon appears

to have sent him all his unpublished poems to criticise, and in the autumn Hopkins wrote him a number of long letters separately criticising almost every poem that Dixon had written whether published or unpublished. Among these are some thirty-four poems which have never been printed. I heard little of this, because from June 1881 until June in the following year I was either ill or out of England ; so that if there were among these poems any composed at that date I may never have seen them. Most of them however I must have seen ; of nine of them I have earlier copies, and I have recovered three others from G.M.H.'s copies in the possession of his family. None of the others except *The Rainbow* poem was much praised by Hopkins. That poem cannot be found. That R.W.D. destroyed these poems during his period of mental depression is inferred from their not being found among his papers. Seven of them appear to have been in the series of "Christ's Company."

P. xxxi. note.—*There is little to compare.* There is one remarkable exception, namely, the poem *Romance*, on p. 144 of "Christ's Company." This reads like a burlesque of William Morris, which it cannot be. It is an excess of absurdity without comicality. Miss Coleridge praises it, and her praise implies that it is successful nonsense. I never liked it nor thought it intended for a joke.

I am sorry now that I neglected to ask Dixon what the humour of it was.

P. xxxii.—*The clearer on that account.* This is obvious enough, but the expression is so similar to my own when comparing Wordsworth with Keats (Essay on Keats) that I wish to state that I did not see these letters of Hopkins' until after Dixon's death.

P. xxxiii.—*The Unanswered Question.*—The first part of this poem is among those sent to G.M.H. in 1881. The second part is in a letter to me November 16, 1892, and was written, as the letter states, in the summer of that year. It was therefore one of his last poems, and after his illness.

P. xxxix.—*The so-called Last Poems.* A thin volume entitled the "Last poems of R.W.D., selected by R.B.," was issued by Henry Frowde in 1905. There were two or three poems in it corresponding with that title, but the scanty material put into my hands consisted mainly of old poems which Dixon for various reasons had refrained from publishing. It did not in mass correspond with what I knew should exist if Dixon had not destroyed his MSS., nor in excellence with what I should have expected him to preserve. Among the papers was one love-tale, concerning which there was unmistakable evidence that he wished and intended to print it, and that therefore I somewhat unwillingly edited. Another love-tale and several minor poems

I withheld; the only service which I could then render being to prevent the publication of such pieces as I thought the author would not have wished to put forth. It happened that I was leaving England for many months and was unable to do what was expected of me; for this necessitated a search among papers that were inaccessible, besides other investigations which I had at that time no opportunity of making. Miss Coleridge kindly wrote the preface for me. I have now attempted to make up in some measure for my shortcomings; and the time that this has occupied justifies me to my own conscience for having refused to undertake it when I had not leisure. I am glad to have been able to include in this selection some of the recovered poems, the absence of which left that other volume so sadly in need of this apology.

P. xxxix.—*The second feeling will be surprise.* This is the word used by Hopkins in his letter given above in the note to p. xxvi.

POEMS.—P. 2, last line. The original prints *She rest implied.* Though not in the printed table of errata I have guessed this to be a misprint, and made the correction.

P. 67.—*Ode to Summer.* See G.M.H.'s letter above. The objection that this ode is too like Keats may serve those who do not wish to admire, but it will not be much of an objection until others have found this sort of imitation easy.

P. 74.—*The Feathers of the Willow.* I should say that the destiny of this poem is that it will always be found in any collection of the best English lyrics.

P. 92.—*Polyphemus.* This poem was sent to me, I think, in January 1882. It is therefore the latest of the eclogues.

P. 141.—*Free,* in the last line. This word is indefensible: it is inserted merely for the sake of the rhyme, and what meaning it has is wrong; but there was no escape from it. The mills are elaborated from William Morris—

> "But the battle was scatter'd from hill to hill,
> From the windmill to the watermill."

P. 147.—*Ruffling Wind.* This and the next three poems are recovered from the MSS. of G.M.H., and were kindly copied for me by Miss Hopkins. The title of this poem and the next were given by Gerard Hopkins.

P. 163.—This sonnet is the second of a series of three.

P. 165.—This hymn was sent to me, January 1889.

THE END

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES.