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P O E M S.

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# P O E M S.

BY

SYDNEY WHITING,

AUTHOR OF "HELIONDÉ; OR, ADVENTURES IN THE SUN;" "THE ROMANCE  
OF A GARRET," &c.

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"I never liste presume to Parnasse Hill;  
But, pyping low in shade of lowly grove,  
I play to please myselfe, all be it ill."

THE SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

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1873

**M**OST of the following poems have, to some extent, passed through an ordeal; that is, they have found acceptance at various times by the editors of leading periodicals. Others are now published for the first time, and the entire collection has been revised, in the hope—though a very faint one—of extending the circle of my readers in a department of literature wherein the labour of production is one of entire and absorbing love. The temerity of terming the collection “Poems,” I feel may bring condign punishment; but as poetry consists of many degrees, and as I ask for only a place on the lowest plinths of the Fane, it is just possible I may be permitted so humble a position. The drama of “A Summer’s Tale of Venice,” it is scarcely necessary

to observe, was not written with a view to representation, and its slight plot was intended merely as a medium for a poetic dress. The poems on mythological subjects, were published several years ago, and received at the time of their appearance so many kindly expressions from the press, that they are now included in this unpretending anthology.

S. W.

TEMPLE, 1873.

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# P O E M S.



## THE SIBYL'S GLASS.

[The following is an attempt to sketch, in a concentrated poetical form, the supposed progress of Creation, as suggested by the details of the physical sciences.]

### I.

**I**F any think that life is worth,  
With all its myst'ry, but a thought,  
Oh, scan the records of the earth,  
Then ask if life, indeed, be nought.  
Yes—turn at once to Science' light,  
'Twill shadow forth the early time,  
When o'er the realms of endless night,  
There brooded first the thought sublime.  
Intensest fires 'midst fearful jar,  
For  $\Delta$ Eons bluster'd madly on ;

While roaring waters joined the war,  
     But Form arose from chaos soon.  
 Yes, there had pass'd a mighty word,  
 Primeval harmony was heard.

## II.

The Sibyl's glass shows earth a fire  
     Slow cooling down to scorixæ rude;  
 The while its raging flames retire  
     To burn in central solitude.  
 But giant Force, a rebel still,  
     Amorphous masses flings on high;  
 The whirlpool and tornado fill  
     With terror ocean and the sky.  
 Volcanoes belch beneath the sea,  
     And mountains leap and first behold  
 The sun in his sublimity,  
     And seeing—find their summits gold!  
 Then forth the mighty mandate sped  
 The germ of life abroad was spread.

## III.

But turn again, the glass is clear:  
     The sun from forth his vast domain  
 Doth send the Light, his messenger,  
     With warmth and colour in her train;

The beams, through liquid fields of blue,  
 Bid all the earth with radiance glow,  
 And bathe it in the burnished hue  
 We saw on mountain tops but now.  
 How strangely grand!—the worlds afar  
 Are linked to earth by golden ray,  
 And every planet, every star,  
 Are but a part of unity.  
 Yes, star with star, and sun with sun,  
 Hold a divine communion!

## IV.

But turn again, the glass is clear:  
 The scene is chang'd, and deep repose  
 Is brooding on the sleeping sphere,  
 And lulls to rest its mighty throes;  
 Then harmonies akin to love  
 Are loosened from their home divine,  
 And over all creation move  
 To chasten, elevate, refine.  
 And yet the wondrous, peaceful scene  
 Is prelude to more wondrous birth;  
 For LIFE at length is ushered in,  
 Its awful spirit moves on earth.  
 Yes, there had pass'd a mighty word,  
 And mystery to its depths was stirr'd.

## V.

But turn again, the glass is clear :  
    Though earth with teeming life be bless'd,  
The simpler works alone are here,  
    But being perfect, prompt the rest.<sup>1</sup>  
Cycles roll, and as they fall  
    Merely points of ages die,  
For what are Cycles, ages, all,  
    When reckon'd by eternity !  
Cycles roll, and as they fade,  
    The work sublime becomes more fair ;  
And earth in beauties fresh array'd,  
    Beholds that LOVE is everywhere.  
Yes, there had pass'd a mighty sound,  
    And love and beauty breathed around.

## VI.

But turn again, the glass is clear :  
    Creations new rise one by one ;  
Now gaudy insects paint the air,  
    The children of the golden sun.  
And birds array'd in gorgeous dress,  
    Like notes of music fly along—



A music taught by happiness,  
 For joy intense breaks forth in song.  
 Their counterparts<sup>2</sup> the flow'rets bloom  
 With wings, and voice, and plumage too,  
 Their petal wings, their voice perfume,  
 Their plumage caught from rainbow-hue.  
 For there had pass'd another spell,  
 Weaving the gentler forces well.

## VII.

But turn again, the glass is clear :  
 Another age hath been a dream ;  
 And higher types of life appear,  
 Perfecting still creation's scheme.  
 While ever as an epoch bright  
 Doth culminate above the rest,  
 Another phase more exquisite  
 Is born from that, but now the best.  
 The attribute of God-like thought  
 Is ever to increase its own,  
 When to a seeming limit brought  
 It bears afresh a mightier one.<sup>3</sup>  
 And each doth take eternal place,  
 Like ever beaming stars in space !

## VIII.

But turn again, the glass is clear :  
    The world is bathed in love and light ;  
And light and love with joy prepare  
    For earth another sacred rite.  
Awaiting this, it rests awhile,  
    And viewing all its rich excess,  
Its inward heart gives forth a smile,  
    The glow of its own loveliness.  
And as that smile—the brightest one  
    Since first commenced creation's plan—  
Illumes the world—the work is done,  
    It ushers in the spirit MAN !  
The teeming earth makes festival,  
And yields to man its beauties all.

## IX.

And what is man? How dimly flit  
    The shadows which would fain reply ;  
With all his lore he must admit  
    Himself the greatest mystery.  
He must allow his brief career  
    Is but a skein in Nature's loom,  
He cannot think he dwelleth here  
    To limit marvels yet to come ;

He cannot comprehend the love  
Which breathes throughout the magic spell;  
The simplest form of life doth prove  
To him, profoundest miracle.  
Art thou the link of higher mould  
The womb of time will yet unfold ?

## x.

But turn again, the glass is bright :  
Whate'er the problem dark may be ;  
Above, around, there shines a light  
To bid him onward hopefully—  
A light whose beams about him fall  
As closely as the folding air,  
For they are Nature's wonders all  
He views around him everywhere.  
And Science tells him nothing dies :  
The smallest leaf from Autumn's spray,  
Though seeming dead, yet fructifies  
To other shapes from out decay.  
Then sure it were a strange belief  
To rank the soul beneath the leaf!

## xi.

And what the soul ? Ah, once again  
Dim shadows crowd the clear reply.

And e'en the Sibyl seeks in vain  
     To answer, save by simile :  
 " A matchless diamond set in lead  
     The soul is, in its earthy zone,  
 With rays of light for ever fed :  
     Its setting crumbles, and is gone.  
 The diamond, too, in depths of earth  
     Deep hidden by its fellow-clay,  
 Is, while obscured, of little worth,  
     But priceless in the beams of day.  
 So, for the soul such rays of light,  
 From heaven above, are requisite."

## XII.

But turn again, the mirror scan :  
     Again the Sibyl's art we test,  
 When we demand—of gifts to man  
     Which for himself is noblest—best ?  
 The shining oracle replies  
     That " TRUTH<sup>d</sup> is noblest, most divine ;  
 For truth it is which simplifies  
     And aids the progress of design.  
 Man scarcely thinks one falsity  
     By lip or word makes Nature grieve,

And stays her course to rectify ;  
 One thread untrue she cannot weave :  
 The warp and woof, divinely fair,  
 Reject all spot and blemish there."

## XIII.

And what is Nature?—how began,  
 What is the cause, and where the source ?  
 Doth HE vouchsafe no sign to man,  
 Nor leave a tracklight of his course ?  
 Oh, yes ! as roaming through the mead,  
 We scatter dew-drops on our way,  
 So worlds spring at th' Eternal's tread,  
 And light the blue immensity.  
 Systems arise, like diadems,  
 Crowning space with wreaths of fire ;  
 And suns with belts of starry gems  
 Take their eternal station higher.  
 But where the source, and what the cause ?  
 Ah ! here the mind must shrinking pause.

## XIV.

For mind doth bend beneath the thought  
 Which grapples the idea of space ;

When intellect is highest wrought,  
 A little speck it can but trace.  
 The image of eternity  
 We cannot pass before the mind ;  
 When million *Æons* picture we,  
 The same are left before—behind.  
 In manner like, the human soul,  
 Filled and glowing with its God,  
 Knows but a fraction of the whole,  
 An unit of infinitude.  
 Ah ! wondrous fact—the stars we view  
 Are formed as e'en the drop of dew.<sup>5</sup>

## xv.

Turn once again : the shadows pass  
 Within the mirror, and we see  
 New forms of light, which make the glass  
 Dazzling with refulgency.  
 LOVE—the maiden—smileth there,  
 Bidding man be not afraid,  
 For INTELLECT is chaining FEAR,  
 While TRUTH is lending him his aid.  
 Dogma strives to set FEAR free,  
 And CANT is doing all his best

To imitate true Piety,  
 And roam abroad as she is dressed.  
 But Knowledge rends the false pretence,  
 As Cant is yoked to Ignorance.

## XVI.

And Science, too, whose massive brow  
 Betokens thought and daring will,  
 Has made with ART a holy vow,  
 To range the world to conquer ill.  
 'Tis Science makes the earth a Fane,<sup>6</sup>  
 And life itself a lengthened prayer ;  
 The grandest sun, the smallest grain,  
 In miracles, true light appear.  
 The maxima and minima  
 Of wonders keen-eyed Science knows,  
 Searching near, yet glancing far,  
 A grain dissects, a planet shows ;  
 While dainty Art with palette near,  
 Copies all most good and fair.

## XVII.

Then HOPE perennial springs afresh,  
 Though often under SCEPTIC'S sway ;

"The age we live in" bursts the mesh,  
 And endeth her captivity.  
 Bright INTELLECT on highest throne,  
 Whose lustre PRIDE essays to dim,  
 Calls KNOWLEDGE forth, his dearest son,  
 And weds the blushing maid to him.  
 Thus HOPE and KNOWLEDGE, wedded now,  
 Their destiny to best fulfil,  
 Join Art and Science, in their vow,  
 To range the world, and conquer ill.  
 The shadows deepen—now are past.  
 But Hope was one which lingered last.

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<sup>1</sup> "The botanist discovers the constancy of the gyratory motion of the chara in the greater number of vegetable cells, and recognises in the genera and natural families of plants the intimate relations of organic life."—*Kosmos*.

<sup>2</sup> Many, no doubt, have marked the beautiful similitude between different species of flowers and the smaller tribe of birds. Some of the creeping plants seem to put forth their little *leafy wings*, while certainly they make progress with them! In like manner, the perfume of a flower (its voice) touches us by association, as the song of a bird. The flowers, too, close their petals at night, and may be said poetically to roost; while in colours the likeness is striking, especially in the Indian Archipelago. The *Phyllium Siccifolium* so closely resembles a leaf, that, without a minute examination, it is impossible to distinguish it from one; and towards autumn its wings become brown and withered!

<sup>3</sup> Nature, as a celebrated physiologist has defined it, and as the word was interpreted by the Greeks and Romans, is, "that which is ever growing and ever unfolding itself in new forms."—HUMBOLDT.



<sup>4</sup> “ In primis, hominis est propria VERI inquisitio atque investigatio. Itaque cum sumus negotiis necessariis, curisque vacui, tum avemus aliquid videre, audire, ac dicere, cognitionemque rerum, aut occultarum, aut admirabilium, ad bene beatéque vivendum necessariam ducimus ; ex quo intelligitur quod VERUM, simplex, sincerumque sit, id esse naturæ hominis aptissimum. Huic veri videndi cupiditati adjuncta est appetitio quædam principatûs, ut nemini pacere animus benè a naturâ informatus velit, nisi præcipienti, aut docenti, aut utilitatis causâ justè et legitime imperanti : ex quo animi magnitudo existit, et humanarum rerum contentio.”—CICERO, *De Officiis*, lib. i., § 13, quoted by William Herschel.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Tyndal says it is an old remark that the law which moulds a tear also rounds a planet.

<sup>6</sup> “ If one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme, intelligent author. To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of everything religious. The world henceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration.”—PALEY'S *Natural Theology*.

## CORA :

## A Legend of Somersetshire.

**T**HE Sun has sunk, but o'er each red-capp'd hill  
 His parting radiance fondly lingers still,  
 'Till twilight follows on the steps of day,  
 And softly steals the golden tints away.  
 Strange forms of clouds along the western sky  
 Like isles of green and lakes of crimson lie,  
 Which fading in the throbs of lessening light,  
 Die like a fairy vision out of sight.  
 Then all is hush'd, while Nature seeks repose,  
 And o'er her face a veil of shadow throws ;  
 While night arrayed in grief for daylight gone,  
 Comes with her breath of perfume gently on,  
 And stars drop in their places one by one. }  
 But soon still brighter rays illumine the wood,  
 And bathe its foliage in a silver flood ;

For throned in silence doth the summer moon  
Rule earth, and sky, and this sweet night of June.  
Now is the time when sprites and spirits roam,  
Or cautious peep from out each secret home ;  
Spirits who weave from moonlight's filmy beams  
Fantastic thoughts, and strange uncertain dreams,  
And which in frolic mood they've power to fling  
O'er mortal worlds, while worlds are slumbering.  
And fairies too are busy in the glade,  
For unnamed beauties by their spells are made,  
And flowers of magic tints by fairy might  
Are formed from out the soft uncertain light,  
While blossoms bloom through whose thin petals shine  
The dews of night like fresh distillèd wine.  
But all must vanish when the wak'ning day  
Bids every fay and mystic work away.  
The ground within this dell is softly moss'd,  
And fairy rings are on the sward emboss'd ;  
Trees, in their freshest dress, surround the glade,  
And cast by contrast almost ebon shade.  
The myrtle and the laurel interpose  
Their dark-green foliage 'midst the briar-rose.  
The digitalis and the heather-bell  
Live here, the fairy's favourites of the dell,

For in their leafy cups they sleep by day,  
And in the night amidst their petals play.  
The woodbines twine their sweet caressing arms  
Around each aged stem, and thus give charms  
To that which else were desolate and bare ;  
The humbler works of Nature thus declare  
That youth and beauty to the old should cling,  
And round the aged stem love's fragrance fling.

Upon the borders of this lovely wood  
A lonely, low-roof'd nestling cottage stood ;  
But simple though the structure, it was drest  
By vine and eglantine in sweetest vest.  
And at this time its lattices all gleam  
Like trellised mirrors in the silver beam.  
The inmates seem at rest, no human sound  
Disturbs the stillness of the scene around.  
But there is one within that humble cot,  
Who, though the night wears on, yet sleepeth not :  
Intensely does she gaze upon the sky,  
As though the glance could pierce its mystery.  
And who shall say, when thus the human heart,  
Beating with rapture, which its thoughts impart,  
And left alone with beauties that control,  
And bear still fairer visions to the soul—

Who shall then say our fancies may not bring  
Back to the heart *some* truth upon their wing ?  
Who shall then say, we may not feel the bliss  
And beauties of a better world than this ?  
And this sweet maiden, at such lovely hour,  
May she not feel the mystic soul-born power ?  
She gazes on the liquid azure dome,  
Forgetting all—the scene, the hour, her home :  
Hears not her own heart beating, so intense  
The spirit's thoughts which bear her visions hence.  
Alas ! such blissful moments soon are past ;  
The stretch of mind is too intense to last ;  
And when within the heart such fancies dwell,  
A sigh or simpler cause will break the spell :  
Would that the mind could better bear the strain,  
And bid the dreams return to Heaven again.

'Twas thus the maiden gazed, and thus a sigh  
Heaved her soft bosom, then the moonlit sky  
Fell as a veil before the lovely scene  
Of angel'd Heaven, where all her thoughts had been ;  
That quiv'ring breath dissolved the blissful dream,  
And all things round are simply as they seem ;  
The night is lovely, and the soft light shed,  
But that bright vision of her heart is fled.

Yet at her open casement still she gazed ;  
Her deep blue eyes were still to Heaven upraised.  
For, though her dream of imaged scenes was past,  
Yet still to Heaven her lustrous eyes were cast.  
Her pale soft cheek upon her hand was laid ;  
Amidst her tresses loose the night air strayed ;  
A darkness in the lustre of her eye  
Gave to its glance the soul's intensity ;  
The brightest eyes do oft this beauty wear  
When thought lies in them like a shadow there.  
And who thus communes with her heart alone ?  
From whose soft eyelids has repose thus flown ?  
Who may it be, thus like a guardian sprite,  
Keeps watch upon the beauties of the night ?  
Who, as the soft beams fall, seems not of earth,  
But to the trembling light must owe her birth ?  
No sprite—but Cora 'tis ; a rustic maid,  
And yet so fragile that she well might fade  
To shadeless form, and in her own loved grove,  
On airy wing 'midst kindred spirits move.  
The spot neglected, save by Nature's care,  
Still brings forth flowers ; and though not bright nor rare  
As nurtured ones, yet, left to Nature's hand,  
As sweetly smile and scent their own loved land ;  
And to the breezes give as sweet perfume  
As those bright petals which are forced to bloom.

And thus was Cora's mind—Nature its guide,  
Its monitress, and Cora deified  
The sweet instructress, and, as flow'rets wild,  
So Cora was completely Nature's child.  
And Cora knew no passion of the heart.  
Love, it is true, was of herself a part ;  
Indeed it was her fault—if fault it be—  
To love all objects with intensity ;  
But love—what men call love—she ne'er had known ;  
Her heart, which *could* have worshipp'd, was her own.  
Almost alone she dwelt ; her thoughtful mind  
Would in the grove's retreat most pleasure find ;  
But still she gladly join'd the village scene,  
When May-day gave the villagers their queen ;  
They chose a nut-brown, merry, laughing maid,  
How unlike Cora ! yet 'twas she array'd  
The rustic queen, and all the May-day band,  
Owed what of grace they had to Cora's hand.

Her one companion in this lone retreat  
Was old indeed, yet was his life made sweet  
By Cora's tenderness. A time-worn man,  
Whose feeble form betoken'd that the span  
Of his exhausted life was dwindling fast,  
And though still living, life seem'd well-nigh past.

But he was Cora's father, and her care  
Awhile kept death away, though hov'ring near.  
With him alone she lived, him she adored,  
On him alone her heart's best love she pour'd.  
But even now, at this most tranquil hour,  
Whose loveliness would scare an evil power,  
When night's soft breath is far too pure and light  
To bear upon ethereal wave a sprite  
That could attain its breath—a form was here  
That well might every elfin spirit scare  
To flowery bells, or to their form of air,  
That they the dreary shadowy guest might fly;  
But he had come on wing so stealthily  
That beauteous night smiled ever sweetly still,  
And Cora gazed unconscious of an ill:—  
And while she thus was fann'd by night's soft breath,  
And all was lovely—*could* she dream of death?  
And yet with Cora, in this peaceful cot,  
The spirit was—but Cora knew it not.  
A short while since her father she had seen,  
In calm repose, his features so serene,  
She deem'd he slept. Poor child! She little knew,  
Although she mark'd his features' pallid hue,  
That death had counterfeited sleep so well;  
But thought the moonlight, which then softly fell,



Had paled his cheek ; and so she gently cast  
A curtain o'er the lattice—'twas the last  
Sweet act of love ; and trembling did she tread,  
In fear her gentle step might wake—the dead !—

Thus while she gazed, and all was bright as day,  
The life of him so dear had pass'd away ;  
While from her bosom rose a quiv'ring sigh :  
Yet she was happy, and she knew not why  
The trembling breath she drew.—A glistening tear,  
From out her heart's own joy, would oft appear,  
And dim the lustre of her deep fringed eye ;  
And thus the maiden all unconsciously  
A tribute to her parent's spirit paid  
With signs of grief, but not in grief array'd !  
But now her casement she has left.—At length,  
Fatigued with watching, does her mental strength  
Succumb to weariness ? Does downy sleep,  
Light with his drowsy wing, and gently steep  
Her waning senses in some bright-hued dream ?  
It must be so ; for, see, the moon-rays stream  
No more upon her form : the night air sighs,  
As disappointed, to her lattice flies  
And finds the sweet breath gone, which it had sought  
To prove to flow'rets that their scent was nought,

And bid them emulate in vain. But see !  
The cottage door is open'd silently,  
But for the shade it might some spirit be.  
And Cora 'tis, who comes the night to bless,  
To add fresh beauty to its loveliness.  
'Twere almost sin to say she could repose  
While ev'ry beauty of the night still throws  
Their magic charm around. They bid her come,  
A lovely wanderer from her moon-lit home.  
One glance she casts upon the chamber, where  
She deem'd her father slept—no thought of fear  
Or ill foreboding cross'd the lovely maid :—  
It would be strange were purity afraid !  
No loneliness she feels, but only knows  
That which she seeks in rich profusion grows  
Upon the greenwood sward ; and only views  
What well she loves, the moon's soft silvery hues,  
Dancing amidst the foliage of the groves ;  
And thus of fear unconscious onward moves,  
And nears the glen—the same—the mystic one  
I named before, then tenanted alone  
By elfish sprites. But now the balmy air  
In tuneful motion bids her enter there.  
Her fate is cast, and ev'ry step she takes,  
Sweet sounds of welcome from the stillness wakes ;

And though she treads upon the briary way,  
 No crisping sound ensues—soft as a ray  
 Her footstep falls, nor does the ground indent,  
 And each impending stem or branch is bent  
 Ere she can reach the green entanglement.

But Cora, still unconscious, onward treads,  
 Amidst the violets' and the blue-bells' beds,  
 Nor sees them raise again their scented heads  
 As though her step was air's light kiss. She stoops,  
 Mayhap to pluck some pale-eyed flower that droops,  
 With fragrance and with glist'ning pendent dew,  
 Which magnify while they reflect its hues ;  
 Mayhap for this sweet theft she short while stays,  
 And then moves onward through the tangled ways,  
 Which, though it opes its sylvan arms to make  
 A pathway else conceal'd—the mystic brake  
 Resumes its tangled form behind the maid,  
 And thus she nears the magic fairy glade.

Within this dell a different atmosphere  
 Is breath'd by Spirits of the moon-lit air ;  
 Now they are seen, and then anon they fade,  
 And all seems motionless within the glade ;  
 And then anon the rays the outline take  
 Of mortal form, which suddenly will break

In dancing light again, and all around  
Swells harmony, till gradually the sound  
Subsides to merely moving of the trees,  
And plaintive whisperings of the scented breeze.  
The tiny forms of fairy beings play,  
And hang in clusters on each quivering ray :  
Or float upon some perfume passing by,  
With folded pinions resting lazily.  
Anon within the cavern of a bud  
Some elfish band will sink in listless mood ;  
And closing up the curtains of the flower  
Remain embosom'd for an idle hour.  
Then others pluck the moss from off its bed  
And piling it around the rose's head  
In pillow'd rest, find to their great content  
The moss enamour'd of the luscious scent  
And contact sweet, remains for ever there,  
And makes the rose, a "moss rose," ever fair.  
But ah ! what means that change ? The elves appear  
As though transfix'd upon the blossoms here :  
They are not frightened, for they do not fly,  
Or hide themselves in petal cups—but lie  
Upon the fragile leaves, as though in fear  
Again to flutter on the stagnant air,  
While all within the dell appear to wait  
Some strange event, and grow inanimate.—

And see ! amidst the brightness falls a shade,  
Some mortal wanders to the fairy glade !  
Who yet must purer be, than mortals are,  
Or like that sudden quenching of the star  
That's lost from Heaven in the abyss of air,  
Would ev'ry elf and spirit disappear.  
But, though 'tis Cora's shadow dims the spot,  
Yet the immortal forms are frightened not.  
With sweet bewilderment the air she feels  
Press'd round her form, and o'er her senses steals  
Oblivion of the past ; but, as it fades,  
In lieu a mystic sense her mind pervades ;  
What erst appear'd but common to her view,  
Now wears a diff'rent shape, a stranger hue.  
She sees the dews of night are bubbling springs,  
Where fairies tired with gambols lave their wings.  
She knows that colour in each tender flower,  
And perfume, too, are born of the same power  
That maketh worlds, and creatures of the hour ;  
She views the sap arise in magic force,  
Imparting life and beauty in its course ;  
She comprehends that e'en the smallest bud  
Is cared for by the same solicitude  
Bestow'd by Nature on the vast and grand.  
All this and more doth Cora understand,  
For intuition subtle and refined

Imparts a strange perception to her mind.  
The while the light becomes incorporate,  
And mixes with her form, while odours wait  
To claim their share of welcome and delight,  
And as she grows to merely outline light,  
No more on Cora's form the air can press,  
But air meets air and mingles in caress.  
Then is the scene all animate again :  
No form that loves the night now dare remain  
Enseanced in cradling flowers—no spirit rest,  
While all are with a kindred spirit bless'd.  
Nor do they wish—the music of each wing  
Makes glad the air, the joyful fluttering  
Bids ev'ry odour choicest incense pour,  
Each floral chalice gives its richest store ;  
The dew-drops glisten more intensely bright,  
FOR CORA IS A SPIRIT OF THE NIGHT.

E'en to this day the cottage may be seen,  
But almost hidden from the passer's view ;  
For Time has robed it in a garb of green :  
Now climbs the ivy, where the roses grew,  
And peasants speak of how the old man died,  
And how that night his only child was lost ;  
And that in grief they sought her near and wide ;  
But vain the search, and vain the tears it cost.

They tell the tale with reverential fear,  
That though the cot remains unoccupied,  
Soft sounds at even-time still hover near ;  
And, though the stranger will the tale deride,  
Yet some avow they recognise the sound—  
The same sweet melancholy sound they say,  
That once had call'd the village band around,  
To deck the maidens with the buds of May.  
Strange stories have they all, and each one tells  
The tale with fresh tradition of his own ;  
But all agree that oft-times eerie bells  
Send forth a musical, yet plaintive tone ;  
More softly than if peal'd by village hands,  
More sweetly than their notes e'er spoke before,  
And then the home-returning peasant stands,  
With wond'ring silence till the sounds be o'er.  
But, whatsoe'er the truth, the place is dear  
To all who know the legend of the spot ;  
And e'en the poorest rustic will forbear  
To break the charm, to occupy the cot :  
He will not even touch a tree or flower,  
And so in wildness climb the creeping bands ;  
And thus the cottage, to this very hour,  
A loved memorial of tradition stands.

## RESURGAM.

**I**N a part of the City, where day by day,  
The stream of humanity flows its way,  
Leaving its waifs and strays behind  
To people the courts and the alleys blind,  
To people those hidden and horrible spots  
Where the seum of rascality seethes and rots—  
A pauper family rented a room,  
If reeking walls, and filth, and gloom,  
And broken windows deserve the name.  
Their daily life was a shifting game,  
A game like fever, with changing fits;  
Food to-day by their vagabond wits,  
Starvation next for a time, and then  
By theft or begging a meal again.



The mother, for lack of food and air,  
Was a shadow of hungry, weak despair ;  
The father worse, was a maudlin sot,  
Who dribbled in rags o'er pipe and pot ;  
And his children, ah ! what a horrible crew !  
None worse to be found in a Houndsditch stew ;  
And they lived together some eight or ten,  
If life be life in a festering den.

The youngest child might have done his best  
To walk in the footsteps of all the rest,  
Might perhaps have follow'd the family trade,  
And tried his hand at an innocent raid  
On the books of a stall : or, likelier still,  
Have stolen the pence from a rag-shop till ;  
But this, and more, in his case were denied,  
For the boy was half-witted and lame beside.  
Stunted from birth, with rickety limbs,  
Twisted and turned by Nature's whims,  
He scarcely could hobble from side to side  
Of the room where his brethren swore and lied,  
And saving once in a month or so,  
When he craved for food and received a blow,  
His sister, in gewgaws, and tawdry lace,  
Had left in her nature the womanly grace

To snatch him up with a sort of rough care,  
And carry him forth into purer air.

But the horrible place was a world to him ;  
And the light that enter'd uncertain and dim,  
Was comfort and warmth ; for he never had known  
A sky unclouded, a sun that shone  
With all its splendour of golden might.  
And often he watch'd with a deep delight,  
The motes of dust in the struggling ray :  
For what could he do all the weary day,  
But make the commonest objects round  
His study, and care, and thought profound.

And the broken panes, and squares with none ;  
And the rotten sash-lines hanging down ;  
And the rent in the rafters, showing the beams  
Where the mortar had split in cracks and seams ;  
And the scrap of sacking which form'd his bed,  
And the mouldy shaving that pillow'd his head,  
And the gusts of wind that startled his sleep,  
Were each and all of significance deep.  
For each and all to his limited sense,  
Were matters of study and thought intense.

From night till morning, one by one,  
His brothers return'd when their work was done ;  
Return'd to quarrel, and fight, and swear,  
And haggle, each over his lawful share  
Of stolen goods, or Charity's gifts  
They managed to get by their rascally shifts.  
While sodden with beer, or drunk with gin,  
Mother and father came reeling in,  
Till sleep which visits e'en vilest spots,  
Descended alike on thieves and sots.

So the cripple was often left all alone,  
To munch his crust and to gnaw his bone.  
For once or twice they had taken him out  
To pity excite, by limping about ;  
But he acted so badly the mendicant part,  
He never could touch Compassion's weak heart.  
And as they well knew that his end was nigh,  
They left him to rot in the family sty.

But as Nature is ever in contrasts rife,  
It happen'd this child with his blighted life  
Was at times nigh happy ; and over his face  
Would flicker at times a shadow of grace,

A look for a moment, as much as to say,  
Who knows but there cometh a happier day ;  
And a smile that was almost sweet would fly  
Over his features to fade and die.  
But brief, indeed, were these fits of joy,  
In the hopeless life of the desolate boy ;  
For cuffs and blows, and brotherly ways,  
Of making deformity end its days,  
Would soon succeed in hastening death,  
Who was ready in waiting with fœtid breath ;  
For they hated the cripple's appealing face,  
And they wanted his mat and his sleeping place ;  
And as he could neither beg, borrow, nor steal,  
They grudged him the leavings they call'd a meal.

One wearisome day, it so fell out,  
That hunting for scraps, and groping about,  
Like a hog for acorns, the famish'd lad found  
A dirty root on the dirtier ground.  
In a jeering mood they said it was sweet,  
And good for a starving boy to eat ;  
But knowing their ways, he refused to try,  
And carelessly cast it as worthless by,  
Cast it inside of an old broken pot,  
Where it lay awhile with some earth forgot.

But lo! each week as the cripple grew  
Paler and weaker, came struggling through  
The buried root, a small offshoot green,  
With a promise of blossom its leaves between ;  
And this in amazement deep he saw,  
For what should he know of the marvellous law,  
That bids from meanest of seeds up spring,  
Leaf, and flowers, and scents that fling  
A wealth of odours on earth and air,  
And daintily paints the rich parterre.  
Ah ! how, indeed, should he dream or know,  
Of ought save his life of want and woe.  
But the root he had tended day by day,  
Burst forth at length in a delicate spray.

Bud, and flower, and perfume, too,  
Came from that bulb of a russet hue.  
Its scent to him was a dream of Heaven,  
Its touch as the lips by a spirit given ;—  
The only kiss that the child had known ;  
And when that the pale-tinted buds were blown  
In bells of beauty, he often would creep  
In the early morn from his fever'd sleep,  
And gaze at his love in the struggling light,  
With the sense of a new and a strange delight,

And the dawn of a something undefined,  
Like sweet dew fell on his childish mind.

As figures reflected in ill-made glass  
So dreams o'er his poor weak brain would pass ;  
And once in a vision he thought he lay  
Like the worthless bulb he had cast away,  
Like the one in the rickety window nigh,  
Which had grown to flower, though left to die.  
And a feeling of life both sweet and new  
Through ev'ry fibrous artery flew ;  
While bud, and flower, and perfume rose  
Like phantoms of form in that strange repose.  
And he fancied the perfume had voice and said,  
" I'm the soul of the thing that thou thought'st was  
    dead !"

And then he awoke to his life of pain,  
And long'd for his sleep and that dream again.

One night when his brothers came one by one,  
They found the life that they hated gone.  
'Twas only a tatterdemalion dead,  
A body of bones on a mouldy bed.  
But a hyacinth's petals in perfumed rest,  
Lay on the mendicant's naked breast ;

And his skeleton hand the flower had crush'd  
Into incense sweet for his pauper dust.

And thus, oh, reader ! my tale is done,  
It *may* have a moral—I offer none.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE SNOWDROP.

## I.

**A** DOWN the leaden sky,  
The drifting snow-flakes fall ;  
And o'er the ground they lie  
A soft and velvet pall.  
A symbol of the grief  
That shivering Nature feels,  
When ice on stem and leaf,  
Her every tear congeals :  
Yes, on the earth so light,  
They form a velvet shroud ;  
'Tis strange that flakes so white,  
Should come from blackest cloud !  
Floating, drifting, soft descending  
From their sources up on high ;  
Falling, floating, never ending,  
In the dull and sullen sky.



## II.

The languid sun with slanting beam  
    Illumed a snowdrift fair,  
And with his pale and wintry gleam  
    Formed silver crystals there.  
But when the stealthy evening came  
    And bathed the western sky  
With indigo and lurid flame  
    It bade the sunlight die.  
Then like a lovely robe of fur  
    The snow lay far and wide,  
A robe of whitest miniver  
    Cast o'er the earth, its bride.  
A mantle for the slumbering night,  
    And though itself so cold,  
It warms with its protecting might,  
    All things within its fold.  
It shelters embryo life in seeds  
    That in the spring shall rise,  
In painted flow'rets o'er the meads,  
    With bright and loving eyes.  
Those roots that hide and hibernate  
    Within their frozen home,  
It covers up, and bids them wait  
    Till summer days shall come.

Floating, drifting, never ending,  
In the dark and sullen sky,  
Falling, floating, soft descending  
On the earth so tranquilly.

## III.

Then spoke small voices sweet  
From crypt beneath the ground  
Where busy pigmies meet  
To babble lore profound.  
“ Oh, Nature, hear our prayer,  
The prayer of sprites who love,  
The spotless drift so fair,  
Born in the heavens above.  
We are not elves who dwell  
In perfumed cups of flowers,  
When summer lights the dell,  
And gilds the laughing hours.  
We care not for the days,  
That dress in vesture green,  
For we are winter fays  
Who love the frozen scene.  
We live in icy homes  
Where bulbs and fibres grow ;

Yes, we are winter gnomes,  
The genii of the snow.  
So Nature hear our prayer,  
The prayer of sprites who love,  
The spotless drift so fair  
Born in the heavens above."

Floating, drifting, never ending,  
In the dark and sullen sky;  
Falling, floating, soft descending,  
On the earth so tranquilly.

To this replied a voice, in whisper low :  
'Twas like the murmuring where waters flow,  
"Speak, fairies, speak, and mine the task shall be,  
To grant the boon you seek, all willingly."

## IV.

"Thanks, Nature, thanks, we ask of thee  
Memento of our darling snow,  
Before that dreadful time shall be—  
And come it must we know—  
When that the glowing days shall bring  
Vertumnus and the sun,  
To change the drift to gurgling spring,  
And bid its waters run :

We ask some token e'er the dress  
Beloved by every fay,  
That cherish'd us in loneliness,  
Be rudely torn away.  
For we must wait the circling year  
Before it comes again.  
So bounteous Nature hear our prayer,  
And ere the frozen rain  
Shall vanish quite, and winter go,  
O leave some record of the snow."'  
Floating, drifting, soft descending,  
From its sources up on high ;  
Falling, floating, strangely blending  
With the dull and leaden sky.  
They ceased ; then once again there fell  
A voice which like a perfume fill'd the dell.  
So mystic in its tones, it floated round  
As gently as the snow, in flakes of sound,  
Yet clear as Nature's whispers ever fall  
For those who love her ; clear as madrigal  
From reedy flutes where breezes lightly play,  
And from the pipes evoke strange harmony.  
For those who love her, fragments of a tone,  
Or scent, or sigh, have meaning of their own.

Thus came, in trembling notes, her answer sweet,  
Which I, in feeblest verse, must fain repeat.

## v.

“ Oh, fairies of the frozen earth,  
Who know the secrets of my power,  
Who watch, and aid the magic birth  
Of root to tree ; of seed to flower.  
I grant your prayer and freely give  
A relic of the winter time :  
Within this very dell shall live  
A lovely child of snow and rime.  
Before the sun shall warmer grow,  
And bid the drowsy Undines leap ;  
Before the rivers dancing go  
That late were ice in tranquil sleep :  
Within this fairy dell shall rise  
A snowdrop from the frozen rain,  
And pale with maidenly surprise  
At gift of life, shall pale remain.  
No colour that can change or fade  
Shall she assume, but like a nun  
With hood of pearly petals made,  
She'll 'scape the rude and garish sun.

Amidst her maiden leaves so green,  
    She'll sit, and bend her head to hear  
The words which call her winter's queen  
    From knightly crocus growing near.  
Sir Yellow Crocus, gay and bold,  
    Would win her for his lovely bride  
Dress'd in his panoply of gold,  
    With spears of sharp leaves by his side.  
But soon the sunny days will shine  
    And ice be changed to rippling water.  
So make, oh elves, the snowdrop thine,  
    And love her as adopted daughter ;  
And wipe the tear-drops from her eyes,  
    And tell her this sweet hope is given,  
That though her mother melts and flies  
    She'll come again in flakes from Heaven !"

Floating, drifting, soft descending  
    From their sources up on high ;  
And their whiteness strangely blending  
    With the dull and leaden sky.

## THE BIRTH OF VENUS.

PAPHOS.

**F**AIR land of beauty, lovely Cyprus, hail !  
From forth thy Altars perfume fills the gale,  
And on thy peaceful bosom Paphos lies,  
Her glossy sea reflecting cloudless skies,  
So liquid both, they mingle into one,  
In limpid azure gilded by the sun.  
The rolling ocean here has calm'd his roar,  
And scarcely ripples on the Paphian shore.  
Anon a restless wavelet rears its crest,  
Despite the waters' almost perfect rest,  
Ambitious for a frothy crown, and then  
Sinks into sleep, and all is calm again.

Seek 'midst the choicest beauties of the earth  
A fairer spot for an immortal birth ;

And vain the search :—not e'en th' Hesperides,  
With nectar streams, and golden-fruited trees ;  
Not all the Isles in the Ægean sea,  
With all their wealth of floral luxury,  
Can boast so exquisite a clime as this,  
Where Nature scarcely breathes from sense of bliss.  
The lotus opes her lovely ivory dress,  
Whose fragrance faints at its own lusciousness,  
And rhododendrons, and azaleas sweet  
On knolls and mossy undulations meet,  
While nightingales awaking in dismay  
At their neglect of the dissolving day,  
Throw almost passion in their wondrous song,  
Now throbbing quick, now tremulously long.  
Here Flora lives, her iris-coloured train,  
In clustering beauties scatter'd to the main ;  
The blossoms of the citron waft around,  
Delicious perfume as they strew the ground ;  
And crimson buds of wild pomegranato gleam  
Like sunset broken in a rippling stream.  
Close to the water's edge the myrtle grows  
In sweet contentment with the Cyprian rose,  
Whose colour like the lining of a shell,  
Accords with the approaching miracle.



Ripe luscious fruit of every sort and dye  
In clusters hang, or on the soft banks lie.  
And purple grapes give forth their juices rare  
Press'd by the kisses of the wandering air.  
Light feathery trees with grace in every bend,  
Through twining branches airs Æolian send.  
And perfumes as of gum from stems arise  
In sweet and aromatic sacrifice.  
In circling flights the pale-eyed amorous dove,  
Sinks to the grove, her peaceful home of love.  
The bold lycostomos in sportive play,  
Gilds with his fin the momentary spray ;  
And but for this the ocean gently flows,  
Calm in the beauty of its deep repose.  
But not long thus ; all imperceptibly  
Commotion strange has risen o'er the sea,  
And half-appearing forms with azure wing  
Are o'er the water's bosom hovering ;  
From forth the snowy and the frothing surge  
The whiter necks of Nereïds emerge,  
Who holding converse with the magic train,  
Dive with a message, then return again.  
The fleeting moments in their noiseless flight  
The shadows lengthen, but a mystic light

Falls o'er the scene ; unlike the morning ray,  
Which with its rosy smile bids night away ;  
Unlike the splendour of the molten sun,  
Which turns to gold all that he shines upon ;  
Unlike the hour it is of eventide  
When hush'd by phantom beauties winds subside ;  
Unlike the hour of sweet Phœnician night,  
So strangely beautiful the new-born light.  
The water-nymphs on harps of sea-weed play  
Soft Lydian airs, which as they fade away  
In caves and grottoes, Echo gives again  
In sounds of rippling music o'er the main.  
The lusty Tritons in their caves below  
Send the glad waters with melodious flow ;  
And forms erst indistinct now plain appear  
Emerging strange on all sides from the air ;  
And their fresh wreaths by loving Flora lent,  
Prove them the Zephyrs on some mission sent.  
And thus it is, from out th' expectant sea  
They bear a form which all reluctantly  
The jealous waters yield, and on it press  
Their wavelets' kisses as a last caress.

## ANADYOMENE.

Sweetly bewilder'd, as from startled sleep,  
Fair Aphrodité rises from the deep;  
Half shrinking as she feels the joyous air  
Fan her soft limbs to dry the waters there.  
One hand she passes 'cross her lovely brow,  
O'er which in wat'ry folds her tresses flow,  
And on her shoulder, magically fair,  
Gathers the dripping clusters of her hair.  
But still she blushes, and the waters still  
Are loath their destined mission to fulfil.  
While she herself, half Goddess and half foam,  
Appears relapsing to her liquid home.  
But waiting zephyrs their light arms entwine,  
And bear their lovely burden o'er the brine—  
They bear her to the spot I named before,  
The loveliest on the lovely Cyprian shore.  
With varied gifts the Seasons meet her now;  
Persuasion binds a chaplet on her brow,  
And nymphs called Pleasure with soft claspèd hands,  
In circles foot it o'er the silver sands;  
While young Desire in coming, yet hath gone,  
She touch'd the Goddess, and they grew as one!

## THE APOTHEOSIS.

The gods from out Olympus' heights had seen  
The Paphian waves yield forth the Paphian Queen ;  
They mark'd her borne upon the lovely land,  
They saw her limbs to rosy colour fann'd.  
And now they view the West winds gently rise,  
And bear her fresh-born beauties on the skies.  
And though immortal, this they wond'ring see,  
For e'en immortals read not destiny.  
Beauty doth elevate the human soul,  
And bends man's nature to its soft control ;  
Its magic influence will often gain  
What strength of mind or arms could ne'er obtain.  
The heart refined adores from sympathy,  
The vulgar are subdued, they know not why ;  
And Beauty's powers to deities extend,  
Immortal Gods beneath the influence bend.  
What marvel then that all the heavenly host  
Is wrapt in silence and in wonder lost,  
When onward, upward, still the zephyrs bear  
Their charge amidst the gods, and leave her there ?  
She, new-born Beauty, with a timid mien,  
And yet all joyfully, beholds the scene ;

Smiles through her blushes flit—as sun-rays shed  
Their quivering light upon the roses' bed ;  
All, all Olympus pauses in delight,  
Stricken, enchanted, ravish'd at the sight !  
But now Apollo, from his sapphire throne,  
With silver bow, and sunny-tinted zone,  
Advances from the rest. He, lustrous God,  
The purport of this coming understood ;  
For power to him by Jupiter was given  
To read futurity in earth and heaven :  
And thence the God his graceful figure bends,  
His harmony-producing hand he tends ;  
A smile calls all the heavenly choir around,  
All bid a welcome, while melodious sound  
Of voices from immortals sweeps the sky,  
In praises of the bright nativity.  
Some flow'rets bring, of soft celestial hue,  
With amaranths the gold-edged clouds they strew ;  
Some fan her with ambrosia-scented wing ;  
Some o'er her rosy limbs ambrosia fling ;  
Others attend with soft, officious care,  
And twine the tresses of her auburn hair.  
A fleecy garment o'er her form is laid,  
The texture from the finest clouds is made.

The warlike Mars, more eager than the rest,  
Enfolds her charms within the envied vest ;  
And oh what ecstacy ! his martial chest  
Against her glowing form is gently press'd.  
Not half so fatal wounds from his own dart  
As those that pressure made upon his heart.  
Apollo as the sun, illumes the day,  
Apollo's harp drives clouds of care away.  
The heavenly minstrel can with rapture move,  
In sternest moments, e'en immortal Jove.  
Then strike thy lyre, Apollo, strike thy lyre,  
And as thy rays illum the heavens with fire,  
So pour a flood of music through the sky,  
And wake the phorminx with thy minstrelsy !  
Stern and secluded, 'midst a cloudy zone,  
Removed to farthest heights, Jove sits alone.  
Sublimest thoughts athwart his mighty soul  
Bind past and future in their vast control ;  
Immutable decrees from forth his mind  
Pass to the earth, to bless or curse mankind ;  
Upon the fate of future worlds he dwells,  
When on the air that sound of music swells.  
Then doth his aspect glow with joy serene ;  
Abstraction vanishes, for Beauty's Queen

Awaits him 'midst th' expectant gods below ;  
And smiling as the strains continuous flow,  
He joins the heavenly throng ; refulgence now  
In place of mighty thought upon his brow.  
Here let me draw a veil—no mortal's pen  
Could paint the scene Olympus witness'd then.  
Description failing, Fancy tries the strain ;  
Invention aids her, but he aids in vain ;  
So let me then the sequel hurry on,—  
Nor with Icarian wing approach the sun.  
And brief it is. The Gods their arms entwine,  
Round Cypria centre of that band divine :  
A priceless pearl within an ivory zone,  
They bear her to the foot of Jove's bright throne ;  
Hebe approaches, with the nectar-bowl,  
Jove breathes within it an immortal soul ;  
The rim he places near her willing lips,  
Unconscious of the gift, she sweetly sips.  
And then—oh, joy !—gives back the brightest smile :  
It was her first, and lit the air awhile :  
Rejoice, ye skies—rejoice, thou vaulted Heaven,  
For life to Love and Beauty has been given.

THE SHEIK'S FEAST.<sup>1</sup>

AN OLD TALE WITH A NEW ENDING.

## I.

HASSAN BEN HASSAN lived as he could,  
For poor though proud was he ;  
His fare was scant, his appetite good,  
Unfortunate unity.

## II.

Nor wife nor wives had this sapient man,  
But only his Bedouin kin ;  
And he belong'd to as brave a clan  
As ever thrust spear point in.

## III.

And " Selim " his horse was dear to him,  
Dearer than all beside ;  
Selim as lovely as damsel slim,  
Was more than a wife or bride.



## IV.

They said he came from a royal race,  
    In Solomon's stables bred ;<sup>2</sup>  
And they judged it so by his wondrous pace,  
    And his nostrils quite blood red.

## V.

His chest was deep, and his fetlocks thin,  
    As ankle of Syrian belle ;  
His veins stood out from his glossy skin  
    As his soft flanks rose and fell.

## VI.

He whinnied with joy when Hassan said,  
    " Selim, thou'rt all to me !"  
And often he pillow'd his master's head  
    When they slept in the desert free.

## VII.

Hassan Ben Hassan's humble tent  
    Was all astir to-day ;  
For Akel the Sheik, on business bent,  
    Was coming Ben Hassan's way.

## VIII.

And savoury smells arose, I ween,  
Of kabob and other fare ;  
And a cook as swart as Yemen's<sup>3</sup> bean  
Was hired for the visit rare.

## IX.

For the powerful Sheik he loved pillau,  
And juice of the Kishmeec<sup>4</sup> vine ;  
And he eat the more when he covertly saw  
Ben Hassan forbore to dine.

## X.

And the powerful Sheik he loved ragout,  
And sherbet with violets in ;<sup>5</sup>  
And he knew where the red pomegranate grew  
By a glance at its russet skin.

## XI.

Yes, Akel he relish'd the rich pillau,  
And a flask of forbidden wine ;  
But he soothed his conscience when breaking the law  
By paying himself a fine.

## XII.

Yet never was chief more hearty and true,  
And his speech was bluff and gay ;  
And as he'd just eaten and drank for two,  
He was doubly pleasant to-day.

## XIII.

“ Ben Hassan,” he said, “ ’tis a long while since  
I’ve had such a princely feed ;  
But mine host himself is, in truth, a prince,  
By Allah ! he is indeed.

## XIV.

“ But ere I go his love I must task ;”  
Says Hassan with deep salaam,  
“ Consider it done, whatever you ask,  
For your humblest slave I am.”

## XV.

“ Ben Hassan,” he said, with a sort of a-h-e-m,  
“ This boon I ask of thee ;  
Give Selim to me as the crowning gem  
Of your hospitality.”

## XVI.

Ben Hassan by turns grew white and red :  
    “ Great chief, your pardon pray,  
“ I would joyfully give my horse,” he said,  
    “ But you’ve eaten him up to-day.”

## XVII.

“ No, no,” cried Akel the Sheik, “ thou’rt wrong,  
    ’Twas kid, and sheep, and deer,  
That have kept me here in your tent so long,  
    And furnish’d our dainty fare.

## XVIII.

“ By chance I heard—it matters not when,  
    How thy larder stood with thee ;  
And Hassan, I knew, most loyal of men,  
    The feast thou wouldst serve for me.

## XIX.

“ So I secretly sent some meats to your cook,  
    And an order to Selim spare ;  
And if outside of your tent you look,  
    You will see your beloved one there.

## XX.

His bit and his stirrups you'll find are gold,  
 Inadequate gift from me ;  
 And my daughter is yours—if not too old,"  
 And he chuckled with cynical glee.

## XXI.

" Farewell, Ben Hassan, too long I have stayed,  
 But this I have yet to say ;  
 When next such a savoury feast is laid,  
 Don't starve as you did to-day."

## XXII.

Ben Hassan with joy could scarcely move,  
 But he heard the well-known neigh ;  
 And he cast his arms round the neck of his love,  
 And wept, as the bravest may.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Arabian chronicles, the ballad ought to end at verse 16 ; but the hippophagy leaves an unpleasant flavour (morally) hence the addition of the stanzas.

<sup>2</sup> The horses are called by the Arabs *Kochlani*, and they are said to derive their origin from King Solomon's steeds.—NIEBUHR.

<sup>3</sup> Yemen is the province where the Mocha coffee grows.

<sup>4</sup> Kishmee, an island in the Persian Gulf, famous for its white wine.

<sup>5</sup> The sherbet the Arabs most esteem is made of violets and sugar.—*Lalla Rookh*.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF BURNS'  
BIRTHDAY.

JANUARY 25TH, 1866.

[The two following poems on Burns were sent in as competing poems for a prize offered by the Crystal Palace Directors, and were specially mentioned, together with some thirty others, by the adjudicators, and as the competing poems amounted to six hundred and twenty-one, they may possibly lay claim to a place amongst the present collection. The one in blank verse has been published in a volume of the selected competing poems: and the other appeared in the columns of "Once a Week," slightly altered from the original.]

SWIFTLY the stealthy sands have run  
 Since Scotia bore her poet son;  
 When bursting forth with frantic power  
 A tempest rose to mark the hour:  
 The clouds were chased athwart the moon,  
 The waves were lash'd on foaming Doon:  
 The very house was rudely torn  
 Wherein the infant bard was born.<sup>1</sup>

'Twas more than strange that awful fray,  
Which burst on Ayr so suddenly:  
As if the spirits who preside  
O'er birth-time, fought for right to guide  
The future of the child of song,  
And waged the combat fierce and strong :  
But shrieking on the gloomy night,  
The storm was conquer'd in its might.

'Twas winter then, but soon the hours  
The summer brought with perfumed flowers :  
A summer more than passing fair,  
It hung a garland in the year ;  
It wove a coronal to greet  
The infant poet, slumbering sweet :  
The gude-folk said they never knew  
The earth so fair, the sky so blue.

The mer'è whistled on the bough,  
The mavis warbled soft and low,  
And both in joy pour'd forth the tale ;  
Their luscious cadence fill'd the vale.  
The bending reeds as breezes past  
Glad murmurs o'er the river cast,—  
The river which, in after time,  
Was note of music in his rhyme.<sup>2</sup>

The digitalis in the dells  
Peal'd forth upon its tiny bells  
A chime which shook the dewy showers  
That cling with love to woodland flowers.  
The water lilies in the stream  
Oped all their cups to morning's beam,  
And drinking in the sunny rays,  
They pledged the poet, and his days.

The lav'rock, like a speck on high,  
His music scatter'd through the sky ;  
The lintwhite in the woodlands sang,  
The squirrel in the lime-trees sprang ;  
The cushat coo'd within the grove  
A ritornella to her love ;  
The gowdspinks piped their roundelays,  
And pledged the poet, and his days.

Again the wingèd hours had flown,  
Another bud of time had blown ;  
And manhood crown'd the poet's brow,—  
To Heaven he sang, yet work'd the plough,  
Or cast the seed, or till'd the soil,  
And with his sweet notes lighten'd toil :  
A bard in soul, yet yeoman strong,  
He warbled his untutor'd song.



And as he strew'd the golden grain,  
A prelude of Æolian strain,  
Bade inspiration from on high  
Descend with gift of minstrelsy.<sup>3</sup>  
Then forms of beauty undefined,  
Or shapes fantastic cross'd his mind ;  
But he transfix'd the shadows pale,  
And gave them life in song or tale.

His Highland Mary ; Tam o' Shanter ;  
With Maggie's magic midnight canter ;  
The Cotter's Night ; or sonnet fair ;  
Or tender song ; or solemn prayer ;  
The " modest crimson tipped flower ;"  
Or damsel in her rustic bower ;  
In tint or tone, all cross'd his brain,  
The while he strew'd the golden grain.

And though his songs were music's own,  
Their truth gave force to ev'ry tone :  
Like garlands on some oak-tree flung,  
The fragrance of his verses clung  
To honesty ; and if should fly  
The perfume all, truth ne'er can die,—  
The manly truth he dared to speak,  
To guide the strong and save the weak.

He clink'd the coin of manhood's worth ;  
He help'd the wearied heart to mirth ;  
The counterfeit in language terse  
He broke and scatter'd by his verse.  
His burning words, like sparks of fire,  
Flew as he swept the Doric lyre ;  
And yet, anon, in tender sound  
Sicilian music melted round.<sup>4</sup>

Oh, there is something half divine,  
In hand so rough, and brain so fine.  
Edina's belles were glad to press  
His doughty palm in soft caress.<sup>5</sup>  
He furrow'd earth with labour stern,  
But found meanwhile the time to learn  
Strange knowledge of the human heart,  
And swept its strings with magic art.

But who shall hope his worth to sing,  
Unless on his immortal wing  
We fly to Heaven for some loved tone,  
That once was his to make our own ;  
Or cull some beauty from his strain,  
And faintly give it forth again ;  
Or catch the cadence of some air,  
Which like a perfume lingers there

But this were vain; so, bard, adieu,  
 Thy spirit haunts thy mountains blue:  
 Thy echoes linger in each dell,  
 And in the human heart as well,  
 O'er "banks and braes" the music flies,—  
 The voice of genius never dies:  
 Then weep not o'er his willow'd urn,  
 The torch he lit will ever burn.

<sup>1</sup> "Robert Burns was born in a little mud-walled cottage on the banks of Doon, January 25th, 1759. As a natural mark of the event, a sudden storm at the same moment swept the land; the gable walls of the frail dwelling gave way, and the babe bard was hurried through a tempest of wind and sleet to the shelter of a securer hovel."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> The river Ayr.

<sup>3</sup> "The poetic genius of my country found me as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha, at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle around me"—BURNS' *Dedication*.

<sup>4</sup> The Sicilian and the Doric measures were the extreme of the tender and the stern. The elder writers had a measure they called the sub-Dorian.

<sup>5</sup> The beautiful Duchess of Gordon amongst others.

## BURNS' CENTENARY.

**F**ORMS of poetic beauty float around,  
When mournfully, and yet elate, we breathe  
The name of Scotland's Poet and her son;  
And down the vista of a hundred years  
The torch still brightly burns which Genius lit.  
The finest shreds of song in warp and woof  
Were interwoven in his melodies;  
And like some tapestry with golden threads  
Depicting images of bygone years,  
His pictures of poetic skill will last  
Unfaded heir-looms to remotest days.  
A melting tenderness, like gentle tones  
From other spheres, subdued and harmonised  
The vigour of his verse, and as we see  
The water-lilies on the river ope  
Their ivory petals, and with eyes of love  
Gaze upward on the azure canopy,  
And yet their roots within the clay beneath;

So he upon the flowing stream of time  
Expanded all the sweet leaves of his soul,  
And gazed on high, yet doom'd with roughen'd hand  
To dig and delve the clay of common earth.  
'Twas strange, and strange as beautiful, to find  
A soul encradled in a peasant's home  
Cast off its narrow preconceivèd thoughts ;  
And like a Pegasus in labour's yoke,  
Fold up its wings, and bear its humble lot.  
Oh sure it were a symbol half divine  
To find him casting forth the fruitful seed,  
And yet in manner like to know he sow'd  
Such thoughts in human hearts, as soon could make  
All Scotland ring with praises of the fruit !  
His harvest home of golden song was ripe  
And beautiful, and midst the bounteous sheaves  
The soft cyānes with their eyes of blue  
Were garnered in ; those dainty flowers of rhyme  
Which grew amongst the treasures of his lays.  
As sculptors mould the common clay to forms  
Of loveliness, so Nature from the fields  
And plough-share called her gifted minstrel forth.

Mayhap his manly words sound somewhat harsh  
To southern ear, but sweetest kernels oft

Are set in roughest rinds, and Nature then  
To make the grateful earth receive the seed  
Bursts all the coating as the fruit doth fall :—  
Thus time in southern lands has broke the husk  
Of northern sound, and in a loving soil  
The seeds of his mellifluous song are fallen.

Nature, it seems, takes little heed of birth,  
At least so far as that mysterious gift—  
The gift of poesy. Where learn'd our bard  
The cunning of his rhymes? How did he ken  
The various measures of his verse, which changed  
In force and tone like some Æolian strain?  
Anon, a love-lay trembled on the strings;  
Or harsher tone of war-song clang'd along;  
Or story quaint of goblins and of fays  
Set all the chords in shivering sympathy;  
Or in some mournful dirge a wailing sprite  
Died in vibrations of the trembling harp.  
Then changing yet again like tuneful reeds  
A strain Pandæan spoke of sylvan lore;  
Or some sweet idyl of Theocritus  
Was echoed from the classic groves; or tone  
Of Moschus, or of Bion seem'd to hint  
That Nature makes her best-loved poets speak

In accents similar : yet seldom thus,  
For Burns was simply Burns—himself—alone,  
And when he blew his sterner blasts along  
And flung his gauntlet in the cause of truth,  
No poet ever crown'd in capitol  
Stood so apart. Oh truly he hath set  
A beauteous iris in the sky of hope  
To tell us that the world of human worth  
Will ne'er by flood of vice be deluged more !  
How learn'd he all ? Whence came the power to view  
Creation's hand impress'd in humble forms ?  
Was it that the "lilies of the field" raised up  
His hopes and inspirations heavenward ?  
When singing of the crimson-tippèd flower  
Did it suggest to his enchanted view  
Those bright celestial lab'ratories where  
Not flowers alone receive their wondrous gifts,  
But where *all* harmonies divine are wrought ?  
The maxima and minima of things  
Work with a godlike hand, which raising up  
The "cloud-capp'd hills" yet pausing stoop to paint  
With delicate and most elaborate skill  
The humble daisy on the sloping sward.  
All this he knew ; of this and more he sang,  
And smallest forms of Nature's mysteries

Which to the common gaze were nought—to him  
Were exquisite. As tiller of the soil  
He soon became Earth's best interpreter,  
And hieroglyphics of the fields and woods  
Found an exponent in his tuneful lays.  
To him the tinted children of the soil—  
The flow'rets in their coats of divers hues—  
Were lessons in the Earth's Astronomy,  
And floral constellations group'd about  
Were as celestial to his loving gaze  
As those bright garlands of the midnight sky  
Which we call stars, and which can only bloom  
Like to the cereus on the robe of night.

Thou livest still, dear Poet of the fields ;  
For though the ashes of thy mortal part  
Repose within the sad and dusky crypt,  
Thy spirit is enshrined in Scottish hearts ;  
And English too, for genius such as thine  
Hath no especial home, and lights us all ;  
Time is the pedestal on which it stands ;  
And as the peaks of thy own mountains rise  
All crown'd with gold when sunset paints the scene,  
So glory tinged the fabric of thy fame  
When life sank gently in the silent shades.



## FAIRY BELLS.\*

(RECITED BY MR. BELLEW, AT THE WESTBOURNE HALL,  
AND OTHER PLACES.)

## I.

**H**IS voice was sweet, his words were fair ;  
 Would that his love had ne'er been spoken ;  
 Would that the pole-star heard my prayer  
     In words, as now, in anguish broken !  
 Would that the awful Greenland gales  
     Could drown my sighs ; for then, oh ! then,  
 I should be where my Alick sails,  
     And share the fate of daring men.  
 Would I were in that churning sea,  
     Where glassy icebergs, slowly moving,  
 Might threaten death to him and me ;  
     But what is death, when mad with loving !

\* There is a superstition amongst many of the seafaring people of Great Britain that fairy bells are heard when lover, husband, or relation is returning from some expedition ; but, alas ! they do not always refer to the living as in the following poem.

Oh ! Alick, why those whispers low,  
 Those honey'd words, those soft entreatings !  
 For, far away, 'midst ice and snow,  
 Thou wilt forget our summer meetings.

## II.

His voice was sweet ; his words were fair ;  
 Oh, how I pray'd him ne'er to leave me !  
 He only smooth'd my streaming hair ;  
 Said he, " My love, thy fears deceive thee.  
 Trust me, my Annie, soon will come  
 The happy days, when peace and plenty  
 Shall be the gifts of ice and foam ;  
 We cannot wed with coffers empty."  
 " Oh, yes !" I cried, " I'd wed thee now,  
 And work or starve, to stay thy going."  
 He only kiss'd my throbbing brow :—  
 Says he, " My love, the wind is blowing ;  
 The southern breeze creeps up the lea,  
 See on yon cliff the pines are bending ;  
 They point towards the frozen sea,  
 Propitious winds and wishes sending."

## III.

" Oh, Alick, darling, say not so,  
 Thou wrongly read'st the warning motion.

It says, 'Let not thy lover go,  
 There's death around the frozen ocean.'  
 Thou hearest how the curlews scream,  
 In echoes to the dreadful warning."  
 He only said, "'Tis but a dream—  
 I must away ere break of morning.  
 But when in Spring thou hear'st the sound  
 Of magic bells above thee ringing,  
 Know that the whaler, homeward bound,  
 From off her prow the spray is flinging."  
 His boat sped o'er the seething surge;  
 The wind flung back my wild cries, scoffing;—  
 With strong and cruel pulls they urge  
 The craft that bears him to the offing!

## IV.

But when I hear the eerie chimes,  
 They'll tell me that my lad's returning.  
 Yet, oh, the dreary, dreary times,  
 With hope so cold, and love so burning!  
 The wintry months go slowly past:  
 I listen for the fairies pealing;  
 I watch for every spar and mast;  
 Away from home for ever stealing.  
 And mother frets; and father's sad:—  
 They deem me daft thus ever sighing!

Oh, could I, as a sailor lad,  
 Across the Arctic seas be flying !  
 For then, oh then, the scalding tear  
 That burns my cheek, would not be flowing ;  
 For I should sail with Alick dear,  
 Close to his heart when blasts were blowing !

## v.

The maniac windmill whirls its arms,  
 Like some weird giant winds defying !  
 The sea-birds scream their shrill alarms ;  
 The day in streaks of umber's dying.  
 The waves are swashing on the strand,  
 Or in the booming caverns roaming :—  
 Anon the tide leaves bare the sand,  
 And weedy pools lie in the gloaming !  
 The coast is barren, stern, and sad  
 As those dark shores where he is roving :—  
 And yet they wonder I am mad—  
 Mad with the strain of over-loving !  
 But, hark ! I hear the elfin bells !  
 Ah, Alick, soon these arms will fold thee !  
 In rippling chime their music swells,  
 And ring " He comes ! " as Alick told me !

## VI.

“ Ah yes he comes,” but o’er the sea  
The tempest shrieks in mad commotion.  
The lightning darts along the lee,  
And melts in one the sky and ocean.  
Alas! those tongues of molten steel  
Light up a wreck on breakers driven,  
And on the deck pale spectres kneel  
And breathe their last despair to Heaven!  
The while—how strange—those fairy bells  
Steal softly o’er the foaming water;  
From out the din their music swells  
Like rippling flutes ’midst war and slaughter.  
But on the shore a pale corpse lies  
With fond arms round no more to sever,  
And on the gale this requiem flies,  
“ In death my Alick’s mine for ever.”

## THE THREE PHASES.

## PHASE I.

FAR o'er the azure depths, in which the earth  
Reposes now as at its primal birth,  
Imagination takes a daring flight,  
And penetrates to realms remote and bright.  
Thought chases thought, and in the crowded race,  
A bridge of beauty quivers over space ;  
An arc created in youth's golden dreams,  
As fragile as the floating web which seems  
A skein unravell'd from an iris-bow,  
To glisten on the summer air below.  
But though so fragile, o'er it fancies fly,  
And mock the limits of earth's boundary ;  
Within the furnace of the brain they burn,  
And darting upward into space, return  
Bright with attrition of some lustrous sphere,  
Or laden with the treasures gather'd there.

Or some have caught, from wing of astral breeze,  
The mystic whispers of the Pleiades,  
And then, deep-shadow'd in youth's glances, dwell  
Those dreamy looks the painter loves so well.  
But other fancies from his teeming brain,  
Fly o'er the void, and ne'er come back again :  
They find within that far ethereal sea,  
Beauty with theirs, in strange affinity ;  
A force mysterious lures them to the shore,  
And they are lost to youth for evermore.  
But soon these visions mystical depart,  
And Love assumes his throne to rule the heart ;  
And though a despot, yet his soft control,  
Like sweet bells, chimes within an inner soul.  
Deep, deep within, a bliss he bids arise,  
And all things range themselves in melodies ;  
The streams of life to music's murmurs flow,  
And on youth's hearts there falls "love's purple glow."  
Then do emotions new exert their might,  
And song translates the language of delight ;  
E'en as the sky-lark bathes her soaring wings  
In balmy waves of air, and, ravish'd, sings  
In wanton joy—so youth, with passion new,  
Sends up his glad notes to the heaven's blue ;

Sends up his wild notes upon pinions strong,  
 And scatters happiness in shreds of song.  
 Yes, sweetest Eoline, he sings to thee,  
 In accents soft as that low melody  
 Which evening breezes whisper in the ear  
 Of bending reeds, when not a sound is near.

#### PHASE II.

Oh man, arise, before thee lies the goal ;  
 Arise ! cast off the lethargy of soul,  
 Which poesy and song around thee fling ;  
 Put by thy trembling lyre, thy harp unstring,  
 Bid music cease, and fold thy poet's wing :  
   Life is the call.

Thy manhood doth demand a sterner theme  
 Than beauteous phantoms of thy early dream ;  
 Turn thy rapt vision from yon distant star,  
 Recal thy mystic thoughts, which wander far,  
 For here on teeming earth thy duties are :  
   Here stand or fall.

Wring from the stirring world some prize to prove  
 That thou art worthy of that higher Love,



Who dwelleth not for aye in Paphian bowers,  
But gathers riches from the toiling hours,  
And binds his brow with laurels, not with flowers :

Do thou the same.

Forge on the glowing anvil of the world,  
Some manacle for vice. Thy flag, unfurl'd,  
Let flutter wide where human energy  
Enrols within its ranks the brave, the free,  
For action is life's noblest poesy,

And work is fame.

The ceaseless toil of muscle and of mind  
Illumines life, and lights and leads mankind.  
Then, onward ever ! and amidst the din,  
With hope and strong heart plunge thou fearless in,  
And Fortune's guerdon thou shalt surely win

For Eoline.

Then, if thou wilt, in leisure's peaceful hours,  
Find happy solace in thy minstrel powers.  
And oh ! when life has borne good fruit for thee,  
How doubly sweet those tender words will be  
Which woo, and win her with her melody,

And she is thine !

**PHASE III.**

Deeply we have quaff'd together,  
Passion fervent, love sincere ;  
But the chalice is not empty—  
Some hath gone, but much is here.

In vain the world has brought us sorrow,  
You have been my solace true ;  
Every wave of adverse fortune  
Hath been bravely stemm'd by you.

Estasy of joys departed  
Leaves behind no feeble light ;  
Chasten'd love is love augmented—  
There is strength in gentle might.

What though now a line of silver  
Glistens in your raven hair ?  
In playful mood, with loving finger,  
Time too soon hath placed it there.

At this moment, orange-blossoms  
'Midst your tresses seem to twine,  
And their perfume lingers sweetly  
Round the brow of Eoline.

Yet, dear love, 'tis twenty summers  
Crown the term of wedded life,  
And garlands hang all down the vista,  
Placed there by a perfect wife.

## LOVE AND PRIDE.

LOVE and Pride together rambled  
O'er the fields one sunny day ;  
Through the May-thorn hedges scrambled ;  
Love loud-laughing all the way.

How they came to rove together  
Matters little—perhaps because  
Grassy meads, and glorious weather,  
Lured them forth—but so it was.

Cupid, as a pinion'd rover,  
Topp'd the fences without fear ;  
Pride, all wingless, stumbled over,  
Getting many a scratch and tear.

Cupid laugh'd at Pride's debasement,  
Who, each time he felt a thorn,  
Sternly asked Love what the chase meant,  
Hiding fear, but showing scorn.

Love laugh'd more at each disaster ;  
And plucking fragrant bits of May,  
Skipp'd, and ran, and flew the faster,  
Laughing still at Pride's dismay.

“ I have wings,” exclaim'd the urchin,  
“ Why didst thou set out with me ?  
I shall leave thee soon the lurch in,  
With thy weight of dignity.

“ Cast the load at foot of this hill,  
'Tis a log which none should wear ;  
Saving those who feed on thistle,  
Known by bray and length of ear.

“ Ah, thou wilt not !—then these brambles”  
(Here he pluck'd some briars sweet)  
“ Bind thee to me, and thy rambles  
Last for ever—no retreat.

“ I will lead thee as Titania  
Leads the night-dance o'er the lea,  
I will cure thee of thy mania,  
Pride, of smiling scorn on me !

“ I will lead thee as the fay queen  
Leads the night-dance o’er the lea ;  
I will bind thee with the gay green  
Bramble chains, I weave for thee.

“ Seeing, some folks say’s believing,  
Watch me how I ply my art ;  
Bonds like these which I am weaving  
Are not bonds which bind the heart.

“ Let the secret rest between us,  
Watch me how my art I ply :  
The trick was taught by Mother Venus  
When a Paphian infant I.”

As he sang, he ran and flutter’d ;  
Pride not speaking all the while ;  
Something now and then he mutter’d,  
Looking on with haughty smile.

Love at length with nimble fingers  
Wove the fetters strong and light,  
And while his stern companion lingers,  
Casts them round, and draws them tight !

Pride, made captive by young Cupid,  
What to utter scarcely knew,  
He first look'd grand, then very stupid,  
As Pride is ever wont to do.

“ I have thee !” cried his young tormentor,  
“ Thorns are nothing new to thee,  
Grumble not sir, be content, or  
I will never set thee free.

“ Why not break the fragile fetter ?  
Ah, thou canst not !—try again,  
Art than force is often better—  
S-o-ft-ly, it is near in twain.

“ Gently, lest the thorns molest thee,  
So, thou hast it !—vain endeavour !  
Magic manacles invest thee,  
I alone the links could sever.

“ But I will not, thou art bound, sir,  
Firmly, though by weakest thong,  
Lash'd to Cupid like a hound, sir,  
Beast and Beauty rove along.

“ Now we'll rest, for both are weary,  
Sit thee by this river's side,  
How thou lov'st me ! or so near me  
Thou wouldst never come, dear Pride.”

Mocking thus, with folded pinion,  
Love sat down upon the brink,  
Laughing still at his dominion  
Over Pride, then stoop'd to drink.

As he did so, Pride complying  
With the hardships of the case,  
Stoop'd with Cupid, who, espying  
Bright reflections of each face,

Cried, “ Why thou art twin with Cupid,  
See, thou'rt quivering by my side,  
For the waters, calm and lucid,  
Mirror Cupid, mirror Pride.

“ Now I stoop—and so dost thou too,  
See again our figures there ;  
Bend again—again we bow to  
Love and Pride—a pretty pair !



“ Oh, what fun ! my dearest mother,  
How I wish that thou couldst see  
Pride obliged his pride to smother,  
And compell'd to mimic me !”

Pride bore well the boy's reviling,  
But it rankled in his thought,  
And a kind of inward smiling  
Hinted of some purpose wrought.

Cupid but of mischief thinking,  
Heeded not the warning look,  
And, refresh'd with rest and drinking,  
Started up to cross the brook.

With outstretch'd wings to aid his leaping,  
He back retired a step or so,  
And sulky Pride, his counsel keeping,  
Seem'd prepared to follow too.

So Cupid shouted, “ Now be steady,  
Start, sir, when I cry, Away ;  
Once—twice—thrice—prepare, make ready,  
Away !—not so, oh stop, I pray !”

In vain he calls, for both had started,  
And when they near'd the river's side,  
Pride stopp'd short, then nimbly darted  
With the boy within the tide.

Cupid sank, then rose and flutter'd,  
Till his wings, all dripping wet,  
Soon grew useless ; then he splutter'd,  
Sinking deeper, deeper yet.

Sinking deeper, for the fetter  
Now refused to set *him* free,  
And Pride, to teach him manners better,  
Dipp'd him, as we often see—

Lady Neptune's children laving  
From machines in beachy row,  
When amidst their shrieks and raving,  
Bubble, splutter—in they go.

Cupid's cheeks grew pale as lily  
Dripping with the dew of morn,  
And within Pride's arms, so still he  
Lay, that life seem'd almost gone.

But a sigh and gentle quiver  
Proved that heart of Love is strong,  
So Pride from out the silver river  
Stept and laid him gently down.

He laid him where the sun was shining  
Warm below and bright above ;  
And Phœbus, seeing Cupid pining,  
Dried the boy—and tasted Love !

Then the roses, fresh as ever,  
Mantled o'er his checks again,  
So Pride soft whisper'd — “ Please to sever,  
Cupid dear, the galling chain.”

With feeble hands, Love took the fetter  
Which till now had bound the two,  
And pouting, mutter'd — “ There now, get a-  
Way, 'tis broke, so Pride, adieu !

“ Adieu ! adieu ! and if thou meet me  
In this mead where oft I rove,  
I beg with distant bow thou'lt greet me,  
Nor throw cold water upon Love.

“ Boast not of the cruel measure  
Thou hast used to set thee free,  
But try thyself when thou hast leisure  
The system of hydropathy.

“ Adieu ! adieu ! most poignant sorrow  
Will soon within thy heart be born ;  
Now Pride upholds thee, but to-morrow  
Pain will take the place of scorn.”

The last few words were like a sound  
Of music fading through the air ;  
An iris seem'd to melt around,  
Shedding lustre everywhere.

An odour linger'd, for the fragrant  
Words he spoke were sweet as May,  
And Pride, half-pausing, saw the Vagrant  
Swathed in light, then melt away.

Yes, he rose to blissful bowers,  
Rose up through the ether tide,  
And, welcomed back by rosy Hours,  
Soon forgot the world and Pride.

But Pride, alas ! not soon forgetting  
All the smiles which late had shone  
O'er his path like sunlight setting,  
As Love predicted—sorrow'd on.

So much, indeed, he took to grieving,  
That sharp regrets did rankle sore,  
And bitter was the forced believing,  
That Love had fled for evermore.

But the very tears which started,  
Though reluctant and but few,  
Changed his nature, and imparted  
Feelings altogether new.

The ice of Pride, though slowly thawing  
In the sun of memory sweet,  
Work'd a secret spell for drawing  
Love again from his retreat.

And once again the sun was glancing  
In the stream I named but now,  
And golden eddies bright were dancing  
To the music of its flow.

Pride was there—reflections bitter  
Setting bilious fluids free,  
When all at once, a merry titter  
Roused him from his reverie.

And then he saw a flying dragon—  
Dragon-fly, I mean to say—  
And a Boy, without a rag on,  
Held the insect-king at bay.

Lightly vaulting from the saddle,  
And jerking off the magic reins,  
“By Jove!” he cried, “such speed doth addle  
Even my immortal brains.

“However, Fly, thou’st done thy duty,  
So haste thee to the Cyprian shore,  
And Psyche tell—dear soul of beauty!  
I return to dine at four.”

Pride surprised, beheld before him  
The roguish son of beauty’s queen,  
And the sight did much restore him  
To his haughty look and mien.

(For 'tis true, that if we sorrow  
 For young Love our wounds to heal,  
 When we win him, then we borrow  
 Mask of Pride, to joy conceal.)

“Nay, Sir Pride,” cried Cupid, laughing,  
 “Frown no more—I know thy heart,  
 And since I come from nectar quaffing,  
 I'm in the mood to heal thy smart.

“I come to say we'll roam together  
 When again the sun shall glow ;  
 But, I swear, no magic tether  
 Will I ever round thee throw.

“In *idea* I like to follow  
 Sunny streamlets as they glide ;  
 But I find my friend Apollo  
 Warmeth not the under tide.

“Who could think such surface smiling  
 Hid a death's embrace beneath :  
 With seeming light and warmth beguiling,  
 Its gets one down and stops the breath.

“ It likes me not, and so my oath, sir,  
    Again I take to bind thee never ;  
And, being free, I think that both, sir,  
    May spend a pleasant day together.”

Pride uprose, and, smiling, patted  
    Cupid on his beauteous wings,  
And with a patron's air he chatted  
    To young Love about such things,

As much concerns the sighing lover  
    And the bashful maiden too ;  
But now my task and lay are over,  
    I have nothing left to do,

Except to add—my simple ditty  
    Doth a little moral hide ;  
Which hints, if maidens show no pity,  
    Binding Cupid fast to Pride,

Why Pride will try his hand at slaughter ;  
    And though, 'tis true, Love ne'er can die,  
Yet he liketh not cold water,  
    So he is compell'd to fly.



He *may* come back, if soft emotion  
    Warms the heart and dewes the eyes ;  
He *may* sail back upon the ocean  
    Caused by tears, and toss'd by sighs :

But at best 'tis doubtful whether  
    Love 'midst storms will oft return.  
The ice which made him stretch his feather  
    Makes the way back, bleak and stern.

Thus, ye lovely Angel-flowers  
    Made to dry the saddest tear,  
Let the young God bless thy bowers,  
    Pride discreetly standing near :

For his presence is but proper,  
    Keeping Love in decent bounds,  
Especially when lovers pop a  
    Question made of trembling sounds.

So, ye lovely Angel-flowers  
    Blooming in this world of clay,  
Let the Boy, at proper hours,  
    In with Pride, and both may stay.

## LOVE'S ASTRONOMY.

## Un Concerto.

## I.

I ANTHÈ my darling, the pale moon is keeping  
 Her vigil on high while the nightingales sing;  
 The Earth in her beauty is tranquilly sleeping,  
 While cluster'd to guard it, are stars in a ring.

## II.

They say look to Zenith, and there ever beaming  
 Are golden-eyed stellar orbs, pensive with love;  
 But below at Antipodes, Nadir is teeming,  
 The East and the West, too, are gemm'd as above.

## III.

No question our Earth is the centre of Heaven,  
 And stars are battalions around us at night;  
 Their watch-fires are lighted, the pass-word is given,  
 And we all see *here* is their bivouac's light.

## IV.

To me, I confess, 'tis an exquisite pleasure,  
Each eve when that camp of the mighty appears,  
To fancy I list to a heavenly measure,  
As planets march out to "the music of spheres."

## V.

And do we not see, too, on Summer's night clearly,  
A meteor drop down from the ranks in the sky;  
We call it a shooting star, but it is really  
A runaway spirit escaping on high.

## VI.

A spirit of evil entranced with thy beauty,  
Attempts on the bloom of its freshness to light;  
But discover'd in time by the sentry on duty.  
He saves my Ianthè, and chastens the sprite.

## VII.

I own I am puzzled, if e'er I endeavour  
To tell what becomes of the stars in the day;  
And I cannot account for the fact, that whenever  
The sun is seen rising they all run away.

## THE FATE OF ACTÆON.

## DAY-BREAK.

**A**URORA rises from old Ocean's arms  
 Suffused with blushes, and array'd in grace :  
 And Instrons Sol, enamour'd of her charms,  
     Deepens her roses with his warm embrace.  
 Thus glowing colours greet the coming day,  
     Streaking the east with bright and varying dyes,  
 Which, as they change their hue, dissolve away,  
     And fade from Phœbus as he mounts the skies.  
 Then Nature, grateful for the fresh'ning hour,  
     Her daily tribute for the blessing pays,  
 And breathes an odour from each op'ning flower,  
     And birds give forth in choral song their praise.  
 And, iris-mirrors, tremble on each bough  
     Dew-drops—the gems of morning's lovely gear,  
 And music from Æolian whispers now  
     Is borne upon the perfumed fresh'ning air.

Oh ! that some voice more eloquent than mine  
 Would sing the glories of sweet healthful morn ;  
 An hour it was that saw a birth divine :  
 For this bless'd time beheld Hygeia born.  
 But now my lay a diff'rent tone must take ;  
 And hark ! that huntsman's echo in yon dell  
 Reminds me of the strain I must awake,  
 And bids me leave a theme beloved so well.

## THE WOOD-KING.

King of the woodlands, foremost in the chase,  
 Each grove's thy home, each dell thy dwelling-place ;  
 Thy sovereign sway the subject wood-gods own—  
 The sky, thy canopy—the bank, thy throne.  
 Thy council in the shelter'd glens debate,  
 Thy bow and buskins, symbols of thy state.  
 The ensign of thy monarchy,—thy spear ;  
 Thy trophies, tusks and antlers of the deer ;  
 The dancing stream,—thy never-failing mine,  
 Where jewels countless in the sunbeams shine ;  
 Thy tributes levied not, but freely paid  
 By ev'ry Faun and Satyr of the glade.  
 Thy couch, the mossy turf, where shelt'ring trees  
 Call forth a melody from ev'ning's breeze—

For their resistance, as the sweet wind blows,  
Produces music for thy calm repose.  
King of the woodlands ! happy is thy lot ;  
The cares of empires' kings approach thee not.  
'Tis thou, Actæon, art this woodland king,  
Whose praises ev'ry Dryad loves to sing.  
Thou art this monarch of the wood domain,  
Whom sighing Oreads love, but love in vain.  
Arise, Actæon, on thy buskins brace ;  
Arise, Actæon, to the healthful chase ;  
Across thy chest the well-charged quiver fling ;  
Actæon is indeed the huntsman king !

## THE CHASE.

Hark ! from yon wiry brake that well-known strain  
Tells thee the scent lies freshly o'er the plain.  
The game is roused, and at the welcome sound  
Thy glad voice answers cheerily around.  
Those silver notes on morning's breezes fling,  
And bid in ev'ry dell the echoes ring.  
Forward, Actæon ! forward, or the game  
Finds shelter in yon brake to 'scape thy aim.  
Thy flying feet scarce touch the moss-clad ground,  
And hardly brush the pendent dew-drops round ;

But for thy arms, thou seem'st a flying god  
 Pursuing some coy Dryad of the wood.  
 Ah ! why relax thy speed ? Why is thy breast  
 Against the smooth bark of that dark tree press'd ?  
 Why does Actæon thus his figure hide ?  
 Thy spear is clasp'd, thy bow is thrown aside ;  
 Why thus transfix'd, with lips so firm compress'd  
 No breath escapes from forth thy hard-held chest ;  
 No muscle moves, and thou dost now appear,  
 Some guardian statue of that yew-tree there.  
 But hark ! that scarcely-heard and distant call,  
 And crisping in yon brake, explains it all ;  
 The monster is about to break his lair,  
 The close wood moves, the grunt of angry fear  
 Grows louder as he nears the thicket's verge ;  
 The yelling hounds compel him to emerge ;  
 Quicker than thought is poised the ready spear,  
 Which like a meteor glances through the air.  
 Unerring is the arm that launch'd that dart,  
 It strikes the grisly boar, and finds his heart.

## THE FOUNTAIN.

Near sweet Gargaphia's vale a fountain springs,  
 Where Zephyrs love to dip their perfumed wings ;

Where poppies and the dittany<sup>1</sup> abound,  
And all bright flow'rets sweetly bloom around.  
Upon the bosom of the bubbling stream,  
'Midst twining shrubs intruding sun-rays gleam,  
And through the trellis of the leafy shade  
A quiv'ring shadow on the brook is made.  
A verdant bank sweeps sloping to its brink,  
Where amorous doves come flutt'ring down to drink.  
The bending hyacinth sighs sweetly here,  
And birds of gaudy plumage paint the air.  
On all sides shelt'ring trees their branches raise  
To screen its beauties from the common gaze.  
Few mortals e'er disturb this lovely spot,  
And e'en the wand'ring huntsman knows it not.

## DIANA AND HER NYMPHS.

At that sweet time when graceful morn unfolds  
The dewy pearls which in her lap she holds;  
Beside this stream reposed a maiden band,  
Whose undeck'd limbs an unseen Zephyr fann'd;  
But the light waving of their golden hair  
And moving of his wings reveal'd him there.  
Some twine in listless mood the flow'ry braid,  
And cast it in the brook as soon as made,

<sup>1</sup> These flowers were sacred to Diana.



And watch it floating down the limpid stream,  
As smoothly gliding as their own life's dream.  
Others rise dripping from the streamlet's waves,  
Like Naiäds stepping from their crystal caves.  
Some their fair locks in heavy fillets twine,  
Others in simple knots their hair confine.  
Some round their form the fragile vesture place,  
And on their snowy feet the buskins brace:  
This, with the cestus, and their hunting gear,  
In Dian's train the lovely nymphs declare.  
And where, oh chaste Diana! where art thou,  
Surely amidst thy sweet companions now?  
Not half so joyous would they sport and play,  
If thou, fair huntress queen, wert now away!  
And see, from forth that half-conceal'd alcove  
She in immortal loveliness doth move.  
A crescent on her radiant brow is seen,  
But needed not to stamp the maiden Queen.  
It glistens o'er her forehead wondrous fair,  
Of brightness made, for 'tis no substance there.  
The radiant glance from forth her heaven-lit eyes  
Perforce in every heart bids passion rise;  
And yet, when risen, it is but born to die  
Such the strange influence is of chastity.  
Her form is all disrobed—her sweet undress  
Discloses all her simple loveliness.

No conscious look she wears to mar the charm—  
Blushes denote a mind apprised of harm.  
But now upon the streamlet's verge she stands,  
Her tresses gather'd in her ivory hands,  
Half shrinking as she feels the water's lips  
Bedew the lovely foot she partly dips.  
But ah ! what means that start ? her smile hath flown,  
And o'er her form a vesture quick is thrown.  
She stands erect, as though some sudden fear  
Had pierced her bosom and transfix'd her there.  
Her nymphs alarm'd, in quick disorder fly,  
And wake the woodlands with their piteous cry ;  
Confused they seek the shelter of the grove,  
But yet the heavenly maid disdains to move.  
The smiles which brighten'd her sweet face but now  
Are fled, and anger darkens o'er her brow.

## THE CRIME.

Behold, through yonder trees a huntsman's seen  
With rapture gazing on the lovely queen ;  
The breaking of those boughs betrays him there ;  
But he, alas ! knows not the danger near.  
Although the cause of all that strange dismay,  
He knows not that he frights those nymphs away ;

The cry he hears not of the wailing band,  
So rapt in admiration does he stand.  
Bold huntsman, fly ! thou hast no time to lose ;  
Fly this retreat while thou hast time to choose ;  
Oh be not blinded with the dazzling sight,  
'Tis certain death such deep, intense delight ;  
For dear life's sake pass not that sylvan screen,  
'Tis fatal to approach th' immortal queen.  
Alas ! he heeds not, for his raptured sight  
Had ne'er beheld a form so wondrous bright !  
In fairest dreams, when brightest visions bless,  
Ne'er had he pictured such rare loveliness.  
Unmindful of her stern and angry glance,  
He sees her beauty, and he dares advance :  
He rashly ventures past that sylvan bound,  
Which forms a zone to guard the spot around ;  
And then no sooner does he tread the glade,  
Than strength deserts him, and his senses fade ;  
His blood, erst dancing with delight, congeals,  
That maiden's awful glance his fate reveals.

## DIANA'S REVENGE.

Speechless the goddess mark'd the huntsman's gaze,  
Nor scarcely moved except to higher raise

The slender garment o'er her throbbing breast ;  
And yet so thin and vapour-like the vest,  
So close its airy folds her limbs embraced,  
Through the light web her beauty could be traced.  
But when she views the hardy youth invade  
The woody bound'ry of her sacred shade ;  
When she observes him gazing on her face,  
And yet unblinded by the heav'nly grace ;  
All her celestial attributes she wears,  
Her dazzling immortality declares :  
His fate in awful silence does she cast,  
Athwart her mind his doom severe has pass'd :  
No words pronounce the stern, unheard decree,  
The goddess wills it, and the Fates agree.  
Would that the sequel were as like a dream ;  
Thy hapless fate thus as a vision seem.  
E'en as it is, the wondering huntsman's glance  
Shows that he deems it some delusive trance ;  
But yet the trees, the lawn, the rippling stream,  
Tell him, alas ! too truly, 'tis no dream.  
His yelling hounds in full and wak'ning cry,  
Tell him his comrades and the game are nigh.  
Fain would he call, but ah ! he vainly tries,  
A mournful note alone comes forth in sighs ;

Those piteous tones alone his anguish tell,  
While the fierce pack approach with frantic yell.  
He trembles at the sound—that once-loved cry  
Bids him with fearful menaces to fly.  
Fain would he leave the mystic spot—yet strange,  
His nature and his form appear to change,  
And as he struggles with the awful throes,  
Nearer and nearer to the stream he goes,  
And sees reflected in that mirror there,  
No more Actæon, but a timid deer.  
A conscious horror chills his very blood,  
The cry grows louder in the echoing wood ;  
On come the dogs, a gloom falls o'er his soul,  
And down his anguish'd cheek the large tears roll ;  
Death's awful coming shade he trembling feels,  
The dogs are close,—now at his very heels ;  
The foremost pulls him bleeding to the ground,  
Ah, stern Diana ! 'twas his fav'rite hound ;  
The rest yell round—his quiv'ring life is o'er,  
Their fangs they dye deep in Actæon's gore.

Weep all ye dark-clad trees, lament ye now,  
Hang tear-drops on your every leaf and bough ;

Ye flow'rs that saw the loved Actæon die,  
Give deeper than your wont the fragrant sigh ;  
Ye glist'ning dews that tremble on each spray,  
Fall to the earth in drops of deep dismay.  
Oh, lovely morn, of which I sang before,  
Wear not the happy smile which then you wore :  
Ye crystal springs, that murmur as ye flow,  
Give as ye glide protracted notes of woe.  
Weep, every Dryad of the mourning wood,  
Weep, ev'ry Faun, weep, ev'ry sylvan God;  
Weep, ev'ry Nereid of the crystal rill,  
And with your copious tears the stream o'erfill.  
Ye dark green cypress, hang your heads in grief,  
Bid sorrow bend o'er ev'ry drooping leaf ;  
Ye warbling birds, let notes of joy be o'er,  
Sing your complaint—Actæon is no more !

## COLUMBINE MAY-DAY.

## Song.

## I.

COLUMBINE May-day, welcome art thou,  
Clusters of blossoms circle thy brow ;  
Brightly the Sun-God burnishes earth,  
Lightly the church bells peal at thy birth ;  
Dear one, fair one, Columbine sweet,  
Dance, and the May flowers spring at thy feet.

## II.

The streamlets reflect the blue of the sky,  
And down in their depths seems a heaven to lie ;  
Anon the light breezes ripple the stream,  
Then the reflex is gone, like the breath of a dream.  
Dear one, fair one, Columbine sweet,  
Dance, and the May flowers spring at thy feet.

## III.

Harlequin Green-Spring<sup>1</sup> comes with his wand,  
Spangled with dew-drops, seeking thy hand ;  
His luscious young lips, love's lessons teach,  
And kisses translate it better than speech ;  
Dear one, fair one, Columbine gay,  
Harlequin Green-Spring wins thee to-day.

## IV.

The gold-belted bee pretending he brings  
A message of love on his mendicant wings,  
Asks leave of the buds as a lover entreats  
In the slightest salute, then rifles their sweets :  
Dear one, fair one, Columbine soon,  
Thy garlands will drop in the lap of young June.

<sup>1</sup> Vertumnus.



## SONG OF BACCHUS.

TIME: EVENING GRADUALLY DRAWING TOWARDS NIGHT. THE MÆNADES ARE SURROUNDING A RUSTIC SHRINE OF BACCHUS OFFERING LIBATIONS, AND CHANTING TO HIS PRAISE.

THE fumes of ruby wine arise,  
Sending the soul to light their eyes,  
Around their temples tendrils cling,  
Whilst their melodious voices sing  
Praises of the sparkling wine,  
And Evœ ! is the shout divine.

On, Bacchæ on, my Mænades advance,  
With ivory feet that twinkle in the dance :  
With flowing tresses loosen'd to the wind.  
With zone of ivy and the oak entwined ;  
Choir of fair dames, raise your sweet voices high,  
While Evœ, Evœ, is the joyful cry.

Kiss with your snowy feet the grateful ground,  
And wine, bright wine, shall instant flow around ;  
In gurgling streamlets shall it course the plain,  
And, whilst my orgies last, shall there remain ;  
So sweetly to the ev'ning breezes fling  
Your dulcet notes, and Evoc, Evoc, sing.

The dappled skins, across their shoulders thrown,  
Wave as they dance, or kiss the smilax zone ;  
The thyrsus, circling in their lovely hand,  
Brings milk or honey from the yielding land ;  
No music's wanted save the silvery sound  
Of Evoc, Evoc, which they breathe around.

The Fauns, delighted at the warbling strain,  
Peep from their delves, and then withdraw again ;  
The closing flow'rets in their shelter'd beds  
Re-ope their petals, and re-lift their heads—  
For could they seek repose whilst that soft song  
Of Evoc ! on the air is borne along.

The fumes of ruby wine arise,  
Sending their soul to light their eyes ;  
Around their temples tendrils cling,  
Whilst their melodious voices sing

Praises of the sparkling wine,  
And Evœ! is the shout divine.

But list—they know, sweet Mænades, I'm here,  
Hark to their voices which enchant the air.

## CHORUS OF MÆNADES.

Come, strew the earth with its beautiful flowers,  
The twinkling stars will peep;  
Apollo has quench'd his golden showers  
Afar in the western deep.

*(A voice heard.)*

Softly change those quickly moving measures,  
Dithyrambus hears the strain;  
Fling on his shrine your welcomed treasures,  
Then resume those notes again.

Come, strew the earth with its beautiful flowers,  
The twinkling stars will peep;  
Apollo has quench'd his golden showers  
Afar in the western deep.

*(A voice heard.)*

Again that sound is softly borne along,  
List, Bacchæ, list ! it is no mortal song ;  
Raptured is Nature as the tuneful strain  
Comes with the breezes o'er the fragrant plain ;  
Is it a hymn to sweet departing day,  
What are those dulcet notes, quick, Bacchæ, say ?

It is our God accepts our rites divine,  
Then pour the rich libations on his shrine ;  
Raise high in silver sounds the Bacchic lay,  
While the sweet rites to Dithyrambus pay.  
Press'd with the snowy hands the grape shall bleed,  
And send its luscious fragrance o'er the mead ;  
Pour milk and honey, and the rich perfume  
Crush'd from the spicy cassia in its bloom ;  
Around the yew tree's vermeil berries fling,  
And high in silver sounds of Bacchus sing !  
Oh ! happy Mænades, the God approves the lay,  
Then high your voices raise in Bacchic symphony.

So, rest, Bacchæ, rest ! the Pleiades peep,  
Like gems on the Persian vest ;  
Bacchus will watch while his Mænades sleep,  
And breezes will fan them to rest.

## POT-POURRI.

A SUMMER'S DAY FABLE.

**A** LOVELY Rose, nor red nor white,  
 But of a tint between the two—  
 A tint to me more exquisite  
 For roses than all other hue,  
 And which has been described so well  
 As like the lining of a shell—  
 Indulged, within her lone retreat,  
 In converse with herself so sweet,  
 That passing near you would have thought  
 Amidst her leaves some summer sprite  
 His lingual lore in music taught,  
 And lay in ambush of delight.  
 And if you ask the reason why  
 This gift of speech so strangely given :  
 'Twas perhaps because, with loving sigh,  
 She asked the boon direct of Heaven.

But this I know—she lived alone,  
    Away, away from other flowers ;  
And maidens by themselves are prone  
    To spend as best they may the hours ;  
To clear away their mental fog,  
If need be, in a monologue.  
And thus she spoke, one sunny day,  
And I translate as best I may.

“ I wonder that, with all my beauty,  
In life I’ve no especial duty,  
Except to feel that I am fair,  
And idly scent the summer air.  
Sure Nature never meant that I  
Should live in inutility :  
Should never feel the longing greed  
To do at least one worthy deed.  
I’m sure she cannot ; so suppose  
I turn a missionary rose,  
And try to make all flowers that blow  
As good as I, or nearly so ;  
To bid the children of the earth  
Feel and lament their humble birth,  
Reminding them from smallest seed  
Magnolias spring—and yet the weed !

At all events, I'll try my power,  
And send my belted knight, the bee,  
With message to each floral bower,  
And kiss of honey-dew from me :  
To tell them I am not content  
To live an useless ornament ;  
But that I feel I ought to teach,  
And from my leafy pulpit preach."

With this she paused, and, with a sigh,  
Seem'd for a moment lost in thought ;  
The while the wind, in passing by,  
The music of her voice had caught,  
And laughing up the sunlit vale,  
Bid Echo echo forth the tale  
How Rose, with lofty fervour fired,  
Spoke 'midst her leaves like one inspired.  
But she, unconscious that the breeze  
Had touch'd her lightly—then away,  
Continued still, in words like these,  
Her musical soliloquy,  
Continued to rehearse the speech  
By which she hoped to warn and teach :—

“ The Violets hide their purple heads  
*Too* bashfully within their beds ;  
Courage exists with self-respect,  
A truth they seldom recollect.

“ The Lilac’s scent is sweet, no doubt,  
But indiscreetly given out.  
Exclusiveness is often good,  
And maidens in a generous mood  
May grant too much : and thus to me  
The Lilac might more prudent be.

“ Then see the Lily, all in white,  
Her dress is surely far too slight ;  
What would censorious people say  
Of evening costume worn by day ?  
What would they think if damsels all  
Dress’d in the daytime for a ball ?

“ As for Carnations—if they move  
They have that vulgar scent of clove !  
And why do all their sisters think  
It right to dress in staring pink ?  
No tint is like the maiden’s blush ;  
Or even a still fainter flush,



Like that I wear, is best of all ;  
 For hues too bright the senses pall.

“ Next look at that dependent thing,  
 On stranger’s aid compell’d to cling—  
 The tribe we called *Convolvuli*—  
 Who climb and twist, I know not why ;  
 Far better self-reliant be.  
 And grow alone ‘ in fancy free.’

“ Talk of the *Daisy*’s modest mien !  
 A bolder minx was never seen ;  
 Think how she stares with all her might  
 Into the very face of light !

“ The *Blue-bell* hangs her pretty head  
 With modest gaze ; but then ’tis said  
 She droops the tender lid of truth  
 From some *faux pas* in early youth :  
 Some story how she shelter gave  
 To elfin renegade and slave,  
 Who, flying from *Titania*’s sway,  
 Beheld her on his headlong way,  
 And, falling prostrate at her feet,  
 Awoke within her belfry sweet

A chime of love. Alas ! 'twas hard,  
Thus only ending in an escapade.

“ But this is scandal and a shame,  
Though I know one I need not name,  
Who, when the honey-bee's about,  
Lets from her luscious prison out  
Mellifluous scent ; and then when he  
Alights to taste the luxury,  
She shrinks and shrivels at the touch,<sup>1</sup>  
Assuming prudence over much :  
Like some young damsel who pretends  
To modesty beyond her friends.

“ Then there's another even worse,  
Whose very sweetness is a curse ;  
A female traitress in her ways,  
Who smiling softly, yet betrays ;  
Who opes her ripe, delicious lip,  
And when Ephemera would sip  
(Those pretty, gaudy, short-lived things  
With little rainbows on their wings),  
She bids them enter her abode,  
And baits with mead the treacherous road ;

<sup>1</sup> Mimosæ tribe.

Then, once within, she letteth fall  
Her ivory trap, and kills them all!<sup>2</sup>

“ As for the Primrose, pretty dunce,  
We all know what her hue was once,  
But jealous of some idle fellow,  
Woke in the morning all in yellow !

“ Ah me ! I might go on for ever,  
And find some perfect flow’ret—never.  
So now to put in force my plan  
Of making converts where I can,  
And showing to my sisterhood  
The thorny path which leads to good.”

How Rose would have fulfill’d her task.

’Tis not for me to know or ask :

For chance ordain’d that near her grew

    A plant with prickles sharp and fine,

A plant beloved by very few,

    A sort of leafy porcupine,

A pungent acanaceous thing,

Which for a touch returns a sting ;

But, boldly grasp’d, no wound you’ll get

(Like ills of life when bravely met).

<sup>2</sup> Venus’s fly-trap.

Well, he had heard the Rose enlarge  
On foibles of the floral world,  
And wrathful at the shameful charge,  
His prickly lips indignant curled,  
And curling, thus in language bold  
His mind to Rose too harshly told :

“ Shame on you, maiden, for the view  
You take of all those lovely flowers,  
Born of the sunshine and the dew,  
And cherish'd by the loving hours !  
Shame for the many rifts you find,  
Pretending that you praise the while,  
Or, hinting errors undefined,  
Stab with your censure as you smile !

“ Do you not know, with all your grace  
And all the fragrance that you yield,  
You come of a degenerate race,  
The common dog-rose of the field ?  
As for yourself—of moon-rays born,  
You were at first but passing fair,  
Though, tinted by the crimson morn,  
You owe your beauty to her care.

“ Have you forgot the days of yore,  
The gentle, tender part you play'd,  
When brother, red with brother's gore,  
Of you their badge, and symbol made.  
Ha ! ha ! you shrink, and well you may :  
The names of Lancaster and York  
Should fill your bosom with dismay,  
And bid you tremble on your stalk ;  
Then, if you please remember this  
When next you speak in terms of scorn,  
That when you give the slightest kiss,  
You ever threaten with a thorn !  
Your beauty I could almost hate ;  
And e'en your perfume's naught to me,  
Since no attractions compensate  
For absence of humility.  
As for your blushes and your bloom,  
Another truth I'll tell to you,  
Try all you may, you'll ne'er assume  
A single shade of lovely blue.  
Why, even the Forget-me-not  
And little Woodbine of the glade,  
With azure beauty paint the spot,  
And love the sunshine or the shade.

“ And bright Cyānes ’midst the corn,  
And meek Lobelia, growing near,  
Were both, oh, Rose, cerulean born,  
And boast a garb you’ll never wear.  
So pray, vain maid, another time  
Respect your absent sisters’ fame ;  
Depreciation is a crime,  
And hypercritics come to shame !”

Poor tender Rose ! through every leaf  
She shudder’d at this stern address :  
In all her life such poignant grief  
Had never marr’d her loveliness.  
In all her life she never heard  
Such cruel lips so sternly speak ;  
And like a frighten’d, fluttering bird,  
She felt all powerless and weak.  
So weak, that when she tried to say  
She saw her fault, but yet must own  
Such savage speech was not the way  
To make a timid Rose atone,  
She could not form her words aright,  
And thrice essay’d, but all in vain ;  
Then in the arms of breezes light  
She swooned in “ aromatic pain :”

And fainting, fell upon the ground,  
    And scatter'd all her beauty there ;  
And loving soft airs swept around  
    And wept a requiem for the fair.

And now her sweet leaves are embalm'd—  
    Oh, happy thought!—embalm'd for me,  
In life her tender beauty charm'd,  
    In death she lives in Pot-pourri.

## CHRISTMAS BELLS.

RECITED BY MR. BELLEW AT THE WESTBOURNE HALL, AND  
OTHER PLACES.

**I**N broken notes of sound,  
The voice of distant bells  
Falls fitfully around,  
Borne o'er the rimey dells.

Anon in wailing tones  
It breaks against the breeze,  
Or in sad accents moans  
Amidst the shivering trees.

In fragments o'er the glades  
It falls, or floats aloft ;  
Then tremulously fades  
In echoes low and soft.



But other, nearer chimes,  
 In laughing octaves run,  
 In memory of old times,  
 And what the days have done.

Then changing, clang and wail,  
 Up in their prison high,  
 And sob, and groan, and rail,  
 At their captivity.

Ringling :—flinging wild notes everywhere !  
 Clanging :—hanging discord in the air !  
 Chiming :—rhyming words from brazen throat !  
 Pealing :—stealing o'er the meadows and the moat !  
 Dying :—sighing gently as a child !  
 Floating :—gloating o'er their tumult wild !  
 Swinging :—springing suddenly to life !  
 Surging :—urging nature into strife !  
 Laughing :—quaffing the sweet and eager air !  
 Groaning :—moaning in a weird note of despair !

Yes, how they sigh,  
 And seem to die,

But like expiring ember,  
At slightest breath,  
They leap from death,  
And wrestle with December.

Oh, 'tis strange,  
How they change,  
In rhythmus and in measure,  
Now tolling sad,  
Now almost mad,  
With throbbing pulse of pleasure.

But not long thus,—the ringers soon  
Will catch the proper metre,  
Staccato first; then rippling tune  
Grows every moment sweeter.

Away, away, the music flies,  
O'er mead, and wold, and river,  
Arpeggio movement shakes the skies,  
And makes the belfry quiver.

Away, away, the cheerful sound,  
Flies with its Christmas greeting,  
And laughs along the icy ground,  
Where snowdrops pale are peeping.

The Crocus hearing chimes of mirth,  
Puts on her brightest yellow,  
What cares she for the frosty earth,  
When peals ring out so mellow.

The blackbird, in a love-lorn mood,  
Is pecking at red berries,  
But hark ! those joy bells make her food  
As sweet as summer cherries.

In truth all Nature hears the strains,  
With heart of honest gladness ;  
They ring surcease of human pains,  
And ring—a death to sadness.

They ring of friendship, and the grasp  
Of hands in manly greeting ;  
They ring the softer tender clasp  
Of Love and Psyche meeting.

They ring oblivion of the years  
Whose sunset was in sorrow ;  
They drown in waves of sound, the fears  
That cloud the dawn to-morrow.

They ring the affluent table spread,  
They ring of that sweet maiden,  
Who comes with modest silent tread,  
With gifts for poor folk laden.

They ring in tones more sweet than all,  
Of Hopes the Cross has given,  
And then their glad notes rise and fall,  
Like Christmas bells in Heaven.

## IÖ AND ECHO.

STROPHE.

IÖ, sweet nymph ! each grace that could adorn  
 Was given to thee, that e'en high Jove  
 Felt the sharp pangs of burning love,  
 And bade thee quick to Lerna's grove :  
 But all his wishes thou repaid'st with scorn.—  
 Sweet suffering maid ! still Juno's vengeful eye  
 Mark'd thee the victim of her jealousy ;  
 Argus, earth-born, was sent to keep  
 Watch on thy ways, till lull'd to sleep  
 By Mercury's soft treach'rous strain,  
 Which closed his hundred eyes, and he was slain :  
 But still, sweet Iö, still not free from pain.  
 Sent from thy father's peaceful home,  
 In heifer's form compelled to roam,  
 Tortured by the brize's sting,  
 Which followed still thy wandering.

## ANTISTROPHE.

Daughter of Inachus, destined to bear  
 A progeny begot by heavenly Jove,  
 Still dost thou shed the peace-consuming tear?  
 Still in the gentle heifer's form dost move?  
 Sweet Iö, no,  
 Thy time of woe  
 Expired by Nile Canopic; thus  
 From thy sad stormy passage there  
 The strait was call'd the Bosphorus,<sup>1</sup>  
 And changed the term of ancient Rhea,  
 Which gulf in after-times shall be  
 Called from thy course th' Ionian sea.

Of Iö, sweetest Iö, sing,  
 To Iö tune the trembling string,  
 For Iö pour the tuneful song,  
 Borne on Ionian winds along,  
 'Till Echo wakes and gives again  
 Softly back the warbled strain.

<sup>1</sup> Bosphorus — passage of the heifer. — *Vide* Prometheus Chained.

## EPODE.

Ah, Echo, ah ! thy voice from out that dell  
 Tells how Love's dart once made thy bosom bleed,  
 And then soft sighs from out that bosom fell  
 That wafted fragrance to the flow'ry mead.  
 But now, alas ! thy voice alone remains,  
 A sad memorial of thy love-made pains.  
     Narcissus sigh'd, but not for thee;  
     Enamour'd of himself was he :  
     While gazing in the limpid brook  
     Himself for some soft Naiäd took.  
 Each time he stoop'd, she nearer came,  
     And almost kiss'd his vermeil lip ;  
 When he withdrew—she did the same,  
     Then near'd, as he approach'd to dip  
 His arms t' embrace the image there.  
     Poor youth ! the dancing stream,  
     Gilded by Apollo's beam,  
 And heedless of his heart-born tear,  
     Reflected fair Narcissus' charms,  
     But yielded not the shadow to his arms.  
 Still pined he on, till soft compassion came  
     And changed him to a lovely flower,

Which to this day still bears his name,  
And gives in summer's even hour,  
A perfume such as forth he sigh'd,  
When his own image his embrace denied.

But sorrow came to Echo's heart ;  
E'en Time, that healer of all pain,  
Could not assuage the rankling smart,  
He tried his power, but tried in vain.

She sorrow'd on—and like some lovely flower,  
Drooping for want of sunshine and the shower,  
Sigh'd forth her life—but such true love  
Could not without memorial be,  
And so in ev'ry dell and grove  
Is Echo's sweetest harmony.

In after-times, as now, her voice will still reply  
To ev'ry tuneful note, to ev'ry lover's sigh.

And now she wakes to Iö's praise,  
Responsive to the choral lays :  
Ev'ry dingle, ev'ry dell,  
Ev'ry fragrant heather bell,  
Hears soft Echo sweet reply,  
And dearly loves the minstrelsy.



## D E L A Y.

## Song.

THE golden hours are fleeting, Jane ;  
 The summer sweets are on the wane ;  
 With brown is tinged the waving grain,  
     Then why, O why delay ?  
 There's danger in the word, my love,  
 For life must ever onward move ;  
 Its sands this truth too surely prove,  
     By running out alway.

The fruit is on the bending bough,  
 But buds were there when first my vow,  
 Was breathed to thee. Then answered'st thou—  
     There *shall* be no delay.  
 Yet feather'd broods since then have flown,  
 The blackbird sings with mellow'd tone,  
 The fir-tree drops its dusky cone,  
     Full over-ripe to-day.

The soft air rustles through the wheat,  
As though to test, by contact sweet  
If Autumn will its task complete,  
    To ripen—not delay.

Amidst the stems, the corn-flowers lie,  
Their blue eyes watching poppies high;  
But neither bloom'd, dear love, when I  
    Confess'd to thee in May.

Come, an thou lov'st me, come with me;  
The bells shall wake with marriage glee,  
The clerk and parson clink their fee,  
    And both of them shall say:  
“ Was ever such poor guerdon given  
For licensing a man to Heaven;  
But bless them both, for they have riven  
    The monster called—Delay.”

## TWILIGHT.

THE light is waning, and the evening air  
Bids his loved flow'rets for the night prepare ;  
He roves amidst their petal cups, and sips  
The sweetest kisses from their dewy lips ;  
Or wipes the tear-drops from the lily's eyes,  
Or gathers odours as he onward flies ;  
Then rustling through the trees a last "good-bye,"  
Fades in the cadence of a plaintive sigh.  
The belted bee, with treasures all oppress'd,  
Unloads his sweets at home, and then—to rest ;  
The songsters hood-wing all their pretty heads,  
Snugly within their own made feather-beds ;  
But haply some lone robin wakes a strain,  
A hymn forgot—then folds his head again  
Within the lining of his soft warm wing,  
Bid by his mate mayhap to sleep, not sing.

The bat on velvet pinion flits unheard,  
Unearthly as the phantom of a bird.  
The distant streamlet, like a serpent lies,  
Torpid and dark, until the moon shall rise,  
Then, like a glist'ning snake, 'twill onward glide  
Its scales, the ripples of the silver tide.  
Both day and night, oh! twilight, own your charms,  
For as the day sinks gently in your arms,  
You greet her with the perfume of your breath,  
And reconcile her to a fragrant death;  
While on the other hand the night you greet  
With dewy spangles, and an odorous treat  
You spread upon the carpet of the earth,  
Sighing o'er death, yet welcoming a birth!  
Thus blending light and darkness into one,  
The shadows deepen, and the hours steal on;  
The dew-drops—tears for the departed day—  
You change to gems for night's nativity.

## THE SNOWDROP.

SET TO MUSIC BY T. P. KNIGHT.

## Song.

## I.

PALE daughter of the snow arise,  
 Awake to life with wondering eyes,  
     For ice-bound is thine home ;  
 On every side bright prisms gleam,  
 The drift lies soft in winter's beam,  
     A sea of sleeping foam.

## II.

Thou bloomest while thy sister flowers,  
 Await the warm and gala hours  
     Of almond-scented May :  
 And in thy robe of dainty white,  
 As if 'twere made of frozen light,  
     Smil'st on the shivering day.

## III.

A spear of ice on spray and stem  
Is there to guard each lustrous gem  
    Which flames in sunset's glow.  
But *thou* art bending towards the earth  
In marvel at thy magic birth,  
    A flow'ret from the snow.

## IV.

When Nature in her sternest mood  
Form'd rugged winter harsh and rude  
    She smiled ; for thou wert born ;  
But when in after-times she bade  
The summer sunlight flash the glade  
    She sigh'd ; for thou wert gone !

## V.

So Nature's tender child arise ;  
While floating from the tranquil skies  
    The snow-flakes fall around.  
Arise ! and take thy destined place  
An afterthought of Nature's grace  
    To deck the frozen ground.

## TO ILIA.

## Song.

## I.

PLACE that crystal cup of wine  
Near the taper burning bright ;  
See, a ruddy light doth shine,  
A ruby with a heart of light.

## II.

Every time the golden flame  
Wavers to the evening air,  
The crimson shadow does the same,  
Dancing here, and dancing there.

## III.

Haste, my love, with Chian wine,  
The taper is the beaming soul ;  
The glow it casts are thoughts divine,  
Darling Ilia, fill the bowl.

## IV.

When thy sighs of soft desire  
    Stir the roses round my brow,  
My senses quiver, and a fire  
    Dances through my veins as now.

## V.

Grapes shall weep with luscious tear,  
    The soul of love shall ravish'd be;  
Ravish'd by the Teian air,  
    In Lydian accents sung by thee.

## VI.

To-night I drain the chalice deep,  
    To Scythian<sup>1</sup> measure quaffing free;  
To-night the Byblian vine shall weep  
    To strains Ionic sung by thee.

<sup>1</sup> The Scythians were noted for their deep potations.



## I P H I G E N I A.

AGAMEMNON.

**S**TERN the decree which dooms a lovely child  
To pour her life-blood on the reeking shrine,  
All stain'd by bestial blood. Oh, ye just Gods,  
They call thee chaste Diana; sure thy heart  
Ne'er warm'd with love, or couldst thou thus command  
A maiden's blood, thy anger to assuage?  
I would not be irreverent, but sure  
The chastity of mind lies not in this.

ULYSSES.

And yet all Aulis breathes with pestilence;  
E'en to Eubœa the foul air extends,  
And Boreas by Æolus is sent  
To spread the dank contagion 'mongst our troops;  
For dainty Zephyr on his drooping wing,  
Would sicken ere he fann'd the noxious breeze

Which sends its blighting breath o'er all Bœotia.  
 Then canst thou pause, when by a woman's death  
 These ills may be averted, and the waves,  
 Which like the Cyclops' hammers beat against  
 Our rending ships, be calm'd? Hast thou forgot  
 The deep dishonour by young Paris done  
 To th' Atridæ's name, when at the court  
 Of injured Menelaus entertained!  
 Can then the Gen'ral of the Grecian troops,  
 Whose duty 'tis to urge them on to battle,  
 Pause for an instant while disorder rages  
 Amongst the very men he has to lead,  
 Whilst quick prevention of these ills is his?—  
 Re-kindle all thy soul's most noble blood,  
 For oh! remember, Agamemnon's name  
 Is one that must descend to after-ages,  
 With fame immortal, nor meriting the taunt  
 That soft affection in his nerveless heart,  
 Bade linger with disease the Grecian hosts!

AGAMEMNON.

Enough—no more is wanting, and my heart  
 Casts off a father's love, and cases it  
 In iron. Go bid the garlands be entwined  
 To deck the victim, let libations press'd

From earth's best fruits, be on the altar pour'd;  
 Despatch too by the swiftest birds the news  
 To Clytemnestra of her daughter's death.  
 No more—I pray no more ; my firm resolve  
 Hath pass'd, and take advantage of my will,  
 Or recollection of my sweet child's form  
 Will rush all o'er my heart, to make me snatch  
 The victim ere her blood shall purify,  
 The beast-stain'd altar where she trembling lies.

*(Chorus of officiating Dames. Iphigenia bound on the altar.)*

The blood of Agamemnon must be shed,  
 Ere stern Diana stays the foul disease,  
 And thus his daughter to the knife is led,  
 By death the virgin Goddess to appease.  
 Oh, sad our office, for so sweet a maid  
 Was ne'er before upon this altar laid.  
 Fair and as pure as sweet Castalia's stream,  
 How quickly vanish'd is thy young life's dream.  
 Thy trembling resignation more disarms  
 Our woful duty, than the piercing cries  
 Which erst have sounded to the vaulted skies ;  
 Oh, dreadful task to violate such charms !  
 The Oracle could scarce the tear refrain  
 When first the stern decree he gave,

And show'd by every sign his pain.

But that, alas! that could not save  
Thy sweet young life, or make the hard decree,  
Take from thy heart its load of misery.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Come, maidens, cease these useless tears,  
Her doom hath pass'd, and we no choice have left :  
Whilst we give way to trembling fears,  
Of strength of purpose is the soul bereft.  
Prepare we then, 'tis vain t' attempt to keep  
The shrinking victim from eternal sleep;  
And when stern fate's decree is pass'd—'tis wrong  
By slow suspense the evil to prolong.

CHORUS.

Ah, what is this! a lovely dappled hind  
Entwined within the sacrificial braid!  
Oh, gen'rous Goddess, the exchange is kind,  
For none hath sent this but the huntress-maid.  
The beaut'ous victim with the snow-white breast,  
Which heav'd uneven with her trembling life,  
Hath now in Taurica's fair dome a rest;  
How near th' escape from Atropos's knife!

Sweet virgin Goddess of the silver bow,  
Whose hair is braided lest the wanton wind  
Should bid unlicensed thy bright tresses flow,  
Unpleasing symbol to thy chasten'd mind ;  
But lovely huntress, in thy train appear  
The Oceanides with flowing hair,  
*Their* golden tresses unconfined,  
Stream as they chase the fleeting hind ;  
A fitting difference 'tween a Goddess born,  
And those who only her sweet train adorn.  
Then high in measured cadence raise  
The gentlest, sweetest, choral lays ;  
Sweet fragrance on the altar fling,  
In undulating measure sing  
To chaste Diana's praise.

## MAY-DAY.

DEAR scented May,  
This season, pray,  
Come deck'd in gear  
Which suits the year ;  
For you,  
In lieu  
Of green and blossom'd dress,  
Arrive too oft *en déshabille*,  
And look so comfortless,  
We feel  
That you've been made  
An April fool,  
And thus have come array'd  
In dress too cool.

If this year thus—I pray you quick return—  
To day's the first, it is not many miles—  
Go back, young May, and do in future learn  
To dress yourself in warm and sunny smiles.

But now presuming that you're *really* May,  
 Clad in your brightest and your best array ;  
 Presuming you are such—then let me sing  
 One verse to you and to the sweets you bring :

Dear scented May !

Oh ! how we love

The mossy way ;

And as we move,

To feel it gently yielding to the tread,  
 While ev'ry daisy rears its saucy head,

As though the step had been a kiss ;

Not e'en a fleecy cloud obscures the sky,

So deep and blue it seems, as though the eye

Could penetrate the realms of bliss.

The perfume rises from the sweet woodbine,

The dew-drop glistens on the eglantine,

The songsters, 'midst the fresh-clad trees,

Are pouring forth their happy melodies !

The insect world is busy on its wing,

And hums its notes of welcome to the Spring.

All Nature smiles with happy life ;

The very air is rife

With living myriads all newly born,

To only last the sunshine of the morn.

The sheep-bell tinkles on the distant hill,  
The sunlight quivers on the dancing rill,  
The cuckoo's note is borne upon the air,  
And ev'ry feather'd husband starts with fear !  
The swallow twitters on his sunny wing,  
The lark and thrush in emulation sing,  
The one, ambitious, warbles to the sky,  
The other wakes the grove with harmony.  
Hark to the ringing of the village bells ;  
The sound now dies away, now softly swells :—  
A maiden's voice upon the light air floats,  
Alas ! too far to catch the tuneful notes :  
But no—again they come upon the breeze.  
And reach the ear subdued in tones like these :

All the earth is smiling,  
The sun with cheerful ray,  
O'er hill and dale is shining  
With brighter light to-day ;  
The skylark is adoring  
The beauty of the morn—  
To " Heaven's gate " he's soaring,  
Proclaiming—May is born.



The daffodil is rearing  
Her gold and scented head ;  
The cowslip is appearing  
From her sweet and leafy bed.  
True, the violet now is fading,  
But, tender to the last,  
Her own fresh leaves are shading,  
The beauty which is past.

The happy birds are winging  
Their bright and tuneful way ;  
In chorus they are singing  
May's natal roundelay :  
Soft echoes are replying,  
And each take up the strain,  
While just as they dying,  
The birds sing forth again.

Country ! I loved thee from my very soul,  
And worshipp'd Nature second to my God.  
Oh ! for those hours again, when once I stole  
Out to the silent night, and gazing stood,

Enraptured 'neath the Summer star-lit sky,  
And child-like thinking that my feeble prayer  
Would sooner reach the azure canopy,  
Because no sound disturb'd its passage there.  
Country! I loved thee—and that happy time  
In mem'ry lives to bid me love thee yet.  
Yes, Country! Nature! still I call thee mine,  
And all thy beauties will I ne'er forget;  
For recollection comes on fancy's wings,  
Laden with bygone scenes of happy hours,  
And 'mid the tumult of a city brings  
Thy shady glades—the perfume of thy flowers.  
But now no more of this—reader forgive  
The short lament I could not well suppress,  
And add one sigh to mine, if you, too, live  
Far from the scenes of rural loveliness.

Dear scented, now half-pouting May,  
I see you deem  
That I forget your natal day,  
And idly dream,  
Instead of singing of your beauty bright—  
Dear one, digression is the Poet's right.

I've spoken of you, May, when morning's prime  
And morning's golden rays your sweets reveal;  
When gaily at your birth the church bells chime  
To welcome you with many a merry peal.  
But now the hour is changed, and star-light throws  
A veil of soften'd brightness o'er your face;  
All Nature, hush'd, has sunk into repose,  
For night comes gently on with stealthy pace:  
The sky grows studded with a thousand gems  
To glow a short while in the firmament;  
The flowers are crown'd with dewy diadems  
Bestow'd by ev'ning for their fragrant scent;  
The moon is rising o'er the sleeping scene,  
And one by one the stars withdraw their light,  
They dare not shine so brightly when their Queen  
Ascends her throne, to rule the realms of night.  
So now, dear May, sleep gently, sweetly on—  
The bright Night folds you in his fond embrace;  
The breezes of the day to rest are gone,  
And perfumed air alone floats o'er your face.

## SPRING-TIME TO THE FLOWERS.

## Song.

## I.

**A** WAKE! awake! fair flowers arise,  
The sun around is beaming.  
Arise! awake! in sweet surprise,  
And wonder at your dreaming.

## II.

Too long earth's loving anodyne  
Hath steep'd your lids in slumber.  
Arise! awake! to life divine  
With sweets the earth encumber.

## III.

And what your dreams? Ah! who may know  
What flow'rets think while sleeping?  
But, perhaps, the night-wind, sighing low,  
Your secrets strict is keeping.

## IV.

And he could say : in dreams you see  
    Some spot all fair and sunny,  
Where, like a tiny hawk, the bee  
    Is poised to swoop on honey ;

## V.

And that in slumber you distil  
    Such fragrance for the rover,  
That, though he comes to rob or kill,  
    He stays—your humble lover !

## VI.

But useless is surmise or guess ;  
    For now the waiting hours  
Are ready, with a gala dress,  
    To deck their darling flowers,

## VII.

Are ready, with a fragrance rare,  
    To consecrate your beauty ;  
And tell you that, to look so fair,  
    Is simple act of duty.

## VIII.

Your tender green, and lilac pale,  
And odours, all were given  
For spring-time, and the wingèd gale  
Which wafts a word from Heaven.

## IX.

A word to say, when Eden's gate  
Shut out the world for ever:  
Man's lot had been too desolate,  
Compell'd from flowers to sever.

## X.

And so the edict pass'd that you,  
Your primal grace assuming,  
Should smile on earth, with scent and hue  
As when in Eden blooming.

“ SABBATH DAY AT SEA.”

Song.

SET TO MUSIC BY J. P. KNIGHT. SANG BY MR. SANTLEY.

I.

WHO could believe the restless sea,  
The stormy, wild, and booming ocean,  
Could rest to-day, and seem to be  
A sky without a cloud or motion?

II.

Who could believe the awful deep,  
That tells of wreck, and death, and plunder,  
To-day can like an infant sleep,  
Yet wake to-morrow in its thunder?

III.

But, hark! a diapason rolls  
From human lips to list'ning Heav'n,  
The solemn thanks of human souls,  
For safety 'mid their dangers giv'n.

## IV.

Yes, upward from that distant speck,  
    With sail and spars in trim perfection,  
Ascends a sound from forth the deck,  
    The sailor's voice for God's protection ;

## V.

For 'tis the Sabbath Day at sea,  
    And pray'rs are o'er the waters stealing ;  
The brave, the hardy, and the free,  
    Who never knelt to man, are kneeling.



## DOUBTS AND FEARS.

To L. N.

I.

**T**HERE is one who has heard with anguish and sorrow,  
That illness has blighted your bloom for awhile ;  
And is it not strange that a shadow should follow,  
So soon the dear light of thy beautiful smile ?

II.

There is one who will gather from fond recollection,  
And wear it for ever a blossom of joy,  
A joy so delicious, e'en after reflection  
May sober its rapture, but never destroy.

III.

There are many around us whose natures can never,  
Assimilate love with the sensitive soul ;  
The refined emanation escapes them for ever,  
They only discover the lees in the bowl.

## IV.

But the poet who dwells in the region of feeling,  
Doth sublimate love to a spirit so fine,  
That he trusts to the soul without language revealing,  
Its presence, its truth, and its essence divine.

## V.

Yet mingled with ecstasy, doubt, and dejection,  
Arise like a cloud o'er the star of our trust,  
And turn the sweet blossoms of love and affection,  
To fruit of the desert, which crumbles to dust.

## VI.

And must I believe that the words which were spoken,  
Are formless as motes in the beam of the sun ;  
Is the chalice you sweeten'd, uncared for or broken,  
Is all its aroma, rejected or gone ?

## VII.

Ah, let me remember that exquisite hour,  
As one you forbid me on Lethe to cast ;  
And let it re-blossom a love-giving flower,  
Its fruit in the future, its roots in the past.

## ADDRESS.

SPOKEN AT MISS KELLY'S THEATRE, ON THE OCCASION OF A PERFORMANCE IN AID OF THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND.

FORMS of eternal beauty haunt the mind  
When'er we breathe the name of Italy ;  
And Art low bends her head in reverence,  
Although a tear-drop trembles on her lid  
In memory of the present and its fruits.  
Oh, what a debt of gratitude we owe  
To that fair land, whose sky hath canopied  
The birthplace of a race of mighty men,  
Whose souls were breathed, and stand in adamant.  
The Lares and Penates of our homes,  
Are at this moment models of her gift ;  
While form, and colour, outline, and design,  
Are group'd in harmony within our halls.  
How can the dainty connoisseur repay  
The debt *he* owes for luxuries of vision ?  
How can the Sapphos of our modern times,

Whose thrilling notes awake an atmosphere  
Of silence round, evince *their* souls' emotion ?  
How can the dwellers in the world of Art,  
The painters and the sculptors of the day,  
Speak of their masters, giant spirits gone,  
In language adequate ; or how the poet sing,  
And not uplift the flood-gates of his thanks,  
When shades of Dante, Ariosto, rise  
And bid him strive by ever-daring thought  
And sweetest song, their strains to emulate ?  
How can the lover, lost in haleyon dreams,  
Approach the beauteous vortex of his love,  
Unversed in something of that eloquence  
Which glow'd when Petrarch woke his Laura's name  
In language born of Passion's melody ?  
In saddest truth, then, one and all, oh ! say,  
How can the stirring Present render back  
The debt bequeath'd by the great sleeping Past ?  
A thousand tongues could never answer us,  
Were every tongue exponent of a heart  
Of love and gratitude ; but still, if humbly we  
Attempt to pay the swelling interest,  
And that alone, 'twere something to achieve.  
With this intent, in all due diffidence,  
We don to-night a plumage not our own,

And flutter in a mimic world awhile :  
But since we hope, by not ungraceful mirth,  
To move ye to applause, our best reward,  
Oh, let the smiles radiate from hearts,  
Not lips alone ; for we assemble here  
To fill the urn which Charity presents,  
And swell the coffers of a holy cause.  
Yes, we are here, to gather by your aid  
The golden fruit which pastimes innocent  
May shake from boughs of mirth ; and laying them  
In childhood's lap, augment the stores which give  
The sons and daughters of fair Italy,  
Who live exotics in our northern home,  
The impulse of instruction ; so that they,  
The offspring of the good and great, may learn,  
The value of their rich inheritance.  
Thus blended in their hearts a radiant hope,  
With soften'd memory, it were not vain  
To deem that glories of a brilliant Past  
May guide their energies to rise afresh.

The sun, when bathed at eve in golden light,  
Appears to plunge in shades of endless night ;  
But—happy truth—it is the *setting* ray  
Doth fringe the vesture of another day.

## THE CARRION CROW.

**T**HE Carrion Crow is the bird for me,  
As he sits aloft on the gibbet tree;  
He maketh his food of the fest'ring dead,  
With bleaching bones he maketh his bed;  
With carrion flesh he crammeth his maw,  
And he gobbles it down with his

Caw! Caw!

The Carrion Crow is the bird for me,  
How I love his sleek black poll to see.  
His fine bright eye it standeth out,  
And he marketh well what the worms are about.  
He needeth no cook, for his food is raw,  
But he sayeth his grace with his

Caw! Caw!

Look at his plumage, black as jet;  
Look at his beak, so strongly set;

Like a hammer descending on flinty stones,  
So he rappeth his bill against echoing bones ;  
He maketh a sound, but he maketh no flaw,  
For he dives in the flesh with his

Caw ! Caw !

In the noonday sun he taketh his nap,  
And he wakes to renew his tap, tap, tap ;  
Again he hops to his carrion feast,  
To surfeit again on some mouldering beast ;  
He picks out the flesh of the crumbling jaw,  
And he whitens the skulls with his

Caw ! Caw !

Time passes on, still the carrion bird  
By his croaking cry in the night is heard.  
Still he fatteneth well on carrion meat,  
Still the gibbet top is his constant seat ;  
Ages pass on, and changed is the law,  
But he flourishes on with his

Caw ! Caw !

## A PROPHECY.

[The following lines were written at the time when the marriage of the Queen of Spain occupied the attention of Europe, and were published at that period] :—

A MAIDEN desolate within her chamber wept.  
“Oh God !” she cried, “why is this sacrifice ?  
I seek no throne, no state, and only ask  
A woman’s privilege to rule my heart.  
Oh, that he came to seize mine heritage  
By force of arms and with intent declared.  
But no ! he looks in dim futurity,  
And seeing but the outline of a dream  
That son begot by him shall wear Spain’s crown,  
Makes me the victim of his lust of power.  
To-morrow, at the altar of high God  
He bids me kneel, and with a faltering tongue  
Preface by perjury this body’s wrongs.  
Alas ! this wide world offers me no friend,  
And Nature outraged bids a mother’s form



Come clad in terrors seconding my doom.  
Oh! Heaven of mercy, if to-morrow's sun  
Must rise once more upon this life of woe,  
Void of all chances t' avert my doom,  
Then must I humbly bend to thy decree!  
But with the certainty these tears are seen,  
And that an agony so exquisite  
Pierces the vaulted dome on high, and brings  
A retribution soon and terrible,"  
She said, and down her cheek the large tears roll'd  
In sobs of agony, and robed in grief,  
The morrow brought no sunshine to her heart.  
The dreadful pageantry, in proper course  
Was duly chronicled; and on the self-same eve  
A mystic light shone o'er the Tuileries,  
*The culmination of the Bourbon star.*



A SUMMER'S TALE OF VENICE.

A Drama, in Three Acts.



# A SUMMER'S TALE OF VENICE.

A Drama, in Three Acts.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Venice. An open Space.*

*Enter ANSELMO and VITALE.*

VITALE.

Anselmo! why thou art completely changed  
From sunny spring to sombre autumn's time :  
And all thy blossoms, which were wit and mirth,  
Are prematurely turn'd to bitter fruit  
Of sighs and groans; and all this done by love!  
If love be ever thus, then Heaven forbend  
That love should visit one I count a friend.

ANSELMO.

Yes, it is love which weighs my spirit down ;  
And oh! 'tis hard to love, and know not where  
To find the load-star of my soul.

VITALE.

Alas!

It must have been a falling star that dropt  
From out its azure setting in the sky.  
'Tis very often on a summer's night  
One sees the meteor thus, but 'tis not oft  
It doth reverse a man so thoroughly.

ANSELMO.

Ay, like a meteor she did dazzle me,  
And, like a meteor, trackless she hath gone.

VITALE.

Did she from out the Adriatic rise,  
A second Venus, dripping from the waves ?  
Or didst thou sow the dragon's tooth, and she  
Sprung from the earth all arm'd to conquer thee ?

## ANSELMO.

To stay thy mocking, I will tell the tale.  
One morning, coming from Secretto's ball,  
We met a musical quartette of dames,  
Whose laughter drown'd the splashing of our oars.  
Thus I was almost at their side before  
They had observed me ; then in sweet dismay,  
They shuffled on their masks, and laughing bade  
Their gondolier to rest till I had pass'd.  
Meanwhile, Vitale, I had seen a face  
Replete with beauty of that pensive kind  
Which most doth hallow women's loveliness.  
She seem'd some goddess dreaming of her home,  
Or mourning some short-lived mortality.

## VITALE.

Such is thy taste ! I relish less of thought :  
Such faces seem regretting their own charms :  
But beauty ought to deck itself in smiles.

## ANSELMO.

True ; but when intellect and beauty form

A contract of their own to make a face  
Their mutual citadel—the loveliness  
Doth take its shape from an immortal source  
The reflex of the soul. Still more a charm  
When pensive thought is added unto this,  
To soften and subdue the fire of mind.  
Then doth a woman's beauty emulate  
Angelic form. And such hath she to whom  
My life is dedicate. A glance did serve  
Her likeness to implant upon my heart ;  
And there the portraiture hath dwelt with me,  
Stamp'd by the hand of love for evermore.

## VITALE.

Beauty's exponent ought to lie in smiles.  
The loveliest view without the sun is lost.  
Thy beauties ever were like moonlight nights,  
Serenely cold and passionless : but mine,  
Like rosy day, all redolent of smiles.  
'Tis well in this our tastes do not agree ;  
For as it is, we cannot clash in arms.  
But didst thou not attempt to learn her name,



Or were thy energies all petrified  
By her cold glance ?

ANSELMO.

Oh, no : I would not speak,  
For she did evidently shun discourse :  
And what is stranger, all Bergetto's pains  
To find her residence hath been in vain.

VITALE.

I'll wager thee that Pippo finds her out :  
I have already bade him to the task.  
If he tracks not the fair incognita,  
Then shall I think the waters yielded forth  
Some day-break Spirit to thy wondering sight.

ANSELMO.

Never was Naiäd half so lovely yet ;  
Or, if her equal lived, and once beheld  
Her spirit-image in her crystal home,  
Then, like Narcissus, must she die of love,  
For love of her own beauty.

VITALE.

Adieu, my friend ;

I pity thee with so much earnestness,  
That I'll at once to work. Anon we meet.  
Then I will tell thee of the means I've used  
To give a substance to thy morning dream ;  
And so, till then, farewell. *(Exit.)*

ANSELMO.

Farewell, indeed !

For if thou farest badly in thy search,  
How worse fare I, who wait thy seeking her.  
Oh ! I could ever praise her to the wind ;  
And then, perchance, some sweetly scented breath,  
Bearing commission to her fragrant lips,  
To learn how sweeter they—might in its folds  
Convey the sighs my heart would fain suppress ;  
To speak the love my tongue would fain confess.  
*(Exit.)*

SCENE II.—*View of the Rialto.**Enter PIPPO and BERGETTO.*

PIPPO.

Ah, Bergetto, friend and rogue, whither now? Thou hast some secret, I suppose, to keep inviolate, for thou seemest dying to tell it.

BERGETTO.

An' I might die if I waited the stopping of thy tongue. Call me a rogue, forsooth! The learned tell us, Pippo, that particles of like nature are attracted together; thus my being a rogue explains why thou art here.

PIPPO.

Come, thy secret or the news.

BERGETTO.

Coretto has been teaching me a new pass. I can run a man through while he is winking.

PIPPPO.

Keep thy secret entirely for thine own use. What else ?

BERGETTO.

I killed the bullying Frenchman, De Courtney, the other night. By my faith, though, it was a lucky tierce that did it. The rascal was as good at swordcraft as Bergetto.

PIPPPO.

Of course, thou braggart. No merit else in killing him. What next ?

BERGETTO.

The most lovely woman in Venice hath fallen in love with me.

PIPPPO.

That is possible, for an angel hath translated her passion for me. What else ?

BERGETTO.

Thy master has a knave for a servant.

PIPPO.

And thy servant a villain for his master. Go on.

BERGETTO.

My Lord Anselmo has grown moody, and morose, and mouldy through love.

PIPPO.

Signor Vitale has deserted poor Juliet. He discovered a mole on her shoulder.

BERGETTO.

Signor Anselmo is in love, downright in love. 'Tis no fanciful sentimental offspring of Cupid, but the god hath done it all himself, and now I hardly know my former master.

PIPPO.

He never knew, or he never would have hired thee.

BERGETTO.

Rascal! I'll show thee my new method of letting daylight through a man.

PIPPO.

I'll lay thee a piastre I get the first hit.

BERGETTO.

Ay, twenty that thou gett'st the first hit.

*(Strikes him.)*

PIPPO.

Go to. Does not the signor know for whom he so sighs?

BERGETTO.

No: neither does thy master, for I learn he is seeking her all over Venice for his unhappy friend.

PIPPO.

(I will not tell him that I have found the lady.) 'Tis very strange. I thought that if Bergetto or Pippo saw but the flutter of a lady's garment, they would know the wearer by it.

BERGETTO.

Or, trace the owner of a little foot but half-way peeping from a balcony.

PIPPO.

Or, from the fingers touching the strings of a gondola's curtain, know who was inside.

BERGETTO.

Or, by the outline of a hideous mask, in strict discordance with the face beneath, tell the hidden beauty's name.

PIPPO.

Or, make the pavement of the Piazzetta say whose foot had kissed it last.

BERGETTO.

Yes, thou playest in very truth the part of a providing jackal to the lion, and findest the prey out for thy master, which master needs the prayers of all the saints in the calendar to get a niche in heaven if his servant was seen with him half an hour before.

PIPPO.

Thy pious speech has called him forth. Get thou

hence, sirrah! I wish not my master to see I waste my time in converse with such as thou.

BERGETTO.

Find out the lady of Anselmo's love, and in return I'll be sarcastic, and will say—*good, honest Pip.* (Exit.)

Enter VITALE.

VITALE.

Hast any tidings of the lady yet?

PIPPO.

Yea, my good lord, and of the Lady Julia, and Signora Viola, and Lord Gerardo's waiting-woman, and Lucretia, and the Milanese, and the dame of Padua—all. These notes will testify my skill. (*Showing notes.*) The lovely Viola I saw in person, and her questions were so searching, I was compelled to say you were gone to Lombardy to see your aunt.

VITALE (*impatiently*).

'Tis not of these I speak, but of the fair

Whose charms have wrought such changes on my friend.



PIPPO.

Your pardon, sir, but what quality of love is his? I have learned the lady's residence and name, but she is one to whom honourable love alone can be proffered. If your sort of love is meant, my lord——

VITALE.

No fear of any but the truest—best.  
Anselmo never loved before, and now  
The god makes up in strength the fallow time.  
Anselmo's heart knows not of love like mine. (*Sully.*)  
While I have dissipated golden youth,  
Turning the current sterling time to nought,  
His purer soul hath nursed its sweet affections,  
And by the nursing hath increased the store.  
Thus he hath now a heart of worth to give,  
The more since late he lays it on love's shrine.  
But I have served an untrue deity,  
The image of the god without his soul;  
The dross of love, the counterfeit of truth.

PIPPO.

Be sure, my lord, thou art in love with love.

VITALE.

Oh, that my licensed soul could find some chord  
To bind it, like my friend's, in innocence;  
Some sweet enchantress, who in honour's home  
Would weave a spell to bid my truant heart  
Abhor the false god as I loved him once.

PIPPA.

This sudden change doth show the spell already is  
began.

VITALE.

Would that it were! But now no more of this;  
Thou hast learn'd the lady's name—who is she?

PIPPA.

They call her Isola: she is the Duke's own kins-  
woman.

VITALE.

Ah, by my faith! thy love, Anselmo takes  
No lowly flight. Is she of Venice then?

PIPPO.

Of Venice now, and Florence now and then; and then of Florence yet again. (VITALE *impatient.*) Nay, my lord, prithee let me impart my knowledge in mine own way. It hath cost much to gain it, and must be doled forth like all valuable stuff.

VITALE.

Oh, if thou gavest money, take my purse;  
But tell me what thou know'st, and get thee hence.

PIPPO.

Money, i'faith! No, master mine, it hath cost your Pippo far more than money's worth—his modest, loving, virgin heart.

VITALE.

I'll let thy knowledge, sirrah, quickly out  
From forth thy doublet with my rapier's point.

PIPPO.

That would be cutting open the goose for her golden eggs—destroying the swan for his song. Well, my lord,

this, in brief, is the tale. In Florence lately dwelt two ladies, who were accounted the most lovely there. They lived (*imitating his master*) in solitude, nursing their minds in Learning's lap, the while their forms grew up in beauty's mould. (VITALE *impatient.*) A week ago, Florence mourned their loss. They left the city for the palace of our Duke, and there they have dwelt since.

VITALE.

And yet their presence here is still unknown.

PIPPO.

From what I can gather from the cuttings of my informant's reservation, I fancy the Duke is fattening his nieces. (VITALE *half draws his sword.*) Well, my lord, cooping them up like capons, till he finds a good market, is much the same thing. I believe he is seeking for proper mates, and keeps them guarded in case they should fall in love for themselves. The process agrees with them, at all events, for I hear they are rare beauties, and outshine all here.

VITALE.

In Florence 'twas I first a likeness set  
Of female beauty in my heart, and love  
Since then has stamp'd the lines indelibly.

PIPPPO.

Nay, 'tis a passing sketch, my lord, for you have said  
the same of every fresh beauty.

VITALE.

But yet my roving heart was never fix'd.  
The sun's most wondrous might we scarcely heed,  
Because its heat is all dispersed abroad ;  
But only concentrate the smallest beam,  
And it doth burn with fire's intensity.  
Just so is love ; when dissipated thus,  
Its strength is broken in a thousand rays ;  
But once collect them in united force,  
And what can then withstand their potency ?  
But all regrets are vain and foolish now :  
How didst thou trace the fair incognita ?

PIPPO.

Oh, a little love adventure of mine own—saving your presence, sir—led to the knowledge. I performed a trifling service for a damsel one night, and as she was so muffled up I might have taken her for an old woman, she was very sensibly grateful—told me she was young and very pretty, and one of the waiting-women upon two ladies who had arrived from Florence. This led to a better acquaintance; and although to my famished ear she only doled forth scraps and bits, I learned enough, and am now ready to lead you to the very apartment of the ladies.

VITALE.

But what excuses can I offer them,  
Unless I say from Florence I have come,  
Bearing most urgent tidings from their friends?  
Thus, if I gain admittance by the cheat,  
The fraud I will extenuate, and trust  
Love's rhetoric to plead for him and me.

PIPPO.

No fear, my lord, if once you gain their ear.

VITALE.

Ay, and her heart's best love I ought to gain,  
Because I plead in friendship's holy cause.  
Soon shall I find if this sweet deity  
Approves the worship of her votary.

(*Exeunt severally.*)

---

SCENE III.—*A Room in the Duke's Palace.*

*Enter LUCIA and LUCILLA.*

LUCILLA.

I do freely own it, coz. Whether it be from sympathy, because my mistress hath lost her heart, I know not; but certain it is, whenever I am idle I find myself thinking of Pippo.

LUCIA.

And I of Bergetto, when I have nothing else to do. And certainly our ladies are very deep in the same predicament. Didst thou observe the other morning how

my mistress's mask lingered in her hand while the cavalier seemed demolishing her with his glances?

LUCILLA.

That did I; and also that his well-graced servitor fixed his looks on Lucia. How very suddenly their gondola came abreast of us.

LUCIA.

Why our tongues did gallop so fast, and we laughed so indecorously loud, thinking none listened but the stream, it was no wonder we heard not the splash of oars. How sad my lady has become since then.

LUCILLA.

She is somewhat addicted to make terms with melancholy upon the least occasion. 'Tis her temper to be sad and yet she hath a sweet disposition.

LUCIA.

No better mistress in the world. And thy lady, too, with all her high spirits and fondness for raillery, is gentle as a dove, when gentleness is most needful.



LUCILLA.

Yes, we are fortunate in those we serve, and in those who serve us ; for never was a more seemly lover than Pippo, and, by thy account, Bergetto is not of ordinary mould.

LUCIA.

He is the most sauey varlet in the world. It was he or Pippo who was tinkling under our window last night. He would have climbed the balcony in a thought, if we had been the least indiscreet.

LUCILLA.

We are sure to meet them to-morrow night, as we have to attend our ladies to the ball. Remember, until our time of probation hath passed, we are to conceal our names ; and furthermore we will dress alike, so, if needs be, we can play upon their ignorance of our persons, and entangle their notions of our identity. Pippo hath never seen thee, nor Bergetto me, so, if occasion requires we can be either apart or the same together.

LUCIA.

Lovers are always best when well tormented. If all goes smoothly on, they let love's barque lie lazily on the waters of certainty; but if there be but a doubt to ripple the waves, and a chance of a gale, they are on the alert directly, and attentive to their business. After the ball, I believe all the world may know our names. Canst thou guess the reason why the Duke is so careful in concealing his kinswomen?

LUCILLA.

I suppose he is desirous of finding proper mates here in Venice for his caged birds.

LUCIA.

Little does he guess how Cupid hath crept in through the crevices of his cage. The moment a watch is placed upon young hearts, that moment there is most interest in evading the sentinel. I think love will sit easily enough on my mistress, but I fear for thine. Misfortune often settles on tenderest beauties, just as blight selects the sweetest flowers.

LUCILLA.

Nay, I hear that Lord Anselmo is of the most noble family of Padua, only excelled by the nobleness of his own nature.

LUCIA.

Oh, I doubt it not. But there is a stern determination in my lady's character, which only needs to be developed by love to enable her to act to the very letter of her own will.

LUCILLA.

Yes, the Duke will have some trouble to barter either of our dames, if that be his intent. But they come this way; so let us hence to concert our plans to best deceive and torment our lovers.

LUCIA.

I'm with thee, coz. Too many sweets do cloy,  
The purest metals all need some alloy  
Before they can be work'd, and thus 'tis meet  
We mix with love some innocent deceit.      (*Exeunt.*)

*Enter ISOLA and MINA.*

ISOLA.

Laugh on, dear Mina ; I can bear the strain ;  
Thy mocking proves the love-bird in thy heart.  
I hear it beating its imprison'd wings,  
E'en though thy laughter tries to stifle it.

MINA.

I ever thought love sadden'd sister mine,  
For thou hast been for a whole week so dull,  
That I must sacrifice to mirth for both.  
Did I not find thee gazing on the stars,  
When all the world did sleep but Isola ?

ISOLA.

On that especial one which looks o'er Florence ;  
It shone the brightest of the starry host.  
And when his name was uttered in thy sleep,  
Its lustre deepen'd till it blinded me.

*Enter* LUCILLA.

LUCILLA.

A gentleman below doth crave admittance. He bears a message from some friends at Florence.

ISOLA.

Messengers from friends do bear credentials——

MINA.

Nay, let him speak ; his words can do no harm.

Lucilla, tell the gentleman we wait. (*Exit* LUCILLA.)

ISOLA.

What if it be some message from the Duke,  
Which finds us thus so easy of access ?

MINA.

If treachery be meant—be Mina for awhile ;  
I will be Isola. Exchange our names  
Before the cavalier, and it may spoil  
The purpose of his coming.

ISOLA.

I'll leave thee  
To manage him thyself; for who so fit?  
Arm'd as thou art with courage and with wit. (*Exit.*)

*Enter* VITALE.MINA (*puts on her mask*).

(Ah! 'tis the same! What strange fatality!  
To hide my blushes will I wear this mask,  
To hide my passion I will fain be stern.)  
What means this trespass, sir? or do you err,  
And seek some other than the Lady Isola?

VITALE.

(Oh, happy fate! 'tis she. That little mask  
Doth hide her face, but not her loveliness.)  
Thy pardon, lady, for my coming here,  
And seeking such divinity of truth  
With falsehood on my lips—for, honestly,  
I bear no syllable from friends of thine.  
Thus let the cancell'd fabrication gain  
Forgiveness that it e'er was framed.

MINA.

To make  
 Or mar a falsehood, sir, is easy done.  
 When candour lacks occasion, it oft forms  
 A quibble or a cheat that it may honest seem  
 When it doth straight confess it is a cheat.

VITALE.

This do not I. Not for myself I come,  
 But I do plead for one more dear to me  
 Than life itself; and as his life doth rest  
 Upon my seeing thee—the petty fraud  
 Doth in its aim bring full extenuation.

MINA.

Some wager laid to mar my privacy.  
 Fit recreation for an idle hour!  
 A pleasant pastime for a cavalier!  
 Far better to have climb'd the balcony,  
 And proved thy courage and thy strength of limb,  
 Than ready faculty for falsehood, sir.

## VITALE.

(I'faith she hath a spirit of her own.)  
Being the suitor in another's cause,  
I will not risk the little chance he has  
By taking ill the keenness of thy words.  
This then, in brief, the cause is of my crime.  
Perchance thou'st heard—most casually, of course—  
That in this city dwell two gentlemen  
Whose names are not forgotten in the list  
Of those who've served the senate in the field.  
But more than fame for arms they prize  
The fortune which hath made them firmest friends ;  
For none so bound in ties of brotherhood,  
As those they call Anselmo and Vitale.

## MINA.

And which art thou, sir? for I guess that friends  
So staunch do sometimes separate, and one of them  
Doth break into a lady's solitude  
To make a story for the other's ear.

## VITALE.

Oh! thou dost wrong again both him and me.



Anselmo is my friend, and I so love him  
That I have ventured here to plead his cause.  
Had I but known the sharpness of thy wit,  
It would indeed have been a test of love  
To risk the shafts. But now I know their point,  
And feel the pain, how greatly do I prove  
My courage in his cause by waiting here,  
And bearing all thy poignant mockery  
Until I've told thee what a heart he hath,  
And how with all that heart he worships thee.

MINA.

(What music thou hast lost, dear Isola !)  
Capacious heart, that maketh room for love  
And friendship both. Go, prithee tell him, sir,  
That Love's ambassador is not approved,  
Because we do not recognise the right  
Of those who send a message to our court  
Who bear no signs of proper royalty.

VITALE.

Oh, lady, send not message so unkind,  
But let me pray thy presence at the ball

To-morrow at the palace of the Duke,  
And then speak what thou wilt to him thyself;  
But send not misery by proxy thus.

MINA.

The Lady Mina, sir, doth never make——  
(Ah! by St. Mark, I have betray'd myself).

VITALE.

Mina didst say! And was she late of Florence?

MINA.

But just return'd—knowest thou the lady?

VITALE.

From Florence too, and Mina is her name!  
Dear lady, tell me is she tall, like thee?  
Has she thy grace, with beauteous form as thine?  
Is she thy counterpart?—oh say she is,  
And fate has not another boon to give.

MINA.

Thou sure art mad. I know the lady well,  
Ay, as myself.

VITALE.

Oh let me see her, then :

A moment grant me with her own dear self,  
For I would gladly purchase it with life.

MINA (*takes off her mask*).

Thy sword, sir. An hour thou hast wasted here.  
Thy life is mine, so yield it with good grace.  
Where wilt thou have the blow ?

VITALE (*in great surprise*).

Not in my heart,  
For thou wouldst wound thyself therein enshrined.  
Oh ! what strange metamorphosis is this ?  
Oh ! what intense delight to find thee here,  
To know thee near me, and to touch thy hand !  
Thou who hast held my willing soul in bond ;  
Thou who awak'st me first to life—for life  
Was nought till glowing with the thought of thee.

MINA.

Hast thou e'er seen, sir, summer lightning play  
With ardent flashes on a summer's eve,

Lighting the east one moment with the blaze,  
Then shortly after all the west is bright  
Lit by the fickle flame? Just so dost thou.  
Thy words flash forth in Lord Anselmo's praise,  
And light his love so well, I see it all:  
When lo! at Mina's name the lightning plays  
Directly opposite. Then when I take  
The flimsy mask from my poor features, sir,  
Again thy vivid eloquence breaks forth,  
To cancel all the pleading for thy friend.  
If thou to friendship thus a traitor turn,  
'Twere hard indeed to credit thee in love.

## VITALE.

I cannot think a fate so terrible  
Is destined to destroy my hopes—my life.  
Art thou, then, Isola and Mina both?  
Art *thou* the goddess of Anselmo's love?

## MINA.

Are Isola and Mina names so strange,  
One lady may not entertain them both?  
But now, sir, fare thee well. To-morrow night

I may forget thy rash intrusion here ;  
And as I know thou art a gentleman,  
In all the best acceptance of the word,  
I promise thee my hand to dance with thee.

VITALE.

Alas ! an hour ago a word so kind  
Would then have lit my soul with happiness.  
What greater joy on earth to have my hand  
In a delicious contact with thine own ?  
But now I dare not entertain the thought,  
For truth to thee is falsehood to my friend.

MINA.

(Far falser I, thus counselling my tongue  
To utter falsehoods which my heart abhors.  
But, oh ! 'tis very sweet to torture him,  
And force confessions of his welcome love.)  
Once more, sir, fare thee well. I do rejoice  
To find thee careful of the trust imposed  
By this strange friend of thine ; but lest thy faith,  
In its commendable integrity,

Should keep thee from the ball to-morrow night,  
'Tis right, I say, in all good modesty,  
I'd rather dance with thee than any else.  
Nay, sir, I must beseech thee leave me now,  
Too much we have prolong'd this strange discourse ;  
And recollect, that truth and faith remove  
The clouds which rise upon the sky of love.

## VITALE.

Oh, sweet enigma ! there doth lie a sting  
E'en in the very honey of thy words ;  
And I do gladly take my leave of thee.  
For honour, friendship, should I soon forget  
While thus my ear drinks in such ravishment.  
To-morrow night, I do entreat thee, solve  
The riddle of thy strange yet sweet discourse ;  
And like the sun, which clears the mists of day,  
Let truth chase all the mystery away.

*(Exit with deep obeisance.)*

## MINA.

Ay, ev'ry doubt from out that noble heart,  
If warm affection has the power to chase

The clouds which I myself did bid arise  
Upon the firmament of his deep faith,  
Where honour, truth, and friendship reign,  
Like stars to guide him to the heaven of love.  
In bondage, too, dear Isola, thou hold'st  
A noble heart; for nobleness is proved  
When it doth consort much with its own form,  
And thy Anselmo is Vitale's friend;  
That doth bespeak him fitted for thy love;  
That doth his worthiness most surely prove;  
Oh, thou dost guess not what a tale I bear,  
Bliss for thine heart, and music for thine ear.

*(Exit into inner chamber.)*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A magnificent terracc-way leads to the back of the Duke's Palace, from the windows of which lights are streaming, and music is heard within. On one side is a canal, by which the guests, who arrive in gondolas, continue to pass—some masked, some in costume—into the Palace. The terrace is illuminated by lights in vases, and the moon has risen. Statues, and flowers in stands, &c., ornament the place.*

*Enter VITALE, attended by PIPPO and others, who withdraw.*

VITALE.

Not less than life do I Anselmo love ;  
Not less than both is honour dear to me :  
And must I forfeit friendship and my faith,  
Because a lady's smile doth captivate !



But why, in fortune's name, did he select  
The only woman whom with proper suit  
I fain would conquer to become my wife?  
Of him she spoke with cold indifference,  
But, oh! to me her words were music's own;  
And I could trace beneath her seeming frowns,  
Affection struggling to be paramount.  
Yet I do fear myself, for friendship arm'd  
All cap-à-pic to fight and conquer Love,  
Is but a mortal combating a God.  
And what though friendship's buckler be of truth,  
His weapons all the vows he ever swore,  
Yet Love breathes fragrant incense o'er his foe,  
And ends the strife without a single blow.

*Enter ANSELMO, with BERGETTO, and ATTENDANTS.*

*(ATTENDANTS withdraw.)*

ANSELMO.

Never was gratitude so weak before :  
Its very greatness is its poverty ;  
For how can I repay thy serving me  
In this, this greatest purpose of my life ?

VITALE.

Why thy insolvency of thanks is caused  
By thy extravagance in paying them  
Where none are due. I tell thee candidly,  
I fail'd to gain one word of such import  
That I might construe truly into love.  
She promised to be here; and that she will,  
Is all the consolation I can give.

ANSELMO.

Thou wert not wont to be so choice of words,  
That banish all kind form of sentiment.

VITALE.

(Thou wert not wont to stumble in thy choice,  
And out of all the world select  
She whom I love.) What wouldst thou have me say?  
'Twere surely useless to raise phantom hopes.

ANSELMO.

'Tis useless, too, to raise a false despair.  
Are we so often conquer'd in Love's wars,

E'en when we raise a sort of bandit's strife,  
Waylaying beauties who most treasures bear?  
And am I now, thy comrade in success,  
To turn poltroon when love legitimate  
Is on my side and all-expectant waits,  
To crown the triumph of affection's arms?

## VITALE.

Ay, but thou bearest colours not thine own.  
The lady's beauty is not of the stamp  
To which thou'st sworn thy knightly fealty.  
"Il Penseroso" should thy motto be,  
But on thy banner is "l'Allégo" writ.

## ANSELMO.

Ah! was her beauty lighted up by smiles?  
Thou now hast learn'd that sunshine often flits  
Athwart the brow of thought, and yet no detriment  
To pensive loveliness. At once confess  
The sunny light hath scorch'd thy tender heart,  
And thou art somewhat jealous of thy friend.

VITALE.

If we were jealous, save as jealous friends,  
We ne'er had lived so long in amity.

ANSELMO.

I did but jest, and jests are new to me,  
As thy sad gait is marvellous in thee.

*Enter ISOLA and MINA, masked. LUCIA, LUCILLA, and  
SERVANTS attend them. (SERVANTS withdraw.)*

Who have we here? Vitale, she doth come!  
Oh, yes, a thousand masks could ne'er disguise  
The beauty veil'd beneath. My beating heart  
Doth plainly tell me that its mistress comes.

VITALE.

They seem to love the fresh'ning air of night:  
'Tis she—the very step of majesty  
Doth stamp her as my lovely Florentine.

MINA (*to LUCIA*).

Thou know'st thy task! take heed, betray us not;  
I yet must test the metal of his truth.

(*LUCIA and LUCILLA exeunt.*)

ISOLA.

Take care, dear Mina, there is danger there ;  
Experiments do often injure those  
Who try to probe into affection's heart.

ANSELMO.

Ah ! they do join us, and she bows to thee.

VITALE (*to MINA*).

The happy moment is at length arrived ;  
Thy hand I claim, dear lady, for the dance.

MINA.

I recollect—my word is sacred, sir ;  
But first I pay my devoirs to the Duke.

VITALE.

What ecstasy is this ! Oh, hapless friend,  
Forgive the perfidy, if such it be,  
To lose a mortal for a deity.

*(They retire back, and enter the ball-room).*

ANSELMO (*to ISOLA*).

I know thee, lady, though that envious mask

Sits on thy features like a hypocrite ;  
 For it assumes disguise, that it may lie  
 In blissful contact with thy loveliness.  
 But were it dense and black as Erebus,  
 Beauty would shine, like sunlight through a cloud.

ISOLA (*removes her mask*).

You know me, sir, and straightway cull  
 The flowers of language for my vanity,  
 That I may wear them until judgment reels  
 Beneath the incense of their potent spell.  
 You know me not—or could you thus confuse  
 Beauty with my poor humble features, sir ?

ANSELMO.

Beauty and thou are but a synonym.  
 Beauty is oft an index to the mind,  
 The lovely binding of a glorious book,  
 Wherein a store of love and knowledge lies  
 To teach, delight, exalt, and vanquish us.  
 And such art thou—a poem in thyself,  
 In which do shine all woman's attributes  
 In brightest lustre, animate and real.

Forgive these hasty and most worthless words ;  
For if I lose the fleeting time, which gives  
These happy moments to converse with thee,  
I do my loving soul so sad a wrong,  
That it would torture me for evermore.  
Then let it hope, for, oh ! my life doth rest  
Upon the tenure of thy coming words.

ISOLA.

Then am I dumb. I dare not take thy life,  
But give a willing hearing to thy praise.

ANSELMO.

Oh ! thanks, dear lady, and in simple words,  
For inasmuch as opportunity  
Is fleeting as the smiles of April days,  
In brief I swear my love for thee is such,  
That wert thou less immortal than thou art,  
My worship would become idolatry.  
This simple truth is all my tongue could say,  
If tutor'd into cunning form of words,  
For in its import doth my soul translate  
The offer of my fortune and myself.

But, oh ! were wealth of kingdoms all mine own,  
 How infinitely poor and worthless I,  
 When weigh'd against the value of thy heart.  
 And yet, thus bankrupt of all qualities,  
 Befitting me to gain one smile of thine,  
 I dare to seek a prize which might reward,  
 The virtues of a hero, or a god.

## ISOLA.

(Be still, my heart, nor let its love confess ;  
 But, like a miser, hoard its happiness.)  
 How can I thank you for your candour, sir ?  
 A clear confession makes a folly less ;  
 For, oh ! indeed it does deserve the name,  
 To honour me so much with your esteem.  
 How can you read my merits in my face ?  
 How tell my temper or my honesty ?  
 How know I have one virtue in my heart ?  
 How guess I have *one* particle of love  
 In all my inner soul ? That you are pleased  
 With my poor outward form I fain believe,  
 For falsehood never glows with eloquence,  
 And words of eloquence have said—'tis so.



Yet, brightest jewels lie in dullest ore,  
And worthless ones are oft encased in sheen.

## ANSELMO.

Doth beauty fix her throne upon a brow  
To rule the virtues which she clothes in shape  
Of her own form, except she reigns supreme?  
Can harmony of feature made by mind  
The absence of its own creator speak?  
Doth intellect shine forth from out the eyes  
To prove a dull and leaden soul within?  
If contradictions thus can e'er agree,  
Then truth and virtue never dwelt with thee.

## ISOLA.

How skilfully thou canst attune thy words  
To music for mine ear. What, if I give my heart,  
Because thy praise intoxicates my sense,  
Wouldst thou not deem my love of little worth  
Till sober sense did ratify the gift?  
But I do owe thee best and warmest thanks,  
And it would be excess of modesty  
Did I disown the gratitude I feel;

A debt ill-paid by words, unless my heart  
Were gifted with thy tongue of rhetoric.  
But pray, sir, let us hence: I have to pay  
My duty to the Duke.

ANSELMO.

Most willingly;  
For others soon will desecrate this spot,  
To me most hallow'd by thy gentle words,  
To whose sweet music hope doth wake afresh.  
Oh! I would keep this place inviolate,  
And hedge it round with Spirits of my love,  
To guard its sacredness for evermore.

ISOLA.

(And I would set a watch upon my heart,  
But vigilance is useless, for he knows  
The pass-word—passion—gains the citadel.  
Then reason is invoked, but all in vain,  
For love has enter'd, and must e'en remain.)

*(They retire back, and enter the ball-room.)*

*Enter* LUCIA *and* BERGETTO.

LUCIA.

Why, you are gay as Momus in his cups.

BERGETTO.

Yes, I would ever favour make with mirth ;  
For you, the widwife are, to help its birth,  
And I turn nurse to feed it when it cries,  
Filching its nourishment from out your eyes.

LUCIA.

Then you do give it tears !

BERGETTO.

Merriment's best sign ;  
For mirth does fatten well on laughter's brine.  
But now your name, dear maid, and just suppose  
You answer me in ordinary prose.  
I am not fitted, as you seem to be,  
To talk in verse so very fluently.

LUCIA.

You bid me speak in prose, yet straightway you  
Do the same thing you would not I should do.

BERGETTO.

When I have such example, 'tis but right  
To follow when it lends so kind a light.

LUCIA.

'Twill lead you into bogs and briars, too,  
And dance before you but to puzzle you :  
So give it up—verse is a cheating thing,  
Light as itself is verse's reasoning.

BERGETTO.

Women do ever love what they abuse ;  
Thus you condemn the form of speech you use.  
But not of verses, 'tis of love I speak ;  
Not Poets' language, but your name I seek.

LUCIA.

I've told you oft 'tis Lu—and nought but Lu  
Is what they call me ;—and I answer too :

If you seek further—it is still the same,  
Unless, indeed, you choose to change the name.

BERGETTO.

That do I live for, for my heart is thine,  
And I do love you as a thing divine.

LUCIA.

Nay, as a simple, honest woman, sir,  
Simple—because Bergetto I prefer ;  
Honest—because mine honour is mine own ;  
And woman, sir—because I'm woman born.  
So, if you love me, prithee let it be  
Without a bit of immortality.

BERGETTO.

Ay, as you will, so long as you approve—  
As angel, woman, devil—I will love :  
I doubt not you are each in turn, yet I  
Am still your suitor, and your votary.  
Who have we here ?

*Enter FOOL in cap and bells, &c.*

FOOL.

They call me fool—or ass—  
And such I am, and thou my looking-glass.

BERGETTO.

Without your telling—one is right, I'll swear,  
For you can make reflections everywhere.

LUCIA.

Tilt not your sense against his folly so :  
When reason's prostrate, it disarms a foe.

FOOL.

Good. Take my part, whichever part thou wilt,  
Or take me all, and let him call thee jilt.

BERGETTO.

Wrapt in his folly doth a venom lie :  
He hides a sting beneath his mummery.

*(They retire back and exeunt.)*

FOOL.

A sting for those who greet me with a sting.

That is but fair, and no fool's reasoning.  
 A blow for those who think a gentle word  
 On fool is lost, and but for reason good.  
 'Tis sweet to think how little people deem  
 That stilted learning doth like folly seem ;  
 Nor guess they that redundancy of sense  
 Is oft mistaken for mind's impotence.

*(Sings. A bell accompaniment in the orchestra.)*

My cap and bell

Doth my calling tell,

With their ting ! tang ! tingle !

But those who wear nor cap nor bell,  
 You know their natures just as well :  
 For the cap is shown in ev'ry word,  
 And the bell goes ting ! whene'er they're heard,  
 So the world and I are much the same,  
 For marry ! we play the self-same game.

*Enter PIPPO and LUCILLA.*

LUCILLA.

Methinks, Sir Fool, the jingle of those bells  
 A requiem plays for Folly's death in you.

Many a song I've heard from wiser lips,  
Hath room for pregnancy of sense like that.

FOOL.

Go treat thy thine hearing with thy lover's words,  
If thou want'st more of folly. Come not here,  
I'm the bell-wether of Minerva's flock.

PIPPO (*to LUCILLA*).

He earns his pay right well—they whisper, too,  
The Duke doth hold him in his confidence,  
For greater service than to laugh at him.

FOOL.

Why dost thou mumble so? I hear thee not.  
But go: I need not offer thee my cap.

PIPPO.

Why, thou art like a porcupine to-day:  
As nettlesome and quick.

FOOL.

But I can lay



My quills all smoothly down, that thou may'st pat  
 And stroke and fondle me—but go thy way,  
 I'm making verses for my wedding-day.

LUCILLA.

Who is thy bride?

FOOL.

Why, ev'ry woman, sure ;  
 No harem in Mahomet's paradise  
 So stock'd as mine, Ay, I shall have thee, too :  
 Or marry him—I share thy favours.

PIPPO.

I think we *will* move on.

LUCILLA.

To leave him thus  
 Is greater favour than he doth predict.

FOOL. (*Sings. Accompaniment as before.*)

My cap and bell  
 Do my calling tell,  
 With their ting! tang! tingle!

But there lies a gap 'twixt them and me :  
By what they do, their folly you see.  
Now, the thing which doth my folly tell  
Is very soon doff'd—my cap and bell.  
So the outward form of folly is here,  
But the essence you find spreads everywhere.

(FOOL *retires back.*)

PIPPO.

Nay, be not fickle thus, but say at once  
I'll marry thee, dear Pip, whene'er thou wilt.  
Candour on these occasions is the food  
Which love likes best.

LUCILLA.

Mayhap one-sided love  
Is not oft ask'd the choice of nourishment.  
A yea and nay I hold in counterpoise.

PIPPO.

Why, thou hast own'd thou didst return my love.

LUCILLA.

Well, that implies I do not wish to keep it.  
We ne'er return a gift we dearly prize.

PIPPA.

Ay, but I gave it for a fair exchange.

LUCILLA.

Upon my word, you value much your love.  
You ask for mine, and call it fair exchange!  
*This* will be fair: I'll give you just a bit,  
A little mite of love, and for the shred  
Give all of yours, without an atom's loss,  
And then the bargain will be just.

PIPPA.

Agreed:

So long as you will marry me—and now,  
Reveal your name, or why you hesitate.

LUCILLA.

Why, then, 'tis Lu—a pretty name, is't not?

PIPPO.

'Tis short and sweet, but something else doth wait  
To perfect it.

LUCILLA.

My friends do call me Lu—  
And nothing else—at least my dearest friends.

PIPPO.

Then will I call you Lu—till doomsday comes.

LUCILLA.

You may be call'd upon for warmer work.  
Fancy your ghost through all th' infernal gloom  
Shouting out Lu—till Cerb'rus howls again.

PIPPO.

Or rather, till the music of the name  
Suspends the anguish of the spirits there.

(FOOL *returns.*)

LUCILLA.

Here comes your friend again! no doubt he'll tame  
All your extravagance.

PIPPO.

With greater still ;

He said he'd share your favours when we wed.

LUCILLA.

And so he shall (PIPPO *pauses*) ; half of the citron buds  
You'll order from Verona shall be his.

(*They retire back.*)

FOOL.

I cannot bear the heat of my own breath :  
It fills the ball-room till it stifles me.  
A thousand human beings talking love,  
Bleating like sheep their amorous desires,  
Or frisking in the hot satyric dance,  
Doth sore affect even folly's stomach.  
Here comes a couple of a higher breed,

*Enter* MINA (*still assuming her sister's name*) and VITALE.

Who talk of love in sickly sentiment,  
And gloss its baser part with cunning shape  
Of compliment, and similies and wit,

And fancy that they're less the animal.

Sure this is sense—but no—they call me Fool!

*(Retires back, and sings. Accompaniment as before).*

All the world would make a noise

If married or if single;

And after all, what is that noise

But—tingle! tang! tingle!

VITALE.

Oh, lady sweet, be not as sceptical

As you are fair, for I must c'en avow,

By every beauty that the earth doth own,

I love you as the dear supreme of all.

Why will you cast the hellebore of doubt

Within affection's chalice which I hold,

And trembling ask the fragrant lips of faith

To touch and sanctify for evermore?

There, now you frown! and yet anon, mayhap,

By smiles you'll raise a phantom happiness,

Which, seeming tangible, will all dissolve

When I attempt to test its certainty.

MINA.

Why, vanity is ever pleased to hear  
Confessions such as thine—but when you press  
Your suit into the form of marriage thus,  
It takes a shape that scares a prudent maid.  
So I do fain retract encouragement,  
To keep a loophole lest I need escape.  
Is not this candour, sir? Besides, if I did say  
“Oh, yes, without delay I'll marry you,  
Place you at once as lord of all my heart,  
And put my freedom in your hands for aye,”  
What of your friend? You say he loves me too;  
Between such claimants what, sir, can I do?

VITALE.

Why, if you love him, tell me so at once,  
And I would banish me to distant climes,  
Content to dwell with sorrow for his sake.  
But oh! I pray you keep me not in doubt;  
Suspense is worse than certain misery.

MINA.

I do not crave your friend Anselmo's love.

VITALE.

Have you the same indifference for me ?

MINA.

In all good honesty, I like you well ;  
And were I free as I would wish to be,  
I e'en could place my hand in yours, and say,  
This humble gift is all your own :—but stay,  
I could do this, for you possess, sir, much  
To win so light a trifle as my heart.  
Yet I would pause—nay, I would e'en refuse,  
And more—declare upon my sacred word  
I ne'er would wed you, if I thought your friend  
Would feel one moment's pang when you make known  
Th' acceptance. Ay, and more than this,  
I must refuse my hand, unless he feels  
Delight because it may be yours.

VITALE.

Enough !

My fate is cast, for e'en if friendship stirr'd  
The noblest feelings in his heart, and he  
Relinquish'd all his claim, yet must he feel  
An utter desolation at his loss.



MINA.

( If I had not reward in store for you,  
I would not test your truthful nature thus.)  
Now that you know my resolution, sir,  
We will, if please you, join the dance again.

VITALE.

A moment more—what meaning was implied  
When you did say you were not free to choose ?

MINA.

Simply, my will's dependent on the Duke,  
Who, by the virtue of his guardianship,  
Disposes of my sister's hand and mine  
To whom he may select.

VITALE.

What, if I gain  
His free consent to make you mine ?

MINA.

Alas !

Do kinsmen ever give their countenance

To those their poor dependent wards would choose?  
Besides—your friend—my resolution's firm.

VITALE.

Why he doth seem full happy with your sister,  
And has not made an effort for your hand.  
Her name is Isola. Is she like to you?

MINA.

Nay, quite dissimilar. While I am deem'd  
A gay and maybe careless demoiselle,  
My sister, sir, is grave, and harbours thought,  
And is a devotee at Learning's shrine.  
From this her style of beauty takes its tone.

VITALE.

Then pray to Heaven, she may her features show,  
And soon remove that Ethiop's face she wears  
To mar such loveliness.

MINA.

Nay, but, good sir,  
He cannot fall in love with both of us.

VITALE.

The more I think, the more I am confused ;  
So I will e'en submit to fate and thee,  
Praying of both to clear the mystery.

MINA.

A good resolve when none is left beside.  
But see, the Duke hath order'd music here,  
To give the revellers a moonlight dance.

*(They retire back. A crowd of MASKERS enter from the  
Palace. FOOL and a group come forward.)*

FIRST MASK.

Here are the florins, Sir Fool—pray decide the wager.

FOOL.

Spced on : I have no time to waste.

FIRST MASK.

We all three differ about the effect which veritable  
Love doth cause. I affirm he makes a man sad, turns  
his breathing into sighs, causes each leg to be fearful of

its neighbour, so that one is slowly drawn after the other; establishes an affection between the arms, that they do lie most lovingly on one another. In short, doth make the entire man a sort of peg for Melancholy to hang her mantle on, patched up with groans, sudden ejaculations, starts, and throes.

FOOL (*to* SECOND MASK).

In what wise differ you ?

SECOND MASK.

I swear that love assimilates with love ;  
And when a man doth love in proper form,  
The God discloses marvels to his sight,  
And what were things of casual form before,  
He now doth clothe with love's intelligence.  
Much that was bad he now thinks passing good ;  
Much that was doubtful he thinks excellent ;  
All that was common he doth elevate ;  
And can with keen perception ever see  
That good preponderates throughout the world.  
In short, I vow that love in truest guise  
Exalts and well-nigh Deifies the man.

FOOL.

If that's a maiden by thy side, and thou dost woo her, thy speech hath won her now, chiefly because she understands it not. And thou, how is't with thee? (to THIRD MASK.)

THIRD MASK.

I differ from my friends. I say that genuine love doth make a man happy as a bird. Each morn when I awake, the eyes of her I love seem looking into mine, and with their laughing light dance to and fro, like to the image of a sun circle, which performs a phantom motion on the wall. My heart doth form the centre of a thousand joyous meteors, which cast a light on the clouds of sore events. In fact, I do avow love rises on man's life, like the sun upon the world, to brighten, and sustain, and glorify.

FOOL.

And each man backs his notion by the wager of a hundred florins. 'Tis a small sum to gild an image with, whose upper half is a man, the lower half a goat. Well, tell it not that the Fool essays a word of common sense,

and he will answer thee. Here are the hundred florins (*clinks them*); this is the Fool's philosophy, grubbed out of books (*puts them in his pocket*), and the musty rhyme will settle the question.

Love unto some is food and nourishment ;  
From some he takes all sleekness and content.  
While unto others he gives cunning wit,  
And ev'ry word they utter makes a hit,  
He yet doth change again—turns wit to sighs,  
Or smiles to anger, and himself denies.  
Some are by Love changed both in mien and mind ;  
Some he quick-sighted makes, some makes he blind ;  
In short, Love's changes are a multitude,  
And no two changes bear similitude.

(*Music without.*)

But hear—other lips discourse on love, so leave the Fool, and listen with all the length of your ears.

(*Song is heard from without. A harp accompaniment.*)

## The Gondolier's Song.

## I.

Brightly, oh brightly, the moon-rays are falling,  
The waters are glassing the deep sky above :  
Then hasten, ye lovers, the gondolier's calling,  
'Tis time for young hearts to be hallow'd by love.  
While softly the light on the water is sleeping,  
Oh seek not your faith, nor your love to deny ;  
For nought betwixt earth and bright heaven is keeping  
The plighting of love from ascending on high.  
Hush ! softly the dip of the gondolier's oar  
Shall be lull'd to a sound scarcely heard by the night !  
Young hearts, ye may dream that earth is no more,  
But changed to a heaven of love and delight.

## II.

Brightly, oh brightly, the moon-rays are streaming ;  
How deeply unlike are the thoughts they impart !  
For though they are bright—they but coldly are beaming,  
Yet passion and warmth they bestow on the heart,

Oh ! pure is the hour, and the holiest feeling  
Forbids aught of love but the true lover's vow :  
If e'er was a time for affection's revealing  
The language of soul, it is now—it is now.  
Hush ! softly the dip of the gondolier's oar  
Shall be lull'd to a sound scarcely heard by the night :  
Young hearts, you may dream that earth is no more,  
But changed to a heaven of love and delight !

*(Music strikes up. MASKERS form a dance, and  
curtain falls.)*



ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Piazza.*

*Enter PIPPO and BERGETTO.*

PIPPO.

And so thou really didst not see her last night? 'Tis well; her beauty would have blinded thee.

BERGETTO.

Wilt thou say whom?

PIPPO.

What were thou doing to miss her?

BERGETTO.

Making love to an angel.

PIPPO.

Well, but didst thou see her ?

BERGETTO.

Devils ! man, see whom ?

PIPPO.

Oh ! what a goddess in petticoats is she !

BERGETTO.

If thou meanest a woman, I have a match for her. She hath a front of wit, a back of scorn, sides of mirth and humour, and tail of epigram.

PIPPO.

My sweet hath everything outside and inside for perfect woman.

BERGETTO.

Inside !

PIPPO.

Yes, she is lined with intelligence, and covered with

beauty. She is a volume of excellent manuscript, whose pages Virtue hath illuminated with her own portrait. Its binding is of the softest skin, its preface explains its contents, and liking the index, I bought the book.

BERGETTO

Bless thy conceit! How much didst give?

PIPPO.

Coins stamped with Love's image.

BERGETTO.

Thou wilt be hanged for forgery yet. What is the title?

PIPPO.

Title!

BERGETTO.

Yes, books have titles—does she carry it on her back?

PIPPO.

It's small enough to be writ anywhere.

BERGETTO.

Well, the priest can lengthen it. What is't?

PIPPO.

Her name is—promise discretion.

BERGETTO.

That's a long one. Much longer than any angel's name.

PIPPO.

Thy angel's ugliness stunted it, when her sponsors put it on her.

BERGETTO.

Spare thy wit, and speak her name.

PIPPO.

'Tis—very short.

BERGETTO.

Ha!

PIPPO.

Yes, quite as short as ha! Well, then, 'tis——

BERGETTO.

In faith's name, what?

PIPPO.

No, not what—shorter.

BERGETTO.

I swear I will cudgel thee.

PIPPO.

Well, gentle friend—'tis Lu.

BERGETTO.

Lu! if there be not two Lu's in Venice—make thy will.

PIPPO.

How now?

BERGETTO.

Lu, didst say? Oh no, thou hast not dared to set thy

misbegotten love on the same woman I have elected for my bride. *My angel is Ln!*

PIPPO (*drawing his sword*).

Before I let daylight through thy carcase, did she say she was the Lady Isola's waiting-woman?

BERGETTO (*draws his sword*).

Ay, the same—come on.

PIPPO.

One instant, knave: there may be some mistake e'en yet. This ring I wear came from her—a token of our plighted faith.

BERGETTO.

This chain she presented to me till our wedding-day makes all we have a mutual property.

PIPPO.

One moment yet. Is she tall, with hair dark as night, but herself merry as the morn?

BERGETTO.

Yes, and as full of smiles for Bergetto as the noon ;  
and cool, in regard for thee, as the evening.

PIPPO.

Come on, thou braggart.

*(They fight. BERGETTO wounds his sword-arm.)*

BERGETTO.

There's a scratch for thee. Art satisfied ? That was  
the Frenchman's trick I told thee of before.

PIPPO.

Since first blood is thine, we'll settle it by arbitration,  
and the subject of the quarrel shall decide.

BERGETTO.

How so ?

PIPPO.

Why, I will make an appointment with this imp, or  
angel, or whatever she may prove to be ; and if she

keeps it, come and see us, and let thine own eyes drink in thy misery.

BERGETTO.

Nay, for as much as thou art vanquish'd, I will make the appointment, and thou shalt look on when she comes.

PIPPA.

Perhaps, if we named nearly the same time, she would come to both. There is no plumbing the abyss of woman's deceit.

BERGETTO.

Well, I agree. When St. Mark strikes four to-day, I will be here with the fair——

PIPPA.

Never mind her name, it brings on the cholick. When St. Mark chimes a quarter past she will be with me.

BERGETTO.

The one to whom she comes is in no way to be interfered with by the other.



PIPPO.

No, I swear not to speak if she is with thee. I'll murder thee in the evening, and go to Greece.

BERGETTO.

Or swing in the Piazzetta in the morning. Poor Pip.  
—I do pity thee. Adieu. *(Exit.)*

PIPPO.

Not so poor as thou, if a wife will enrich me. *(Exit.)*

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SCENE II.—*An Ante-room in the Duke's Palace.*

*Enter VITALE, and MINA, unseen by him.*

VITALE.

No more shall resolution alternate  
Between a doubtful love and friendship sure.  
Still be my friend, Anselmo, for I swear,  
By absence from thee to deserve the name,  
And I will fly from love to keep thy trust.

MINA.

(First snap the cords with which I hold thee bound).

VITALE.

Her beauty would imply that Truth herself  
 Must dwell within so sweet an edifice,  
 For Virtue should have been the architect  
 To raise the temple for her dwelling-place.  
 But truth, which ought the very core to be  
 Of smallest syllable from maidens' lips,  
 Doth ne'er resemblance bear to coquetry.  
 Yet she doth hesitate; recalls her speech;  
 Doth seem confused, and not a word comes free,  
 Fresh from her soul, untainted by a doubt.  
 'Tis pity that such outward loveliness  
 Should hide the mildew of untruth within.

MINA (*coming forward*).

Unwilling, and yet with willing ear,  
 I overheard your speech. Yes, you are right.  
 Words, sir, are living things: we give them birth  
 To rise in judgment either for or 'gainst us;  
 And if we did implant a soul of truth

In ev'ry syllable we give the world,  
Earth might become a paradise again.  
But, oh! except one little falsity,  
Which soon should have been made as clear as light,  
I have deceived you, sir, in nought—yet you  
Set falsehood's name upon my character,  
And from a change of feeling in yourself  
Avow I am not worthy of your love.

VITALE.

How cruel thou. Say but in simple words  
That I may call thee mine.

MINA.

What! with thy wings  
Full spread to fly from me? It is too late:  
The Duke hath signified his choice is made,  
And I *must* wed.

VITALE.

Little as I know thee,  
I will be sworn thou wilt not so forget  
Thine own pure nature as to let the Duke

Trade with thy person as with merchandise,  
And sell thy hand unhallow'd by thy heart.

MINA.

Ay, but kind fate may so direct his choice,  
That his selection proves my own. What then?

VITALE.

Oh, do not trifle thus—thy pleasure lies  
In probing wounds, instead of healing them.

*Enter* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Lady, the Duke, so please you, waits your presence.  
*(Exit.)*

MINA.

I come. Oh, think of me with gentler thoughts  
When next we meet, and 'twill be soon. Adieu.  
*(Exit.)*

VITALE.

Was ever mortal so completely held

In woman's changeful fantasy as I?  
First she confesses love, then straight retracts.  
Next, she declares that she will give her hand  
If wedding me doth cause a rival joy!  
Then, when I swear I will not injure him,  
She well-nigh urges me to do the wrong;  
And ends it all by calmly telling me  
The Duke has mated her, and she must wed!  
There must be something wrong in this, for truth  
Doth never need a veil of mystery.

*Enter ANSELMO with a letter, not seeing VITALE.*

ANSELMO.

How bright doth finely-temper'd honour shine  
In ev'ry syllable her hand hath writ;  
Making them each a torch of purity  
To light her character in dearest form!  
How sweetly is her nature here express'd,  
Set forth in words that bid affection's heart  
Leap forth in ecstasy to catch the sense!  
But for this note, the Duke's most sudden will  
Had strewn with thorns my new-trod path of joy,  
But she, with loving hand of truthfulness,

Hath clear'd the threatening parasites away.  
Go next my heart, sweet messenger of love ;  
Guard it from evil—thy antithesis.

VITALE.

I fear, Anselmo, I intrude on thee :  
But I do bear a load upon my soul,  
And I would ask thy aid to lighten it.

ANSELMO.

Thou dost command me as thou ever didst.  
Why not, dear friend, in full assurance say  
Do this, or that, without another word ?  
Thou know'st thy will in all things is my own.

VITALE.

Thy words augment occasion for the boon.  
A wrong I've done thee, and would e'en atone  
Before it be too late. Nay, hear me on,  
'Tis soon explain'd, and, oh ! that thy forgiveness  
Were spoke as briefly.

ANSELMO.

I will *not* listen.

If thou hast lost my fortune to some foe,  
I e'en could pardon it, for I am heir  
To wealth so vast, that all beside is nought.  
The rich mine of her love is promised me,  
A treasure ever inexhaustible.

VITALE.

(Can she be thus so false to him and me!)  
What, dear Anselmo, an' the mine be rich  
As all Golconda's fabled store, if she  
Doth turn by fickleness the gold to dross?  
For love in woman false is little less.

ANSELMO.

My friend, what dost thou mean?

VITALE.

That I forgot  
The debt I owe thee for a thousand boons  
Perform'd through all my life, and set my heart  
Where thou hast placed thine own; and she, I fear,  
Doth welcome both—at least, her conduct lacks  
That candid front of fair integrity

Which seems to raise a doubt; but, oh! 'tis thou  
Didst rise in judgment 'gainst me, and decreed  
A load of anguish 'till I told thee all.  
Nay, prithee hear me on. 'Tis some excuse  
That I did meet the dame at Florence once;  
And 'twas not till I gain'd an interview,  
And then first knew her name was Isola,  
That I perceived the strange entanglement  
Which threaten'd discord to our amity.

ANSELMO.

I scarce can credit my own sense. I thought  
My suit was urged—ay, even to her face.

VITALE.

Yes, when her face was mask'd; but ere I left,  
She stood before me as the Florentine.

ANSELMO.

I am so ill-prepared for news thus strange  
I cannot shape reply. That thou art kind,  
And generous, and candid, I can feel,  
For else Vitale could not be—but say



Thou hast some other meaning in thy words  
Besides what my poor understanding finds.

## VITALE.

Would that I had; but 'tis not my intent  
To mar thy happiness in smallest shape :  
For oh ! Anselmo, there is much in love  
That will not bear the crucible of thought.  
For thought doth analyse its every part,  
And proves alloy is mingled with it all.  
The senses wait on love for womankind  
With pleasure in their train in cunning guise ;  
But yet, with all love's blandishment and smiles,  
With all the gilding which doth glitter on't,  
With all the ecstasy which makes the heart  
Bound in its seat, yet passion still is there  
Mixing with all, and blemishing the best.  
But *friendship* holds his sovereignty without  
One minister of passion in his court,  
And rules the baser part of human kind  
With laws that do regenerate it much.  
The flattering sycophants which ever wait  
Upon love's rival court, and make themselves

The theme of their own praise and flattery,  
Are by the power of friendship all reversed :  
And then, in place of self-esteem, they see  
Another's excellence. The courtier's vanity  
Gives place to sober judgment of men's worth ;  
And even selfishness, the subtlest stain  
Which finds its way into the purest hearts,  
Doth fain succumb when friendship enters too ;  
Thus is the sacrifice of little worth  
I make to call thee still my friend. To-night  
I do depart, and may all happiness  
Wait on thy steps, as sorrow does on mine.

## ANSELMO.

How terrible is this ! Fate hath decreed  
The worst infliction that she could bestow.  
The sweetest period of my life has changed  
To bitterness. Oh ! best and dearest friend,  
By this warm grasp, and by the love I bear  
For thee, my brother of our happy youth,  
I swear I will do nought to injure thee.  
But if thou bidst me to relinquish love,  
I yield my life, for 'tis a part of it.

VITALE.

Nay, 'twere a useless sacrifice for thee.  
And lest thou credit'st me for greater worth  
Than I can justify, I must confess  
I would not give up hope so readily,  
Had she confess'd, in plain unvarnish'd words,  
An honest love ; but ev'ry syllable that she did speak  
Was stamp'd with doubt, and though she gave  
Enough encouragement to lead me on,  
I fear'd to follow so unsure a flame,  
Which, like a meteor of the night, misleads.

ANSELMO.

Encouragement ! what meanest thou by the word ?

VITALE.

I fear, Anselmo, that her purity  
Is not unmingled with a common sin,  
Which women think is none, for they believe  
Deceit's a weapon Nature furnishes  
For them to use in warfare 'gainst us all.

ANSELMO.

Nay, that the lady in the smallest word

Hides not an atom else than is express'd  
I stake my soul upon.

*Enter* MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

The Duke, my lord, awaits you.

VITALE.

I follow you.

Adieu, dear friend: to-night we meet again;  
I've much to tell thee ere I take my leave.

ANSELMO.

Nay, dear Vitale, 'twould be wrong to all;  
To me, a score of hearts, and to thyself.

VITALE.

I seek e'en now commission for the wars.

*(Exit.)*

ANSELMO.

How cruel fate! Thus, at the very time  
When all my hopes were nearly consummate,

To turn my foe, and strike so fatally.  
Oh ! were her worth of less undoubted form,  
His words would sorely rankle in the wound  
Which sorrow at his pain already caused.  
But her sweet character doth bear the stamp  
Of purity so clear, that doubt doth die  
At mention of its enemy, her name.

*Enter ISOLA, in haste.*

ISOLA.

How fortunate we meet ! Hadst thou my note ?

ANSELMO.

My heart doth hold it in captivity.  
But wherefore ask ? now it hath found its home,  
Where it is welcomed by a thousand thanks,  
And usher'd in by love, thou wouldst not take  
The cherish'd missive from its resting-place ?

ISOLA.

Oh no. I wrote it with the full belief  
That thou wouldst feel that even bashfulness  
Should not, with sensibility too nice,

Stand in the path of clearing doubt away.  
I now attend the Duke, and it may chance  
His purport takes a form to bid us part.

ANSELMO.

Go where thou wilt, sweet love, I follow thee ;  
The guide-star of my fate in life or death.

ISOLA.

I do not fear myself, for did the Duke  
Threaten my life, or offer me a crown,  
I would not purchase it by falsehood's vow,  
Sworn at the altar kneeling to my God,  
Searing my very soul with perjury.  
But lest he separate us by some course  
We neither dream of now, Anselmo say  
Whate'er occurs thou wilt rely on me ;  
And if the worst should happen, still believe  
That truth shall justify thy faith and love ?

ANSELMO.

To doubt thee were to doubt the life of truth.  
I swear, dear Isola, my trust in thee

Is equal to my love, and that doth prove  
Against suspicion such an antidote,  
That did enigmas rest in all thy words,  
My deep affection would decipher them  
To show the soul of purity in all.

## ISOLA.

Believing thee, I do not fear the Duke.  
Misfortune is deprived of half its sting  
When those we love preserve our memory,  
Embalm'd in confidence—'tis a sweet plant,  
Shedding a perfume even over hope,  
When hope doth languish most ; and if events  
Be barren of all fruit of happiness,  
Nipping the early blossoms of our love,  
Set in their place the flowers of hope and faith,  
And they shall only fade when I am false.

## ANSELMO.

Memory shall be a very paradise,  
Where trust indeed shall bloom, tended by love.  
But wherefore thus so sad, dear Isola ?

ISOLA.

The Duke hath learn'd the secret of our hearts ;  
And in the note which bids me wait on him,  
There breathes a tone unwontedly severe.

ANSELMO.

I, too, am summon'd, and I know not why :  
Who could betray a love invisible ?

ISOLA.

I hear the Duke doth learn by strangest means,  
Not only tidings useful to the state,  
But plots and stratagems of love as well.  
And it is whisper'd that his minister,  
A certain Fool in outward gear, betrays  
All who do trust his folly with their news.  
Here comes a messenger to bid me haste,  
And so—adieu. Thou wilt rely on me,  
Whate'er betides, and in this confidence  
Again—adieu. (*Exit.*)



ANSELMO.

In Heaven and thee I trust.

My stake on happiness is far too deep  
 For simply *hope*—so from my earnest soul  
 I trust in Heaven and thee.

*(Exit.)*SCENE III. — *The Piazza, as before.**Enter* BERGETTO. (*Clock strikes.*)

BERGETTO.

Now is the time. Poor Pip;—I'm sorry for thee, Pip  
 —for thou hast been a merry friend and true. Poor  
 devil! I will make light of thy misery, which is doing  
 thee a good turn. Oh! 'twill be glorious to see thee  
 dumb with vexation when she doth come!

*Enter* PIPPO.

PIPPO.

The bell hath struck.

BERGETTO.

Nay, but a moment. See, she comes—avaunt, thou villain, into darkness.

*Enter LUCIA, masked.*

*(PIPPO retires back in a rage, and is about to speak.)*

Nay, keep thy oath—be silent.

LUCIA.

(Poor jealous fools—why, they are blind as bats!)  
Well, Bergetto, I received thy note, and here I am.  
What wouldst thou?

BERGETTO.

Good, sweet Lu. I tell thee why I sought thee thus. I have a kind of an acquaintance with a fellow—a most entire coxcomb—a very impersonation of petty vanities stuck on one man—the laughing-stock of every woman in Venice. Well, this biped puppy, whom they call Pippo, hath sworn that you bestowed all sorts of favours on him, and had the impudence to give his effrontery a shape, by declaring that you have promised to marry him.

LUCIA.

I promised to marry any but thee! Nay, to believe that so dishonourable a blot can rest on my nature, proves thee unfitted for my love.

BERGETTO.

Nay, it is——

LUCIA.

How durst thou think I should promise to marry two men, sir? I will never speak to thee again.

BERGETTO.

But hear——

LUCIA.

I will not hear. Thou hast put an insult on mine honour; and if thou couldst do that before marriage, what wouldst thou after? But I refuse thee.

BERGETTO.

Oh! I am——

LUCIA.

Nay, not a word. Thou hast proved thyself unworthy a thought even, and I retract all the absurdity I spoke last night. *(Exit, pretending anger.)*

PIPPO *(coming forward)*.

Ah, 'ah! my fine friend, how likest thou the end on't? Now thou wilt hear what she says to me, for be sure she hath left thee in such haste only to come to me.

*Enter LUCILLA, masked.*

*(BERGETTO is about to address her, but PIPPO pushes him back.)*

Nay, keep thy oath, good Bergetto.

LUCILLA.

*(Now to speak like my mischivous cousin, or it's all over with me.)* Well, Pippo, no spirit ever waited on his master with more alacrity. What wouldst thou?

PIPPO.

Thanks, dearest maid. When I have wished to speak

of scoundrels, idiots, knaves, and such like, and wanted to express the superlative of each, thou hast heard me name a certain Bergetto. Well, this clod of ills and follies hath sworn, that at the ball last night, thou gavest him a token of thy love, and accepted him, with all his vices thick upon him, as thy husband——

LUCILLA (*interrupting*).

A base invention of thine own, to cast a slur upon my character, that thou mayest rid thyself of me. I quite understand. Thou dost repent giving me so valuable a commodity as thyself, so desirest to lay a fault upon me to give thee occasion—nay, speak not—truly, sir, an ingenious way of ridding thyself of a burden. But fear not. I tell thee now I am not sorry at thy caprice, for I see I have had a lucky escape in marrying that worst of characters—a suspicious man. Nay, sir, I wish to hear no word of thine. (*Exit in a hurry.*)

(PIPPA is confounded, and looks on without attempting to speak.)

BERGETTO (*coming forward and mocking*).

“ Ah, ah! my fine friend, how likest thou the end

on't?" I'll tell thee what—never let us quarrel about womankind or woman unkind again.

*Enter LUCIA and LUCILLA, unmasked.*

She hath deceived us both alike, but leaves no wound save what I treated thee to.

PIPPO.

Give me thy hand. 'Tis well said, Bergetto; henceforth a fig for women all. However, revenge is left, and we will paint her in her true colours as jilt, and will hang the portrait as a warning at every bachelor's door in Venice.

LUCIA (*to BERGETTO*).

Here is the copy ready o thy hand.

LUCILLA (*to PIPPO*).

Is it a full-length, or a miniature?

LUCIA.

If love be blind, thou art indeed in love:  
And if 'tis thus, and we attempt to move

The bandage from thine eyes to give thee sight,  
Love is not love—so keep without the light.  
But yet—when blind, it seems that every sense  
Deserts thee quite—so, as a recompense,  
Know that the vows to Lu, which thou didst swear,  
Were false—for Lucia is the name I bear.

LUCILLA.

And I, Lucilla—yet we both are Lu—  
And, honestly—we meant to puzzle you.

PIPPO (*to LUCIA*).

Although before I never saw thy face,  
I have been minded often of thy grace ;  
For here is one (*to LUCILLA*) so very like to thee,  
That we have loved a double deity.

BERGETTO.

I did not think that beauty could divide  
Her gifts so equally on either side ;  
Weigh each your graces, and a single hair  
Would the just balance of the scales impair.

PIPPA.

Most happy we, for we have both a prize,  
 Alike in manner, and alike in size ;  
 And one resemblance more doth further strike—  
 Your tongues in speed run very much alike

LUCILLA.

They must be fast, for they are driven so,  
 To keep the pace thy impudence doth go.  
 But, as by some mischance, we four are plighted,  
 Delay our race of tongues—

LUCIA.

'Till we're united.

SCENE IV.—*A Room in the Palace.*

(SECRETARIES *at a table*, ATTENDANTS, &c. DUKE, ISOLA,  
*and MINA.*)

DUKE.

The punishment that I would guard you from  
 Rests with yourselves alone. Condemn not me,



For I am bound to minister to him  
Who, dying, did bequeath you to my charge,  
And left his wishes in his will express'd,  
That I, his nearest relative, should choose  
A husband for you each—fitted, of course,  
In worth to match with so much worthiness.  
But 'tis provided, too, if you refuse  
To marry whom I name, your fortune goes  
A rich endowment to a nunnery.  
It seems, however, that although you know  
The trust I hold, and its contingent aim,  
You have disposed already of your hearts,  
Forgetting that the gift opposed by me  
Doth strip you of your fortune, and doth place  
A sterner punishment within my hands.  
So pause before, in obstinate disdain,  
You bring a judgment I would fain withhold;  
And, as I swear the cavaliers are rich  
In all good parts for perfect gentlemen,  
Yield with good grace, since you must yield at last,  
And do not force me to command your will.

MINA.

Was it so great a crime to ope the door

Which caged our hearts, and give them liberty ?  
But please you, gracious Duke, I'm ready now  
To hasten to the altar, and to swear  
Loyalty and love, and go through all the form  
Which waits on marriage, if a trifle you  
Will grant me for my ready complaisance.

DUKE.

Your place, fair niece, is not to dictate terms.  
But what is your request ?

MINA.

Simply, your grace,  
I vow to wed, this morning, if you will,  
Ay, and to deck myself in gayest dress,  
To seem a bride, and not a sacrifice—  
Look at my sister, please you, sire—she chides  
In gesture dumb but eloquent, because  
She fancies I am playing hypocrite.

DUKE.

It seems you do not lose your saucy tongue  
E'en at a moment when 'tis least required ;  
But your request—or your conditions—which ?

MINA.

Why, my Lord Duke, in matters of the heart  
Maidens do think their will a privilege  
By Nature given them, for she hath made  
Its instincts all irrelevant to will :  
And forasmuch as I could not control  
The urgency of love, I gave my heart,  
Without remembering once that your good grace  
Did lay a claim to the poor property,  
To make it over to some stranger's care.  
So much I own ; and having thus confess'd  
My crime, my folly, and forgetfulness,  
I do repeat my promise, sire, to wed,  
If you will grant the small request I make.

DUKE.

Pray be the Duke, and turn my guardian too ;  
Change places for the nonce. But I agree,  
If you will wed the gentleman I name ;  
All terms are then in form of settlements.

MINA.

What gratitude I owe ! 'Tis simply this—  
Permit me, sire, to marry whom I will.

DUKE (*smiling aside*).

My word is pledged, and I must fain submit :  
Of course surmising that the gentleman  
Is willing to embrace the happiness  
Involved in choosing him.

MINA.

Oh yes, indeed ;  
That is, your grace, a necessary clause,  
Subtracting nought from all the thanks I owe.

DUKE.

Then recollect, I keep you to your word.  
And now, what says your gentle sister here ?  
Am I to turn a pleader yet again—  
Forget the sovereign in the advocate ?

ISOLA.

'Tis I the pleader, and your grace the judge,  
Who will, I think, allow my cause is just ;  
For I do simply ask for liberty  
To lose my fortune rather than to wed.

DUKE.

Nay, by my faith ! your stubbornness is wrong :  
You marry, lady ; and to none but him  
Whom I have chosen shall you give yourself.

ISOLA.

Oh, my Lord Duke be merciful, be just.  
You would not that the daughter of your friend,  
Your relative, should so pollute her name,  
Her lineage and herself, as e'er to wed  
At any mandate but her own heart's love ?  
You will not force so terrible a wrong  
Upon a helpless woman, sire, who leans  
For aid and kindness on the very judge  
Who would consign her thus to misery ?

DUKE.

Think you, your father would such trust have placed  
In both my judgment and my leniency,  
If he had thought I should have wedded you  
To any but the noblest and the best ?  
Why should his daughter then evince such fear—  
Or is she wiser than her father was ?

## ISOLA.

I never yet deceived you—nor will now.  
Not e'en equivocation, nor one word  
That tells with double sense, will I e'er speak.  
Thus, my good Duke, I honestly confess  
That I have pledged myself to die unwed  
If you refuse me use of my own will.  
Oh, sire, it is so great a sacrifice,  
Whose terrible extent men scarcely know,  
When they do ask a maiden to pronounce  
The vow which wedding her corporeally  
Divorces her affections from her heart,  
And sends her on the barren path of life  
A soulless outcast when bereft of love.  
Oh, my good liege, this hand did never steal;  
This tongue ne'er spoke in language of untruth;  
My will did guide them in an honest course;  
And shall my will, which rules o'er petty things,  
Consign this person to dishonesty?  
Degrade it in the sacred name of God,  
Making the altar but a barter-place,  
Where, with few words of seeming sanctity,  
The bargain's struck, and oh! the name of wife

Doth brand, not bless, a slave for evermore !  
That I should act in this most solemn mime  
Is so repugnant to my very soul,  
That I would sooner die than take a part.

MINA (*aside*).

(I'faith, but love doth make her eloquent.)

DUKE.

Or sooner perish than forego your love !

ISOLA.

No merit if I do confess my love,  
Because I am aware you know the truth.  
But were my heart and hand at liberty,  
With all respect, my liege, for your commands,  
Forgive me if I say, no punishment  
Could shake my firm resolve. I dare not wed  
With one of whom I am so ignorant,  
I do not even guess his name, or why  
He seeks so poor a person as myself.  
If he doth know me well, he too must know  
I should refuse his suit—not knowing me,  
No loss accrues from my rejecting him.

DUKE.

So be it, then. It seems you are so bent  
In having your own way, that I withdraw  
The willing hand which would have guided you.  
And if you lose the path to happiness,  
Which I would fain have clear'd of obstacles,  
The blame and consequence doth rest with you.

ISOLA.

'Tis not reproach, but gratitude I owe  
For this emancipation of my fears.  
And oh! forgive me, sire, if I have spoke  
The smallest syllable that lacks respect.  
But in a cause where soul and heart do plead,  
The mode of speech may take improper form;  
And if it were so, prithee pardon me.

DUKE.

When hearts are threaten'd, then the tongue eries out;  
And, like a sentinel, doth sound alarms,  
Defending its commander 'gainst attacks  
With every arm of specious argument.  
But now the strife is o'er be pleased to write



In simple words 'tis you, not I, refuse  
 Your heart and hand, since I did promise both ;  
 And I would hold a written testament,  
 That may acquit me of all want of truth.

ISOLA.

Most gladly, sir—no dubious terms shall cast  
 One doubt upon the source of the refusal.      (*Writes.*)

MINA (*aside*).

There's something hidden in this suavity ;  
 More, I suspect, than meets the view.

ISOLA (*giving paper*).

This doth attach, my liege, all blame to me.

DUKE (*having read it*).

It is sufficient—brief and explicit.  
 Adieu, then, ladies, till I send for you.  
 Be ready at command, since I may seek  
 Some further converse : and again take heed,  
 Not I, but you, direct your destinies.

ISOLA (*to MINA*).

A mystery lies in every word he speaks.

MINA (*to ISOLA*).

There is a something lurking in his eye,

Whose character I cannot comprehend.

(*Exeunt.*)

*Enter ANSELMO and VITALE.*

DUKE.

(Here come the prompters of their eloquence ;

But, by my faith, they recollect their part

With so much certainty of utterance,

That they must read it in their inmost hearts,

Making the prompter's place a sinecure.)

Signor Vitale, you have writ to me,

Demanding your commission to bear arms ;

And forasmuch as the rash Genoese

Do draw on Venice for her best defence,

There is the answer to you requisition ;

(*Gives a paper.*)

\*You take command as herein specified.

You, Lord Anselmo, would not willingly

Be where your friend is not; thus have I drawn  
The terms which make you captain of a troop.

*(Gives a paper.)*

I need not tell you that the senate calls  
On all the servants of the state for aid  
And ready energy to quell these wars.  
Therefore with utmost speed I pray depart.

ANSELMO.

My liege, kind fortune hath allotted me  
A name not ill connected with the deeds,  
Which, shared by others, hath made Venice stand  
Alone as conqueror of her enemies.  
No imputation, then, can be attach'd,  
When I request that you will cancel this.  
For now ambition to excel in arms  
Hath given place to hopes that I may win  
A richer prize than war could ever give.

DUKE.

The duty of a soldier is to cast  
All thoughts away that enervate his soul,  
And love should be the spur to bravery;  
To follow, not precede, the call to war.

ANSELMO.

Most true; and if you will accord one boon  
Dependent on my service giving me  
A right to ask it, I will fly to arms,  
And either die, or merit the reward.

DUKE.

A noble soldier and a gentleman,  
As Lord Anselmo is, doth hold a right  
To ask a favour from the state. What is't?

ANSELMO.

On you alone, my liege, the favour rests;  
On you alone my happiness depends;  
'Tis you alone can make or mar my fate,  
My life a blessing or a lengthen'd curse.  
On you doth rest the rich disposal, sire,  
Of her to whom my life is dedicate:  
And from your gracious hand I humbly seek  
Your lovely charge, the Lady Isola.

DUKE.

Pity you cast your happiness, my lord,

Upon so frail a barque, which every wave  
Of changeful humour bears in diff'rent track.  
'Twas but a minute since, the lady here  
Refused you in such terms, that I was forced  
Abruptly to concede my earnest wish  
That she would marry you.

ANSELMO.

What mean you, sire !

DUKE.

Am I so little explicit ?

VITALE.

My liege,  
You do corroborate what I dared think :  
The Lady Isola, with all her form  
Of grace most exquisite, doth ever change,  
Like hues of evening, beautiful and warm,  
Yet evanescent, fitful, and unreal.  
Thus have I told him oft, and begg'd him too,  
To plant love's banner on a firmer ground.

DUKE.

My lord, how answer you your friend ?

ANSELMO.

As I would answer him and all the world !  
Standing on earth, we think that clouds do pass  
Athwart the face of heaven ; but when we climb  
Some eminence, we see the azure deep  
Lies calmly in immensity beyond.  
Thus is her truth, if clouds do cross its light,  
Belief augments my faculty to see,  
And I do view its brightness clear as day.

DUKE.

What if your eyes translate her wishes, sir ?  
Here is a note which she hath writ for you.

ANSELMO.

Oh, yes, her own dear hand hath rested here.

*(Reads.)*

“ When you would wed, first win the lady's love ;

“ It is the only key to happiness.

“ Not having it, you force affliction's lock,

“ And then the whole is spoil'd for evermore.  
“ Thus, as I cannot render you the charm  
“ Which hallows marriage vows, I here declare  
“ The Duke hath urged your suit in ablest form ;  
“ And I, alone consulting my own heart,  
“ Decline the offer with as firm resolve  
“ As I do write the name of—ISOLA.”

DUKE.

Dost credit thine own eyes ?

ANSELMO.

Oh, yes, my liege,  
But tranquilly I read. I said before,  
I view her brightness from the altitude  
Which true affection doth accord to me :  
And though I cannot understand these lines  
I feel assured the blindness is with me,  
And not a spot dims her integrity.

DUKE.

(Was ever trust so obdurate and just ?)

Nay, then, your hearing shall assist your sight.

(*To SERVANT.*)

Go tell the ladies I would speak with them.

VITALE.

Prithee, Anselmo, do not rest thy faith  
Upon the shifting nature of her love.

ANSELMO.

My faith is set—ay, and so firmly too,  
Suspicion's breath must turn a hurricane  
To shake its fixity.

DUKE (*to VITALE*).

Upon what grounds  
Have you built up your disbelief, good sir,  
Of this fair lady's truth?

VITALE.

Why, please your grace,  
It so turn'd out, all inadvertently,  
I fell in love with her, and often spoke  
With love's warm tongue, while she, I must confess,  
Did seem to relish it; but yet she lack'd



A candid manner, and I soon observed  
Anselmo loved the lady too ! Thus I  
In friendship's cause retreated from the course.

*Enter ISOLA and MINA, followed by PIPPO, BERGETTO,  
LUCIA, and LUCILLA.*

DUKE.

Supposing you could find her parallel,  
At least in beauty, but in truth excell'd,  
Could you transfer your love ; or is it chain'd,  
With all its hopelessness, to this fair dame ?

VITALE.

No, my Lord Duke : since fate, to punish me,  
For many crimes committed against love,  
Refuses me the mistress of my soul,  
I would not swell the catalogue of sin  
By wedding where affection takes no part.  
'Tis true I do relinquish Isola,  
And true with her I give up hope and love.

DUKE (*to ISOLA and MINA, who are about to speak*).

Nay, for your own sake, interrupt me not.

(*To ISOLA.*)

In brief, say yea or nay, did you declare  
 In terms of clearest form that you reject  
 The husband which my duty made me choose.

ISOLA (*hesitating*).

I—did, my liege——

ANSELMO.

Oh, Isola, I pray——

DUKE.

Nay, sir, I must command you hear me on.

(*To MINA.*)

And you, too, lady, did you not avow  
 That you would wed the object of your choice,  
 Only surmising he objected not ?

MINA.

I did ! I did ! 'tis all an error, sire——

DUKE (*staying her*).

And errors punish those who gave them birth.

(*To ANSELMO.*)

My lord, you swore full confidence just now,

And spake some pretty speeches about your faith.  
 Here stands the heaven of your most steadfast trust,  
 With self-confessèd clouds obscuring it.  
 What think you now ?

ISOLA.

My liege, I do implore——

DUKE.

Each word increases your just punishment.  
 Your answer, sir.

ANSELMO.

As I did ever think :  
 That truth would never leave his bless'd abode,  
 Tasting but once the sweetness of its home,  
 Which it hath tasted here.                   (*Going to ISOLA.*)

My life I stake  
 Upon the worth personified by her.  
 We love—and if she hath rejected me,  
 She knew not that your choice had fallen here.

ISOLA.

Can it be true !

DUKE.

It is, but now too late ;  
 I judge you all by your own wilfulness.  
 Isola refused the gentleman I chose ;  
 Her sister is rejected by her cavalier,  
 Who swears to marry none but Isola.  
 Anselmo only doth require that I  
 Should indicate my will, since he alone  
 Hath judged of others, and not judged himself.  
 Thus ope the packet which commissions you  
 To take up arms at once.

MINA (*to VITALE*).

I must speak out  
 Or else my very heart will burst ! My name  
 Is Mina, and not Isola ; and blind  
 Art thou not to have seen the simple part  
 Which I did play to test thy honesty.

VITALE (*in extreme surprise*).

Gladness and sorrow do together come :  
 Joy that I am not the rival of my friend,  
 And sorrow since I'm summon'd far from thee.

DUKE.

Read your commands—but first, Anselmo, yours.

ANSELMO (*opens the packet and reads, greatly agitated*).

“ You are appointed captain of a troop,  
 “ (Of graces exquisite)—To carry arms,  
 “ (Whene'er the humour suits)—To wage a war,  
 “ (In Love's own cause), and, if you win the day,  
 “ Seek your reward of Isola.”

(*Embracing ISOLA.*)

'Tis here ! 'tis she ! I am bereft of words :  
 But not a moment of my life shall pass  
 Unheeded by my soul's best gratitude.

ISOLA (*embracing the DUKE*).

How could I utter one harsh word to thee,  
 My sovereign, yet my father and my friend ?

VITALE.

This is a day of happiness indeed. (*Reads.*)

“ As you do ask commission for the wars,  
 “ 'Tis granted you, provided you can live  
 “ All through a honey-moon with Mina wed.

“ If you survive the time, then, an’ you please,  
“ You may betake yourself to other arms,  
“ Having thus proved yourself immaculate.”

MINA.

Why, then, my liege—he never will be kill’d :  
He serves not Venice, since you will it so.

DUKE.

He acted nobly, and deserves your care :  
He stood a test which men do seldom bear ;  
Not love alone doth meet reward to-day,  
But friendship, confidence and purity.

*(Curtain falls.)*

THE END.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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OR,

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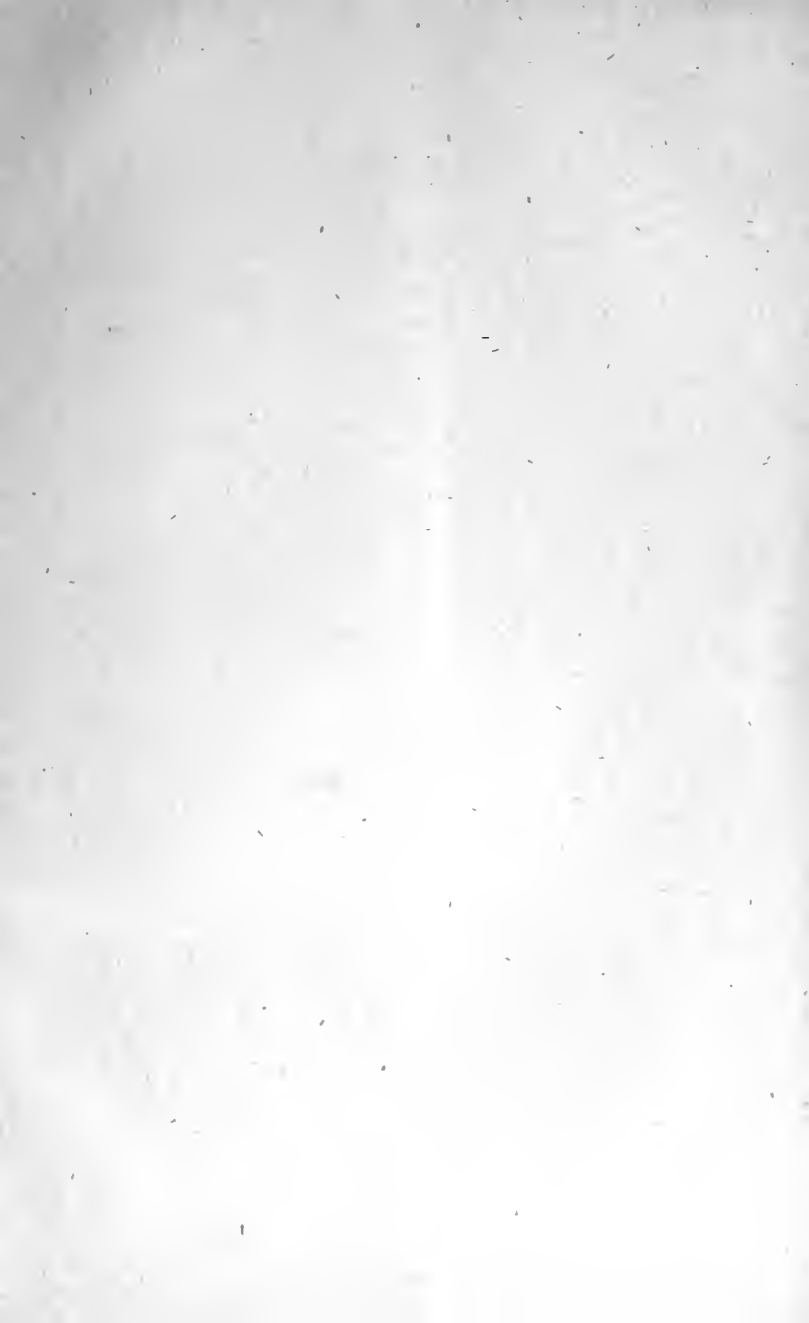
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