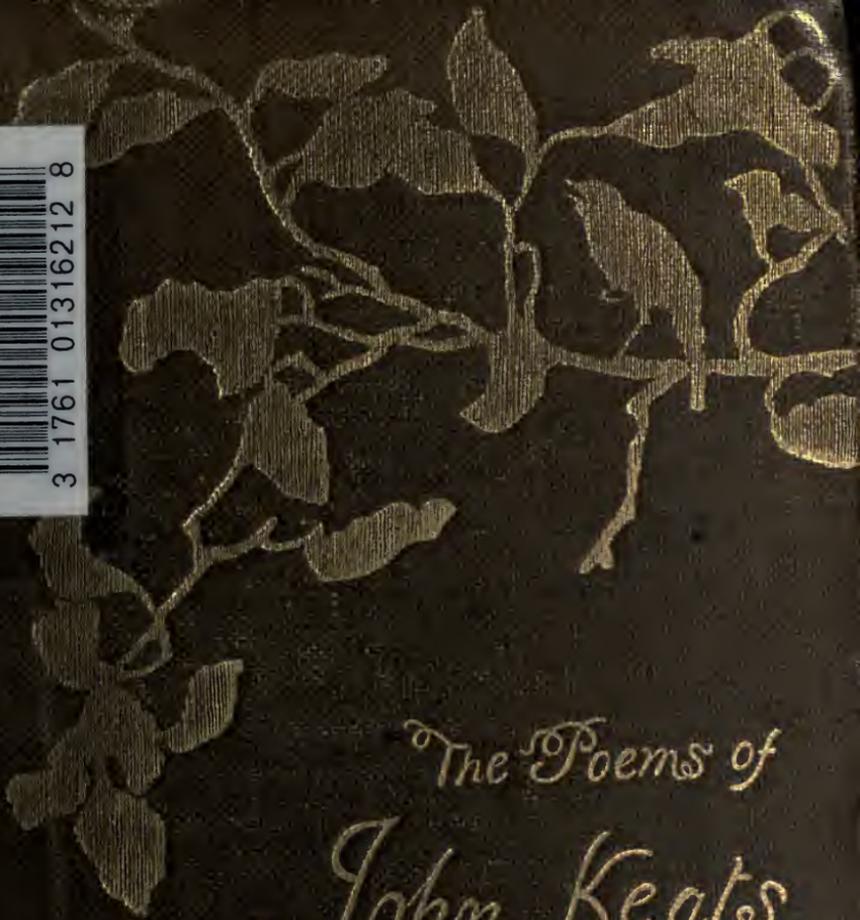


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*The Poems of
John Keats*

Edited by 
H. Duxton Forman





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KEATS'S POETICAL WORKS

...there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :...

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,”—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.



Yours affectionately
John Keats.

~~From~~

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN KEATS

GIVEN FROM HIS OWN EDITIONS

AND OTHER AUTHENTIC SOURCES AND COLLATED WITH

MANY MANUSCRIPTS



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EDITED BY H. BUXTON FORMAN

SEVENTH EDITION

WITH SEVEN PORTRAITS AND TEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE text and arrangement of the present edition of Keats's poetry are those of the library edition which has recently been published, on the lines of my library edition of Shelley. In the case of Keats, as in that of Shelley, the plan adopted has been to gather together everything which could be found from the hand of the poet, and to establish the text as nearly as possible in accordance with what the poet wrote or meant to write.

The three volumes of Keats's poetry¹ printed during his life have been reproduced upon this plan; and their contents have been collated with all available manuscripts and printed issues of authority. The posthumous poems in order of date follow the three printed volumes; and the chronology has only been interrupted wittingly in the matter of *Otho the Great*, *King Stephen*, and *The Cap and Bells*. Here it was impossible to preserve the real order, because Keats had other things in progress at

¹ The volumes are (1) *Poems*, C. and J. Ollier, 1817, (2) *Endymion*, Taylor and Hessey, 1818, and (3) *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems*, Taylor and Hessey, 1820.

the same time as *Otho*, and these, if strict chronological order were followed, would have to be interspersed among the acts and scenes of the tragedy. It seemed better therefore to set the dramatic attempts apart as a kind of appendix, to be completed by the less happy experiment *The Cap and Bells*, and to leave the real poetical works of Keats to close characteristically with *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and the beautiful sonnet which was really the last thing he wrote in verse.

The manuscripts of *Endymion*, *Lamia*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and a portion of *Isabella* should be mentioned as especially important among a great mass of manuscripts which have been consulted; and not the least of the fortunate chances attending my efforts to complete my work for Keats's lovers was the unexpected discovery of Richard Woodhouse's copy of *Endymion*, in which were noted, not only the variations of the final manuscript from the printed text, but also those of the first draft, which had not itself come to the surface. Woodhouse seems to have been an ardent admirer of Keats and an enthusiastic student of his works, as well as a capital scholar; for his copy of *Endymion* was interleaved, seemingly while Keats was still alive, and the textual differences above referred to were noted down in the most business-like and elaborate manner, while the pages bear many remarks and hints of a learned and acute kind, whereof I have not scrupled to avail myself in my library edition. So far as regards the largest of Keats's poems, this book has been of more service than either of the other printed copies of *Endymion* I have used, namely Sir Charles Dilke's copy

and one in my own possession with a number of autograph corrections. But Sir Charles Dilke's copy has a quantity of manuscript poems bound up at the end; and these have yielded a good deal of assistance in textual work.

It will be seen that I give several poems which are not included by other editors; and most of these are from manuscript sources. *Sharing Eve's Apple* and the humorous ballad of *The Gadfly* are, I think, the most noteworthy of the poems I have been able to add to what we already possessed of Keats's work; but, seeing how great an interest must always attach to even the minor and lighter efforts of such a poet as Keats, I have been glad to rescue from oblivion such versicles as the lines *On Death*, the *Stanzas to Miss Wylie*, *A Song about Myself*, the verses *On Oxford*, *A Galloway Song*, the dialogue entitled *Ben Nevis*, that delicate little piece of brotherly trifling which I have extracted from a letter to Keats's sister and headed *Two or Three*, and the couplets *Women*, *Wine and Snuff*, preserved by Keats's fellow-student Henry Stephens. All these were obtained from manuscript sources—the last, sent to me by Mr. W. H. Doeg too late for the library edition; and from outlying printed sources I have collected the acrostic, *Georgiana Augusta Keats*, the *Sonnet on hearing the Bagpipe and seeing The Stranger*, *A Party of Lovers*, and the *Sonnet on Mrs. Reynolds's Cat*.

Of work attributed to Keats in former editions and rejected from the present volume there is very little; but of such rejection as has been necessary an account should be rendered. The poem and sonnet given in

Lord Houghton's Aldine edition (and others) as of doubtful authenticity are both omitted because I cannot bring myself to think that Keats had anything more to do with the poem than with the sonnet, that beginning with

Pleasures lie thickest where no pleasures seem,

which is to be found among Laman Blanchard's works, and is assigned to that author in more than one anthology.¹ Lord Houghton has recorded his belief that the sonnet was "one of George Byron's forgeries" (Aldine edition, page 493); but at page 326, the poem commencing with the words

What sylph-like form before my eyes,

is introduced by a suggestion that there were genuine pieces among the forgeries sold at the George Byron "autograph" auction. My own belief is that, so far as the actual documents are concerned, all were forged; but that many of them were copies, in assumed hands, of genuine documents. Some of the Shelley letters certainly were; and I think it is only a question of time how soon this particular piece of verse shall be traced to the source outside Keats's work from which George Byron copied it. The song

Stay, ruby-breasted warbler, stay,

given at page 6 of the Aldine edition, was probably

¹ As for instance in Leigh Hunt's *Book of the Sonnet*, Dr. Mackay's *A Thousand and One Gems of English Poetry*, and Mr. John Dennis's *English Sonnets*.

sent to Lord Houghton from America, where people go so far as to print fac-similes of George Keats's writing for fac-similes of John's—although there is not the faintest likeness between them. I omit the song because, in a scrap-book in my possession containing a mass of transcripts by George Keats from his brother's poetry, and seemingly at one time the property of Mrs. George Keats, I find this poem not only written in George's hand but signed "G. K." instead of "J. K."; and I confess I think it more likely to be one of the effusions which George is recorded to have produced than an early poem by John.

It is impossible to read Keats's poetry closely without being struck by the earnest single-heartedness of his devotion to his art. It is the most salient moral quality which his writings display, and contributes more than any cultivation of thought, study of philosophy, or adherence to the spirit of the Greek mythology, to give to his works that stability which made certain from the first what he half doubtingly ventured to "think" in writing to his brother,—that he should be "among the English poets" after his death. It was perhaps this great earnestness, over-straining his super-sensitive nature, that led to most of the faults of his more youthful productions. The line of his reading was from early times the best calculated to invigorate and inspire his style; and although he fell at first into some of the laxities of early English poets, the small damage here and there effected in this way is insignificant when compared with the good he got from his studies. Spenser very soon gained a great influence

over him, as an examination of *Endymion* shows; but curiously enough the early poem called an *Imitation of Spenser* has very little that is directly Spenserian, and is much more like an imitation of Thomson—an echo from the Spenserian galleries of *The Castle of Indolence*. In the opening of "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," Keats makes good use of a mental phase inspired by the earlier poem *The Floure and the Lefe*, and if, in the same line of reading, he caught the trick of writing such a couplet as

And glides into a bed of water lillies:
Broad leav'd are they and their white canopies

the balance is still very clearly in our favour. Now and then the debt to classic literature is a little too evident; but as a rule Keats's works are remarkably free from other men's thoughts. It is quite exceptional to come upon such a household word as was reset for us in the lines

To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preacā
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;

which we cannot help placing at a disadvantage beside the lines from *As You Like It* (Act II, Scene 1)

And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in every thing.

But the real wonder about Keats is what a little way into the land of his poetry the reader carries with him the sense of shortcomings of this kind. *Endymion* bears us along in a whirl of imaginative creation; and the beauties with which it is lavishly strewn scarcely leave time for the thought that the construction wants

perspicacity—a thought which will intrude at last. In work later than *Endymion* there are probably more passages wherein the thought or feeling, whatever it may be, is expressed with an almost absolute felicity than will be found in the like bulk of work by any other modern English poet. The Odes to a Nightingale, on a Grecian Urn, and on Indolence, *The Eve of St. Mark*, and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, may be named among the most sustained examples of this lofty felicity. Perhaps it will be objected that the opening of the Ode to a Nightingale is not really clear,—that it is not made evident at a glance how the poet's numbness arose from being too happy in the bird's happiness,—too happy that the bird sang “of summer in full-throated ease”; but I am not sure that the tremulous thickness of utterance arising from intense emotion is not better rendered by the means employed, even if unconsciously employed and unintentionally rendered, than it would have been if the thought had undergone a little more chastening; while the prismatic line

No hungry generations tread thee down

is Dantesque in its weird vigour,—a touch of the highest genius, bringing before us visions of many terrible things, and chiefly of multitudinous keen and cruel faces more awful in the relentless oppressiveness of their onset upon the sensitive among men than anything in the mighty visions of damnation and detestableness seen five hundred years ago in Italy. The unphilosophic obliqueness of the analogy drawn—the comparison between the lot of the *individual* man and that of

the *general* nightingale—scarcely detracts from the value, as it certainly does not from the supreme beauty, of the poem—while we know not how much the pathos is enhanced by this very obliqueness of analogy.

It was late in Keats's short life before he began to give birth to grand thoughts such as those just glanced at. The mythology and poetry of the moon were perhaps longer uppermost in his thoughts than in any other poet's. Beside the *Endymion* that he speaks of in his letter to Clarke of the 17th of December 1816, a poem now identified with "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," there are what we may term lunar traces throughout the early volume of Poems. Even in the poor little poem *To Some Ladies*, which is not so much as well finished up to its own Tom Moorish standard, seeing that the second quatrain lacks a rhyme,—even in this we have talk of "Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend." In the Epistle to George Felton Mathew we read

in happy hour

Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,

and in the Epistle to George Keats there are the really admirable verses about the poet and what he sees beside the mere moon in heaven—

Ah, yes ! much more would start into his sight—
The revelries and mysteries of night :
And should I ever see them, I will tell you
Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

Again in the Epistle to Clarke—

When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,
And peers among the cloudlet's jet and white,
As though she were reclining in a bed
Of bean blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.

Once more in the Sonnet to George Keats—

Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping
So scantly, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.

And the Hecate character of the moon is clearly enough alluded to in the two lines at the close of the Sonnet to * * * * *

And when the moon her pallid face discloses,
I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

Indeed Keats may almost be said to have made the moon and her lover his own,—so much so that Browning, in one of his two tributes to Keats, conveys a whole romanceful of meaning in a word, the word *even* in those glorious trochaics from *One Word More*:—

What, there's nothing in the moon note-worthy?
Nay—for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy)
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos)
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!

Had Keats never passed out of the lunar phase he would still have produced a book far more remarkable than Chamberlayne's *Pharonnida*, a poem which bears a certain resemblance to *Endymion*, and which, I think, had probably been read by the modern poet;¹ and

¹ Compare Book III, lines 767-8, of *Endymion*,

Sweet music breath'd his soul away, and sigh'd
A lullaby to silence,...

with the words

much of even the 1817 volume must perforce have been remembered; but it is the volume published in 1820 that assures him a seat among the immortals.

Mr. Francis Turner Palgrave refers in his *Golden Treasury* to Keats as "a poet deserving the title 'marvellous boy' in a much higher sense than Chatterton," and says that Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth would have left "poems of less excellence and hope" than Keats has left "had their lives been closed at twenty-five." Such was Keats's enthusiasm for Chatterton that I feel sure he would have been the first to wish Mr. Palgrave to be reminded that the Bristol boy really was a boy in the strictest sense, having won for himself at the hands of Keats the proud title of "the most English of poets except Shakespeare" by a truly prodigious mass of work all done before he was eighteen years old—an age he never attained. The comparison with Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth holds; but it is only fair to ask on behalf of Chatterton what Keats would have left had he failed to attain eighteen instead of twenty-six years. I think the real marvel of Keats is best touched on by Mrs. Browning in Book I of *Aurora Leigh*:

By Keats's soul, the man who never stepped
In gradual progress like another man,
But, turning grandly on his central self,
Ensphered himself in twenty perfect years
And died, not young,—(the life of a long life,

The glad birds had sung

A lullaby to night,...

at page 51, volume ii, of the 1820 edition of Chamberlayne's poems.

Distilled to a mere drop, falling like a tear
Upon the world's cold cheek to make it burn
For ever ;) by that strong excepted soul,
I count it strange and hard to understand
That nearly all young poets should write old ; . . .

What is really notable is that he who had produced practically nothing as a boy, who between the ages of twenty and twenty-five had been through so much sorrow and anguish tending to stop his work, should yet have written within those five years such a body of poetry, so suddenly rising to the highest excellence of expression and the most startling imaginative capacity, and this out of poetic beginnings scarcely removed from the common-place.

That Keats himself was always at the very antipodes of common-place, we have ample evidence in the various recollections of his childhood, boyhood, and youth ; in the facts of his life ; and in the excellently recorded physiognomy. In every authentic portrait, he is a marked man ; and there is scarcely an act on record that does not express individuality and character.

By all who really knew Keats he seems to have been greatly beloved,—one of the surest proofs of the nobility of his character. His devotion to his mother and his brothers, taking practical forms, his paternal solicitude for his young orphan sister, his readiness to assist friends from his own slender resources, his promptness to protect the weak and oppressed, his enthusiasm for the good, the beautiful, and the true, and his contempt for everything that was mean, sordid, or hollow, are all qualities which find, more or less, a balanced expression in his writings and his acts. His words and his life

speaking for him fully in a complete collection of his own writings and of the many reminiscences which his most intimate friends have left; and truly of a more lovable character it would be hard indeed to find living records such as these. The fluctuation of his nobler qualities under premature physical decay is one of the saddest spectacles in the history of literature; but, although his friends had all somewhat to bear with when the hand of death was upon him, the main stream of his life remained noble and beautiful to the last. In the records that relate to the times when he was between twenty and twenty-three years of age, and in his letters even later than those times, there is a splendid elasticity corresponding with the "fine compactness of person" which he is said to have had. That his forces were rather volcanic and intermittent than sustained and resistant the melancholy result showed; and however much or little prophetic truth may have been in Coleridge's well-known utterance "there is death in that hand," the final verdict will probably be that this noble nature, with all its male vigour, had not the due proportion of patient stolid resistance to make head against a dire combination of misfortunes.

Hunt, in his admirable remarks upon *The Eve of St. Agnes*, points to the fainting of Porphyro at sight of Madeline as the one flaw in the poem, and apologizes for it on the score of the poet's enfeebled state of health at the time. But I think this is rather hard on all three—poem, poet, and disease. If it be so decided a fault, I fear we must acquit bodily disease of any part or lot in it, for Keats's young people always had a way of

fainting, whether conceived in his more vigorous or in his less vigorous period. Endymion after the visit of Diana (page 133) is described as having "Swoon'd drunken from pleasure's nipple"; and he swoons at the thought of Diana's voice when he is in the palace of Neptune, at the end of Book III of the poem: at the end of Book IV he is represented as kneeling before the goddess "in a blissful swoon," which however may not be meant quite literally; and again, in Book IV, lines 745-7, the disguised Diana tells how as a child she gave kisses "to the void air," and how when she imagined

the warm tremble of a devout kiss
Even then, that moment, at the thought of this,
Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
And languish'd there three days.

Lycius faints when he meets with Lamia at the roadside; Lamia had previously fallen "into a swooning love of him"; and the idea of swooning lovers was so familiar to the poet that, when his own time came, he wrote to his lady, "all I can bring you is a swooning admiration of your beauty."

To me it has always seemed that Keats's attitude towards women was that of impassioned chivalry not wholly free from a hysterical element. The line in "Woman! when I behold thee"

E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps and prances,
is not inapt; and

My ear is open like a greedy shark,
To catch the tunings of a voice divine

expresses the exaggeration of sentiment perfectly.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair ;
Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast,
Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
Till the fond fixed eyes forget they stare.

This is all more or less hysterical ; and, with all its obvious charm for young people, so, very much so, is

God ! she is like a milk white lamb that bleats
For man's protection.

In one of his letters Keats describes the reactionary converse of this exaggerated sentiment, in a passage which is an anticipation of the *Ode on Indolence*, and in which the phase of feeling is described as "a delightful sensation, about three degrees on this side of faintness" ; and even in the carefully finished *Ode to Psyche*, we have the line

And on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
applied to the mere vision of Cupid and Psyche.

This default of male robustness in one particular is a contradiction in Keats's manly and even pugnacious character ; but I do not think it ought to be regarded with intolerance, even though it helped so valuable a life to fall into a hereditary consumption. The fact of the matter is that, somehow or other, an Oriental as well as a Greek strain had passed into the child of Finsbury parents ; and if we have the supreme advantage of a romantic colour and warmth throughout a great part of the poetry left by this wondrously gifted youth, we must be content to take with it the prevalent temperament of the lovers in Oriental romances and tales, who faint as a matter of course under due provocation, very much to the surprise of a northerly reader not previously ac-

quainted with their customs. Strange and occult things happen now and again in the building up of men of genius ; but I do not know that the presence, in a London child whose parents were unremarkable, of clear emanations from the spirit of Greek mythology and the spirit of Eastern romance is more wonderful than the transfusion of the sublimated essence of the French revolution into the veins of Shelley, the scion of a long line of Sussex squires, or the perfect intuition of mediæval romance life displayed by Thomas Chatterton, the descendant of a line of Bristol sextons.

H. BUXTON FORMAN.

46 MARLBOROUGH HILL, ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
December 1883.

Postscript for the Sixth Edition.

THE first three issues of this complete collection of Keats's known works in verse were published in 1884, 1885, and 1889, and were unillustrated, save by the portrait of the poet etched by W. B. Scott after the Severn miniature. After the appearance of the third issue in London, Messrs. Lippincott of Philadelphia published it in the United States, dividing it into three volumes and illustrating it with the well-known designs of Mr. Will. H. Low and some others. To the fourth London edition, published in 1895, the year of Keats's Centenary, an international character was given by including the American illustrations. In 1896, for a fifth edition, the best of those illustrations were re-executed in a more suitable size, with some others, and six portraits ; and these reappear in the present

edition. The text has been kept up to date in each re-issue: whatever discovery has been made in the interim has been utilized. To the present edition two trifles have been added,—the lines at page 417 apparently addressed to Fanny Brawne, and the "Nonsense Sonnet" at page 561 ("Before he went to feed with owls and bats—") preserved by Keats's school-friend Stephens.

On the other hand it has been necessary to reject the sonnet formerly supposed to have been written in sickness to George Keats, and the lovely couplets from *The Examiner* ("Oh what a voice was silent," etc.), which the late Dante Gabriel Rossetti and myself were both deceived into regarding as a cancelled passage of *Endymion*. The sonnet is by Mrs. Tighe; and I am unable to explain positively why George Keats copied it among his brother's poems: probably Keats himself copied it from Mrs. Tighe's works into a commonplace book among his own compositions, and thus unwittingly misled George as to the authorship. The couplets are to be found in *Marcian Colonna*, etc. (1820), by Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall"), and must, I should think, have been written in conscious imitation or perhaps illustration of *Endymion*. It is to the courtesy of Mr. Bryan Charles Waller, nephew of Procter and author of *The Twilight Land*, and other poems, that I am indebted for the reference to the true place of *Vox et Præterea Nihil* in our literature. It should be mentioned that *La Belle Dame sans Merci* was not written quite at the close of Keats's poetic career, but in or about April 1819.

H. B. F.

46, MARLBOROUGH HILL, ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
November 1897.

CHRONOLOGY

OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS, COMPOSITIONS, AND PUBLICATIONS.

- 1795 John Keats's birth in Finsbury, 31 October.
1797 Birth of his brother George, Spring.
1798 Birth of his brother Thomas, 18 November.
1803 Birth of his sister, 3 June.
1804 Death of his Father, 16 April.
1807 Death of his Mother.
1803-9 Is educated at Mr. Clarke's school, Enfield.
Begins translating THE ÆNEID.
1809 Apprenticed to Thomas Hammond, Surgeon.
Finishes translating THE ÆNEID.
1812 Writes IMITATION OF SPENSER.
Rupture with Hammond.
1813 Introduced to Severn.
1815 Writes ODE and HYMN TO APOLLO.
Writes EPISTLE TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW, November.
1816 First published poem appears in *The Examiner*, 5 May.
Addresses a sonnet to Charles Wells, June.
Writes the Chapman's Homer Sonnet.
Writes EPISTLE TO GEORGE KEATS, August.
Writes EPISTLE TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE, September.
Introduced to Haydon, November.
Contemplates the subject of ENDYMION and writes "I stood
tip-toe upon a little hill."
1817 First volume of POEMS published, early.
ENDYMION begun, Spring.
Stays in the Isle of Wight, April, and Margate, May.

- 1817 Visits Benjamin Bailey at Oxford, September.
 Stays at Leatherhead, November.
 Draft of ENDYMION finished at Burford Bridge, 28 November.
 Sees Kean's return to the public and criticizes it in *The Champion*, December.
- 1817-18 Winters at Hampstead.
- 1818 Book I of ENDYMION sent to press, January.
 Seeing "a good deal" of Wordsworth, January.
 Joins his brothers at Teignmouth March.
 Revision of ENDYMION finished, March.
 ENDYMION published, April.
 ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL, finished by 27 April.
 FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA written, 1 May.
 Returns to Hampstead, May.
 Departure of George Keats and his bride for America, June.
 Visits the Lakes with Brown, June.
 Scotch tour with Brown, July and August.
 A flying visit to Ireland, July.
 A violent cold caught in the Isle of Mull, July.
 "Cockney School" attack in *Blackwood's Magazine* published, August.
 Returns to Hampstead, August.
 Return of sore throat, September.
 At Teignmouth again, September (?).
 Attack in *The Quarterly Review* published, September.
 At Well Walk, Hampstead, September to December.
 First meeting with Fanny Brawne, October or November.
 Thomas Keats dies and John moves to Wentworth Place to live with Brown, December.
 Sore throat again, December.
- 1818-19 HYPERION begun, Winter.
- 1819 Stays at Chichester and Bedhampton, January.
 THE EVE OF ST. AGNES written, January.
 Returns to Wentworth Place, February.
 Persistent sore throat, February.
 ODE TO PSYCHE written, April.
 Probably engaged to Fanny Brawne, April.
 LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI written, April-May.
 ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE composed, May.
 Throat still sore in June and July.
 Visits the Isle of Wight with James Rice, July.
 ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE published, July.
 Writes LAMIA, Part I, and OTHO THE GREAT, Act I, July.

- 1819 Removes with Brown to Winchester, August.
 OTHO THE GREAT finished, HYPERION continued, August.
 Flying visit to London and return to Winchester, September.
 TO AUTUMN composed, HYPERION abandoned, LAMIA
 finished, THE EVE OF ST. AGNES revised, September.
 Resolves to work for periodicals, September.
 Returns to Hampstead to winter, October.
 Leaves off animal food, October.
 Throat in a threatening state again, December
- 1820 ODE ON A GRECIAN URN published, January.
 Fatal illness commences, 3 February.
 Keats and Brown finally part at Gravesend, 7 May.
 LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI published in *The Indicator*,
 10 May.
 Fragment of THE CAP AND BELLS written, June (?).
 LAMIA, ISABELLA &c. published, first week in July.
 Stays at Kentish Town near and with Hunt, June-July.
 Fresh attack of blood-spitting, 22 June.
 Returns to Wentworth Place to be nursed by Mrs. and Miss
 Brawne, August.
 Sails for Italy with Severn, September.
 His last Sonnet, written on board ship.
 Writes his last letter from Rome, November.
- 1821 His death, 23 February, and burial near the tomb of
 Caius Cestius, 26 February.

Poems

Published in 1817.

“What more felicity can fall to creature,

“Than to enjoy delight with liberty.”

Fate of the Butterfly.—SPENSER.

DEDICATION.

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and loveliness have pass'd away ;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day :
No crowd of nymphs soft voic'd and young, and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these,
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time, when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.



LEIGH HUNT :

AFTER A PICTURE BY SAMUEL LAWRENCE—Page 4.

POEMS.

“Places of nestling green for Poets made.”

STORY OF RIMINL

I STOOD tip-toe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty leav'd, and finely tapering stems, 5
Had not yet lost those starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept 10
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.

There was wide wand'ring for the greediest eye, 15
To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint, and curious bending
Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending; 20
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,

Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
 I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
 As though the fanning wings of Mercury
 Had play'd upon my heels : I was light-hearted, 25
 And many pleasures to my vision started ;
 So I straightway began to pluck a posey
 Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.

A bush of May flowers with the bees about them ;
 Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them ; 30
 And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
 And let long grass grow round the roots to keep them
 Moist, cool and green ; and shade the violets,
 That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert hedge with wild briar overtwin'd, 35
 And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
 Upon their summer thrones ; there too should be
 The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,
 That with a score of light green brethren shoots
 From the quaint mossiness of aged roots : 40
 Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters
 Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters
 The spreading blue bells : it may haply mourn
 That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
 From their fresh beds, and scatter'd thoughtlessly 45
 By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
 Ye ardent marigolds !
 Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
 For great Apollo bids 50
 That in these days your praises should be sung
 On many harps, which he has lately strung ;
 And when again your dewiness he kisses,

Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses :
So haply when I rove in some far vale, 55
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight :
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings. 60

Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :
They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings,
How silent comes the water round that bend ; 65

Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging sallows : blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
To where the hurrying freshesses aye preach 70

A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds ;
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams

Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle 75
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.

If you but scantily hold out the hand,
That very instant not one will remain ;
But turn your eye, and they are there again. 80

The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
And cool themselves among the em'rald tresses ;
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
And moisture, that the bowery green may live :
So keeping up an interchange of favours, 85
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.

Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
 From low hung branches ; little space they stop ;
 But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek ;
 Then off at once, as in a wanton freak : 90
 Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden wings,
 Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.
 Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
 That nought less sweet, might call my thoughts away,
 Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown 95
 Fanning away the dandelion's down ;
 Than the light music of her nimble toes
 Patting against the sorrel as she goes.
 How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught
 Playing in all her innocence of thought. 100
 O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,
 Watch her half-smiling lips, and downward look ;
 O let me for one moment touch her wrist ;
 Let me one moment to her breathing list ;
 And as she leaves me may she often turn 105
 Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.
 What next ? A tuft of evening primroses,
 O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes ;
 O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
 But that 'tis ever startled by the leap 110
 Of buds into ripe flowers ; or by the flitting
 Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are quitting ;
 Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
 Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
 Coming into the blue with all her light. 115
 O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
 Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers ;
 Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
 Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
 Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams, 120
 Lover of loneliness, and wandering,

Of upcast eye, and tender pondering !
 Thee must I praise above all other glories
 That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
 For what has made the sage or poet write 125
 But the fair paradise of Nature's light ?
 In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
 We see the waving of the mountain pine ;
 And when a tale is beautifully staid,
 We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade : 130
 When it is moving on luxurious wings,
 The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings :
 Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
 And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases ;
 O'er head we see the jasmine and sweet briar, 135
 And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire ;
 While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles
 Charms us at once away from all our troubles :
 So that we feel uplifted from the world,
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd. 140
 So felt he, who first told, how Psyche went
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment ;
 What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
 First touch'd ; what amorous, and fondling nips
 They gave each other's cheeks ; with all their sighs, 145
 And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes :
 The silver lamp,—the ravishment,—the wonder—
 The darkness,—loneliness,—the fearful thunder ;
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown,
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne. 150
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,
 That we might look into a forest wide,
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees ;
 And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet, 155
 Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet :

Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
 Poor nymph,—poor Pan,—how he did weep to find,
 Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind 160
 Along the reedy stream ; a half heard strain,
 Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

What first inspir'd a bard of old to sing
 Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring ?
 In some delicious ramble, he had found 165
 A little space, with boughs all woven round ;
 And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
 Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,
 The blue sky here, and there, serenely peeping
 Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping. 170
 And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
 A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,
 Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
 To woo its own sad image into nearness :
 Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move ; 175
 But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
 So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
 Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;
 Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
 Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale. 180

Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew
 That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
 That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
 Coming ever to bless
 The wanderer by moonlight ? to him bringing 185
 Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
 From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
 Full in the speculation of the stars.

Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars; 190
Into some wond'rous region he had gone,
To search for thee, divine Endymion!

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below; 195
And brought in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow
A hymn from Dian's temple; while upswelling,
The incense went to her own starry dwelling.
But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,
Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice, 200
The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,
Wept that such beauty should be desolate:
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air; thou most lovely queen 205
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen!
As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.
O for three words of honey, that I might
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night! 210

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,
Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,
And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.
The evening weather was so bright, and clear, 215
That men of health were of unusual cheer;
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo on the pedestal:
And lovely women were as fair and warm,
As Venus looking sideways in alarm. 220
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,

And crept through half closed lattices to cure
 The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,
 And sooth'd them into slumbers full and deep.
 Soon they awoke clear ey'd : nor burnt with thirsting, 225
 Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting :
 And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
 Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight ;
 Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss and stare,
 And on their placid foreheads part the hair. 230
 Young men, and maidens at each other gaz'd
 With hands held back, and motionless, amaz'd
 To see the brightness in each other's eyes ;
 And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
 Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy. 235
 Therefore no lover did of anguish die :
 But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
 Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
 Cynthia ! I cannot tell the greater blisses,
 That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses : 240
 Was there a poet born ?—but now no more,
 My wand'ring spirit must no farther soar.—

SPECIMEN

OF AN

INDUCTION TO A POEM.



LO! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;
 For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.
 Not like the formal crest of latter days :
 But bending in a thousand graceful ways ;

So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand, 5
 Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
 Could charm them into such an attitude.
 We must think rather, that in playful mood,
 Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight,
 To show this wonder of its gentle might. 10
 Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;
 For while I muse, the lance points slantingly
 Athwart the morning air : some lady sweet,
 Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
 From the worn top of some old battlement 15
 Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent :
 And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,
 Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.
 Sometimes, when the good Knight his rest would take,
 It is reflected, clearly, in a lake, 20
 With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,
 And th' half seen mossiness of linnets' nests.
 Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty,
 When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,
 And his tremendous hand is grasping it, 25
 And his dark brow for very wrath is knit ?
 Or when his spirit, with more calm intent,
 Leaps to the honors of a tournament,
 And makes the gazers round about the ring
 Stare at the grandeur of the ballancing ? 30
 No, no ! this is far off :—then how shall I
 Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,
 Which linger yet about lone gothic arches,
 In dark green ivy, and among wild larches ?
 How sing the splendour of the revelries, 35
 When buts of wine are drunk off to the lees ?
 And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,
 Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
 Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield ?

- Where ye may see a spur in bloody field. 40
 Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces
 Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces ;
 Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens :
 Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.
 Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry : 45
 Or wherefore comes that steed so proudly by ?
 Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight,
 Rein in the swelling of his ample might ?
- Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,
 And come like a clear sun-rise to my mind ; 50
 And always does my heart with pleasure dance,
 When I think on thy noble countenance :
 Where never yet was ought more earthly seen
 Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.
 Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully 55
 Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
 My daring steps: or if thy tender care,
 Thus startled unaware,
 Be jealous that the foot of other wight
 Should madly follow that bright path of light 60
 Trac'd by thy lov'd Libertas ; he will speak,
 And tell thee that my prayer is very meek ;
 That I will follow with due reverence,
 And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.
 Him thou wilt hear ; so I will rest in hope 65
 To see wide plains, fair trees and lawny slope :
 The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the flowers ;
 Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.

CALIDORE.

A Fragment.



YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake ;
 His healthful spirit eager and awake
 To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
 Which seem'd full loath this happy world to leave ;
 The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly. 5
 He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
 And smiles at the far clearness all around,
 Until his heart is well nigh over wound,
 And turns for calmness to the pleasant green 10
 Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean
 So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
 And show their blossoms trim.
 Scarce can his clear and nimble eye-sight follow
 The freaks, and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,
 Delighting much, to see it half at rest, 15
 Dip so refreshingly its wings, and breast
 'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,
 The widening circles into nothing gone.

 And now the sharp keel of his little boat
 Comes up with ripple, and with easy float, 20
 And glides into a bed of water lillies :
 Broad leav'd are they and their white canopies
 Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.
 Near to a little island's point they grew ;
 Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view 25

Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore
 Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
 And light blue mountains : but no breathing man
 With a warm heart, and eye prepar'd to scan
 Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by 30
 Objects that look'd out so invitingly
 On either side. These, gentle Calidore
 Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
 Which the glad setting sun, in gold doth dress ; 35
 Whence ever, and anon the jay outsprings,
 And scales upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,
 Stands venerably proud ; too proud to mourn
 Its long lost grandeur : fir trees grow around, 40
 Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.

The little chapel with the cross above .
 Upholding wreaths of ivy ; the white dove,
 That on the window spreads his feathers light,
 And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight. 45
 Green tufted islands casting their soft shades
 Across the lake ; sequester'd leafy glades,
 That through the dimness of their twilight show
 Large dock leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow
 Of the wild cat's eyes, or the silvery stems 50
 Of delicate birch trees, or long grass which hems
 A little brook. The youth had long been viewing
 These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing
 The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught
 A trumpet's silver voice. Ah ! it was fraught 55
 With many joys for him : the warder's ken
 Had found white coursers prancing in the glen :

Friends very dear to him he soon will see ;
 So pushes off his boat most eagerly,
 And soon upon the lake he skims along, 60
 Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song ;
 Nor minds he the white swans that dream so sweetly :
 His spirit flies before him so completely.

And now he turns a jutting point of land,
 Whence may be seen the castle gloomy, and grand : 65
 Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,
 Before the point of his light shallop reaches
 Those marble steps that through the water dip :
 Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
 And scarcely stays to ope the folding doors : 70
 Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
 Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds ! those little bright-ey'd things
 That float about the air on azure wings,
 Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang 75
 Of clattering hoofs ; into the court he sprang,
 Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,
 Were slanting out their necks with loosened rein ;
 While from beneath the threat'ning portcullis
 They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss, 80
 What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand !
 How tremblingly their delicate ankles spann'd !
 Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,
 While whisperings of affection
 Made him delay to let their tender feet 85
 Come to the earth ; with an incline so sweet
 From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent :
 And whether there were tears of languishment,
 Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses,
 He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses 90

With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye,
 All the soft luxury
 That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,
 Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,
 Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers 95
 Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers :
 And this he fondled with his happy cheek
 As if for joy he would no further seek ;
 When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond
 Came to his ear, like something from beyond 100
 His present being : so he gently drew
 His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,
 From their sweet thrall, and forward gently bending,
 Thank'd heaven that his joy was never ending ;
 While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd 105
 A hand heaven made to succour the distress'd ;
 A hand that from the world's bleak promontory
 Had lifted Calidore for deeds of Glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
 There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair 110
 Of his proud horse's mane : he was withal
 A man of elegance, and stature tall :
 So that the waving of his plumes would be
 High as the berries of a wild ash tree,
 Or as the winged cap of Mercury. 115
 His armour was so dexterously wrought
 In shape, that sure no living man had thought
 It hard, and heavy steel : but that indeed
 It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,
 In which a spirit new come from the skies 120
 Might live, and show itself to human eyes.
 'Tis the far-fam'd, the brave Sir Gondibert,
 Said the good man to Calidore alert ;
 While the young warrior with a step of grace

Came up,—a courtly smile upon his face, 125
 And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
 The large-ey'd wonder, and ambitious heat
 Of the aspiring boy ; who as he led
 Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head
 To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully 130
 Over a knightly brow ; while they went by
 The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall were pendent,
 And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated ;
 The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted 135
 All the green leaves that round the window clamber,
 To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.
 Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,
 Gladdening in the free, and airy feel
 Of a light mantle ; and while Clerimond 140
 Is looking round about him with a fond,
 And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
 To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning
 Of all unworthiness ; and how the strong of arm
 Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm 145
 From lovely woman : while brimful of this,
 He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,
 And had such manly ardour in his eye,
 That each at other look'd half staringly ;
 And then their features started into smiles 150
 Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,
 Softly they blew aside the taper's flame ;
 Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower ;
 Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower ; 155
 Mysterious, wild, the far heard trumpet's tone ;
 Lovely the moon in ether, all alone :

Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,
 As that of busy spirits when the portals
 Are closing in the west ; or that soft humming 160
 We hear around when Hesperus is coming.
 Sweet be their sleep. * * * * *

TO
 SOME LADIES.

WHAT though while the wonders of nature exploring,
 I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend ;
 Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
 Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend :

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain stream
 rushes, 5
 With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove ;
 Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,
 Its spray that the wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger you so, the wild labyrinth strolling ?
 Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare ? 10
 Ah ! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
 Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy air.

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,
 I see you are treading the verge of the sea :
 And now ! ah, I see it—you just now are stooping 15
 To pick up the keep-sake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
 Had brought me a gem from the fret-work of heaven ;

And smiles, with his star-cheering voice sweetly blending,
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given ; 20

It had not created a warmer emotion
Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with from
you,
Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the
ocean
Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure, 25
(And blissful is he who such happiness finds,)
To possess but a span of the hour of leisure,
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

*On receiving a curious Shell, and a Copy of Verses,
from the same Ladies.*



HAST thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem
Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the mountain ?
Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,
When it flutters in sun-beams that shine through a
fountain ?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine ? 5
That goblet right heavy, and massy, and gold ?
And splendidly mark'd with the story divine
Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the bold ?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flowing?
 Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's smart is? 10
 Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing?
 And wear'st thou the shield of the fam'd Britomartis?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder, so brave,
 Embroider'd with many a spring peering flower?
 Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave? 15
 And hastest thou now to that fair lady's bower?

Ah! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy thou art
 crown'd;
 Full many the glories that brighten thy youth!
 I will tell thee my blisses, which richly abound
 In magical powers to bless, and to sooth. 20

On this scroll thou seest written in characters fair
 A sun-beamy tale of a wreath, and a chain;
 And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare
 Of charming my mind from the trammels of pain.

This canopy mark: 'tis the work of a fay; 25
 Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon languish,
 When lovely Titania was far, far away,
 And cruelly left him to sorrow, and anguish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft sighing lute
 Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the nightingales
 listen'd; 30
 The wondering spirits of heaven were mute,
 And tears 'mong the dewdrops of morning oft glisten'd.

In this little dome, all those melodies strange,
 Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will sigh;
 Nor e'er will the notes from their tenderness change; 35
 Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So, when I am in a voluptuous vein,
 I pillow my head on the sweets of the rose,
 And list to the tale of the wreath, and the chain,
 Till its echoes depart ; then I sink to repose. 40

Adieu, valiant Eric ! with joy thou art crown'd ;
 Full many the glories that brighten thy youth,
 I too have my blisses, which richly abound
 In magical powers, to bless and to sooth.

TO * * * *



HADST thou liv'd in days of old,
 O what wonders had been told
 Of thy lively countenance,
 And thy humid eyes that dance
 In the midst of their own brightness ; 5
 In the very fane of lightness.
 Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,
 Picture out each lovely meaning :
 In a dainty bend they lie,
 Like to streaks across the sky, 10
 Or the feathers from a crow,
 Fallen on a bed of snow.
 Of thy dark hair that extends
 Into many graceful bends :
 As the leaves of Hellebore 15
 Turn to whence they sprung before.
 And behind each ample curl

Peeps the richness of a pearl.
 Downward too flows many a tress
 With a glossy waviness ; 20
 Full, and round like globes that rise
 From the censer to the skies
 Through sunny air. Add too, the sweetness
 Of thy honey'd voice ; the neatness
 Of thine ankle lightly turn'd : 25
 With those beauties, scarce discern'd,
 Kept with such sweet privacy,
 That they seldom meet the eye
 Of the little loves that fly
 Round about with eager pry. 30
 Saving when, with freshening lave,
 Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave ;
 Like twin water lillies, born
 In the coolness of the morn.
 O, if thou hadst breathed then, 35
 Now the Muses had been ten.
 Couldst thou wish for lineage higher
 Than twin sister of Thalia ?
 At least for ever, evermore,
 Will I call the Graces four. 40

Hadst thou liv'd when chivalry
 Lifted up her lance on high,
 Tell me what thou wouldst have been ?
 Ah ! I see the silver sheen
 Of thy broider'd, floating vest 45
 Cov'ring half thine ivory breast ;
 Which, O heavens ! I should see,
 But that cruel destiny
 Has plac'd a golden cuirass there ;
 Keeping secret what is fair. 50
 Like sunbeams in a cloudlet nested

Thy locks in knightly casque are rested :
 O'er which bend four milky plumes
 Like the gentle lilly's blooms
 Springing from a costly vase. 55
 See with what a stately pace
 Comes thine alabaster steed ;
 Servant of heroic deed !
 O'er his loins, his trappings glow
 Like the northern lights on snow. 60
 Mount his back ! thy sword unsheath !
 Sign of the enchanter's death ;
 Bane of every wicked spell ;
 Silencer of dragon's yell.
 Alas ! thou this wilt never do : 65
 Thou art an enchantress too,
 And wilt surely never spill
 Blood of those whose eyes can kill.

TO
H O P E.

WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,
 And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom ;
 When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye" flit,
 And the bare heath of life presents no bloom ;
 Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed, 5
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,
 Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,

Should sad Despondency my musings fright,
 And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away, 10
 Peep with the moon-beams through the leafy roof,
 And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,
 Strive for her son to seize my careless heart ;
 When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air, 15
 Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart :
 Chace him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,
 And fright him as the morning frightens night !

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear
 Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow, 20
 O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer ;
 Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow :
 Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head !

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain, 25
 From cruel parents, or relentless fair ;
 O let me think it is not quite in vain
 To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air !
 Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head ! 30

In the long vista of the years to roll,
 Let me not see our country's honour fade :
 O let me see our land retain her soul,
 Her pride, her freedom ; and not freedom's shade.
 From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed— 35
 Beneath thy pinions canopy my head !

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,
 Great liberty ! how great in plain attire !

With the base purple of a court oppress'd,
 Bowing her head, and ready to expire : 40
 But let me see thee stoop from heaven on wings
 That fill the skies with silver glitterings !

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star
 Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud ;
 Brightening the half veil'd face of heaven afar : 45
 So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,
 Sweet Hope, celestial influence round me shed,
 Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

February, 1815.

IMITATION OF SPENSER.

* * * * *



Now Morning from her orient chamber came,
 And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill ;
 Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,
 Silv'ring the untainted gushes of its rill ;
 Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distill, 5
 And after parting beds of simple flowers,
 By many streams a little lake did fill,
 Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,
 And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the king-fisher saw his plumage bright 10
 Vieing with fish of brilliant dye below ;
 Whose silken fins, and golden scales' light
 Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow :

There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,
 And oar'd himself along with majesty; 15
 Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show
 Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,
 And on his back a fay reclin'd voluptuously.

Ah! could I tell the wonders of an isle
 That in that fairest lake had placed been, 20
 I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;
 Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen;
 For sure so fair a place was never seen,
 Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye:
 It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen 25
 Of the bright waters; or as when on high,
 Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœrulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously
 Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,
 Which, as it were in gentle amity, 30
 Rippled delighted up the flowery side;
 As if to glean the ruddy tears, it try'd,
 Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem!
 Haply it was the workings of its pride,
 In strife to throw upon the shore a gem 35
 Outvieing all the buds in Flora's diadem.



WOMAN! when I behold thee flippant, vain,
 Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies ;
 Without that modest softening that enhances
 The downcast eye, repentant of the pain
 That its mild light creates to heal again : 5
 E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps, and prances,
 E'en then my soul with exultation dances
 For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain :
 But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,
 Heavens! how desperately do I adore 10
 Thy winning graces ;—to be thy defender
 I hotly burn—to be a Calidore—
 A very Red Cross Knight—a stout Leander—
 Might I be lov'd by thee like these of yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair ; 15
 Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast,
 Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
 Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.
 From such fine pictures, heavens! I cannot dare
 To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd 20
 They be of what is worthy,—though not drest
 In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.
 Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark ;
 These lures I straight forget,—e'en ere I dine,
 Or thrice my palate moisten : but when I mark 25
 Such charms with mild intelligences shine,
 My ear is open like a greedy shark,
 To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being?
Who can forget her half retiring sweets? 30
God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,
Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,
Will never give him pinions, who intreats
Such innocence to ruin,—who vilely cheats 35
A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing
One's thoughts from such a beauty; when I hear
A lay that once I saw her hand awake,
Her form seems floating palpable, and near;
Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take 40
A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

EPISTLES.

“ Among the rest a shepherd (though but young

“ Yet hartned to his pipe) with all the skill

“ His few yeeres could, began to fit his quill.”

Britannia's Pastorals.—BROWNE.

EPISTLES.



TO

GEORGE FELTON MATHEW.



SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song ;
Nor can remembrance, Mathew ! bring to view
A fate more pleasing, a delight more true
Than that in which the brother Poets joy'd, 5
Who with combined powers, their wit employ'd
To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.
The thought of this great partnership diffuses
Over the genius loving heart, a feeling
Of all that's high, and great, and good, and healing. 10

Too partial friend ! fain would I follow thee
Past each horizon of fine poesy ;
Fain would I echo back each pleasant note
As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float
'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted, 15
Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted :
But 'tis impossible ; far different cares
Beckon me sternly from soft " Lydian airs,"

And hold my faculties so long in thrall,
 That I am oft in doubt whether at all 20
 I shall again see Phœbus in the morning :
 Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning !
 Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream ;
 Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam ;
 Or again witness what with thee I've seen, 25
 The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,
 After a night of some quaint jubilee
 Which every elf and fay had come to see :
 When bright processions took their airy march
 Beneath the curved moon's triumphal arch. 30

But might I now each passing moment give
 To the coy muse, with me she would not live
 In this dark city, nor would condescend
 'Mid contradictions her delights to lend.
 Should e'er the fine-ey'd maid to me be kind, 35
 Ah ! surely it must be whene'er I find
 Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,
 That often must have seen a poet frantic ;
 Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,
 And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing ; 40
 Where the dark-leav'd laburnum's drooping clusters
 Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,
 And interwin'd the cassia's arms unite,
 With its own drooping buds, but very white.
 Where on one side are covert branches hung, 45
 'Mong which the nightingales have always sung
 In leafy quiet : where to pry, aloof,
 Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,
 Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,
 And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling. 50
 There must be too a ruin dark, and gloomy,
 To say " joy not too much in all that's bloomy."

Yet this is vain—O Mathew lend thy aid
 To find a place where I may greet the maid—
 Where we may soft humanity put on, 5f
 And sit, and rhyme and think on Chatterton ;
 And that warm-hearted Shakspeare sent to meet him
 Four laurell'd spirits, heaven-ward to intreat him.
 With reverence would we speak of all the sages
 Who have left streaks of light athwart their ages : 60
 And thou shouldst moralize on Milton's blindness,
 And mourn the fearful dearth of human kindness
 To those who strove with the bright golden wing
 Of genius, to flap away each sting
 Thrown by the pitiless world. We next could tell 65
 Of those who in the cause of freedom fell ;
 Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell ;
 Of him whose name to ev'ry heart's a solace,
 High-minded and unbending William Wallace.
 While to the rugged north our musing turns 70
 We well might drop a tear for him, and Burns.

Felton! without incitements such as these,
 How vain for me the niggard Muse to tease :
 For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,
 And make "a sun-shine in a shady place:" 75
 For thou wast once a flowret blooming wild,
 Close to the source, bright, pure, and undefil'd,
 Whence gush the streams of song : in happy hour
 Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,
 Just as the sun was from the east uprising ; 80
 And, as for him some gift she was devising,
 Beheld thee, pluck'd thee, cast thee in the stream
 To meet her glorious brother's greeting beam.
 I marvel much that thou hast never told
 How, from a flower, into a fish of gold 85
 Apollo chang'd thee ; how thou next didst seem

A black-ey'd swan upon the widening stream ;
 And when thou first didst in that mirror trace
 The placid features of a human face :
 That thou hast never told thy travels strange, 90
 And all the wonders of the mazy range
 O'er pebbly crystal, and o'er golden sands ;
 Kissing thy daily food from Naiad's pearly hands.

November, 1815.

TO
 MY BROTHER GEORGE.

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,
 My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast
 With heaviness ; in seasons when I've thought
 No sphere'y strains by me could e'er be caught 5
 From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze
 On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays ;
 Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,
 Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely :
 That I should never hear Apollo's song,
 Though feathery clouds were floating all along 10
 The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,
 The golden lyre itself were dimly seen :
 That the still murmur of the honey bee
 Would never teach a rural song to me :
 That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting 15
 Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,
 Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold
 Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay,



GEORGE KEATS :

AFTER A MINIATURE BY SEVERN—Page 36.

Fly from all sorrowing far, far away ; 20
 A sudden glow comes on them, nought they see
 In water, earth, or air, but poesy.
 It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,
 (For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it,)

That when a Poet is in such a trance, 25
 In air he sees white coursers paw, and prance,
 Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
 Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel,
 And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,
 Is the swift opening of their wide portal, 30
 When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,
 Whose tones reach nought on earth but Poet's ear.
 When these enchanted portals open wide,
 And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,
 The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls, 35
 And view the glory of their festivals :
 Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
 Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream ;
 Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run
 Like the bright spots that move about the sun ; 40
 And, when upheld, the wine from each bright jar
 Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
 Yet further off, are dimly seen their bowers,
 Of which, no mortal eye can reach the flowers ;
 And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows 45
 'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.
 All that's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,
 Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,
 As gracefully descending, light and thin,
 Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin, 50
 When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,
 And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,

Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.
 Should he upon an evening ramble fare 55
 With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,
 Would he naught see but the dark, silent blue
 With all its diamonds trembling through and through?
 Or the coy moon, when in the waviness
 Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress, 60
 And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
 Like a sweet nun in holy-day attire?
 Ah, yes! much more would start into his sight—
 The revelries, and mysteries of night:
 And should I ever see them, I will tell you 65
 Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard:
 But richer far posterity's award.
 What does he murmur with his latest breath,
 While his proud eye looks through the film of death? 70
 "What though I leave this dull, and earthly mould,
 "Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold
 "With after times.—The patriot shall feel
 "My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel;
 "Or, in the senate thunder out my numbers 75
 "To startle princes from their easy slumbers.
 "The sage will mingle with each moral theme
 "My happy thoughts sententious; he will teem
 "With lofty periods when my verses fire him,
 "And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him. 80
 "Lays have I left of such a dear delight
 "That maids will sing them on their bridal night.
 "Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,
 "When they have tir'd their gentle limbs with play,
 "And form'd a snowy circle on the grass, 85
 "And plac'd in midst of all that lovely lass
 "Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head

"Crowned with flowers purple, white, and red :
 "For there the lilly, and the musk-rose, sighing,
 "Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying: 90
 "Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,
 "A bunch of violets full blown, and double,
 "Serenely sleep :—she from a casket takes
 "A little book,—and then a joy awakes
 "About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries, 95
 "And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes :
 "For she's to read a tale of hopes, and fears ;
 "One that I foster'd in my youthful years :
 "The pearls, that on each glist'ning circlet sleep,
 "Gush ever and anon with silent creep, 100
 "Lur'd by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest
 "Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,
 "Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu !
 "Thy dales, and hills, are fading from my view :
 "Swiftly I mount, upon wide spreading pinions, 105
 "Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.
 "Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,
 "That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,
 "And warm thy sons!" Ah, my dear friend and brother,
 Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother, 110
 For tasting joys like these, sure I should be
 Happier, and dearer to society.
 At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain
 When some bright thought has darted through my brain :
 Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure 115
 Than if I'd brought to light a hidden treasure.
 As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,
 I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.
 Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,
 Stretch'd on the grass at my best lov'd employment 120
 Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought
 While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.

E'en now I'm pillow'd on a bed of flowers
 That crowns a lofty clift, which proudly towers
 Above the ocean-waves. The stalks, and blades, 125
 Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.
 On one side is a field of drooping oats,
 Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats ;
 So pert and useless, that they bring to mind
 The scarlet coats that pester human-kind. 130
 And on the other side, outspread, is seen
 Ocean's blue mantle streak'd with purple, and green.
 Now 'tis I see a canvass'd ship, and now
 Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.
 I see the lark down-dropping to his nest, 135
 And the broad winged sea-gull never at rest ;
 For when no more he spreads his feathers free,
 His breast is dancing on the restless sea.
 Now I direct my eyes into the west,
 Which at this moment is in sunbeams drest : 140
 Why westward turn ? 'Twas but to say adieu !
 'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you !

August, 1816.

TO

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.



OFT have you seen a swan superbly frowning,
 And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning ;
 He slants his neck beneath the waters bright
 So silently, it seems a beam of light
 Come from the galaxy : anon he sports,— 5
 With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,

Or ruffles all the surface of the lake
In striving from its crystal face to take
Some diamond water drops, and them to treasure
In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure. 10
But not a moment can he there insure them,
Nor to such downy rest can he allure them ;
For down they rush as though they would be free,
And drop like hours into eternity.
Just like that bird am I in loss of time, 15
Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme ;
With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvass rent,
I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent ;
Still scooping up the water with my fingers,
In which a trembling diamond never lingers. 20
By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see
Why I have never penn'd a line to thee :
Because my thoughts were never free, and clear,
And little fit to please a classic ear ;
Because my wine was of too poor a savour 25
For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour
Of sparkling Helicon :—small good it were
To take him to a desert rude, and bare,
Who had on Baiæ's shore reclin'd at ease,
While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze 30
That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,
Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers :
Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream
Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream ;
Who had beheld Belphœbe in a brook, 35
And lovely Una in a leafy nook,
And Archimago leaning o'er his book :
Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,
From silv'ry ripple, up to beauty's queen ;
From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania, 40
To the blue dwelling of divine Urania :

One, who, of late, had ta'en sweet forest walks
 With him who elegantly chats, and talks—
 The wrong'd Libertas,—who has told you stories
 Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories ; 45
 Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,
 And tearful ladies made for love, and pity :
 With many else which I have never known.
 Thus have I thought ; and days on days have flown
 Slowly, or rapidly—unwilling still 50
 For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.
 Nor should I now, but that I've known you long ;
 That you first taught me all the sweets of song :
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine ;
 What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine : 55
 Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
 And float along like birds o'er summer seas ;
 Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness ;
 Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slender-
 ness.
 Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly 60
 Up to its climax and then dying proudly ?
 Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,
 Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load ?
 Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,
 The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram ? 65
 Show'd me that epic was of all the king,
 Round, vast, and spanning all like Saturn's ring ?
 You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,
 And pointed out the patriot's stern duty ;
 The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell ; 70
 The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell
 Upon a tyrant's head. Ah ! had I never seen,
 Or known your kindness, what might I have been ?
 What my enjoyments in my youthful years,
 Bereft of all that now my life endears ? 75

And can I e'er these benefits forget?
 And can I e'er repay the friendly debt?
 No, doubly no;—yet should these rhymings please,
 I shall roll on the grass with two-fold ease:
 For I have long time been my fancy feeding 80
 With hopes that you would one day think the reading
 Of my rough verses not an hour misspent;
 Should it e'er be so, what a rich content!
 Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw the spires
 In lucent Thames reflected:—warm desires 85
 To see the sun o'erpeep the eastern dimness,
 And morning shadows streaking into slimness
 Across the lawny fields, and pebbly water;
 To mark the time as they grow broad, and shorter;
 To feel the air that plays about the hills, 90
 And sips its freshness from the little rills;
 To see high, golden corn wave in the light
 When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,
 And peers among the cloudlets jet and white,
 As though she were reclining in a bed 95
 Of bean blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.
 No sooner had I stepp'd into these pleasures
 Than I began to think of rhymes and measures:
 The air that floated by me seem'd to say
 "Write! thou wilt never have a better day." 100
 And so I did. When many lines I'd written,
 Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,
 Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd better
 Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.
 Such an attempt requir'd an inspiration 105
 Of a peculiar sort,—a consummation;—
 Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have been
 Verses from which the soul would never wean:
 But many days have past since last my heart
 Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart; 110

By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd ;
 Or by the song of Erin pierc'd and sadden'd :
 What time you were before the music sitting,
 And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.
 Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes 115
 That freshly terminate in open plains,
 And revel'd in a chat that ceased not
 When at night-fall among your books we got :
 No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—
 Nor when reluctantly I took my hat ; 120
 No, nor till cordially you shook my hand
 Mid-way between our homes :—your accents bland
 Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
 Could hear your footsteps touch the grav'ly floor.
 Sometimes I lost them, and then found again ; 125
 You chang'd the footpath for the grassy plain.
 In those still moments I have wish'd you joys
 That well you know to honor :—" Life's very toys
 " With him," said I, " will take a pleasant charm ;
 " It cannot be that ought will work him harm." 130
 These thoughts now come o'er me with all their might :—
 Again I shake your hand,—friend Charles, good night.

September, 1816.

SONNETS.

SONNETS.

I.

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

MANY the wonders I this day have seen:
The sun, when first he kist away the tears
That fill'd the eyes of morn;—the laurell'd peers
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean;—
The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,—
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping
So scanty, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.
But what, without the social thought of thee,
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

II.

TO * * * * *

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my sighs
 Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell
 Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart ; so well
 Would passion arm me for the enterprize :
 But ah ! I am no knight whose foeman dies ;
 No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell ;
 I am no happy shepherd of the dell
 Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.
 Yet must I dote upon thee,—call thee sweet,
 Sweeter by far than Hybla's honied roses
 When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.
 Ah ! I will taste that dew, for me 't is meet,
 And when the moon her pallid face discloses,
 I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

III.

*Written on the day that Mr. Leigh Hunt
 left Prison.*

WHAT though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,
 Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
 In his immortal spirit, been as free
 As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.

Minion of grandeur ! think you he did wait ?
 Think you he nought but prison walls did see,
 Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key ?
 Ah, no ! far happier, nobler was his fate !
 In Spenser's halls he stray'd, and bowers fair,
 Culling enchanted flowers ; and he flew
 With daring Milton through the fields of air :
 To regions of his own his genius true
 Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
 When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew ?

IV.



How many bards gild the lapses of time !
 A few of them have ever been the food
 Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood
 Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime :
 And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,
 These will in throngs before my mind intrude :
 But no confusion, no disturbance rude
 Do they occasion ; 't is a pleasing chime.
 So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store ;
 The songs of birds—the whisp'ring of the leaves—
 The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves
 With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,
 That distance of recognizance bereaves,
 Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

V.

To a Friend who sent me some Roses.

AS late I rambled in the happy fields,
 What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew
 From his lush clover covert ;—when anew
 Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields :
 I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
 A fresh-blown musk-rose ; 't was the first that threw
 Its sweets upon the summer : graceful it grew
 As is the wand that queen Titania wields.
 And, as I feasted on its fragraney,
 I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd :
 But when, O Wells ! thy roses came to me
 My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd :
 Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
 Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness un-
 quell'd.

VI.

To G. A. W.

NYPH of the downward smile and sidelong glance,
 In what diviner moments of the day
 Art thou most lovely ?—when gone far astray
 Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance,



CHARLES WELLS :
AFTER A MINIATURE BY WAGEMAN—
Page 50.

Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance
 Of sober thought?—or when starting away
 With careless robe to meet the morning ray
 Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?
 Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
 And so remain, because thou listenest:
 But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
 That I can never tell what mood is best.
 I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly
 Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

VII.



○ SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap
 Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,—
 Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
 Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
 May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
 'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's swift
 leap
 Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
 Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,
 Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

VIII.

TO MY BROTHERS.



SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,
 And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
 Like whispers of the household gods that keep
 A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
 And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
 Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
 Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
 That aye at fall of night our care condoes.
 This is your birth-day Tom, and I rejoice
 That thus it passes smoothly, quietly.
 Many such eyes of gently whisp'ring noise
 May we together pass, and calmly try
 What are this world's true joys,—ere the great voice,
 From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly.

November 18, 1816.

IX.



KEEN, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there
 Among the bushes half leafless, and dry ;
 The stars look very cold about the sky,
 And I have many miles on foot to fare.



THOMAS KEATS THE YOUNGER :
AFTER A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING BY SEVERN—Page 52.

Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,
 Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
 Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
 Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair :
 For I am brimfull of the friendliness
 That in a little cottage I have found ;
 Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,
 And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd ;
 Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
 And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

X.



To one who has been long in city pent,
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
 Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
 And gentle tale of love and languishment ?
 Returning home at evening, with an ear
 Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
 Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
 He mourns that day so soon has glided by :
 E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
 That falls through the clear ether silently.

XI.

On first looking into Chapman's Homer.



MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-brow'd Homer rul'd as his demesne ;
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken ;
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

XII.

On leaving some Friends at an early Hour.



GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean
 On heap'd up flowers, in regions clear, and far ;
 Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
 Or hand of hymning angel, when 't is seen

The silver strings of heavenly harp atween :
 And let there glide by many a pearly car,
 Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,
 And half discovered wings, and glances keen.
 The while let music wander round my ears,
 And as it reaches each delicious ending,
 Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
 And full of many wonders of the spheres :
 For what a height my spirit is contending !
 'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

XIII.

ADDRESSED TO HAYDON.



HIGHMINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,
 A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,
 Dwells here and there with people of no name,
 In noisome alley, and in pathless wood :
 And where we think the truth least understood,
 Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"
 That ought to frighten into hooded shame
 A money-mong'ring, pitiable brood.
 How glorious this affection for the cause
 Of stedfast genius, toiling gallantly !
 What when a stout unbending champion awes
 Envy, and Malice to their native sty ?
 Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,
 Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

XIV.

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME.



GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning ;
 He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
 Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing :
 He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
 The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :
 And lo!—whose stedfastness would never take
 A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
 And other spirits there are standing apart
 Upon the forehead of the age to come ;
 These, these will give the world another heart,
 And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
 Of mighty workings?——
 Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

XV.

On the Grasshopper and Cricket.

THE poetry of earth is never dead :
 When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
 And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;

That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
 In summer luxury,—he has never done
 With his delights ; for when tired out with fun
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
 The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
 On a lone winter evening, when the frost
 Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
 The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
 And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
 The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

December 30, 1816.

XVI.

TO KOSCIUSKO.



GOOD Kosciusko, thy great name alone
 Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling ;
 It comes upon us like the glorious pealing
 Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.
 And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,
 The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,
 And changed to harmonies, for ever stealing
 Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.
 It tells me too, that on a happy day,
 When some good spirit walks upon the earth,
 Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore
 Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth
 To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
 To where the great God lives for evermore.

XVII.



HAPPY is England ! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own ;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent :
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters ;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging :
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

SLEEP AND POETRY.

“ As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
“ Was unto me, but why that I ne might
“ Rest I ne wist, for there n’as erthly wight
“ [As I suppose] had more of hertis ese
“ Than I, for I n’ad sicknesse nor disese.”

CHAUCER.

SLEEP AND POETRY.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer?
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
That stays one moment in an open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing 5
In a green island, far from all men's knowing?
More healthful than the leafiness of dales?
More secret than a nest of nightingales?
More serene than Cordelia's countenance?
More full of visions than a high romance? 10
What, but thee Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!
Low murmurer of tender lullabies!
Light hoverer around our happy pillows!
Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!
Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses! 15
Most happy listener! when the morning blesses
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes
That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?
Fresher than berries of a mountain tree? 20
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle?
What is it? And to what shall I compare it?
It has a glory, and nought else can share it:

The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy, 25
 Chasing away all worldliness and folly ;
 Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,
 Or the low rumblings earth's regions under ;
 And sometimes like a gentle whispering
 Of all the secrets of some wond'rous thing 30
 That breathes about us in the vacant air ;
 So that we look around with prying stare,
 Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial lymning,
 And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning ;
 To see the laurel wreath, on high suspended, 35
 That is to crown our name when life is ended.
 Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,
 And from the heart up-springs, rejoice ! rejoice !
 Sounds which will reach the Framers of all things,
 And die away in ardent mutterings. 40

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,
 And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
 For his great Maker's presence, but must know
 What 't is I mean, and feel his being glow :
 Therefore no insult will I give his spirit, 45
 By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven—Should I rather kneel
 Upon some mountain-top until I feel 50
 A glowing splendour round about me hung,
 And echo back the voice of thine own tongue ?
 O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven ; yet, to my ardent prayer, 55
 Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
 Smooth'd for intoxication by the breath

Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
 Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
 The morning sun-beams to the great Apollo 60
 Like a fresh sacrifice ; or, if I can bear
 The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring to me the fair
 Visions of all places : a bowery nook
 Will be elysium—an eternal book
 Whence I may copy many a lovely saying 65
 About the leaves, and flowers—about the playing
 Of nymphs in woods, and fountains ; and the shade
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid ;
 And many a verse from so strange influence
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence 70
 It came. Also imaginings will hover
 Round my fire-side, and haply there discover
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander
 Through its lone vales ; and where I found a spot 75
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd dress
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
 All that was for our human senses fitted. 80
 Then the events of this wide world I'd seize
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit teaze
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
 Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ! life is but a day ; 85
 A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way
 From a tree's summit ; a poor Indian's sleep
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown ; 90
 The reading of an ever-changing tale ;

The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ;
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,
 Riding the springy branches of an elm. 95

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
 Myself in poesy ; so I may do the deed
 That my own soul has to itself decreed.
 Then will I pass the countries that I see
 In long perspective, and continually 100
 Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass
 Of Flora, and old Pan : sleep in the grass,
 Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
 And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees ;
 Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places, 105
 To woo sweet kisses from averted faces,—
 Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white
 Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
 As hard as lips can make it : till agreed,
 A lovely tale of human life we'll read. 110
 And one will teach a tame dove how it best
 May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest ;
 Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
 Will set a green robe floating round her head,
 And still will dance with ever varied ease, 115
 Smiling upon the flowers and the trees :
 Another will entice me on, and on
 Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon ;
 Till in the bosom of a leafy world
 We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd 120
 In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?
 Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
 Where I may find the agonies, the strife

Of human hearts : for lo ! I see afar, 125
 O'ersailing the blue cragginess, a car
 And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer
 Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear :
 And now the numerous tramlings quiver lightly
 Along a huge cloud's ridge ; and now with sprightly 130
 Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,
 Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.
 Still downward with capacious whirl they glide ;
 And now I see them on a green-hill's side
 In breezy rest among the nodding stalks. 135
 The charioteer with wond'rous gesture talks
 To the trees and mountains ; and there soon appear
 Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,
 Passing along before a dusky space
 Made by some mighty oaks : as they would chase 140
 Some ever-fleeting music on they sweep.
 Lo ! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep :
 Some with upholden hand and mouth severe ;
 Some with their faces muffled to the ear
 Between their arms ; some, clear in youthful bloom, 145
 Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom ;
 Some looking back, and some with upward gaze ;
 Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
 Flit onward—now a lovely wreath of girls
 Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls ; 150
 And now broad wings. Most awfully intent
 The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
 And seems to listen : O that I might know
 All that he writes with such a hurrying glow !

The visions all are fled—the car is fled 155
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
 A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear along

My soul to nothingness : but I will strive
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive 160
 The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
 Journey it went.

Is there so small a range
 In the present strength of manhood, that the high
 Imagination cannot freely fly
 As she was wont of old ? prepare her steeds, 165
 Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
 Upon the clouds ? Has she not shown us all ?
 From the clear space of ether, to the small
 Breath of new buds unfolding ? From the meaning
 Of Jove's large eye-brow, to the tender greening 170
 Of April meadows ? Here her altar shone,
 E'en in this isle ; and who could paragon
 The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
 Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
 Its mighty self of convoluting sound, 175
 Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,
 Eternally around a dizzy void ?
 Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd
 With honors ; nor had any other care
 Than to sing out and sooth their wavy hair. 180

Could all this be forgotten ? Yes, a scism
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
 Men were thought wise who could not understand
 His glories : with a puling infant's force 185
 They sway'd about upon a rocking horse,
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah dismal soul'd !
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
 Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
 Bar'd its eternal bosom, and the dew 190

Of summer nights collected still to make
 The morning precious : beauty was awake !
 Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
 To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule 195
 And compass vile : so that ye taught a school
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask 200
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !
 That blasphem'd the bright Lyrist to his face,
 And did not know it,—no, they went about,
 Holding a poor, decrepid standard out
 Mark'd with most flimsy mottos, and in large 205
 The name of one Boileau !

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills !
 Whose congregated majesty so fills
 My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace
 Your hallowed names, in this unholy place, 210
 So near those common folk ; did not their shames
 Affright you ? Did our old lamenting Thames
 Delight you ? Did ye never cluster round
 Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,
 And weep ? Or did ye wholly bid adieu 215
 To regions where no more the laurel grew ?
 Or did ye stay to give a welcoming
 To some lone spirits who could proudly sing
 Their youth away, and die ? 'T was even so :
 But let me think away those times of woe : 220
 Now 't is a fairer season ; ye have breathed
 Rich benedictions o'er us ; ye have wreathed
 Fresh garlands : for sweet music has been heard

In many places ;—some has been upstirr'd
 From out its crystal dwelling in a lake, 225
 By a swan's ebon bill ; from a thick brake,
 Nested and quiet in a valley mild,
 Bubbles a pipe ; fine sounds are floating wild
 About the earth : happy are ye and glad.

These things are doubtless : yet in truth we've had 230
 Strange thunders from the potency of song ;
 Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,
 From majesty : but in clear truth the themes
 Are ugly clubs, the Poets Polyphemes
 Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower 235
 Of light is poesy ; 't is the supreme of power ;
 'T is might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.
 The very archings of her eye-lids charm
 A thousand willing agents to obey,
 And still she governs with the mildest sway : 240
 But strength alone though of the Muses born
 Is like a fallen angel : trees uptorn,
 Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
 Delight it ; for it feeds upon the burrs,
 And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end 245
 Of poesy, that it should be a friend
 To sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice : a myrtle fairer than
 E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
 Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds 250
 A silent space with ever sprouting green.
 All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,
 Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,
 Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.
 Then let us clear away the choaking thorns 255
 From round its gentle stem ; let the young fawns,

Yeaned in after times, when we are flown,
 Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown
 With simple flowers : let there nothing be
 More boisterous than a lover's bended knee ; 260
 Nought more ungentle than the placid look
 Of one who leans upon a closed book ;
 Nought more untr tranquil than the grassy slopes
 Between two hills. All hail delightful hopes !
 As she was wont, th' imagination 265
 Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,
 And they shall be accounted poet kings
 Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.
 O may these joys be ripe before I die.

Will not some say that I presumptuously 270
 Have spoken ? that from hastening disgrace
 'T were better far to hide my foolish face ?
 That whining boyhood should with reverence bow
 Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach ? How !
 If I do hide myself, it sure shall be 275
 In the very fane, the light of Poesy :
 If I do fall, at least I will be laid
 Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;
 And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven ;
 And there shall be a kind memorial graven. 280
 But off Despondence ! miserable bane !
 They should not know thee, who athirst to gain
 A noble end, are thirsty every hour.
 What though I am not wealthy in the dower
 Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know 285
 The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
 Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
 Of man : though no great minist'ring reason sorts
 Out the dark mysteries of human souls
 To clear conceiving : yet there ever rolls 290

A vast idea before me, and I glean
 Therefrom my liberty; thence too I've seen
 The end and aim of Poesy. 'T is clear
 As anything most true; as that the year
 Is made of the four seasons—manifest 295
 As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,
 Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I
 Be but the essence of deformity,
 A coward, did my very eye-lids wink
 At speaking out what I have dar'd to think. 300
 Ah! rather let me like a madman run
 Over some precipice; let the hot sun
 Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down
 Convuls'd and headlong! Stay! an inward frown
 Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile. 305
 An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
 Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!
 How many days! what desperate turmoil!
 Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
 Ah, what a task! upon my bended knees, 310
 I could unsay those—no, impossible!
 Impossible!

For sweet relief I'll dwell
 On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
 Begun in gentleness die so away.
 E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades: 315
 I turn full hearted to the friendly aids
 That smooth the path of honour; brotherhood,
 And friendliness the nurse of mutual good.
 The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet
 Into the brain ere one can think upon it; 320
 The silence when some rhymes are coming out;
 And when they're come, the very pleasant rout:
 The message certain to be done to-morrow.

'T is perhaps as well that it should be to borrow
 Some precious book from out its snug retreat, 325
 To cluster round it when we next shall meet.
 Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs
 Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;
 Many delights of that glad day recalling,
 When first my senses caught their tender falling. 330
 And with these airs come forms of elegance
 Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,
 Careless, and grand—fingers soft and round
 Parting luxuriant curls ;—and the swift bound
 Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye 335
 Made Ariadne's cheek look blushingly.
 Thus I remember all the pleasant flow
 Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers
 To trains of peaceful images : the stirs 340
 Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :
 A linnet starting all about the bushes :
 A butterfly, with golden wings broad parted,
 Nestling a rose, convuls'd as though it smarted
 With over pleasure—many, many more, 345
 Might I indulge at large in all my store
 Of luxuries : yet I must not forget
 Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :
 For what there may be worthy in these rhymes
 I partly owe to him : and thus, the chimes 350
 Of friendly voices had just given place
 To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace
 The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.
 It was a poet's house who keeps the keys
 Of pleasure's temple. Round about were hung 355
 The glorious features of the bards who sung
 In other ages—cold and sacred busts

- Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts
 To clear Futurity his darling fame!
 Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim 360
 At swelling apples with a frisky leap
 And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap
 Of vine-leaves. Then there rose to view a fane
 Of liny marble, and thereto a train
 Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward : 365
 One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward
 The dazzling sun-rise : two sisters sweet
 Bending their graceful figures till they meet
 Over the trippings of a little child :
 And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild 370
 Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.
 See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping
 Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs ;—
 A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims
 At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion 375
 With the subsiding crystal : as when ocean
 Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er
 Its rocky marge, and balances once more
 The patient weeds ; that now unshent by foam
 Feel all about their undulating home. 380
- Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down
 At nothing ; just as though the earnest frown
 Of over thinking had that moment gone
 From off her brow, and left her all alone.
- Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes, 385
 As if he always listened to the sighs
 Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's worn
 By horrid suffrance—mightily forlorn.
- Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,
 Starts at the sight of Laura ; nor can wean 390

His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they !
For over them was seen a free display
Of out-spread wings, and from between them shone
The face of Poesy : from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell. 395
The very sense of where I was might well
Keep Sleep aloof : but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast ; so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night ; 400
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines ; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.'

ENDYMION:

A Poetic Romance.

"THE STRETCHED METRE OF AN ANTIQUE SONG."

INSCRIBED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

ENDYMION.

PREFACE.

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy ; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted : thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness : for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

Teignmouth,
April 10, 1818.

ENDYMION.

BOOK I.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. 5
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways 10
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils 15
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20
We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :

An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences 25
For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light 30
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion. 35
The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own vallies : so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din ; 40
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests ; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber ; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year 45
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white, 50
Hide in deep herbage ; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finish'd : but let Autumn bold, 55
With universal tinge of sober gold,

Be all about me when I make an end.
 And now at once, adventuresome, I send
 My herald thought into a wilderness :
 There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress 60
 My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
 Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmus was outspread
 A mighty forest ; for the moist earth fed
 So plenteously all weed-hidden roots 65
 Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.
 And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,
 Where no man went ; and if from shepherd's keep
 A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,
 Never again saw he the happy pens 70
 Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
 Over the hills at every nightfall went.
 Among the shepherds, 'twas believed ever,
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
 From the white flock, but pass'd unworried 75
 By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
 Until it came to some unfooted plains
 Where fed the herds of Pan : aye great his gains
 Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
 Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny, 80
 And ivy banks ; all leading pleasantly
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
 Stems thronging all around between the swell
 Of turf and slanting branches : who could tell
 The freshness of the space of heaven above, 85
 Edg'd round with dark tree tops ? through which a dove
 Would often beat its wings, and often too
 A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
 There stood a marble altar, with a tress 90

Of flowers budded newly ; and the dew
 Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
 Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
 And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
 For 'twas the morn : Apollo's upward fire 95
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
 Of brightness so unsully'd, that therein
 A melancholy spirit well might win
 Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
 Into the winds : rain-scented eglantine 100
 Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun ;
 The lark was lost in him ; cold springs had run
 To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass ;
 Man's voice was on the mountains ; and the mass
 Of nature's lives and wonders puls'd tenfold, 105
 To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
 Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
 All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
 A troop of little children garlanded ; 110
 Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry
 Earnestly round as wishing to espy
 Some folk of holiday : nor had they waited
 For many moments, ere their ears were sated
 With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then 115
 Fill'd out its voice, and di'd away again.
 Within a little space again it gave
 Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
 To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
 Through copse-clad vallies,—ere their death, o'ertaking
 The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea. 121

And now as deep into the wood as we
 Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light

Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
 Plainer and plainer showing, till at last 125
 Into the widest alley they all past,
 Making directly for the woodland altar.
 O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue falter
 In telling of this goodly company,
 Of their old piety, and of their glee: 130
 But let a portion of ethereal dew
 Fall on my head, and presently unmew
 My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
 To stammer where old Chaucer us'd to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danc'd along, 135
 Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;
 Each having a white wicker over brimm'd
 With April's tender younglings: next, well trimm'd,
 A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks
 As may be read of in Arcadian books; 140
 Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
 When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
 Let his divinity o'er-flowing die
 In music, through the vales of Thessaly:
 Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground, 145
 And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
 With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,
 Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
 A venerable priest full soberly,
 Begirt with ministring looks: alway his eye 150
 Stedfast upon the matted turf he kept,
 And after him his sacred vestments swept.
 From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
 Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;
 And in his left he held a basket full 155
 Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:
 Wild thyme, and valley-lillies whiter still

Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.
 His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
 Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth 160
 Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
 Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
 Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,
 Up-followed by a multitude that rear'd
 Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car, 165
 Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
 The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown :
 Who stood therein did seem of great renown
 Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
 Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown ; 170
 And, for those simple times, his garments were
 A chieftain king's : beneath his breast, half bare,
 Was hung a silver bugle, and between
 His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
 A smile was on his countenance ; he seem'd, 175
 To common lookers on, like one who dream'd
 Of idleness in groves Elysian :
 But there were some who feelingly could scan
 A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip 180
 Through his forgotten hands : then would they sigh,
 And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
 Of logs pil'd solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,
 Why should our young Endymion pine away !

Soon the assembly, in a circle rang'd, 185
 Stood silent round the shrine : each look was chang'd
 To sudden veneration : women meek
 Beckon'd their sons to silence ; while each cheek
 Of virgin bloom pal'd gently for slight fear.
 Endymion too, without a forest peer, 190
 Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,

Among his brothers of the mountain chace.
 In midst of all, the venerable priest
 Ey'd them with joy from greatest to the least,
 And, after lifting up his aged hands, 195
 Thus spake he: "Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!
 Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks
 That overtop your mountains; whether come
 From vallies where the pipe is never dumb; 200
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
 Blue hare-bells lightly, and where prickly furze
 Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge
 Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
 Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn 205
 By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:
 Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare
 The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air;
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup 210
 Will put choice honey for a favoured youth:
 Yea, every one attend! for in good truth
 Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
 Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
 Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains 215
 Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
 Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
 Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
 Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
 The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd 220
 His early song against yon breezy sky,
 That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire
 Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;
 Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod 225

With wine, in honor of the shepherd-god.
 Now while the earth was drinking it, and while
 Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,
 And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
 'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light 230
 Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang :

“O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ; 235
 Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken ;
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
 In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds 240
 The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth ;
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,
 By thy love's milky brow !
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran, 245
 Hear us, great Pan !

“O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
 Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
 What time thou wanderest at eventide
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side 250
 Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom
 Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
 Their ripen'd fruitage ; yellow girted bees
 Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas
 Their fairest blossom'd beans and poppied corn ; 255
 The chuckling linnnet its five young unborn,
 To sing for thee ; low creeping strawberries
 Their summer coolness ; pent up butterflies

Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh budding year
 All its completions—be quickly near, 260
 By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
 O forester divine !

“Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
 For willing service ; whether to surprise
 The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit ; 265
 Or upward ragged precipices flit
 To save poor lambkins from the eagle’s maw ;
 Or by mysterious enticement draw
 Bewildered shepherds to their path again ;
 Or to tread breathless round the frothy main, 270
 And gather up all fancifullest shells
 For thee to tumble into Naiads’ cells,
 And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping ;
 Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
 The while they pelt each other on the crown 275
 With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown—
 By all the echoes that about thee ring,
 Hear us, O satyr king !

“O Harkener to the loud clapping shears,
 While ever and anon to his shorn peers 280
 A ram goes bleating : Winder of the horn,
 When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
 Anger our huntsmen : Breather round our farms,
 To keep off mildews, and all weather harms :
 Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds, 285
 That come a swooning over hollow grounds,
 And wither drearily on barren moors :
 Dread opener of the mysterious doors
 Leading to universal knowledge—see,
 Great son of Dryope, 290
 The many that are come to pay their vows
 With leaves about their brows !

" Be still the unimaginable lodge
 For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven, 295
 Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,
 That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
 Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth :
 Be still a symbol of immensity ;
 A firmament reflected in a sea ; 300
 An element filling the space between ,
 An unknown—but no more : we humbly screen
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
 And giving out a shout most heaven rending,
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan, 305
 Upon thy Mount Lycean ! "

Even while they brought the burden to a close,
 A shout from the whole multitude arose,
 That lingered in the air like dying rolls 310
 Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals
 Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.
 Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
 Young companies nimbly began dancing
 To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.
 Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly 315
 To tunes forgotten—out of memory :
 Fair creatures ! whose young childrens' children bred
 Thermopylæ its heroes—not yet dead,
 But in old marbles ever beautiful.
 High genitors, unconscious did they cull 320
 Time's sweet first-fruits—they danc'd to weariness,
 And then in quiet circles did they press
 The hillock turf, and caught the latter end
 Of some strange history, potent to send
 A young mind from its bodily tenement. 325
 Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent

On either side ; pitying the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him,—Zephyr penitent,
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament, 330
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
The archers too, upon a wider plain,
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top, 335
Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
Poor, lonely Niobe ! when her lovely young
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue 340
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,
And very, very deadliness did nip
Her motherly cheeks. Arous'd from this sad mood
By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,
Uplifting his strong bow into the air, 345
Many might after brighter visions stare :
After the Argonauts, in blind amaze
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
There shot a golden splendour far and wide, 350
Spangling those million poutings of the brine
With quivering ore : 'twas even an awful shine
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow ;
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating, 355
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increas'd
The silvery setting of their mortal star.
There they discours'd upon the fragile bar 360
That keeps us from our homes ethereal ;

And what our duties there: to nightly call
 Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather ;
 To summon all the downiest clouds together
 For the sun's purple couch ; to emulate 365
 In ministring the potent rule of fate
 With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations ;
 To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
 Sweet poesy by moonlight : besides these,
 A world of other unguess'd offices. 370
 Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
 Into Elysium ; vieing to rehearse
 Each one his own anticipated bliss.
 One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
 His quick gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs, 375
 Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
 Her lips with music for the welcoming.
 Another wish'd, mid that eternal spring,
 To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
 Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales : 380
 Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,
 And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind ;
 And, ever after, through those regions be
 His messenger, his little Mercury.
 Some were athirst in soul to see again 385
 Their fellow huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
 In times long past ; to sit with them, and talk
 Of all the chances in their earthly walk ;
 Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
 Of happiness, to when upon the moors, 390
 Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
 And shar'd their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told
 Their fond imaginations,—saving him
 Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,
 Endymion : yet hourly had he striven 395
 To hide the cankering venom, that had riven

His fainting recollections. Now indeed
 His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed
 The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
 Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe, 400
 Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,
 Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms:
 But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,
 Like one who on the earth had never slept.
 Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man, 405
 Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?
 Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,
 And breath'd a sister's sorrow to persuade 410
 A yielding up, a cradling on her care.
 Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse
 Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,
 Along a path between two little streams,— 415
 Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,
 From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small;
 Until they came to where these steamlets fall,
 With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush, 420
 Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush
 With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.
 A little shallop, floating there hard by,
 Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;
 And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank, 425
 And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,—
 Peona guiding, through the water straight,
 Towards a bowery island opposite;
 Which gaining presently, she steered light
 Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove, 430

Where nested was an arbour, overwove
 By many a summer's silent fingering ;
 To whose cool bosom she was us'd to bring
 Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
 And minstrel memories of times gone by. 435

So she was gently glad to see him laid
 Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
 On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
 Dry'd carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
 When last the sun his autumn tresses shook, 440
 And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.
 Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest :
 But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
 Peona's busy hand against his lips,
 And still, a sleeping, held her finger-tips 445
 In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
 A patient watch over the stream that creeps
 Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
 Held her in peace : so that a whispering blade
 Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling 450
 Down in the blue-bells, or a wren light rustling
 Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
 Till it is hush'd and smooth ! O unconfin'd 455
 Restraint ! imprisoned liberty ! great key
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
 Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves
 And moonlight ; aye, to all the mazy world 460
 Of silvery enchantment !—who, upfurl'd
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
 But renovates and lives ?—Thus, in the bower,
 Endymion was calm'd to life again.

Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain, 465
 He said : " I feel this thine endearing love
 All through my bosom : thou art as a dove
 Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings
 About me ; and the pearliest dew not brings
 Such morning incense from the fields of May, 470
 As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray
 From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt
 Of sisterly affection. Can I want
 Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears ?
 Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears 475
 That, any longer, I will pass my days
 Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
 My voice upon the mountain-heights ; once more
 Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar :
 Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll 480
 Around the breathed boar : again I'll poll
 The fair-grown yew tree, for a chosen bow :
 And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
 Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
 To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed 485
 Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered sweet,
 And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat
 My soul to keep in its resolved course."

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
 Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim, 490
 And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
 A lively prelude, fashioning the way
 In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay
 More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
 Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child ; 495
 And nothing since has floated in the air
 So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
 Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand ;

For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
 The quick invisible strings, even though she saw 500
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
 Before the deep intoxication.
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
 Her self-possession—swung the lute aside,
 And earnestly said : " Brother, 'tis vain to hide 505
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,
 Immortal, starry ; such alone could thus
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught
 Offensive to the heavenly powers ? Caught
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent ? 510
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,
 Sacred to Dian ? Haply, thou hast seen
 Her naked limbs among the alders green ;
 And that, alas ! is death. No, I can trace
 Something more high perplexing in thy face !" 515

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,
 And said, " Art thou so pale, who wast so bland
 And merry in our meadows ? How is this ?
 Tell me thine ailment : tell me all amiss !—
 Ah ! thou hast been unhappy at the change 520
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange ?
 Or more complete to overwhelm surmise ?
 Ambition is no sluggard : 'tis no prize,
 That toiling years would put within my grasp,
 That I have sigh'd for : with so deadly gasp 525
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
 So all have set my heavier grief above
 These things which happen. Rightly have they done :
 I, who still saw the horizontal sun
 Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world, 530
 Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
 My spear aloft, as signal for the chace—

I, who, for very sport of heart, would race
 With my own steed from Araby ; pluck down
 A vulture from his towery perching ; frown 535
 A lion into growling, loth retire—
 To lose, at once, all my toil breeding fire,
 And sink thus low ! but I will ease my breast
 Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

“ This river does not see the naked sky, 540
 Till it begins to progress silverly
 Around the western border of the wood,
 Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood
 Seems at the distance like a crescent moon :
 And in that nook, the very pride of June, 545
 Had I been us'd to pass my weary eyes ;
 The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
 So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
 And I could witness his most kingly hour,
 When he doth tighten up the golden reins, 550
 And paces leisurely down amber plains
 His snorting four. Now when his chariot last
 Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
 There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
 Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red : 555
 At which I wondered greatly, knowing well
 That but one night had wrought this flowery spell ;
 And, sitting down close by, began to muse
 What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,
 In passing here, his owlet pinions shook ; 560
 Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook
 Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
 Had dipt his rod in it : such garland wealth
 Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,
 Until my head was dizzy and distraught. 565
 Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole

A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul ;
 And shaping visions all about my sight
 Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light ;
 The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,
 And then were gulph'd in a tumultuous swim : 571
 And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
 The enchantment that afterwards befel ?
 Yet it was but a dream : yet such a dream
 That never tongue, although it overteem 575
 With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,
 Could figure out and to conception bring
 All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
 Watching the zenith, where the milky way
 Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ; 580
 And travelling my eye, until the doors
 Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
 I became loth and fearful to alight
 From such high soaring by a downward glance :
 So kept me stedfast in that airy trance, 585
 Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
 When, presently, the stars began to glide,
 And faint away, before my eager view :
 At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
 And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge ; 590
 And lo ! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
 The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
 A shell for Neptune's goblet : she did soar
 So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
 Commingling with her argent spheres did roll 595
 Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
 At last into a dark and vapoury tent—
 Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
 Of planets all were in the blue again.
 To commune with those orbs, once more I rais'd 600
 My sight right upward : but it was quite daz'd

By a bright something, sailing down apace,
 Making me quickly veil my eyes and face :
 Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
 Who from Olympus watch our destinies ! 605
 Whence that completed form of all completeness ?
 Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness ?
 Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where
 Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair ?
 Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun ; 610
 Not—thy soft hand, fair sister ! let me shun
 Such follying before thee—yet she had,
 Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad ;
 And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
 Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded, 615
 Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow ;
 The which were blended in, I know not how,
 With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
 Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
 That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings 620
 And plays about its fancy, till the stings
 Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
 Unto what awful power shall I call ?
 To what high fane ?—Ah ! see her hovering feet,
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet 625
 Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
 From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows
 Her scarf into a fluttering pavillion ;
 'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million .
 Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed, 630
 Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,
 Handfuls of daisies.”—“ Endymion, how strange !
 Dream within dream ! ”—“ She took an airy range,
 And then, towards me, like a very maid,
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid, 635
 And press'd me by the hand : Ah ! 'twas too much ;

Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
 Yet held my recollection, even as one
 Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
 Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon, 640
 I felt upmounted in that region
 Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
 And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
 That ballances the heavy meteor-stone;—
 Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone, 645
 But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
 Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
 And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;
 Such as aye muster where grey time has scoop'd
 Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side: 650
 There hollow sounds arous'd me, and I sigh'd
 To faint once more by looking on my bliss—
 I was distracted; madly did I kiss
 The wooing arms which held me, and did give
 My eyes at once to death: but 'twas to live, 655
 To take in draughts of life from the gold fount
 Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count
 The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd
 A second self, that each might be redeem'd
 And plunder'd of its load of blessedness. 660
 Ah, desperate mortal! I e'en dar'd to press
 Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
 And, at that moment, felt my body dip
 Into a warmer air: a moment more,
 Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store 665
 Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
 A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
 Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
 Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
 And once, above the edges of our nest, 670
 An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I guess'd.

"Why did I dream that sleep o'er-power'd me
 In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,
 Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
 And stare them from me? But no, like a spark 675
 That needs must die, although its little beam
 Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
 Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.
 And so it was, until a gentle creep,
 A careful moving caught my waking ears, 680
 And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
 My clenched hands;—for lo! the poppies hung
 Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
 A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
 Had chidden herald Hesperus away, 685
 With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
 Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease
 With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
 Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
 Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus!— 690
 Away I wander'd—all the pleasant hues
 Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
 Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
 Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills
 Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills 695
 Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
 In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown
 Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
 Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
 In little journeys, I beheld in it 700
 A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit
 My soul with under darkness; to entice
 My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:
 Therefore I eager followed, and did curse
 The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse, 705
 Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!

These things, with all their comfortings, are given
 To my down-sunken hours, and with thee
 Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
 Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both 710
 Sat silent: for the maid was very loth
 To answer; feeling well that breathed words
 Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords
 Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps
 Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps, 715
 And wonders; struggles to devise some blame;
 To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness! but, for all her strife,
 She could as soon have crush'd away the life
 From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause, 720
 She said with trembling chance: "Is this the cause?
 This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!
 That one who through this middle earth should pass
 Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
 His name upon the harp-string, should achieve 725
 No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
 Singing alone, and fearfully,—how the blood
 Left his young cheek; and how he us'd to stray
 He knew not where; and how he would say, *nay*,
 If any said 'twas love: and yet 'twas love; 730
 What could it be but love? How a ring-dove
 Let fall a sprig of yew tree in his path;
 And how he di'd: and then, that love doth scathe,
 The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses;
 And then the ballad of his sad life closes 735
 With sighs, and an alas!—Endymion!
 Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon
 Among the winds at large—that all may hearken!
 Although, before the crystal heavens darken,

I watch and dote upon the silver lakes 740
 Pictur'd in western cloudiness, that takes
 The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
 Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands
 With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
 And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease 745
 My pleasant days, because I could not mount
 Into those regions? The Morpheat fount
 Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
 Into its airy channels with so subtle, 750
 So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
 Circl'd a million times within the space
 Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
 A tinting of its quality : how light 754
 Must dreams themselves be ; seeing they're more slight
 Than the mere nothing that engenders them !
 Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
 Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick ?
 Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
 For nothing but a dream ?" Hereat the youth 760
 Look'd up : a conflicting of shame and ruth
 Was in his plaited brow . yet, his eyelids
 Widened a little, as when Zephyr bids
 A little breeze to creep between the fans
 Of careless butterflies : amid his pains 765
 He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
 Full palatable ; and a colour grew
 Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

" Peona ! ever have I long'd to slake
 My thirst for the world's praises : nothing base, 770
 No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace
 The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepar'd—
 Though now 'tis tatter'd ; leaving my bark bar'd

And sullenly drifting : yet my higher hope
 Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope, 775
 To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
 Wherein lies happiness ? In that which becks
 Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
 A fellowship with essence ; till we shine,
 Full alchemiz'd, and free of space. Behold 780
 The clear religion of heaven ! Fold
 A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,
 And soothe thy lips : hist, when the airy stress
 Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
 And with a sympathetic touch unbinds 785
 Æolian magic from their lucid wombs :
 Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs ;
 Old ditties sigh above their father's grave ;
 Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave
 Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot ; 790
 Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
 Where long ago a giant battle was ;
 And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
 In every place where infant Orpheus slept.
 Feel we these things ?—that moment have we stept 795
 Into a sort of oneness, and our state
 Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
 Richer entanglements, enthralmments far
 More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
 To the chief intensity : the crown of these 800
 Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
 Upon the forehead of humanity.
 All its more ponderous and bulky worth
 Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
 A steady splendour ; but at the tip-top, 805
 There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop
 Of light, and that is love : its influence,
 Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,

At which we start and fret ; till in the end,
 Melting into its radiance, we blend, 810
 Mingle, and so become a part of it,—
 Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
 So wingedly : when we combine therewith,
 Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
 And we are nurtured like a pelican brood. 815
 Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,
 That men, who might have tower'd in the van
 Of all the congregated world, to fan
 And winnow from the coming step of time
 All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime 820
 Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
 Have been content to let occasion die,
 Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.
 And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness : 825
 For I have ever thought that it might bless
 The world with benefits unknowingly ;
 As does the nightingale, upperched high,
 And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves—
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives 830
 How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.
 Just so may love, although 'tis understood
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth :
 What I know not : but who, of men, can tell 835
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would
 swell
 To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
 The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones, 840
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet
 If human souls did never kiss and greet ?

" Now, if this earthly love has power to make
 Men's being mortal, immortal ; to shake
 Ambition from their memories, and brim 845
 Their measure of content ; what merest whim,
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
 To one, who keeps within his stedfast aim
 A love immortal, an immortal too.
 Look not so wilder'd ; for these things are true, 850
 And never can be born of atomies
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,
 My restless spirit never could endure
 To brood so long upon one luxury, 855
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
 A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
 My sayings will the less obscured seem,
 When I have told thee how my waking sight
 Has made me scruple whether that same night 860
 Was pass'd in dreaming. Harken, sweet Peona !
 Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
 Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,
 Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
 Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart, 865
 And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,
 And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
 Past them, but he must brush on every side.
 Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,
 Far as the slabbed margin of a well, 870
 Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
 Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
 Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set
 Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
 Edges them round, and they have golden pits : 875
 'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits
 In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,

When all above was faint with mid-day heat,
 And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,
 I'd bubble up the water through a reed ; 880
 So reaching back to boy-hood : make me ships
 Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,
 With leaves stuck in them ; and the Neptune be
 Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
 When love-lorn hours had left me less a child, 885
 I sat contemplating the figures wild
 Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.
 Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
 A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver ;
 So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver 890
 The happy chance : so happy, I was fain
 To follow it upon the open plain,
 And, therefore, was just going ; when, behold !
 A wonder, fair as any I have told—
 The same bright face I tasted in my sleep, 895
 Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap
 Through the cool depth.—It mov'd as if to flee—
 I started up, when lo ! refreshfully,
 There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,
 Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers, 900
 Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,
 Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
 Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
 Alone preserv'd me from the drear abyss
 Of death, for the fair form had gone again. 905
 Pleasure is oft a visitant ; but pain
 Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
 On the deer's tender haunches : late, and loth,
 'Tis scar'd away by slow returning pleasure.
 How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure 910
 Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
 By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night !

Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
 Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill :
 And a whole age of lingering moments crept 915
 Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
 Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.
 Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen ;
 Once more been tortured with renewed life.
 When last the wintry gusts gave over strife 920
 With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies
 Warm and serene, but yet with moistened eyes
 In pity of the shatter'd infant buds,—
 That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,
 My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and smil'd, 925
 Chatted with thee, and many days exil'd
 All torment from my breast ;—'twas even then,
 Straying about, yet, coop'd up in the den
 Of helpless discontent,—hurling my lance
 From place to place, and following at chance, 930
 At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,
 And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck
 In the middle of a brook,—whose silver ramble
 Down twenty little falls, through reeds and bramble,
 Tracing along, it brought me to a cave, 935
 Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave
 The nether sides of mossy stones and rock,—
 'Mong which it gurgled blythe adieus, to mock
 Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
 Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread 940
 Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.
 " Ah ! impious mortal, whither do I roam ? "
 Said I, low voic'd : " Ah, whither ! 'Tis the grot
 " Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
 " Doth her resign ; and where her tender hands 945
 " She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands :
 " Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits,

" And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
 " Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
 " Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone 950
 " Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,
 " And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,
 " To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
 " Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,
 " And weave them dyingly—send honey-whispers 955
 " Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers
 " May sigh my love unto her pitying !
 " O charitable echo ! hear, and sing
 " This ditty to her !—tell her"—so I stay'd
 My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid, 960
 Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
 And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.
 Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name
 Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came :
 " Endymion ! the cave is secreter 965
 " Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
 " No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
 " Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys
 " And trembles through my labyrinthine hair."
 At that oppress'd I hurried in.—Ah ! where 970
 Are those swift moments ? Whither are they fled ?
 I'll smile no more, Peona ; nor will wed
 Sorrow the way to death ; but patiently
 Bear up against it : so farewell, sad sigh ;
 And come instead demurest meditation, 975
 To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
 My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.
 No more will I count over, link by link,
 My chain of grief : no longer strive to find
 A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind 980
 Blustering about my ears : aye, thou shalt see,
 Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be ;

What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
 There is a paly flame of hope that plays
 Where'er I look: but yet, I'll say 'tis naught— 985
 And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
 Already, a more healthy countenance?
 By this the sun is setting; we may chance
 Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star 990
 Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand:
 They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

BOOK II.

O SOVEREIGN power of love! O grief! O balm!
 All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,
 And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:
 For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
 Have become indolent; but touching thine, 5
 One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,
 One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.
 The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
 Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
 Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades 10
 Into some backward corner of the brain;
 Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain
 The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.
 Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded cheat!
 Swart planet in the universe of deeds! 15
 Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
 Along the pebbled shore of memory!
 Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be

Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnify'd
 To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride, 20
 And golden keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.
 But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly
 About the great Athenian admiral's mast?
 What care, though striding Alexander past
 The Indus with his Macedonian numbers? 25
 Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
 The glutt'd Cyclops, what care?—Juliet leaning
 Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning
 Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
 Doth more avail than these: the silver flow 30
 Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
 Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
 Are things to brood on with more ardency
 Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
 Must such conviction come upon his head, 35
 Who, thus far, discontent, has dar'd to tread,
 Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
 The path of love and poesy. But rest,
 In chaffing restlessness, is yet more drear
 Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear 40
 Love's standard on the battlements of song.
 So once more days and nights aid me along,
 Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd prince,

What promise hast thou faithful guarded since
 The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows 45
 Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?
 Alas! 'tis his old grief. For many days,
 Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:
 Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks;
 Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes 50
 Of the lone woodcutter; and listening still,

Hour after hour, to each lush-leav'd rill.
 Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
 And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
 Stems the upbursting cold : a wild rose tree 55
 Pavillions him in bloom, and he doth see
 A bud which snares his fancy : lo ! but now
 He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water : how !
 It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight ;
 And, in the middle, there is softly pight 60
 A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings
 There must be surely character'd strange things,
 For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
 Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands : 65
 Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands
 His limbs are loos'd, and eager, on he hies
 Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.
 It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was ;
 And like a new-born spirit did he pass 70
 Through the green evening quiet in the sun,
 O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,
 Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams
 The summer time away. One track unseams
 A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue 75
 Of ocean fades upon him ; then, anew,
 He sinks adown a solitary glen,
 Where there was never sound of mortal men,
 Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences
 Melting to silence, when upon the breeze 80
 Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
 To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet
 Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,
 Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side
 That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd 85

Unto the temperate air : then high it soar'd,
 And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
 As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip
 The crystal spout-head : so it did, with touch
 Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch 90
 Even with mealy gold the waters clear.
 But, at that very touch, to disappear
 So fairy-quick, was strange ! Bewildered,
 Endymion sought around, and shook each bed
 Of covert flowers in vain ; and then he flung 95
 Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,
 What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest ?
 It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
 In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood
 'Mong lillies, like the youngest of the brood. 100
 To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
 And anxiously began to plait and twist
 Her ringlets round her fingers, saying : " Youth !
 Too long, alas, hast thou starv'd on the ruth,
 The bitterness of love : too long indeed, 105
 Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
 Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
 All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
 To Amphitrite ; all my clear-ey'd fish,
 Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish, 110
 Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze ;
 Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
 A virgin light to the deep ; my grotto-sands
 Tawny and gold, ooz'd slowly from far lands
 By my diligent springs ; my level lillies, shells, 115
 My charming rod, my potent river spells ;
 Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup
 Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up
 To fainting creatures in a desert wild.
 But woe is me, I am but as a child 120

To gladden thee ; and all I dare to say,
 Is, that I pity thee ; that on this day
 I've been thy guide ; that thou must wander far
 In other regions, past the scanty bar
 To mortal steps, before thou can'st be ta'en 125
 From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
 Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
 Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above :
 But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell !
 I have a ditty for my hollow cell." 130

Hereat, she vanish'd from Endymion's gaze,
 Who brooded o'er the water in amaze :
 The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool
 Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
 Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still, 135
 And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill
 Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
 Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
 Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down ;
 And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown 140
 Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,
 Thus breath'd he to himself: " Whoso encamps
 To take a fancy'd city of delight,
 O what a wretch is he ! and when 'tis his,
 After long toil and travelling, to miss 145
 The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile :
 Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil ;
 Another city doth he set about,
 Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt
 That he will seize on trickling honey-combs : 150
 Alas, he finds them dry ; and then he foams,
 And onward to another city speeds.
 But this is human life : the war, the deeds,
 The disappointment, the anxiety,

Imagination's struggles, far and nigh, 155
 All human ; bearing in themselves this good,
 That they are still the air, the subtle food,
 To make us feel existence, and to show
 How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,
 Whether to weeds or flowers ; but for me, 160
 There is no depth to strike in : I can see
 Nought earthly worth my compassing ; so stand
 Upon a misty, jutting head of land—
 Alone ? No, no ; and by the Orphean lute,
 When mad Eurydice is listening to't ; 165
 I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
 With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
 But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,
 Than be—I care not what. O meekest dove
 Of heaven ! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair ! 170
 From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,
 Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
 Into my bosom, that the dreadful might
 And tyranny of love be somewhat scar'd !
 Yet do not so, sweet queen ; one torment spar'd, 175
 Would give a pang to jealous misery,
 Worse than the torment's self : but rather tie
 Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
 My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
 Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou, 180
 Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
 Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
 O be propitious, nor severely deem
 My madness impious ; for, by all the stars
 That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars 185
 That kept my spirit in are burst—that I
 Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky !
 How beautiful thou art ! The world how deep !
 How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep

Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins, . 130
 How lithe! When this thy chariot attains
 Its airy goal, haply some bower veils
 Those twilight eyes? Those eyes!—my spirit fails—
 Dear goddess, help! or the wide-gaping air
 Will gulph me—help!”—At this with madden'd stare, 195
 And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood;
 Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
 Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.
 And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
 A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone; . 200
 Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
 Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth: “Descend,
 Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend
 Into the sparry hollows of the world!
 Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd . 205
 As from thy threshold; day by day hast been
 A little lower than the chilly sheen
 Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
 Into the deadening ether that still charms
 Their marble being: now, as deep profound . 210
 As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd
 With immortality, who fears to follow
 Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,
 The silent mysteries of earth, descend!”

He heard but the last words, nor could contend . 215
 One moment in reflection: for he fled
 Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
 From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'Twas far too strange, and wonderful for sadness;
 Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite . 220
 To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,
 The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,

But mingled up ; a gleaming melancholy ;
 A dusky empire and its diadems ;
 One faint eternal eventide of gems. 225
 Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
 Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,
 With all its lines abrupt and angular :
 Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,
 Through a vast antre ; then the metal woof, 230
 Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof
 Curves hugely : now, far in the deep abyss,
 It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss
 Fancy into belief : anon it leads
 Through winding passages, where sameness breeds 235
 Vexing conceptions of some sudden change ;
 Whether to silver grots, or giant range
 Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
 Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge
 Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath 240
 Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth
 A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
 But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb
 His bosom grew, when first he, far away,
 Descry'd an orb'd diamond, set to fray 245
 Old darkness from his throne : 'twas like the sun
 Uprisen o'er chaos : and with such a stun
 Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
 He saw not fiercer wonders—past the wit
 Of any spirit to tell, but one of those 250
 Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,
 Will be its high remembrancers : who they ?
 The mighty ones who have made eternal day
 For Greece and England. While astonishment
 With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went 255
 Into a marble gallery, passing through
 A mimic temple, so complete and true

In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd
 To search it inwards ; whence far off appear'd,
 Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine, 260
 And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,
 A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,
 The youth approach'd ; oft turning his veil'd eye
 Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old.
 And when, more near against the marble cold 265
 He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread
 All courts and passages, where silence dead
 Rous'd by his whispering footsteps murmured faint :
 And long he travers'd to and fro, to acquaint
 Himself with every mystery, and awe ; 270
 Till, weary, he sat down before the maw
 Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,
 To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
 There, when new wonders ceas'd to float before,
 And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore 275
 The journey homeward to habitual self !
 A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,
 Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-briar,
 Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
 Into the bosom of a hated thing. 280

What misery most drowningly doth sing
 In lone Endymion's ear, now he has raught
 The goal of consciousness ? Ah, 'tis the thought,
 The deadly feel of solitude : for lo !
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow 285
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
 In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-pil'd,
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,
 Like herded elephants ; nor felt, nor prest
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air ; 290
 But far from such companionship to wear

An unknown time, surcharg'd with grief, away,
 Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,
 Tracing fantastic figures with his spear?
 "No!" exclaim'd he, "why should I tarry here?" 295
 No! loudly echoed times innumerable.
 At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell
 His paces back into the temple's chief;
 Warming and glowing strong in the belief
 Of help from Dian: so that when again 300
 He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,
 Moving more near the while: "O Haunter chaste
 Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,
 Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen
 Art thou now forested? O woodland Queen, 305
 What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos?
 Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos
 Of thy disparted nymphs? Through what dark tree
 Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,
 'Tis in the breath of heaven: thou dost taste 310
 Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste
 Thy loveliness in dismal elements;
 But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,
 There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
 It feels Elysian, how rich to me, 315
 An exil'd mortal, sounds its pleasant name!
 Within my breast there lives a choking flame—
 O let me cool 't the zephyr-boughs among!
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue—
 O let me slake it at the running springs! 320
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—
 O let me once more hear the linnet's note!
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—
 O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white? 325
 O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!

Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice!
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
 O think how I should love a bed of flowers!— 330
 Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep!"

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap
 His destiny, alert he stood: but when
 Obstinate silence came heavily again, 335
 Feeling about for its old couch of space
 And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face
 Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.
 But 'twas not long; for, sweeter than the rill
 To its old channel, or a swollen tide 340
 To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,
 And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns
 Up heaping through the slab: refreshment drowns
 Itself, and strives its own delights to hide—
 Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride 345
 In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
 Before his footsteps; as when heav'd anew
 Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore,
 Down whose green back the short-liv'd foam, all hoar,
 Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence. 350

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,
 Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;
 So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes
 One moment with his hand among the sweets:
 Onward he goes—he stops—his bosom beats 355
 As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm
 Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,
 This sleepy music, forc'd him walk tiptoe:
 For it came more softly than the east could blow

Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles ; 360
 Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles
 Of thron'd Apollo, could breathe back the lyre
 To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,
 Who lov'd—and music slew not? 'Tis the pest 365
 Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest ;
 That things of delicate and tenderest worth
 Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,
 By one consuming flame : it doth immerse
 And suffocate true blessings in a curse. 370
 Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,
 Is miserable. 'Twas even so with this
 Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear ;
 First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,
 Vanish'd in elemental passion. 375

And down some swart abysm he had gone,
 Had not a heavenly guide benignant led
 To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head
 Brushing, awakened : then the sounds again
 Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain 380
 Over a bower, where little space he stood ;
 For as the sunset peeps into a wood
 So saw he panting light, and towards it went
 Through winding alleys ; and lo, wonderment !
 Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there, 385
 Cupids a slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,
 At last, with sudden step, he came upon
 A chamber, myrtle wall'd, embowered high,
 Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy, 390
 And more of beautiful and strange beside :
 For on a silken couch of rosy pride,

In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
 Of fondest beauty ; fonder, in fair sooth,
 Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach : 395
 And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
 Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
 Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—
 Not hiding up an Apollonian curve
 Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve 400
 Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light ;
 But rather, giving them to the filled sight
 Officiously. Sideway his face repos'd
 On one white arm, and tenderly unclos'd,
 By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth 405
 To slumbery pout ; just as the morning south
 Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,
 Four lilly stalks did their white honours wed
 To make a coronal ; and round him grew
 All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue, 410
 Together intertwin'd and trammel'd fresh :
 The vine of glossy sprout ; the ivy mesh,
 Shading its Ethiop berries ; and woodbine,
 Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine ;
 Convolvulus in streaked vases flush ; 415
 The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush ;
 And virgin's bower, trailing airily ;
 With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,
 Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
 One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings, 420
 Muffling to death the pathos with his wings ;
 And, ever and anon, uprose to look
 At the youth's slumber ; while another took
 A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,
 And shook it on his hair ; another flew 425
 In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise
 Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,
The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er ;
Until, impatient in embarrassment, 430
He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went
To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,
Smiling, thus whisper'd : " Though from upper day
Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here
Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer ! 435
For 'tis the nicest touch of human honor,
When some ethereal and high-favouring donor
Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense ;
As now 'tis done to thee, Endymion. Hence
Was I in no wise startled. So recline 440
Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,
Alive with sparkles—never, I aver,
Since Ariadne was a vintager,
So cool a purple : taste these juicy pears,
Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears 445
Were high about Pomona : here is cream,
Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam ;
Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd
For the boy Jupiter : and here, undimm'd
By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums 450
Ready to melt between an infant's gums :
And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,
In starlight, by the three Hesperides.
Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know
Of all these things around us." He did so, 455
Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre ;
And thus : " I need not any hearing tire
By telling how the sea-born goddess pin'd
For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind
Him all in all unto her doting self. 460
Who would not be so prison'd ? but, fond elf,
He was content to let her amorous plea

Faint through his careless arms ; content to see
 An unseiz'd heaven dying at his feet ;
 Content, O fool ! to make a cold retreat, 465
 When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,
 Lay sorrowing ; when every tear was born
 Of diverse passion ; when her lips and eyes
 Were clos'd in sullen moisture, and quick sighs
 Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small. 470
 Hush ! no exclaim—yet, justly mightst thou call
 Curses upon his head.—I was half glad,
 But my poor mistress went distract and mad,
 When the boar tusk'd him : so away she flew
 To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew 475
 Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard ;
 Whereon, it was decreed he should be rear'd
 Each summer time to life. Lo ! this is he,
 That same Adonis, safe in the privacy
 Of this still region all his winter-sleep. 480
 Aye, sleep ; for when our love-sick queen did weep
 Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower
 Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,
 Medicin'd death to a lengthened drowsiness :
 The which she fills with visions, and doth dress 485
 In all this quiet luxury ; and hath set
 Us young immortals, without any let,
 To watch his slumber through. 'Tis well nigh pass'd,
 Even to a moment's filling up, and fast
 She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through 490
 The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew
 Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.
 Look ! how those winged listeners all this while
 Stand anxious : see ! behold !"—This clamant word
 Broke through the careful silence ; for they heard 495
 A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd
 Pigeons and doves : Adonis something mutter'd,

The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh
 Lay dormant, mov'd convuls'd and gradually
 Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum 500
 Of sudden voices, echoing, "Come! come!
 Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk'd
 Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd
 Full soothingly to every nested finch:
 Rise, Cupids! or we'll give the blue-bell pinch 505
 To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!"
 At this, from every side they hurried in,
 Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
 And doubling over head their little fists
 In backward yawns. But all were soon alive: 510
 For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
 In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,
 So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air
 Odorous and enlivening; making all
 To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call 515
 For their sweet queen: when lo! the wreathed green
 Disparted, and far upward could be seen
 Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
 Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
 Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill 520
 On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
 Nestle and turn uneasily about.
 Soon were the white doves plain, with neck stretch'd
 out,
 And silken traces lighten'd in descent;
 And soon, returning from love's banishment, 525
 Queen Venus leaning downward open arm'd:
 Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd
 A tumult to his heart, and a new life
 Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,
 But for her comforting! unhappy sight, 530
 But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who can write

Of these first minutes ? The unchariest muse
To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,
Saving Love's self, who stands superb to share 535
The general gladness : awfully he stands ;
A sovereign quell is in his waving hands ;
No sight can bear the lightning of his bow ;
His quiver is mysterious, none can know
What themselves think of it ; from forth his eyes 540
There darts strange light of varied hues and dies :
A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
Look full upon it feel anon the blue
Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.
Endymion feels it, and no more controls 545
The burning prayer within him ; so, bent low,
He had begun a plaining of his woe.
But Venus, bending forward, said : " My child,
Favour this gentle youth ; his days are wild
With love—he—but alas ! too well I see 550
Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.
Ah, smile not so, my son : I tell thee true,
That when through heavy hours I us'd to rue
The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',
This stranger eye I pitied. For upon 555
A dreary morning once I fled away
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray
For this my love : for vexing Mars had teaz'd
Me even to tears : thence, when a little eas'd,
Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood, 560
I saw this youth as he despairing stood :
Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind ;
Those same full fringed lids a constant blind
Over his sullen eyes : I saw him throw
Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though 565

Death had come sudden ; for no jot he mov'd,
 Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he lov'd
 Some fair immortal, and that his embrace
 Had zon'd her through the night. There is no trace
 Of this in heaven : I have mark'd each cheek, 570
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek ;
 And that of all things 'tis kept secretest.
 Endymion ! one day thou wilt be blest :
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends
 Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends. 575
 'Tis a concealment needful in extreme ;
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam
 Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu !
 Here must we leave thee."—At these words upflew
 The impatient doves, uprose the floating car, 580
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar
 The Latmian saw them minish into nought ;
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.
 When all was darkened, with Ætnean throe 585
 The earth clos'd—gave a solitary moan—
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,
 And he in loneliness : he felt assur'd 590
 Of happy times, when all he had endur'd
 Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.
 So, with unusual gladness, on he hies
 Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,
 Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquoise floor, 595
 Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,
 And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,
 Leading afar past wild magnificence,
 Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence

Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er 600
 Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,
 Streams subterranean tease their granite beds ;
 Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads
 Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash
 The waters with his spear ; but at the splash, 605
 Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose
 Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to enclose
 His diamond path with fretwork, streaming round
 Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,
 Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells 610
 Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells
 On this delight ; for, every minute's space,
 The streams with changed magic interlace :
 Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
 Cover'd with crystal vines ; then weeping trees, 615
 Moving about as in a gentle wind,
 Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refin'd,
 Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,
 Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries
 Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair. 620
 Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare ;
 And then the water, into stubborn streams
 Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,
 Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,
 Of those dusk places in times far aloof 625
 Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth farewell
 To these founts Protean, passing gulph, and dell,
 And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,
 Half seen through deepest gloom, and griesly gapes,
 Blackening on every side, and overhead 630
 A vaulted dome like Heaven's, far bespread
 With starlight gems : aye, all so huge and strange,
 The solitary felt a hurried change
 Working within him into something dreary,—

Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost, and weary, 635
 And purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds.
 But he revives at once : for who beholds
 New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough ?
 Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,
 Came mother Cybele ! alone—alone— 64c
 In sombre chariot ; dark foldings thrown
 About her majesty, and front death-pale,
 With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale
 The sluggish wheels ; solemn their toothed maws,
 Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws 645
 Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
 Covering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
 This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away
 In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,

Young traveller, in such a mournful place ? 650
 Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace
 The diamond path ? And does it indeed end
 Abrupt in middle air ? Yet earthward bend
 Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne
 Call ardently ! He was indeed wayworn ; 655
 Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost ;
 To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost
 Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,
 Without one impious word, himself he flings,
 Committed to the darkness and the gloom : 660
 Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,
 Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell
 Through unknown things ; till exhal'd asphodel,
 And rose, with spicy fannings interbreath'd,
 Came swelling forth where little caves were wreath'd 665
 So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd
 Large honey-combs of green, and freshly teem'd

With airs delicious. In the greenest nook
The eagle landéd him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown 670
With golden moss. His every sense had grown
Ethereal for pleasure ; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable ; his tread
Was Hesperean ; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres ; 675
A dewy luxury was in his eyes ;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs
And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell
He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell
Of sudden exaltation : but, " Alas ! " 680
Said he, " will all this gush of feeling pass
Away in solitude ? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo ? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft ! 685
Yet still I feel immortal ! O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou ? High above,
Dancing before the morning gates of heaven ?
Or keeping watch among those starry seven,
Old Atlas' children ? Art a maid of the waters, 690
One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters ?
Or art, impossible ! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions
For very idleness ? Where'er thou art,
Methinks it now is at my will to start 695
Into thine arms ; to scare Aurora's train,
And snatch thee from the morning ; o'er the main
To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off
From thy sea-foamy cradle ; or to doff
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee mid fresh leaves. 700
No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives

Its powerless self : I know this cannot be.
 O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee
 To her entrancements : hither sleep awhile !
 Hither most gentle sleep ! and soothing foil 705
 For some few hours the coming solitude."

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endu'd
 With power to dream deliciously ; so wound
 Through a dim passage, searching till he found
 The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where 710
 He threw himself, and just into the air
 Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss !
 A naked waist : " Fair Cupid, whence is this ?"
 A well-known voice sigh'd, " Sweetest, here am I !"
 At which soft ravishment, with doting cry 715
 They trembled to each other.—Helicon !
 O fountain'd hill ! Old Homer's Helicon !
 That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er
 These sorry pages ; then the verse would soar
 And sing above this gentle pair, like lark 720
 Over his nested young : but all is dark
 Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount
 Exhales in mists to heaven. Aye, the count
 Of mighty Poets is made up ; the scroll
 Is folded by the Muses ; the bright roll 725
 Is in Apollo's hand : our dazed eyes
 Have seen a new tinge in the western skies :
 The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,
 Although the sun of poesy is set,
 These lovers did embrace, and we must weep 730
 That there is no old power left to steep
 A quill immortal in their joyous tears.
 Long time in silence did their anxious fears
 Question that thus it was ; long time they lay
 Fondling and kissing every doubt away ; 735

Long time ere soft caressing sobs began
 To mellow into words, and then there ran
 Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.
 "O known Unknown! from whom my being sips
 Such darling essence, wherefore may I not 740
 Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot
 Pillow my chin for ever? ever press
 These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?
 Why not for ever and for ever feel
 That breath about my eyes? Ah, thou wilt steal 745
 Away from me again, indeed, indeed—
 Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed
 My lonely madness. Speak, delicious fair!
 Is—is it to be so? No! Who will dare
 To pluck thee from me? And, of thine own will, 750
 Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still
 Let me entwine thee surer, surer—now
 How can we part? Elysium! who art thou?
 Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,
 Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere? 755
 Enchantress! tell me by this soft embrace,
 By the most soft completion of thy face,
 Those lips, O slippery blisses, twinkling eyes,
 And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties—
 These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine, 760
 The passion "———"O dov'd Ida the divine!
 Endymion! dearest! Ah, unhappy me!
 His soul will 'scape us—O felicity!
 How he does love me! His poor temples beat
 To the very tune of love—how sweet, sweet, sweet. 765
 Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die;
 Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by
 In tranced dulness; speak, and let that spell
 Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell
 Its heavy pressure, and will press at least 770

My lips to thine, that they may richly feast
 Until we taste the life of love again.
 What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!
 I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;
 And so long absence from thee doth bereave 775
 My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:
 Yet, can I not to starry eminence
 Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own
 Myself to thee: Ah, dearest, do not groan
 Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy, 780
 And I must blush in heaven. O that I
 Had done 't already; that the dreadful smiles
 At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,
 Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,
 And from all serious Gods; that our delight 785
 Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!
 And wherefore so asham'd? 'Tis but to atone
 For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:
 Yet must I be a coward!—Horror rushes
 Too palpable before me—the sad look 790
 Of Jove—Minerva's start—no bosom shook
 With awe of purity—no Cupid pinion
 In reverence veiled—my crystalline dominion
 Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!
 But what is this to love? O I could fly 795
 With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,
 So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,
 Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once
 That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce—
 Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown— 800
 O I do think that I have been alone
 In chastity: yes, Pallas has been sighing,
 While every eve saw me my hair uptying
 With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love,
 I was as vague as solitary dove, 805

Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss—
 Aye, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,
 An immortality of passion's thine :
 Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine
 Of heaven ambrosial ; and we will shade 810
 Ourselves whole summers by a river glade ;
 And I will tell thee stories of the sky,
 And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.
 My happy love will overwing all bounds !
 O let me melt into thee ; let the sounds 815
 Of our close voices marry at their birth ;
 Let us entwine hoveringly—O dearth
 Of human words ! roughness of mortal speech !
 Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach
 Thine honied tongue—lute-breathings, which I gasp 820
 To have thee understand, now while I clasp
 Thee thus, and weep for fondness—I am pain'd,
 Endymion : woe ! woe ! is grief contain'd
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life ?"—
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife 825
 Melted into a languor. He return'd
 Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd

With too much passion, will here stay and pity,
 For the mere sake of truth ; as 'tis a ditty
 Not of these days, but long ago 'twas told 830
 By a cavern wind unto a forest old ;
 And then the forest told it in a dream
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam
 A poet caught as he was journeying
 To Phœbus' shrine ; and in it he did fling 835
 His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,
 And after, straight in that inspired place
 He sang the story up into the air,

Giving it universal freedom. There
 Has it been ever sounding for those ears 840
 Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers
 Yon centinel stars ; and he who listens to it
 Must surely be self-doom'd or he will rue it :
 For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,
 Made fiercer by a fear lest any part 845
 Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.
 As much as here is penn'd doth always find
 A resting place, thus much comes clear and plain ;
 Anon the strange voice is upon the wane—
 And 'tis but echo'd from departing sound, 850
 That the fair visitant at last unwound
 Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep.—
 Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers.—
 Endymion awoke, that grief of hers 855
 Sweet paining on his ear : he sickly guess'd
 How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd
 His empty arms together, hung his head,
 And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed
 Sat silently. Love's madness he had known : 860
 Often with more than tortured lion's groan
 Moanings had burst from him ; but now that rage
 Had pass'd away : no longer did he wage
 A rough-voic'd war against the dooming stars.
 No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars : 865
 The lyre of his soul Æolian tun'd
 Forgot all violence, and but commun'd
 With melancholy thought : O he had swoon'd
 Drunken from pleasure's nipple ; and his love
 Henceforth was dove-like.—Loth was he to move 870
 From the imprinted couch, and when he did,
 'Twas with slow, languid paces, and face hid

In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd
 Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd
 Alecto's serpents; ravishments more keen 875
 Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean
 Over eclipsing eyes : and at the last
 It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,
 O'er studded with a thousand, thousand pearls,
 And crimson mouthed shells with stubborn curls, 880
 Of every shape and size, even to the bulk
 In which whales harbour close, to brood and sulk
 Against an endless storm. Moreover too,
 Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,
 Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder 885
 Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder
 On all his life : his youth, up to the day
 When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,
 He stept upon his shepherd throne: the look
 Of his white palace in wild forest nook, 890
 And all the revels he had lorded there:
 Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,
 With every friend and fellow-woodlander—
 Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the spur
 Of the old bards to mighty deeds : his plans 895
 To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans :
 That wondrous night : the great Pan-festival :
 His sister's sorrow ; and his wanderings all,
 Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd :
 Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd 900
 High with excessive love. "And now," thought he,
 "How long must I remain in jeopardy
 Of blank amazements that amaze no more ?
 Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core
 All other depths are shallow : essences, 905
 Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,
 Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,

And make my branches lift a golden fruit
 Into the bloom of heaven : other light,
 Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight 910
 The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,
 Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark !
 My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells ;
 Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells
 Of noises far away ?—list !”—Hereupon 915
 He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone
 Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
 On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
 A copious spring ; and both together dash'd
 Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd 920
 Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,
 Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot
 Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise
 As of some breathless racers whose hopes poize
 Upon the last few steps, and with spent force 925
 Along the ground they took a winding course.
 Endymion follow'd—for it seem'd that one
 Ever pursu'd, the other strove to shun—
 Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh
 He had left thinking of the mystery,— 930
 And was now rapt in tender hoverings
 Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah ! what is it sings
 His dream away ? What melodies are these ?
 They sound as through the whispering of trees,
 Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear ! 935

“O Arethusa, peerless nymph ! why fear
 Such tenderness as mine ? Great Dian, why,
 Why didst thou hear her prayer ? O that I
 Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
 Circling about her waist, and striving how 940
 To entice her to a dive ! then stealing in

Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
 O that her shining hair was in the sun,
 And I distilling from it thence to run
 In amorous rilllets down her shrinking form ! 945
 To linger on her lilly shoulders, warm
 Between her kissing breasts, and every charm
 Touch raptur'd !—See how painfully I flow :
 Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.
 Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead, 950
 A happy wooer, to the flowery mead
 Where all that beauty snar'd me.”—“Cruel god,
 Desist ! or my offended mistress' nod
 Will stagnate all thy fountains :—tease me not
 With syren words—Ah, have I really got 955
 Such power to madden thee ? And is it true—
 Away, away, or I shall dearly rue
 My very thoughts : in mercy then away,
 Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey
 My own dear will, 'twould be a deadly bane. 960
 O, Oread-Queen ! would that thou hadst a pain
 Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn
 And be a criminal. Alas, I burn,
 I shudder—gentle river, get thee hence.
 Alpheus ! thou enchanter ! every sense 965
 Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.
 Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
 Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave ;
 But ever since I heedlessly did lave
 In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow 970
 Grew strong within me : wherefore serve me so,
 And call it love ? Alas, 'twas cruelty.
 Not once more did I close my happy eye
 Amid the thrushes' song. Away ! Avaunt !
 O 'twas a cruel thing.”—“Now thou dost taunt 975
 So softly, Arethusa, that I think

If thou wast playing on my shady brink,
 Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid !
 Stifle thine heart no more ; nor be afraid
 Of angry powers : there are deities 980
 Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs
 'Tis almost death to hear : O let me pour
 A dewy balm upon them !—fear no more,
 Sweet Arethusa ! Dian's self must feel
 Sometime these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal 985
 Blushing into my soul, and let us fly
 These dreary caverns for the open sky.
 I will delight thee all my winding course,
 From the green sea up to my hidden source
 About Arcadian forests ; and will show 990
 The channels where my coolest waters flow
 Through mossy rocks ; where, 'mid exuberant green,
 I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen
 Than Saturn in his exile ; where I brim
 Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim 995
 Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees
 Buzz from their honey'd wings : and thou shouldst please
 Thyself to choose the richest, where we might
 Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.
 Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness, 1000
 And let us be thus comforted ; unless
 Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream
 Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,
 And pour to death along some hungry sands."—
 "What can I do, Alpheus ? Dian stands 1005
 Severe before me : persecuting fate !
 Unhappy Arethusa ! thou wast late
 A huntress free in"—At this, sudden fell
 Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.
 The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more, 1010
 Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er

The name of Arethusa. On the verge
 Of that dark gulph he wept, and said: "I urge
 Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
 By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage, 1015
 If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains;
 And make them happy in some happy plains."

He turn'd—there was a whelming sound—he stept,
 There was a cooler light; and so he kept
 Towards it by a sandy path, and lo! 1020
 More suddenly than doth a moment go,
 The visions of the earth were gone and fled—
 He saw the giant sea above his head.

BOOK III.

THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-men
 With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen
 Their baaing vanities, to browse away
 The comfortable green and juicy hay
 From human pastures; or, O torturing fact! 5
 Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd
 Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
 Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not one tinge
 Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight
 Able to face an owl's, they still are dight 10
 By the blear-ey'd nations in empurpled vests,
 And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts,
 Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount
 To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,
 Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones— 15
 Amid the fierce intoxicating tones
 Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums,

And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this hums,
 In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone—
 Like thunder clouds that spake to Babylon, 20
 And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks.—
 Are then regalities all gilded masks?
 No, there are throned seats unscalable
 But by a patient wing, a constant spell,
 Or by ethereal things that, unconfin'd, 25
 Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,
 And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents
 To watch the abysm-birth of elements.
 Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate
 A thousand Powers keep religious state, 30
 In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne;
 And, silent as a consecrated urn,
 Hold spherey sessions for a season due.
 Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few!
 Have bar'd their operations to this globe— 35
 Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe
 Our piece of heaven—whose benevolence
 Shakes hand with our own Ceres; every sense
 Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,
 As bees gorge full their cells. And, by the feud 40
 'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,
 Eterne Apollo! that thy Sister fair
 Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.
 When thy gold breath is misting in the west,
 She unobserved steals unto her throne, 45
 And there she sits most meek and most alone;
 As if she had not pomp subservient;
 As if thine eye, high Poet! was not bent
 Towards her with the Muses in thine heart;
 As if the ministring stars kept not apart, 50
 Waiting for silver-footed messages.
 O Moon! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees

Feel palpitations when thou lookest in :
 O Moon ! old boughs lisp forth a holier din
 The while they feel thine airy fellowship. 55
 Thou dost bless every where, with silver lip
 Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,
 Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine :
 Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
 Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes ; 60
 And yet thy benediction passeth not
 One obscure hiding-place, one little spot
 Where pleasure may be sent : the nested wren
 Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,
 And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf 65
 Takes glimpses of thee ; thou art a relief
 To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
 Within its pearly house.—The mighty deeps,
 The monstrous sea is thine—the myriad sea !
 O Moon ! far-spooning Ocean bows to thee, 70
 And Tellus feels his forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia ! where art thou now ? What far abode
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine
 Such utmost beauty ? Alas, thou dost pine
 For one as sorrowful : thy cheek is pale 75
 For one whose cheek is pale : thou dost bewail
 His tears, who weeps for thee. Where dost thou sigh ?
 Ah ! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,
 Or what a thing is love ! 'Tis She, but lo !
 How chang'd, how full of ache, how gone in woe ! 80
 She dies at the thinnest cloud ; her loveliness
 Is wan on Neptune's blue : yet there's a stress
 Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,
 Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
 The curly foam with amorous influence. 85
 O, not so idle : for down-glancing thence

She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
 O'erwhelming water-courses ; scaring out
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning
 Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lightning. 90
 Where will the splendour be content to reach ?
 O love ! how potent hast thou been to teach
 Strange journeyings ! Wherever beauty dwells,
 In gulph or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun, 95
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.
 Amid his toil thou gav'st Leander breath ;
 Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death ;
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin element ;
 And now, O winged Chieftain ! thou hast sent 100
 A moon-beam to the deep, deep water-world,
 To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd
 With lilly shells, and pebbles milky white,
 Poor Cynthia greeted him, and sooth'd her light
 Against his pallid face : he felt the charm 105
 To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm
 Of his heart's blood : 'twas very sweet ; he stay'd
 His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid
 His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,
 To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads, 110
 Lash'd from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.
 And so he kept, until the rosy veils
 Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand
 Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd
 Into sweet air ; and sober'd morning came 115
 Meekly through billows :—when like taper-flame
 Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,
 He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare
 Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,
 With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd, 120
 Above, around, and at his feet ; save things
 More dead than Morpheus' imaginings :
 Old rusted anchors, helmets, breast-plates large
 Of gone sea-warriors ; brazen beaks and targe ;
 Rudders that for a hundred years had lost 125
 The sway of human hand ; gold vase emboss'd
 With long-forgotten story, and wherein
 No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin
 But those of Saturn's vintage ; mouldering scrolls,
 Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls 130
 Who first were on the earth ; and sculptures rude
 In ponderous stone, developing the mood
 Of ancient Nox ;—then skeletons of man,
 Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,
 And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw 135
 Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe
 These secrets struck into him ; and unless
 Dian had chac'd away that heaviness,
 He might have died : but now, with cheered feel,
 He onward kept ; wooing these thoughts to steal 140
 About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

"What is there in thee, Moon ! that thou shouldst
 move

My heart so potently ? When yet a child
 I oft have dry'd my tears when thou hast smil'd.
 Thou seem'dst my sister : hand in hand we went 145
 From eve to morn across the firmament.
 No apples would I gather from the tree,
 Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously :
 No tumbling water ever spake romance,
 But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance : 150
 No woods were green enough, no bower divine,

Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine :
 In sowing time ne'er would I dibble take,
 Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake ;
 And, in the summer tide of blossoming, 155
 No one but thee hath heard me blythly sing
 And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
 No melody was like a passing spright
 If it went not to solemnize thy reign.
 Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain 160
 By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end ;
 And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
 With all my ardours : thou wast the deep glen ;
 Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage's pen—
 The poet's harp—the voice of friends—the sun ; 165
 Thou wast the river—thou wast glory won ;
 Thou wast my clarion's blast—thou wast my steed—
 My goblet full of wine—my topmost deed :—
 Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon !
 O what a wild and harmonized tune 170
 My spirit struck from all the beautiful !
 On some bright essence could I lean, and lull
 Myself to immortality : I prest
 Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.
 But, gentle Orb ! there came a nearer bliss— 175
 My strange love came—Felicity's abyss !
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away—
 Yet not entirely ; no, thy starry sway
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power 180
 Is coming fresh upon me : O be kind,
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
 My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, forgive
 That I can think away from thee and live !—
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize 185
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries !

How far beyond!" At this a surpris'd start
 Frosted the springing verdure of his heart ;
 For as he lifted up his eyes to swear
 How his own goddess was past all things fair, 190
 He saw far in the concave green of the sea
 An old man sitting calm and peacefully.
 Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
 And his white hair was awful, and a mat
 Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet ; 195
 And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
 A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
 O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans
 Of ambitious magic : every ocean-form
 Was woven in with black distinctness ; storm, 200
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,
 Quicksand, and whirlpool, and deserted shore,
 Were emblem'd in the woof ; with every shape
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.
 The gulphing whale was like a dot in the spell, 205
 Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell
 To its huge self ; and the minutest fish
 Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
 And show his little eye's anatomy.
 Then there was pictur'd the regality 210
 Of Neptune ; and the sea nymphs round his state,
 In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.
 Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
 So stedfastly, that the new denizen 215
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man rais'd his hoary head and saw
 The wilder'd stranger—seeming not to see,
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly 220

He woke as from a trance ; his snow-white brows
 Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile. 225
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age
 Eas'd in one accent his o'er-burden'd soul,
 Even to the trees. He rose : he grasp'd his stole, 230
 With convuls'd clenches waving it abroad,
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that aw'd
 Echo into oblivion, he said :—

“Thou art the man ! Now shall I lay my head
 In peace upon my watery pillow : now 235
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.
 O Jove ! I shall be young again, be young !
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierc'd and stung
 With new-born life ! What shall I do ? Where go,
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe ?— 240
 I'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen
 Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten ;
 Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,
 That writhes about the roots of Sicily :
 To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail, 245
 And mount upon the snortings of a whale
 To some black cloud ; thence down I'll madly sweep
 On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,
 Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd
 With rapture to the other side of the world ! 250
 O, I am full of gladness ! Sisters three,
 I bow full hearted to your old decree !
 Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,
 For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.

Thou art the man!" Endymion started back 255
 Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom the rack
 Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,
 Mutter'd: "What lonely death am I to die
 In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,
 And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas? 260
 Or will he touch me with his searing hand,
 And leave a black memorial on the sand?
 Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,
 And keep me as a chosen food to draw
 His magian fish through hated fire and flame? 265
 O misery of hell! resistless, tame,
 Am I to be burnt up? No, I will shout,
 Until the gods through heaven's blue look out!—
 O Tartarus! but some few days ago
 Her soft arms were entwining me, and on 270
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves:
 Her lips were all my own, and—ah, ripe sheaves
 Of happiness! ye on the stubble droop,
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love! love, farewell! 275
 Is there no hope from thee? This horrid spell
 Would melt at thy sweet breath.—By Dian's hind
 Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind
 I see thy streaming hair! and now, by Pan,
 I care not for this old mysterious man!" 280

He spake, and walking to that aged form,
 Look'd high defiance. Lo! his heart 'gan warm
 With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.
 Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?
 Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought 285
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to humane thought,
 Convulsion to a mouth of many years?
 He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.

The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt 290
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake :

“ Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus' sake !
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
 A very brother's yearning for thee steal
 Into mine own : for why ? thou openest 295
 The prison gates that have so long opprest
 My weary watching. Though thou know'st it not,
 Thou art commission'd to this fated spot
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more :
 I am a friend to love, to loves of yore : 300
 Aye, hadst thou never lov'd an unknown power,
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour.
 But even now most miserable old,
 I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold
 Gave mighty pulses : in this tottering case 305
 Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays
 As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,
 For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,
 Now as we speed towards our joyous task.”

So saying, this young soul in age's mask 310
 Went forward with the Carian side by side :
 Resuming quickly thus ; while ocean's tide
 Hung swollen at their backs, and jewel'd sands
 Took silently their foot-prints.

“ My soul stands
 Now past the midway from mortality, 315
 And so I can prepare without a sigh
 To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.
 I was a fisher once, upon this main,
 And my boat danc'd in every creek and bay ;

Rough billows were my home by night and day,— 320
 The sea-gulls not more constant ; for I had
 No housing from the storm and tempests mad,
 But hollow rocks,—and they were palaces
 Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease :
 Long years of misery have told me so. 325
 Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.
 One thousand years !—Is it then possible
 To look so plainly through them ? to dispel
 A thousand years with backward glance sublime ?
 To breathe away as 'twere all scummy slime 330
 From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,
 And one's own image from the bottom peep ?
 Yes : now I am no longer wretched thrall,
 My long captivity and moanings all
 Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum, 335
 The which I breathe away, and thronging come
 Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

“ I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures :
 I was a lonely youth on desert shores.
 My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars, 340
 And craggy isles, and sea-mew's plaintive cry
 Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.
 Dolphins were still my playmates ; shapes unseen
 Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,
 Nor be my desolation ; and, full oft, 345
 When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft
 Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe
 To burst with hoarsest thunders, and wipe
 My life away like a vast sponge of fate,
 Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state, 350
 Has div'd to its foundations, gulph'd it down,
 And left me tossing safely. But the crown
 Of all my life was utmost quietude :

More did I love to lie in cavern rude,
 Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice, 355
 And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!
 There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer
 My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
 The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,
 Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep : 360
 And never was a day of summer shine,
 But I beheld its birth upon the brine :
 For I would watch all night to see unfold
 Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold
 Wide o'er the swelling streams : and constantly 365
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
 My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
 With daily boon of fish most delicate :
 They knew not whence this bounty, and elate 370
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

"Why was I not contented? Wherefore reach
 At things which, but for thee, O Latmian!
 Had been my dreary death? Fool! I began
 To feel distemper'd longings : to desire 375
 The utmost privilege that ocean's sire
 Could grant in benediction : to be free
 Of all his kingdom. Long in misery
 I wasted, ere in one extremest fit
 I plung'd for life or death. To interknit 380
 One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff
 Might seem a work of pain ; so not enough
 Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,
 And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt
 Whole days and days in sheer astonishment ; 385
 Forgetful utterly of self-intent ;
 Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.

Then, like a new fledg'd bird that first doth show
 His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,
 I try'd in fear the pinions of my will. 390
 'Twas freedom! and at once I visited
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.
 No need to tell thee of them, for I see
 That thou hast been a witness—it must be—
 For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth, 395
 By the melancholy corners of that mouth.
 So I will in my story straightway pass
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas!
 That love should be my bane! Ah, Scylla fair!
 Why did poor Glaucus ever—ever dare 400
 To sue thee to his heart? Kind stranger-youth!
 I lov'd her to the very white of truth,
 And she would not conceive it. Timid thing!
 She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory, 405
 From where large Hercules wound up his story
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear:
 Until 'twas too fierce agony to bear; 410
 And in that agony, across my grief
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief—
 Cruel enchantress! So above the water
 I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.
 Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon:— 415
 It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon
 Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

“When I awoke, 'twas in a twilight bower;
 Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,
 Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees. 420
 How sweet, and sweeter! for I heard a lyre.

And over it a sighing voice expire.
 It ceas'd—I caught light footsteps ; and anon
 The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon
 Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove! 425
 With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove
 A net whose thraldom was more bliss than all
 The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall
 The dew of her rich speech: " Ah! Art awake?
 " O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake! 430
 " I am so oppress'd with joy! Why, I have shed
 " An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead ;
 " And now I find thee living, I will pour
 " From these devoted eyes their silver store,
 " Until exhausted of the latest drop, 435
 " So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop
 " Here, that I too may live : but if beyond
 " Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond
 " Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme ;
 " If thou art ripe to taste a long love dream ; 440
 " If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,
 " Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,
 " O let me pluck it for thee." Thus she link'd
 Her charming syllables, till indistinct
 Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul ; 445
 And then she hover'd over me, and stole
 So near, that if no nearer it had been
 This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

" Young man of Latmus ! thus particular
 Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far 450
 This fierce temptation went : and thou may'st not
 Exclaim, How then, was Scylla quite forgot ?

" Who could resist ? Who in this universe ?
 She did so breathe ambrosia ; so immerse

My fine existence in a golden clime. 455
 She took me like a child of suckling time,
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
 The current of my former life was stemm'd,
 And to this arbitrary queen of sense
 I bow'd a tranced vassal : nor would thence 460
 Have mov'd, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd
 Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.
 For as Apollo each eve doth devise
 A new appareling for western skies ;
 So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour 465
 Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.
 And I was free of haunts umbrageous ;
 Could wander in the mazy forest-house
 Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,
 And birds from coverts innermost and drear 470
 Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow—
 To me new born delights !

“ Now let me borrow,
 For moments few, a temperament as stern
 As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn
 These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell 475
 How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

“ One morn she left me sleeping : half awake
 I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake
 My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts ;
 But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts 480
 Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,
 That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.
 Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom
 Damp awe assail'd me ; for there 'gan to boom
 A sound of moan, an agony of sound, 485
 Sepulchral from the distance all around.

Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled
 That fierce complain to silence : while I stumbled
 Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.
 I came to a dark valley.—Groanings swell'd 490
 Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,
 The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,
 That glar'd before me through a thorny brake.
 This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,
 Bewitch'd me towards ; and I soon was near 495
 A sight too fearful for the feel of fear :
 In thicket hid I curs'd the haggard scene—
 The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,
 Seated upon an uptorn forest root ;
 And all around her shapes, wizard and brute, 500
 Laughing, and wailing, groveling, serpentine,
 Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting !
 O such deformities ! Old Charon's self,
 Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,
 And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian, 505
 It could not be so phantasy'd. Fierce, wan,
 And tyrannizing was the lady's look,
 As over them a gnarled staff she shook.
 Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,
 And from a basket empty'd to the rout 510
 Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick
 And roar'd for more ; with many a hungry lick
 About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,
 Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,
 And empty'd on't a black dull-gurgling phial : 515
 Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial
 Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.
 She lifted up the charm : appealing groans
 From their poor breasts went suing to her ear
 In vain ; remorseless as an infant's bier 520
 She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.

Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,
 Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,
 Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage ;
 Until their grieved bodies 'gan to bloat 525
 And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat :
 Then was appalling silence : then a sight
 More wildering than all that hoarse affright ;
 For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writhen,
 Went through the dismal air like one huge Python 530
 Antagonizing Boreas,—and so vanish'd.
 Yet there was not a breath of wind : she banish'd
 These phantoms with a nod. Lo ! from the dark
 Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,
 With dancing and loud revelry,—and went 535
 Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent.—
 Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd
 Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud
 In human accent : “ Potent goddess ! chief
 “ Of pains resistless ! make my being brief, 540
 “ Or let me from this heavy prison fly :
 “ Or give me to the air, or let me die !
 “ I sue not for my happy crown again ;
 “ I sue not for my phalanx on the plain ;
 “ I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife ; 545
 “ I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,
 “ My children fair, my lovely girls and boys !
 “ I will forget them ; I will pass these joys ;
 “ Ask nought so heavenward, so too—too high :
 “ Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die, 550
 “ Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,
 “ From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,
 “ And merely given to the cold bleak air.
 “ Have mercy, Goddess ! Circe, feel my prayer ! ”

“ That curst magician's name fell icy numb 555

Upon my wild conjecturing : truth had come
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart ;
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night. 560
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate
 My waking must have been ! disgust, and hate,
 And terrors manifold divided me
 A spoil amongst them. I prepar'd to flee
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood : 565
 I fled three days—when lo ! before me stood
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.
 “ Ha ! ha ! Sir Dainty ! there must be a nurse 570
 “ Made of rose leaves and thistledown, express,
 “ To cradle thee my sweet, and lull thee : yes,
 “ I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch :
 “ My tenderest squeeze is but a giant’s clutch.
 “ So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies 575
 “ Unheard of yet ; and it shall still its cries
 “ Upon some breast more lilly-feminine.
 “ Oh, no—it shall not pine, and pine, and pine
 “ More than one pretty, trifling thousand years ;
 “ And then ’twere pity, but fate’s gentle shears 580
 “ Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt !
 “ Young dove of the waters ! truly I’ll not hurt
 “ One hair of thine : see how I weep and sigh,
 “ That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
 “ And must we part ? Ah, yes, it must be so. 585
 “ Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
 “ Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
 “ And speak a blessing : Mark me ! Thou hast thews
 “ Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race :
 “ But such a love is mine, that here I chace 590

" Eternally away from thee all bloom
 " Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
 " Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast ;
 " And there, ere many days be overpast,
 " Disabled age shall seize thee ; and even then 505
 " Thou shalt not go the way of aged men ;
 " But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
 " Ten hundred years : which gone, I then bequeath
 " Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.
 " Adieu, sweet love, adieu !"—As shot stars fall, 60
 She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung
 And poison'd was my spirit : despair sung
 A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.
 A hand was at my shoulder to compel
 My sullen steps ; another 'fore my eyes 605
 Mov'd on with pointed finger. In this guise
 Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam
 I found me ; by my fresh, my native home.
 Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,
 Came salutary as I waded in ; 610
 And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave
 Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave
 Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd
 Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd.

" Young lover, I must weep—such hellish spite 615
 With dry cheek who can tell ? While thus my might
 Proving upon this element, dismay'd,
 Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid ;
 I look'd—'twas Scylla ! Cursed, cursed Circe !
 O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy ? 620
 Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,
 But thou must nip this tender innocent
 Because I lov'd her ?—Cold, O cold indeed
 Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed

The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was
 I clung about her waist, nor ceas'd to pass
 Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,
 Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
 Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.
 Headlong I darted ; at one eager swirl
 Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold !
 'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold ;
 And all around—But wherefore this to thee
 Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see?—
 I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.
 My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread
 Met palsy half way : soon these limbs became
 Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

“ Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,
 Without one hope, without one faintest trace
 Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble
 Of colour'd phantasy ; for I fear 'twould trouble
 Thy brain to loss of reason : and next tell
 How a restoring chance came down to quell
 One half of the witch in me.

“ On a day,
 Sitting upon a rock above the spray,
 I saw grow up from the horizon's brink
 A gallant vessel : soon she seem'd to sink
 Away from me again, as though her course
 Had been resum'd in spite of hindering force—
 So vanish'd : and not long, before arose
 Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.
 Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,
 But could not : therefore all the billows green
 Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds.
 The tempest came : I saw that vessel's shrouds

In perilous bustle ; while upon the deck
 Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck ;
 The final gulphing ; the poor struggling souls :
 I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls. 660
 O they had all been sav'd but crazed eld
 Annull'd my vigorous cravings : and thus quell'd
 And curb'd, think on't, O Latmian ! did I sit
 Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit
 Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone, 665
 By one and one, to pale oblivion ;
 And I was gazing on the surges prone,
 With many a scalding tear and many a groan,
 When at my feet emerg'd an old man's hand,
 Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand. 670
 I knelt with pain—reach'd out my hand—had grasp'd
 These treasures—touch'd the knuckles—they unclasp'd—
 I caught a finger : but the downward weight
 O'erpowered me—it sank. Then 'gan abate
 The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst 675
 The comfortable sun. I was athirst
 To search the book, and in the warming air
 Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.
 Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on
 My soul page after page, till well-nigh won 680
 Into forgetfulness ; when, stupefied,
 I read these words, and read again, and tried
 My eyes against the heavens, and read again.
 O what a load of misery and pain
 Each Atlas-line bore off !—a shine of hope 685
 Came gold around me, cheering me to cope
 Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend !
 For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

*“ In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
 Doom'd with enfeebled carcase to outstretch 690*

*His loath'd existence through ten centuries,
 And then to die alone. Who can devise
 A total opposition? No one. So
 One million times ocean must ebb and flow,
 And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,* 695
*These things accomplish'd:—If he utterly
 Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
 The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;
 If he explores all forms and substances
 Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;* 700
*He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief
 Most piously;—all lovers tempest-tost,
 And in the savage overwhelming lost,
 He shall deposit side by side, until* 705
*Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:
 Which done, and all these labours ripened,
 A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led,
 Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct
 How to consummate all. The youth elect* 710
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.”—

“Then,” cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,
 “We are twin brothers in this destiny!
 Say, I intreat thee, what achievement high
 Is, in this restless world, for me reserv'd.” 715
 What! if from thee my wandering feet had swerv'd,
 Had we both perish'd?”—“Look!” the sage reply'd,
 “Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,
 Of diverse brilliances? 'tis the edifice
 I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies;” 720
 And where I have enshrined piously
 All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die
 Throughout my bondage.” Thus discoursing, on
 They went till unobscur'd the porches shone;

Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight. 725
 Sure never since king Neptune held his state
 Was seen such wonder underneath the stars.
 Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars
 Has legion'd all his battle ; and behold
 How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold 730
 His even breast : see, many steeled squares,
 And rigid ranks of iron—whence who dares
 One step ? Imagine further, line by line,
 These warrior thousands on the field supine :—
 So in that crystal place, in silent rows, 735
 Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes.—
 The stranger from the mountains, breathless, trac'd
 Such thousands of shut eyes in order plac'd ;
 Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
 All ruddy,—for here death no blossom nips. 740
 He mark'd their brows and foreheads ; saw their hair
 Put sleekly on one side with nicest care ;
 And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,
 Put cross-wise to its heart.

“ Let us commence,”

Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, “ even now.”
 He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough, 746
 Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,
 Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.
 He tore it into pieces small as snow
 That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow ; 750
 And having done it, took his dark blue cloak
 And bound it round Endymion : then struck
 His wand against the empty air times nine.—
 “ What more there is to do, young man, is thine :
 But first a little patience ; first undo 755
 This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.
 Ah, gentle ! 'tis as weak as spider's skein ;

And shouldst thou break it—What, is it done so clean?
 A power overshadows thee! O, brave!
 The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave. 760
 Here is a shell; 'tis pearly blank to me,
 Nor mark'd with any sign or character—
 Canst thou read aught? O read for pity's sake!
 Olympus! we are safe! Now, Carian, break
 This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal." 765

'Twas done: and straight with sudden swell and fall
 Sweet music breath'd her soul away, and sigh'd
 A lullaby to silence.—“Youth! now strew
 These minced leaves on me, and passing through
 Those files of dead, scatter the same around, 770
 And thou wilt see the issue.”—'Mid the sound
 Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,
 Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,
 And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.
 How lightning-swift the change! a youthful wight 775
 Smiling beneath a coral diadem,
 Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,
 Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,
 Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force
 Press'd its cold hand, and wept,—and Scylla sigh'd! 780
 Endymion, with quick hand, the charm apply'd—
 The nymph arose: he left them to their joy,
 And onward went upon his high employ,
 Showering those powerful fragments on the dead.
 And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head, 785
 As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.
 Death felt it to his inwards: 'twas too much:
 Death fell a weeping in his charnel-house.
 The Latmian persever'd along, and thus
 All were re-animated. There arose 790
 A noise of harmony, pulses and throes

Of gladness in the air—while many, who
 Had died in mutual arms devout and true,
 Sprang to each other madly ; and the rest
 Felt a high certainty of being blest. 795
 They gaz'd upon Endymion. Enchantment
 Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.
 Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
 Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers
 Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine. 800
 The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
 Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.
 Speechless they ey'd each other, and about
 The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
 Distracted with the richest overflow 805
 Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

——“ Away !”

Shouted the new born god ; “ Follow, and pay
 Our piety to Neptunus supreme !”—
 Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,
 They led on first, bent to her meek surprise, 810
 Through portal columns of a giant size,
 Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.
 Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
 Down marble steps ; pouring as easily
 As hour-glass sand,—and fast, as you might see 815
 Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
 Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,
 Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,
 Just within ken, they saw descending thick 820
 Another multitude. Whereat more quick
 Mov'd either host. On a wide sand they met,
 And of those numbers every eye was wet ;

For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,
 Like what was never heard in all the throes 825
 Of wind and waters: 'tis past human wit
 To tell; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host
 Mov'd on for many a league; and gain'd, and lost
 Huge sea-marks; vanward swelling in array, 830
 And from the rear diminishing away,—
 Till a faint dawn surpris'd them. Glaucus cry'd,
 "Behold! behold, the palace of his pride!
 God Neptune's palaces!" With noise increas'd,
 They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east. 835
 At every onward step proud domes arose
 In prospect,—diamond gleams, and golden glows
 Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.
 Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,
 Still onward; still the splendour gradual swell'd. 840
 Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld
 By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts
 A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts
 Each gazer drank; and deeper drank more near:
 For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere 845
 As marble was there lavish, to the vast
 Of one fair palace, that far far surpass'd,
 Even for common bulk, those olden three,
 Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow 850
 Of Iris, when unfading it doth show
 Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch
 Through which this Paphian army took its march,
 Into the outer courts of Neptune's state:
 Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate, 855
 To which the leaders sped; but not half raught

Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,
 And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes
 Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.
 Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze 860
 Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,
 And then, behold ! large Neptune on his throne
 Of emerald deep : yet not exalt alone ;
 At his right hand stood winged Love, and on
 His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon. 865

Far as the mariner on highest mast
 Can see all round upon the calmed vast,
 So wide was Neptune's hall : and as the blue
 Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew
 Their doming curtains, high, magnificent, 870
 Aw'd from the throne aloof ;—and when storm-rent
 Disclos'd the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air ;
 But sooth'd as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,
 Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering
 Death to a human eye : for there did spring 875
 From natural west, and east, and south, and north,
 A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth
 A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.
 Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread
 As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe 880
 Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through
 The delicatest air : air verily,
 But for the portraiture of clouds and sky :
 This palace floor breath-air,—but for the amaze
 Of deep-seen wonders motionless,—and blaze 885
 Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,
 Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams
 Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang ;

The Nereids danc'd ; the Syrens faintly sang ;
 And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head. 890
 Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed
 On all the multitude a nectarous dew.
 The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew
 Fair Scylla and her guides to conference ;
 And when they reach'd the throned eminence 895
 She kist the sea-nymph's cheek,—who sat her down
 A toying with the doves. Then,—“Mighty crown
 And sceptre of this kingdom !” Venus said,
 “Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid :
 Behold !”— Two copious tear-drops instant fell 900
 From the God's large eyes ; he smil'd delectable,
 And over Glaucus held his blessing hands.—
 “Endymion ! Ah ! still wandering in the bands
 Of love ? Now this is cruel. Since the hour
 I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power 905
 Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet
 Escap'd from dull mortality's harsh net ?
 A little patience, youth ! 'twill not be long,
 Or I am skillless quite : an idle tongue,
 A humid eye, and steps luxurious, 910
 Where these are new and strange, are ominous.
 Aye, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,
 When others were all blind ; and were I given
 To utter secrets, haply I might say
 Some pleasant words :—but Love will have his day. 915
 So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,
 Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,
 Visit thou my Cythera : thou wilt find
 Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind ;
 And pray persuade with thee—Ah, I have done, 920
 All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son !”—
 Thus the fair goddess : while Endymion
 Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began
 Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran 925
 In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd ;
 And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd
 New growth about each shell and pendent lyre ;
 The which, in disentangling for their fire,
 Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture 930
 For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,
 Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the throng
 Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,
 And garlanding grew wild ; and pleasure reign'd.
 In harmless tendril they each other chain'd, 935
 And strove who should be smother'd deepest in
 Fresh crush of leaves.

O 'tis a very sin
 For one so weak to venture his poor verse
 In such a place as this. O do not curse,
 High Muses ! let him hurry to the ending. 940

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending
 Of dulcet instruments came charmingly ;
 And then a hymn.

" KING of the stormy sea !
 Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor
 Of elements ! Eternally before 945
 Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,
 At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock
 Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.
 All mountain-rivers, lost in the wide home
 Of thy capacious bosom, ever flow. 950
 Thou frownest, and old Æolus thy foe
 Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint
 Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint

When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam
 Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team 955
 Gulphs in the morning light, and scuds along
 To bring thee nearer to that golden song
 Apollo singeth, while his chariot
 Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art not
 For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou; 960
 And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now
 As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit
 To blend and interknit
 Subdued majesty with this glad time.
 O shell-borne King sublime! 965
 We lay our hearts before thee evermore—
 We sing, and we adore!

“Breathe softly, flutes;
 Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes;
 Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain; 970
 Not flowers budding in an April rain,
 Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow,—
 No, nor the Æolian twang of Love's own bow,
 Can mingle music fit for the soft ear
 Of goddess Cytherea! 975
 Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes
 On our souls' sacrifice.

“Bright-winged Child!
 Who has another care when thou hast smil'd?
 Unfortunates on earth, we see at last 980
 All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast
 Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.
 O sweetest essence! sweetest of all minions!
 God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
 And panting bosoms bare! 985
 Dear unseen light in darkness! eclipser

Of light in light! delicious poisoner!
 Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until
 We fill—we fill!
 And by thy Mother's lips——”

Was heard no more 990

For clamour, when the golden palace door
 Opened again, and from without, in shone
 A new magnificence. On oozy throne
 Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,
 To take a latest glimpse at his sheep-fold, 995
 Before he went into his quiet cave
 To muse for ever—Then a lucid wave,
 Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,
 Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty
 Of Doris, and the Ægean seer, her spouse— 1000
 Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,
 Theban Amphion leaning on his lute:
 His fingers went across it—All were mute
 To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,
 And Thetis pearly too.—

The palace whirls 1005

Around giddy Endymion; seeing he
 Was there far strayed from mortality.
 He could not bear it—shut his eyes in vain;
 Imagination gave a dizzier pain.
 “O I shall die! sweet Venus, be my stay! 1010
 Where is my lovely mistress? Well-away!
 I die—I hear her voice—I feel my wing—”
 At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring
 Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife
 To usher back his spirit into life: 1015
 But still he slept. At last they interwove
 Their cradling arms, and purpos'd to convey
 Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,
 To his inward senses these words spake aloud ; 1020
 Written in star-light on the dark above :
Dearest Endymion! my entire love!
How have I dwelt in fear of fate: 'tis done—
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch 1025
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!

The youth at once arose: a placid lake
 Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,
 Cooler than all the wonders he had seen, 1030
 Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.
 How happy once again in grassy nest!

BOOK IV.

MUSE of my native land! loftiest Muse!
 O first-born on the mountains! by the hues
 Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:
 Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
 While yet our England was a wolfish den; 5
 Before our forests heard the talk of men;
 Before the first of Druids was a child;—
 Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild
 Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.
 There came an eastern voice of solemn mood:— 10
 Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,
 Apollo's garland:—yet didst thou divine
 Such home-bred glory, that they cry'd in vain,
 "Come hither, Sister of the Island!" Plain

Spake fair Ausonia ; and once more she spake 15
 A higher summons :—still didst thou betake
 Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won
 A full accomplishment ! The thing is done,
 Which undone, these our latter days had risen
 On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what prison,
 Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets 21
 Our spirit's wings : despondency besets
 Our pillows ; and the fresh to-morrow morn
 Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
 Of our dull, uninspir'd, snail-paced lives. 25
 Long have I said, how happy he who shrives
 To thee ! But then I thought on poets gone,
 And could not pray :—nor can I now—so on
 I move to the end in lowliness of heart.—

“ Ah, woe is me ! that I should fondly part 30
 From my dear native land ! Ah, foolish maid !
 Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade
 Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields !
 To one so friendless the clear freshet yields
 A bitter coolness ; the ripe grape is sour : 35
 Yet I would have, great gods ! but one short hour
 Of native air—let me but die at home.”

Endymion to heaven's airy dome
 Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,
 When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows 40
 His head through thorny-green entanglement
 Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,
 Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

“ Is no one near to help me ? No fair dawn
 Of life from charitable voice ? No sweet saying 45
 To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing ?

No hand to toy with mine? No lips so sweet
 That I may worship them? No eyelids meet
 To twinkle on my bosom? No one dies
 Before me, till from these enslaving eyes
 Redemption sparkles!—I am sad and lost.” 50

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost
 Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,
 Warm mountaineer! for canst thou only bear
 A woman's sigh alone and in distress? 55
 See not her charms! Is Phœbe passionless?
 Phœbe is fairer far—O gaze no more:—
 Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,
 Behold her panting in the forest grass!
 Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass 60
 For tenderness the arms so idly lain
 Amongst them? Feelest not a kindred pain,
 To see such lovely eyes in swimming search
 After some warm delight, that seems to perch
 Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond 65
 Their upper lids?—Hist!

“O for Hermes' wand,
 To touch this flower into human shape!
 That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
 From his green prison, and here kneeling down
 Call me his queen, his second life's fair crown! 70
 Ah me, how I could love!—My soul doth melt
 For the unhappy youth—Love! I have felt
 So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender
 To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,
 That but for tears my life had fled away!— 75
 Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,
 And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,
 There is no lightning, no authentic dew

But in the eye of love : there's not a sound,
 Melodious howsoever, can confound 80
 The heavens and earth in one to such a death
 As doth the voice of love : there's not a breath
 Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,
 Till it has panted round, and stolen a share
 Of passion from the heart!"—

Upon a bough 85

He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
 Thirst for another love : O impious,
 That he can even dream upon it thus !—
 Thought he, "Why am I not as are the dead,
 Since to a woe like this I have been led 90
 Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?
 Goddess ! I love thee not the less : from thee
 By Juno's smile I turn not—no, no, no—
 While the great waters are at ebb and flow.—
 I have a triple soul ! O fond pretence— 95
 For both, for both my love is so immense,
 I feel my heart is cut for them in twain."

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.
 The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see
 Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously. 100
 He sprang from his green covert : there she lay,
 Sweet as a muskrose upon new-made hay ;
 With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes
 Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries.
 "Fair damsel, pity me ! forgive that I 105
 Thus violate thy bower's sanctity !
 O pardon me, for I am full of grief—
 Grief born of thee, young angel ! fairest thief !
 Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith
 I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith 110

Thou art my executioner, and I feel
 Loving and hatred, misery and weal,
 Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,
 And all my story that much passion slew me ;
 Do smile upon the evening of my days : 115
 And, for my tortur'd brain begins to craze,
 Be thou my nurse ; and let me understand
 How dying I shall kiss that lilly hand.—
 Dost weep for me ? Then should I be content.
 Scowl on, ye fates ! until the firmament 120
 Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth
 Crumbles into itself. By the cloud girth
 Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst
 To meet oblivion.”—As her heart would burst
 The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then reply'd : 125
 “Why must such desolation betide
 As that thou speak'st of ? Are not these green nooks
 Empty of all misfortune ? Do the brooks
 Utter a gorgon voice ? Does yonder thrush,
 Schooling its half-fledg'd little ones to brush 130
 About the dewy forest, whisper tales ?—
 Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails
 Will slime the rose to night. Though if thou wilt,
 Methinks 'twould be a guilt—a very guilt—
 Not to companion thee, and sigh away 135
 The light—the dusk—the dark—till break of day !”
 “Dear lady,” said Endymion, “'tis past :
 I love thee ! and my days can never last.
 That I may pass in patience still speak :
 Let me have music dying, and I seek 140
 No more delight—I bid adieu to all.
 Didst thou not after other climates call,
 And murmur about Indian streams ?”—Then she,
 Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,
 For pity sang this roundelay—— 145

" O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips ?—
 To give maiden blushes
 To the white rose bushes ? 150
 Or is't thy dewy hand the daisy tips ?

" O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye ?—
 To give the glow-worm light ? 155
 Or, on a moonless night,
 To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry ?

" O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue ?— 160
 To give at evening pale
 Unto the nightingale,
 That thou mayst listen the cold dews among ?

" O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow 165
 Heart's lightness from the merriment of May ?—
 A lover would not tread
 A cowslip on the head,
 Though he should dance from eve till peep of day—
 Nor any drooping flower 170
 Held sacred for thy bower,
 Wherever he may sport himself and play.

" To Sorrow,
 I bade good-morrow,
 And thought to leave her far away behind ; 175
 But cheerly, cheerly,

She loves me dearly ;
 She is so constant to me, and so kind :
 I would deceive her
 And so leave her, 180
 But ah ! she is so constant and so kind.

“ Beneath my palm trees, by the river side
 I sat a weeping : in the whole world wide
 There was no one to ask me why I wept,—
 And so I kept 185
 Brimming the water-lilly cups with tears
 Cold as my fears.

“ Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,
 I sat a weeping : what enamour'd bride,
 Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds, 190
 But hides and shrouds
 Beneath dark palm trees by a river side ?

“ And as I sat, over the light blue hills
 There came a noise of revellers : the rills
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue— 195
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew !

The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din—
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin !
 Like to a moving vintage down they came, 200
 Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame ;
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
 To scare thee, Melancholy !

O then, O then, thou wast a simple name !
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly 205
 By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
 Tall chesnuts keep away the sun and moon :—
 I rush'd into the folly !

" Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
 Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood, 210
 With sidelong laughing ;
 And little rills of crimson wine imbru'd
 His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
 For Venus' pearly bite :
 And near him rode Silenus on his ass, 215
 Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
 Tipsily quaffing.

Whence came ye, merry Damsels ! whence came ye !
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?
 Why have ye left your bowers desolate, 220
 Your lutes, and gentler fate ?—
 ' We follow Bacchus ! Bacchus on the wing,
 A conquering !
 Bacchus, young Bacchus ! good or ill betide,
 We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide :— 225
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
 To our wild minstrelsy !'

" Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs ! whence came ye !
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?
 Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left 230
 Your nuts in oak-tree cleft ?—
 ' For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree ;
 For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
 And cold mushrooms ;
 For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth ; 235
 Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth !—
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
 To our mad minstrelsy !'

" Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
 And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent, 240

Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
 With Asian elephants :
 Onward these myriads—with song and dance,
 With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,
 Web-footed alligators, crocodiles, 245
 Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
 Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
 Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil :
 With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
 Nor care for wind and tide. 250

“ Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,
 From rear to van they scour about the plains ;
 A three days' journey in a moment done :
 And always, at the rising of the sun,
 About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn, 255
 On spleenful unicorn.

“ I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
 Before the vine-wreath crown !
 I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
 To the silver cymbals' ring ! 260
 I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
 Old Tartary the fierce !
 The kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres vail,
 And from their treasures scatter pearled hail ;
 Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans, 265
 And all his priesthood moans ;
 Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.—
 Into these regions came I following him,
 Sick hearted, weary—so I took a whim
 To stray away into these forests drear 270
 Alone, without a peer :
 And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

" Young stranger !
 I've been a ranger
 In search of pleasure throughout every clime : 275
 Alas, 'tis not for me !
 Bewitch'd I sure must be,
 To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

" Come then, Sorrow !
 Sweetest Sorrow ! 280
 Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast :
 I thought to leave thee
 And deceive thee,
 But now of all the world I love thee best.

" There is not one, 285
 No, no, not one
 But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid ;
 Thou art her mother,
 And her brother,
 Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade." 290

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,
 And look, quite dead to every worldly thing !
 Endymion could not speak, but gaz'd on her ;
 And listened to the wind that now did stir
 About the crisped oaks full drearily, 295
 Yet with as sweet a softness as might be
 Remember'd from its velvet summer song.
 At last he said : " Poor lady, how thus long
 Have I been able to endure that voice ?
 Fair Melody ! kind Syren ! I've no choice ; 300
 I must be thy sad servant evermore :
 I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.
 Alas, I must not think—by Phœbe, no !
 Let me not think, soft Angel ! shall it be so ?

Say, beautifullest, shall I never think? 305
 O thou could'st foster me beyond the brink
 Of recollection! make my watchful care
 Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair!
 Do gently murder half my soul, and I
 Shall feel the other half so utterly!— 310
 I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth;
 O let it blush so ever! let it soothe
 My madness! let it mantle rosy-warm
 With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.—
 This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is; 315
 And this is sure thine other softling—this
 Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near!
 Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!
 And whisper one sweet word that I may know
 This is this world—sweet dewy blossom!—*Woe!* 320
Woe! Woe to that Endymion! Where is he?—
 Even these words went echoing dismally
 Through the wide forest—a most fearful tone,
 Like one repenting in his latest moan;
 And while it died away a shade pass'd by, 325
 As of a thunder cloud. When arrows fly
 Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth
 Their timid necks and tremble; so these both
 Leant to each other trembling, and sat so
 Waiting for some destruction—when lo, 330
 Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime
 Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time
 Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropt
 Towards the ground; but rested not, nor stopt
 One moment from his home: only the sward 335
 He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward
 Swifter than sight was gone—even before
 The teeming earth a sudden witness bore
 Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear

Above the crystal circlings white and clear ; 340
 And catch the cheated eye in wide surprise,
 How they can dive in sight and unseen rise—
 So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,
 Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.
 The youth of Caria plac'd the lovely dame 345
 On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame
 The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,
 High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew
 Exhal'd to Phœbus' lips, away they are gone,
 Far from the earth away—unseen, alone, 350
 Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free,
 The buoyant life of song can floating be
 Above their heads, and follow them untir'd.—
 Muse of my native land, am I inspir'd ?
 This is the giddy air, and I must spread 355
 Wide pinions to keep here ; nor do I dread
 Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance
 Precipitous : I have beneath my glance
 Those towering horses and their mournful freight.
 Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await 360
 Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid ?—

There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade
 From some approaching wonder, and behold
 Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold
 Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire, 365
 Dying to embers from their native fire !

There curl'd a purple mist around them ; soon,
 It seem'd as when around the pale new moon
 Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow :
 'Twas Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow. 370
 For the first time, since he came nigh dead born
 From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn

Had he left more forlorn ; for the first time,
 He felt aloof the day and morning's prime—
 Because into his depth Cimmerian 375
 There came a dream, showing how a young man,
 Ere a lean bat could plump its wintery skin,
 Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win
 An immortality, and how espouse
 Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house. 380
 Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,
 That he might at the threshold one hour wait
 To hear the marriage melodies, and then
 Sink downward to his dusky cave again.
 His litter of smooth semilucent mist, 385
 Diversely ting'd with rose and amethyst,
 Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought ;
 And scarcely for one moment could be caught
 His sluggish form reposing motionless.
 Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress 390
 Of vision search'd for him, as one would look
 Athwart the shallows of a river nook
 To catch a glance at silver throated eels,—
 Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals
 His rugged forehead in a mantle pale, 395
 With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale
 Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are
 Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop
 Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop ; 400
 Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread
 Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead,—
 And on those pinions, level in mid air,
 Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.
 Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle 405
 Upon a calm sea drifting : and meanwhile

The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold! he walks
 On heaven's pavement; brotherly he talks
 To divine powers: from his hand full fain
 Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain: 410
 He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow,
 And asketh where the golden apples grow:
 Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,
 And strives in vain to unsettle and wield
 A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings 415
 A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings
 And tantalizes long; at last he drinks,
 And lost in pleasure at her feet he sinks,
 Touching with dazzled lips her starlight hand.
 He blows a bugle,—an ethereal band 420
 Are visible above: the Seasons four,—
 Green-kyrtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
 In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,
 Join dance with shadowy Hours; while still the blast,
 In swells unmitigated, still doth last 425
 To sway their floating morris. "Whose is this?
 Whose bugle?" he inquires: they smile—"O Dis!
 Why is this mortal here? Dost thou not know
 Its mistress' lips? Not thou?—'Tis Dian's: lo!
 She rises crescented!" He looks, 'tis she, 430
 His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,
 And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;
 Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he spring
 Towards her, and awakes—and, strange, o'erhead,
 Of those same fragrant exhalations bred, 435
 Beheld awake his very dream: the gods
 Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and nods;
 And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.
 O state perplexing! On the pinion bed,
 Too well awake, he feels the panting side 440
 Of his delicious lady. He who died

For soaring too audacious in the sun,
 When that same treacherous wax began to run,
 Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
 His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne, 445
 To that fair shadow'd passion puls'd its way—
 Ah, what perplexity! Ah, well a day!
 So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,
 He could not help but kiss her: then he grew
 Awhile forgetful of all beauty save 450
 Young Phœbe's, golden hair'd; and so 'gan crave
 Forgiveness: yet he turn'd once more to look
 At the sweet sleeper,—all his soul was shook,—
 She press'd his hand in slumber; so once more
 He could not help but kiss her and adore. 455
 At this the shadow wept, melting away.
 The Latmian started up: "Bright goddess, stay!
 Search my most hidden breast! By truth's own tongue,
 I have no dædale heart: why is it wrung
 To desperation? Is there nought for me, 460
 Upon the bourn of bliss, but misery?"

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses:
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from underneath.
 "Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe 465
 This murky phantasm! thou contented seem'st
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery!—
 Yet did she merely weep—her gentle soul 470
 Hath no revenge in it: as it is whole
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love!
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,
 Even when I feel as true as innocence?
 I do, I do.—What is this soul then? Whence 475

Came it? It does not seem my own, and I
 Have no self-passion or identity.
 Some fearful end must be : where, where is it ?
 By Nemesis, I see my spirit flit
 Alone about the dark—Forgive me, sweet : 480
 Shall we away ?” He rous’d the steeds : they beat
 Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,
 Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,
 And Vesper, risen star, began to throe 485
 In the dusk heavens silverly, when they
 Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.
 Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange—
 Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,
 In such wise, in such temper, so aloof 490
 Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,
 So witless of their doom, that verily
 ’Tis well nigh past man’s search their hearts to see ;
 Whether they wept, or laugh’d, or griev’d, or toy’d—
 Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy’d. 495

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,
 The moon put forth a little diamond peak,
 No bigger than an unobserved star,
 Or tiny point of fairy scymetar ;
 Bright signal that she only stoop’d to tie 500
 Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
 She bow’d into the heavens her timid head.
 Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,
 While to his lady meek the Carian turn’d,
 To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern’d 505
 This beauty in its birth—Despair ! despair !
 He saw her body fading gaunt and spare

In the cold moonshine. Straight he seiz'd her wrist ;
 It melted from his grasp : her hand he kiss'd
 And, horror ! kiss'd his own—he was alone. 510
 Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
 Dropt hawkwise to the earth.

There lies a den,

Beyond the seeming confines of the space
 Made for the soul to wander in and trace
 Its own existence, of remotest glooms. 515
 Dark regions are around it, where the tombs
 Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce
 Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart :
 And in these regions many a venom'd dart 520
 At random flies ; they are the proper home
 Of every ill : the man is yet to come
 Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.
 But few have ever felt how calm and well
 Sleep may be had in that deep den of all. 525
 There anguish does not sting ; nor pleasure pall :
 Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
 Yet all is still within and desolate.
 Beset with plainful gusts, within ye hear
 No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier 530
 The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none
 Who strive therefore : on the sudden it is won.
 Just when the sufferer begins to burn,
 Then it is free to him ; and from an urn,
 Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught— 535
 Young Semele such richness never quaft
 In her maternal longing ! Happy gloom !
 Dark Paradise ! where pale becomes the bloom
 Of health by due ; where silence dreariest
 Is most articulate ; where hopes infest ; 540

Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep
 Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
 O happy spirit-home! O wondrous soul!
 Pregnant with such a den to save the whole
 In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian! 545
 For, never since thy griefs and woes began,
 Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud
 Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude.
 Aye, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne
 With dangerous speed: and so he did not mourn 550
 Because he knew not whither he was going.
 So happy was he, not the aerial blowing
 Of trumpets at clear parley from the east
 Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.
 They stung the feather'd horse: with fierce alarm 555
 He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas, no charm
 Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd
 A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude,—
 And silvery was its passing: voices sweet
 Warbling the while as if to lull and greet 560
 The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,
 While past the vision went in bright array.

“Who, who from Dian's feast would be away?
 For all the golden bowers of the day
 Are empty left? Who, who away would be 565
 From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?
 Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings
 He leans away for highest heaven and sings,
 Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—
 Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too! 570
 Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
 Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
 Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill
 Your baskets high

With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines, 575
Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,

Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme ;

Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,

All gather'd in the dewy morning : hie

Away ! fly, fly !—

580

Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,

Aquarius ! to whom king Jove has given

Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,

Two fan-like fountains,—thine illuminings

For Dian play :

585

Dissolve the frozen purity of air ;

Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare

Show cold through watery pinions ; make more bright

The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night :

Haste, haste away !—

590

Castor has tam'd the planet Lion, see !

And of the Bear has Pollux mastery :

A third is in the race ! who is the third,

Speeding away swift as the eagle bird ?

The ramping Centaur !

595

The Lion's mane's on end : the Bear how fierce !

The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce

Some enemy : far forth his bow is bent

Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,

Pale unrelentor,

600

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a playing.—

Andromeda ! sweet woman ! why delaying

So timidly among the stars : come hither !

Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither

They all are going.

605

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,

Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.

Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral :

Ye shall for ever live and love, for all

Thy tears are flowing.—
By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!—”

610

More

Endymion heard not: down his steed him bore,
Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill.
“Alas!” said he, “were I but always borne 615
Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn
A path in hell, for ever would I bless
Horrors which nourish an uneasiness
For my own sullen conquering: to him
Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim, 620
Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see
The grass; I feel the solid ground—Ah, me!
It is thy voice—divinest! Where?—who? who
Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew?
Behold upon this happy earth we are; 625
Let us aye love each other; let us fare
On forest-fruits, and never, never go
Among the abodes of mortals here below,
Or be by phantoms dup'd. O destiny!
Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly, 630
But with thy beauty will I deaden it.
Where didst thou melt to? By thee will I sit
For ever: let our fate stop here—a kid
I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid
Us live in peace, in love and peace among 635
His forest wildernesses. I have clung
To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen
Or felt but a great dream! O I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements, against the tie 640
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms

Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory
Has my own soul conspired : so my story
Will I to children utter, and repent. 645
There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
But starv'd and died. My sweetest Indian, here,
Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing : gone and past 650
Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!
And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
Of visionary seas! No, never more
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast. 655
Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so vast
My love is still for thee. The hour may come
When we shall meet in pure elysium.
On earth I may not love thee ; and therefore
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store 660
All through the teeming year : so thou wilt shine
On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
And bless our simple lives. My Indian bliss!
My river-lilly bud! one human kiss!
One sigh of real breath—one gentle squeeze, 665
Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,
And warm with dew at ooze from living blood!
Whither didst melt? Ah, what of that!—all good
We'll talk about—no more of dreaming.—Now,
Where shall our dwelling be? Under the brow 670
Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun
Would hide us up, although spring leaves were none ;
And where dark yew trees, as we rustle through,
Will drop their scarlet berry cups of dew?
O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place ; 675
Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace

Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclin'd :
 For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,
 And by another, in deep dell below,
 See, through the trees, a little river go 680
 All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.
 Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,
 And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee,—
 Cresses that grow where no man may them see,
 And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag : 685
 Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,
 That thou mayst always know whither I roam,
 When it shall please thee in our quiet home
 To listen and think of love. Still let me speak ;
 Still let me dive into the joy I seek,— 690
 For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,
 Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill
 With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,
 And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.
 Its bottom will I strew with amber shells, 695
 And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.
 Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,
 And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.
 I will entice this crystal rill to trace
 Love's silver name upon the meadow's face. 700
 I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire ;
 And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre ;
 To Empress Dian, for a hunting spear ;
 To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,
 That I may see thy beauty through the night ; 705
 To Flora, and a nightingale shall light
 Tame on thy finger ; to the River-gods,
 And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods
 Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright tress.
 Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness ! 710
 Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be

'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee :
 Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,
 Trembling or stedfastness to this same voice, 715
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice :
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,
 Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seisure ? 720
 O that I could not doubt !"

The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear
 His briar'd path to some tranquillity.
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow ; 725
 Answering thus, just as the golden morrow
 Beam'd upward from the vallies of the east :
 "O that the flutter of this heart had ceas'd,
 Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away.
 Young feather'd tyrant ! by a swift decay 730
 Wilt thou devote this body to the earth :
 And I do think that at my very birth
 I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly ;
 For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,
 With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven. 735
 Art thou not cruel ? Ever have I striven
 To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do !
 When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew
 Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave
 To the void air, bidding them find out love : 740
 But when I came to feel how far above
 All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,
 All earthly pleasure, all imagin'd good,
 Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss,—

Even then, that moment, at the thought of this, 745
 Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
 And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,
 Am I not cruelly wrong'd? Believe, believe
 Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave
 With my own fancies garlands of sweet life, 750
 Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!
 I may not be thy love: I am forbidden—
 Indeed I am—thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
 By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.
 Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth 755
 Ask me no more! I may not utter it,
 Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
 Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;
 We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought!
 Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught 760
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness.
 No, no, that shall not be: thee will I bless,
 And bid a long adieu."

The Carian

No word return'd: both lovelorn, silent, wan,
 Into the vallies green together went. 765
 Far wandering, they were perforce content
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree;
 Nor at each other gaz'd, but heavily
 Por'd on its hazle cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves 770
 Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
 Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem
 Truth the best music in a first-born song.
 Thy lute-voic'd brother will I sing ere long,
 And thou shalt aid—hast thou not aided me? 775
 Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity

Has been thy meed for many thousand years ;
 Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
 Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester ;—
 Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir 780

His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse
 Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls
 Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
 Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.
 A little onward ran the very stream 785

By which he took his first soft poppy dream ;
 And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant
 A crescent he had carv'd, and round it spent
 His skill in little stars. The teeming tree
 Had swollen and green'd the pious charactery, 790

But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope
 Up which he had not fear'd the antelope ;
 And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade
 He had not with his tamed leopards play'd :
 Nor could an arrow light, or javelin, 795
 Fly in the air where his had never been—
 And yet he knew it not.

O treachery !

Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye
 With all his sorrowing ? He sees her not.
 But who so stares on him ? His sister sure ! 800
 Peona of the woods !—Can she endure—
 Impossible—how dearly they embrace !
 His lady smiles ; delight is in her face ;
 It is no treachery.

“ Dear brother mine !

Endymion, weep not so ! Why shouldst thou pine 805

When all great Latmus so exalt will be?
 Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly;
 And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.
 Sure I will not believe thou hast such store
 Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again. 810
 Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,
 Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.
 Be happy both of you! for I will pull
 The flowers of autumn for your coronals.
 Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls; 815
 And when he is restor'd, thou, fairest dame,
 Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame
 To see ye thus,—not very, very sad?
 Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad:
 O feel as if it were a common day; 820
 Free-voic'd as one who never was away.
 No tongue shall ask, whence come ye? but ye shall
 Be gods of your own rest imperial.
 Not even I, for one whole month, will pry
 Into the hours that have pass'd us by, 825
 Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.
 O Hermes! on this very night will be
 A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light;
 For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
 Good visions in the air,—whence will befall, 830
 As say these sages, health perpetual
 To shepherds and their flocks; and furthermore,
 In Dian's face they read the gentle lore:
 Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.
 Our friends will all be there from nigh and far. 835
 Many upon thy death have ditties made;
 And many, even now, their foreheads shade
 With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.
 New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,
 And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows. 840

Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse
 This wayward brother to his rightful joys!
 His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise
 His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,
 To lure—Endymion, dear brother, say 845
 What ails thee?" He could bear no more, and so
 Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said:
 "I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid!
 My only visitor! not ignorant though, 850
 That those deceptions which for pleasure go
 'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be:
 But there are higher ones I may not see,
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake 855
 Night after night, and day by day, until
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me
 More happy than betides mortality.
 A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave, 860
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave
 Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.
 Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well;
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.
 And, for my sake, let this young maid abide 865
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own
 This may sound strangely: but when, dearest girl,
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair! 870
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share
 This sister's love with me?" Like one resign'd
 And bent by circumstance, and thereby blind
 In self-commitment, thus that meek unknown:
 "Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown, 875

Of jubilee to Dian :—truth I heard ?
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.
 Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,
 Behold I find it ! so exalted too ! 880
 So after my own heart ! I knew, I knew
 There was a place untenanted in it :
 In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
 And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
 With sanest lips I vow me to the number 885
 Of Dian's sisterhood ; and, kind lady,
 With thy good help, this very night shall see
 My future days to her fane consecrate."

As feels a dreamer what doth most create
 His own particular fright, so these three felt : 890
 Or like one who, in after ages, knelt
 To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine
 After a little sleep : or when in mine
 Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his friends
 Who know him not. Each diligently bends 895
 Towards common thoughts and things for very fear ;
 Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
 By thinking it a thing of yes and no,
 That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow
 Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last 900
 Endymion said : " Are not our fates all cast ?
 Why stand we here ? Adieu, ye tender pair !
 Adieu ! " Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,
 Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot
 His eyes went after them, until they got 905
 Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,
 In one swift moment, would what then he saw
 Engulph for ever. " Stay ! " he cried, " ah, stay !
 Turn, damsels ! hist ! one word I have to say.

Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again. 910
 It is a thing I dote on : so I'd fain,
 Peona, ye should hand in hand repair
 Into those holy groves, that silent are
 Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,
 At vesper's earliest twinkle—they are gone— 915
 But once, once, once again—" At this he press'd
 His hands against his face, and then did rest
 His head upon a mossy hillock green,
 And so remain'd as he a corpse had been
 All the long day ; save when he scanty lifted 920
 His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted
 With the slow move of time,—sluggish and weary
 Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,
 Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,
 And, slowly as that very river flows, 925
 Walk'd towards the temple grove with this lament :
 " Why such a golden eve ? The breeze is sent
 Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
 Before the serene father of them all
 Bows down his summer head below the west. 930
 Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,
 But at the setting I must bid adieu
 To her for the last time. Night will strew
 On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
 And with them shall I die ; nor much it grieves 935
 To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
 Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
 Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
 Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour roses ;
 My kingdom's at its death, and just it is 940
 That I should die with it : so in all this
 We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heartbreak, woe,
 What is there to plain of ? By Titan's foe
 I am but rightly serv'd." So saying, he

Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee ; 945
 Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,
 As though they jests had been : nor had he done
 His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
 Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,
 And then his tongue with sober seemlied 950
 Gave utterance as he enter'd : " Ha ! I said,
 " King of the butterflies ; but by this gloom,
 And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
 This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
 And the Promethean clay by thief endued, 955
 By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
 Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
 Myself to things of light from infancy ;
 And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
 Is sure enough to make a mortal man 960
 Grow impious." So he inwardly began
 On things for which no wording can be found ;
 Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
 Beyond the reach of music : for the choir
 Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough briar 965
 Nor muffling thicket interpos'd to dull
 The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
 Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.
 He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,
 Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight 970
 By chilly finger'd spring. " Unhappy wight !
 Endymion ! " said Peona, " we are here !
 What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier ? "
 Then he embrac'd her, and his lady's hand
 Press'd, saying : " Sister, I would have command, 975
 If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate."
 At which that dark-ey'd stranger stood elate
 And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
 To Endymion's amaze : " By Cupid's dove,

And so thou shalt ! and by the lilly truth 980
 Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth !”
 And as she spake, into her face there came
 Light, as reflected from a silver flame :
 Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
 Full golden ; in her eyes a brighter day 985
 Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld
 Phœbe, his passion ! joyous she upheld
 Her lucid bow, continuing thus : “ Drear, drear
 Has our delaying been ; but foolish fear
 Withheld me first ; and then decrees of fate ; 990
 And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state
 Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd for change
 Be spiritualiz'd. Peona, we shall range
 These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
 As was thy cradle ; hither shalt thou flee 995
 To meet us many a time.” Next Cynthia bright
 Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night :
 Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown
 Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.
 She gave her fair hands to him, and behold, 1000
 Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
 They vanish'd far away !—Peona went
 Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

LAMIA,
ISABELLA,
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

Published in 1820.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of HYPERION, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with ENDYMION, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.

Fleet-Street, June 26, 1820.

L A M I A.

L A M I A.

PART I.

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns 5
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight 10
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt ;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons poured 15
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose. 20
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat

Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
 That from a whiteness, as the lilly clear,
 Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair, 25
 Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
 Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
 And wound with many a river to its head.
 To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret
 bed: 30

In vain ; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
 And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
 Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
 Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
 There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice, 35
 Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
 All pain but pity : thus the lone voice spake :
 " When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake !
 " When move in a sweet body fit for life,
 " And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife 40
 " Of hearts and lips ! Ah, miserable me !"
 The God, dove-footed, glided silently
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
 Until he found a palpitating snake, 45
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue ;
 Strip'd like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
 Ey'd like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd ; 50
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
 Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—

So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
 She seem'd, at once, some penanc'd lady elf, 55
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar :
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete: 60
 And for her eyes : what could such eyes do there
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair ?
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake, 65
 And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
 Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey.

" Fair Hermes, crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
 " I had a splendid dream of thee last night :
 " I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, 70
 " Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
 " The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear
 " The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,
 " Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
 " Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious
 moan. 75
 " I dreamt I saw thee, rob'd in purple flakes,
 " Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
 " And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
 " Strike for the Cretan isle ; and here thou art !
 " Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ? " 80
 Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired :
 " Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high inspired !
 " Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
 " Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise, 85
 " Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—

“Where she doth breathe!” “Bright planet, thou hast
said,”

Return'd the snake, “but seal with oaths, fair God!”

“I swear,” said Hermes, “by my serpent rod,
“And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!” 90

Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine :

“Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,

“Free as the air, invisibly, she strays

“About these thornless wilds ; her pleasant days 95

“She tastes unseen ; unseen her nimble feet

“Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet ;

“From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,

“She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen :

“And by my power is her beauty veil'd 100

“To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd

“By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,

“Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.

“Pale grew her immortality, for woe

“Of all these lovers, and she grieved so 105

“I took compassion on her, bade her steep

“Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep

“Her loveliness invisible, yet free

“To wander as she loves, in liberty.

“Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone, 110

“If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!”

Then, once again, the charmed God began

An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran

Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.

Ravish'd, she lifted her Circean head, 115

Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lipping said,

“I was a woman, let me have once more

“A woman's shape, and charming as before.

“I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!

“Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is. 120





HERMES AND THE NYMPH—Page 211.

" Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
 " And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
 She breath'd upon his eyes, and swift was seen
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green. 125
 It was no dream ; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
 One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
 Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd ; 130
 Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
 To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
 Delicate, put to proof the lythe Caducean charm.
 So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
 Full of adoring tears and blandishment, 135
 And towards her stept : she, like a moon in wane,
 Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
 Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
 That faints into itself at evening hour :
 But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140
 She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
 And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
 Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
 Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;
 Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do. 145

Left to herself, the serpent now began
 To change ; her elfin blood in madness ran,
 Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
 Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;
 Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear, 150
 Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling
 tear.

The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,

She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain :
 A deep volcanian yellow took the place 155
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede ;
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
 Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars : 160
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
 And rubious-argent : of all these bereft,
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
 Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she 165
 Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;
 And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
 Cry'd, " Lycius ! gentle Lycius ! "—Borne aloft
 With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
 These words dissolv'd : Crete's forests heard no more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
 A full-born beauty new and exquisite ?
 She fled into that valley they pass o'er
 Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore ;
 And rested at the foot of those wild hills, 175
 The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
 And of that other ridge whose barren back
 Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
 South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
 About a young bird's flutter from a wood, 180
 Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
 By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
 To see herself escap'd from so sore ills,
 While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius !—for she was a maid 185
 More beautiful than ever twisted braid,



LAMIA BESIDE THE POOL.—Page 212.

Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea
 Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy :
 A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
 Of love deep learned to the red heart's core : 190
 Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
 To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain ;
 Define their pettish limits, and estrange
 Their points of contact, and swift counterchange ;
 Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart 195
 Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art ;
 As though in Cupid's college she had spent
 Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
 And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so faerily 200
 By the wayside to linger, we shall see ;
 But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
 And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
 Of all she list, strange or magnificent :
 How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ; 205
 Whether to faint Elysium, or where
 Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
 Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;
 Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
 Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ; 210
 Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
 Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
 And sometimes into cities she would send
 Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend ;
 And once, while among mortals dreaming thus, 215
 She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
 Charioting foremost in the envious race,
 Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
 And fell into a swooning love of him.
 Now on the moth-time of that evening dim 220

He would return that way, as well she knew,
 To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew
 The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
 Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow
 In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle 225
 Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile
 To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
 Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
 Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;
 For by some freakful chance he made retire 230
 From his companions, and set forth to walk,
 Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :
 Over the solitary hills he fared,
 Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared
 His phantasy was lost, where reason fades, 235
 In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
 Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
 Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
 His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;
 So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen 240
 She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
 His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
 Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
 Turn'd—syllabling thus, " Ah, Lycius bright,
 " And will you leave me on the hills alone ? 245
 " Lycius, look back ! and be some pity shown."
 He did ; not with cold wonder fearingly,
 But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice ;
 For so delicious were the words she sung,
 It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long : 250
 And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
 Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
 Due adoration, thus began to adore ; 255



LYCIUS SWOONING—Page 215.

Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure :
 " Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see
 " Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !
 " For pity do not this sad heart belie—
 " Even as thou vanishest so I shall die. 260
 " Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !
 " To thy far wishes will thy streams obey :
 " Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
 " Alone they can drink up the morning rain :
 " Though a descended Pleiad, will not one 265
 " Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
 " Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?
 " So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
 " Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade
 " Thy memory will waste me to a shade :— 270
 " For pity do not melt !"—" If I should stay,"
 Said Lamia, " here, upon this floor of clay,
 " And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
 " What canst thou say or do of charm enough
 " To dull the nice remembrance of my home ? 275
 " Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
 " Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
 " Empty of immortality and bliss !
 " Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
 " That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280
 " In human climes, and live : Alas ! poor youth,
 " What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
 " My essence ? What serener palaces,
 " Where I may all my many senses please,
 " And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease ?
 " It cannot be—Adieu ! " So said, she rose 286
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,
 Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
 The cruel lady, without any show 290

Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh : 295
 And as he from one trance was wakening
 Into another, she began to sing,
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting
 fires. 300

And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
 As those who, safe together met alone
 For the first time through many anguish'd days,
 Use other speech than looks ; bidding him raise
 His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt, 305
 For that she was a woman, and without
 Any more subtle fluid in her veins
 Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
 Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
 And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss 310
 Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
 She dwelt but half retir'd, and there had led
 Days happy as the gold coin could invent
 Without the aid of love ; yet in content
 Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by, 315
 Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
 At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
 Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
 Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
 The Adonian feast ; whereof she saw no more, 320
 But wept alone those days, for why should she adore ?
 Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
 To see her still, and singing so sweet lays ;
 Then from amaze into delight he fell

To hear her whisper woman's lore so well ; 325
 And every word she spake entic'd him on
 To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
 Of the sweets of Faeries, Peris, Goddesses,
 There is not such a treat among them all, 330
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
 As a real woman, lineal indeed
 From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
 Thus gentle Lamia judg'd, and judg'd aright,
 That Lycius could not love in half a fright, 335
 So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
 More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
 With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
 That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
 Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340
 Marrying to every word a twinborn sigh ;
 And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
 If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.
 The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
 Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease 345
 To a few paces ; not at all surmised
 By blinded Lycius, so in her comprized.
 They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
 So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350
 Throughout her palaces imperial,
 And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
 Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
 To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
 Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours, 355
 Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
 Companion'd or alone ; while many a light
 Flar'd, here and there, from wealthy festivals,

And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
 Or found them cluster'd in the cornic'd shade 360
 Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
 Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
 With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald
 crown,
 Slow-stepp'd, and rob'd in philosophic gown : 365
 Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
 Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
 While hurried Lamia trembled : " Ah," said he,
 " Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully ?
 " Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew ?"— 370
 " I'm wearied," said fair Lamia : " tell me who
 " Is that old man ? I cannot bring to mind
 " His features :—Lycius ! wherefore did you blind
 " Yourself from his quick eyes ?" Lycius reply'd,
 " 'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide 375
 " And good instructor ; but to-night he seems
 " The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams."

While yet he spake they had arriv'd before
 A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
 Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow 380
 Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
 Mild as a star in water ; for so new,
 And so unsully'd was the marble's hue,
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
 Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine 385
 Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
 Breath'd from the hinges, as the ample span
 Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown
 Some time to any, but those two alone,
 And a few Persian mutes, who that same year 390

Were seen about the markets : none knew where
 They could inhabit ; the most curious
 Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house :
 And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
 For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befel, 395
 'Twould humour many a heart to leave them us,
 Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II.

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
 Is—Love, forgive us !—cinders, ashes, dust ;
 Love in a palace is perhaps at last
 More grievous torment than a hermit's fast :—
 That is a doubtful tale from faery land, 5
 Hard for the non-elect to understand.
 Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,
 He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
 Or clench'd it quite : but too short was their bliss
 To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss. 10
 Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
 Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
 Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
 Above the lintel of their chamber door,
 And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor. 15

For all this came a ruin : side by side
 They were enthroned, in the even tide,
 Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
 Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
 Floated into the room, and let appear 20

Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
 Betwixt two marble shafts :—there they reposed,
 Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
 Saving a tythe which love still open kept,
 That they might see each other while they almost slept; 25
 When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
 Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
 Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
 But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
 For the first time, since first he harbour'd in 30
 That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
 His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
 Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
 The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
 Saw this with pain, so arguing a want 35
 Of something more, more than her empery
 Of joys ; and she began to moan and sigh
 Because he mus'd beyond her, knowing well
 That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.
 " Why do you sigh, fair creature ? " whisper'd he : 40
 " Why do you think ? " return'd she tenderly :
 " You have deserted me ;—where am I now ?
 " Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow :
 " No, no, you have dismiss'd me ; and I go
 " From your breast houseless : aye, it must be so." 45
 He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
 Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,
 " My silver planet, both of eve and morn !
 " Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
 " While I am striving how to fill my heart 50
 " With deeper crimson, and a double smart ?
 " How to entangle, trammel up and snare
 " Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
 " Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose ?
 " Aye, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes. 55

" My thoughts ! shall I unveil them ? Listen then !
 " What mortal hath a prize, that other men
 " May be confounded and abash'd withal,
 " But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
 " And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice 60
 " Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
 " Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
 " While through the thronged streets your bridal car
 " Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek
 Trembled ; she nothing said, but, pale and meek, 65
 Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
 Of sorrows at his words ; at last with pain
 Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
 To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim :
 Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
 Against his better self, he took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue 75
 Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike
 The serpent—Ha, the serpent ! certes, she 80
 Was none. She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,
 And, all subdu'd, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
 " Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my
 truth, 85
 " I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
 " Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
 " As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
 " Fit appellation for this dazzling frame ?

" Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth, 90
 " To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth ?"
 " I have no friends," said Lamia, " no, not one ;
 " My presence in wide Corinth hardly known :
 " My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 " Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns, 95
 " Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
 " And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
 " Even as you list invite your many guests ;
 " But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 " With any pleasure on me, do not bid 100
 " Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
 Made close inquiry ; from whose touch she shrank,
 Feigning a sleep ; and he to the dull shade
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd. 105

It was the custom then to bring away
 The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
 Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
 By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
 With other pageants : but this fair unknown 110
 Had not a friend. So being left alone,
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin)
 And knowing surely she could never win
 His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
 She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress 115
 The misery in fit magnificence.
 She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
 Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
 About the halls, and to and from the doors,
 There was a noise of wings, till in short space 120
 The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched
 grace.
 A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone

Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
 Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
 Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade 125
 Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
 High in the midst, in honor of the bride :
 Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
 From either side their stems branch'd one to one
 All down the aisled place ; and beneath all 130
 There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to
 wall.

So canopy'd, lay an untasted feast
 Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
 Silently pac'd about, and as she went,
 In pale contented sort of discontent, 135
 Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
 The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
 Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
 Came jasper pannels ; then, anon, there burst
 Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, 140
 And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
 Approving all, she faded at self-will,
 And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
 Complete and ready for the revels rude,
 When dreadful guests would come to spoil her
 solitude. 145

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
 O senseless Lycius ! Madman ! wherefore flout
 The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
 And show to common eyes these secret bowers ?
 The herd approach'd ; each guest, with busy brain, 150
 Arriving at the portal, gaz'd amain,
 And enter'd marveling : for they knew the street,
 Remember'd it from childhood all complete
 Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen

That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne ; 155
 So in they hurried all, maz'd, curious and keen :
 Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
 And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere ;
 'Twas Apollonius : something too he laugh'd,
 As though some knotty problem, that had daft 160
 His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
 And solve and melt :—'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
 His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,
 " Lycius," said he, " for uninvited guest 165
 " To force himself upon you, and infest
 " With an unbidden presence the bright throng
 " Of younger friends ; yet must I do this wrong,
 " And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led
 The old man through the inner doors broad-spread ; 170
 With reconciling words and courteous mien
 Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
 Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume :
 Before each lucid pannel fuming stood 175
 A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
 Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
 Whose slender feet wide-swerv'd upon the soft
 Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke
 From fifty censers their light voyage took 180
 To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
 Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
 Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats inspher'd,
 High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
 On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold 185
 Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
 Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine



THE WEDDING GUESTS OF LYCIUS AND LAMIA—Page 225.

Come from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
 Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
 Each shrining in the midst the image of a God. 190

When in an antichamber every guest
 Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
 By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,
 And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
 Pour'd on his hair, they all mov'd to the feast 195
 In white robes, and themselves in order plac'd
 Around the silken couches, wondering
 Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could
 spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
 While fluent Greek a vowel'd undersong 200
 Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
 At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;
 But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
 Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
 Of powerful instruments :—the gorgeous dyes, 205
 The space, the splendour of the draperies,
 The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
 Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
 Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
 And every soul from human trammels freed, 210
 No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,
 Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
 Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright :
 Garlands of every green, and every scent 215
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought

Of every guest ; that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?
What for the sage, old Apollonius ?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him 225
The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
Into forgetfulness ; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy ? 230
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :
We know her woof, her texture ; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, 235
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face, 240
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher 245
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet
pride.
Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch : 250

'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins ;
 Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
 Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
 " Lamia, what means this ? Wherefore dost thou start ?
 " Know'st thou that man ? " Poor Lamia answer'd not.
 He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot 256
 Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal :
 More, more he gaz'd : his human senses reel :
 Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs ;
 There was no recognition in those orbs. 260
 " Lamia ! " he cry'd—and no soft-ton'd reply.
 The many heard, and the loud revelry
 Grew hush ; the stately music no more breathes ;
 The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
 By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased ; 265
 A deadly silence step by step increased,
 Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
 And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
 " Lamia ! " he shriek'd ; and nothing but the shriek
 With its sad echo did the silence break. 270
 " Begone, foul dream ! " he cry'd, gazing again
 In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
 Wander'd on fair-spac'd temples ; no soft bloom
 Misted the cheek ; no passion to illumine
 The deep-recessed vision :—all was blight ; 275
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
 " Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man !
 " Turn them aside, wretch ! or the righteous ban
 " Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
 " Here represent their shadowy presences, 280
 " May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
 " Of painful blindness ; leaving thee forlorn,
 " In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
 " Of conscience, for their long offended might,
 " For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries, 285

"Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
 "Corinthians! look upon that grey-beard wretch!
 "Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
 "Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
 "My sweet bride withers at their potency." 290
 "Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-tone
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
 He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 "Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still 295
 Relented not, nor mov'd; "from every ill
 "Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
 "And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?"
 Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly, 300
 Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging: she, as well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
 "A serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said, 305
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
 And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
 On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
 Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found, 310
 And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.



LAMIA VANISHES—Page 228.

ISABELLA,

OR,

THE POT OF BASIL.

▲ STORY FROM BOCCACCIO.

ISABELLA ;

OR,

THE POT OF BASIL.

I.

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel !

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady ;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well
It soothed each to be the other by ;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still ;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
 Before the door had given her to his eyes ;
 And from her chamber-window he would catch
 Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ;
 And constant as her vespers would he watch,
 Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :
 "To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
 "To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—
 "O may I never see another night,
 "Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."—
 So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain :
 "How ill she is," said he, "I may not speak,
 "And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :
 "If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
 "And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray
 For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide

Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away—
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

VII.

So once more he had wak'd and anguished
 A dreary night of love and misery,
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
 And straight all flush'd ; so, lisped tenderly,
 " Lorenzo !"—here she ceas'd her timid quest,
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII.

" O Isabella, I can half perceive
 " That I may speak my grief into thine ear ;
 " If thou didst ever any thing believe,
 " Believe how I love thee, believe how near
 " My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve
 " Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
 " Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live
 " Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX.

" Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
 " Lady ! thou ledest me to summer clime,
 " And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
 " In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
 So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
 And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme :
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
 Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
 Only to meet again more close, and share
 The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
 She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
 Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart ;
 He with light steps went up a western hill,
 And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
 Ah ! better had it been for ever so,
 Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then ?—It cannot be—
 Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
 Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
 Too much of pity after they are dead,
 Too many doleful stories do we see,
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;
 Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
 Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
 And Isabella's was a great distress,

Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
 Enriched from ancestral merchandize,
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt
 In torched mines and noisy factories,
 And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
 In blood from stinging whip ;—with hollow eyes
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,
 To take the rich-or'd driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
 And went all naked to the hungry shark ;
 For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
 Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI.

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears ?—
 Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs ?—
 Why were they proud ? Because red-lin'd accounts
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ?—
 Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
 Pal'd in and vineyarded from beggar-spies;
 The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest?
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
 A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest
 Into their vision covetous and sly!
 How could these money-bags see east and west?—
 Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
 And of thy lillies, that do paler grow
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,
 For venturing syllables that ill beseem
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;
 There is no other crime, no mad assail
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:

But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—
To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs
What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines
His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad
That he, the servant of their trade designs,
Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,
And many times they bit their lips alone,
Before they fix'd upon a surest way
To make the youngster for his crime atone ;
And at the last, these men of cruel clay
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;
For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
Their footing through the dews ; and to him said,
“ You seem there in the quiet of content,
“ Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
“ Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,
“ Bstride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

“To-day we purpose, aye, this hour we mount
 “To spur three leagues towards the Apennine;
 “Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
 “His dewy rosary on the eglantine.”

Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
 Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine;
 And went in haste, to get in readiness,
 With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
 Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
 If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
 Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;
 And as he thus over his passion hung,
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft;
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright
 Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

XXVI.

“Love, Isabel!” said he, “I was in pain
 “Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow:
 “Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
 “I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
 “Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll gain
 “Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
 “Good bye! I'll soon be back.”—“Good bye!” said she:—
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
 Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream
 Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan
 Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream

Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan
 The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
 Lorenzo's flush with love.—They pass'd the water
 Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
 There in that forest did his great love cease;
 Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
 It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace
 As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin:
 They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease
 Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
 Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,
 Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
 Because of some great urgency and need
 In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
 Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
 And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands;
 To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
 And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;
 Sorely she wept until the night came on,
 And then, instead of love, O misery!
 She brooded o'er the luxury alone:
 His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
 And on her couch low murmuring "Where? O where?"

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast ;
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
 Upon the time with feverish unrest—
 Not long—for soon into her heart a throng
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
 Came tragic ; passion not to be subdu'd,
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eyes
 The breath of Winter comes from far away,
 And the sick west continually bereaves
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
 Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
 To make all bare before he dares to stray
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
 Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale
 Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
 Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;
 And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance
 But for a thing more deadly dark than all ;
 It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
 Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall

For some few gasping moments ; like a lance,
 Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
 With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
 Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,
 The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
 I.orenzo stood, and wept : the forest tomb
 Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake ;
 For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,
 And Isabella on its music hung :
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
 As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;
 And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof
 Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite
 Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof
 In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,
 Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, "Isabel, my sweet!

"Red whortle-berries droop above my head
 "And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;
 "Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
 "Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat
 "Comes from beyond the river to my bed:
 "Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
 "And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

"I am a shadow now, alas! alas!
 "Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling
 "Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,
 "While little sounds of life are round me knelling,
 "And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
 "And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,
 "Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,
 "And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

"I know what was, I feel full well what is,
 "And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;
 "Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
 "That paleness warms my grave, as though I had
 "A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss
 "To be my spouse: thy paleness makes me glad;
 "Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
 "A greater love through all my essence steal."

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"—dissolv'd, and left
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,

We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil :
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
 And in the dawn she started up awake ;

XLII.

"Ha! ha!" said she, "I knew not this hard life,
 "I thought the worst was simple misery ;
 "I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
 "Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die ;
 "But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife !
 "Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy :
 "I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
 "And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised
 How she might secret to the forest hie ;
 How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,
 And sing to it one latest lullaby ;
 How her short absence might be unsurmised,
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.
 Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side,
 How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,
 And, after looking round the champaign wide,
 Shows her a knife.—"What feverous hectic flame
 "Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,
 "That thou should'st smile again?"—The evening came,
 And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed ;
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,
 And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,
 Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
 To see scull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole ;
 Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
 And filling it once more with human soul ?
 Ah ! this is holiday to what was felt
 When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI.

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
 One glance did fully all its secrets tell ;
 Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
 Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well ;
 Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,
 Like to a native lilly of the dell :
 Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
 To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
 Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies,
 She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
 And put it in her bosom, where it dries
 And freezes utterly unto the bone
 Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :
 Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care,
 But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
 Until her heart felt pity to the core
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,
 And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,

And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :
 Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ?
 Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
 To speak :—O turn thee to the very tale,
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
 They cut away no formless monster's head,
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
 'Twas love ; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethron'd.

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
 And then the prize was all for Isabel :
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash ; the smeared loam
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away :—and still she comb'd, and kept
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—
 She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze ;
 She had no knowledge when the day was done,
 And the new morn she saw not : but in peace
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
 Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
 So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
 Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew
 Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
 From the fast mouldering head there shut from view :
 So that the jewel, safely casketed,
 Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
 O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
 Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !

Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;
 Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ;
 For simple Isabel is soon to be
 Among the dead : She withers, like a palm
 Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour !—
 It may not be—those Baälites of pelf,
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower
 From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,
 Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
 Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
 By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
 Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
 And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;
 Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean :
 They could not surely give belief, that such
 A very nothing would have power to wean
 Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
 And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
 This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;
 For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
 And seldom felt she any hunger-pain ;
 And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
 As bird on wing to breast its eggs again ;
 And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
 Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,
 And to examine it in secret place :
 The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :
 The guerdon of their murder they had got,
 And so left Florence in a moment's space,
 Never to turn again.—Away they went,
 With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
 From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !
 Spirits of grief, sing not your " Well-a-way !"
 For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
 Asking for her lost Basil amorously ;
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings
 Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry

After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was ; and why
'Twas hid from her : " For cruel 'tis," said she,
" To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

LXIII.

And so she pin'd, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd:
Still is the burthen sung—" O cruelty,
" To steal my Basil-pot away from me !"

THE

EVE OF ST. AGNES.

THE

EVE OF ST. AGNES.

I.

ST. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue

Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;
 But no—already had his deathbell rung ;
 The joys of all his life were said and sung :
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
 The carved angels, ever eager-ey'd,
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
 breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
 The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,

If ceremonies due they did aright ;
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lilly white ;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,
 But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere :
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amort,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,

That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

X.

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
 " They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

XII.

" Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ;
 " He had a fever late, and in the fit
 " He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
 " Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 " More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me ! flit !
 " Flit like a ghost away."—" Ah, Gossip dear,
 " We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,

“And tell me how”—“Good Saints! not here, not here;
“Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.”

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd “Well-a—well-a-day!”
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
“Now tell me where is Madeline,” said he,
“O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
“Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
“When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously.”

XIV.

“St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
“Yet men will murder upon holy days:
“Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
“And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
“To venture so: it fills me with amaze
“To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
“God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
“This very night: good angels her deceive!
“But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve.”

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook

Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot : then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
“ A cruel man and impious thou art :
“ Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
“ Alone with her good angels, far apart
“ From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
“ Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.”

XVII.

“ I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,”
Quoth Porphyro : “ O may I ne'er find grace
“ When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
“ If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
“ Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
“ Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
“ Or I will, even in a moment's space,
“ Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
“ And beard them, though they be more fang'd than
wolves and bears.”

XVIII.

“ Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
“ A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
“ Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
“ Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
“ Were never miss'd.”—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,

That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unesp'y'd,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-ey'd.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
"Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
"Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
"For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
"On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
"Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
"The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
"Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
 kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
 Loosens her fragrant boddice ; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress,

And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast she
 slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :—
 The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,

Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
 “And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 “Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
 “Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes’ sake,
 “Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains:—’twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
 It seem’d he never, never could redeem
 From such a stedfast spell his lady’s eyes;
 So mus’d awhile, entoil’d in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He play’d an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call’d, “La belle dame sans mercy:”
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturb’d, she utter’d a soft moan:
 He ceas’d—she panted quick—and suddenly
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell’d
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;

Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

“ Ah, Porphyro !” said she, “ but even now
“ Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
“ Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
“ And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
“ How chang'd thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !
“ Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
“ Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
“ Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
“ For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.”

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
“ This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline ! ”
'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
“ No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
“ Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
“ Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
“ I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
“ Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
“ A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.”

XXXVIII.

" My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
 " Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
 " Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dy'd?
 " Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 " After so many hours of toil and quest,
 " A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.
 " Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 " Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
 " To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX.

" Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
 " Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
 " Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
 " The bloated wassaillers will never heed:—
 " Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
 " There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
 " Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
 " Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
 " For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;

Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flaggon by his side :
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

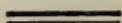
XLII.

And they are gone : aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

P O E M S.

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P O E M S.



ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singing of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O, for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth ;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-ey'd despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4.

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
Already with thee ! tender is the night,

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;

But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
ways.

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

6.

Darkling I listen ; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy !
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

7.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

8.

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music :—Do I wake or sleep ?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

I.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
 What men or gods are these ? What maidens loth ?
 What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
 What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ?

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve ;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

3.

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new ;

More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young ;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

5.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO PSYCHE.

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear :
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see 5
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes ?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
 In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof 10
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espy'd :

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-ey'd,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass ; 15
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber
 At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love : 20
 The winged boy I knew ;
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?
 His Psyche true !

O latest born and loveliest vision far
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy ! 25
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;
 Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30
 Upon the midnight hours ;
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming ;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming. 35

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;
 Yet even in these days so far retir'd 40
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours ; 45
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swung censer teeming ;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane 50
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant
 pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ; 55
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain, 60
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win, 65
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in !

FANCY.

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home :
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
 Then let winged Fancy wander 5
 Through the thought still spread beyond her :
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 10
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming ;
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting : What do then ? 15
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear faggot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night ;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the caked snow is shuffled 20

From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad, 25
 With a mind self-overaw'd,
 Fancy, high-commission'd :—send her !
 She has vassals to attend her :
 She will bring, in spite of frost,
 Beauties that the earth hath lost ; 30
 She will bring thee, all together,
 All delights of summer weather ;
 All the buds and bells of May,
 From dewy sward or thorny spray ;
 All the heaped Autumn's wealth, 35
 With a still, mysterious stealth :
 She will mix these pleasures up
 Like three fit wines in a cup,
 And thou shalt quaff it :—thou shalt hear
 Distant harvest-carols clear ; 40
 Rustle of the reaped corn ;
 Sweet birds antheming the morn :
 And, in the same moment—hark !
 'Tis the early April lark,
 Or the rooks, with busy caw, 45
 Foraging for sticks and straw.
 Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
 The daisy and the marigold ;
 White-plum'd lillies, and the first
 Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ; 50
 Shaded hyacinth, alway
 Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
 And every leaf, and every flower
 Pearled with the self-same shower.
 Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep 55

Meagre from its celled sleep ;
 And the snake all winter-thin
 Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
 Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
 Hatching in the hawthorn-tree, 60
 When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest ;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;
 Acorns ripe down-pattering, 65
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Every thing is spoilt by use :
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gaz'd at ? Where's the maid 70
 Whose lip mature is ever new ?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary ? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place ?
 Where's the voice, however soft, 75
 One would hear so very oft ?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, winged Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind : 80
 Dulcet-ey'd as Ceres' daughter,
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide ;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone 85
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh

Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again ;
And the souls ye left behind you 25
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week ; 30
Of their sorrows and delights ;
Of their passions and their spites ;
Of their glory and their shame ;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day, 35
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-liv'd in regions new ! 40

LINES

ON

THE MERMAID TAVERN.

SOULS of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?

Have ye tippled drink more fine 5
 Than mine host's Canary wine?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison? O generous food!
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood 10
 Would, with his maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,
 Nobody knew whither, till 15
 An astrologer's old quill
 To a sheepskin gave the story,
 Said he saw you in your glory,
 Underneath a new old-sign
 Sipping beverage divine, 20
 And pledging with contented smack
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern, 25
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD.

TO A FRIEND.

No! those days are gone away,
 And their hours are old and gray,
 And their minutes buried all
 Under the down-trodden pall

Of the leaves of many years : 5
 Many times have winter's shears,
 Frozen North, and chilling East,
 Sounded tempests to the feast
 Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
 Since men knew nor rent nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
 And the twanging bow no more ;
 Silent is the ivory shrill
 Past the heath and up the hill ;
 There is no mid-forest laugh, 15
 Where lone Echo gives the half
 To some wight, amaz'd to hear
 Jestings, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
 You may go, with sun or moon, 20
 Or the seven stars to light you,
 Or the polar ray to right you ;
 But you never may behold
 Little John, or Robin bold ;
 Never one, of all the clan, 25
 Thrumming on an empty can
 Some old hunting ditty, while
 He doth his green way beguile
 To fair hostess Merriment,
 Down beside the pasture Trent ; 30
 For he left the merry tale
 Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din ;
 Gone, the song of Gamelyn ;
 Gone, the tough-belted outlaw 35
 Idling in the "grenè shawe ;"

All are gone away and past !
 And if Robin should be cast
 Sudden from his turfed grave,
 And if Marian should have 40
 Once again her forest days,
 She would weep, and he would craze :
 He would swear, for all his oaks,
 Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
 Have rotted on the briny seas ; 45
 She would weep that her wild bees
 Sang not to her—strange ! that honey
 Can't be got without hard money !

So it is : yet let us sing,
 Honour to the old bow-string ! 50
 Honour to the bugle-horn !
 Honour to the woods unshorn !
 Honour to the Lincoln green !
 Honour to the archer keen !
 Honour to tight little John, 55
 And the horse he rode upon !
 Honour to bold Robin Hood,
 Sleeping in the underwood !
 Honour to maid Marian,
 And to all the Sherwood-clan ! 60
 Though their days have hurried by
 Let us two a burden try.

TO AUTUMN.

I.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run ;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

2.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

3.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
 Hedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

I.

NO, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine ;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine ;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries ;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

2.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud ;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave

Or on the wealth of globed peonies ;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

3.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die ;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
 tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

HYPERION.

A FRAGMENT.

HYPERION.

BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair ; 5
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went, 15
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unseptr'd ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth, 20
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
 But there came one, who with a kindred hand
 Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
 With reverence, though to one who knew it not. 25
 She was a Goddess of the infant world ;
 By her in stature the tall Amazon
 Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;
 Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30
 Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
 Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made 35
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun ;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck 45
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
 Would come in these like accents ; O how frail 50
 To that large utterance of the early Gods !
 " Saturn, look up !—though wherefore, poor old King ?
 " I have no comfort for thee, no not one :
 " I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ?'
 " For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth 55
 " Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;

" And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 " Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
 " Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 " Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60
 " Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
 " And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands
 " Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
 " O aching time ! O moments big as years !
 " All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth, 65
 " And press it so upon our weary griefs
 " That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
 " Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I
 " Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
 " Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70
 " Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir, 75
 Save from one gradual solitary gust
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;
 So came these words and went ; the while in tears
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground, 80
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,
 And still these two were postured motionless, 85
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, 90

And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake,
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :
 " O tender spouse of gold Hyperion, 95
 " Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;
 " Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;
 " Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
 " Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
 " Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow, 100
 " Naked and bare of its great diadem,
 " Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
 " To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?
 " How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
 " While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp ? 105
 " But it is so ; and I am smother'd up,
 " And buried from all godlike exercise
 " Of influence benign on planets pale,
 " Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
 " Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting, 110
 " And all those acts which Deity supreme
 " Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
 " Away from my own bosom : I have left
 " My strong identity, my real self,
 " Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit 115
 " Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !
 " Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
 " Upon all space : space starr'd, and lorn of light ;
 " Space region'd with life-air ; and barren void ;
 " Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.— 120
 " Search, Thea, search ! and tell me, if thou seest
 " A certain shape or shadow, making way
 " With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 " A heaven he lost erewhile : it must—it must
 " Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King. 125

" Yes, there must be a golden victory ;
 " There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
 " Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
 " Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 " Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130
 " Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be
 " Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 " Of the sky-children ; I will give command :
 " Thea ! Thea ! Thea ! where is Saturn ? "

This passion lifted him upon his feet, 135
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd 140
 Utterance thus.—" But cannot I create ?
 " Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth
 " Another world, another universe,
 " To overbear and crumble this to nought ?
 " Where is another chaos ? Where ?"—That word 145
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
 The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

" This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends,
 " O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ; 151
 " I know the covert, for thence came I hither."
 Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went
 With backward footing through the shade a space :
 He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way 155
 Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
 Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe : 150
 The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
 Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
 And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
 But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
 His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty ;— 165
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
 Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
 From man to the sun's God ; yet unsecure :
 For as among us mortals omens drear
 Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he— 170
 Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
 Or the familiar visiting of one
 Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
 But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve, 175
 Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
 Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
 Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ; 180
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
 Flush'd angerly : while sometimes eagle's wings,
 Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
 Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,
 Not heard before by Gods or wondering men. 185
 Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
 Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
 Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
 And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west, 190
 After the full completion of fair day,—
 For rest divine upon exalted couch

And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ; 195
 While far within each aisle and deep recess,
 His winged minions in close clusters stood,
 Amaz'd and full of fear ; like anxious men
 Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 200
 Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
 Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
 Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;
 Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope 205
 In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
 Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
 And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210
 That inlet to severe magnificence
 Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire, 215
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades, 220
 Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;
 There standing fierce beneath, he stampt his foot,
 And from the basements deep to the high towers
 Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before
 The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd, 225
 His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,

To this result : " O dreams of day and night !
 " O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !
 " O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !
 " O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools ! 230
 " Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why
 " Is my eternal essence thus distraught
 " To see and to behold these horrors new ?
 " Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?
 " Am I to leave this haven of my rest, 235
 " This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
 " This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
 " These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
 " Of all my lucent empire ? It is left
 " Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240
 " The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,
 " I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
 " Even here, into my centre of repose,
 " The shady visions come to domineer,
 " Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.— 245
 " Fall !—No, by Tellus and her briny robes !
 " Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 " I will advance a terrible right arm
 " Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
 " And bid old Saturn take his throne again."— 250
 He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
 Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;
 For as in theatres of crowded men
 Hubbub increases more they call out " Hush !"
 So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale 255
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
 At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown, 260
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular

Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush, 265
He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through, 270
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark 275
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-ey'd astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries : 280
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach : 285
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspread were ;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne 290
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not :—No, though a primeval God :
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told. 295
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,

Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;
 And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
 Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent 300
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars 305
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
 " O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
 " And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310
 " All unrevealed even to the powers
 " Which met at thy creating ; at whose joys
 " And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
 " I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence ;
 " And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be, 315
 " Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,
 " Manifestations of that beauteous life
 " Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space :
 " Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child !
 " Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses ! 320
 " There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
 " Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 " I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !
 " To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
 " Found way from forth the thunders round his head !
 " Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face. 326
 " Art thou, too, near such doom ? vague fear there is :
 " For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
 " Divine ye were created, and divine
 " In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd. 330
 " Unruffled, like high Gods. ye liv'd and ruled :

" Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;
 " Actions of rage and passion ; even as
 " I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
 " In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son ! 335
 " Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !
 " Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,
 " As thou canst move about, an evident God ;
 " And canst oppose to each malignant hour
 " Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice ; 340
 " My life is but the life of winds and tides,
 " No more than winds and tides can I avail :—
 " But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
 " Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb
 " Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth ! 345
 " For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
 " Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
 " And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
 Until it ceas'd ; and still he kept them wide :
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas, 355
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place

Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
 It was a den where no insulting light 5
 Could glimmer on their tears ; where their own groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;
 And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
 Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
 Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon, 15
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
 Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :
 Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20
 With many more, the brawniest in assault,
 Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;
 Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
 Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
 Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd ; 25
 Without a motion, save of their big hearts
 Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
 With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;
 Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered ; 30
 And many else were free to roam abroad,
 But for the main, here found they covert drear.
 Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
 Lay vast and edgeways ; like a dismal cirque
 Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor, 35
 When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
 In dull November, and their chancel vault,
 The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.

Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
 Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40
 Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace
 Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
 Iäpetus another ; in his grasp,
 A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue 45
 Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
 Dead ; and because the creature could not spit
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
 Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,
 As though in pain ; for still upon the flint 50
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
 Though feminine, than any of her sons : 55
 More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
 For she was prophesying of her glory ;
 And in her wide imagination stood
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60
 Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
 Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else, 65
 Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wrath,
 He meditated, plotted, and even now
 Was hurling mountains in that second war, 70
 Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods
 To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
 Not far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone

Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
 Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap 75
 Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
 In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
 Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;
 No shape distinguishable, more than when
 Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds : 80
 And many else whose names may not be told.
 For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
 Who shall delay her flight? And she must chaunt
 Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
 With damp and slippery footing from a depth 85
 More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
 Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
 Till on the level height their steps found ease :
 Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
 Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90
 And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face :
 There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God
 At war with all the frailty of grief,
 Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
 Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair. 95
 Against these plagues he strove in vain ; for Fate
 Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
 A disanointing poison : so that Thea,
 Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
 First onwards in, among the fallen tribe. 100

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
 Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
 When it is nighing to the mournful house
 Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;
 So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst, 105
 Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
 But that he met Enceiadus's eye,

Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
 Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,
 "Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd ; 110
 Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;
 Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;
 And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
 Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
 Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes. 115
 There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
 When Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise
 Among immortals when a God gives sign,
 With hushing finger, how he means to load
 His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought, 120
 With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines ;
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
 No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom 125
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
 Thus grew it up—"Not in my own sad breast,
 "Which is its own great judge and searcher out, 130
 "Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 "Not in the legends of the first of days,
 "Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
 "Which starry Uranus with finger bright
 "Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves 135
 "Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom ;—
 "And the which book ye know I ever kept
 "For my firm-based footstool :—Ah, infirm !
 "Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
 "Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,— 140
 "At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
 "One against one, or two, or three, or all

" Each several one against the other three,
 " As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
 " Drown both, and press them both against earth's
 face, 145
 " Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
 " Unhinges the poor world ;—not in that strife,
 " Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
 " Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 " No, no-where can unriddle, though I search, 150
 " And pore on Nature's universal scroll
 " Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
 " The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,
 " Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
 " Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here, 155
 " O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here !
 " O Titans, shall I say, ' Arise ! '—Ye groan :
 " Shall I say ' Crouch ! '—Ye groan. What can I then ?
 " O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !
 " What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods, 160
 " How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
 " O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
 " Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
 " Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
 " I see, astonied, that severe content 165
 " Which comes of thought and musing : give us help ! "

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
 But cogitation in his watery shades,
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
 " O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
 " Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !
 " Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears, 175

" My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
 " Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
 " How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
 " And in the proof much comfort will I give,
 " If ye will take that comfort in its truth. 180
 " We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
 " Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
 " Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;
 " But for this reason, that thou art the King,
 " And only blind from sheer supremacy, 185
 " One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
 " Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
 " And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
 " So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :
 " Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190
 " From chaos and parental darkness came
 " Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
 " That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
 " Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
 " And with it light, and light, engendering 195
 " Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
 " The whole enormous matter into life.
 " Upon that very hour, our parentage,
 " The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
 " Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race, 200
 " Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
 " Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain ;
 " O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
 " And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
 " That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well ! 205
 " As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
 " Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;
 " And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
 " In form and shape compact and beautiful,
 " In will, in action free, companionship, 210

" And thousand other signs of purer life ;
 " So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
 " A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 " And fated to excel us, as we pass
 " In glory that old Darkness : nor are we 215
 " Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
 " Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
 " Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
 " And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
 " Can it deny the chieftom of green groves ? 220
 " Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
 " Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
 " To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?
 " We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
 " Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves, 225
 " But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
 " Above us in their beauty, and must reign
 " In right thereof ; for 'tis the eternal law
 " That first in beauty should be first in might :
 " Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230
 " Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
 " Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
 " My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?
 " Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
 " By noble winged creatures he hath made ? 235
 " I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
 " With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
 " That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
 " To all my empire : farewell sad I took,
 " And hither came, to see how dolorous fate 240
 " Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
 " Give consolation in this woe extreme.
 " Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through poz'd conviction, or disdain,

They guarded silence, when Oceanus 245
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild, 250
Thus wording timidly among the fierce :
“ O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
“ And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
“ And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
“ There to remain for ever, as I fear : 255
“ I would not bode of evil, if I thought
“ So weak a creature could turn off the help
“ Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;
“ Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
“ Of what I heard, and how it made me weep, 260
“ And know that we had parted from all hope.
“ I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
“ Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
“ Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
“ Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ; 265
“ Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;
“ So that I felt a movement in my heart
“ To chide, and to reproach that solitude
“ With songs of misery, music of our woes ;
“ And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell 270
“ And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
“ O melody no more ! for while I sang,
“ And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
“ The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
“ Just opposite, an island of the sea, 275
“ There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
“ That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
“ I threw my shell away upon the sand,
“ And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd

" With that new blissful golden melody. 280
 " A living death was in each gush of sounds,
 " Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
 " That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
 " Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string :
 " And then another, then another strain, 285
 " Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
 " With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
 " To hover round my head, and make me sick
 " Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
 " And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290
 " When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
 " A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
 " And still it cry'd, ' Apollo ! young Apollo !
 " ' The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo !'
 " I fled, it follow'd me, and cry'd ' Apollo !' 295
 " O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
 " Those pains of mine ; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
 " Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
 " Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook 300
 That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
 Doth fear to meet the sea : but sea it met,
 And shudder'd ; for the overwhelming voice
 Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath :
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves 305
 In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
 He lean'd ; not rising, from supreme contempt.
 " Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
 " Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods ? 310
 " Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
 " That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
 " Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,

- " Could agonize me more than baby-words
 " In midst of this dethronement horrible. 315
 " Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
 " Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
 " Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
 " Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
 " Thy scalding in the seas? What, have I rous'd 320
 " Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
 " O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
 " O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
 " Wide glaring for revenge!"—As this he said,
 He lifted up his stature vast, and stood, 325
 Still without intermission speaking thus:
 " Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
 " And purge the ether of our enemies;
 " How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
 " And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330
 " Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
 " O let him feel the evil he hath done;
 " For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
 " Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
 " The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled; 335
 " Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 " When all the fair Existences of heaven
 " Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—
 " That was before our brows were taught to frown,
 " Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds; 340
 " That was before we knew the winged thing,
 " Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
 " And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
 " Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
 " Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!" 345

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name

Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern :
Not savage, for he saw full many a God 350
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove. 355
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade, 365
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion :—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East : 375
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380
And many hid their faces from the light :
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes

Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
 Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
 And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode 385
 To where he towered on his eminence.
 There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;
 Hyperion from the peak loud answered, " Saturn !"
 Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
 In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods 390
 Gave from their hollow throats the name of " Saturn ! "

BOOK III.

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,
 Amazed were those Titans utterly.
 O leave them, Muse ! O leave them to their woes ;
 For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire :
 A solitary sorrow best befits 5
 Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
 Leave them, O Muse ! for thou anon wilt find
 Many a fallen old Divinity
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
 Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp, 10
 And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
 In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute ;
 For lo ! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
 Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
 Let the rose glow intense and warm the air, 15
 And let the clouds of even and of morn
 Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills ;
 Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
 Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipp'd shells,
 On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn 20

Through all their labyrinths ; and let the maid
 Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.
 Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
 Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
 And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech, 25
 In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
 And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade :
 Apollo is once more the golden theme !
 Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
 Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers ? 30
 Together had he left his mother fair
 And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
 And in the morning twilight wandered forth
 Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
 Full ankle-deep in lillies of the vale. 35
 The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
 There was no covert, no retired cave
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves, 40
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by 45
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
 And there was purport in her looks for him,
 Which he with eager guess began to read
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :
 " How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea ? 50
 " Or hath that antique mien and robed form
 " Mov'd in these vales invisible till now ?
 " Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
 " The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
 " In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced 55

" The rustle of those ample skirts about
 " These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
 " Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
 " Goddess ! I have beheld those eyes before,
 " And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60
 " Or I have dream'd."—" Yes," said the supreme shape,
 " Thou hast dream'd of me ; and awaking up
 " Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 " Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
 " Unwearied ear of the whole universe 65
 " Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 " Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
 " That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,
 " What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad
 " When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs 70
 " To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 " The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
 " From the young day when first thy infant hand
 " Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
 " Could bend that bow heroic to all times. 75
 " Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
 " Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
 " For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
 " Of loveliness new born."—Apollo then,
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
 Throbb'd with the syllables.—" Mnemosyne !
 " Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;
 " Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?
 " Why should I strive to show what from thy lips 85
 " Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,
 " And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :
 " I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
 " Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;
 " And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90

" Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
 " Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
 " Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I
 " Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?
 " Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing : 95
 " Are there not other regions than this isle ?
 " What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !
 " And the most patient brilliance of the moon !
 " And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way
 " To any one particular beauteous star, 100
 " And I will flit into it with my lyre,
 " And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
 " I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?
 " Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
 " Makes this alarum in the elements, 105
 " While I here idle listen on the shores
 " In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?
 " O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 " That wailleth every morn and eventide,
 " Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves ! 110
 " Mute thou remainest—Mute ! yet I can read
 " A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :
 " Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 " Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,
 " Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, 115
 " Creations and destroyings, all at once
 " Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 " And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 " Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 " And so become immortal."—Thus the God, 120
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs ; 125

Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life : so young Apollo anguish'd : 130
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
 Apollo shriek'd ;—and lo ! from all his limbs 135
 Celestial * * * * *
 * * * * *

HYPERION, A VISION:

ATTEMPTED RECONSTRUCTION OF THE POEM.

FANATICS have their dreams, wherewith they weave
 A paradise for a sect ; the savage, too,
 From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
 Guesses at heaven ; pity these have not
 Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf 5
 The shadows of melodious utterance,
 But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die ;
 For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
 With the fine spell of words alone can save
 Imagination from the sable chain 10
 And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,
 "Thou art no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams?"
 Since every man whose soul is not a clod
 Hath visions and would speak, if he had loved,
 And been well nurtured in his mother tongue. 15

Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse
 Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
 When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
 Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech, 20
 With plantane and spice-blossoms, made a screen,
 In neighbourhood of fountains (by the noise
 Soft-showering in mine ears), and (by the touch
 Of scent) not far from roses. Twining round
 I saw an arbour with a drooping roof 25
 Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
 Like floral censers, swinging light in air ;
 Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
 Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,
 Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal 30
 By angel tasted or our Mother Eve ;
 For empty shells were scatter'd on the grass,
 And grapestalks but half-bare, and remnants more
 Sweet-smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.
 Still was more plenty than the fabled horn 35
 Thrice emptied could pour forth at banqueting,
 For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,
 Where the white heifers low. And appetite,
 More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
 Growing within, I ate deliciously,— 40
 And, after not long, thirsted ; for thereby
 Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice
 Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,
 And pledging all the mortals of the world,
 And all the dead whose names are in our lips, 45
 Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.
 No Asian poppy nor elixir fine
 Of the soon-fading, jealous, Caliphat,
 No poison gender'd in close monkish cell,

To thin the scarlet conclave of old men, 50
 Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
 Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd
 Upon the grass, I struggled hard against
 The domineering potion, but in vain.
 The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sank, 55
 Like a Silenus on an antique vase.
 How long I slumber'd 'tis a chance to guess.
 When sense of life return'd, I started up
 As if with wings, but the fair trees were gone,
 The mossy mound and arbour were no more : 60
 I look'd around upon the curved sides
 Of an old sanctuary, with roof august,
 Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
 Might spread beneath as o'er the stars of heaven.
 So old the place was, I remember'd none 65
 The like upon the earth : what I had seen
 Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,
 The superannuations of sunk realms,
 Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,
 Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things 70
 To that eternal domed monument.
 Upon the marble at my feet there lay
 Store of strange vessels and large draperies,
 Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
 Or in that place the moth could not corrupt, 75
 So white the linen, so, in some, distinct
 Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
 All in a mingled heap confus'd there lay
 Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing-dish,
 Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries. 80

Turning from these with awe, once more I raised
 My eyes to fathom the space every way :
 The embossed roof, the silent massy range

Of columns north and south, ending in mist
 Of nothing ; then to eastward, where black gates 85
 Were shut against the sunrise evermore ;
 Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off
 An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
 At level of whose feet an altar slept,
 To be approach'd on either side by steps 90
 And marble balustrade, and patient travail
 To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
 Towards the altar sober-pac'd I went,
 Repressing haste as too unholy there ;
 And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine 95
 One ministering ; and there arose a flame
 When in mid-day the sickening east-wind
 Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain
 Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
 And fills the air with so much pleasant health 100
 That even the dying man forgets his shroud ;—
 Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,
 Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
 Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,
 And clouded all the altar with soft smoke ; 105
 From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard
 Language pronounc'd : " If thou canst not ascend
 These steps, die on that marble where thou art.
 Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
 Will parch for lack of nutriment ; thy bones 110
 Will wither in few years, and vanish so
 That not the quickest eye could find a grain
 Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.
 The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,
 And no hand in the universe can turn 115
 Thy hourglass, if these gummed leaves be burnt
 Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps."
 I heard, I look'd : two senses both at once,

So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
 Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed. 120
 Prodigious seem'd the toil ; the leaves were yet
 Burning, when suddenly a palsied chill
 Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
 And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
 Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat. 125
 I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shriek
 Stung my own ears ; I strove hard to escape
 The numbness, strove to gain the lowest step.
 Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace : the cold
 Grew stifling, suffocating at the heart ; 130
 And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.
 One minute before death my ic'd foot touch'd
 The lowest stair ; and, as it touch'd, life seem'd
 To pour in at the toes ; I mounted up
 As once fair angels on a ladder flew 135
 From the green turf to heaven. "Holy Power,"
 Cry'd I, approaching near the horned shrine,
 "What am I that should so be sav'd from death ?
 What am I that another death come not
 To choke my utterance, sacrilegious, here ?" 140
 Then said the veiled shadow : "Thou hast felt
 What 'tis to die and live again before
 Thy fated hour ; that thou hadst power to do so
 Is thine own safety ; thou hast dated on
 Thy doom." "High Prophetess," said I, "purge off, 145
 Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film."
 "None can usurp this height," return'd that shade,
 "But those to whom the miseries of the world
 Are misery, and will not let them rest.
 All else who find a haven in the world, 150
 Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
 If by a chance into this fane they come,
 Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half."

"Are there not thousands in the world," said I,
 Encourag'd by the sooth voice of the shade, 155
 "Who love their fellows even to the death,
 Who feel the giant agony of the world,
 And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
 Labour for mortal good? I sure should see
 Other men here, but I am here alone." 160
 "Those whom thou spakest of are no visionaries,"
 Rejoin'd that voice; "they are no dreamers weak;
 They seek no wonder but the human face,
 No music but a happy-noted voice:
 They come not here, they have no thought to
 come; 165
 And thou art here, for thou art less than they.
 What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
 To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,
 A fever of thyself: think of the earth;
 What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee? 170
 What haven? every creature hath its home,
 Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
 Whether his labours be sublime or low—
 The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct:
 Only the dreamer venoms all his days, 175
 Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.
 Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shared,
 Such things as thou art are admitted oft
 Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,
 And suffer'd in these temples: for that cause 180
 Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees."
 "That I am favour'd for unworthiness,
 By such propitious parley medicined
 In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
 Aye, and could weep for love of such award." 185
 So answer'd I, continuing, "If it please,
 Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,

Whose altar this, for whom this incense curls ;
 What image this whose face I cannot see
 For the broad marble knees ; and who thou art, 190
 Of accent feminine so courteous ? ”

Then the tall shade, in drooping linen veil'd,
 Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
 Stirr'd the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
 About a golden censer from her hand 195
 Pendent ; and by her voice I knew she shed
 Long-treasured tears. “ This temple, sad and lone,
 Is all spar'd from the thunder of a war
 Foughten long since by giant hierarchy
 Against rebellion : this old image here, 200
 Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,
 Is Saturn's ; I, Moneta, left supreme,
 Sole goddess of this desolation.”
 I had no words to answer, for my tongue,
 Useless, could find about its roofed home 205
 No syllable of a fit majesty
 To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn :
 There was a silence, while the altar's blaze
 Was fainting for sweet food. I look'd thereon,
 And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled 210
 Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps
 Of other crisped spicewood : then again
 I look'd upon the altar, and its horns
 Whiten'd with ashes, and its languorous flame,
 And then upon the offerings again ; 215
 And so, by turns, till sad Moneta cry'd :
 “ The sacrifice is done, but not the less
 Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
 My power, which to me is still a curse,
 Shall be to thee a wonder ; for the scenes 220
 Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,

With an electral changing misery,
 Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold
 Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not."
 As near as an immortal's sphered words 225
 Could to a mother's soften were these last:
 And yet I had a terror of her robes,
 And chiefly of the veils that from her brow
 Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries,
 That made my heart too small to hold its blood. 230
 This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
 Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,
 Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright-blanch'd
 By an immortal sickness which kills not ;
 It works a constant change, which happy death 235
 Can put no end to ; deathwards progressing
 To no death was that visage ; it had past
 The lilly and the snow ; and beyond these
 I must not think now, though I saw that face.
 But for her eyes I should have fled away ; 240
 They held me back with a benignant light,
 Soft, mitigated by divinest lids
 Half-clos'd, and visionless entire they seem'd
 Of all external things ; they saw me not,
 But in blank splendour beam'd, like the mild moon, 245
 Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
 What eyes are upward cast. As I had found
 A grain of gold upon a mountain's side,
 And, twing'd with avarice, strain'd out my eyes
 To search its sullen entrails rich with ore, 250
 So, at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
 I ask'd to see what things the hollow brow
 Behind environ'd : what high tragedy
 In the dark secret chambers of her skull
 Was acting, that could give so dread a stress 255
 To her cold lips, and fill with such a light

Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice
 With such a sorrow? "Shade of Memory!"
 Cry'd I, with act adorant at her feet,
 "By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house, 260
 By this last temple, by the golden age,
 By great Apollo, thy dear foster-child,
 And by thyself, forlorn divinity,
 The pale Omega of a wither'd race,
 Let me behold, according as thou saidst, 265
 What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!"
 No sooner had this conjuration past
 My devout lips, than side by side we stood
 (Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)
 Deep in the shady sadness of a vale 270
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
 Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star.
 Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,
 And saw what first I thought an image huge,
 Like to the image pedestall'd so high 275
 In Saturn's temple; then Moneta's voice
 Came brief upon mine ear. "So Saturn sat
 When he had lost his realms;" whereon there grew
 A power within me of enormous ken
 To see as a god sees, and take the depth 280
 Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
 Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
 Of those few words hung vast before my mind
 With half-unravell'd web. I sat myself
 Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see, 285
 And seeing ne'er forget. No stir of life
 Was in this shrouded vale,—not so much air
 As in the zoning of a summer's day
 Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass;
 But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest. 290
 A stream went noiseless by, still deaden'd more

By reason of the fallen divinity
 Spreading more shade ; the Naiad 'mid her reeds
 Prest her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went 295
 No further than to where old Saturn's feet
 Had rested, and there slept how long a sleep!
 Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground
 His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
 Unsceptred, and his realmless eyes were closed ; 300
 While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,
 His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
 But there came one who, with a kindred hand,
 Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low 305
 With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
 Then came the griev'd voice of Mnemosyne,
 And griev'd I hearken'd. " That divinity
 Whom thou saw'st step from yon forlornest wood,
 And with slow pace approach our fallen king, 310
 Is Thea, softest-natured of our brood."
 I mark'd the Goddess, in fair statuary
 Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,
 And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.
 There was a list'ning fear in her regard, 315
 As if calamity had but begun ;
 As if the venom'd clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up,
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot 320
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain ;
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear

Leaning, with parted lips some words she spoke 325
 In solemn tenour and deep organ-tone ;
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
 Would come in this like accenting ; how frail
 To that large utterance of the early gods !

“ Saturn, look up ! and for what, poor lost king ? 330
 I have no comfort for thee ; no, not one ;
 I cannot say, wherefore thus sleepest thou ?
 For Heaven is parted from thee, and the Earth
 Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a god.
 The Ocean, too, with all its solemn noise, 335
 Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
 Is emptied of thy hoary majesty.
 Thy thunder, captious at the new command,
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
 And thy sharp lightning, in unpractis'd hands, 340
 Scourges and burns our once serene domain.

“ With such remorseless speed still come new woes,
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
 Saturn ! sleep on : me thoughtless, why should I
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ? 345
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ?
 Saturn ! sleep on, while at thy feet I weep.”

As when upon a tranced summer-night
 Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a noise, 350
 Save from one gradual solitary gust
 Swelling upon the silence, dying off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave,
 So came these words and went ; the while in tears
 She prest her fair large forehead to the earth, 355
 Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,

A soft and silken net for Saturn's feet.
 Long, long these two were postured motionless,
 Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave
 Of their own power. A long awful time 360
 I look'd upon them : still they were the same ;
 The frozen God still bending to the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet ;
 Moneta silent. Without stay or prop
 But my own weak mortality, I bore 365
 The load of this eternal quietude,
 The unchanging gloom and the three fixed shapes
 Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon ;
 For by my burning brain I measured sure
 Her silver seasons shedded on the night, 370
 And every day by day methought I grew
 More gaunt and ghostly. Oftentimes I pray'd
 Intense, that death would take me from the vale
 And all its burthens ; gasping with despair
 Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself, 375
 Until old Saturn rais'd his faded eyes,
 And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.

As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,
 Fills forest-dells with a pervading air, 381
 Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
 Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,
 Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
 And to the windings of the foxes' hole, 385
 With sad, low tones, while thus he spoke, and sent
 Strange moanings to the solitary Pan.
 " Moan, brethren, moan, for we are swallow'd up
 And buried from all godlike exercise
 Of influence benign on planets pale, 390

And peaceful sway upon man's harvesting,
 And all those acts which Deity supreme
 Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail ;
 Moan, brethren, moan ; for lo, the rebel spheres
 Spin round ; the stars their ancient courses keep ; 395
 Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the earth,
 Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon ;
 Still buds the tree, and still the seashores murmur,
 There is no death in all the universe,
 No smell of death.—There shall be death. Moan.
 moan ; 400
 Moan, Cybele, moan ; for thy pernicious babes
 Have chang'd a god into an aching palsy.
 Moan, brethren, moan, for I have no strength left ;
 Weak as the reed, weak, feeble as my voice.
 Oh ! Oh ! the pain, the pain of feebleness ; 405
 Moan, moan, for still I thaw ; or give me help ;
 Throw down those imps, and give me victory.
 Let me hear other groans, and trumpets blown
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,
 From the gold peaks of heaven's high-piled clouds ; 410
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
 Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 Of the sky-children." So he feebly ceased,
 With such a poor and sickly-sounding pause, 415
 Methought I heard some old man of the earth
 Bewailing earthly loss ; nor could my eyes
 And ears act with that unison of sense
 Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,
 And dolorous accent from a tragic harp 420
 With large-limb'd visions. More I scrutinized.
 Still fixt he sat beneath the sable trees,
 Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms,
 With leaves all hush'd ; his awful presence there

(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie 425
 To what I erewhile heard : only his lips
 Trembled amid the white curls of his beard ;
 They told the truth, though round the snowy locks
 Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
 A mid-day fleece of clouds. Thea arose, 430
 And stretcht her white arm through the hollow dark,
 Pointing some whither : whereat he too rose,
 Like a vast giant, seen by men at sea
 To grow pale from the waves at dull midnight.
 They melted from my sight into the woods ; 435
 Ere I could turn, Moneta cry'd, " These twain
 Are speeding to the families of grief,
 Where, rooft in by black rocks, they waste in pain
 And darkness, for no hope." And she spake on,
 As ye may read who can unwearied pass 440
 Onward from the antechamber of this dream,
 Where, even at the open doors, awhile
 I must delay, and glean my memory
 Of her high phrase—perhaps no further dare.

END OF CANTO I.

CANTO II.

" MORTAL, that thou may'st understand aright,
 I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
 Making comparisons of earthly things ;
 Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
 Whose language is to thee a barren noise, 5
 Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trees.
 In melancholy realms big tears are shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe.

The Titans fierce, self-hid or prison-bound, 10
 Groan for the old allegiance once more,
 Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.
 But one of the whole eagle-brood still keeps
 His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty :
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire 15
 Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up
 From Man to the Sun's God—yet insecure.
 For as upon the earth dire prodigies
 Fright and perplex, so also shudders he ;
 Not at dog's howl or gloom-bird's hated screech, 20
 Or the familiar visiting of one
 Upon the first toll of his passing bell,
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
 But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,
 Make great Hyperion ache. His palace bright, 25
 Bastion'd with pyramids of shining gold,
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
 Glares a blood-red thro' all the thousand courts,
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds 30
 Flash angerly ; when he would taste the wreaths
 Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes
 Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick ;
 Wherefore when harbour'd in the sleepy West, 35
 After the full completion of fair day,
 For rest divine upon exalted couch,
 And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He paces through the pleasant hours of ease,
 With strides colossal, on from hall to hall, 40
 While far within each aisle and deep recess
 His winged minions in close clusters stand
 Amaz'd, and full of fear ; like anxious men,
 Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,

When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 45
Even now where Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Is sloping to the threshold of the West.
Thither we tend." Now in clear light I stood, 50
Reliev'd from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne
Was sitting on a square-edg'd polish'd stone,
That in its lucid depth reflected pure
Her priestess' garments. My quick eyes ran on
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault, 55
Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades.
Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion ;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar as if of earthy fire, 60
That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours,
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared.

POSTHUMOUS
AND
FUGITIVE POEMS.

POSTHUMOUS AND FUGITIVE
POEMS.

ON DEATH.

I.

CAN death be sleep, when life is but a dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?
The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

2.

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone
His future doom which is but to awake.

SONNET.

TO BYRON.

BYRON! how sweetly sad thy melody!
Attuning still the soul to tenderness,
As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,
Had touch'd her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,

Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer'd them to die.
 O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make thee less
 Delightful: thou thy griefs dost dress
 With a bright halo, shining beamily,
 As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,
 Its sides are ting'd with a resplendent glow,
 Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail,
 And like fair veins in sable marble flow;
 Still warble, dying swan! still tell the tale,
 The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe.

SONNET.

TO CHATTERTON.

O CHATTERTON! how very sad thy fate!
 Dear child of sorrow—son of misery!
 How soon the film of death obscur'd that eye,
 Whence Genius mildly flash'd, and high debate.
 How soon that voice, majestic and elate,
 Melted in dying numbers! Oh! how nigh
 Was night to thy fair morning. Thou didst die
 A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts amate.
 But this is past: thou art among the stars
 Of highest Heaven: to the rolling spheres
 Thou sweetly singest: nought thy hymning mars,
 Above the ingrate world and human fears.
 On earth the good man base detraction bars
 From thy fair name, and waters it with tears.

SONNET.
TO SPENSER.

SPENSER! a jealous honourer of thine,
A forester deep in thy midmost trees,
Did last eve ask my promise to refine
Some English that might strive thine ear to please.
But Elfin Poet 'tis impossible
For an inhabitant of wintry earth
To rise like Phœbus with a golden quill
Fire-wing'd and make a morning in his mirth.
It is impossible to escape from toil
O' the sudden and receive thy spiriting :
The flower must drink the nature of the soil
Before it can put forth its blossoming :
Be with me in the summer days and I
Will for thine honour and his pleasure try.

ODE TO APOLLO.

I.

IN thy western halls of gold
When thou sittest in thy state,
Bards, that erst sublimely told
Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
With fervour seize their adamantyne lyres,
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires.

2.

Here Homer with his nervous arms
 Strikes the twanging harp of war,
 And even the western splendour warms,
 While the trumpets sound afar :
 But, what creates the most intense surprise,
 His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

3.

Then, through thy Temple wide, melodious swells
 The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre :
 The soul delighted on each accent dwells,—
 Enraptur'd dwells,—not daring to respire,
 The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.

4.

'Tis awful silence then again ;
 Expectant stand the spheres ;
 Breathless the laurell'd peers,
 Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
 Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease.
 And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace.

5.

Thou biddest Shakspeare wave his hand,
 And quickly forward spring
 The Passions—a terrific band—
 And each vibrates the string
 That with its tyrant temper best accords,
 While from their Master's lips pour forth the inspiring
 words.

6.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
From a virgin chorus flows
A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
'Tis still! Wild warblings from the Æolian lyre
Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

7.

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
Float along the pleased air,
Calling youth from idle slumbers,
Rousing them from Pleasure's lair:—
Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,
And melt the soul to pity and to love.

8.

But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine,
And all the powers of song combine,
We listen here on earth :
The dying tones that fill the air,
And charm the ear of evening fair,
From thee, great God of Bards, receive their heavenly
birth.

HYMN TO APOLLO.

I.

GOD of the golden bow,
 And of the golden lyre,
 And of the golden hair,
 And of the golden fire,
 Charioteer
 Of the patient year,
 Where—where slept thine ire,
 When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
 Thy laurel, thy glory,
 The light of thy story,
 Or was I a worm—too low crawling, for death?
 O Delphic Apollo!

2.

The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd
 The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd;
 The eagle's feathery mane
 For wrath became stiffen'd—the sound
 Of breeding thunder
 Went drowsily under,
 Muttering to be unbound.
 O why didst thou pity, and for a worm
 Why touch thy soft lute
 Till the thunder was mute,
 Why was not I crush'd—such a pitiful germ?
 O Delphic Apollo!

3.

The Pleiades were up,
 Watching the silent air ;
 The seeds and roots in the Earth
 Were swelling for summer fare ;
 The Ocean, its neighbour,
 Was at its old labour,
 When, who—who did dare
 To tie, like a madman, thy plant round his brow,
 And grin and look proudly,
 And blaspheme so loudly,
 And live for that honour, to stoop to thee now ?
 O Delphic Apollo !

SONNET.

As from the darkening gloom a silver dove
 Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light,
 On pinions that nought moves but pure delight,
 So fled thy soul into the realms above,
 Regions of peace and everlasting love ;
 Where happy spirits, crown'd with circlets bright
 Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,
 Taste the high joy none but the blest can prove.
 There thou or joinest the immortal quire
 In melodies that even heaven fair
 Fill with superior bliss, or, at desire,
 Of the omnipotent Father, cleav'st the air
 On holy message sent—What pleasure's higher ?
 Wherefore does any grief our joy impair ?

STANZAS TO MISS WYLIE.

I.

O COME Georgiana ! the rose is full blown,
The riches of Flora are lavishly strown,
The air is all softness, and crystal the streams,
The West is resplendently clothed in beams.

2.

O come ! let us haste to the freshening shades,
The quaintly carv'd seats, and the opening glades ;
Where the faeries are chanting their evening hymns,
And in the last sun-beam the sylph lightly swims.

3.

And when thou art weary I'll find thee a bed,
Of mosses and flowers to pillow thy head :
And there Georgiana I'll sit at thy feet,
While my story of love I enraptur'd repeat.

4.

So fondly I'll breathe, and so softly I'll sigh,
Thou wilt think that some amorous Zephyr is nigh :
Yet no—as I breathe I will press thy fair knee,
And then thou wilt know that the sigh comes from me.

5.

Ah ! why dearest girl should we lose all these blisses ?
That mortal's a fool who such happiness misses :
So smile acquiescence, and give me thy hand,
With love-looking eyes, and with voice sweetly bland.

SONNET.

O H! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the golden west,
And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, far—far away to leave
All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet reprieve
From little cares; to find, with easy quest,
A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,
And there into delight my soul deceive.
There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
Musing on Milton's fate—on Sydney's bier—
Till their stern forms before my mind arise:
Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
Full often dropping a delicious tear,
When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

SONNET.

To a Young Lady who sent me a Laurel Crown.

FRESH morning gusts have blown away all fear
From my glad bosom,—now from gloominess
I mount for ever—not an atom less
Than the proud laurel shall content my bier.

No! by the eternal stars! or why sit here
 In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples press
 Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless
 By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.
 Lo! who dares say, "Do this?" Who dares call down
 My will from its high purpose? Who say, "Stand,"
 Or "Go?" This mighty moment I would frown
 On abject Cæsars—not the stoutest band
 Of mailed heroes should tear off my crown:
 Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle hand!

SONNET.

Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition.

THE church bells toll a melancholy round,
 Calling the people to some other prayers,
 Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
 More hearkening to the sermon's horrid sound.
 Surely the mind of man is closely bound
 In some black spell; seeing that each one tears
 Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,
 And converse high of those with glory crown'd.
 Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp,—
 A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
 That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
 That 'tis their sighing, wailing ere they go
 Into oblivion;—that fresh flowers will grow,
 And many glories of immortal stamp.

SONNET.



AFTER dark vapors have oppress'd our plains
 For a long dreary season, comes a day
 Born of the gentle South, and clears away
 From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.
 The anxious month, relieved of its pains,
 Takes as a long-lost right the feel of May ;
 The eyelids with the passing coolness play
 Like rose leaves with the drip of Summer rains.
 The calmest thoughts come round us ; as of leaves
 Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—Autumn suns
 Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves—
 Sweet Sappho's cheek—a smiling infant's breath—
 The gradual sand that through an hour-glass runs—
 A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death.

SONNET.

*Written on a Blank Space at the end of Chaucer's
 Tale of "The Floure and the Lefe."*



THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse :
 The honied lines so freshly interlace
 To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
 So that he here and there full-hearted stops ;

And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
 Come cool and suddenly against his face,
 And by the wandering melody may trace
 Which way the tender-legged linnets hops.
 Oh! what a power has white Simplicity!
 What mighty power has this gentle story!
 I that do ever feel a thirst for glory,
 Could at this moment be content to lie
 Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
 Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

TWO SONNETS.

I.

*To Haydon, with a Sonnet written on seeing the
 Elgin Marbles.*

HAYDON! forgive me that I cannot speak
 Definitively on these mighty things;
 Forgive me that I have not Eagle's wings—
 That what I want I know not where to seek:
 And think that I would not be over meek
 In rolling out upfollow'd thunderings,
 Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,
 Were I of ample strength for such a freak—
 Think too, that all those numbers should be thine;
 Whose else? In this who touch thy vesture's hem?
 For when men star'd at what was most divine
 With browless idiotism—o'erwise phlegm—
 Thou hadst beheld the Hesperean shine
 Of their star in the East, and gone to worship them.



BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON :
AFTER AN ETCHING BY WILKIE—Page 344.

II.

On seeing the Elgin Marbles.

MY spirit is too weak—mortality
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
 And each imagin'd pinnacle and steep
 Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die
 Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.
 Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
 Bring round the heart an undescribable feud ;
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—
 A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

SONNET.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER.

COME hither all sweet maidens soberly,
 Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,
 Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
 And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
 As if so gentle that ye could not see,
 Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,
 Sinking away to his young spirit's night,—
 Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea :

'Tis young Leander toiling to his death ;
 Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
 For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.
 O horrid dream ! see how his body dips
 Dead-heavy ; arms and shoulders gleam awhile :
 He's gone ; up bubbles all his amorous breath !

TO _____



1.

THINK not of it, sweet one, so ;—
 Give it not a tear ;
 Sigh thou mayst, and bid it go
 Any, any where.

2.

Do not look so sad, sweet one,—
 Sad and fadingly ;
 Shed one drop, then it is gone,
 O 'twas born to die.

3.

Still so pale ? then dearest weep ;
 Weep, I'll count the tears,
 And each one shall be a bliss
 For thee in after years.

4.

Brighter has it left thine eyes
 Than a sunny rill ;
 And thy whispering melodies
 Are tenderer still.

5.

Yet—as all things mourn awhile
At fleeting blisses ;
E'en let us too ; but be our dirge
A dirge of kisses.

LINES.

1.

UNFELT, unheard, unseen,
I've left my little queen,
Her languid arms in silver slumber lying :
Ah ! through their nestling touch,
Who—who could tell how much
There is for madness—cruel, or complying ?

2.

Those faery lids how sleek !
Those lips how moist !—they speak,
In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds :
Into my fancy's ear
Melting a burden dear,
How “Love doth know no fullness, and no bounds.”

3.

True !—tender monitors !
I bend unto your laws :
This sweetest day for dalliance was born !
So, without more ado,
I'll feel my heaven anew,
For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

SONNET.

ON THE SEA.

IT keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be mov'd for days from whence it sometime fell,
 When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
 Oh ye ! who have your eye-balls vex'd and tir'd,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea ;
 Oh ye ! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quir'd !

SONNET.

On Leigh Hunt's Poem "The Story of Rimini."

WHO loves to peer up at the morning sun,
 With half-shut eyes and comfortable cheek,
 Let him, with this sweet tale, full often seek
 For meadows where the little rivers run ;

Who loves to linger with that brightest one
 Of Heaven—Hesperus—let him lowly speak
 These numbers to the night, and starlight meek,
 Or moon, if that her hunting be begun.
 He who knows these delights, and too is prone
 To moralize upon a smile or tear,
 Will find at once a region of his own,
 A bower for his spirit, and will steer
 To alleys where the fir-tree drops its cone,
 Where robins hop, and fallen leaves are sear.

FRAGMENT.



WHERE'S the Poet? show him! show him,
 Muses nine! that I may know him!
 'Tis the man who with a man
 Is an equal, be he King,
 Or poorest of the beggar-clan, 5
 Or any other wondrous thing
 A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;
 'Tis the man who with a bird,
 Wren, or Eagle, finds his way to
 All its instincts; he hath heard 10
 The Lion's roaring, and can tell
 What his horny throat expresseth,
 And to him the Tiger's yell
 Comes articulate and presseth
 On his ear like mother-tongue. 15

FRAGMENT:
MODERN LOVE.

AND what is love? It is a doll dress'd up
 For idleness to cosset, nurse, and dandle ;
 A thing of soft misnomers, so divine
 That silly youth doth think to make itself
 Divine by loving, and so goes on 5
 Yawning and doting a whole summer long,
 Till Miss's comb is made a pearl tiara,
 And common Wellingtons turn Romeo boots ;
 Then Cleopatra lives at number seven,
 And Antony resides in Brunswick Square. 10
 Fools ! if some passions high have warm'd the world,
 If Queens and Soldiers have play'd deep for hearts,
 It is no reason why such agonies
 Should be more common than the growth of weeds.
 Fools ! make me whole again that weighty pearl 15
 The Queen of Egypt melted, and I'll say
 That ye may love in spite of beaver hats.

Fragment of "The Castle Builder."

* * * * *

TO-NIGHT I'll have my friar—let me think
 About my room,—I'll have it in the pink ;
 It should be rich and sombre, and the moon,
 Just in its mid-life in the midst of June,
 Should look thro' four large windows and display 5
 Clear, but for gold-fish vases in the way,

Their glassy diamonding on Turkish floor ;
 The tapers keep aside, an hour and more,
 To see what else the moon alone can show ;
 While the night-breeze doth softly let us know 10
 My terrace is well bower'd with oranges.
 Upon the floor the dullest spirit sees
 A guitar-ribband and a lady's glove
 Beside a crumple-leaved tale of love ;
 A tambour-frame, with Venus sleeping there, 15
 All finish'd but some ringlets of her hair ;
 A viol, bow-strings torn, cross-wise upon
 A glorious folio of Anacreon ;
 A skull upon a mat of roses lying,
 Ink'd purple with a song concerning dying ; 20
 An hour-glass on the turn, amid the trails
 Of passion-flower ;—just in time there sails
 A cloud across the moon,—the lights bring in !
 And see what more my phantasy can win.
 It is a gorgeous room, but somewhat sad ; 25
 The draperies are so, as tho' they had
 Been made for Cleopatra's winding-sheet ;
 And opposite the stedfast eye doth meet
 A spacious looking-glass, upon whose face,
 In letters raven-sombre, you may trace 30
 Old " Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin."
 Greek busts and statuary have ever been
 Held, by the finest spirits, fitter far
 Than vase grotesque and Siamesian jar ;
 Therefore 'tis sure a want of Attic taste 35
 That I should rather love a Gothic waste
 Of eyesight on cinque-coloured potter's clay,
 Than on the marble fairness of old Greece.
 My table-coverlits of Jason's fleece
 And black Numidian sheep-wool should be wrought, 40
 Gold, black, and heavy, from the Lama brought.

My ebon sofas should delicious be
 With down from Leda's cygnet progeny.
 My pictures all Salvator's, save a few
 Of Titian's portraiture, and one, though new, 45
 Of Haydon's in its fresh magnificence.
 My wine—O good ! 'tis here at my desire,
 And I must sit to supper with my friar.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT.

“ Under the flag
 Of each his faction, they to battle bring
 Their embryo atoms.”—MILTON.

WELCOME joy, and welcome sorrow,
 Lethe's weed and Hermes' feather ;
 Come to-day, and come to-morrow,
 I do love you both together !
 I love to mark sad faces in fair weather ; 5
 And hear a merry laugh amid the thunder ;
 Fair and foul I love together.
 Meadows sweet where flames are under,
 And a giggle at a wonder ;
 Visage sage at pantomime ; 10
 Funeral, and steeple-chime ;
 Infant playing with a skull ;
 Morning fair, and shipwreck'd hull ;
 Nightshade with the woodbine kissing ;
 Serpents in red roses hissing ; 15
 Cleopatra regal-dress'd
 With the aspic at her breast ;

Dancing music, music sad,
 Both together, sane and mad ;
 Muses bright and muses pale ; 20
 Sombre Saturn, Momus hale ;—
 Laugh and sigh, and laugh again ;
 Oh the sweetness of the pain !
 Muses bright, and muses pale,
 Bare your faces of the veil ; 25
 Let me see ; and let me write
 Of the day, and of the night—
 Both together :—let me slake
 All my thirst for sweet heart-ache !
 Let my bower be of yew, 30
 Interwreath'd with myrtles new ;
 Pines and lime-trees full in bloom,
 And my couch a low grass-tomb.

SONNET.



WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high piled books, in charactry,
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain ;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love ;—then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

SONNET.

TO HOMER.



STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
 Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
 As one who sits ashore and longs perchance
 To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.
 So thou wast blind ;—but then the veil was rent,
 For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,
 And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,
 And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive ;
 Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,
 And precipices show untrodden green,
 There is a budding morrow in midnight,
 There is a triple sight in blindness keen ;
 Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befel
 To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

A DRAUGHT OF SUNSHINE.



HENCE Burgundy, Claret, and Port,
 Away with old Hock and Madeira,
 Too earthly ye are for my sport ;
 There's a beverage brighter and clearer.
 Instead of a pitiful rummer,
 My wine overbrims a whole summer ;
 My bowl is the sky,
 And I drink at my eye,

Till I feel in the brain
 A Delphian pain— 10
 Then follow, my Caius ! then follow :
 On the green of the hill
 We will drink our fill
 Of golden sunshine,
 Till our brains intertwine 15
 With the glory and grace of Apollo !
 God of the Meridian,
 And of the East and West,
 To thee my soul is flown,
 And my body is earthward press'd.— 20
 It is an awful mission,
 A terrible division ;
 And leaves a gulph austere
 To be fill'd with worldly fear.
 Aye, when the soul is fled 25
 To high above our head,
 Affrighted do we gaze
 After its airy maze,
 As doth a mother wild,
 When her young infant child 30
 Is in an eagle's claws—
 And is not this the cause
 Of madness ?—God of Song,
 Thou bearest me along
 Through sights I scarce can bear : 35
 O let me, let me share
 With the hot lyre and thee,
 The staid Philosophy.
 Temper my lonely hours,
 And let me see thy bowers 40
 More unalarm'd !

These blossoms snow upon thy lady's pall!
 Go, pretty page! and in her ear
 Whisper that the hour is near!
 Softly tell her not to fear 10
 Such calm favonian burial!
 Go, pretty page! and soothly tell,—
 The blossoms hang by a melting spell,
 And fall they must, ere a star wink thrice
 Upon her closed eyes, 15
 That now in vain are weeping their last tears,
 At sweet life leaving, and these arbours green,—
 Rich dowry from the Spirit of the Spheres,—
 Alas! poor Queen!

SONG.

*Written on a blank page in Beaumont and Fletcher's
 Works, between "Cupid's Revenge" and
 "The Two Noble Kinsmen."*



I.

SPIRIT here that reignest!
 Spirit here that painest!
 Spirit here that burnest!
 Spirit here that mournest!
 Spirit, I bow
 My forehead low,
 Enshaded with thy pinions.
 Spirit, I look
 All passion-struck
 Into thy pale dominions.

2.

Spirit here that laughest !
 Spirit here that quaffest !
 Spirit here that dancest !
 Noble soul that prancest !
 Spirit, with thee
 I join in the glee
 A-nudging the elbow of Momus.
 Spirit, I flush
 With a Bacchanal blush
 Just fresh from the Banquet of Comus.

STANZAS.

I.

IN a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity :
 The north cannot undo them,
 With a sleety whistle through them ;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

2.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook,
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look ;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

3.

Ah! would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy!
 But were there ever any
 Writh'd not at passed joy?
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numbed sense to steal it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

SONNET.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.



FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year ;
 There are four seasons in the mind of man :
 He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
 Takes in all beauty with an easy span :
 He has his Summer, when luxuriously
 Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves
 To ruminate, and by such dreaming nigh
 His nearest unto heaven : quiet coves
 His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
 He furleth close ; contented so to look
 On mists in idleness—to let fair things
 Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
 He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
 Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair.

CHIEF of organic numbers !
 Old Scholar of the Spheres !
 Thy spirit never slumbers,
 But rolls about our ears,
 For ever, and for ever ! 5
 O what a mad endeavour
 Worketh he,
 Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse
 And melody. 10

How heavenward thou soundest,
 Live Temple of sweet noise,
 And Discord unconfoundest,
 Giving Delight new joys,
 And Pleasure nobler pinions ! 15
 O, where are thy dominions ?
 Lend thine ear
 To a young Delian oath,—aye, by thy soul,
 By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,
 And by the kernel of thine earthly love, 20
 Beauty, in things on earth, and things above,
 I swear !
 When every childish fashion
 Has vanish'd from my rhyme,
 Will I, grey-gone in passion, 25
 Leave to an after-time,
 Hymning and harmony
 Of thee, and of thy works, and of thy life ;
 But vain is now the burning and the strife,

SONNET.
TO THE NILE.

SON of the old moon-mountains African!
 Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile!
 We call thee fruitful, and, that very while,
 A desert fills our seeing's inward span;
 Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
 Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile
 Such men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
 Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan?
 O may dark fancies err! they surely do;
 'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
 Of all beyond itself, thou dost bedew
 Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
 The pleasant sun-rise, green isles hast thou too,
 And to the sea as happily dost haste.

What the Thrush said:

Lines from a Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds.

O THOU whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,
 Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,
 And the black elm tops 'mong the freezing stars,
 To thee the spring will be a harvest-time.
 O thou, whose only book has been the light
 Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on

Night after night when Phœbus was away,
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
 And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens
 At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
 And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

SONNET.

Written in answer to a Sonnet ending thus:—

Dark eyes are dearer far
 Than those that mock the hyacinthine bell—

BY J. H. REYNOLDS.

BLUE! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the domain
 Of Cynthia,—the wide palace of the sun,—
 The tent of Hesperus, and all his train,—
 The bosomer of clouds, gold, grey and dun.
 Blue! 'Tis the life of waters:—Ocean
 And all its vassal streams, pools numberless,
 May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can
 Subside, if not to dark blue nativeness.
 Blue! Gentle cousin of the forest-green,
 Married to green in all the sweetest flowers,—
 Forget-me-not,—the Blue bell,—and, that Queen
 Of secrecy, the Violet: what strange powers
 Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how great,
 When in an Eye thou art, alive with fate!

SONNET.

To John Hamilton Reynolds.

O THAT a week could be an age, and we
 Felt parting and warm meeting every week,
 Then one poor year a thousand years would be,
 The flush of welcome ever on the cheek :
 So could we live long life in little space,
 So time itself would be annihilate,
 So a day's journey in oblivious haze
 To serve our joys would lengthen and dilate.
 O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind !
 To land each Tuesday from the rich Levant !
 In little time a host of joys to bind,
 And keep our souls in one eternal pant !
 This morn, my friend, and yester-evening taught
 Me how to harbour such a happy thought.

TEIGNMOUTH :

“SOME DOGGEREL,”

SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON.

I.

HERE all the summer could I stay,
 For there's Bishop's teign
 And King's teign
 And Coomb at the clear teign head—
 Where close by the stream
 You may have your cream
 All spread upon barley bread.

2.

There's arch Brook
And there's larch Brook
Both turning many a mill ;
And cooling the drouth
Of the salmon's mouth,
And fattening his silver gill.

3.

There is Wild wood,
A Mild hood
To the sheep on the lea o' the down,
Where the golden furze,
With its green, thin spurs,
Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

4.

There is Newton marsh
With its spear grass harsh—
A pleasant summer level
Where the maidens sweet
Of the Market Street,
Do meet in the dusk to revel.

5.

There's the Barton rich
With dyke and ditch
And hedge for the thrush to live in
And the hollow tree
For the buzzing bee
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

6.

And O, and O
 The daisies blow
 And the primroses are waken'd,
 And the violets white
 Sit in silver plight,
 And the green bud's as long as the spike end.

7.

Then who would go
 Into dark Soho,
 And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics,
 When he can stay
 For the new-mown hay,
 And startle the dappled Prickets?

THE DEVON MAID:
 STANZAS

SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON.

I.

WHERE be ye going, you Devon Maid?
 And what have ye there in the Basket?
 Ye tight little fairy just fresh from the dairy,
 Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

2.

I love your Meads, and I love your flowers,
 And I love your junkets mainly,
 But 'hind the door I love kissing more,
 O look not so disdainly.



JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS :
AFTER A MINIATURE BY SEVERN—Page 367.

3.

I love your hills, and I love your dales,
 And I love your flocks a-bleating—
 But O, on the heather to lie together,
 With both our hearts a-beating !

4.

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook,
 Your shawl I hang up on the willow,
 And we will sigh in the daisy's eye
 And kiss on a grass green pillow.

EPISTLE

TO

JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

DEAR Reynolds! as last night I lay in bed,
 There came before my eyes that wonted thread
 Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances,
 That every other minute vex and please :
 Things all disjointed come from north and south,— 5
 Two Witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth,
 Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon,
 And Alexander with his nightcap on ;
 Old Socrates a-tying his cravat,
 And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat ; 10
 And Junius Brutus, pretty well so so,
 Making the best of's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings,—
 Perhaps one or two whose lives have patent wings,

And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish nose, 15
 No wild-boar tushes, and no Mermaid's toes ;
 But flowers bursting out with lusty pride,
 And young Æolian harps personify'd ;
 Some Titian colours touch'd into real life,—
 The sacrifice goes on ; the pontiff knife 20
 Gleams in the Sun, the milk-white heifer lows,
 The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows :
 A white sail shows above the green-head cliff,
 Moves round the point, and throws her anchor stiff ;
 The mariners join hymn with those on land. 25

You know the Enchanted Castle,—it doth stand
 Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,
 Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake
 From some old magic-like Urganda's Sword.
 O Phœbus ! that I had thy sacred word 30
 To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise,
 Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies !

You know it well enough, where it doth seem
 A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream ;
 You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles, 35
 The mountains blue, and cold near neighbour rills,
 All which elsewhere are but half animate ;
 There do they look alive to love and hate,
 To smiles and frowns ; they seem a lifted mound
 Above some giant, pulsing underground. 40

Part of the Building was a chosen See,
 Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee ;
 The other part, two thousand years from him,
 Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim ;
 Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun, 45
 Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd maudlin Nun ;

And many other juts of aged stone
 Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they op'd themselves,
 The windows as if latch'd by Fays and Elves, 50
 And from them comes a silver flash of light,
 As from the westward of a Summer's night ;
 Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes
 Gone mad thro' olden songs and poesies.

See! what is coming from the distance dim! 55
 A golden Galley all in silken trim!
 Three rows of oars are lightening, moment whiles,
 Into the verd'rous bosoms of those isles ;
 Towards the shade, under the Castle wall,
 It comes in silence,—now 'tis hidden all. 60
 The Clarion sounds, and from a Postern-gate
 An echo of sweet music doth create
 A fear in the poor Herdsman, who doth bring
 His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring,—
 He tells of the sweet music, and the spot, 65
 To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O that our dreamings all, of sleep or wake,
 Would all their colours from the sunset take :
 From something of material sublime,
 Rather than shadow our own soul's day-time 70
 In the dark void of night. For in the world
 We jostle,—but my flag is not unfurl'd
 On the Admiral-staff,—and so philosophize
 I dare not yet! Oh, never will the prize,
 High reason, and the love of good and ill, 75
 Be my award! Things cannot to the will
 Be settled, but they teaze us out of thought ;
 Or is it that imagination brought

Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd,
 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind, 80
 Cannot refer to any standard law
 Of either earth or heaven? It is a flaw
 In happiness, to see beyond our bourn,—
 It forces us in summer skies to mourn,
 It spoils the singing of the Nightingale. 85

Dear Reynolds! I have a mysterious tale,
 And cannot speak it: the first page I read
 Upon a Lampit rock of green sea-weed
 Among the breakers; 'twas a quiet eve,
 The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave 90
 An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
 Along the flat brown sand; I was at home
 And should have been most happy,—but I saw
 Too far into the sea, where every maw
 The greater on the less feeds evermore.— 95
 But I saw too distinct into the core
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,
 And so from happiness I far was gone.
 Still am I sick of it, and tho', to-day,
 I've gather'd young spring-leaves, and flowers gay 100
 Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see,—
 The Shark at savage prey,—the Hawk at pounce,—
 The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,
 Ravening a worm,—Away, ye horrid moods! 105
 Moods of one's mind! You know I hate them well.
 You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell
 To some Kamtschatcan Missionary Church,
 Than with these horrid moods be left i' the lurch.

DAWLISH FAIR.

OVER the Hill and over the Dale,
 And over the Bourne to Dawlish,
 Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,
 And ginger-bread nuts are smallish.

*Fragment of an Ode to Maia, written on
 May Day 1818.*

MOTHER of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!
 May I sing to thee
 As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baia?
 Or may I woo thee
 In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
 By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
 O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
 Of heaven and few ears,
 Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.

SONG.

I.

HUSH, hush! tread softly! hush, hush my dear!
 All the house is asleep, but we know very well
 That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,
 Tho' you've padded his night-cap—O sweet Isabel!
 Tho' your feet are more light than a Fairy's feet,
 Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet,—
 Hush, hush! soft tiptoe! hush, hush my dear!
 For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

2.

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there
 On the river,—all's still, and the night's sleepy eye
 Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,
 Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming May-
 fly;
 And the Moon, whether prudish or complaisant,
 Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want
 No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom,
 But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

3.

Lift the latch! ah gently! ah tenderly—sweet!
 We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink!
 Well done—now those lips, and a flowery seat—
 The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink;
 The shut rose shall dream of our loves, and awake
 Full blown, and such warmth for the morning's take,
 The stock-dove shall hatch her soft brace and shall coo,
 While I kiss to the melody, aching all through!

EXTRACTS FROM AN OPERA.

O! WERE I one of the Olympian twelve,
 Their godships should pass this into a law,—
 That when a man doth set himself in toil
 After some beauty veiled far away,
 Each step he took should make his lady's hand
 More soft, more white, and her fair cheek more fair ;
 And for each briar-berry he might eat,
 A kiss should bud upon the tree of love,
 And pulp and ripen richer every hour,
 To melt away upon the traveller's lips.

* * * * *

DAISY'S SONG.

I.

The sun, with his great eye,
 Sees not so much as I ;
 And the moon, all silver-proud,
 Might as well be in a cloud.

2.

And O the spring—the spring!
 I lead the life of a king !
 Couch'd in the teeming grass,
 I spy each pretty lass.

3.

I look where no one dares,
 And I stare where no one stares,
 And when the night is nigh,
 Lambs bleat my lullaby.

* * * * *

FOLLY'S SONG.

When wedding fiddles are a-playing,
 Huzza for folly O !
 And when maidens go a-Maying,
 Huzza, &c.
 When a milk-pail is upset,
 Huzza, &c.
 And the clothes left in the wet,
 Huzza, &c.
 When the barrel's set abroach,
 Huzza, &c.
 When Kate Eyebrow keeps a coach,
 Huzza, &c.
 When the pig is over-roasted,
 Huzza, &c.
 And the cheese is over-toasted,
 Huzza, &c.
 When Sir Snap is with his lawyer,
 Huzza, &c.
 And Miss Chip has kiss'd the sawyer,
 Huzza, &c.

* * * * *

Oh, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts !
 Perhaps her voice is not a nightingale's,
 Perhaps her teeth are not the fairest pearl ;
 Her eye-lashes may be, for aught I know,
 Not longer than the May-fly's small fan-horns ;
 There may not be one dimple on her hand
 And freckles many ; ah ! a careless nurse,
 In haste to teach the little thing to walk,
 May have crumpt up a pair of Dian's legs,
 And warpt the ivory of a Juno's neck.

* * * * *

SONG.

1.

The stranger lighted from his steed,
 And ere he spake a word,
 He seiz'd my lady's lilly hand,
 And kiss'd it all unheard.

2.

The stranger walk'd into the hall,
 And ere he spake a word,
 He kiss'd my lady's cherry lips,
 And kiss'd 'em all unheard.

3.

The stranger walk'd into the bower,—
 But my lady first did go,—
 Aye hand in hand into the bower,
 Where my lord's roses blow.

4.

My lady's maid had a silken scarf,
 And a golden ring had she,
 And a kiss from the stranger, as off he went
 Again on his fair palfrey.

* * * * *

Asleep! O sleep a little while, white pearl!
 And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,
 And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine eyes,
 And let me breathe into the happy air,
 That doth enfold and touch thee all about,
 Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
 My sudden adoration, my great love!

SHARING EVE'S APPLE.

I.

O BLUSH not so! O blush not so!
Or I shall think you knowing;
And if you smile the blushing while,
Then maidenheads are going.

2.

There's a blush for won't, and a blush for shan't,
And a blush for having done it:
There's a blush for thought and a blush for nought,
And a blush for just begun it.

3.

O sigh not so! O sigh not so!
For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;
By these loosen'd lips you have tasted the pips
And fought in an amorous nipping.

4.

Will you play once more at nice-cut-core,
For it only will last our youth out,
And we have the prime of the kissing time,
We have not one sweet tooth out.

5.

There's a sigh for yes, and a sigh for no,
And a sigh for I can't bear it!
O what can be done, shall we stay or run?
O cut the sweet apple and share it!

SONG.

I HAD a dove and the sweet dove died ;
 And I have thought it died of grieving :
 O, what could it grieve for ? Its feet were tied,
 With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving ;
 Sweet little red feet ! why should you die—
 Why should you leave me, sweet bird ! why ?
 You liv'd alone in the forest-tree,
 Why, pretty thing ! would you not live with me ?
 I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas ;
 Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees ?

SONNET.

To a Lady seen for a few Moments at Vauxhall.

TIME'S sea hath been five years at its slow ebb,
 Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand,
 Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
 And snared by the unglowing of thine hand.
 And yet I never look on midnight sky,
 But I behold thine eyes' well memory'd light ;
 I cannot look upon the rose's dye,
 But to thy cheek my soul doth take its flight.
 I cannot look on any budding flower,
 But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips
 And harkening for a love-sound, doth devour
 Its sweets in the wrong sense :—Thou dost eclipse
 Every delight with sweet remembering,
 And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

ACROSTIC:

Georgiana Augusta Keats.

GIVE me your patience, sister, while I frame
 Exact in capitals your golden name ;
 Or sue the fair Apollo and he will
 Rouse from his heavy slumber and instill
 Great love in me for thee and Poesy. 5
 Imagine not that greatest mastery
 And kingdom over all the Realms of verse,
 Nears more to heaven in aught, than when we nurse
 And surety give to love and Brotherhood.

Anthropophagi in Othello's mood ; 10
 Ulysses storm'd and his enchanted belt
 Glow with the Muse, but they are never felt
 Unbosom'd so and so eternal made,
 Such tender incense in their laurel shade
 To all the regent sisters of the Nine 15
 As this poor offering to you, sister mine.

Kind sister ! aye, this third name says you are ;
 Enchanted has it been the Lord knows where ;
 And may it taste to you like good old wine,
 Take you to real happiness and give 20
 Sons, daughters and a home like honied hive.

SONNET.

On visiting the Tomb of Burns.

THE town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,
 The clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,
 Though beautiful, cold—strange—as in a dream,
 I dreamed long ago, now new begun.
 The short-liv'd, paly Summer is but won
 From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam ;
 Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam :
 All is cold Beauty ; pain is never done :
 For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
 The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue
 Sickly imagination and sick pride
 Cast wan upon it ! Burns ! with honour due
 I oft have honour'd thee. Great shadow, hide
 Thy face ; I sin against thy native skies.

MEG MERRILIES.

 I.

OLD MEG she was a Gipsy,
 And liv'd upon the Moors :
 Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
 And her house was out of doors.

2.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
 Her currants pods o' broom ;
 Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
 Her book a churchyard tomb.

3.

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
Her Sisters larchen trees—
Alone with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.

4.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the Moon.

5.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen Yew
She wove, and she would sing.

6.

And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited Mats o' Rushes,
And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes.

7.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon :
An old red blanket cloak she wore ;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago !

A Song about Myself.

I.

THERE was a naughty Boy,
A naughty boy was he,
He would not stop at home,
He could not quiet be—
He took
In his Knapsack
A Book
Full of vowels
And a shirt
With some towels—
A slight cap
For night cap—
A hair brush,
Comb ditto,
New Stockings
For old ones
Would split O !
This Knapsack
Tight at's back
He rivetted close
And followéd his Nose
To the North,
To the North,
And follow'd his nose
To the North.

2.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,

For nothing would he do
But scribble poetry—
He took
An inkstand
In his hand
And a Pen
Big as ten
In the other,
And away
In a Pother
He ran
To the mountains
And fountains
And ghostes
And Postes
And witches
And ditches
And wrote
In his coat
When the weather
Was cool,
Fear of gout,
And without
When the weather
Was warm—
Och the charm
When we choose
To follow one's nose
To the north,
To the north,
To follow one's nose
To the north!

3.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
Nor afraid
Of his Granny-good—
He often would
Hurly burly
Get up early
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook
And bring home
Miller's thumb,
Tittlebat
Not over fat,
Minnows small
As the stall
Of a glove,
Not above
The size
Of a nice
Little Baby's
Little fingers—
O he made
'Twas his trade
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle—
A Kettle
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle!

4.

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty Boy was he,
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see—
Then he found
That the ground
Was as hard,
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red—
That lead
Was as weighty,
That fourscore
Was as eighty,
That a door
Was as wooden
As in England—
So he stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd,
He wonder'd,
He stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd.

SONNET.
TO AILSA ROCK.

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
 Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams !
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams ?
 When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?
 How long is't since the mighty power bid
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams ?
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
 Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.
 Thou answer'st not ; for thou art dead asleep ;
 Thy life is but two dead eternities—
 The last in air, the former in the deep ;
 First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—
 Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
 Another cannot wake thy giant size.

SONNET.

Written in the Cottage where Burns was born.

THIS mortal body of a thousand days
 Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
 Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,
 Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom !
 My pulse is warm with thine own Barley-bree,
 My head is light with pledging a great soul,
 My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
 Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal ;

Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
 Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
 The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er,—
 Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind,—
 Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name,—
 O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

*Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to
 Burns's Country.*

THERE is a charm in footing slow across a silent
 plain,
 Where patriot battle has been fought, where glory had
 the gain;
 There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old have
 been,
 Where mantles grey have rustled by and swept the
 nettles green;
 There is a joy in every spot made known by times of
 old, 5
 New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times be
 told;
 There is a deeper joy than all, more solemn in the heart,
 More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine a
 smart,
 When weary steps forget themselves upon a pleasant
 turf,
 Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron
 scurf, 10
 Toward the castle or the cot, where long ago was born
 One who was great through mortal days, and died of
 fame unshorn.

Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are far
away ;

Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may
hear his lay ;

Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows
clear, 15

But their low voices are not heard, though come on
travels drear ;

Blood-red the Sun may set behind black mountain
peaks ;

Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in caves and
weedy creeks ;

Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the air ;

Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high-cedar'd
lair ; 20

But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,
As Palmer's, that with weariness, mid-desert shrine hath
found.

At such a time the soul's a child, in childhood is the
brain ;

Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone, it beats in vain.—
Aye, if a madman could have leave to pass a healthful
day 25

To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began
decay,

He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had
gone forth

To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent North !
Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the bourn of
care, 29

Beyond the sweet and bitter world,—beyond it unaware !
Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer stay
Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal
way :

O horrible ! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,

Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every
 place ;
 Filling the air, as on we move, with portraiture
 intense ; 35
 More warm than those heroic tints that pain a painter's
 sense,
 When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of old,
 Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions
 manifold.
 No, no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
 Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its
 strength :— 40
 One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
 But in the very next he reads his soul's memorial :—
 He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he
 may sit down
 Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal crown.
 Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a
 prayer 45
 That man may never lose his mind on mountains black
 and bare ;
 That he may stray league after league some great birth-
 place to find
 And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight
 unblind.

THE GADFLY.

I.

ALL gentle folks who owe a grudge
 To any living thing
 Open your ears and stay your t[r]udge
 Whilst I in dudgeon sing.

2.

The Gadfly he hath stung me sore—
 O may he ne'er sting you!
 But we have many a horrid bore
 He may sting black and blue.

3.

Has any here an old grey Mare
 With three legs all her store,
 O put it to her Buttocks bare
 And straight she'll run on four.

4.

Has any here a Lawyer suit
 Of 1743,
 Take Lawyer's nose and put it to't
 And you the end will see.

5.

Is there a Man in Parliament
 Dum[b-]founder'd in his speech,
 O let his neighbour make a rent
 And put one in his breech

6.

O Lowther how much better thou
 Hadst figur'd t'other day
 When to the folks thou mad'st a bow
 And hadst no more to say

7.

If lucky Gadfly had but ta'en
 His seat * * *
 And put thee to a little pain
 To save thee from a worse.

8.

Better than Southey it had been,
Better than Mr. D——,
Better than Wordsworth too, I ween,
Better than Mr. V——.

9.

Forgive me pray good people all
For deviating so—
In spirit sure I had a call—
And now I on will go.

10.

Has any here a daughter fair
Too fond of reading novels,
Too apt to fall in love with care
And charming Mister Lovels,

11.

O put a Gadfly to that thing
She keeps so white and pert—
I mean the finger for the ring,
And it will breed a wort.

12.

Has any here a pious spouse
Who seven times a day
Scolds as King David pray'd, to chouse
And have her holy way—

13.

O let a Gadfly's little sting
Persuade her sacred tongue
That noises are a common thing,
But that her bell has rung.

14.

And as this is the summum bonum
 of all conquering,
 I leave "withouten wordes mo"
 The Gadfly's little sting.

SONNET.

*On hearing the Bag-pipe and seeing "The Stranger"
 played at Inverary.*

OF late two dainties were before me plac'd
 Sweet, holy, pure, sacred and innocent,
 From the ninth sphere to me benignly sent
 That Gods might know my own particular taste :
 First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous haste,
 The Stranger next with head on bosom bent
 Sigh'd ; rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe went,
 Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.
 O Bag-pipe thou didst steal my heart away—
 O Stranger thou my nerves from Pipe didst charm—
 O Bag-pipe thou didst re-assert thy sway—
 Again thou Stranger gav'st me fresh alarm—
 Alas! I could not choose. Ah! my poor heart
 Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part.

STAFFA.

NOT Aladdin magian
 Ever such a work began ;
 Not the wizard of the Dee
 Ever such a dream could sec ;

Not St. John, in Patmos' Isle, 5
 In the passion of his toil,
 When he saw the churches seven,
 Golden-aisl'd, built up in heaven,
 Gaz'd at such a rugged wonder,
 As I stood its roofing under. 10
 Lo ! I saw one sleeping there,
 On the marble cold and bare ;
 While the surges wash'd his feet,
 And his garments white did beat
 Drench'd about the sombre rocks ; 15
 On his neck his well-grown locks,
 Lifted dry above the main,
 Were upon the curl again.
 " What is this ? and what art thou ? "
 Whisper'd I, and touch'd his brow ; 20
 " What art thou ? and what is this ? "
 Whisper'd I, and strove to kiss
 The spirit's hand, to wake his eyes ;
 Up he started in a trice :
 " I am Lycidas," said he, 25
 " Fam'd in funeral minstrelsy !
 This was architectur'd thus
 By the great Oceanus !—
 Here his mighty waters play
 Hollow organs all the day ; 30
 Here, by turns, his dolphins all,
 Finny palmers, great and small,
 Come to pay devotion due,—
 Each a mouth of pearls must strew !
 Many a mortal of these days, 35
 Dares to pass our sacred ways ;
 Dares to touch, audaciously,
 This cathedral of the sea !
 I have been the pontiff-priest,

Where the waters never rest, 40
 Where a fledgy sea-bird choir
 Soars for ever ! Holy fire
 I have hid from mortal man ;
 Proteus is my Sacristan !
 But the dulled eye of mortal 45
 Hath pass'd beyond the rocky portal ;
 So for ever will I leave
 Such a taint, and soon unweave
 All the magic of the place."
 So saying, with a Spirit's glance 50
 He dived !

SONNET.

Written upon the Top of Ben Nevis.

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
 Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist !
 I look into the chasms, and a shroud
 Vapourous doth hide them,—just so much I wist
 Mankind do know of hell ; I look o'erhead,
 And there is sullen mist,—even so much
 Mankind can tell of heaven ; mist is spread
 Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
 Even so vague is man's sight of himself !
 Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—
 Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
 I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet
 Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
 But in the world of thought and mental might !

A PROPHECY:
TO GEORGE KEATS IN AMERICA.

— — — — —

'T IS the witching hour of night,
Orbed is the moon and bright,
And the stars they glisten, glisten,
Seeming with bright eyes to listen—
For what listen they? 5
For a song and for a charm,
See they glisten in alarm,
And the moon is waxing warm
To hear what I shall say.
Moon! keep wide thy golden ears— 10
Hearken, stars! and hearken, spheres!—
Hearken, thou eternal sky!
I sing an infant's lullaby,
A pretty lullaby.
Listen, listen, listen, listen, 15
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby!
Though the rushes that will make
Its cradle still are in the lake—
Though the linen that will be 20
Its swathe, is on the cotton tree—
Though the woollen that will keep
It warm, is on the silly sheep—
Listen, starlight, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten, 25
And hear my lullaby!
Child, I see thee! Child, I've found thee
Midst of the quiet all around thee!
Child, I see thee! Child, I spy thee!

And thy mother sweet is nigh thee ! 30
 Child, I know thee ! Child no more,
 But a Poet evermore !
 See, see, the lyre, the lyre,
 In a flame of fire,
 Upon the little cradle's top 35
 Flaring, flaring, flaring,
 Past the eyesight's bearing.
 Awake it from its sleep,
 And see if it can keep
 Its eyes upon the blaze— 40
 Amaze, amaze !
 It stares, it stares, it stares,
 It dares what no one dares !
 It lifts its little hand into the flame
 Unharm'd, and on the strings 45
 Paddles a little tune, and sings,
 With dumb endeavour sweetly—
 Bard art thou completely !
 Little child
 O' th' western wild, 50
 Bard art thou completely !
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour,
 A Poet now or never,
 Little child
 O' th' western wild, 55
 A Poet now or never !

Translation from a Sonnet of Ronsard.

NATURE withheld Cassandra in the skies,
 For more adornment, a full thousand years ;
 She took their cream of Beauty's fairest dyes,
 And shap'd and tinted her above all Peers :
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
 And underneath their shadow fill'd her eyes
 With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
 Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.
 When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
 My heart took fire, and only burning pains,
 They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad end ;
 Love pour'd her beauty into my warm veins...

* * * * *
 * * * * *

SPENSERIAN STANZA.

*Written at the Close of Canto II, Book V, of
 "The Faerie Queene."*

I N after-time, a sage of mickle lore
 Yclep'd Typographus, the Giant took,
 And did refit his limbs as heretofore,
 And made him read in many a learned book,
 And into many a lively legend look ;
 Thereby in goodly themes so training him,
 That all his brutishness he quite forsook,
 When, meeting Artegall and Talus grim,
 The one he struck stone-blind, the other's eyes wox dim.

THE EVE OF SAINT MARK.

A FRAGMENT.

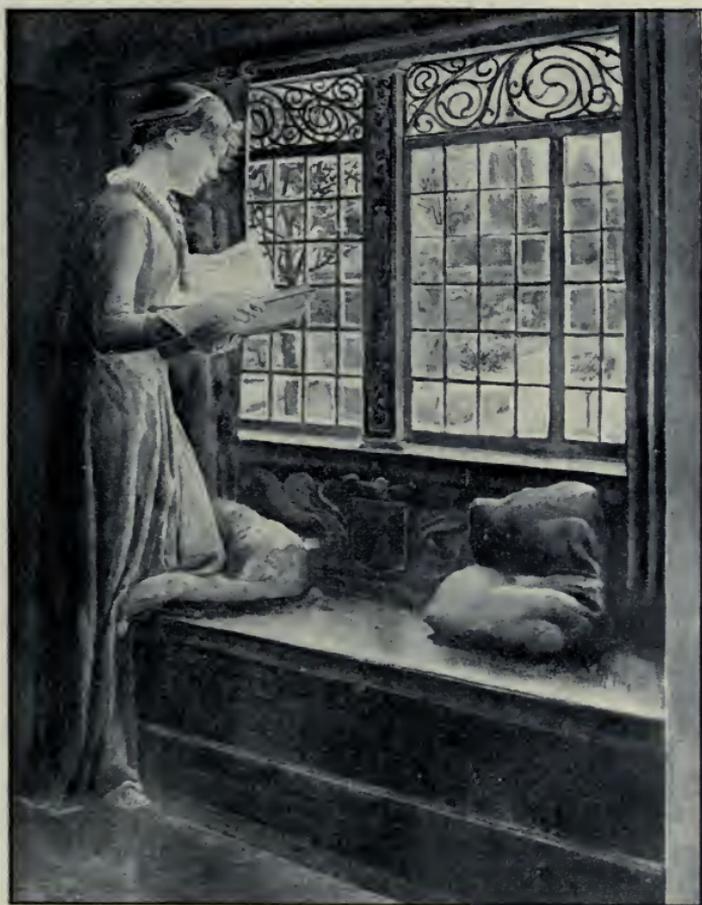
UPON a Sabbath-day it fell ;
 Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
 That call'd the folk to evening prayer ;
 The city streets were clean and fair
 From wholesome drench of April rains ; 5
 And, on the western window panes,
 The chilly sunset faintly told
 Of unmatur'd green vallies cold,
 Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
 Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge, 10
 Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
 And daisies on the aguish hills.
 Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell :
 The silent streets were crowded well
 With staid and pious companies, 15
 Warm from their fire-side orat'ries ;
 And moving, with demurest air,
 To even-song, and vesper prayer.
 Each arched porch, and entry low,
 Was fill'd with patient folk and slow, 20
 With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
 While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
 And Bertha had not yet half done
 A curious volume, patch'd and torn, 25
 That all day long, from earliest morn,
 Had taken captive her two eyes,
 Among its golden broideries ;

Perplex'd her with a thousand things,—
 The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings, 30
 Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
 Azure saints and silver rays,
 Moses' breastplate, and the seven
 Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
 The winged Lion of Saint Mark, 35
 And the Covenantal Ark,
 With its many mysteries,
 Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
 Dwelling in th' old Minster-square ; 40
 From her fire-side she could see,
 Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
 Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;
 Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
 Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript, 45
 By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
 So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
 Bertha arose, and read awhile,
 With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
 Again she try'd, and then again, 50
 Until the dusk eve left her dark
 Upon the legend of St. Mark.
 From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
 She lifted up her soft warm chin,
 With aching neck and swimming eyes, 55
 And daz'd with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
 Save now and then the still foot-fall
 Of one returning homewards late,
 Past the echoing minster-gate. 60
 The clamorous daws, that all the day



BERTHA READING THE LEGEND OF ST. MARK—

Page 398.

Above tree-tops and towers play,
 Pair by pair had gone to rest,
 Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
 Where asleep they fall betimes, 65
 To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
 Abroad and in the homely room :
 Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
 And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ; 70
 Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
 And slant book, full against the glare.
 Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
 Hover'd about, a giant size,
 On ceiling-beam and old oak chair, 75
 The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
 And the warm angled winter-screen,
 On which were many monsters seen,
 Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
 And legless birds of Paradise, 80
 Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
 And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
 Untir'd she read, her shadow still
 Glower'd about, as it would fill
 The room with wildest forms and shades, 85
 As though some ghostly queen of spades
 Had come to mock behind her back,
 And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
 Untir'd she read the legend page,
 Of holy Mark, from youth to age, 90
 On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
 Rejoicing for his many pains.
 Sometimes the learned eremite,
 With golden star, or dagger bright,
 Referr'd to pious poesies 95

Written in smallest crow-quill size
 Beneath the text ; and thus the rhyme
 Was parcell'd out from time to time :
 — “ Als writith he of swevenis,
 Men han beforen they wake in bliss, 100
 Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
 In crimped shroude farre under grounde ;
 And how a litling child mote be
 A saint er its nativitie,
 Gif that the modre (God her blesse !) 105
 Kepen in solitarinesse,
 And kissen devoute the holy croce.
 Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force,—
 He writith ; and thinges many mo
 Of swiche thinges I may not show 110
 Bot I must tellen verilie
 Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
 And chieflie what he auctorethe
 Of Saintè Markis life and dethe : ”

At length her constant eyelids come 115
 Upon the fervent martyrdom ;
 Then lastly to his holy shrine,
 Exalt amid the tapers' shine
 At Venice,—

ODE TO FANNY.



I.

PHYSICIAN Nature ! let my spirit blood !
 O ease my heart of verse and let me rest ;
 Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
 Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.

A theme! a theme! great nature! give a theme;

Let me begin my dream.

I come—I see thee, as thou standest there,

Beckon me not into the wintry air.

2.

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,

And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries,—

To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears

A smile of such delight,

As brilliant and as bright,

As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,

Lost in soft amaze,

I gaze, I gaze!

3.

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast?

What stare outfaces now my silver moon!

Ah! keep that hand unravished at the least;

Let, let, the amorous burn!—

But, pr'ythee, do not turn

The current of your heart from me so soon.

O! save, in charity,

The quickest pulse for me.

4

Save it for me, sweet love! though music breathe

Voluptuous visions into the warm air,

Though swimming through the dance's dangerous
wreath;

Be like an April day,

Smiling and cold and gay,

A temperate lilly, temperate as fair;

Then, Heaven! there will be

A warmer June for me.

5.

Why, this—you'll say, my Fanny! is not true:
 Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
 Where the heart beats: confess—'tis nothing new—
 Must not a woman be
 A feather on the sea,
 Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide?
 Of as uncertain speed
 As blow-ball from the mead?

6.

I know it—and to know it is despair
 To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!
 Whose heart goes fluttering for you every where,
 Nor, when away you roam,
 Dare keep its wretched home,
 Love, love alone, his pains severe and many:
 Then, loveliest! keep me free,
 From torturing jealousy.

7.

Ah! if you prize my subdu'd soul above
 The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour;
 Let none profane my Holy See of love,
 Or with a rude hand break
 The sacramental cake:
 Let none else touch the just new-budded flower;
 If not—may my eyes close,
 Love! on their lost repose.

ODE ON INDOLENCE.

“They toil not, neither do they spin.”

I.

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
 With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced ;
 And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
 In placid sandals, and in white robes graced ;
 They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
 When shifted round to see the other side ;
 They came again ; as when the urn once more
 Is shifted round, the first seen shades return ;
 And they were strange to me, as may betide
 With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

2.

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?
 How came ye muffled in so hush a mask?
 Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
 To steal away, and leave without a task
 My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;
 The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
 Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;
 Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower:
 O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
 Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness?

3.

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
 Each one the face a moment whiles to me ;

Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
 And ach'd for wings, because I knew the three ;
 The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name ;
 The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
 And ever watchful with fatigued eye ;
 The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
 Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,—
 I knew to be my demon Poesy.

4.

They faded, and, forsooth ! I wanted wings :
 O folly ! What is Love ? and where is it ?
 And for that poor Ambition ! it springs
 From a man's little heart's short fever-fit ;
 For Poesy !—no,—she has not a joy,—
 At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
 And evenings steep'd in honied indolence ;
 O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
 That I may never know how change the moons,
 Or hear the voice of busy common-sense !

5.

And once more came they by ;—alas ! wherefore ?
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams ;
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams :
 The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
 Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May ;
 The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay ;
 O Shadows ! 'twas a time to bid farewell !
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

6.

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu ! Ye cannot raise
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass ;



LOVE, AMBITION, AND POESY—Page 404.

For I would not be dieted with praise,
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce !
 Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn ;
 Farewell ! I yet have visions for the night,
 And for the day faint visions there is store ;
 Vanish, ye Phantoms ! from my idle spright,
 Into the clouds, and never more return !

SONNET.

WHY did I laugh to-night ? No voice will tell :
 No God, no Demon of severe response,
 Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.
 Then to my human heart I turn at once.
 Heart ! Thou and I are here sad and alone ;
 I say, why did I laugh ? O mortal pain !
 O Darkness ! Darkness ! ever must I moan,
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.
 Why did I laugh ? I know this Being's lease,
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads ;
 Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds ;
 Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
 But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

SONNET.

A Dream, after reading Dante's Episode of Paulo and Francesca.

AS Hermes once took to his feathers light,
 When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,
 So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright
 So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft
 The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;
 And, seeing it asleep, so fled away—
 Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
 Nor unto Tempe where Jove griev'd a day;
 But to that second circle of sad hell,
 Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
 Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
 Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
 Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
 I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

Spenserian Stanzas on Charles Armitage Brown.

I.

HE is to weet a melancholy carle :
 Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,
 As hath the seeded thistle, when a parle
 It holds with Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair
 Its light balloons into the summer air ;
 Therto his beard had not begun to bloom,
 No brush had touched his chin, or razor sheer ;
 No care had touched his cheek with mortal doom,
 But new he was, and bright, as scarf from Persian loom.

2.

Ne cared he for wine or half-and-half ;
 Ne cared he for fish, or flesh, or fowl ;
 And sauces held he worthless as the chaff ;
 He 'sdeigned the swine-head at the wassail-bowl ;
 Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl ;
 Ne with sly lemans in the scorner's chair ;
 But after water-brooks this pilgrim's soul
 Panted, and all his food was woodland air ;
 Though he would oft-times feast on gilliflowers rare.

3.

The slang of cities in no wise he knew,
Tipping the wink to him was heathen Greek ;
 He sipp'd no "olden Tom," or "ruin blue,"
 Or Nantz, or cherry-brandy, drank full meek
 By many a damsel brave, and rouge of cheek ;
 Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat,
 Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
 For curled Jewesses, with ankles neat,
 Who, as they walk abroad, make tinkling with their feet.

SONNET.



IF by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
 And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
 Fetter'd, in spite of pain'd loveliness ;
 Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
 Sandals more interwoven and complete
 To fit the naked foot of Poesy ;
 Let us inspect the Lyre, and weigh the stress
 Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd

By ear industrious, and attention meet ;
 Misers of sound and syllable, no less
 Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
 Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown,
 So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
 She will be bound with garlands of her own.

SONG OF FOUR FAERIES,

FIRE, AIR, EARTH, AND WATER,

SALAMANDER, ZEPHYR, DUSKETHA, AND BREAMA.

SALAMANDER.

HAPPY, happy glowing fire !

ZEPHYR.

Fragrant air ! delicious light !

DUSKETHA.

Let me to my glooms retire !

BREAMA.

I to green-weed rivers bright !

SALAMANDER.

Happy, happy glowing fire !

5

Dazzling bowers of soft retire,

Ever let my nourish'd wing,

Like a bat's, still wandering,

Faintly fan your fiery spaces,

Spirit sole in deadly places.

10

In unhaunted roar and blaze,

Open eyes that never daze,

Let me see the myriad shapes

Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes,

Portray'd in many a fiery den,

15

And wrought by spumy bitumen,
 On the deep intenser roof,
 Arched every way aloof,
 Let me breathe upon their skies,
 And anger their live tapestries ; 20
 Free from cold, and every care,
 Of chilly rain, and shivering air.

ZEPHYR.

Spirit of Fire ! away ! away !
 Or your very roundelay
 Will sear my plumage newly budded 25
 From its quilled sheath, all studded
 With the self-same dews that fell
 On the May-grown Asphodel.
 Spirit of Fire—away ! away !

BREAMA.

Spirit of Fire—away ! away ! 30
 Zephyr, blue-ey'd Faery, turn,
 And see my cool sedge-bury'd urn,
 Where it rests its mossy brim
 'Mid water-mint and cresses dim ;
 And the flowers, in sweet troubles, 35
 Lift their eyes above the bubbles,
 Like our Queen, when she would please
 To sleep, and Oberon *will* tease.
 Love me, blue-ey'd Faery, true !
 Soothly I am sick for you. 40

ZEPHYR.

Gentle Breama ! by the first
 Violet young nature nurst,
 I will bathe myself with thee,
 So you sometimes follow me
 To my home, far, far, in west, 45
 Beyond the nimble-wheeled quest

Of the golden-browed sun :
 Come with me, o'er tops of trees,
 To my fragrant palaces,
 Where they ever floating are 50
 Beneath the cherish of a star
 Call'd Vesper, who with silver veil
 Ever hides his brilliance pale,
 Ever gently-drows'd doth keep
 Twilight for the Fayes to sleep. 55
 Fear not that your watery hair
 Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there ;
 Clouds of stored summer rains
 Thou shalt taste, before the stains
 Of the mountain soil they take, 60
 And too unlucent for thee make.
 I love thee, crystal Faery, true !
 Sooth I am as sick for you !

SALAMANDER.

Out, ye aguish Faeries, out !
 Chilly lovers, what a rout 65
 Keep ye with your frozen breath,
 Colder than the mortal death.
 Adder-ey'd Dusketha, speak,
 Shall we leave these, and go seek
 In the earth's wide entrails old 70
 Couches warm as their's are cold ?
 O for a fiery gloom and thee,
 Dusketha, so enchantingly
 Freckle-wing'd and lizard-sided !

DUSKETHA.

By thee, Sprite, will I be guided ! 75
 I care not for cold or heat ;
 Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet,
 To my essence are the same ;—

But I honour more the flame.
 Sprite of Fire, I follow thee 80
 Wheresoever it may be,
 To the torrid spouts and fountains,
 Underneath earth-quaked mountains ;
 Or, at thy supreme desire,
 Touch the very pulse of fire 85
 With my bare unlidged eyes.

SALAMANDER.

Sweet Dusketha ! paradise !
 Off, ye icy Spirits, fly !
 Frosty creatures of the sky !

DUSKETHA.

Breathe upon them, fiery sprite ! 90

ZEPHYR AND BREAMA.

Away ! away to our delight !

SALAMANDER.

Go, feed on icicles, while we
 Bedded in tongue-flames will be.

DUSKETHA.

Lead me to those feverous glooms,
 Sprite of Fire !

BREAMA.

Me to the blooms, 95
 Blue-ey'd Zephyr, of those flowers
 Far in the west where the May-cloud lowers ;
 And the beams of still Vesper, when winds are
 all wist,
 Are shed thro' the rain and the milder mist,
 And twilight your floating bowers. 100

TWO SONNETS ON FAME.

I.

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
 To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
 But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,
 And dotes the more upon a heart at ease ;
 She is a Gipsej, will not speak to those
 Who have not learnt to be content without her ;
 A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,
 Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her
 A very Gipsej is she, Nilus-born,
 Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar ;
 Ye love-sick Bards, repay her scorn for scorn,
 Ye Artists lovelorn, madmen that ye are !
 Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
 Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

II.

“You cannot eat your cake and have it too.”—*Proverb.*

HOW fever'd is the man, who cannot look
 Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,
 Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
 And robs his fair name of its maidenhood ;
 It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
 Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,
 As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
 Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom,
 But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,

And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,
 The undisturbed lake has crystal space,
 Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,
 Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed ?

SONNET.

TO SLEEP.

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight,
 Shutting with careful fingers and benign,
 Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,
 Enshaded in forgetfulness divine :

O soothest Sleep ! if so it please thee, close,
 In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
 Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
 Around my bed its lulling charities ;
 Then save me, or the passed day will shine
 Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,—
 Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
 Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole ;
 Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
 And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

A PARTY OF LOVERS.

PENSIVE they sit, and roll their languid eyes,
 Nibble their toast, and cool their tea with sighs,
 Or else forget the purpose of the night,
 Forget their tea—forget their appetite.

See with cross'd arms they sit—ah! happy crew, 5
 The fire is going out and no one rings
 For coals, and therefore no coals Betty brings.
 A fly is in the milk-pot—must he die
 By a humane society?
 No, no; there Mr. Werter takes his spoon, 10
 Inserts it, dips the handle, and lo! soon
 The little straggler, sav'd from perils dark,
 Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.
 Arise! take snuffers by the handle,
 There's a large cauliflower in each candle. 15
 A winding-sheet, ah me! I must away
 To No. 7, just beyond the circus gay.
 'Alas, my friend! your coat sits very well;
 Where may your tailor live?' 'I may not tell.
 O pardon me—I'm absent now and then. 20
 Where might my tailor live? I say again
 I cannot tell, let me no more be teaz'd—
 He lives in Wapping, *might* live where he pleas'd.'

SONNET.

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!
 Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
 Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
 Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!
 Faded the flower and all its budded charms,
 Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
 Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,
 Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—
 Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,
 When the dusk holiday—or holineight

Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave
 The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;
 But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
 He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

LINES TO FANNY.



WHAT can I do to drive away
 Remembrance from my eyes? for they have seen,
 Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen!
 Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,
 What can I do to kill it and be free 5
 In my old liberty?
 When every fair one that I saw was fair,
 Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
 Not keep me there:
 When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things, 10
 My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
 Unintellectual, yet divine to me;—
 Divine, I say!—What sea-bird o'er the sea 15
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes?

How shall I do
 To get anew
 Those moulted feathers, and so mount once more 20
 Above, above
 The reach of fluttering Love,
 And make him cower lowly while I soar?
 Shall I gulp wine? No, that is vulgarism,

A heresy and schism, 25
 Foisted into the canon law of love ;—
 No,—wine is only sweet to happy men ;
 More dismal cares
 Seize on me unawares,—
 Where shall I learn to get my peace again ? 30
 To banish thoughts of that most hateful land,
 Dungeoner of my friends, that wicked strand
 Where they were wreck'd and live a wrecked life ;
 That monstrous region, whose dull rivers pour,
 Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore, 35
 Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods ;
 Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourging rods,
 Ic'd in the great lakes, to afflict mankind ;
 Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black, and blind,
 Would fright a Dryad ; whose harsh herbag'd meads 40
 Make lean and lank the starv'd ox while he feeds ;
 There bad flowers have no scent, birds no sweet song,
 And great unerring Nature once seems wrong.

O, for some sunny spell 45
 To dissipate the shadows of this hell !
 Say they are gone,—with the new dawning light
 Steps forth my lady bright !
 O, let me once more rest
 My soul upon that dazzling breast !
 Let once again these aching arms be plac'd, 50
 The tender gaolers of thy waist !
 And let me feel that warm breath here and there
 To spread a rapture in my very hair,—
 O, the sweetness of the pain !
 Give me those lips again ! 55
 Enough ! Enough ! it is enough for me
 To dream of thee !

SONNET TO FANNY.

I CRY your mercy—pity—love!—aye, love!
 Merciful love that tantalizes not,
 One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
 Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot!
 O! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine!
 That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
 Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes divine,
 That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasur'd breast,—
 Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all,
 Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
 Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
 Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
 Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind
 Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!

LINES

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED
 TO FANNY BRAWNE.

THIS living hand, now warm and capable
 Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
 And in the icy silence of the tomb,
 So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
 That thou would[st] wish thine own heart dry of blood
 So in my veins red life might stream again,
 And thou be conscience-calm'd—see here it is
 I hold it towards you.

La Belle Dame sans Merci.

I.

AH, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering ;
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

2.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone ?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

3.

I see a lilly on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew ;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

4.

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child ;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

5.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long ;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

6.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

7.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew ;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

8.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kiss'd to sleep.

9.

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill side.

10.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
Who cry'd—" La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall !"

11.

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

12.

And this is why I sojourn here
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

SONNET.

*Written on a Blank Page in Shakespeare's Poems,
 facing*
A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

BRIGHT star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
 No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

OTHO THE GREAT
A TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OTHO THE GREAT, *Emperor of Germany.*

LUDOLPH, *his Son.*

CONRAD, *Duke of Franconia.*

ALBERT, *a Knight, favoured by Otho.*

SIGIFRED, *an Officer, friend of Ludolph.*

THEODORE, } *Officers.*

GONFRED, }

ETHELBERT, *an Abbot.*

GERSA, *Prince of Hungary.*

An Hungarian Captain.

Physician.

Page.

Nobles, Knights, Attendants, and Soldiers.

ERMINIA, *Niece of Otho.*

AURANTHE, *Conrad's Sister.*

Ladies and Attendants.

SCENE. *The Castle of Friedburg, its vicinity, and the
Hungarian Camp.*

TIME. *One Day.*

OTHO THE GREAT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter CONRAD.*

CONRAD.

So, I am safe emerged from these broils!
Amid the wreck of thousands I am whole;
For every crime I have a laurel-wreath,
For every lie a lordship. Nor yet has
My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails,— 5
Let her glide on! This danger'd neck is saved,
By dexterous policy, from the rebel's axe;
And of my ducal palace not one stone
Is bruised by the Hungarian petards.
Toil hard, ye slaves, and from the miser-earth 10
Bring forth once more my bullion, treasured deep,
With all my jewell'd salvers, silver and gold,
And precious goblets that make rich the wine,
But why do I stand babbling to myself?
Where is Auranthe? I have news for her 15
Shall—

Enter AURANTHE.

AURANTHE.

Conrad! what tidings? Good, if I may guess
From your alert eyes and high-lifted brows.
What tidings of the battle? Albert? Ludolph? Otho?

CONRAD.

You guess aright. And, sister, slurring o'er

Appear'd, a sudden host, in the open day.
 I should have perish'd in our empire's wreck,
 But, calling interest loyalty, swore faith
 To most believing Otho ; and so help'd 50
 His blood-stain'd ensigns to the victory
 In yesterday's hard fight, that it has turn'd
 The edge of his sharp wrath to eager kindness.

AURANTHE.

So far yourself. But what is this to me
 More than that I am glad ? I congratulate you. 55

CONRAD.

Yes, sister, but it does regard you greatly,
 Nearly, momentarily,—aye, painfully!
 Make me this vow—

AURANTHE.

Concerning whom or what ?

CONRAD.

Albert !

AURANTHE.

I would inquire somewhat of him :
 You had a letter from me touching him ? 60
 No treason 'gainst his head in deed or word !
 Surely you spar'd him at my earnest prayer ?
 Give me the letter—it should not exist !

CONRAD.

At one pernicious charge of the enemy,
 I, for a moment-whiles, was prisoner ta'en 65
 And rifled,—stuff ! the horses' hoofs have minc'd it !

AURANTHE.

He is alive ?

CONRAD.

He is ! but here make oath
 To alienate him from your scheming brain,
 Divorce him from your solitary thoughts,
 And cloud him in such utter banishment, 70

That when his person meets again your eye,
Your vision shall quite lose its memory,
And wander past him as through vacancy.

AURANTHE.

I'll not be perjured.

CONRAD.

No, nor great, nor mighty;
You would not wear a crown, or rule a kingdom.
To you it is indifferent.

75

AURANTHE.

What means this?

CONRAD.

You'll not be perjured! Go to Albert then,
That camp-mushroom—dishonour of our house.
Go, page his dusty heels upon a march,
Furbish his jingling baldric while he sleeps,
And share his mouldy ration in a siege.
Yet stay,—perhaps a charm may call you back,
And make the widening circlets of your eyes
Sparkle with healthy fevers.—The Emperor
Hath given consent that you should marry Ludolph!

80

85

AURANTHE.

Can it be, brother? For a golden crown
With a queen's awful lips I doubly thank you!
This is to wake in Paradise! Farewell
Thou clod of yesterday—'twas not myself!
Not till this moment did I ever feel
My spirit's faculties! I'll flatter you
For this, and be you ever proud of it;
Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,
And from the teeming marrow of thy brain
I spring complete Minerva! But the prince—
His highness Ludolph—where is he?

90

95

CONRAD.

I know not:

When, lackeying my counsel at a beck,
 The rebel lords, on bended knees, received
 The Emperor's pardon, Ludolph kept aloof,
 Sole, in a stiff, fool-hardy, sulky pride ; 100
 Yet, for all this, I never saw a father
 In such a sickly longing for his son.
 We shall soon see him, for the Emperor
 He will be here this morning.

AURANTHE.

That I heard
 Among the midnight rumours from the camp. 105

CONRAD.

You give up Albert to me ?

AURANTHE.

Harm him not !
 E'en for his highness Ludolph's sceptry hand,
 I would not Albert suffer any wrong.

CONRAD.

Have I not laboured, plotted— ?

AURANTHE.

See you spare him :

Nor be pathetic, my kind benefactor, 110
 On all the many bounties of your hand,—
 'Twas for yourself you laboured—not for me !
 Do you not count, when I am queen, to take
 Advantage of your chance discoveries
 Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod 115
 Over my life ?

CONRAD.

Let not this slave—this villain—
 Be cause of feud between us. See ! he comes !
 Look, woman, look, your Albert is quite safe !
 In haste it seems. Now shall I be in the way,
 And wish'd with silent curses in my grave, 120
 Or side by side with 'whelmed mariners.

Enter ALBERT.

ALBERT.

Fair on your graces fall this early morrow !
 So it is like to do, without my prayers,
 For your right noble names, like favorite tunes,
 Have fallen full frequent from our Emperor's lips, 125
 High commented with smiles.

AURANTHE.

Noble Albert !

CONRAD (*aside*).

Noble !

AURANTHE.

Such salutation argues a glad heart
 In our prosperity. We thank you, sir.

ALBERT.

Lady ! O, would to Heaven your poor servant
 Could do you better service than mere words ! 130
 But I have other greeting than mine own,
 From no less man than Otho, who has sent
 This ring as pledge of dearest amity ;
 'Tis chosen I hear from Hymen's jewel'ry,
 And you will prize it, lady, I doubt not, 135
 Beyond all pleasures past, and all to come.
 To you great duke—

CONRAD.

To me ! What of me, ha ?

ALBERT.

What pleas'd your grace to say ?

CONRAD.

Your message, sir !

ALBERT.

You mean not this to me ?

CONRAD.

Sister, this way ; 139
 For there shall be no "gentle Alberts" now, [*Aside*.

No "sweet Auranthes!"

[*Exeunt* CONRAD and AURANTHE.

ALBERT (*solus*).

The duke is out of temper; if he knows

More than a brother of a sister ought,

I should not quarrel with his peevishness.

Auranthe—Heaven preserve her always fair!— 145

Is in the heady, proud, ambitious vein;

I bicker not with her,—bid her farewell!

She has taken flight from me, then let her soar,—

He is a fool who stands at pining gaze!

But for poor Ludolph, he is food for sorrow: 150

No levelling bluster of my licens'd thoughts,

No military swagger of my mind,

Can smother from myself the wrong I've done him,—

Without design, indeed,—yet it is so,—

And opiate for the conscience have I none! 155

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Court-yard of the Castle.*

Martial Music. Enter, from the outer gate, OTHO, Nobles, Knights, and Attendants. The Soldiers halt at the gate, with Banners in sight.

OTHO.

Where is my noble herald?

Enter CONRAD, *from the Castle, attended by two Knights and Servants.* ALBERT *following.*

Well, hast told

Auranthe our intent imperial?

Lest our rent banners, too o' the sudden shown,

Should fright her silken casements, and dismay

Her household to our lack of entertainment. 5

A victory!

CONRAD.

God save illustrious Otho!

OTHO.

Aye, Conrad, it will pluck out all grey hairs ;
 It is the best physician for the spleen ;
 The courtliest inviter to a feast ;
 The subtlest excuser of small faults ; 10
 And a nice judge in the age and smack of wine.

Enter, from the Castle, AURANTHE, followed by Pages holding up her robes, and a train of Women. She kneels.

Hail my sweet hostess ! I do thank the stars,
 Or my good soldiers, or their ladies' eyes,
 That, after such a merry battle fought,
 I can, all safe in body and in soul, 15
 Kiss your fair hand and lady fortune's too.
 My ring ! now, on my life, it doth rejoice
 These lips to feel 't on this soft ivory !
 Keep it, my brightest daughter ; it may prove
 The little prologue to a line of kings. 20
 I strove against thee and my hot-blood son,
 Dull blockhead that I was to be so blind,
 But now my sight is clear ; forgive me, lady.

AURANTHE.

My lord, I was a vassal to your frown,
 And now your favour makes me but more humble ; 25
 In wintry winds the simple snow is safe,
 But fadeth at the greeting of the sun :
 Unto thine anger I might well have spoken,
 Taking on me a woman's privilege,
 But this so sudden kindness makes me dumb. 30

OTHO.

What need of this ? Enough, if you will be
 A potent tutoress to my wayward boy,

And teach him, what it seems his nurse could not,
To say, for once, I thank you. Sigifred!

ALBERT.

He has not yet return'd, my gracious liege. 35

OTHO.

What then! No tidings of my friendly Arab?

CONRAD.

None, mighty Otho.

[*To one of his Knights, who goes out.*

Send forth instantly

An hundred horsemen from my honoured gates,
To scour the plains and search the cottages.
Cry a reward, to him who shall first bring 40
News of that vanished Arabian,
A full-heap'd helmet of the purest gold.

OTHO.

More thanks, good Conrad; for, except my son's,
There is no face I rather would behold
Than that same quick-ey'd pagan's. By the saints, 45
This coming night of banquets must not light
Her dazzling torches; nor the music breathe
Smooth, without clashing cymbal, tones of peace
And in-door melodies; nor the ruddy wine
Ebb spouting to the lees; if I pledge not, 50
In my first cup, that Arab!

ALBERT.

Mighty Monarch,

I wonder not this stranger's victor-deeds
So hang upon your spirit. Twice in the fight
It was my chance to meet his olive brow,
Triumphant in the enemy's shatter'd rhomb; 55
And, to say truth, in any Christian arm
I never saw such prowess.

OTHO.

Did you ever?

O, 'tis a noble boy!—tut!—what do I say?
 I mean a triple Saladin, whose eyes,
 When in the glorious scuffle they met mine, 60
 Seem'd to say—"Sleep, old man, in safety sleep;
 I am the victory!"

CONRAD.

Pity he's not here.

OTHO.

And my son too, pity he is not here.
 Lady Auranthe, I would not make you blush,
 But can you give a guess where Ludolph is? 65
 Know you not of him?

AURANTHE.

Indeed, my liege, no secret—

OTHO.

Nay, nay, without more words, dost know of him?

AURANTHE.

I would I were so over-fortunate,
 Both for his sake and mine, and to make glad
 A father's ears with tidings of his son. 70

OTHO.

I see 'tis like to be a tedious day.
 Were Theodore and Gonfrid and the rest
 Sent forth with my commands?

ALBERT.

Aye, my lord.

OTHO.

And no news! No news! 'Faith! 'tis very strange
 He thus avoids us. Lady, is 't not strange? 75
 Will he be truant to you too? It is a shame.

CONRAD.

Wil't please your highness enter, and accept
 The unworthy welcome of your servant's house?
 Leaving your cares to one whose diligence
 May in few hours make pleasures of them all. 80

OTHO.

Not so tedious, Conrad. No, no, no,—
I must see Ludolph or the—What's that shout?

VOICES WITHOUT.

Huzza! huzza! Long live the Emperor!

OTHER VOICES.

Fall back! Away there!

OTHO.

Say, what noise is that?

[ALBERT *advancing from the back of the Stage, whither he had hastened on hearing the cheers of the soldiery.*

ALBERT.

It is young Gersa, the Hungarian prince, 85
Pick'd like a red stag from the fallow herd
Of prisoners. Poor prince, forlorn he steps,
Slow, and demure, and proud in his despair.
If I may judge by his so tragic bearing,
His eye not downcast, and his folded arm, 90
He doth this moment wish himself asleep
Among his fallen captains on yon plains.

Enter GERSA, in chains, and guarded.

OTHO.

Well said, Sir Albert.

GERSA.

Not a word of greeting,

No welcome to a princely visitor,
Most mighty Otho? Will not my great host 95
Vouchsafe a syllable, before he bids
His gentlemen conduct me with all care
To some securest lodging—cold perhaps!

OTHO.

What mood is this? Hath fortune touch'd thy brain?

GERSA.

O kings and princes of this fev'rous world, 100

What abject things, what mockeries must ye be,
 What nerveless minions of safe palaces !
 When here, a monarch, whose proud foot is used
 To fallen princes' necks, as to his stirrup,
 Must needs exclaim that I am mad forsooth, 105
 Because I cannot flatter with bent knees
 My conqueror !

OTHO.

Gersa, I think you wrong me :
 I think I have a better fame abroad.

GERSA.

I prythee mock me not with gentle speech,
 But, as a favour, bid me from thy presence ; 110
 Let me no longer be the wondering food
 Of all these eyes ; prythee command me hence !

OTHO.

Do not mistake me, Gersa. That you may not,
 Come, fair Auranthe, try if your soft hands
 Can manage those hard rivets to set free 115
 So brave a prince and soldier.

AURANTHE (*sets him free*).

Welcome task !

GERSA.

I am wound up in deep astonishment !
 Thank you, fair lady. Otho ! emperor !
 You rob me of myself ; my dignity
 Is now your infant ; I am a weak child. 120

OTHO.

Give me your hand, and let this kindly grasp
 Live in our memories.

GERSA.

In mine it will.

I blush to think of my unchasten'd tongue ;
 But I was haunted by the monstrous ghost
 Of all our slain battalions. Sire, reflect, 125

And pardon you will grant, that, at this hour,
 The bruised remnants of our stricken camp
 Are huddling undistinguish'd my dear friends,
 With common thousands, into shallow graves.

OTHO.

Enough, most noble Gersa. You are free 130
 To cheer the brave remainder of your host
 By your own healing presence, and that too,
 Not as their leader merely, but their king ;
 For, as I hear, the wily enemy,
 Who eas'd the crownet from your infant brows, 135
 Bloody Taraxa, is among the dead.

GERSA.

Then I retire, so generous Otho please,
 Bearing with me a weight of benefits
 Too heavy to be borne.

OTHO.

It is not so ;
 Still understand me, King of Hungary, 140
 Nor judge my open purposes awry.
 Though I did hold you high in my esteem
 For your self's sake, I do not personate
 The stage-play emperor to entrap applause,
 To set the silly sort o' the world agape, 145
 And make the politic smile ; no, I have heard
 How in the Council you condemn'd this war,
 Urging the perfidy of broken faith,—
 For that I am your friend.

GERSA.

If ever, sire,
 You are my enemy, I dare here swear 150
 'Twill not be Gersa's fault. Otho, farewell !

OTHO.

Will you return, Prince, to our banqueting ?

GERSA.

As to my father's board I will return.

OTHO.

Conrad, with all due ceremony, give
The prince a regal escort to his camp ; 155
Albert, go thou and bear him company.
Gersa, farewell !

GERSA.

All happiness attend you !

OTHO.

Return with what good speed you may ; for soon
We must consult upon our terms of peace.

[Exeunt GERSA and ALBERT with others.]

And thus a marble column do I build 160
To prop my empire's dome. Conrad, in thee
I have another stedfast one, to uphold
The portals of my state ; and, for my own
Pre-eminence and safety, I will strive
To keep thy strength upon its pedestal. 165
For, without thee, this day I might have been
A show-monster about the streets of Prague,
In chains, as just now stood that noble prince :
And then to me no mercy had been shown,
For when the conquer'd lion is once dungeon'd, 170
Who lets him forth again ? or dares to give
An old lion sugar-cakes of mild reprieve ?
Not to thine ear alone I make confession,
But to all here, as, by experience,
I know how the great basement of all power 175
Is frankness, and a true tongue to the world ;
And how intriguing secrecy is proof
Of fear and weakness, and a hollow state.
Conrad, I owe thee much.

CONRAD.

To kiss that hand,

My emperor, is ample recompense,
For a mere act of duty. 180

OTHO.

Thou art wrong ;
For what can any man on earth do more ?
We will make trial of your house's welcome,
My bright Auranthe !

CONRAD.

How is Friedburg honoured !

Enter ETHELBERT *and six Monks.*

ETHELBERT.

The benison of heaven on your head,
Imperial Otho ! 185

OTHO.

Who stays me? Speak ! Quick !

ETHELBERT.

Pause but one moment, mighty conqueror !
Upon the threshold of this house of joy.

OTHO.

Pray, do not prose, good Ethelbert, but speak
What is your purpose. 190

ETHELBERT.

The restoration of some captive maids,
Devoted to Heaven's pious ministries,
Who, driven forth from their religious cells,
And kept in thralldom by our enemy,
When late this province was a lawless spoil, 195
Still weep amid the wild Hungarian camp,
Though hemm'd around by thy victorious arms.

OTHO.

Demand the holy sisterhood in our name
From Gersa's tents. Farewell, old Ethelbert.

ETHELBERT.

The saints will bless you for this pious care. 200

OTHO.

Daughter, your hand ; Ludolph's would fit it best.

CONRAD.

Ho ! let the music sound !

[*Music.* ETHELBERT raises his hands, as in benediction of OTHO. *Exeunt severally. The scene closes on them.*

SCENE III.—*The Country, with the Castle in the distance.*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

LUDOLPH.

You have my secret ; let it not be breath'd.

SIGIFRED.

Still give me leave to wonder that the Prince
Ludolph and the swift Arab are the same ;
Still to rejoice that 'twas a German arm
Death doing in a turban'd masquerade.

5

LUDOLPH.

The Emperor must not know it, Sigifred.

SIGIFRED.

I prythee, why ? What happier hour of time
Could thy pleas'd star point down upon from heaven
With silver index, bidding thee make peace ?

LUDOLPH.

Still it must not be known, good Sigifred ;
The star may point oblique.

10

SIGIFRED.

If Otho knew
His son to be that unknown Mussulman
After whose spurring heels he sent me forth,
With one of his well-pleas'd Olympian oaths,
The charters of man's greatness, at this hour
He would be watching round the castle walls,

15

And, like an anxious warder, strain his sight
 For the first glimpse of such a son return'd—
 Ludolph, that blast of the Hungarians,
 That Saracenic meteor of the fight, 20
 That silent fury, whose fell scymitar
 Kept danger all aloof from Otho's head,
 And left him space for wonder.

LUDOLPH.

Say no more.

Not as a swordsman would I pardon claim,
 But as a son. The bronz'd centurion, 25
 Long toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high deeds
 Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,
 Known only to his troop, hath greater plea
 Of favour with my sire than I can have.

SIGIFRED.

My lord, forgive me that I cannot see 30
 How this proud temper with clear reason squares.
 What made you then, with such an anxious love,
 Hover around that life, whose bitter days
 You vext with bad revolt? Was 't opium,
 Or the mad-fumed wine? Nay, do not frown, 35
 I rather would grieve with you than upbraid.

LUDOLPH.

I do believe you. No, 'twas not to make
 A father his son's debtor, or to heal
 His deep heart-sickness for a rebel child.
 'Twas done in memory of my boyish days, 40
 Poor cancel for his kindness to my youth,
 For all his calming of my childish griefs,
 And all his smiles upon my merriment.
 No, not a thousand foughten fields could sponge
 Those days paternal from my memory, 45
 Though now upon my head he heaps disgrace.

SIGIFRED.

My Prince, you think too harshly—

LUDOLPH.

Can I so ?

Hath he not gall'd my spirit to the quick ?

And with a sullen rigour obstinate

Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults ?

50

Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,

Driven me to the very edge o' the world,

And almost put a price upon my head ?

SIGIFRED.

Remember how he spar'd the rebel lords.

LUDOLPH.

Yes, yes, I know he hath a noble nature

55

That cannot trample on the fallen. But his

Is not the only proud heart in his realm.

He hath wrong'd me, and I have done him wrong ;

He hath lov'd me, and I have shown him kindness ;

We should be almost equal.

SIGIFRED.

Yet, for all this,

60

I would you had appear'd among those lords,

And ta'en his favour.

LUDOLPH.

Ha ! till now I thought

My friend had held poor Ludolph's honour dear.

What ! would you have me sue before his throne

And kiss the courtier's missal, its silk steps ?

65

Or hug the golden housings of his steed,

Amid a camp, whose steeled swarms I dar'd

But yesterday ? And, at the trumpet sound,

Bow like some unknown mercenary's flag,

And lick the soiled grass ? No, no, my friend,

70

I would not, I, be pardon'd in the heap,

And bless indemnity with all that scum,—

Those men I mean, who on my shoulders propp'd
 Their weak rebellion, winning me with lies,
 And pitying forsooth my many wrongs ; 75
 Poor self-deceived wretches, who must think
 Each one himself a king in embryo,
 Because some dozen vassals cry'd—my lord !
 Cowards, who never knew their little hearts,
 Till flurried danger held the mirror up, 80
 And then they own'd themselves without a blush,
 Curling, like spaniels, round my father's feet.
 Such things deserted me and are forgiven,
 While I, least guilty, am an outcast still,
 And will be, for I love such fair disgrace. 85

SIGIFRED.

I know the clear truth ; so would Otho see,
 For he is just and noble. Fain would I
 Be pleader for you—

LUDOLPH.

He'll hear none of it ;
 You know his temper, hot, proud, obstinate ;
 Endanger not yourself so uselessly. 90
 I will encounter his thwart spleen myself,
 To-day, at the Duke Conrad's, where he keeps
 His crowded state after the victory.
 There will I be, a most unwelcome guest,
 And parley with him, as a son should do, 95
 Who doubly loathes a father's tyranny ;
 Tell him how feeble is that tyranny ;
 How the relationship of father and son
 Is no more valid than a silken leash
 Where lions tug adverse, if love grow not 100
 From interchanged love through many years.
 Aye, and those turreted Franconian walls,
 Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl—
 My fair Auranthe ! Yes, I will be there.

SIGIFRED.

Be not so rash ; wait till his wrath shall pass, 105
 Until his royal spirit softly ebbs
 Self-influenced ; then, in his morning dreams
 He will forgive thee, and awake in grief
 To have not thy good morrow.

LUDOLPH.

Yes, to-day
 I must be there, while her young pulses beat 110
 Among the new-plum'd minions of the war.
 Have you seen her of late ? No ? Auranthe,
 Franconia's fair sister, 'tis I mean.
 She should be paler for my troublous days—
 And there it is—my father's iron lips 115
 Have sworn divorcement 'twixt me and my right.

SIGIFRED (*aside*).

Auranthe ! I had hop'd this whim had pass'd.

LUDOLPH.

And, Sigifred, with all his love of justice,
 When will he take that grandchild in his arms,
 That, by my love I swear, shall soon be his ? 120
 This reconcilment is impossible,
 For see—but who are these ?

SIGIFRED.

They are messengers
 From our great emperor ; to you, I doubt not,
 For couriers are abroad to seek you out.

Enter THEODORE *and* GONFRED.

THEODORE.

Seeing so many vigilant eyes explore 125
 The province to invite your highness back
 To your high dignities, we are too happy.

GONFRED.

We have no eloquence to colour justly

The emperor's anxious wishes.

LUDOLPH.

Go. I follow you.

[*Exeunt* THEODORE and GONFRED.

I play the prude : it is but venturing— 130
 Why should he be so earnest? Come, my friend,
 Let us to Friedburg castle.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Ante-chamber in the Castle.*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

LUDOLPH.

NO more advices, no more cautioning ;
 I leave it all to fate—to any thing !
 I cannot square my conduct to time, place,
 Or circumstance ; to me 'tis all a mist !

SIGIFRED.

I say no more.

LUDOLPH.

It seems I am to wait

5

Here in the ante-room ;—that may be a trifle.
 You see now how I dance attendance here,
 Without that tyrant temper, you so blame,
 Snapping the rein. You have medicin'd me
 With good advices ; and I here remain,
 In this most honourable ante-room,
 Your patient scholar.

10

SIGIFRED.

Do not wrong me, Prince.

By Heavens, I'd rather kiss Duke Conrad's slipper,

When in the morning he doth yawn with pride,
 Than see you humbled but a half-degree! 15
 Truth is, the Emperor would fain dismiss
 The nobles ere he sees you.

Enter GONFRED, from the Council-room.

LUDOLPH.

Well, sir! what?

GONFRED.

Great honour to the Prince! The Emperor,
 Hearing that his brave son had re-appeared,
 Instant dismiss'd the Council from his sight, 20
 As Jove fans off the clouds. Even now they pass.

[*Exit.*

Enter the Nobles from the Council-room. They cross the stage, bowing with respect to LUDOLPH, he frowning on them. CONRAD follows. Exeunt Nobles.

LUDOLPH.

Not the discoloured poisons of a fen,
 Which he who breathes feels warning of his death,
 Could taste so nauseous to the bodily sense,
 As these prodigious sycophants disgust 25
 The soul's fine palate.

CONRAD.

Princely Ludolph, hail!

Welcome, thou younger sceptre to the realm!
 Strength to thy virgin crownet's golden buds,
 That they, against the winter of thy sire,
 May burst, and swell, and flourish round thy brows, 30
 Maturing to a weighty diadem!

Yet be that hour far off; and may he live,
 Who waits for thee, as the chapp'd earth for rain.
 Set my life's star! I have lived long enough,
 Since under my glad roof, propitiously, 35
 Father and son each other re-possess.

LUDOLPH.

Fine wording, Duke! but words could never yet
 Forestall the fates; have you not learnt that yet?
 Let me look well: your features are the same;
 Your gait the same; your hair of the same shade; 40
 As one I knew some passed weeks ago,
 Who sung far different notes into mine ears.
 I have mine own particular comments on 't;
 You have your own, perhaps.

CONRAD.

My gracious Prince,

All men may err. In truth I was deceived 45
 In your great father's nature, as you were.
 Had I known that of him I have since known,
 And what you soon will learn, I would have turn'd
 My sword to my own throat, rather than held
 Its threatening edge against a good King's quiet: 50
 Or with one word fever'd you, gentle Prince,
 Who seem'd to me, as rugged times then went,
 Indeed too much oppress'd. May I be bold
 To tell the Emperor you will haste to him?

LUDOLPH.

Your Dukedom's privilege will grant so much. 55
 [*Exit* CONRAD.]

He's very close to Otho, a tight leech!
 Your hand—I go. Ha! here the thunder comes
 Sullen against the wind! If in two angry brows
 My safety lies, then Sigifred, I'm safe.

Enter OTHO and CONRAD.

OTHO.

Will you make Titan play the lackey-page 60
 To chattering pigmies? I would have you know
 That such neglect of our high Majesty
 Annuls all feel of kindred. What is son,—

Or friend,—or brother,—or all ties of blood,—
 When the whole kingdom, centred in ourself, 65
 Is rudely slighted? Who am I to wait?
 By Peter's chair! I have upon my tongue
 A word to fright the proudest spirit here!—
 Death!—and slow tortures to the hardy fool,
 Who dares take such large charter from our smiles! 70
 Conrad, we would be private. Sigifred!
 Off! And none pass this way on pain of death!

[*Exeunt* CONRAD and SIGIFRED.]

LUDOLPH.

This was but half expected, my good sire,
 Yet I am griev'd at it, to the full height,
 As though my hopes of favour had been whole. 75

OTHO.

How you indulge yourself! What can you hope for?

LUDOLPH.

Nothing, my liege; I have to hope for nothing.
 I come to greet you as a loving son,
 And then depart, if I may be so free,
 Seeing that blood of yours in my warm veins 80
 Has not yet mitigated into milk.

OTHO.

What would you, sir?

LUDOLPH.

A lenient banishment;
 So please you let me unmolested pass
 This Conrad's gates, to the wide air again.
 I want no more. A rebel wants no more. 85

OTHO.

And shall I let a rebel loose again
 To muster kites and eagles 'gainst my head?
 No, obstinate boy, you shall be kept cag'd up,
 Serv'd with harsh food, with scum for Sunday-drink.

LUDOLPH.

Indeed!

OTHO.

And chains too heavy for your life : 90
I'll choose a gaoler, whose swart monstrous face
Shall be a hell to look upon, and she—

LUDOLPH.

Ha!

OTHO.

Shall be your fair Auranthe.

LUDOLPH.

Amaze! Amaze!

OTHO.

To-day you marry her.

LUDOLPH.

This is a sharp jest!

OTHO.

No. None at all. When have I said a lie? 95

LUDOLPH.

If I sleep not, I am a waking wretch.

OTHO.

Not a word more. Let me embrace my child.

LUDOLPH.

I dare not. 'Twould pollute so good a father!
O heavy crime! that your son's blinded eyes
Could not see all his parent's love aright, 100
As now I see it. Be not kind to me—
Punish me not with favour.

OTHO.

Are you sure,
Ludolph, you have no saving plea in store?

LUDOLPH.

My father, none!

OTHO.

Then you astonish me.

LUDOLPH.

No, I have no plea. Disobedience, 105
 Rebellion, obstinacy, blasphemy,
 Are all my counsellors. If they can make
 My crooked deeds show good and plausible,
 Then grant me loving pardon, but not else,
 Good Gods! not else, in any way, my liege! 110

OTHO.

You are a most perplexing, noble boy.

LUDOLPH.

You not less a perplexing noble father.

OTHO.

Well, you shall have free passport through the gates.
 Farewell!

LUDOLPH.

Farewell! and by these tears believe,
 And still remember, I repent in pain 115
 All my misdeeds!

OTHO.

Ludolph, I will! I will!

But, Ludolph, ere you go, I would enquire
 If you, in all your wandering, ever met
 A certain Arab haunting in these parts.

LUDOLPH.

No, my good lord, I cannot say I did. 120

OTHO.

Make not your father blind before his time;
 Nor let these arms paternal hunger more
 For an embrace, to dull the appetite
 Of my great love for thee, my supreme child!
 Come close, and let me breathe into thine ear. 125
 I knew you through disguise. You are the Arab!
 You can't deny it. *[Embracing him.]*

LUDOLPH.

Happiest of days!

OTHO.

We'll make it so.

LUDOLPH.

'Stead of one fatted calf

Ten hecatombs shall bellow out their last,
Smote 'twixt the horns by the death-stunning mace 130
Of Mars, and all the soldiery shall feast
Nobly as Nimrod's masons, when the towers
Of Nineveh new kiss'd the parted clouds!

OTHO.

Large as a God speak out, where all is thine.

LUDOLPH.

Aye, father, but the fire in my sad breast 135
Is quench'd with inward tears! I must rejoice
For you, whose wings so shadow over me
In tender victory, but for myself
I still must mourn. The fair Auranthe mine!
Too great a boon! I prythee let me ask 140
What more than I know of could so have changed
Your purpose touching her?

OTHO.

At a word, this:

In no deed did you give me more offence
Than your rejection of Erminia.
To my appalling, I saw too good proof 145
Of your keen-ey'd suspicion,—she is naught!

LUDOLPH.

You are convinc'd?

OTHO.

Aye, spite of her sweet looks.

O, that my brother's daughter should so fall!
Her fame has pass'd into the grosser lips
Of soldiers in their cups.

LUDOLPH.

'Tis very sad. 150

G G

OTHO.

No more of her. Auranthe—Ludolph, come!
This marriage be the bond of endless peace! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Entrance of GERSA'S Tent in the
Hungarian Camp.*

Enter ERMINIA.

ERMINIA.

Where! where! where shall I find a messenger?
A trusty soul? A good man in the camp?
Shall I go myself? Monstrous wickedness!
O cursed Conrad! devilish Auranthe!
Here is proof palpable as the bright sun! 5
O for a voice to reach the Emperor's ears!
[Shouts in the Camp.]

Enter an HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Fair prisoner, you hear these joyous shouts?
The king—aye, now our king,—but still your slave,
Young Gersa, from a short captivity
Has just return'd. He bids me say, bright dame, 10
That even the homage of his ranged chiefs
Cures not his keen impatience to behold
Such beauty once again. What ails you, lady?

ERMINIA.

Say, is not that a German, yonder? There!

CAPTAIN.

Methinks by his stout bearing he should be— 15
Yes—it is Albert; a brave German knight,
And much in the emperor's favour.

ERMINIA.

I would fain
Enquire of friends and kinsfolk; how they fared

In these rough times. Brave soldier, as you pass
 To royal Gersa with my humble thanks, 20
 Will you send yonder knight to me?

CAPTAIN.

I will. [*Exit.*

ERMINIA.

Yes, he was ever known to be a man
 Frank, open, generous; Albert I may trust.
 O proof! proof! proof! Albert's an honest man;
 Not Ethelbert the monk, if he were here, 25
 Would I hold more trustworthy. Now!

Enter ALBERT.

ALBERT.

Good Gods!

Lady Erminia! are you prisoner
 In this beleaguer'd camp? Or are you here
 Of your own will? You pleas'd to send for me.
 By Venus, 'tis a pity I knew not 30
 Your plight before, and, by her Son, I swear
 To do you every service you can ask.
 What would the fairest—?

ERMINIA.

Albert, will you swear?

ALBERT.

I have. Well?

ERMINIA.

Albert, you have fame to lose.

If men, in court and camp, lie not outright, 35
 You should be, from a thousand, chosen forth
 To do an honest deed. Shall I confide—?

ALBERT.

Aye, anything to me, fair creature. Do;
 Dictate my task. Sweet woman,—

ERMINIA.

Truce with that.

You understand me not ; and, in your speech, 40
I see how far the slander is abroad.

Without proof could you think me innocent ?

ALBERT.

Lady, I should rejoice to know you so.

ERMINIA.

If you have any pity for a maid, 45
Suffering a daily death from evil tongues ;
Any compassion for that Emperor's niece,
Who, for your bright sword and clear honesty,
Lifted you from the crowd of common men
Into the lap of honour ;—save me, knight !

ALBERT.

How ? Make it clear ; if it be possible, 50
I, by the banner of Saint Maurice, swear
To right you.

ERMINIA.

Possible !—Easy. O my heart !
This letter's not so soil'd but you may read it ;—
Possible ! There—that letter ! Read—read it.

[Gives him a letter.

ALBERT (*reading*).

“To the Duke Conrad.—Forget the threat you 55
made at parting, and I will forget to send the
Emperor letters and papers of your's I have be-
come possessed of. His life is no trifle to me ; his
death you shall find none to yourself.” (*Speaks to
himself :*) 'Tis me—my life that's pleaded for ! 60
(*Reads.*) “He, for his own sake, will be dumb as
the grave. Erminia has my shame fix'd upon her,
sure as a wen. We are safe. AURANTHE.”

A she-devil ! A dragon ! I her imp !

Fire of Hell! Auranthe—lewd demon! 65
Where got you this? Where? When?

ERMINIA.

I found it in the tent, among some spoils
Which, being noble, fell to Gersa's lot.

Come in, and see. [They go in and return.

ALBERT.

Villainy! Villainy!

Conrad's sword, his corslet, and his helm, 70
And his letter. Caitiff, he shall feel—

ERMINIA.

I see you are thunderstruck. Haste, haste away!

ALBERT.

O I am tortured by this villainy.

ERMINIA.

You needs must be. Carry it swift to Otho;
Tell him, moreover, I am prisoner 75
Here in this camp, where all the sisterhood,
Forc'd from their quiet cells, are parcell'd out
For slaves among these Huns. Away! Away!

ALBERT.

I am gone.

ERMINIA.

Swift be your steed! Within this hour
The Emperor will see it.

ALBERT.

Ere I sleep: 80

That I can swear. [Hurries out.

GERSA (*without*).

Brave captains! thanks. Enough
Of loyal homage now!

Enter GERSA.

ERMINIA.

Hail, royal Hun!

GERSA.

What means this, fair one? Why in such alarm?
 Who was it hurried by me so distract?
 It seem'd you were in deep discourse together; 85
 Your doctrine has not been so harsh to him
 As to my poor deserts. Come, come, be plain.
 I am no jealous fool to kill you both,
 Or, for such trifles, rob th' adorned world
 Of such a beauteous vestal.

ERMINIA.

I grieve, my Lord, 90
 To hear you condescend to ribald-phrase.

GERSA.

This is too much! Hearken, my lady pure!

ERMINIA.

Silence! and hear the magic of a name—
 Erminia! I am she,—the Emperor's niece!
 Prais'd be the Heavens, I now dare own myself! 95

GERSA.

Erminia! Indeed! I've heard of her.
 Prythee, fair lady, what chance brought you here?

ERMINIA.

Ask your own soldiers.

GERSA.

And you dare own your name.
 For loveliness you may—and for the rest
 My vein is not censorious.

ERMINIA.

Alas! poor me! 100
 'Tis false indeed.

GERSA.

Indeed you are too fair:
 The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast,
 When to the stream she launches, looks not back
 With such a tender grace; nor are her wings

So white as your soul is, if that but be
Twin picture to your face. Erminia!
To-day, for the first day, I am a king,
Yet would I give my unworn crown away
To know you spotless. 105

ERMINIA.

Trust me one day more,
Generously, without more certain guarantee, 110
Than this poor face you deign to praise so much;
After that, say and do whate'er you please.
If I have any knowledge of you, sir,
I think, nay I am sure, you will grieve much
To hear my story. O be gentle to me, 115
For I am sick and faint with many wrongs,
Tir'd out, and weary-worn with contumelies.

GERSA.

Poor lady!

Enter ETHELBERT.

ERMINIA.

Gentle Prince, 'tis false indeed.
Good morrow, holy father! I have had
Your prayers, though I look'd for you in vain. 120

ETHELBERT.

Blessings upon you, daughter! Sure you look
Too cheerful for these foul pernicious days.
Young man, you heard this virgin say 'twas false,—
'Tis false, I say. What! can you not employ
Your temper elsewhere, 'mong those burly tents, 125
But you must taunt this dove, for she hath lost
The Eagle Otho to beat off assault?
Fie! fie! But I will be her guard myself;
I' the Emperor's name. I here demand
Herself, and all her sisterhood. She false! 130

GERSA.

Peace! peace, old man! I cannot think she is.

ETHELBERT.

Whom I have known from her first infancy,
 Baptiz'd her in the bosom of the Church,
 Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,
 From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May, 135
 Then to the tender ear of her June days,
 Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green,
 Is blighted by the touch of calumny ;
 You cannot credit such a monstrous tale.

GERSA.

I cannot. Take her. Fair Erminia, 140
 I follow you to Friedburg,—is't not so?

ERMINIA.

Aye, so we purpose.

ETHELBERT.

Daughter, do you so?
 How's this? I marvel! Yet you look not mad.

ERMINIA.

I have good news to tell you, Ethelbert.

GERSA.

Ho! ho, there! Guards! 145
 Your blessing, father! Sweet Erminia,
 Believe me, I am well nigh sure—

ERMINIA.

Farewell!

Short time will show.

[Enter Chiefs.]

Yes, father Ethelbert,
 I have news precious as we pass along.

ETHELBERT.

Dear daughter, you shall guide me.

ERMINIA.

To no ill. 150

GERSA.

Command an escort to the Friedburg lines.

[Exeunt Chiefs.]

Pray let me lead. Fair lady, forget not
 Gersa, how he believ'd you innocent.
 I follow you to Friedburg with all speed.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Country.*

Enter ALBERT.

ALBERT.

O THAT the earth were empty, as when Cain
 Had no perplexity to hide his head!
 Or that the sword of some brave enemy
 Had put a sudden stop to my hot breath,
 And hurl'd me down the illimitable gulph 5
 Of times past, unremember'd! Better so
 Than thus fast-limed in a cursed snare,
 The white limbs of a wanton. This the end
 Of an aspiring life! My boyhood past
 In feud with wolves and bears, when no eye saw 10
 The solitary warfare, fought for love
 Of honour 'mid the growling wilderness.
 My sturdier youth, maturing to the sword,
 Won by the syren-trumpets, and the ring
 Of shields upon the pavement, when bright-mail'd 15
 Henry the Fowler pass'd the streets of Prague.
 Was 't to this end I louted and became
 The menial of Mars, and held a spear
 Sway'd by command, as corn is by the wind?
 Is it for this, I now am lifted up 20
 By Europe's throned Emperor, to see
 My honour be my executioner,—
 My love of fame, my prided honesty

Put to the torture for confessional?
 Then the damn'd crime of blurting to the world 25
 A woman's secret!—Though a fiend she be,
 Too tender of my ignominious life;
 But then to wrong the generous Emperor
 In such a searching point, were to give up
 My soul for foot-ball at Hell's holiday! 30
 I must confess,—and cut my throat,—to-day?
 To-morrow? Ho! some wine!

Enter SIGIFRED.

SIGIFRED.

A fine humour—

ALBERT.

Who goes there? Count Sigifred? Ha! Ha!

SIGIFRED.

What, man, do you mistake the hollow sky
 For a throng'd tavern,—and these stubbed trees 35
 For old serge hangings,—me, your humble friend,
 For a poor waiter? Why, man, how you stare!
 What gipsies have you been carousing with?
 No, no more wine; methinks you've had enough.

ALBERT.

You may well laugh and banter. What a fool 40
 An injury may make of a staid man!
 You shall know all anon.

SIGIFRED.

Some tavern brawl?

ALBERT.

'Twas with some people out of common reach;
 Revenge is difficult.

SIGIFRED.

I am your friend;

We meet again to-day, and can confer 45
 Upon it. For the present I'm in haste.

ALBERT.

Whither ?

SIGIFRED.

To fetch King Gersa to the feast.

The Emperor on this marriage is so hot,

Pray Heaven it end not in apoplexy !

The very porters, as I pass'd the doors,

50

Heard his loud laugh, and answer'd in full choir.

I marvel, Albert, you delay so long

From these bright revelries ; go, show yourself,

You may be made a duke.

ALBERT.

Aye, very like :

Pray, what day has his Highness fix'd upon ?

55

SIGIFRED.

For what ?

ALBERT.

The marriage. What else can I mean ?

SIGIFRED.

To-day. O, I forgot, you could not know ;

The news is scarce a minute old with me.

ALBERT.

Married to-day ! To-day ! You did not say so ?

SIGIFRED.

Now, while I speak to you, their comely heads

60

Are bow'd before the mitre.

ALBERT.

O ! monstrous !

SIGIFRED.

What is this ?

ALBERT.

Nothing, Sigifred. Farewell !

We'll meet upon our subject. Farewell, count !

[Exit.

SIGIFRED.

Is this clear-headed Albert? He brain-turn'd!
'Tis as portentous as a meteor.

64

[Exit.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter, as from the Marriage, OTHO, LUDOLPH, AURANTHE, CONRAD, Nobles, Knights, Ladies, &c. Music.

OTHO.

Now, Ludolph! Now, Auranthe! Daughter fair!
What can I find to grace your nuptial day
More than my love, and these wide realms in fee?

LUDOLPH.

I have too much.

AURANTHE.

And I, my liege, by far.

LUDOLPH.

Auranthe! I have! O, my bride, my love!
Not all the gaze upon us can restrain
My eyes, too long poor exiles from thy face,
From adoration, and my foolish tongue
From uttering soft responses to the love
I see in thy mute beauty beaming forth!
Fair creature, bless me with a single word!
All mine!

5

10

AURANTHE.

Spare, spare me, my Lord; I swoon else.

LUDOLPH.

Soft beauty! by to-morrow I should die,
Wert thou not mine.

[*They talk apart.*

FIRST LADY.

How deep she has bewitch'd him!

FIRST KNIGHT.

Ask you for her recipe for love philtres.

15

SECOND LADY.

They hold the Emperor in admiration.

OTHO.

If ever king was happy, that am I !
 What are the cities 'yond the Alps to me,
 The provinces about the Danube's mouth,
 The promise of fair sail beyond the Rhone ; 20
 Or routing out of Hyperborean hordes,
 To these fair children, stars of a new age ?
 Unless perchance I might rejoice to win
 This little ball of earth, and chuck it them
 To play with !

AURANTHE.

Nay, my Lord, I do not know. 25

LUDOLPH.

Let me not famish.

OTHO (*to Conrad*).

Good Franconia,

You heard what oath I sware, as the sun rose,
 That unless Heaven would send me back my son,
 My Arab,—no soft music should enrich
 The cool wine, kiss'd off with a soldier's smack ; 30
 Now all my empire, barter'd for one feast,
 Seems poverty.

CONRAD.

Upon the neighbour-plain

The heralds have prepar'd a royal lists ;
 Your knights, found war-proof in the bloody field,
 Speed to the game.

OTHO.

Well, Ludolph, what say you ? 35

LUDOLPH.

My lord !

OTHO.

A tourney ?

CONRAD.

Or, if 't please you best—

LUDOLPH.

I want no more!

FIRST LADY.

He soars!

SECOND LADY.

Past all reason.

LUDOLPH.

Though heaven's choir

Should in a vast circumference descend

And sing for my delight, I'd stop my ears!

Though bright Apollo's car stood burning here,

And he put out an arm to bid me mount,

His touch an immortality, not I!

This earth, this palace, this room, Auranthe!

OTHO.

This is a little painful; just too much.

Conrad, if he flames longer in this wise,

I shall believe in wizard-woven loves

And old romances; but I'll break the spell.

Ludolph!

CONRAD.

He'll be calm, anon.

LUDOLPH.

You call'd?

Yes, yes, yes, I offend. You must forgive me;

Not being quite recover'd from the stun

Of your large bounties. A tourney, is it not?

[*A senet heard faintly.*]

CONRAD.

The trumpets reach us.

ETHELBERT (*without*).

On your peril, sirs,

Detain us!

40

45

50

FIRST VOICE (*without*).

Let not the abbot pass.

SECOND VOICE (*without*).

No,

On your lives!

FIRST VOICE (*without*).

Holy father, you must not.

55

ETHELBERT (*without*).

Otho!

OTHO.

Who calls on Otho?

ETHELBERT (*without*).

Ethelbert!

OTHO.

Let him come in.

[*Enter* ETHELBERT *leading in* ERMINIA.

Thou cursed abbot why

Hast brought pollution to our holy rites?

Hast thou no fear of hangman, or the faggot?

LUDOLPH.

What portent—what strange prodigy is this?

60

CONRAD.

Away!

ETHELBERT.

You, Duke?

ERMINIA.

Albert has surely fail'd me!

Look at the Emperor's brow upon me bent!

ETHELBERT.

A sad delay!

CONRAD.

Away, thou guilty thing!

ETHELBERT.

You again, Duke? Justice, most noble Otho!

You—go to your sister there and plot again,

65

A quick plot, swift as thought to save your head.;

For lo! the toils are spread around your den,
The world is all agape to see dragg'd forth
Two ugly monsters.

LUDOLPH.

What means he, my lord?

CONRAD.

I cannot guess.

ETHELBERT.

Best ask your lady sister,
Whether the riddle puzzles her beyond
The power of utterance.

70

CONRAD.

Foul barbarian, cease;

The Princess faints!

LUDOLPH.

Stab him! O, sweetest wife!

[*Attendants bear off AURANTHE.*

ERMINIA.

Alas!

ETHELBERT.

Your wife?

LUDOLPH.

Aye, Satan! does that yerk ye?

ETHELBERT.

Wife! so soon!

LUDOLPH.

Aye, wife! Oh, impudence!

75

Thou bitter mischief! Venomous bad priest!
How dar'st thou lift those beetle brows at me?
Me—the prince Ludolph, in this presence here,
Upon my marriage-day, and scandalize
My joys with such opprobrious surprise?
Wife! Why dost linger on that syllable,
As if it were some demon's name pronounc'd
To summon harmful lightning, and make yawn
The sleepy thunder? Hast no sense of fear?

80

No ounce of man in thy mortality? 85
 Tremble! for, at my nod, the sharpen'd axe
 Will make thy bold tongue quiver to the roots,
 Those grey lids wink, and thou not know it, monk!

ETHELBERT.

O, poor deceived Prince! I pity thee!
 Great Otho! I claim justice—

LUDOLPH.

Thou shalt have't! 90

Thine arms from forth a pulpit of hot fire
 Shall sprawl distracted? O that that dull cowl
 Were some most sensitive portion of thy life,
 That I might give it to my hounds to tear!
 Thy girdle some fine zealous-pained nerve 95
 To girth my saddle! And those devil's beads
 Each one a life, that I might, every day,
 Crush one with Vulcan's hammer!

OTHO.

Peace, my son;

You far outstrip my spleen in this affair.
 Let us be calm, and hear the abbot's plea 100
 For this intrusion.

LUDOLPH.

I am silent, sire.

OTHO.

Conrad, see all depart not wanted here.

[Exeunt Knights, Ladies, &c.]

Ludolph, be calm. Ethelbert, peace awhile.
 This mystery demands an audience
 Of a just judge, and that will Otho be. 105

LUDOLPH.

Why has he time to breathe another word?

OTHO.

Ludolph, old Ethelbert, be sure, comes not
 To beard us for no cause; he's not the man

To cry himself up an ambassador
Without credentials.

LUDOLPH.

I 'll chain up myself. 110

OTHO.

Old abbot, stand here forth. Lady Erminia,
Sit. And now, abbot! what have you to say?
Our ear is open. First we here denounce
Hard penalties against thee, if't be found
The cause for which you have disturb'd us here, 115
Making our bright hours muddy, be a thing
Of little moment.

ETHELBERT.

See this innocent!

Otho! thou father of the people call'd,
Is her life nothing? Her fair honour nothing?
Her tears from matins until even-song 120
Nothing? Her burst heart nothing? Emperor!
Is this your gentle niece—the simplest flower
Of the world's herbal—this fair lilly blanch'd
Still with the dews of piety, this meek lady
Here sitting like an angel newly-shent, 125
Who veils its snowy wings and grows all pale,—
Is she nothing?

OTHO.

What more to the purpose, abbot?

LUDOLPH.

Whither is he winding?

CONRAD.

No clue yet!

ETHELBERT.

You have heard, my Liege, and so, no doubt, all here,
Foul, poisonous, malignant whisperings; 130
Nay open speech, rude mockery grown common,
Against the spotless nature and clear fame

Of the princess Erminia, your niece.
 I have intruded here thus suddenly,
 Because I hold those base weeds, with tight hand, 135
 Which now disfigure her fair growing stem,
 Waiting but for your sign to pull them up
 By the dark roots, and leave her palpable,
 To all men's sight, a lady innocent.
 The ignominy of that whisper'd tale 140
 About a midnight gallant, seen to climb
 A window to her chamber neighbour'd near,
 I will from her turn off, and put the load
 On the right shoulders ; on that wretch's head,
 Who, by close stratagems, did save herself, 145
 Chiefly by shifting to this lady's room
 A rope-ladder for false witness.

LUDOLPH.

Most atrocious !

OTHO.

Ethelbert, proceed.

ETHELBERT.

With sad lips I shall :

For, in the healing of one wound, I fear
 To make a greater. His young highness here 150
 To-day was married.

LUDOLPH.

Good.

ETHELBERT.

Would it were good !

Yet why do I delay to spread abroad
 The names of those two vipers, from whose jaw
 A deadly breath went forth to taint and blast
 This guileless lady ?

OTHO.

Abbot, speak their names. 155

ETHELBERT.

A minute first. It cannot be—but may
I ask, great judge, if you to-day have put
A letter by unread?

OTHO.

Does't end in this?

CONRAD.

Out with their names!

ETHELBERT.

Bold sinner, say you so?

LUDOLPH.

Out, hideous monk!

OTHO.

Confess, or by the wheel— 160

ETHELBERT.

My evidence cannot be far away;
And, though it never come, be on my head
The crime of passing an attain't upon
The slanderers of this virgin.

LUDOLPH.

Speak aloud!

ETHELBERT.

Auranthe, and her brother there.

CONRAD.

Amaze! 165

LUDOLPH.

Throw them from the windows!

OTHO.

Do what you will!

LUDOLPH.

What shall I do with them?

Something of quick dispatch, for should she hear,
My soft Auranthe, her sweet mercy would
Prevail against my fury. Damned priest!
What swift death wilt thou die? As to the lady
I touch her not. 170

ETHELBERT.

Illustrious Otho, stay!

An ample store of misery thou hast,
 Choak not the granary of thy noble mind
 With more bad bitter grain, too difficult 175
 A cud for the repentance of a man
 Grey-growing. To thee only I appeal,
 Not to thy noble son, whose yeasting youth
 Will clear itself, and crystal turn again.
 A young man's heart, by Heaven's blessing, is 180
 A wide world, where a thousand new-born hopes
 Empurple fresh the melancholy blood :
 But an old man's is narrow, tenantless
 Of hopes, and stuff'd with many memories,
 Which, being pleasant, ease the heavy pulse— 185
 Painful, clog up and stagnate. Weigh this matter
 Even as a miser balances his coin ;
 And, in the name-of mercy, give command
 That your knight Albert be brought here before you.
 He will expound this riddle ; he will show 190
 A noon-day proof of bad Auranthe's guilt.

OTHO.

Let Albert straight be summon'd.

[Exit one of the Nobles.]

LUDOLPH.

Impossible !

I cannot doubt—I will not—no—to doubt
 Is to be ashes!—wither'd up to death !

OTHO.

My gentle Ludolph, harbour not a fear ; 195
 You do yourself much wrong.

LUDOLPH.

O, wretched dolt !

Now, when my foot is almost on thy neck,
 Wilt thou infuriate me? Proof! Thou fool!

Why wilt thou tease impossibility
 With such a thick-skull'd persevering suit? 200
 Fanatic obstinacy! Prodigy!
 Monster of folly! Ghost of a turn'd brain!
 You puzzle me,—you haunt me,—when I dream
 Of you my brain will split! Bold sorcerer!
 Juggler! May I come near you? On my soul 205
 I know not whether to pity, curse, or laugh.

Enter ALBERT, and the Nobleman.

Here, Albert, this old phantom wants a proof!
 Give him his proof! A camel's load of proofs!

OTHO.

Albert, I speak to you as to a man
 Whose words once utter'd pass like current gold; 210
 And therefore fit to calmly put a close
 To this brief tempest. Do you stand possess'd
 Of any proof against the honourableness
 Of Lady Auranthe, our new-spoused daughter?

ALBERT.

You chill me with astonishment. How's this? 215
 My Liege, what proof should I have 'gainst a fame
 Impossible of slur? [OTHO rises.

ERMINIA.

O wickedness!

ETHELBERT.

Deluded monarch, 'tis a cruel lie.

OTHO.

Peace, rebel-priest!

CONRAD.

Insult beyond credence!

ERMINIA.

Almost a dream!

LUDOLPH.

We have awaked from 220
 A foolish dream that from my brow hath wrung

A wrathful dew. O folly! why did I
 So act the lion with this silly gnat?
 Let them depart. Lady Erminia!
 I ever griev'd for you, as who did not? 225
 But now you have, with such a brazen front,
 So most maliciously, so madly striven
 To dazzle the soft moon, when tenderest clouds
 Should be unloop'd around to curtain her;
 I leave you to the desert of the world 230
 Almost with pleasure. Let them be set free
 For me! I take no personal revenge
 More than against a nightmare, which a man
 Forgets in the new dawn. [*Exit* LUDOLPH.]

OTHO.

Still in extremes! No, they must not be loose. 235

ETHELBERT.

Albert, I must suspect thee of a crime
 So fiendish—

OTHO.

Fear'st thou not my fury, monk?
 Conrad, be they in your safe custody
 Till we determine some fit punishment.
 It is so mad a deed, I must reflect 240
 And question them in private; for perhaps,
 By patient scrutiny, we may discover
 Whether they merit death, or should be placed
 In care of the physicians.

[*Exeunt* OTHO and Nobles, ALBERT following.]

CONRAD.

My guards, ho!

ERMINIA.

Albert, wilt thou follow there? 245
 Wilt thou creep dastardly behind his back,
 And shrink away from a weak woman's eye?
 Turn, thou court-Janus! thou forget'st thyself;

Here is the duke, waiting with open arms,

[*Enter Guards.*

To thank thee ; here congratulate each other ; 250
 Wring hands ; embrace ; and swear how lucky 'twas
 That I, by happy chance, hit the right man
 Of all the world to trust in.

ALBERT.

Trust ! to me !

CONRAD (*aside*).

He is the sole one in this mystery.

ERMINIA.

Well, I give up, and save my prayers for Heaven ! 255
 You, who could do this deed, would ne'er relent,
 Though, at my words, the hollow prison-vaults
 Would groan for pity.

CONRAD.

Manacle them both !

ETHELBERT.

I know it—it must be—I see it all !
 Albert, thou art the minion !

ERMINIA.

Ah ! too plain— 260

CONRAD.

Silence ! Gag up their mouths ! I cannot bear
 More of this brawling. That the Emperor
 Had plac'd you in some other custody !
 Bring them away. [*Exeunt all but ALBERT.*

ALBERT.

Though my name perish from the book of honour, 265
 Almost before the recent ink is dry,
 And be no more remember'd after death,
 Than any drummer's in the muster-roll ;
 Yet shall I season high my sudden fall
 With triumph o'er that evil-witted duke ! 270

He shall feel what it is to have the hand
Of a man drowning, on his hateful throat.

Enter GERSA and SIGIFRED.

GERSA.

What discord is at ferment in this house ?

SIGIFRED.

We are without conjecture ; not a soul
We met could answer any certainty.

275

GERSA.

Young Ludolph, like a fiery arrow, shot
By us.

SIGIFRED.

The Emperor, with cross'd arms, in thought.

GERSA.

In one room music, in another sadness,
Perplexity every where !

ALBERT.

A trifle more !

Follow ; your presences will much avail
To tune our jarred spirits. I'll explain.

280

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—AURANTHE'S *Apartment.*

AURANTHE and CONRAD *discovered.*

CONRAD.

WELL, well, I know what ugly jeopardy
We are caged in ; you need not pester that
Into my ears. Prythee, let me be spared
A foolish tongue, that I may bethink me
Of remedies with some deliberation.

5

You cannot doubt but 'tis in Albert's power
To crush or save us ?

AURANTHE.

No, I cannot doubt.

He has, assure yourself, by some strange means,
My secret ; which I ever hid from him,
Knowing his mawkish honesty.

CONRAD.

Cursed slave! 10

AURANTHE.

Aye, I could almost curse him now myself,
Wretched impediment ! Evil genius !
A glue upon my wings, that cannot spread,
When they should span the provinces ! A snake,
A scorpion, sprawling on the first gold step, 15
Conducting to the throne, high canopied.

CONRAD.

You would not hear my counsel, when his life
Might have been trodden out, all sure and hush'd ;
Now the dull animal forsooth must be
Intreated, managed ! When can you contrive 20
The interview he demands ?

AURANTHE.

As speedily

It must be done as my brib'd woman can
Unseen conduct him to me ; but I fear
'Twill be impossible, while the broad day
Comes through the panes with persecuting glare. 25
Methinks, if't now were night I could intrigue .
With darkness, bring the stars to second me,
And settle all this trouble.

CONRAD.

Nonsense ! Child !

See him immediately ; why not now ?

AURANTHE.

Do you forget that even the senseless door-posts 30
 Are on the watch and gape through all the house?
 How many whisperers there are about,
 Hungry for evidence to ruin me ;
 Men I have spurn'd, and women I have taunted ?
 Besides, the foolish prince sends, minute whiles, 35
 His pages—so they tell me—to enquire
 After my health, entreating, if I please,
 To see me.

CONRAD.

Well, suppose this Albert here ;
 What is your power with him ?

AURANTHE.

He should be

My echo, my taught parrot ! but I fear 40
 He will be cur enough to bark at me ;
 Have his own say ; read me some silly creed
 'Bout shame and pity.

CONRAD.

What will you do then ?

AURANTHE.

What I shall do, I know not : what I would 45
 Cannot be done ; for see, this chamber-floor
 Will not yield to the pick-axe and the spade,—
 Here is no quiet depth of hollow ground.

CONRAD.

Sister, you have grown sensible and wise,
 Seconding, ere I speak it, what is now,
 I hope, resolv'd between us.

AURANTHE.

Say, what is't? 50

CONRAD.

You need not be his sexton too : a man
 May carry that with him shall make him die

Elsewhere,—give that to him ; pretend the while
 You will to-morrow succumb to his wishes,
 Be what they may, and send him from the Castle 55
 On some fool's errand ; let his latest groan
 Frighten the wolves !

AURANTHE.

Alas ! he must not die !

CONRAD.

Would you were both hears'd up in stifling lead !
 Detested—

AURANTHE.

Conrad, hold ! I would not bear
 The little thunder of your fretful tongue, 60
 Tho' I alone were taken in these toils,
 And you could free me ; but remember, sir,
 You live alone in my security :
 So keep your wits at work, for your own sake,
 Not mine, and be more mannerly.

CONRAD.

Thou wasp ! 65
 If my domains were emptied of these folk,
 And I had thee to starve—

AURANTHE.

O, marvellous !
 But Conrad, now be gone ; the Host is look'd for ;
 Cringe to the Emperor, entertain the Lords,
 And, do ye mind, above all things, proclaim 70
 My sickness, with a brother's sadden'd eye,
 Condoling with Prince Ludolph. In fit time
 Return to me.

CONRAD.

I leave you to your thoughts.

[*Exit.*

AURANTHE (*sola*).

Down, down, proud temper ! down, Auranthe's pride !

Why do I anger him when I should kneel? 75
 Conrad! Albert! help! help! What can I do?
 O wretched woman! lost, wreck'd, swallow'd up,
 Accursed, blasted! O, thou golden Crown,
 Orbing along the serene firmament
 Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon; 80
 And thou, bright sceptre! lustrous in my eyes,—
 There—as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,
 Bearing a fruit more precious! graceful thing,
 Delicate, godlike, magic! must I leave
 Thee to melt in the visionary air, 85
 Ere, by one grasp, this common hand is made
 Imperial? I do not know the time
 When I have wept for sorrow; but methinks
 I could now sit upon the ground, and shed
 Tears, tears of misery. O, the heavy day! 90
 How shall I bear my life till Albert comes?
 Ludolph! Erminia! Proofs! O heavy day!
 Bring me some mourning weeds, that I may 'tire
 Myself, as fits one wailing her own death:
 Cut off these curls, and brand this lilly hand, 95
 And throw these jewels from my loathing sight,—
 Fetch me a missal, and a string of beads,—
 A cup of bitter'd water, and a crust,—
 I will confess, O holy Abbot!—How!
 What is this? Auranthe! thou fool, dolt, 100
 Whimpering idiot! up! up! and quell!
 I am safe! Coward! why am I in fear?
 Albert! he cannot stickle, chew the cud
 In such a fine extreme,—impossible!
 Who knocks? 105

[Goes to the Door, listens, and opens it.]

Enter ALBERT.

Albert, I have been waiting for you here

With such an aching heart, such swooning throbs
 On my poor brain, such cruel—cruel sorrow,
 That I should claim your pity! Art not well?

ALBERT.

Yes, lady, well.

AURANTHE.

You look not so, alas!

110

But pale, as if you brought some heavy news.

ALBERT.

You know full well what makes me look so pale.

AURANTHE.

No! Do I? Surely I am still to learn
 Some horror; all I know, this present, is
 I am near hustled to a dangerous gulph,
 Which you can save me from,—and therefore safe,
 So trusting in thy love; that should not make
 Thee pale, my Albert.

115

ALBERT.

It doth make me freeze.

AURANTHE.

Why should it, love?

ALBERT.

You should not ask me that,

But make your own heart monitor, and save
 Me the great pain of telling. You must know.

120

AURANTHE.

Something has vext you, Albert. There are times
 When simplest things put on a sombre cast;
 A melancholy mood will haunt a man,
 Until most easy matters take the shape
 Of unachievable tasks; small rivulets
 Then seem impassable.

125

ALBERT.

Do not cheat yourself

With hope that gloss of words, or suppliant action,

Or tears, or ravings, or self-threaten'd death,
Can alter my resolve.

AURANTHE.

You make me tremble ; 130
Not so much at your threats, as at your voice,
Untun'd, and harsh, and barren of all love.

ALBERT.

You suffocate me ! Stop this devil's parley,
And listen to me ; know me once for all.

AURANTHE.

I thought I did. Alas ! I am deceiv'd. 135

ALBERT.

No, you are not deceiv'd. You took me for
A man detesting all inhuman crime ;
And therefore kept from me your demon's plot
Against Erminia. Silent ? Be so still ;
For ever ! Speak no more ; but hear my words, 140
Thy fate. Your safety I have bought to-day
By blazoning a lie, which in the dawn
I'll expiate with truth.

AURANTHE.

O cruel traitor !

ALBERT.

For I would not set eyes upon thy shame ;
I would not see thee dragg'd to death by the hair, 145
Penanc'd, and taunted on a scaffolding !
To-night, upon the skirts of the blind wood
That blackens northward of these horrid towers,
I wait for you with horses. Choose your fate.
Farewell.

AURANTHE.

Albert, you jest ; I'm sure you must. 150
You, an ambitious Soldier ! I, a Queen,
One who could say,—Here, rule these Provinces !
Take tribute from those cities for thyself !

Empty these armouries, these treasuries,
 Muster thy warlike thousands at a nod!
 Go! conquer Italy!

155

ALBERT.

Auranthe, you have made
 The whole world chaff to me. Your doom is fix'd.

AURANTHE.

Out, villain! dastard!

ALBERT.

Look there to the door!

Who is it?

AURANTHE.

Conrad, traitor!

ALBERT.

Let him in.

[Enter CONRAD

Do not affect amazement, hypocrite,
 At seeing me in this chamber.

160

CONRAD.

Auranthe?

ALBERT.

Talk not with eyes, but speak your curses out
 Against me, who would sooner crush and grind
 A brace of toads, than league with them t' oppress
 An innocent lady, gull an Emperor,
 More generous to me than autumn sun
 To ripening harvests.

165

AURANTHE.

No more insult, sir!

ALBERT.

Aye, clutch your scabbard; but, for prudence sake,
 Draw not the sword; 'twould make an uproar, Duke,
 You would not hear the end of. At nightfall
 Your lady sister, if I guess aright,

170

Will leave this busy castle. You had best
Take farewell too of worldly vanities.

CONRAD.

Vassal!

ALBERT.

To-morrow, when the Emperor sends
For loving Conrad, see you fawn on him.
Good even!

175

AURANTHE.

You'll be seen!

ALBERT.

See the coast clear then.

AURANTHE (*as he goes*).

Remorseless Albert! Cruel, cruel wretch!

[*She lets him out.*]

CONRAD.

So, we must lick the dust?

AURANTHE.

I follow him.

CONRAD.

How? Where? The plan of your escape?

AURANTHE.

He waits

For me with horses by the forest-side,
Northward.

180

CONRAD.

Good, good! he dies. You go, say you?

AURANTHE.

Perforce.

CONRAD.

Be speedy, darkness! Till that comes,
Fiends keep you company!

[*Exit.*]

AURANTHE.

And you! And you!

And all men! Vanish!

[*Retires to an inner Apartment.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.**Enter LUDOLPH and Page.*

PAGE.

Still very sick my Lord ; but now I went
 Knowing my duty to so good a Prince ;
 And there her women in a mournful throng
 Stood in the passage whispering : if any
 Mov'd 'twas with careful steps and hush'd as death ; 5
 They bid me stop.

LUDOLPH.

Good fellow, once again
 Make soft enquiry ; prythee be not stay'd
 By any hindrance, but with gentlest force
 Break through her weeping servants, till thou com'st
 E'en to her chamber door, and there fair Boy, 10
 If with thy mother's milk thou hast suck'd in
 Any diviner eloquence ; woo her ears
 With plaints for me more tender than the voice
 Of dying Echo, echoed.

PAGE.

Kindest master !

To know thee sad thus, will unloose my tongue 15
 In mournful syllables. Let but my words reach
 Her ears and she shall take them coupled with
 Moans from my heart and sighs not counterfeit.
 May I speed better ! [Exit Page.]

LUDOLPH.

Auranthe ! My Life !

Long have I lov'd thee, yet till now not lov'd : 20
 Remembering, as I do, hard-hearted times
 When I had heard even of thy death perhaps,
 And thoughtless, suffered to pass alone
 Into Elysium ! now I follow thee
 A substance or a shadow, whereso'er 25

Thou leadest me,—whether thy white feet press,
 With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching earth,
 Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,
 A shade! Yet sadly I predestinate!
 O unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let 30
 Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world
 So wearily; as if night's chariot wheels
 Were clog'd in some thick cloud. O, changeful Love,
 Let not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace
 Pass the high stars, before sweet embassy 35
 Comes from the pillow'd beauty of that fair
 Completion of all delicate nature's wit.
 Pout her faint lips anew with rubious health
 And with thine infant fingers lift the fringe
 Of her sick eyelids; that those eyes may glow 40
 With wooing light upon me, ere the Morn
 Peers with disrelish, grey, barren, and cold.

Enter GERSA and Courtiers.

Otho calls me his Lion—should I blush
 To be so tam'd, so——

GERSA.

Do me the courtesy

Gentlemen to pass on.

COURTIER.

We are your servants. 45

[Exeunt Courtiers.]

LUDOLPH.

It seems then Sir you have found out the Man
 You would confer with; me?

GERSA.

If I break not

Too much upon your thoughtful mood, I will
 Claim a brief while your patience.

LUDOLPH.

For what cause

Soe'er I shall be honour'd.

GERSA.

I not less.

50

LUDOLPH.

What may it be? No trifle can take place
Of such deliberate prologue, serious 'haviour.
But be it what it may I cannot fail
To listen with no common interest—
For though so new your presence is to me,
I have a soldier's friendship for your fame—
Please you explain.

55

GERSA.

As thus—for, pardon me,

I cannot in plain terms grossly assault
A noble nature; and would faintly sketch
What your quick apprehension will fill up
So finely I esteem you.

60

LUDOLPH.

I attend—

GERSA.

Your generous Father, most illustrious Otho,
Sits in the Banquet room among his Chiefs—
His wine is bitter, for you are not there
His eyes are fix'd still on the open doors,
And every passer in he frowns upon
Seeing no Ludolph comes.

65

LUDOLPH.

I do neglect—

GERSA.

And for your absence, may I guess the cause?

LUDOLPH.

Stay there! no—guess? more princely you must be—

Than to make guesses at me. 'Tis enough, 70
I'm sorry I can hear no more.

GERSA.

And I

As griev'd to force it on you so abrupt ;
Yet one day you must know a grief whose sting
Will sharpen more the longer 'tis conceal'd.

LUDOLPH.

Say it at once, sir, dead, dead, is she dead ? 75

GERSA.

Mine is a cruel task : she is not dead—
And would for your sake she were innocent—

LUDOLPH.

Thou liest ! thou amazest me beyond
All scope of thought ; convulseth my heart's blood
To deadly churning—Gersa you are young 80
As I am ; let me observe you face to face ;
Not grey-brow'd like the poisonous Ethelbert,
No rheum'd eyes, no furrowing of age,
No wrinkles where all vices nestle in
Like crannied vermin—no, but fresh and young 85
And hopeful featur'd. Ha ! by heaven you weep
Tears, human tears—Do you repent you then
Of a curs'd torturer's office ! Why shouldst join—
Tell me, the league of Devils ? Confess—confess
The Lie.—

GERSA.

Lie !—but begone all ceremonious points
Of honor battailous. I could not turn 91
My wrath against thee for the orb'd world.

LUDOLPH.

Your wrath weak boy ? Tremble at mine unless
Retraction follow close upon the heels
Of that late stounding insult : why has my sword 95
Not done already a sheer judgment on thee ?

Despair, or eat thy words. Why, thou wast nigh
 Whimpering away my reason : hark ye, Sir,
 It is no secret ;—that Erminia
 Erminia Sir, was hidden in your tent ; 100
 O bless'd asylum ! comfortable home !
 Begone, I pity thee, thou art a Gull—
 Erminia's last new puppet—

GERSA.

Furious fire

Thou mak'st me boil as hot as thou canst flame !
 And in thy teeth I give thee back the lie ! 105
 Thou liest ! Thou, Auranthe's fool, A wittol—

LUDOLPH.

Look ! look at this bright sword
 There is no part of it to the very hilt
 But shall indulge itself about thine heart—
 Draw—but remember thou must cower thy plumes, 110
 As yesterday the Arab made thee stoop—

GERSA.

Patience ! not here, I would not spill thy blood
 Here underneath this roof where Otho breathes,
 Thy father—almost mine—

LUDOLPH.

O faltering Coward—

Re-enter PAGE.

Stay, stay, here is one I have half a word with— 115
 Well—What ails thee child ?

PAGE.

My lord,

LUDOLPH.

Good fellow !

PAGE.

They are fled !

LUDOLPH.

They—who ?

PAGE.

When anxiously

I hasten'd back, your grieving messenger,
 I found the stairs all dark, the lamps extinct,
 And not a foot or whisper to be heard. 120
 I thought her dead, and on the lowest step
 Sat listening; when presently came by
 Two muffled up,—one sighing heavily,
 The other cursing low, whose voice I knew
 For the Duke Conrad's. Close I follow'd them 125
 Thro' the dark ways they chose to the open air;
 And, as I follow'd, heard my lady speak.

LUDOLPH.

Thy life answers the truth!

PAGE.

The chamber's empty!

LUDOLPH.

As I will be of mercy! So, at last,
 This nail is in my temples!

GERSA.

Be calm in this. 130

LUDOLPH.

I am.

GERSA.

And Albert too has disappear'd;
 Ere I met you, I sought him everywhere;
 You would not hearken.

LUDOLPH.

Which way went they, boy?

GERSA.

I'll hunt with you.

LUDOLPH.

No, no, no. My senses are
 Still whole. I have surviv'd. My arm is strong— 135
 My appetite sharp—for revenge! I'll no sharer

In my feast ; my injury is all my own,
 And so is my revenge, my lawful chattels !
 Terrier, ferret them out ! Burn—burn the witch !
 Trace me their footsteps ! Away !

140

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A part of the Forest.**Enter* CONRAD *and* AURANTHE.

AURANTHE.

GO no further ; not a step more ; thou art
 A master-plague in the midst of miseries.
 Go—I fear thee. I tremble every limb,
 Who never shook before. There's moody death
 In thy resolved looks—Yes, I could kneel
 To pray thee far away. Conrad, go, go—
 There ! yonder underneath the boughs I see
 Our horses !

5

CONRAD.

Aye, and the man.

AURANTHE.

Yes, he is there.

Go, go,—no blood, no blood, go gentle Conrad !

CONRAD.

Farewell !

AURANTHE.

Farewell, for this Heaven pardon you. 10

[*Exit* AURANTHE.]

CONRAD.

If he survive one hour, then may I die
 In unimagined tortures—or breathe through
 A long life in the foulest sink of the world !
 He dies—'tis well she do not advertise

The caitiff of the cold steel at his back. 15

[*Exit* CONRAD.]

Enter LUDOLPH and PAGE.

LUDOLPH.

Miss'd the way, boy, say not that on your peril!

PAGE.

Indeed, indeed I cannot trace them further.

LUDOLPH.

Must I stop here? Here solitary die?
 Stifled beneath the thick oppressive shade
 Of these dull boughs,—this oven of dark thickets,— 20
 Silent,—without revenge?—pshaw!—bitter end,—
 A bitter death,—a suffocating death,—
 A gnawing—silent—deadly, quiet death!
 Escap'd?—fled?—vanish'd? melted into air?
 She's gone! I cannot clutch her! no revenge! 25
 A muffled death, ensnar'd in horrid silence!
 Suck'd to my grave amid a dreamy calm!
 O, where is that illustrious noise of war,
 To smother up this sound of labouring breath,
 This rustle of the trees!

[AURANTHE *shrieks at a distance.*]

PAGE.

My Lord, a noise! 30

This way—hark!

LUDOLPH.

Yes, yes! A hope! A music!

A glorious clamour! How I live again! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Forest.*

Enter ALBERT (*wounded*).

ALBERT.

O for enough life to support me on
 To Otho's feet—

Enter LUDOLPH.

LUDOLPH.

Thrice villainous, stay there !
Tell me where that detested woman is
Or this is through thee !

ALBERT.

My good Prince, with me
The sword has done its worst ; not without worst 5
Done to another—Conrad has it home—
I see you know it all—

LUDOLPH.

Where is his sister ?

AURANTHE *rushes in.*

AURANTHE.

Albert !

LUDOLPH.

Ha ! There ! there !—He is the paramour !—
There—hug him—dying ! O, thou innocence,
Shrine him and comfort him at his last gasp, 10
Kiss down his eyelids ! Was he not thy love ?
Wilt thou forsake him at his latest hour ?
Keep fearful and aloof from his last gaze,
His most uneasy moments, when cold death
Stands with the door ajar to let him in ? 15

ALBERT.

O that that door with hollow slam would close
Upon me sudden, for I cannot meet,
In all the unknown chambers of the dead,
Such horrors——

LUDOLPH.

Auranthe ! what can he mean ?
What horrors ? Is it not a joyous time ? 20
Am I not married to a paragon
“Of personal beauty and untainted soul ?”

A blushing fair-ey'd Purity! A Sylph,
 Whose snowy timid hand has never sin'd
 Beyond a flower pluck'd, white as itself? 25
 Albert you do insult my Bride—your Mistress—
 To talk of horrors on our wedding-night.

ALBERT.

Alas! poor Prince, I would you knew my heart.
 'Tis not so guilty—

LUDOLPH.

Hear you he pleads not guilty—

You are not? or if so what matters it? 30
 You have escap'd me,—free as the dusk air—
 Hid in the forest—safe from my revenge;
 I cannot catch you—You should laugh at me,
 Poor cheated Ludolph,—make the forest hiss
 With jeers at me—You tremble; faint at once, 35
 You will come to again. O Cockatrice,
 I have you. Whither wander those fair eyes
 To entice the Devil to your help that he
 May change you to a Spider, so to crawl
 Into some cranny to escape my wrath? 40

ALBERT.

Sometimes the counsel of a dying man
 Doth operate quietly when his breath is gone—
 Disjoin those hands—part—part, do not destroy
 Each other—forget her—our miseries
 Are equal shar'd, and mercy is—

LUDOLPH.

A boon 45
 When one can compass it. Auranthe, try
 Your oratory—your breath is not so hitch'd—
 Aye, stare for help—

[ALBERT *groans and dies.*

There goes a spotted soul
 Howling in vain along the hollow night—

Hear him—he calls you—Sweet Auranthe come! 50

AURANTHE.

Kill me.

LUDOLPH.

No, What, upon our Marriage-night!

The earth would shudder at so foul a deed—

A fair Bride, a sweet Bride, an innocent Bride!

No, we must revel it, as 'tis in use

In times of delicate brilliant ceremony: 55

Come, let me lead you to our halls again—

Nay, linger not—make no resistance sweet—

Will you—Ah wretch, thou canst not, for I have

The strength of twenty lions 'gainst a lamb—

Now one adieu for Albert—come away.— 60

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An inner Court of the Castle.*

Enter SIGIFRED, GONFRED, and THEODORE meeting.

THEODORE.

Was ever such a night?

SIGIFRED.

What horrors more?

Things unbeliev'd one hour, so strange they are,

The next hour stamps with credit.

THEODORE.

Your last news?

GONFRED.

After the Page's story of the death

Of Albert and Duke Conrad?

SIGIFRED.

And the return 5

Of Ludolph with the Princess.

GONFRED.

No more save

Prince Gersa's freeing Abbot Ethelbert,

And the sweet lady fair Erminia,
From prison.

THEODORE.

Where are they now? hast yet heard?

GONFRED.

With the sad Emperor they are closeted; 10
I saw the three pass slowly up the stairs
The lady weeping, the old Abbot cowl'd.

SIGIFRED.

What next?

THEODORE.

I ache to think on't.

GONFRED.

'Tis with fate.

THEODORE.

One while these proud towers are hush'd as death.

GONFRED.

The next our poor Prince fills the arched rooms 15
With ghastly ravings.

SIGIFRED.

I do fear his brain.

GONFRED.

I will see more. Bear you so stout a heart?

[Exeunt into the Castle.]

SCENE IV.—*A Cabinet, opening towards a Terrace.*

OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, and a Physician,
discovered.

OTHO.

O, my poor Boy! my Son! my Son! my Ludolph!
Have ye no comfort for me, ye Physicians
Of the weak Body and Soul?

ETHELBERT.

'Tis not the Medicine.

Either of heaven or earth can cure unless
Fit time be chosen to administer—

5

OTHO.

A kind forbearance, holy Abbot—come
Erminia, here sit by me, gentle Girl ;
Give me thy hand—hast thou forgiven me ?

ERMINIA.

Would I were with the saints to pray for you !

OTHO.

Why will ye keep me from my darling child ?

10

PHYSICIAN.

Forgive me, but he must not see thy face—

OTHO.

Is then a father's countenance a Gorgon ?
Hath it not comfort in it ? Would it not
Console my poor Boy, cheer him, heal his spirits ?
Let me embrace him, let me speak to him—
I will—who hinders me ? Who's Emperor ?

15

PHYSICIAN.

You may not Sire—'twould overwhelm him quite,
He is so full of grief and passionate wrath,
Too heavy a sigh would kill him—or do worse.
He must be sav'd by fine contrivances—
And most especially we must keep clear
Out of his sight a Father whom he loves—
His heart is full, it can contain no more,
And do its ruddy office.

20

ETHELBERT.

Sage advice,

We must endeavour how to ease and slacken
The tight-wound energies of his despair,
Not make them tenser—

25

OTHO.

Enough ! I hear, I hear.

Yet you were about to advise more—I listen.

ETHELBERT.

This learned doctor will agree with me,
That not in the smallest point should he be thwarted 30
Or gainsaid by one word—his very motions,
Nods, becks and hints, should be obey'd with care,
Even on the moment: so his troubled mind
May cure itself—

PHYSICIAN.

There is no other means.

OTHO.

Open the door; let's hear if all is quiet— 35

PHYSICIAN.

Beseech you Sire, forbear.

ERMINIA.

Do, do.

OTHO.

I command!

Open it straight—hush!—quiet—my lost Boy!
My miserable Child!

LUDOLPH (*indistinctly without*).

Fill, fill my goblet,—

Here's a health!

ERMINIA.

O, close the door!

OTHO.

Let, let me hear his voice; this cannot last— 40
And fain would I catch up his dying words
Though my own knell they be—this cannot last—
O let me catch his voice—for lo! I hear
This silence whisper me that he is dead
It is so. Gersa?

Enter GERSA.

PHYSICIAN.

Say, how fares the prince? 45

GERSA.

More calm—his features are less wild and flush'd—
Once he complain'd of weariness—

PHYSICIAN.

Indeed!

'Tis good—'tis good—let him but fall asleep,
That saves him.

OTHO.

Gersa, watch him like a child—
Ward him from harm—and bring me better news— 50

PHYSICIAN.

Humour him to the height. I fear to go;
For should he catch a glimpse of my dull garb,
It might affright him—fill him with suspicion
That we believe him sick, which must not be—

GERSA.

I will invent what soothing means I can. 55

[Exit GERSA.]

PHYSICIAN.

This should cheer up your Highness—weariness
Is a good symptom, and most favourable—
It gives me pleasant hopes. Please you walk forth
Onto the Terrace; the refreshing air
Will blow one half of your sad doubts away. 60

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—*A Banqueting Hall, brilliantly illuminated, and set forth with all costly magnificence, with Supper-tables, laden with services of Gold and Silver. A door in the back scene, guarded by two Soldiers. Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, &c., whispering sadly, and ranging themselves; part entering and part discovered.*

FIRST KNIGHT.

Grievously are we tantaliz'd, one and all—

Sway'd here and there, commanded to and fro
 As though we were the shadows of a dream
 And link'd to a sleeping fancy. What do we here ?

GONFRED.

I am no Seer—you know we must obey 5
 The prince from A to Z—though it should be
 To set the place in flames. I pray hast heard
 Where the most wicked Princess is ?

FIRST KNIGHT.

There, Sir,

In the next room—have you remark'd those two
 Stout soldiers posted at the door ?

GONFRED.

For what ? 10

[They whisper.

FIRST LADY.

How ghast a train !

SECOND LADY.

Sure this should be some splendid burial.

FIRST LADY.

What fearful whispering ! See, see,—Gersa there !

Enter GERSA.

GERSA.

Put on your brightest looks ; smile if you can ;
 Behave as all were happy ; keep your eyes 15
 From the least watch upon him ; if he speaks
 To any one, answer collectedly,
 Without surprise, his questions, howe'er strange.
 Do this to the utmost,—though, alas ! with me
 The remedy grows hopeless ! Here he comes,— 20
 Observe what I have said,—show no surprise.

Enter LUDOLPH, followed by SIGIFRED and Page.

LUDOLPH.

A splendid company ! rare beauties here !

K K

I should have Orphean lips, and Plato's fancy,
 Amphion's utterance, toned with his lyre,
 Or the deep key of Jove's sonorous mouth, 25
 To give fit salutation. Methought I heard,
 As I came in, some whispers,—what of that?
 'Tis natural men should whisper; at the kiss
 Of Psyche given by Love, there was a buzz
 Among the gods!—and silence is as natural. 30
 These draperies are fine, and, being a mortal,
 I should desire no better; yet, in truth,
 There must be some superior costliness,
 Some wider-domed high magnificence!
 I would have, as a mortal I may not, 35
 Hanging of heaven's clouds, purple and gold,
 Slung from the spheres, gauzes of silver mist,
 Loop'd up with cords of twisted wreathed light,
 And tassell'd round with weeping meteors!
 These pendent lamps and chandeliers are bright 40
 As earthly fires from dull dross can be cleansed;
 Yet could my eyes drink up intenser beams
 Undazzled,—this is darkness,—when I close
 These lids, I see far fiercer brilliances,—
 Skies full of splendid moons, and shooting stars, 45
 And spouting exhalations, diamond fires,
 And panting fountains quivering with deep glows!
 Yes—this is dark—is it not dark?

SIGIFRED.

My Lord,

'Tis late; the lights of festival are ever
 Quench'd in the morn.

LUDOLPH.

'Tis not to-morrow then? 50

SIGIFRED.

'Tis early dawn.

GERSA.

Indeed full time we slept ;
Say you so, Prince ?

LUDOLPH.

I say I quarrell'd with you ;
We did not tilt each other,—that's a blessing,—
Good gods ! no innocent blood upon my head !

SIGIFRED.

Retire, Gersa !

LUDOLPH.

There should be three more here : 55
For two of them, they stay away perhaps,
Being gloomy-minded, haters of fair revels,—
They know their own thoughts best.

As for the third,

Deep blue eyes—semi-shaded in white lids,
Finish'd with lashes fine for more soft shade, 60
Completed by her twin-arch'd ebon brows—
White temples of exactest elegance,

Of even mould felicitous and smooth—
Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,
So perfect, so divine that our poor eyes 65
Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,

And wonder that 'tis so,—the magic chance !
Her nostrils, small, fragrant, faery-delicate ;
Her lips—I swear no human bones e'er wore
So taking a disguise—you shall behold her ! 70

We 'll have her presently ; aye, you shall see her,
And wonder at her, friends, she is so fair—
She is the world's chief Jewel, and by heaven
She's mine by right of marriage—she is mine !

Patience, good people, in fit time I send 75
A Summoner—she will obey my call,
Being a wife most mild and dutiful.
First I would hear what music is prepared

To herald and receive her—let me hear!

SIGIFRED.

Bid the musicians soothe him tenderly.

80

[*A soft strain of Music.*]

LUDOLPH.

Ye have none better—no—I am content;

'Tis a rich sobbing melody, with reliefs

Full and majestic; it is well enough,

And will be sweeter, when ye see her pace

Sweeping into this presence, glisten'd o'er

85

With emptied caskets, and her train upheld

By ladies, habited in robes of lawn,

Sprinkled with golden crescents; (others bright

In silks, with spangles shower'd,) and bow'd to

By Duchesses and pearled Margravines—

90

Sad, that the fairest creature of the earth—

I pray you mind me not—'tis sad, I say,

That the extremest beauty of the world

Should so entrench herself away from me,

Behind a barrier of engender'd guilt!

95

SECOND LADY.

Ah! what a moan!

FIRST KNIGHT.

Most piteous indeed!

LUDOLPH.

She shall be brought before this company,

And then—then—

FIRST LADY.

He muses.

GERSA.

O, Fortune, where will this end?

SIGIFRED.

I guess his purpose! Indeed he must not have

That pestilence brought in,—that cannot be,

100

There we must stop him.

GERSA.

I am lost! Hush, hush!

He is about to rave again.

LUDOLPH.

A barrier of guilt! I was the fool,
 She was the cheater! Who's the cheater now,
 And who the fool? The entrapp'd, the caged fool, 105
 The bird-lim'd raven? She shall croak to death
 Secure! Methinks I have her in my fist,
 To crush her with my heel! Wait, wait! I marvel
 My father keeps away: good friend, ah! Sigifred!
 Do bring him to me—and Erminia 110
 I fain would see before I sleep—and Ethelbert,
 That he may bless me, as I know he will
 Though I have curs'd him.

SIGIFRED.

Rather suffer me

To lead you to them—

LUDOLPH.

No, excuse me, no—

The day is not quite done—go bring them hither. 115

[Exit SIGIFRED.

Certes a father's smile should, like sun light,
 Slant on my sheafed harvest of ripe bliss—
 Besides I thirst to pledge my lovely Bride
 In a deep goblet: let me see—what wine?
 The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek? 120
 Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape?
 Or of old Ætna's pulpy wine presses,
 Black stain'd with the fat vintage, as it were
 The purple slaughter-house, where Bacchus' self
 Prick'd his own swollen veins? Where is my Page?

PAGE.

Here, here! 125

LUDOLPH.

Be ready to obey me; anon thou shalt
 Bear a soft message for me—for the hour
 Draws near when I must make a winding up
 Of bridal Mysteries—a fine-spun vengeance!
 Carve it on my Tomb, that when I rest beneath 130
 Men shall confess—This Prince was gull'd and cheated
 But from the ashes of disgrace he rose
 More than a fiery Phœnix—and did burn
 His ignominy up in purging fires—
 Did I not send, Sir, but a moment past, 135
 For my Father?

GERSA.

You did.

LUDOLPH.

Perhaps 'twould be
 Much better he came not.

GERSA.

He enters now!

Enter OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, SIGIFRED,
and Physician.

LUDOLPH.

O thou good Man, against whose sacred head
 I was a mad conspirator, chiefly too
 For the sake of my fair newly wedded wife, 140
 Now to be punish'd, do not look so sad!
 Those charitable eyes will thaw my heart,
 Those tears will wash away a just resolve,
 A verdict ten times sworn! Awake—awake—
 Put on a judge's brow, and use a tongue 145
 Made iron-stern by habit! Thou shalt see
 A deed to be applauded, 'scribed in gold!
 Join a loud voice to mine, and so denounce
 What I alone will execute!

OTHO.

Dear son,
What is it? By your father's love, I sue 150
That it be nothing merciless!

LUDOLPH.

To that demon?
Not so! No! She is in temple-stall
Being garnish'd for the sacrifice, and I,
The Priest of Justice, will immolate her
Upon the altar of wrath! She stings me through!— 155
Even as the worm doth feed upon the nut,
So she, a scorpion, preys upon my brain!
I feel her gnawing here! Let her but vanish,
Then, father, I will lead your legions forth,
Compact in steeled squares, and speared files, 160
And bid our trumpets speak a fell rebuke
To nations drows'd in peace!

OTHO.

To-morrow, Son,
Be your word law—forget to-day—

LUDOLPH.

I will
When I have finish'd it—now! now! I'm pight,
Tight-footed for the deed!

ERMINIA.

Alas! Alas! 165

LUDOLPH.

What Angel's voice is that? Erminia!
Ah! gentlest creature, whose sweet innocence
Was almost murder'd; I am penitent,
Wilt thou forgive me? And thou, holy Man,
Good Ethelbert, shall I die in peace with you? 170

ERMINIA.

Die, my lord!

LUDOLPH.

I feel it possible.

OTHO.

Physician ?

PHYSICIAN.

I fear me he is past my skill.

OTHO.

Not so !

LUDOLPH.

I see it, I see it—I have been wandering—
Half-mad—not right here—I forget my purpose.

Bestir, bestir, Auranthe ! ha ! ha ! ha !

175

Youngster ! Page ! go bid them drag her to me !

Obey ! This shall finish it ! *[Draws a dagger.]*

OTHO.

O my Son ! my Son !

SIGIFRED.

This must not be—stop there !

LUDOLPH.

Am I obey'd ?

A little talk with her—no harm—haste ! haste !

[Exit Page.]

Set her before me—never fear I can strike.

180

SEVERAL VOICES.

My Lord ! My Lord !

GERSA.

Good Prince !

LUDOLPH.

Why do ye trouble me ? out—out—out away !

There she is ! take that ! and that ! no—

That's not well done—Where is she ?

[The doors open. Enter Page. Several women are seen grouped about Auranthe in the inner room.]

PAGE.

Alas ! My Lord, my Lord ! they cannot move her ! 185

Her arms are stiff,—her fingers clench'd and cold—

LUDOLPH.

She's dead! [*Stagger and falls into their arms.*]

ETHELBERT.

Take away the dagger.

GERSA.

Softly; so!

OTHO.

Thank God for that!

SIGIFRED.

I fear it could not harm him.

GERSA.

No!—brief be his anguish!

LUDOLPH.

She's gone—I am content—Nobles, good night! 190

We are all weary, faint, set ope the doors—

I will to bed!—To-morrow—

[*Dies.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

KING STEPHEN:
A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING STEPHEN.

QUEEN MAUD.

THE EARL OF GLOCESTER.

THE EARL OF CHESTER.

EARL BALDWIN DE REDVERS.

DE KAIMS.

Knights, Captains, Soldiers.

KING STEPHEN:

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Field of Battle.*

Alarum. Enter King STEPHEN, Knights, and Soldiers.

STEPHEN.

IF shame can on a soldier's vein-swoll'n front
Spread deeper crimson than the battle's toil,
Blush in your casing helmets! for see, see!
Yonder my chivalry, my pride of war,
Wrench'd with an iron hand from firm array, 5
Are routed loose about the plashy meads,
Of honour forfeit. O that my known voice
Could reach your dastard ears, and fright you more!
Fly, cowards, fly! Gloucester is at your backs!
Throw your slack bridles o'er the flurried manes, 10
Ply well the rowel with faint trembling heels,
Scampering to death at last!

FIRST KNIGHT.

The enemy
Bears his flaunt standard close upon their rear.

SECOND KNIGHT.

Sure of a bloody prey, seeing the fens
Will swamp them girth-deep.

STEPHEN.

Over head and ears, 15
No matter! 'Tis a gallant enemy;

How like a comet he goes streaming on.
 But we must plague him in the flank,—hey, friends?
 We are well breathed,—follow!

Enter Earl BALDWIN and Soldiers, as defeated.

STEPHEN.

De Redvers!

What is the monstrous bugbear that can fright
 Baldwin? 20

BALDWIN.

No scare-crow, but the fortunate star
 Of boisterous Chester, whose fell truncheon now
 Points level to the goal of victory.
 This way he comes, and if you would maintain
 Your person unaffronted by vile odds, 25
 Take horse, my Lord.

STEPHEN.

And which way spur for life?

Now I thank Heaven I am in the toils,
 That soldiers may bear witness how my arm
 Can burst the meshes. Not the eagle more
 Loves to beat up against a tyrannous blast, 30
 Than I to meet the torrent of my foes.
 This is a brag,—be't so,—but if I fall,
 Carve it upon my 'scutcheon'd sepulchre.
 On, fellow soldiers! Earl of Redvers, back!
 Not twenty Earls of Chester shall brow-beat 35
 The diadem. [*Exeunt. Alarum.*]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Field.*

*Trumpets sounding a Victory. Enter GLOCESTER,
 Knights, and Forces.*

GLOCESTER.

Now may we lift our bruised vizors up,

And take the flattering freshness of the air,
 While the wide din of battle dies away
 Into times past, yet to be echoed sure
 In the silent pages of our chroniclers. 5

FIRST KNIGHT.

Will Stephen's death be mark'd there, my good Lord,
 Or that we gave him lodging in yon towers ?

GLOCESTER.

Fain would I know the great usurper's fate.

Enter two Captains severally.

FIRST CAPTAIN.

My Lord !

SECOND CAPTAIN.

Most noble Earl !

FIRST CAPTAIN.

The King—

SECOND CAPTAIN.

The Empress greets—

GLOCESTER.

What of the King ?

FIRST CAPTAIN.

He sole and lone maintains 10

A hopeless bustle 'mid our swarming arms,
 And with a nimble savageness attacks,
 Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew
 Eludes death, giving death to most that dare
 Trespass within the circuit of his sword ! 15
 He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is taken ;
 And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag
 He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt down.
 God save the Empress !

GLOCESTER.

Now our dreaded Queen :

What message from her Highness ?

SECOND CAPTAIN.

Royal Maud 20

From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath look'd down,
 Like Pallas from the walls of Ilion,
 And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet.
 She greets most noble Gloucester from her heart,
 Intreating him, his captains, and brave knights, 25
 To grace a banquet. The high city gates
 Are envious which shall see your triumph pass ;
 The streets are full of music.

Enter Second Knight.

GLOCESTER.

Whence come you ?

SECOND KNIGHT.

From Stephen, my good Prince,—Stephen! Stephen!

GLOCESTER.

Why do you make such echoing of his name ? 30

SECOND KNIGHT.

Because I think, my lord, he is no man,
 But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from wounds,
 And misbaptized with a Christian name.

GLOCESTER.

A mighty soldier!—Does he still hold out ?

SECOND KNIGHT.

He shames our victory. His valour still 35
 Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,
 And holds our bladed falchions all aloof—
 His gleaming battle-axe being slaughter-sick,
 Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,
 Broke short in his hand ; upon the which he flung 40
 The heft away with such a vengeful force,
 It paunch'd the Earl of Chester's horse, who then
 Splen-hearted came in full career at him.

GLOCESTER.

Did no one take him at a vantage then ?

SECOND KNIGHT.

Three then with tiger leap upon him flew, 45
 Whom, with his sword swift-drawn and nimbly held,
 He stung away again, and stood to breathe,
 Smiling. Anon upon him rush'd once more
 A throng of foes, and in this renew'd strife,
 My sword met his and snapp'd off at the hilt. 50

GLOCESTER.

Come, lead me to this man—and let us move
 In silence, not insulting his sad doom
 With clamorous trumpets. To the Empress bear
 My salutation as befits the time.

[*Exeunt GLOCESTER and Forces.*]

SCENE III.—*The Field of Battle. Enter STEPHEN
 unarmed.*

STEPHEN.

Another sword ! And what if I could seize
 One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,
 Or choose the fairest of her sheaved spears !
 Where are my enemies ? Here, close at hand,
 Here come the testy brood. O for a sword ! 5
 I'm faint—a biting sword ! A noble sword !
 A hedge-stake—or a ponderous stone to hurl
 With brawny vengeance, like the labourer Cain.
 Come on ! Farewell my kingdom, and all hail
 Thou superb, plum'd, and helmeted renown, 10
 All hail—I would not truck this brilliant day
 To rule in Pylos with a Nestor's beard—
 Come on !

Enter DE KAIMS and Knights, &c.

DE KAIMS.

Is 't madness, or a hunger after death,
That makes thee thus unarm'd throw taunts at us?
Yield, Stephen, or my sword's point dips in 15
The gloomy current of a traitor's heart.

STEPHEN.

Do it, De Kaims, I will not budge an inch.

DE KAIMS.

Yes, of thy madness thou shalt take the meed.

STEPHEN.

Darest thou?

DE KAIMS.

How dare, against a man disarm'd?

STEPHEN.

What weapons has the lion but himself? 20
Come not near me, De Kaims, for by the price
Of all the glory I have won this day,
Being a king, I will not yield alive
To any but the second man of the realm,
Robert of Gloucester.

DE KAIMS.

Thou shalt vail to me. 25

STEPHEN.

Shall I, when I have sworn against it, sir?
Thou think'st it brave to take a breathing king,
That, on a court-day bow'd to haughty Maud,
The awed presence-chamber may be bold
To whisper, there 's the man who took alive 30
Stephen—me—prisoner. Certes, De Kaims,
The ambition is a noble one.

DE KAIMS.

'Tis true,

And, Stephen, I must compass it.

STEPHEN.

No, no,
 Do not tempt me to throttle you on the gorge,
 Or with my gauntlet crush your hollow breast, 35
 Just when your knighthood is grown ripe and full
 For lordship.

A SOLDIER.

Is an honest yeoman's spear
 Of no use at a need? Take that.

STEPHEN.

Ah, dastard!

DE KAIMS.

What, you are vulnerable! my prisoner!

STEPHEN.

No, not yet. I disclaim it, and demand 40
 Death as a sovereign right unto a king
 Who 'sdains to yield to any but his peer,
 If not in title, yet in noble deeds,
 The Earl of Gloucester. Stab to the hilt, De Kaims,
 For I will never by mean hands be led 45
 From this so famous field. Do you hear! Be quick!

[*Trumpets. Enter the Earl of CHESTER
 and Knights.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Presence Chamber. Queen MAUD in
 a Chair of State, the Earls of GLOUCESTER and
 CHESTER, Lords, Attendants.*

MAUD.

Gloucester, no more: I will behold that Boulogne:
 Set him before me. Not for the poor sake
 Of regal pomp and a vain-glorious hour,
 As thou with wary speech, yet near enough,
 Hast hinted.

GLOCESTER.

Faithful counsel have I given ; 5
If wary, for your Highness' benefit.

MAUD.

The Heavens forbid that I should not think so
For by thy valour have I won this realm,
Which by thy wisdom I will ever keep.
To sage advisers let me ever bend 10
A meek attentive ear, so that they treat
Of the wide kingdom's rule and government,
Not trenching on our actions personal.
Advis'd, not school'd, I would be ; and henceforth
Spoken to in clear, plain, and open terms, 15
Not side-ways sermon'd at.

GLOCESTER.

Then, in plain terms,
Once more for the fallen king—

MAUD.

Your pardon, Brother,
I would no more of that ; for, as I said,
'Tis not for worldly pomp I wish to see
The rebel, but as dooming judge to give 20
A sentence something worthy of his guilt.

GLOCESTER.

If't must be so, I'll bring him to your presence.

[Exit GLOCESTER.]

MAUD.

A meaner summoner might do as well—
My Lord of Chester, is 't true what I hear
Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner, 25
That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,
Eats wholesome, sweet, and palatable food
Off Gloucester's golden dishes—drinks pure wine,
Lodges soft ?

CHESTER.

More than that, my gracious Queen,
 Has anger'd me. The noble Earl, methinks, 30
 Full soldier as he is, and without peer
 In counsel, dreams too much among his books.
 It may read well, but sure 'tis out of date
 To play the Alexander with Darius.

MAUD.

Truth! I think so. By Heavens it shall not last! 35

CHESTER.

It would amaze your Highness now to mark
 How Gloucester overstrains his courtesy
 To that crime-loving rebel, that Boulogne—

MAUD.

That ingrate!

CHESTER.

For whose vast ingratitude
 To our late sovereign lord, your noble sire, 40
 The generous Earl condoles in his mishaps,
 And with a sort of lackeying friendliness,
 Talks off the mighty frowning from his brow,
 Woos him to hold a duet in a smile,
 Or, if it please him, play an hour at chess— 45

MAUD.

A perjured slave!

CHESTER.

And for his perjury,
 Gloucester has fit rewards—nay, I believe,
 He sets his bustling household's wits at work
 For flatteries to ease this Stephen's hours,
 And make a heaven of his purgatory; 50
 Adorning bondage with the pleasant gloss
 Of feasts and music, and all idle shows
 Of indoor pageantry; while syren whispers,
 Predestin'd for his ear, 'scape as half-check'd

From lips the courtliest and the rubiest
Of all the realm, admiring of his deeds.

55

MAUD.

A frost upon his summer !

CHESTER.

A queen's nod
Can make his June December. Here he comes.

* * * * *

THE CAP AND BELLS;

OR, THE JEALOUSIES:

A FAERY TALE—UNFINISHED.

THE CAP AND BELLS;

OR, THE JEALOUSIES:

A FAERY TALE—UNFINISHED.

I.

IN midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool,
There stood, or hover'd, tremulous in the air,
A faery city, 'neath the potent rule
Of Emperor Elfinan; fam'd ev'rywhere
For love of mortal women, maidens fair,
Whose lips were solid, whose soft hands were made
Of a fit mould and beauty, ripe and rare,
To pamper his slight wooing, warm yet staid:
He lov'd girls smooth as shades, but hated a mere shade.

II.

This was a crime forbidden by the law;
And all the priesthood of his city wept,
For ruin and dismay they well foresaw,
If impious prince no bound or limit kept,
And faery Zendervester overstept;
They wept, he sin'd, and still he would sin on,
They dreamt of sin, and he sin'd while they slept;
In vain the pulpit thunder'd at the throne,
Caricature was vain, and vain the tart lampoon.

III.

Which seeing, his high court of parliament
Laid a remonstrance at his Highness' feet,

Praying his royal senses to content
 Themselves with what in faery land was sweet,
 Befitting best that shade with shade should meet :
 Whereat, to calm their fears, he promis'd soon
 From mortal tempters all to make retreat,—
 Aye, even on the first of the new moon,
 An immaterial wife to espouse as heaven's boon.

IV.

Meantime he sent a fluttering embassy
 To Pigmio, of Imaus sovereign,
 To half beg, and half demand, respectfully,
 The hand of his fair daughter Bellanaine ;
 An audience had, and speaking done, they gain
 Their point, and bring the weeping bride away ;
 Whom, with but one attendant, safely lain
 Upon their wings, they bore in bright array,
 While little harps were touch'd by many a lyric fay.

V.

As in old pictures tender cherubim
 A child's soul thro' the sapphir'd canvas bear,
 So, thro' a real heaven, on they swim
 With the sweet princess on her plumag'd lair,
 Speed giving to the winds her lustrous hair ;
 And so she journey'd, sleeping or awake,
 Save when, for healthful exercise and air,
 She chose to "*promener à l'aile*," or take
 A pigeon's somerset, for sport or change's sake.

VI.

"Dear Princess, do not whisper me so loud,"
 Quoth Corallina, nurse and confidant,
 "Do not you see there, lurking in a cloud,
 Close at your back, that sly old Crafticant ?

He hears a whisper plainer than a rant :
 Dry up your tears, and do not look so blue ;
 He's Elfinan's great state-spy militant,
 His running, lying, flying foot-man too,—
 Dear mistress, let him have no handle against you !

VII.

“ Show him a mouse's tail, and he will guess,
 With metaphysic swiftness, at the mouse ;
 Show him a garden, and with speed no less,
 He'll surmise sagely of a dwelling house,
 And plot, in the same minute, how to chouse
 The owner out of it ; show him a”— “ Peace !
 Peace ! nor contrive thy mistress' ire to rouse !”
 Return'd the Princess, “ my tongue shall not cease
 Till from this hated match I get a free release.

VIII.

“ Ah, beauteous mortal !” “ Hush !” quoth Coralline,
 “ Really you must not talk of him, indeed.”
 “ You hush !” reply'd the mistress, with a shine
 Of anger in her eyes, enough to breed
 In stouter hearts than nurse's fear and dread :
 'Twas not the glance itself made nurse's flinch,
 But of its threat she took the utmost heed ;
 Not liking in her heart an hour-long pinch,
 Or a sharp needle run into her back an inch.

IX.

So she was silenc'd, and fair Bellanaine,
 Writhing her little body with ennui,
 Continued to lament and to complain,
 That Fate, cross-purposing, should let her be
 Ravish'd away far from her dear countree ;
 That all her feelings should be set at nought,

In trumping up this match so hastily,
 With lowland blood ; and lowland blood she thought
 Poison, as every staunch true-born Imaian ought.

X.

Sorely she griev'd, and wetted three or four
 White Provence rose-leaves with her faery tears,
 But not for this cause ;—alas! she had more
 Bad reasons for her sorrow, as appears
 In the fam'd memoirs of a thousand years,
 Written by Crafticant, and published
 By Parpaglione and Co., (those sly compeers
 Who rak'd up ev'ry fact against the dead,)
 In Scarab Street, Panthea, at the Jubal's Head.

XI.

Where, after a long hypercritic howl
 Against the vicious manners of the age,
 He goes on to expose, with heart and soul,
 What vice in this or that year was the rage,
 Backbiting all the world in every page ;
 With special strictures on the horrid crime,
 (Section'd and subsection'd with learning sage,)
 Of faeries stooping on their wings sublime
 To kiss a mortal's lips, when such were in their prime.

XII.

Turn to the copious index, you will find
 Somewhere in the column, headed letter B,
 The name of Bellanaine, if you're not blind ;
 Then pray refer to the text, and you will see
 An article made up of calumny
 Against this highland princess, rating her
 For giving way, so over fashionably,
 To this new-fangled vice, which seems a burr
 Stuck in his moral throat, no coughing e'er could stir.

XIII.

There he says plainly that she lov'd a man!
 That she around him flutter'd, flirted, toy'd,
 Before her marriage with great Elfinan;
 That after marriage too, she never joy'd
 In husband's company, but still employ'd
 Her wits to 'scape away to Angle-land;
 Where liv'd the youth, who worried and annoy'd
 Her tender heart, and its warm ardours fann'd
 To such a dreadful blaze, her side would scorch her hand.

XIV.

But let us leave this idle tittle-tattle
 To waiting-maids, and bed-room coteries,
 Nor till fit time against her fame wage battle.
 Poor Elfinan is very ill at ease,
 Let us resume his subject if you please:
 For it may comfort and console him much,
 To rhyme and syllable his miseries;
 Poor Elfinan! whose cruel fate was such,
 He sat and curs'd a bride he knew he could not touch.

XV.

Soon as (according to his promises)
 The bridal embassy had taken wing,
 And vanish'd, bird-like, o'er the suburb trees,
 The Emperor, empierc'd with the sharp sting
 Of love, retired, vex'd and murmuring
 Like any drone shut from the fair bee-queen,
 Into his cabinet, and there did fling
 His limbs upon a sofa, full of spleen,
 And damn'd his House of Commons, in complete chagrin.

XVI.

"I'll trounce some of the members," cry'd the Prince,
 "I'll put a mark against some rebel names,

I'll make the Opposition-benches wince,
 I'll show them very soon, to all their shames,
 What 'tis to smother up a Prince's flames ;
 That ministers should join in it, I own,
 Surprises me!—they too at these high games!
 Am I an Emperor? Do I wear a crown?
 Imperial Elfinan, go hang thyself or drown!

XVII.

“I'll trounce 'em!—there's the square-cut chancellor,
 His son shall never touch that bishopric ;
 And for the nephew of old Palfior,
 I'll show him that his speeches made me sick,
 And give the colonelcy to Phalaric ;
 The tiptoe marquis, moral and gallant,
 Shall lodge in shabby taverns upon tick ;
 And for the Speaker's second cousin's aunt,
 She sha'n't be maid of honour,—by heaven that she
 sha'n't!

XVIII.

“I'll shirk the Duke of A. ; I'll cut his brother ;
 I'll give no garter to his eldest son ;
 I won't speak to his sister or his mother!
 The Viscount B. shall live at cut-and-run ;
 But how in the world can I contrive to stun
 That fellow's voice, which plagues me worse than any,
 That stubborn fool, that impudent state-dun,
 Who sets down ev'ry sovereign as a zany,—
 That vulgar commoner, Esquire Biancopany?

XIX.

“Monstrous affair! Pshaw! pah! what ugly minx
 Will they fetch from Imaus for my bride?
 Alas! my wearied heart within me sinks,
 To think that I must be so near ally'd

To a cold dullard fay,—ah, woe betide!
 Ah, fairest of all human loveliness!
 Sweet Bertha! what crime can it be to glide
 About the fragrant plaitings of thy dress,
 Or kiss thine eyes, or count thy locks, tress after tress?"

XX.

So said, one minute's while his eyes remain'd
 Half lidded, piteous, languid, innocent;
 But, in a wink, their splendour they regain'd,
 Sparkling revenge with amorous fury blent.
 Love thwarted in bad temper oft has vent:
 He rose, he stamp'd his foot, he rang the bell,
 And order'd some death-warrants to be sent
 For signature:—somewhere the tempest fell,
 As many a poor fellow does not live to tell.

XXI.

"At the same time, Eban,"—(this was his page,
 A fay of colour, slave from top to toe,
 Sent as a present, while yet under age,
 From the Viceroy of Zanguebar,—wise, slow,
 His speech, his only words were "yes" and "no,"
 But swift of look, and foot, and wing was he,—)
 "At the same time, Eban, this instant go
 To Hum the soothsayer, whose name I see
 Among the fresh arrivals in our empery.

XXII.

"Bring Hum to me! But stay—here, take my ring,
 The pledge of favour, that he not suspect
 Any foul play, or awkward murdering,
 Tho' I have bowstrung many of his sect;
 Throw in a hint, that if he should neglect
 One hour, the next shall see him in my grasp,

And the next after that shall see him neck'd,
 Or swallow'd by my hunger-starved asp,—
 And mention ('tis as well) the torture of the wasp."

XXIII.

These orders given, the Prince, in half a pet,
 Let o'er the silk his propping elbow slide,
 Caught up his little legs, and, in a fret,
 Fell on the sofa on his royal side.
 The slave retreated backwards, humble-ey'd,
 And with a slave-like silence clos'd the door,
 And to old Hum thro' street and alley hied;
 He "knew the city," as we say, of yore,
 And for short cuts and turns, was nobody knew more.

XXIV.

It was the time when wholesale dealers close
 Their shutters with a moody sense of wealth,
 But retail dealers, diligent, let loose
 The gas (objected to on score of health),
 Convey'd in little solder'd pipes by stealth,
 And make it flare in many a brilliant form,
 That all the powers of darkness it repell'th,
 Which to the oil-trade doth great scaith and harm,
 And supersedeth quite the use of the glow-worm.

XXV.

Eban, untempted by the pastry-cooks,
 (Of pastry he got store within the palace)
 With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
 Incognito upon his errand sallies,
 His smelling-bottle ready for the allies;
 He pass'd the Hurdy-gurdies with disdain,
 Vowing he'd have them sent on board the gallies;
 Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,
 Therefore he call'd a coach, and bade it drive amain.

XXVI.

"I'll pull the string," said he, and further said,
 "Polluted Jarvey! Ah, thou filthy hack!
 Whose springs of life are all dry'd up and dead,
 Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,
 Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack;
 And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter;
 Whose glass once up can never be got back,
 Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,
 That 'tis of modern use to travel in a litter.

XXVII.

"Thou inconvenience! thou hungry crop
 For all corn! thou snail-creeper to and fro,
 Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,
 And fiddle-faddle standest while you go;
 I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,
 Unto some lazar-house thou journeyest,
 And in the evening tak'st a double row
 Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,
 Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and west.

XXVIII.

"By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
 An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge;
 Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,
 Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge.
 School'd in a beckon, learned in a nudge,
 A dull-ey'd Argus watching for a fare;
 Quiet and plodding, thou dost bear no grudge
 To whisking Tilburies, or Phaetons rare,
 Curricles, or Mail-coaches, swift beyond compare."

XXIX.

Philosophizing thus, he pull'd the check,
 And bade the Coachman wheel to such a street,

Who, turning much his body, more his neck,
 Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet :
 " Certes, Monsieur were best take to his feet,
 Seeing his servant can no further drive
 For press of coaches, that to-night here meet,
 Many as bees about a straw-capp'd hive,
 When first for April honey into faint flowers they dive."

XXX.

Eban then paid his fare, and tiptoe went
 To Hum's hotel ; and, as he on did pass
 With head inclin'd, each dusky lineament
 Show'd in the pearl-pav'd street, as in a glass ;
 His purple vest, that ever peeping was
 Rich from the fluttering crimson of his cloak,
 His silvery trowsers, and his silken sash
 Tied in a burnish'd knot, their semblance took
 Upon the mirror'd walls, wherever he might look.

XXXI.

He smil'd at self, and, smiling, show'd his teeth,
 And seeing his white teeth, he smil'd the more ;
 Lifted his eye-brows, spurn'd the path beneath,
 Show'd teeth again, and smil'd as heretofore,
 Until he knock'd at the magician's door ;
 Where, till the porter answer'd, might be seen,
 In the clear panel more he could adore,—
 His turban wreath'd of gold, and white, and green,
 Mustachios, ear-ring, nose-ring, and his sabre keen.

XXXII.

" Does not your master give a rout to-night ?"
 Quoth the dark page. " Oh, no !" return'd the Swiss,
 " Next door but one to us, upon the right,
 The *Magazin des Modes* now open is

Against the Emperor's wedding ;—and, sir, this
 My master finds a monstrous horrid bore ;
 As he retir'd, an hour ago I wis,
 With his best beard and brimstone, to explore
 And cast a quiet figure in his second floor.

XXXIII.

“Gad ! he's oblig'd to stick to business !
 For chalk, I hear, stands at a pretty price ;
 And as for aqua vitæ—there's a mess !
 The *dentes sapientiæ* of mice,
 Our barber tells me too, are on the rise,—
 Tinder's a lighter article,—nitre pure
 Goes off like lightning,—grains of Paradise
 At an enormous figure !—stars not sure !—
 Zodiac will not move without a slight douceur !

XXXIV.

“Venus won't stir a peg without a fee,
 And master is too partial, *entre nous*,
 To”— “Hush—hush !” cried Eban, “sure that is he
 Coming down stairs,—by St. Bartholomew !
 As backwards as he can,—is't something new ?
 Or is't his custom, in the name of fun ?”
 “He always comes down backward, with one shoe”—
 Return'd the porter—“off, and one shoe on,
 Like, saving shoe for sock or stocking, my man John !”

XXXV.

It was indeed the great Magician,
 Feeling, with careful toe, for every stair,
 And retrograding careful as he can,
 Backwards and downwards from his own two pair :
 “Salpietro !” exclaim'd Hum, “is the dog there ?
 He's always in my way upon the mat !”

“He’s in the kitchen, or the Lord knows where,”—
 Reply’d the Swiss,—“the nasty, yelping brat!”
 “Don’t beat him!” return’d Hum, and on the floor
 came pat.

XXXVI.

Then facing right about, he saw the Page,
 And said: “Don’t tell me what you want, Eban;
 The Emperor is now in a huge rage,—
 ’Tis nine to one he’ll give you the rattan!
 Let us away!” Away together ran
 The plain-dress’d sage and spangled blackamoor,
 Nor rested till they stood to cool, and fan,
 And breathe themselves at th’ Emperor’s chamber
 door,
 When Eban thought he heard a soft imperial snore.

XXXVII.

“I thought you guess’d, foretold, or prophesy’d,
 That’s Majesty was in a raving fit?”
 “He dreams,” said Hum, “or I have ever lied,
 That he is tearing you, sir, bit by bit.”
 “He’s not asleep, and you have little wit,”
 Reply’d the page; “that little buzzing noise,
 Whate’er your palmistry may make of it,
 Comes from a play-thing of the Emperor’s choice,
 From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his toys.”

XXXVIII.

Eban then usher’d in the learned Seer:
 Elfinan’s back was turn’d, but, ne’ertheless,
 Both, prostrate on the carpet, ear by ear,
 Crept silently, and waited in distress,
 Knowing the Emperor’s moody bitterness;
 Eban especially, who on the floor ’gan

Tremble and quake to death,—he feared less
 A dose of senna-tea or nightmare Gorgon
 Than the Emperor when he play'd on his Man-Tiger-
 Organ.

XXXIX.

They kiss'd nine times the carpet's velvet face
 Of glossy silk, soft, smooth, and meadow-green,
 Where the close eye in deep rich fur might trace
 A silver tissue, scantily to be seen,
 As daisies lurk'd in June-grass, buds in green ;
 Sudden the music ceas'd, sudden the hand
 Of majesty, by dint of passion keen,
 Doubled into a common fist, went grand,
 And knock'd down three cut glasses, and his best ink-
 stand.

XL.

Then turning round, he saw those trembling two :.
 "Eban," said he, "as slaves should taste the fruits
 Of diligence, I shall remember you
 To-morrow, or [the] next day, as time suits,
 In a finger conversation with my mutes,—
 Begone!—for you, Chaldean! here remain!
 Fear not, quake not, and as good wine recruits
 A conjurer's spirits, what cup will you drain?
 Sherry in silver, hock in gold, or glass'd champagne?"

XLI.

"Commander of the Faithful!" answer'd Hum,
 "In preference to these, I'll merely taste
 A thimble-full of old Jamaica rum."
 "A simple boon!" said Elfinan; "thou may'st
 Have Nantz, with which my morning-coffee's lac'd."
 "I'll have a glass of Nantz, then,"—said the Seer,—
 "Made racy—(sure my boldness is misplac'd!)—
 With the third part—(yet that is drinking dear!)—
 Of the least drop of *crème de citron*, crystal clear."

XLII.

“I pledge you, Hum! and pledge my dearest love,
 My Bertha!” “Bertha! Bertha!” cry’d the sage,
 “I know a many Berthas!” “Mine’s above
 All Berthas!” sigh’d the Emperor. “I engage,”
 Said Hum, “in duty, and in vassalage,
 To mention all the Berthas in the earth;—
 There’s Bertha Watson,—and Miss Bertha Page,—
 This fam’d for languid eyes, and that for mirth,—
 There’s Bertha Blount of York,—and Bertha Knox of
 Perth.”

XLIII.

“You seem to know”—“I do know,” answer’d Hum,
 “Your Majesty’s in love with some fine girl
 Named Bertha; but her surname will not come,
 Without a little conjuring.” “’Tis Pearl,
 ’Tis Bertha Pearl! What makes my brains so whirl?
 And she is softer, fairer than her name!”
 “Where does she live?” ask’d Hum. “Her fair locks curl
 So brightly, they put all our fays to shame!—
 Live?—O! at Canterbury, with her old grand-dame.”

XLIV.

“Good! good!” cry’d Hum, “I’ve known her from a
 child!
 She is a changeling of my management;
 She was born at midnight in an Indian wild;
 Her mother’s screams with the striped tiger’s blent,
 While the torch-bearing slaves a halloo sent
 Into the jungles; and her palanquin,
 Rested amid the desert’s dreariment,
 Shook with her agony, till fair were seen
 The little Bertha’s eyes ope on the stars serene.”

XLV.

“I can’t say,” said the monarch; “that may be
 Just as it happen’d, true or else a bam!
 Drink up your brandy, and sit down by me,
 Feel, feel my pulse, how much in love I am;
 And if your science is not all a sham,
 Tell me some means to get the lady here.”
 “Upon my honour!” said the son of Cham,
 “She is my dainty changeling, near and dear,
 Although her story sounds at first a little queer.”

XLVI.

“Convey her to me, Hum, or by my crown,
 My sceptre, and my cross-surmounted globe,
 I’ll knock you”—“Does your majesty mean—*down?*
 No, no, you never could my feelings probe
 To such a depth!” The Emperor took his robe,
 And wept upon its purple palatine,
 While Hum continued, shamming half a sob,—
 “In Canterbury doth your lady shine?
 But let me cool your brandy with a little wine.”

XLVII.

Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,
 That since belong’d to Admiral De Witt,
 Admir’d it with a connoisseuring look,
 And with the ripest claret crowned it,
 And, ere the lively bead could burst and flit,
 He turn’d it quickly, nimbly upside down,
 His mouth being held conveniently fit
 To catch the treasure: “Best in all the town!”
 He said, smack’d his moist lips, and gave a pleasant
 frown.

XLVIII.

“Ah! good my Prince, weep not!” And then again
 He fill’d a bumper. “Great Sire, do not weep!

Your pulse is shocking, but I'll ease your pain."
 "Fetch me that Ottoman, and prithee keep
 Your voice low," said the Emperor ; "and steep
 Some lady's-fingers nice in Candy wine ;
 And prithee, Hum, behind the screen do peep
 For the rose-water vase, magician mine !
 And sponge my forehead,—so my love doth make me
 pine.

XLIX.

"Ah, cursed Bellanaine !" "Don't think of her,"
 Rejoin'd the Mago, "but on Bertha muse ;
 For, by my choicest best barometer,
 You shall not throttled be in marriage noose ;
 I've said it, Sire ; you only have to choose
 Bertha or Bellanaine." So saying, he drew
 From the left pocket of his threadbare hose,
 A sampler hoarded slyly, good as new,
 Holding it by his thumb and finger full in view.

L.

"Sire, this is Bertha Pearl's neat handy-work,
 Her *name*, see here, *Midsummer, ninety-one.*"
 Elfinan snatch'd it with a sudden jerk,
 And wept as if he never would have done,
 Honouring with royal tears the poor homespun ;
 Whereon were broider'd tigers with black eyes,
 And long-tail'd pheasants, and a rising sun,
 Plenty of posies, great stags, butterflies
 Bigger than stags,—a moon,—with other mysteries.

LI.

The monarch handled o'er and o'er again
 Those day-school hieroglyphics with a sigh ;
 Somewhat in sadness, but pleas'd in the main,
 Till this oracular couplet met his eye

Astounded—*Cupid, I do thee defy!*

It was too much. He shrunk back in his chair,
Grew pale as death, and fainted—very nigh!

“Pho! nonsense!” exclaim’d Hum, “now don’t
despair;

She does not mean it really. Cheer up, hearty—there!

LII.

“And listen to my words. You say you won’t,
On any terms, marry Miss Bellanaine;
It goes against your conscience—good! Well, don’t.
You say you love a mortal. I would fain
Persuade your honour’s highness to refrain
From peccadilloes. But, Sire, as I say,
What good would that do? And, to be more plain,
You would do me a mischief some odd day,

Cut off my ears and hands, or head too, by my fay!

LIII.

“Besides, manners forbid that I should pass any
Vile strictures on the conduct of a prince
Who should indulge his genius, if he has any,
Not, like a subject, foolish matters mince.
Now I think on’t, perhaps I could convince
Your Majesty there is no crime at all
In loving pretty little Bertha, since
She’s very delicate,—not over tall,—

A fairy’s hand, and in the waist why—very small.”

LIV.

“Ring the repeater, gentle Hum!” “’Tis five,”
Said gentle Hum; “the nights draw in apace;
The little birds I hear are all alive;
I see the dawning touch’d upon your face,
Shall I put out the candles, please your Grace?”
“Do put them out, and, without more ado,

Tell me how I may that sweet girl embrace,—
 How you can bring her to me." "That's for you,
 Great Emperor! to adventure, like a lover true."

LV.

"I fetch her!"—"Yes, an't like your Majesty;
 And as she would be frighten'd wide awake
 To travel such a distance through the sky,
 Use of some soft manœuvre you must make,
 For your convenience, and her dear nerves' sake;
 Nice way would be to bring her in a swoon,
 Anon, I'll tell what course were best to take;
 You must away this morning." "Hum! so soon?"
 "Sire, you must be in Kent by twelve o'clock at noon."

LVI.

At this great Cæsar started on his feet,
 Lifted his wings, and stood attentive-wise.
 "Those wings to Canterbury you must beat,
 If you hold Bertha as a worthy prize.
 Look in the Almanack—*Moore* never lies—
 April the twenty-fourth,—this coming day,
 Now breathing its new bloom upon the skies,
 Will end in St. Mark's Eve;—you must away,
 For on that eve alone can you the maid convey."

LVII.

Then the magician solemnly 'gan to frown,
 So that his frost-white eyebrows, beetling low,
 Shaded his deep green eyes, and wrinkles brown
 Plaited upon his furnace-scorched brow:
 Forth from his hood that hung his neck below,
 He lifted a bright casket of pure gold,
 Touch'd a spring-lock, and there in wool or snow,
 Charm'd into ever freezing, lay an old
 And legend-leaved book, mysterious to behold.

LVIII.

“Take this same book,—it will not bite you, Sire ;
 There, put it underneath your royal arm ;
 Though it's a pretty weight it will not tire,
 But rather on your journey keep you warm :
 This is the magic, this the potent charm,
 That shall drive Bertha to a fainting fit !
 When the time comes, don't feel the least alarm,
 But lift her from the ground, and swiftly flit
 Back to your palace. * * *

LIX.

“What shall I do with that same book ?” “Why merely
 Lay it on Bertha's table, close beside
 Her work-box, and 'twill help your purpose dearly ;
 I say no more.” “Or good or ill betide,
 Through the wide air to Kent this morn I glide !”
 Exclaim'd the Emperor. “When I return,
 Ask what you will,—I'll give you my new bride !
 And take some more wine, Hum ;—O Heavens ! I burn
 To be upon the wing ! Now, now, that minx I spurn !”

LX.

“Leave her to me,” rejoin'd the magian :
 ‘But how shall I account, illustrious fay !
 For thine imperial absence ? Pho ! I can
 Say you are very sick, and bar the way
 To your so loving courtiers for one day ;
 If either of their two archbishops' graces
 Should talk of extreme unction, I shall say
 You do not like cold pig with Latin phrases,
 Which never should be used but in alarming cases.”

LXI.

“Open the window, Hum ; I'm ready now !”
 “Zooks !” exclaim'd Hum, as up the sash he drew,

“Behold, your Majesty, upon the brow
 Of yonder hill, what crowds of people!” “Whew!
 The monster’s always after something new,”
 Return’d his Highness, “they are piping hot
 To see my pigsney Bellanaine. Hum! do
 Tighten my belt a little,—so, so,—not
 Too tight,—the book!—my wand!—so, nothing is forgot.”

LXII.

“Wounds! how they shout!” said Hum, “and there,
 —see, see!
 Th’ ambassador’s return’d from Pigmio!
 The morning’s very fine,—uncommonly!
 See, past the skirts of yon white cloud they go,
 Tinging it with soft crimsons! Now below
 The sable-pointed heads of firs and pines
 They dip, move on, and with them moves a glow
 Along the forest side! Now amber lines
 Reach the hill top, and now throughout the valley
 shines.”

LXIII.

“Why, Hum, you’re getting quite poetical!
 Those *nows* you manag’d in a special style.”
 “If ever you have leisure, Sire, you shall
 See scraps of mine will make it worth your while,
 Tit-bits for Phœbus!—yes, you well may smile,
 Hark! hark! the bells!” “A little further yet,
 Good Hum, and let me view this mighty coil.”
 Then the great Emperor full graceful set
 His elbow for a prop, and snuff’d his mignonnette.

LXIV.

The morn is full of holiday; loud bells
 With rival clamours ring from every spire;
 Cunningly-station’d music dies and swells
 In echoing places; when the winds respire,

Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues of fire ;
 A metropolitan murmur, lifeful, warm,
 Comes from the northern suburbs ; rich attire
 Freckles with red and gold the moving swarm ;
 While here and there clear trumpets blow a keen alarm

LXV.

And now the fairy escort was seen clear,
 Like the old pageant of Aurora's train,
 Above a pearl-built minster, hovering near ;
 First wily Crafticant, the chamberlain,
 Balanc'd upon his grey-grown pinions twain,
 His slender wand officially reveal'd ;
 Then black gnomes scattering sixpences like rain ;
 Then pages three and three ; and next, slave-held,
 The Imaian 'scutcheon bright,—one mouse in argent
 field.

LXVI.

Gentlemen pensioners next ; and after them,
 A troop of winged Janizaries flew ;
 Then slaves, as presents bearing many a gem ;
 Then twelve physicians fluttering two and two ;
 And next a chaplain in a cassock new ;
 Then Lords in waiting ; then (what head not reels
 For pleasure ?)—the fair Princess in full view,
 Borne upon wings,—and very pleas'd she feels
 To have such splendour dance attendance at her heels.

LXVII.

For there was more magnificence behind :
 She wav'd her handkerchief. " Ah, very grand !"
 Cry'd Elfinan, and clos'd the window-blind ;
 " And, Hum, we must not shilly-shally stand,—
 Adieu ! adieu ! I'm off for Angle-land !
 I say, old Hocus, have you such a thing

About you,—feel your pockets, I command,—
 I want, this instant, an invisible ring,—
 Thank you, old mummy!—now securely I take wing.”

LXVIII.

Then Elfinan swift vaulted from the floor,
 And lighted graceful on the window-sill ;
 Under one arm the magic book he bore,
 The other he could wave about at will ;
 Pale was his face, he still look'd very ill :
 He bow'd at Bellanaine, and said—“ Poor Bell !
 Farewell ! farewell ! and if for ever ! still
 For ever fare thee well ! ”—and then he fell
 A laughing !—snapp'd his fingers !—shame it is to tell !

LXIX.

“ By'r Lady ! he is gone ! ” cries Hum, “ and I—
 (I own it)—have made too free with his wine ;
 Old Crafticant will smoke me. By-the-bye !
 This room is full of jewels as a mine,—
 Dear valuable creatures, how ye shine !
 Sometime to-day I must contrive a minute,
 If Mercury propitiously incline,
 To examine his scrutoire, and see what 's in it,
 For of superfluous diamonds I as well may thin it.

LXX.

“ The Emperor's horrid bad ; yes, that's my cue ! ”
 Some histories say that this was Hum's last speech
 That, being fuddled, he went reeling through
 The corridor, and scarce upright could reach
 The stair-head ; that being glutted as a leech,
 And us'd, as we ourselves have just now said,
 To manage stairs reversely, like a peach
 Too ripe, he fell, being puzzled in his head
 With liquor and the staircase : verdict—*found stone dead.*

LXXI.

This as a falsehood Crafticanto treats ;
 And as his style is of strange elegance,
 Gentle and tender, full of soft conceits,
 (Much like our Boswell's,) we will take a glance
 At his sweet prose, and, if we can, make dance
 His woven periods into careless rhyme ;
 O, little faery Pegasus ! rear—prance—
 Trot round the quarto—ordinary time !
 March, little Pegasus, with pawing hoof sublime !

LXXII.

Well, let us see,—*tenth book and chapter nine*,—
 Thus Crafticant pursues his diary :—
 “ ’Twas twelve o'clock at night, the weather fine,
 Latitude thirty-six ; our scouts descry
 A flight of starlings making rapidly
 Towards Thibet. Mem. :—birds fly in the night ;
 From twelve to half-past—wings not fit to fly
 For a thick fog—the Princess sulky quite ;
 Call'd for an extra shawl, and gave her nurse a bite.

LXXIII.

“ Five minutes before one—brought down a mot.
 With my new double-barrel—stew'd the thighs
 And made a very tolerable broth—
 Princess turn'd dainty, to our great surprise,
 Alter'd her mind, and thought it very nice :
 Seeing her pleasant, try'd her with a pun,
 She frown'd ; a monstrous owl across us flies
 About this time,—a sad old figure of fun ;
 Bad omen—this new match can't be a happy one.

LXXIV.

“ From two to half-past, dusky way we made,
 Above the plains of Gobi,—desert, bleak ;

Beheld afar off, in the hooded shade
 Of darkness, a great mountain (strange to speak),
 Spitting, from forth its sulphur-baken peak,
 A fan-shap'd burst of blood-red, arrowy fire,
 Turban'd with smoke, which still away did reek,
 Solid and black from that eternal pyre,
 Upon the laden winds that scantly could respire.

LXXV.

“Just upon three o'clock a falling star
 Created an alarm among our troop,
 Kill'd a man-cook, a page, and broke a jar,
 A tureen, and three dishes, at one swoop,
 Then passing by the Princess, singed her hoop:
 Could not conceive what Coralline was at,
 She clapp'd her hands three times and cry'd out
 ‘Whoop!’

Some strange Imaian custom. A large bat
 Came sudden 'fore my face, and brush'd against my hat.

LXXVI.

“Five minutes thirteen seconds after three,
 Far in the west a mighty fire broke out,
 Conjectur'd, on the instant, it might be,
 The city of Balk—'twas Balk beyond all doubt:
 A griffin, wheeling here and there about,
 Kept reconnoitring us—doubled our guard—
 Lighted our torches, and kept up a shout,
 Till he sheer'd off—the Princess very scar'd—
 And many on their marrow-bones for death prepar'd.

LXXVII.

“At half-past three arose the cheerful moon—
 Bivouack'd for four minutes on a cloud—
 Where from the earth we heard a lively tune
 Of tambourines and pipes, serene and loud,

While on a flowery lawn a brilliant crowd
 Cinque-parted danc'd, some half asleep reposed
 Beneath the green-fan'd cedars, some did shroud
 In silken tents, and 'mid light fragrance dozed,
 Or on the open turf their soothed eyelids closed.

LXXVIII.

"Dropp'd my gold watch, and kill'd a kettledrum—
 It went for apoplexy—foolish folks!—
 Left it to pay the piper—a good sum—
 (I've got a conscience, maugre people's jokes,)
 To scrape a little favour; 'gan to coax
 Her Highness' pug-dog—got a sharp rebuff—
 She wish'd a game at whist—made three revokes—
 Turn'd from myself, her partner, in a huff;
 His majesty will know her temper time enough.

LXXIX.

"She cry'd for chess—I play'd a game with her—
 Castled her king with such a vixen look,
 It bodes ill to his Majesty—(refer
 To the second chapter of my fortieth book,
 And see what hoity-toity airs she took).
 At half-past four the morn essay'd to beam—
 Saluted, as we pass'd, an early rook—
 The Princess fell asleep, and, in her dream,
 Talk'd of one Master Hubert, deep in her esteem.

LXXX.

"About this time,—making delightful way,—
 Shed a quill-feather from my larboard wing—
 Wish'd, trusted, hop'd 'twas no sign of decay—
 Thank heaven, I'm hearty yet!—'twas no such thing:—
 At five the golden light began to spring,
 With fiery shudder through the bloomed east;

At six we heard Panthea's churches ring—
 The city all his unhiv'd swarms had cast,
 To watch our grand approach, and hail us as we pass'd.

LXXXI.

“As flowers turn their faces to the sun,
 So on our flight with hungry eyes they gaze,
 And, as we shap'd our course, this, that way run,
 With mad-cap pleasure, or hand-clasp'd amaze;
 Sweet in the air a mild-ton'd music plays,
 And progresses through its own labyrinth;
 Buds gather'd from the green spring's middle-days,
 They scatter'd,—daisy, primrose, hyacinth,—
 Or round white columns wreath'd from capital to plinth.

LXXXII.

“Onward we floated o'er the panting streets,
 That seem'd throughout with upheld faces paved;
 Look where we will, our bird's-eye vision meets
 Legions of holiday; bright standards waved,
 And fluttering ensigns emulously craved
 Our minute's glance; a busy thunderous roar,
 From square to square, among the buildings raved,
 As when the sea, at flow, gluts up once more
 The craggy hollowness of a wild reefed shore.

LXXXIII.

“And ‘Bellanaine for ever!’ shouted they,
 While that fair Princess, from her winged chair,
 Bow'd low with high demeanour, and, to pay
 Their new-blown loyalty with guerdon fair,
 Still emptied, at meet distance, here and there,
 A plenty horn of jewels. And here I
 (Who wish to give the devil her due) declare
 Against that ugly piece of calumny,
 Which calls them Highland pebble-stones not worth a fly.

LXXXIV.

“Still ‘Bellanaine!’ they shouted, while we glide
 ‘Slant to a light Ionic portico,
 The city’s delicacy, and the pride
 Of our Imperial Basilic; a row
 Of lords and ladies, on each hand, make show
 Submissive of knee-bent obeisance,
 All down the steps; and, as we enter’d, lo!
 The strangest sight—the most unlook’d-for chance—
 All things turn’d topsy-turvy in a devil’s dance.

LXXXV.

“’Stead of his anxious Majesty and court
 At the open doors, with wide saluting eyes,
Congées and scrape-graces of every sort,
 And all the smooth routine of gallantries,
 Was seen, to our immoderate surprise,
 A motley crowd thick gather’d in the hall,
 Lords, scullions, deputy-sculions, with wild cries
 Stunning the vestibule from wall to wall,
 Where the Chief Justice on his knees and hands doth
 crawl.

LXXXVI.

“Counts of the palace, and the state purveyor
 Of moth’s-down, to make soft the royal beds,
 The Common Council and my fool Lord Mayor
 Marching a-row, each other slipshod treads;
 Powder’d bag-wigs and ruffy-tuffy heads
 Of cinder wenches meet and soil each other;
 Toe crush’d with heel ill-natur’d fighting breeds,
 Frill-rumpling elbows brew up many a bother,
 And fists in the short ribs keep up the yell and pother.

LXXXVII.

“A Poet, mounted on the Court-Clown’s back,
 Rode to the Princess swift with spurring heels,

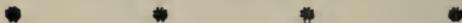
And close into her face, with rhyming clack,
 Began a Prothalamion;—she reels,
 She falls, she faints! while laughter peels
 Over her woman's weakness. 'Where!' cry'd I,
 'Where is his Majesty?' No person feels
 Inclin'd to answer; wherefore instantly
 I plung'd into the crowd to find him or to die.

LXXXVIII.

"Jostling my way I gain'd the stairs, and ran
 To the first landing, where, incredible!
 I met, far gone in liquor, that old man,
 That vile impostor Hum,——"

So far so well,—

For we have prov'd the Mago never fell
 Down stairs on Crafticanto's evidence;
 And therefore duly shall proceed to tell,
 Plain in our own original mood and tense,
 The sequel of this day, though labour 'tis immense!



ADDITIONAL "NONSENSE VERSES"

AND

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF ENDYMION.

ADDITIONAL "NONSENSE VERSES."

ON OXFORD.

I.

THE Gothic looks solemn,
The plain Doric column
Supports an old Bishop and Crosier ;
The mouldering arch,
Shaded o'er by a larch
Stands next door to Wilson the Hosier.

2.

Vicè—that is, by turns,—
O'er pale faces mourns
The black tassell'd trencher and common hat ;
The Chantry boy sings,
The Steeple-bell rings,
And as for the Chancellor—*dominat.*

3.

There are plenty of trees,
And plenty of ease,
And plenty of fat deer for Parsons ;
And when it is venison,
Short is the benison,—
Then each on a leg or thigh fastens.

SONNET TO MRS. REYNOLDS'S CAT.

CAT! who has[t] pass'd thy grand clima[c]teric,
 How many mice and rats hast in thy days
 Destroy'd?—How many tit bits stolen? Gaze
 With those bright languid segments green, and prick
 Those velvet ears—but pr'ythee do not stick
 Thy latent talons in me—and upraise
 Thy gentle mew—and tell me all thy frays
 Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick.
 Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists—
 For all the wheezy asthma,—and for all
 Thy tail's tip is nick'd off—and though the fists
 Of many a maid has given thee many a maul,
 Still is that fur as soft as when the lists
 In youth thou enter'dst on glass bottled wall.

A GALLOWAY SONG.

AH! ken ye what I met the day
 Out oure the Mountains
 A coming down by craggi[e]s grey
 An mossie fountains—
 A[h] goud hair'd Marie yeve I pray 5
 Ane minute's guessing—
 For that I met upon the way
 Is past expressing.
 As I stood where a rocky brig
 A torrent crosses 10
 I spied upon a misty rig
 A troupe o' Horses—

BEN NEVIS: A DIALOGUE.

THERE was one Mrs. Cameron of 50 years of age and the fattest woman in all Invernessshire who got up this Mountain some few years ago—true she had her servants—but then she had her self. She ought to have hired Sisyphus,—“Up the high hill he heaves a huge round—Mrs. Cameron.” ’Tis said a little conversation took place between the mountain and the Lady. After taking a glass of W[h]iskey as she was tolerably seated at ease she thus began—

MRS. C.

Upon my Life Sir Nevis I am pique'd
 That I have so far panted tugg'd and reek'd
 To do an honor to your old bald pate
 And now am sitting on you just to bate,
 Without your paying me one compliment. 5
 Alas 'tis so with all, when our intent
 Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind
 We fair ones show a preference, too blind!
 You Gentle man immediately turn tail—
 O let me then my hapless fate bewail! 10
 Ungrateful Baldpate have I not disdain'd
 The pleasant Valleys—have I not madbrain'd
 Deserted all my Pickles and preserves
 My China closet too—with wretched Nerves
 To boot—say wretched ingrate have I not 15
 Le[f]t my soft cushion chair and caudle pot.
 'Tis true I had no corns—no! thank the fates
 My Shoemaker was always Mr. Bates.
 And if not Mr. Bates why I'm not old!
 Still dumb ungrateful Nevis—still so cold! 20

Here the Lady took some more w[h]iskey and was putting even more to her lips when she dashed [it] to the Ground for the Mountain began to grumble—which continued for a few minutes before he thus began,

BEN NEVIS.

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus dares
Disturb my slumber of a thousand years?
Even so long my sleep has been secure—
And to be so awaked I'll not endure.
Oh pain—for since the Eagle's earliest scream 25
I've had a dam[n]'d confounded ugly dream,
A Nightmare sure. What Madam was it you?
It cannot be! My old eyes are not true!
Red-Crag, my Spectacles! Now let me see!
Good Heavens Lady how the gemini 30
Did you get here? O I shall split my sides!
I shall earthquake——

MRS. C.

Sweet Nevis do not quake, for though I love
You[r] honest Countenance all things above
Truly I should not like to be convey'd 35
So far into your Bosom—gentle Maid
Loves not too rough a treatment gentle Sir—
Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir
No not a Stone or I shall go in fits—

BEN NEVIS.

I must—I shall—I meet not such tit bits— 40
I meet not such sweet creatures every day—
By my old night cap night cap night and day
I must have one sweet Buss—I must and shall!
Red Crag!—What Madam can you then repent
Of all the toil and vigour you have spent 45

To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?
 Red Crag I say! O I must have them close!
 Red Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe
 A vein of Sulphur—go dear Red Crag, go—
 And rub your flinty back against it—budge! 50
 Dear Madam I must kiss you, faith I must!
 I must Embrace you with my dearest gust!
 Block-head, d'ye hear—Block-head I'll make her feel
 There lies beneath my east leg's northern heel
 A cave of young earth dragons—well my boy 55
 Go thither quick and so complete my joy
 Take you a bundle of the largest pines
 And when the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines
 Fire them and ram them in the Dragon's nest—
 Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best 60
 Until ten thousand now no bigger than
 Poor Al[l]igators—poor things of one span—
 Will each one swell to twice ten times the size
 Of northern whale—then for the tender prize—
 The moment then—for then will Red Crag rub 65
 His flinty back—and I shall kiss and snub
 And press my dainty morsel to my breast.
 Block-head make haste!

O Muses weep the rest—

The Lady fainted and he thought her dead
 So pulled the clouds again about his head 70
 And went to sleep again—soon she was rous'd
 By her affrighted servants—next day hous'd
 Safe on the lowly ground she bless'd her fate
 That fainting fit was not delayed too late.

But what surprises me above all is how this Lady got down again.

WOMEN, WINE AND SNUFF.

GIVE me women, wine and snuff
 Until I cry out "hold, enough!"
 You may do so sans objection
 Till the day of resurrection ;
 For bless my beard they aye shall be
 My beloved Trinity.

TWO OR THREE.

TWO or three Posies
 With two or three simples—
 Two or three Noses
 With two or three pimples—
 Two or three wise men 5
 And two or three ninny's—
 Two or three purses
 And two or three guineas—
 Two or three raps
 At two or three doors— 10
 Two or three naps
 Of two or three hours—
 Two or three Cats
 And two or three mice—
 Two or three sprats 15
 At a very great price—
 Two or three sandies
 And two or three tabbies—
 Two or three dandies
 And two Mrs ——— mum ! 20
 Two or three Smiles
 And two or three frowns—

Two or three Miles
 To two or three towns—
 Two or three pegs
 For two or three bonnets—
 Two or three dove eggs
 To hatch into sonnets.

25

AN EXTEMPORE.

WHEN they were come into the Faery's Court
 They rang—no one at home—all gone to sport
 And dance and kiss and love as faerys do
 For Faries be as humans lovers true—

Amid the woods they were so lone and wild

5

Where even the Robin feels himself exil'd

And where the very brooks as if affraid

Hurry along to some less magic shade.

'No one at home'! the fretful princess cry'd

'And all for nothing such a dre[a]ry ride

10

And all for nothing my new diamond cross

No one to see my persian feathers toss

No one to see my Ape, my Dwarf, my Fool

Or how I pace my Otaheitan mule.

Ape, Dwarf and Fool why stand you gaping there

15

Burst the door open, quick—or I declare

I'll switch you soundly and in pieces tear.'

The Dwarf began to tremble and the Ape

Star'd at the Fool, the Fool was all agape

The Princess grasp'd her switch but just in time

20

The dwarf with piteous face began to rhyme.

O mighty Princess did you ne'er hear tell

What your poor servants know but too too well

Know you the three great crimes in faery land

The first alas! poor Dwarf I understand

25

I made a whipstock of a faery's wand
 The next is snoring in their company
 The next the last the direst of the three
 Is making free when they are not at home.
 I was a Prince—a baby prince—my doom 30
 You see, I made a whipstock of a wand
 My top has henceforth slept in faery land.
 He was a Prince the Fool, a grown up Prince
 But he has never been a King's son since
 He fell a snoring at a faery Ball— 35
 Your poor Ape was a Prince and he poor thing
 Picklock'd a faery's boudour—now no king
 But ape—so pray your highness stay awhile
 'Tis sooth indeed we know it to our sorrow—
 Persist and *you* may be an ape tomorrow— 40
 While the Dwarf spake the Princess all for spite
 Peal'd the brown hazel twig to lilly white
 Clench'd her small teeth, and held her lips apart
 Try'd to look unconcerned with beating heart.
 They saw her highness had made up her mind 45
 And quaver'd like the reeds before the wind
 And they had had it, but O happy chance
 The Ape for very fear began to dance
 And grin'd as all his ugliness did ache—
 She staid her vixen fingers for his sake 50
 He was so very ugly: then she took
 Her pocket mirror and began to look
 First at herself and [then] at him and then
 She smil'd at her own beauteous face again.
 Yet for all this—for all her pretty face 55
 She took it in her head to see the place.
 Women gain little from experience
 Either in Lovers, husbands or expense.
 The more their beauty the more fortune too
 Beauty before the wide world never knew. 60

So each fair reasons—tho' it oft miscarries.
 She thought *her* pretty face would please the fa[e]ries.
 "My darling Ape I wont whip you today
 Give me the Picklock sirrah and go play."
 They all three wept but counsel was as vain 65
 As crying cup biddy to drops of rain.
 Yet lingeringly did the sad Ape forth draw
 The Picklock from the Pocket in his Jaw.
 The Princess took it and dismounting straight
 Trip'd in blue silver'd slippers to the gate 70
 And touch'd the wards, the Door full courteously
 Opened—she enter'd with her servants three.
 Again it clos'd and there was nothing seen
 But the Mule grazing on the herbage green.

End of Canto xii

Canto the xiii

The Mule no sooner saw himself alone
 Than he prick'd up his Ears—and said 'well done!
 At least unhappy Prince I may be free—
 No more a Princess shall side saddle me
 O King of Othaiete—tho' a Mule 5
 'Aye every inch a King'—tho' 'Fortune's fool.'
 Well done—for by what Mr. Dwarfy said
 I would not give a sixpence for her head.'
 Even as he spake he trotted in high glee
 To the knotty side of an old Pollard tree 10
 And rub'd his sides against the mossed bark
 Till his Girths burst and left him naked stark
 Except his Bridle—how get rid of that
 Buckled and tied with many a twist and plait.
 At last it struck him to pretend to sleep 15
 And then the thievish Monkeys down would creep
 And filch the unpleasant trammels quite away.
 No sooner thought of than adown he lay

Sham'd a good snore—the Monkey-men descended
And whom they thought to injure they befriended. 20
They hung his Bridle on a topmost bough
And of[f] he went run, trot, or anyhow—

SONNET.

BEFORE he went to feed with owls and bats
Nebuchadnezzar had an ugly dream,
Worse than an Hus'if's when she thinks her cream
Made a Naumachia for mice and rats.
So scared, he sent for that "Good King of Cats"
Young Daniel, who soon did pluck away the beam
From out his eye, and said he did not deem
The sceptre worth a straw—his Cushions old door-mats.
A horrid nightmare similar somewhat
Of late has haunted a most motley crew,
Most loggerheads and Chapmen—we are told
That any Daniel tho' he be a sot
Can make the lying lips turn pale of hue
By belching out "ye are that head of Gold."

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF
ENDYMION.

In place of lines 407-12, Book I.

Now happily, there sitting on the grass
Was fair Peona, a most tender Lass,
And his sweet sister ; who, uprising, went
With stifled sobs, and o'er his shoulder leant.
Putting her trembling hand against his cheek
She said : ' My dear Endymion, let us seek
A pleasant bower where thou may'st rest apart,
And ease in slumber thine afflicted heart :
Come my own dearest brother : these our friends
Will joy in thinking thou dost sleep where bends
Our freshening River through yon birchen grove :
Do come now !' Could he gainsay her who strove,
So soothingly, to breathe away a Curse ?

In place of lines 436-42, Book I.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
Dry'd carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
When last the Harvesters rich armfuls took.
She tied a little bucket to a Crook,

Ran some swift paces to a dark wells side,
 And in a sighing-time return'd, supplied
 With spar cold water ; in which she did squeeze
 A snowy napkin, and upon her knees
 Began to cherish her poor Brother's face ;
 Damping refreshfully his forehead's space,
 His eyes, his Lips : then in a cupped shell
 She brought him ruby wine ; then let him smell,
 Time after time, a precious amulet,
 Which seldom took she from its cabinet.
 Thus was he quieted to slumbrous rest :...

In place of lines 465-6, Book I.

Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
 A cheerfuller resignation, and a smile
 For his fair Sister flowing like the Nile
 Through all the channels of her piety,
 He said : ' Dear Maid, may I this moment die,
 If I feel not this thine endearing Love...

In place of lines 469-72, Book I.

... and the pearliest dew not brings
 From woodbine hedges such a morning feel,
 As do those brighter drops, that twinkling steal
 Through those pressed lashes, from the blossom'd
 plant...

In place of lines 494-5, Book I.

More forest-wild, more subtle-cadenced
 Than can be told by mortal : even wed
 The fainting tenors of a thousand shells
 To a million whisperings of Lilly bells ;

And mingle too the Nightingale's complain
Caught in its hundredth echo ; 'twould be vain : . . .

After line 515, Book I.

And I do pray thee by thy utmost aim
To tell me all. No little fault or blame
Canst thou lay on me for a teasing Girl ;
Ever as an unfathomable pearl
Has been thy secrecy to me : but now
I needs must hunger after it, and vow
To be its jealous Guardian for aye.

Uttering these words she got nigh and more nigh,
And put at last her arms about his neck :
Nor was there any , ungentle check,
Nor any frown, or stir dissatisfied,
But smooth compliance, and a tender slide
Of arm in arm, and what is written next.

'Doubtless, Peona, thou hast been perplex'd,
And pained oft in thinking of the change . . .

In place of lines 545-6, Book I.

And in this spot the most endowing boon
Of balmy air, sweet blooms, and coverts fresh
Has been outshed ; yes, all that could enmesh
Our human senses—make us fealty sware
To gadding Flora. In this grateful lair
Have I been used to pass my weary eaves ;

In place of line 646, Book I.

But lapp'd and lull'd in safe deliriousness ;
Sleepy with deep foretasting, that did bless
My Soul from Madness, 'twas such certainty.

After flowers in line 665, Book I.

Hurry o'er
 O sacrilegious tongue the——best be dumb;
 For should one little accent from thee come
 On such a daring theme, all other sounds
 Would sicken at it, as would beaten hounds
 Scare the elysian Nightingales.

In place of lines 721-2, Book I.

She said with trembling chance: "Is this the cause?
 This all? Yet it is wonderful—exceeding—
 And yet a shallow dream, for ever breeding
 Tempestuous Weather in that very Soul
 That should be twice content, twice smooth, twice whole,
 As is a double Peach. 'Tis sad Alas!

In place of lines 895-7, Book I.

The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
 In the green opening smiling. Gods that keep,
 Mercifully, a little strength of heart
 Unkill'd in us by raving, pang and smart;
 And do preserve it like a lilly root,
 That, in another spring, it may outshoot
 From its wintry prison; let this hour go
 Drawling along its heavy weight of woe
 And leave me living! 'Tis not more than need—
 Your veriest help. Ah! how long did I feed
 On that crystalline life of Portraiture!
 How hover'd breathless at the tender lure!
 How many times dimpled the watery glass
 With maddest kisses; and, till they did pass
 And leave the liquid smooth again, how mad!
 O 'twas as if the absolute sisters had
 My Life into the compass of a Nut

In place of lines 656-62 and 668-71, Book II.

To cloudborne Jove he bent : and there was tost
 Into his grasping hands a silken cord
 At which without a single impious word
 He swung upon it off into the gloom.
 Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,
 Dropt like a fathoming plummet, down he fell...

Long he hung about
 Before his nice enjoyment could pick out
 The resting place : but at the last he swung
 Into the greenest cell of all—among
 Dark leaved jasmine : star flower'd and bestrown
 With golden moss.

In place of lines 1016-18, Book III.

They gave him nectar—shed bright drops, and strove
 Long time in vain. At last they interwove
 Their cradling arms, and carefully conveyed
 His body towards a quiet bowery shade.

In place of lines 94-5, Book IV.

While the fair moon gives light, or rivers flow
 My adoration of thee is yet pure
 As infants prattling. How is this—why sure
 I have a tripple soul !

In place of lines 137-45, Book IV.

Canst thou do so? Is there no balm, no cure
 Could not a beckoning Hebe soon allure

Thee into Paradise? What sorrowing
So weighs thee down what utmost woe could bring
This madness—Sit thee down by me, and ease
Thine heart in whispers—haply by degrees
I may find out some soothing medicine.”—
“Dear Lady,” said Endymion, “I pine
I die—the tender accents thou hast spoken
Have finish’d all—my heart is lost and broken.
That I may pass in patience still speak :
Let me have music dying, and I seek
No more delight—I bid adieu to all.
Didst thou not after other climates call
And murmur about Indian streams—now, now—
I listen, it may save me—O my vow—
Let me have music dying!” The ladye
Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree
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