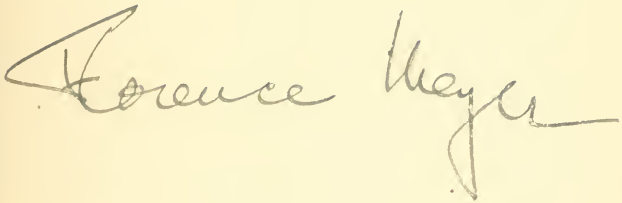

The Golden Treasury

Second Series

THE

GOLDEN TREASURY

SELECTED FROM THE BEST SONGS AND LYRICAL POEMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ARRANGED WITH NOTES

BY

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SECOND SERIES

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TO THE MEMORY OF

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

BY WHOM THE FIRST SERIES

OF THE GOLDEN TREASURY WAS

KINDLY SUPERVISED

AND IN GRATITUDE FOR HIS

INVARIABLY FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP AND COUNSEL

THROUGH FORTY YEARS AND MORE

THIS BOOK

IS SADLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

The Vignette — The Muse and her Genius — reproduces a design by Raphael Sanzio engraved in chiar' oscuro by a contemporary artist.

PREFACE

In the former volume of this selection our lyrical poetry was brought down to 1850 (including hence six of the greatest poets who have ennobled the century), but limited also to the work of writers no longer alive in 1861. We have hence now to retrace the stream, beginning with a period nearly corresponding to what has been called the Victorian, during part of which Wordsworth in solitary grandeur was the one surviving link between those whom we now almost think of, as poets ancient and modern. The two ages in fact overlap. And it was therefore my first wish to include in the same volume the later risen of our stars.

But this plan proved impossible. A decided preference for Lyrical poetry, — to which in all ages the perplexed or overburdened heart has fled for relief and confession, — has shown itself for sixty years or more; an impulse traceable in large measure to the increasingly *subjective* temper of the age, and indeed already in different phases foreshown by Shelley and by Wordsworth. From this preference (whilst the national or commemorative Ode has become rare), followed also a vast extension in length of our lyrics: their work is apt to be less concentrated than that of their best predecessors, classical or English: whilst, concurrently, they have at the same time often taken a dramatic character, rarely to be found before; though Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* and Gray's *Bard* are splendid exceptions in our earlier poetry. Lastly, while during the first quarter of the century Keats, Shelley, Byron, died in actual or comparative youth,

within my present range England has been favoured with the long lives and persistent powers of our two most eminent singers, whilst few of real promise have been cut off prematurely.

Hence, also, despite this whole volume dedicated to a harvest of song more copious than even that famed Elizabethan outflowering, it has not been possible to renew the attempt made in the former book, wherein with but three or four exceptions on the ground of length, all our best lyrics (so far as I could judge) were gathered: and a selection only from the finest work of our greater Victorian poets (so far as my choice may have been happy) can alone be offered here. It should therefore be remembered that many famous and favourite beauties must inevitably be wanting from the present portrait gallery: but I have tried to make the specimens characteristic of each writer's genius. Despite, however, the wide difference between the work, for example, of Browning and Tennyson, the present series, as representing only the spirit of less than a single century, wears a certain monotony of character compared with the vast range of style exhibited in the earlier volume. Yet — and yet — after all, this little book, as I turn the pages over, seems to have a variety and wealth of power and beauty, which, its range considered, is wonderful.

This second Treasury has cost thrice the labour of the first. For nothing, it need scarcely be said, is harder than to form an estimate even remotely accurate of our own contemporary artists, whatever the sphere of their art. This difficulty, in the former book, was far less. For its contents, the verdict of Time had been already largely given, and I had also that invaluable assistance which my Dedication acknowledges. I may however add (asking pardon for egotism) that the best endeavour within my power has been made to hold the balance even between substance and form, the figure or the drapery, — and beauty always the last impression, — by spreading the choice over three or four years during which the poets have been searched and read over, and the results noted at many months' interval. Some check on a choice necessarily imperfect, and indeed convincing

only when the verdict of Time has been given, — it is hoped may thus have been gained. But a personal element always remains, too often refusing to be excluded; especially in case of early favourites, and the haunting music which has seized on our youth, and passed perhaps physically into the very nerves or whatever may be that mysterious organ of Memory which transacts its secret and inexplicable life within the soul's furthest recesses.

The selection has been brought, near as I can venture, to our own day. But, especially in case of those later singers whose course is not yet run, it is all too soon even to attempt a valuation. Many indeed and bright are the blossoms springing up among us, though nightshade and yewberries be not absent. It were, however, presumption if we attempted with the microscope of criticism to classify these growths, or decide whether they belong to the children's 'Adonis Garden' of cut flowers, or the true 'immortal amaranth.' This I leave to other hands than mine in the far-off summers. I have however tried my best to fill the book with such *Underwoods* (to take Jonson's phrase) as the early Roman poet Naevius spoke of 'wherein the copse-wood is sown by natural process, not planted;'

Ingenio arbusta ubi nata sunt, non insita:

— a definition, more than two thousand years old, of the strange spell which lifts verse into poetry which it would be difficult to improve. — But here that wearisomely familiar 'tastes differ' warns that no invitation to its critical exercise more liberal and alluring can be held out, than is offered by a selection like the present. One of the worldly-wise Goethe's best aphorisms was that his opinion on any matter was immensely strengthened if he found it accepted by any one fellow-creature. But I cannot hope even as much acceptance for this book. Varieties in taste, often deeply rooted and strenuously held, will lead every reader to condemn me for omissions and inclusions: inevitably, and rightly. For such judgments reveal the power which poetry, our own recent poetry in especial, holds over us. They testify

to life. All the leniency that can be asked is the reflection that to love the rose need not carry with it scorn of the lily; while the flowers of the Victorian domain are so multitudinous and so nobly large in the blossom, — like those sixty-leaved roses which Herodotus, two thousand and more years since, heard of in the king's garden below Mount Bermion, — that a limited, an imperfect garland only can be collected within the garth allowed me.

It is my pleasant duty here to give thanks once for all to the copyright proprietors or publishers who have kindly permitted me to transfer their treasures, sometimes almost too graspingly, to the enrichment of this Anthology. Should any claims have been overlooked by inadvertence I ask forgiveness. Special acknowledgments will be found in the notes.

I deeply regret, and every reader will regret with me, that I am not able to adorn my pages with examples of Mr. A. C. Swinburne's brilliant lyrical gift.

After the lapse of six-and-thirty years to complete a book brings with it an inevitable sadness: the longing for the irrevocable; the sigh for the old familiar faces; — of his, perhaps, here above all, who privileged me to dedicate to his honoured name that first volume to which he gave such invaluable aid: it is a feeling such as that to which Goethe, in one of his most beautiful lyrics, gave expression, —

> Sie hören nicht die folgenden Gesänge,
> Die Seelen, denen ich die ersten sang: —

Yet I may hope perhaps for new friends to replace the lost: Kind readers! — if I have the fortune to find such — may this little selection, like the former, with whatever deficiencies, be the draught tempting you to approach, in their free fullness, the inexhaustible and invigorating fountains, old and new, of England's Helicon.

F. T. P.

February 1897

The Golden Treasury

Second Series

I

ODE

We are the music makers,
  And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
  And sitting by desolate streams ;—
World-losers and world-forsakers,
  On whom the pale moon gleams :
Yet we are the movers and shakers
  Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
  And out of a fabulous story
  We fashion an empire's glory :
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
  Shall go forth and conquer a crown ;
And three with a new song's measure
  Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

A. O'Shaughnessy

II

CRADLE SONG

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

A. Lord Tennyson

III

LETTY'S GLOBE

When Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year,
And her young, artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a colour'd sphere
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,

By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
She patted all the world ; old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers ; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leap'd,
And laugh'd, and prattled in her world-wide bliss ;
But when we turn'd her sweet unlearnéd eye
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,
'Oh ! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there !'
And, while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

C. Tennyson-Turner

IV

THE SURPRISE

As there I left the road in May,
And took my way along a ground,
I found a glade with girls at play,
By leafy boughs close-hemm'd around,
And there, with stores of harmless joys,
They plied their tongues, in merry noise;
Though little did they seem to fear
So queer a stranger might be near ;
Teeh-hee ! Look here ! Hah ! ha ! Look there !
And oh ! so playsome, oh ! so fair.

And one would dance as one would spring,
Or bob or bow with leering smiles,
And one would swing, or sit and sing,
Or sew a stitch or two at whiles,
And one skipp'd on with downcast face,
All heedless, to my very place,
And there, in fright, with one foot out,
Made one dead step and turn'd about.
Heeh, hee, oh ! oh ! ooh ! oo !—Look there !
And oh ! so playsome, oh ! so fair.

Away they scamper'd all, full speed,
By boughs that swung along their track,
As rabbits out of wood at feed,
At sight of men all scamper back.

And one pull'd on behind her heel,
A thread of cotton, off her reel,
And oh ! to follow that white clue,
I felt I fain could scamper too.
Teeh, hee, run here. Eeh ! ee ! Look there !
And oh ! so playsome, oh ! so fair.

W. Barnes

V

ISEULT'S CHILDREN

—They sleep in shelter'd rest,
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
On the castle's southern side ;
Where feebly comes the mournful roar
Of buffeting wind and surging tide
Through many a room and corridor.
—Full on their window the moon's ray
Makes their chamber as bright as day.
It shines upon the blank white walls,
And on the snowy pillow falls,
And on two angel-heads doth play
Turn'd to each other—the eyes closed,
The lashes on the cheeks reposed.
Round each sweet brow the cap close-set
Hardly lets peep the golden hair ;
Through the soft-open'd lips the air
Scarcely moves the coverlet.
One little wandering arm is thrown
At random on the counterpane,
And often the fingers close in haste
As if their baby-owner chased
The butterflies again.
This stir they have, and this alone ;
But else they are so still !

—Ah, tired madcaps ! you lie still ;
But were you at the window now,
To look forth on the fairy sight
Of your illumined haunts by night,

To see the park-glades where you play
Far lovelier than they are by day,
To see the sparkle on the eaves,
And upon every giant-bough
Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves
Are jewell'd with bright drops of rain—
How would your voices run again !
And far beyond the sparkling trees
Of the castle-park one sees
The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,
Moor behind moor, far, far away,
Into the heart of Brittany.
And here and there, lock'd by the land,
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
And many a stretch of watery sand
All shining in the white moon-beams—
But you see fairer in your dreams !

M. Arnold

VI

THE DESERTED GARDEN

I mind me in the days departed,
How often underneath the sun,
With childish bounds I used to run
To a garden long deserted.

The beds and walks were vanish'd quite;
And wheresoe'er had struck the spade,
The greenest grasses Nature laid,
To sanctify her right.

I call'd the place my wilderness;
For no one enter'd there but I.
The sheep look'd in, the grass to espy,
And pass'd it ne'ertheless.

The trees were interwoven wild,
And spread their boughs enough about
To keep both sheep and shepherd out,
But not a happy child.

Adventurous joy it was for me!
I crept beneath the boughs, and found
A circle smooth of mossy ground
Beneath a poplar tree.

Old garden rose-trees hedged it in,
Bedropt with roses waxen-white,
Well satisfied with dew and light,
And careless to be seen.

Long years ago, it might befall,
When all the garden flowers were trim,
The grave old gardener prided him
On these the most of all,—

Some Lady, stately overmuch,
Here moving with a silken noise,
Has blush'd beside them at the voice
That liken'd her to such.

Or these, to make a diadem,
She often may have pluck'd and twined;
Half-smiling as it came to mind,
That few would look at *them.*

Oh, little thought that Lady proud,
A child would watch her fair white rose,
When buried lay her whiter brows,
And silk was changed for shroud!—

Nor thought that gardener (full of scorns
For men unlearn'd and simple phrase,)
A child would bring it all its praise,
By creeping through the thorns!

To me upon my low moss seat,
Though never a dream the roses sent
Of science or love's compliment,
I ween they smelt as sweet.

It did not move my grief, to see
The trace of human step departed.
Because the garden was deserted,
The blither place for me!

Friends, blame me not! a narrow ken
Hath childhood twixt the sun and sward:
We draw the moral afterward—
We feel the gladness then.

And gladdest hours for me did glide
In silence at the rose-tree wall:
A thrush made gladness musical
Upon the other side.

Nor he nor I did e'er incline
To peck or pluck the blossoms white—
How should I know but that they might
Lead lives as glad as mine?

To make my hermit-home complete,
I brought clear water from the spring
Praised in its own low murmuring,—
And cresses glossy wet.

And so, I thought my likeness grew
(Without the melancholy tale)
To 'gentle hermit of the dale,'
And Angelina too.

For oft I read within my nook
Such minstrel stories! till the breeze
Made sounds poetic in the trees,—
And then I shut the book.

If I shut this wherein I write,
I hear no more the wind athwart
Those trees,—nor feel that childish heart
Delighting in delight.

My childhood from my life is parted,
My footstep from the moss which drew
Its fairy circle round: anew
The garden is deserted.

Another thrush may there rehearse
The madrigals which sweetest are;
No more for me!—myself afar
Do sing a sadder verse.

Ah me, ah me! when erst I lay
In that child's-nest so greenly wrought,
I laugh'd unto myself and thought
'The time will pass away.'

And still I laugh'd, and did not fear
But that, whene'er was past away
The childish time, some happier play
My womanhood would cheer.

I knew the time would pass away;
And yet, beside the rose-tree wail,
Dear God, how seldom, if at all
Did I look up to pray!

The time *is* past:—and now that grows
The cypress high among the trees,
And I behold white sepulchres
As well as the white rose,—

When wiser, meeker thoughts are given,
And I have learnt to lift my face,
Reminded how earth's greenest place
The colour draws from heaven;—

It something saith for earthly pain,
But more for Heavenly promise free,
That I who was, would shrink to be
That happy child again.

E. B. Browning

VII

BLACKMWORE MAIDENS

The primwrose in the sheäde do blow,
The cowslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run;
An' where do pretty maïdens grow
An' blow, but where the tow'r
Do rise among the bricken tuns,
In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gaït,
An' prettÿ feäces' smiles,
A-trippèn on so light o' waïght,
An' steppèn off the stiles ;
A-gwaïn to church, as bells do swing
An' ring 'ithin the tow'r,
You'd own the pretty maïdens' pleäce
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,
To Stower or Paladore,
An' all the farmers' housen show'd
Their daughters at the door ;
You'd cry to bachelors at hwome—
' Here, come ; 'ithin an hour
You'll vind ten maïdens to your mind,
In Blackmwore by the Stour.'

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door,
To zee 'em in their pleäce,
A-doèn housework up avore
Their smilèn mother's feäce ;
You'd cry—' Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour.'

As I upon my road did pass
A school-house back in Maÿ,
There out upon the beäten grass
Wer maïdens at their plaÿ ;
An' as the pretty souls did tweil
An' smile, I cried, ' The flow'r
O' beauty, then, is still in bud
In Blackmwore by the Stour.'

W. Barnes

VIII

LITTLE SOPHY BY THE SEASIDE

Young Sophy leads a life without alloy
Of pain ; she dances in the stormy air ;
While her pink sash and length of golden hair
With answering motion time her step of joy !

Now turns she through that seaward gate of heaven,
That opens on the sward above the cliff,—
Glancing a moment at each barque and skiff,
Along the roughening waters homeward driven ;

Shoreward she hies, her wooden spade in hand,
Straight down to childhood's ancient field of play,
To claim her right of common in the land
Where little edgeless tools make easy way—
A right no cruel Act shall e'er gainsay,
No greed dispute the freedom of the sand.

C. Tennyson-Turner

IX

THE PET NAME

I have a name, a little name,
  Uncadenced for the ear,
Unhonour'd by ancestral claim,
Unsanctified by prayer and psalm,
  The solemn font anear.

It never did, to pages wove
  For gay romance, belong,
It never dedicate did move
As ' Sacharissa,' unto love—
  ' Orinda,' unto song.

Though I write books, it will be read
Upon the leaves of none,
And afterward, when I am dead,
Will ne'er be graved for sight or tread,
Across my funeral stone.

This name, whoever chance to call,
Perhaps your smile, may win ;
Nay, do not smile ! mine eyelids fall
Over mine eyes, and feel withal
The sudden tears within.

Is there a leaf that greenly grows
Where summer meadows bloom,
But gathereth the winter snows,
And changeth to the hue of those,
If lasting till they come ?

Is there a word, or jest, or game,
But time encrusteth round
With sad associate thoughts the same ?
And so to me my very name
Assumes a mournful sound.

My brother gave that name to me
When we were children twain ;
When names acquired baptismally
Were hard to utter, as to see
That life had any pain.

No shade was on us then, save one
Of chestnuts from the hill—
And through the wood our laugh did run
As part thereof ! The mirth being done,
He calls me by it still.

Nay, do not smile ! I hear in it
What none of you can hear !
The talk upon the willow seat,
The bird and wind that did repeat
Around, our human cheer.

I hear the birthday's noisy bliss,
My sisters' woodland glee,—
My father's praise, I did not miss,
When stooping down he cared to kiss
The poet at his knee ;—

And voices, which to name me, aye
Their tenderest tones were keeping !—
To some, I never more can say
An answer, till God wipes away
In heaven, these drops of weeping.

My name to me a sadness wears ;
No murmurs cross my mind :
Now God be thank'd for these thick tears,
Which show, of those departed years,
Sweet memories left behind !

Now God be thank'd for years enwrought
With love which softens yet !
Now God be thank'd for every thought
Which is so tender, it hath caught
Earth's guerdon of regret !

The earth may sadden, not remove,
Our love divinely given ;
And e'en that mortal grief shall prove
The immortality of love
And lead us nearer Heaven.

E. B. Browning

X

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.

Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancéd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
'I will be sorry for their childishness.'

C. Patmore

XI

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—
And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!—
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?—
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago—
The old tree is leafless in the forest—
The old year is ending in the frost—
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy—
'Your old earth,' they say, 'is very dreary;'
'Our young feet,' they say, 'are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,—
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

'True,' say the young children, 'it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen
Like a snowball in the rime.
We look'd into the pit prepared to take her—
Was no room for any work in the close clay:
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, "Get up, little Alice! it is day."

If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries!—
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—
And merry go her moments, lull'd and still'd in
The shroud, by the kirk-chime!
It is good when it happens,' say the children,
'That we die before our time.

'For oh,' say the children, 'we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap—
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

'For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.—
And all day, the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,
"O ye wheels," (breaking out in a mad moaning)
"Stop! be silent for to-day!"'

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray—
So the blesséd One, who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, 'Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirr'd?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word!

And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door:
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more?

'But, no!' say the children, weeping faster,
'He is speechless as a stone;
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!' say the children,—'Up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.'
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—
And the children doubt of each.

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity;—
'How long,' they say, 'how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mail'd heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,
And your purple shows your path;
But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath!'

E. B. Browning

XII

OUR MARY AND THE CHILD MUMMY

When the four quarters of the world shall rise,
Men, women, children, at the Judgment-time,
Perchance this Memphian girl, dead ere her prime,
Shall drop her mask, and with dark new-born eyes

Salute our English Mary, loved and lost;
The Father knows her little scroll of prayer,
And life as pure as His Egyptian air;
For, though she knew not Jesus, nor the cost
At which He won the world, she learn'd to pray;
And though our own sweet babe on Christ's good name
Spent her last breath, premonish'd and advised
Of Him, and in His glorious Church baptized,
She will not spurn this old-world child away,
Nor put her poor embalméd heart to shame.

C. Tennyson-Turner

XIII

MARGARET LOVE PEACOCK

THREE YEARS OLD

Long night succeeds thy little day:
O, blighted blossom! can it be
That this gray stone and grassy clay
Have closed our anxious care of thee?

The half-form'd speech of artless thought,
That spoke a mind beyond thy years,
The song, the dance by Nature taught,
The sunny smiles, the transient tears,

The symmetry of face and form,
The eye with light and life replete,
The little heart so fondly warm,
The voice so musically sweet,—

These, lost to hope, in memory yet
Around the hearts that loved thee cling,
Shadowing with long and vain regret
The too fair promise of thy Spring.

T. L. Peacock

XIV

THE WAIL OF THE CORNISH MOTHER

They say 'tis a sin to sorrow,
That what God doth is best;
But 'tis only a month to-morrow
I buried it from my breast.

I thought it would call me Mother,
The very first words it said:
O, I never can love another
Like the blesséd babe that's dead.

Well! God is its own dear Father;
It was carried to church, and bless'd;
And our Saviour's arms will gather
Such children to their rest.

I will make my best endeavour
That my sins may be forgiven;
I will serve God more than ever:
To meet my child in heaven.

I will check this foolish sorrow,
For what God doth is best—
But O, 'tis a month to-morrow
I buried it from my breast!

R. S. Hawker

XV

It was her first sweet child, her heart's delight:
And, though we all foresaw his early doom,
We kept the fearful secret out of sight;
We saw the canker, but she kiss'd the bloom.

And yet it might not be: we could nôt brook
To vex her happy heart with vague alarms,
To blanch with fear her fond intrepid look,
Or send a thrill through those encircling arms.

She smiled upon him, waking or at rest :
She could not dream her little child would die :
She toss'd him fondly with an upward eye :
She seem'd as buoyant as a summer spray,
That dances with a blossom on its breast,
Nor knows how soon it will be borne away.

C. Tennyson-Turner

XVI

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

EMMIE

Our doctor had call'd in another, I never had seen
him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him come
in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of other
lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless
hands !
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but they said
too of him
He was happier using the knife than in trying to save
the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he look'd so coarse
and so red,
I could think he was one of those who would break
their jests on the dead,
And mangle the living dog that had loved him and
fawn'd at his knee—
Drench'd with the hellish oorali—that ever such
things should be !

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of our children
would die
But for the voice of Love, and the smile, and the
comforting eye—
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seem'd out of
its place—
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all but a hope-
less case :

And he handled him gently enough; but his voice and his face were not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and made up his mind,
And he said to me roughly 'The lad will need little more of your care.'
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all His children here, and I pray for them all as my own:'
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman, can prayer set a broken bone?'
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know that I heard him say
'All is very well—but the good Lord Jesus has had His day.'

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It will come by and by.
O how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the loathsome smells of disease
But that He said 'Ye do it to Me, when ye do it to these'?

So he went. And we past to this ward where the younger children are laid:
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have lost her who loved her so much—
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive plant to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found in a child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used to send her the flowers;
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!

They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an Angel's wing;
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin hands crost on her breast—
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor said 'Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll never live thro' it, I fear.'

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as far as the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward; the child didn't see I was there.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so grieved and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd from her cot to the next,
'He says I shall never live thro' it, O Annie, what shall I do?'
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise little Annie, 'was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there: "Little children should come to Me."'
(Meaning the print that you gave us, I find that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about His knees.)
'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then if I call to the Lord,
How should He know that it's me? such a lot of beds in the ward!'

That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she consider'd and said :
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em outside on the bed—
The Lord has so *much* to see to ! but, Emmie, you tell it Him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying out on the counterpane.'

I had sat three nights by the child—I could not watch her for four—
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and the darkness without ;
My sleep was broken besides with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would escape with her life ;
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see the child.

He had brought his ghastly tools : we believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane ;
Say that His day is done ! Ah why should we care what they say ?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had past away.

A. Lord Tennyson

XVII

THE MOTHER'S DREAM

I'd a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
Oh ! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep :
Of my little lad,
Gone to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight ;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh ! it did not burn ;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turn'd about,
'Your tears put it out ;
Mother, never mourn.'

W. Barnes

XVIII

SIMPLE NATURE

Be it not mine to steal the cultured flower
From any garden of the rich and great,
Nor seek with care, through many a weary hour,
Some novel form of wonder to create.

Enough for me the leafy woods to rove,
And gather simple cups of morning dew,
Or, in the fields and meadows that I love,
Find beauty in their bells of every hue.
Thus round my cottage floats a fragrant air,
And though the rustic plot be humbly laid,
Yet, like the lilies gladly growing there,
I have not toil'd, but take what God has made.
My Lord Ambition pass'd, and smiled in scorn;
I pluck'd a rose, and, lo! it had no thorn.

G. J. Romanes

XIX

'*DE GUSTIBUS*——'

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees
(If our loves remain),
In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
Making love, say,—
The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
With the bean-flowers' boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurl'd,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands),—
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,

My sentinel to guard the sands
To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?
While, in the house, for ever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news to-day—the king
Was shot at, touch'd in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
—She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her—Calais)—
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, 'Italy.'
Such lovers old are I and she:
So it always was, so shall ever be!

R. Browning

XX

MY EARLY HOME

Here sparrows build upon the trees,
And stockdove hides her nest;
The leaves are winnow'd by the breeze
Into a calmer rest;
The black-cap's song was very sweet,
That used the rose to kiss;
It made the Paradise complete:
My early home was this.

The redbreast from the sweet-briar bush
Drop't down to pick the worm;
On the horse-chestnut sang the thrush,
O'er the house where I was born;

The moonlight, like a shower of pearls,
Fell o'er this 'bower of bliss,'
And on the bench sat boys and girls:
My early home was this.

The old house stoop'd just like a cave,
Thatch'd o'er with mosses green;
Winter around the walls would rave,
But all was calm within;
The trees are here all green agen,
Here bees the flowers still kiss,
But flowers and trees seem'd sweeter then:
My early home was this.

J. Clare

XXI

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I wonder do you feel to-day
As I have felt, since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touch'd a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amass'd
Five beetles,—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal: and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life there, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles perform'd in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting Nature have her way
While Heaven looks from its towers!

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more.
Nor yours, nor mine,—nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? what the core
Of the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs,—your part, my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fix'd by no friendly star?

Just when I seem'd about to learn !
Where is the thread now ? Off again !
The old trick ! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

R. Browning

XXII

THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

A. Lord Tennyson

XXIII

THE GLORY OF NATURE

If only once the chariot of the Morn
Had scatter'd from its wheels the twilight dun,
But once the unimaginable Sun
Flash'd godlike through perennial clouds forlorn,
And shown us Beauty for a moment born:

If only once blind eyes had seen the Spring
  Waking among the triumphs of midnoon,
  But once had seen the lovely Summer boon,
Pass by in state like a full robëd king,
The waters dance, the woodlands laugh and sing:

If only once deaf ears had heard the joy
  Of the wild birds, or morning breezes blowing,
  Of silver fountains from their caverns flowing,
Or the deep-voicëd rivers rolling by,
Then Night eternal fallen from the sky:

If only once weird Time had rent asunder
  The curtain of the Clouds, and shown us Night
  Climbing into the awful Infinite,
Those stairs whose steps are worlds above and under,
Glory on glory, wonder upon wonder!

If Lightnings lit the Earthquake on his way
  But once, or Thunder spake unto the world;
  The realm-wide banners of the Wind unfurl'd;
Earth-prison'd Fires broke loose into the day;
Or the great Seas awoke—then slept for aye!

Ah! sure the heart of Man too strongly tried
  By godlike presences so vast and fair,
  Withering in dread, or sick in love's despair,
Had wept for ever, and to Heaven cried,
Or struck with lightnings of delight had died.

But He though heir of immortality,
  With mortal dust too feeble for the sight,
  Draws through a veil God's overwhelming light—
Use arms the soul; anon there moveth by
A more majestic Angel—and we die.

F. Tennyson

XXIV

RESUSCITATION OF FANCY

The edge of thought was blunted by the stress
Of the hard world; my fancy had wax'd dull,
All nature seem'd less nobly beautiful,—
Robb'd of her grandeur and her loveliness;

Methought the Muse within my heart had died,
Till, late, awaken'd at the break of day,
Just as the East took fire and doff'd its gray,
The rich preparatives of light I spied;

But one sole star—none other anywhere—
A wild-rose odour from the fields was borne:
The lark's mysterious joy fill'd earth and air,
And from the wind's top met the hunter's horn;
The aspen trembled wildly, and the morn
Breathed up in rosy clouds, divinely fair!

C. Tennyson-Turner

XXV

SUNSET WINGS

To-night this sunset spreads two golden wings
Cleaving the western sky;
Wing'd too with wind it is, and winnowings
Of birds; as if the day's last hour in rings
Of strenuous flight must die.

Sun-steep'd in fire, the homeward pinions sway
Above the dovecote-tops;
And clouds of starlings, ere they rest with day,
Sink, clamorous like mill-waters, at wild play,
By turns in every copse:

Each tree heart-deep the wrangling rout receives,—
Save for the whirr within,
You could not tell the starlings from the leaves;
Then one great puff of wings, and the swarm heaves
Away with all its din.

Even thus Hope's hours, in ever-eddying flight,
To many a refuge tend;
With the first light she laugh'd, and the last light
Glows round her still; who natheless in the night
At length must make an end.

And now the mustering rooks innumerable
Together sail and soar,
While for the day's death, like a tolling knell,
Unto the heart they seem to cry, Farewell,
No more, farewell, no more!

Is Hope not plumed, as 'twere a fiery dart?
And oh! thou dying day,
Even as thou goest must she too depart,
And Sorrow fold such pinions on the heart
As will not fly away?

D. G. Rossetti

XXVI

THE STEAM THRESHING-MACHINE

WITH THE STRAW-CARRIER

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burn'd
At eve, while smoke and vapour fill'd the yard;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starr'd,
The fly-wheel with a mellow murmur turn'd;

While, ever rising on its mystic stair
In the dim light, from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, sever'd from the corn,
Climb'd, and fell over, in the murky air.

I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him, who set his stately seal
Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry: *I* could but feel
With what a rich precision *he* would draw
The endless ladder, and the booming wheel!

C. Tennyson-Turner

XXVII

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CANARY

Poor Matthias! Wouldst thou have
More than pity? claim'st a stave?
—Friends more near us than a bird
We dismiss'd without a word.
Rover, with the good brown head,
Great Atossa, they are dead;
Dead, and neither prose nor rhyme
Tells the praises of their prime.
Thou didst know them old and gray,
Know them in their sad decay.
Thou hast seen Atossa sage
Sit for hours beside thy cage;
Thou wouldst chirp, thou foolish bird,
Flutter, chirp—she never stirr'd!
What were now these toys to her?
Down she sank amid her fur;
Eyed thee with a soul resign'd—
And thou deemedst cats were kind!
—Cruel, but composed and bland,
Dumb, inscrutable and grand,
So Tiberius might have sat,
Had Tiberius been a cat.

Birds, companions more unknown,
Live beside us, but alone;
Finding not, do all they can,
Passage from their souls to man.
Kindness we bestow, and praise,
Laud their plumage, greet their lays;
Still, beneath their feather'd breast,
Stirs a history unexpress'd.
Wishes there, and feelings strong,
Incommunicably throng;
What they want, we cannot guess,
Fail to track their deep distress—
Dull look on when death is nigh,
Note no change, and let them die.

Was it, as the Grecian sings,
Birds were born the first of things,
Before the sun, before the wind,
Before the gods, before mankind,
Airy, ante-mundane throng—
Witness their unworldly song!
Proof they give, too, primal powers,
Of a prescience more than ours—
Teach us, while they come and go,
When to sail, and when to sow.
Cuckoo calling from the hill,
Swallow skimming by the mill,
Swallows trooping in the sedge,
Starlings swirling from the hedge,
Mark the seasons, map our year,
As they show and disappear.
But, with all this travail sage
Brought from that anterior age,
Goes an unreversed decree
Whereby strange are they and we,
Making want of theirs, and plan,
Indiscernible by man.

M. Arnold

XXVIII

ORARA

A TRIBUTARY OF THE CLARENCE RIVER

The strong sob of the chafing stream,
That seaward fights its way
Down crags of glitter, dells of gleam,
Is in the hills to-day.

But far and faint a gray-wing'd form
Hangs where the wild lights wane—
The phantom of a bye-gone storm,
A ghost of wind and rain.

The soft white feet of afternoon
Are on the shining meads;
The breeze is as a pleasant tune
Amongst the happy reeds.

The fierce, disastrous, flying fire,
That made the great caves ring,
And scarr'd the slope, and broke the spire,
Is a forgotten thing.

The air is full of mellow sounds;
The wet hill-heads are bright;
And, down the fall of fragrant grounds,
The deep ways flame with light.

A rose-red space of stream I see,
Past banks of tender fern;
A radiant brook, unknown to me,
Beyond its upper turn.

The singing silver life I hear,
Whose home is in the green
Far-folded woods of fountains clear,
Where I have never been.

Ah, brook above the upper bend,
I often long to stand,
Where you in soft, cool shades descend
From the untrodden land:—

But I may linger long, and look,
Till night is over all;
My eyes will never see the brook,
Or strange, sweet waterfall.

The world is round me with its heat,
And toil, and cares that tire;
I cannot with my feeble feet
Climb after my desire.

H. C. Kendall

XXIX

SONG OF PALMS

Mighty, luminous, and calm
Is the country of the palm,
Crown'd with sunset and sunrise,
Under blue unbroken skies,

Waving from green zone to zone,
Over wonders of its own;
Trackless, untraversed, unknown,
Changeless through the centuries.

Who can say what thing it bears?
Blazing bird and blooming flower,
Dwelling there for years and years,
Hold the enchanted secret theirs:
Life and death and dream have made
Mysteries in many a shade,
Hollow haunt and hidden bower
Closed alike to sun and shower.

Who is ruler of each race
Living in each boundless place,
Growing, flowering, and flying,
Glowing, revelling, and dying?
Wave-like, palm by palm is stirr'd,
And the bird sings to the bird,
And the day sings one rich word,
And the great night comes replying

Long red reaches of the cane,
Yellow winding water-lane,
Verdant isle and amber river,
Lisp and murmur back again,
And ripe under-worlds deliver
Rapturous souls of perfume, hurl'd
Up to where green oceans quiver
In the wide leaves' restless world.

Many thousand years have been,
And the sun alone hath seen,
Like a high and radiant ocean,
All the fair palm world in motion;
But the crimson bird hath fed
With its mate of equal red,
And the flower in soft explosion
With the flower hath been wed.

And its long luxuriant thought
Lofty palm to palm hath taught,
While a single vast liana
All one brotherhood hath wrought,
Crossing forest and savannah,
Binding fern and coco-tree,
Fig-tree, buttress-tree, banana,
Dwarf cane and tall maritĭ.

A. O'Shaughnessy

XXX

WINTER

I, singularly moved
To love the lovely that are not beloved,
Of all the Seasons, most
Love Winter, and to trace
The sense of the Trophonian pallor on her face.
It is not death, but plenitude of peace;
And the dim cloud that does the world enfold
Hath less the characters of dark and cold
Than warmth and light asleep,
And correspondent breathing seems to keep
With the infant harvest, breathing soft below
Its eider coverlet of snow.
Nor is in field or garden anything
But, duly look'd into, contains serene
The substance of things hoped for, in the Spring.
And evidence of Summer not yet seen.
On every chance-mild day
That visits the moist shaw,
The honeysuckle, 'sdaining to be crost
In urgence of sweet life by sleet or frost,
'Voids the time's law
With still increase
Of leaflet new, and little, wandering spray;
Often, in sheltering brakes,
As one from rest disturb'd in the first hour,
Primrose or violet bewilder'd wakes,
And deems 'tis time to flower;

Though not a whisper of her voice he hear,
The buried bulb does know
The signals of the year,
And hails far Summer with his lifted spear.

C. Patmore

XXXI

LYNMOUTH

Around my love and me the brooding hills,
Full of delicious murmurs, rise on high,
Closing upon this spot the summer fills,
And over which there rules the summer sky.

Behind us on the shore down there the sea
Roars roughly, like a fierce pursuing hound;
But all this hour is calm for her and me;
And now another hill shuts out the sound.

And now we breathe the odours of the glen,
And round about us are enchanted things;
The bird that hath blithe speech unknown to men,
The river keen, that hath a voice and sings.

The tree that dwells with one ecstatic thought,
Wider and fairer growing year by year,
The flower that flowereth and knoweth nought,
The bee that scents the flower and draweth near

Our path is here, the rocky winding ledge
That sheer o'erhangs the rapid shouting stream;
Now dips down smoothly to the quiet edge,
Where restful waters lie as in a dream.

The green exuberant branches overhead
Sport with the golden magic of the sun,
Here quite shut out, here like rare jewels shed
To fright the glittering lizards as they run.

And wonderful are all those mossy floors
  Spread out beneath us in some pathless place,
Where the sun only reaches and outpours
  His smile, where never a foot hath left a trace.

And there are perfect nooks that have been made
  By the long growing tree, through some chance turn
Its trunk took ; since transform'd with scent and shade
  And fill'd with all the glory of the fern.

And tender-tinted wood flowers are seen,
  Clear starry blooms and bells of pensive blue,
That lead their delicate lives there in the green—
  What were the world if it should lose their hue?

Even o'er the rough out-jutting stone that blocks
  The narrow way some cunning hand hath strewn
The moss in rich adornment, and the rocks
  Down there seem written thick with many a rune.

And here, upon that stone, we rest awhile,
  For we can see the lovely river's fall,
And wild and sweet the place is to beguile
  My love, and keep her till I tell her all.

A. O'Shaughnessy

XXXII

THE SONG OF EMPEDOCLES

And you, ye stars,
Who slowly begin to marshal,
As of old, in the fields of heaven,
Your distant, melancholy lines !
Have you, too, survived yourselves?
Are you, too, what I fear to become?
You, too, once lived ;
You too moved joyfully
Among august companions,
In an older world, peopled by Gods,
In a mightier order,
The radiant, rejoicing, intelligent Sons of Heaven.

But now, ye kindle
Your lonely, cold-shining lights,
Unwilling lingerers
In the heavenly wilderness,
For a younger, ignoble world;
And renew, by necessity,
Night after night your courses,
In echoing, unnear'd silence,
Above a race you know not—
Uncaring and undelighted,
Without friend and without home;
Weary like us, though not
Weary with our weariness.

M. Arnold

XXXIII

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd ! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again !
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
'And I,' he said, 'the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill.'

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near

Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,

And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled,
brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he
strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope,

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven ! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd ;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
Ah ! do not we, wanderer ! await it too?

Yes, we await it !—but it still delays,
And then we suffer ! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days ;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest ! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear ;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—
But none has hope like thine !
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames ;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear !

Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Aegaean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,

Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits ; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come ;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

M. Arnold

XXXIV

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet ;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me ;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

A. Lord Tennyson

XXXV

SOUL'S BEAUTY

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned ; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

D. G. Rossetti

XXXVI

AMATURUS

Somewhere beneath the sun,
These quivering heart-strings prove it,
Somewhere there must be one
Made for this soul to move it;
Some one that hides her sweetness
From neighbours whom she slights,
Nor can attain completeness,
Nor give her heart its rights;
Some one whom I could court
With no great change of manner,
Still holding reason's fort,
Though waving fancy's banner;
A lady, not so queenly
As to disdain my hand,
Yet born to smile serenely
Like those that rule the land;
Noble, but not too proud;
With soft hair simply folded,
And bright face crescent-brow'd,
And throat by Muses moulded;
And eyelids lightly falling
On little glistening seas,
Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,
Though stirr'd by every breeze;
Swift voice, like flight of dove
Through minster-arches floating,
With sudden turns, when love
Gets overnear to doting;

Keen lips, that shape soft sayings
  Like crystals of the snow,
With pretty half-betrayings
  Of things one may not know ;
Fair hand, whose touches thrill,
  Like golden rod of wonder,
Which Hermes wields at will
  Spirit and flesh to sunder ;
Light foot, to press the stirrup
  In fearlessness and glee,
Or dance, till finches chirrup,
  And stars sink to the sea.

Forth, Love, and find this maid,
  Wherever she be hidden :
Speak, Love, be not afraid,
  But plead as thou art bidden ;
And say, that he who taught thee
  His yearning want and pain,
Too dearly, dearly, bought thee
  To part with thee in vain.

W. Johnson-Cory

XXXVII

ZULEIKA

Zuleika is fled away,
  Though your bolts and your bars were strong ;
A minstrel came to the gate to-day
  And stole her away with a song.
His song was subtle and sweet,
It made her young heart beat,
  It gave a thrill to her faint heart's will,
And wings to her weary feet.

Zuleika was not for ye,
  Though your laws and your threats were hard ;
The minstrel came from beyond the sea,
  And took her in spite of your guard ;

His ladder of song was slight,
But it reach'd to her window height ;
  Each verse so frail was the silken rail
From which her soul took flight.

The minstrel was fair and young ;
  His heart was of love and fire ;
His song was such as you ne'er have sung,
  And only love could inspire :
He sang of the singing trees,
And the passionate sighing seas,
  And the lovely land of his minstrel band ;
And with many a song like these

He drew her forth to the distant wood,
  Where bird and flower were gay,
And in silent joy each green tree stood ;
  And with singing along the way,
He drew her to where each bird
Repeated his magic word,
  And there seem'd a spell she could not tell
In every sound she heard.

And singing and singing still,
  He lured her away so far,
Past so many a wood and valley and hill,
  That now, would you know where they are ?
In a bark on a silver stream,
As fair as you see in a dream ;
  Lo ! the bark glides along to the minstrel's song,
While the smooth waves ripple and gleam.

And soon they will reach the shore
  Of that land whereof he sings,
And love and song will be evermore
  The precious, the only things ;
They will live and have long delight
They two in each other's sight,
  In the violet vale of the nightingale,
And the flower that blooms by night.

A. O'Shaughnessy

XXXVIII

AT THE CHURCH GATE

Although I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
Ofttimes I hover ;
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait,
Expectant of her.

The Minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout
And noise and humming ;
They've hush'd the Minster bell ;
The organ 'gins to swell :
She's coming ! she's coming !

My Lady comes at last,
Timid and stepping fast
And hastening hither,
With modest eyes down-cast :
She comes—she's here—she's pass'd.
May heaven go with her !

Kneel undisturb'd, fair Saint !
Pour out your praise or plaint
Meekly and duly !
I will not enter there
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute !
Like outcast spirits who wait
And see through heaven's gate
Angels within it.

W. M. Thackeray

XXXIX

THE BIRTH-BOND

Have you not noted, in some family
  Where two were born of a first marriage-bed,
  How still they own their gracious bond, though fed
And nursed on the forgotten breast and knee?—
How to their father's children they shall be
  In act and thought of one goodwill; but each
  Shall for the other have, in silence speech,
And in a word complete community?

Even so, when first I saw you, seem'd it, love,
  That among souls allied to mine was yet
One nearer kindred than life hinted of.
  O born with me somewhere that men forget,
  And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
Known for my soul's birth-partner well enough!

D. G. Rossetti

XL

LISTENING

She listen'd like a cushat dove
That listens to its mate alone:
She listen'd like a cushat dove
  That loves but only one.

Not fair as men would reckon fair,
Nor noble as they count the line:
Only as graceful as a bough,
  And tendrils of the vine:
Only as noble as sweet Eve
  Your ancestress and mine.

And downcast were her dovelike eyes
And downcast was her tender cheek;
Her pulses flutter'd like a dove
  To hear him speak.

C. G. Rossetti

XLI

SOMEWHERE OR OTHER

Somewhere or other there must surely be
The face not seen, the voice not heard.
The heart that not yet—never yet—ah me!
Made answer to my word.

Somewhere or other, may be near or far;
Past land and sea, clean out of sight;
Beyond the wandering moon, beyond the star
That tracks her night by night.

Somewhere or other, may be far or near;
With just a wall, a hedge, between;
With just the last leaves of the dying year
Fallen on a turf grown green.

C. G. Rossetti

XLII

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

A. Lord Tennyson

XLIII

ZUMMER AN' WINTER

When I led by zummer streams
The pride o' Lea, as naïghbours thought her,
While the zun, wi' evenèn beams,
Did cast our sheädes athirt the water;
Winds a-blowèn,
Streams a-flowèn,
Skies a-glowèn;
Tokens ov my jaÿ zoo fleetèn,
Heighten'd it, that happy meetèn.

Then, when maïd an' man took pleäces,
Gaÿ in winter's Chris'mas dances,
Showèn in their merry feäces
Kindly smiles an' glisnèn glances;
Stars a-winkèn,
Day a-shrinkèn,
Sheädes a-zinkèn;
Brought anew the happy meetèn,
That did meäke the night too fleetèn.

W. Barnes

XLIV

LULLABY

The rook's nest do rock on the tree-top
Where vew foes can stand;
The martin's is high, an' is deep
In the steep cliff o' zand.
But thou, love, a-sleepèn where vootsteps
Mid come to thy bed,
Hast father an' mother to watch thee
An' shelter thy head.
Lullaby, Lilybrow. Lie asleep;
Blest be thy rest.

An' zome birds do keep under ruffèn
Their young vrom the storm,
An' zome wi' nest-hoodèns o' moss
An' o' wool, do lie warm.
An' we wull look well to the house ruf
That o'er thee mid leäk,
An' the blast that mid beät on thy winder
Shall not smite thy cheäk.
Lullaby, Lilybrow. Lie asleep;
Blest be thy rest.,

W. Barnes

XLV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
'I love her for her smile . . . her look . . her way
Of speaking gently, . . . for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day'—
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love so wrought
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,
Since one might well forget to weep who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby.
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou may'st love on through love's eternity.

E. B. Browning

XLVI

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And *be* all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing, and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors . . another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Fill'd by dead eyes, too tender to know change?

That's hardest ! If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief tries more . . . as all things prove :
For grief indeed is love, and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love—
Yet love me—wilt thou ? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

E. B. Browning

XLVII

WILLOWWOOD

I sat with Love upon a woodside well,
Leaning across the water, I and he ;
Nor ever did he speak nor look'd at me,
But touch'd his lute wherein was audible
The certain secret thing he had to tell :
Only our mirror'd eyes met silently
In the low wave ; and that sound came to be
The passionate voice I knew ; and my tears fell.

And at their fall, his eyes beneath grew hers ;
And with his foot and with his wing-feathers
He swept the spring that water'd my heart's drouth.
Then the dark ripples spread to waving hair,
And as I stoop'd, her own lips rising there
Bubbled with brimming kisses at my mouth.

D. G. Rossetti.

XLVIII

JEÄNE

We now mid hope vor better cheer,
My smilèn wife o' twice vive year.
Let others frown, if thou bist near
Wi' hope upon thy brow, Jeäne ;
Vor I vu'st lov'd thee when thy light
Young sheäpe vu'st grew to woman's height ;
An' I do love thee now, Jeäne.

An' we've a-trod the sheenèn bleäde
Ov eegrass in the zummer sheäde,
An' when the leäves begun to feäde
Wi' zummer in the weäne, Jeäne;
An' we've a-wander'd drough the groun'
O' swayèn wheat a-turnèn brown,
An' we've a-stroll'd together roun'
The brook an' drough the leäne, Jeäne.

An' nwone but I can ever tell
Ov all thy tears that have a-vell
When trials meäde thy bosom zwell,
An' nwone but thou o' mine, Jeäne;
An' now my heart, that heaved wi' pride
Back then to have thee at my zide,
Do love thee mwore as yeärs do slide,
An' leäve them times behine, Jeäne.

W. Barnes

XLIX

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore, . .
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes, the tears of two.

E. B. Browning

L

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wish'd-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years, . .
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . .
'Guess now who holds thee?' 'Death!' I said
But, there,
The silver answer rang—'Not Death, but Love.'

E. B. Browning

LI

KEEPING A HEART

If one should give me a heart to keep,
With love for the golden key,
The giver might live at ease or sleep;
It should ne'er know pain, be weary, or weep,
The heart watch'd over by me.

I would keep that heart as a temple fair,
No heathen should look therein;
Its chaste marmoreal beauty rare
I only should know, and to enter there
I must hold myself from sin.

I would keep that heart as a casket hid
Where precious jewels are ranged,
A memory each; as you raise the lid,
You think you love again as you did
Of old, and nothing seems changed.

How I should tremble day after day,
As I touch'd with the golden key,
Lest aught in that heart were changed, or say
That another had stolen one thought away
And it did not open to me.

But ah, I should know that heart so well,
As a heart so loving and true,
As a heart that I held with a golden spell,
That so long as I changed not I could foretell
That heart would be changeless too.

I would keep that heart as the thought of heaven,
To dwell in a life apart,
My good should be done, my gift be given,
In hope of the recompense there ; yea, even
My life should be led in that heart.

And so on the eve of some blissful day,
From within we should close the door
On glimmering splendours of love, and stay
In that heart shut up from the world away,
Never to open it more.

A. O'Shaughnessy

LII

HOME AT LAST

Now more the bliss of love is felt,
Though felt to be the same ;
'Tis still our lives in one to melt,
Within love's sacred flame :

Each other's joy each to impart,
Each other's grief to share ;
To look into each other's heart,
And find all solace there :

To lay the head upon one breast,
To press one answering hand,
To feel through all the soul's unrest,
One soul to understand ;

To go into the teeming world,
The striving and the heat,
With knowledge of one tent unfurl'd
To welcome weary feet:

A shadow in a weary land,
Where men as wanderers roam:
A shadow where a rock doth stand—
The shadow of a Home.

G. J. Romanes

LIII

SUDDEN LIGHT

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before,—
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turn'd so,
Some veil did fall,—I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
And shall not thus time's eddying flight
Still with our lives our love restore
In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?

D. G. Rossetti

LIV

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path—how soft to pace!
This May—what magic weather!

Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,
With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
O enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Thro' the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers: we—
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she,
—I and she!

R. Browning

LV

THE BROOK-SIDE

I wander'd by the brook-side,
I wander'd by the mill,—
I could not hear the brook flow,
The noisy wheel was still;
There was no burr of grasshopper,
Nor chirp of any bird,
But' the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

I sat beneath the elm-tree,
I watch'd the long, long shade,
And as it grew still longer,
I did not feel afraid;
For I listen'd for a footfall,
I listen'd for a word,—
But' the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

He came not,—no, he came not,—
The night came on alone,—
The little stars sat, one by one,
Each on his golden throne ;
The evening air pass'd by my cheek,
The leaves above were stirr'd,—
But ' the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

Fast silent tears were flowing,
When something stood behind,—
A hand was on my shoulder,
I knew its touch was kind :
It drew me nearer—nearer,—
We did not speak one word,
For ' the beating of our own hearts
Was all the sound we heard.

R. M. (Milnes) Lord Houghton

LVI

A PAUSE

They made the chamber sweet with flowers and leaves,
And the bed sweet with flowers on which I lay ;
While my soul, love-bound, loiter'd on its way.
I did not hear the birds about the eaves,
Nor hear the reapers talk among the sheaves :
Only my soul kept watch from day to day,
My thirsty soul kept watch for one away :—
Perhaps he loves, I thought, remembers, grieves.

At length there came the step upon the stair,
Upon the lock the old familiar hand :
Then first my spirit seem'd to scent the air
Of Paradise ; then first the tardy sand
Of time ran golden ; and I felt my hair
Put on a glory, and my soul expand.

C. G. Rossetti

LVII

The mighty ocean rolls and raves,
To part us with its angry waves ;
But arch on arch from shore to shore,
In a vast fabric reaching o'er,

With careful labours daily wrought
By steady hope and tender thought,
The wide and weltering waste above—
Our hearts have bridged it with their love.

There fond anticipations fly
To rear the growing structure high ;
Dear memories upon either side
Combine to make it large and wide.

There, happy fancies day by day,
New courses sedulously lay ;
There soft solicitudes, sweet fears,
And doubts accumulate, and tears.

While the pure purpose of the soul,
To form of many parts a whole,
To make them strong and hold them true,
From end to end, is carried through.

Then when the waters war between,
Upon the masonry unseen,
Secure and swift, from shore to shore,
With silent footfall travelling o'er,

Our sunder'd spirits come and go,
Hither and thither, to and fro,
Pass and repass, now linger near,
Now part, anew to reappear.

With motions of a glad surprise,
We meet each other's wondering eyes,
At work, at play, when people talk,
And when we sleep, and when we walk.

Each dawning day my eyelids see
You come, methinks, across to me,
And I, at every hour anew
Could dream I travell'd o'er to you.

A. H. Clough

LVIII

SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-search'd growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosen'd from the sky:—
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companion'd inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

D. G. Rossetti

LIX

NUNC AMET QUI NUNQUAM AMAVIT . . .

'Twas when the spousal time of May
Hangs all the hedge with bridal wreaths,
And air's so sweet, the bosom gay
Gives thanks for every breath it breathes,
When like to like is gladly moved,
And each thing joins in Spring's refrain,
'Let those love now, who never loved;
Let those who have loved love again;'

That I, in whom the sweet time wrought.
  Lay stretch'd within a lonely glade,
Abandon'd to delicious thought
  Beneath the softly twinkling shade.
The leaves, all stirring, mimick'd well
  A neighbouring rush of rivers cold,
And, as the sun or shadow fell,
  So these were green and those were gold ;
In dim recesses hyacinths droop'd,
  And breadths of primrose lit the air,
Which, wandering through the woodland, stoop'd
  And gather'd perfumes here and there ;
Upon the spray the squirrel swung,
  And careless songsters, six or seven,
Sang lofty songs the leaves among,
  Fit for their only listener, Heaven.

C. Patmore

LX

Birds in the high Hall-garden
  When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
  They were crying and calling.

Where was Maud? in our wood ;
  And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
  Myriads blow together.

Birds in our wood sang
  Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
  In among the lilies.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
  She took the kiss sedately ;
Maud is not seventeen,
  But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride
  Who have won her favour!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
  If lowliness could save her.

I know the way she went
  Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
  And left the daisies rosy.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
  Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
  One is come to woo her.

Look, a horse at the door,
  And little King Charley snarling:
—Go back, my lord, across the moor,
  You are not her darling.

A. Lord Tennyson

LXI

A LOVE SYMPHONY

Along the garden ways just now
  I heard the flowers speak;
The white rose told me of your brow,
  The red rose of your cheek;
The lily of your bended head,
  The bindweed of your hair:
Each look'd its loveliest and said
    You were more fair.

I went into the wood anon,
  And heard the wild birds sing,
How sweet you were; they warbled on,
  Piped, trill'd the self-same thing.
Thrush, blackbird, linnet, without pause
  The burden did repeat,
And still began again because
    You were more sweet.

And then I went down to the sea,
  And heard it murmuring too,
Part of an ancient mystery,
  All made of me and you:
How many a thousand years ago
  I loved, and you were sweet—
Longer I could not stay, and so
  I fled back to your feet.

A. O'Shaughnessy

LXII

FAR—FAR—AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

What sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
  Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
  Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy,
  Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
  Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of Birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
  Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
  Far—far—away?

A. Lord Tennyson

LXIII

THE 'OLD, OLD SONG'

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down:
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maim'd among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

C. Kingsley

LXIV

ON A PHOTOGRAPH

Since through the open window of the eye
The unconscious secret of the soul we trace,
And character is written on the face,
In this sun-picture what do we descry?
An artless innocence, and purpose high
To tread the pleasant paths of truth and grace,
To tend each flower of Duty in its place,
Smile with the gay and comfort those who sigh.
Dear maiden, let a poet breathe the prayer
That God may keep thee still, in all thy ways,
Spotless in heart as those in face art fair;
And may the gentle current of thy days
Make music even from the stones of care,
And murmur with an undersong of praise.

R. Wilton

LXV

OLD JANE

I love old women best, I think:
  She knows a friend in me,—
Old Jane, who totters on the brink
  Of God's Eternity;
Whose limbs are stiff, whose cheek is lean,
  Whose eyes look up, afraid;
Though you may gather she has been
  A little laughing maid.

Once had she with her doll what times,
  And with her skipping-rope!
Her head was full of lovers' rhymes,
  Once, and her heart of hope;
Who, now, with eyes as sad as sweet,—
  I love to look on her,—
At corner of the gusty street,
  Asks, 'Buy a pencil, Sir?'

Her smile is as the litten West,
  Nigh-while the sun is gone;
She is more fain to be at rest
  Than here to linger on:
Beneath her lids the pictures flit
  Of memories far-away:
Her look has not a hint in it
  Of what she sees to-day.

T. Ashe

LXVI

WAGES

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
  Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
  Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,
  Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
  To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

A. Lord Tennyson

LXVII

THE MEN OF OLD

I know not that the men of old
  Were better than men now,
Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,
  Of more ingenuous brow:
I heed not those who pine for force
  A ghost of Time to raise,
As if they thus could check the course
  Of these appointed days.

To them was life a simple art
  Of duties to be done,
A game where each man took his part,
  A race where all must run;
A battle whose great scheme and scope
  They little cared to know,
Content, as men at arms, to cope
  Each with his fronting foe.

Man *now* his Virtue's diadem
  Puts on and proudly wears,
Great thoughts, great feelings, came to them,
  Like instincts, unawares:
Blending their souls' sublimest needs
  With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
  As noble boys at play.

R. M. (Milnes) Lord Houghton

LXVIII

MAGNA EST VERITAS

Here, in this little Bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail;
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

C. Patmore

LXIX

THE SUN'S SHAME

Beholding youth and hope in mockery caught
From life; and mocking pulses that remain
When the soul's death of bodily death is fain;
Honour unknown, and honour known unsought;
And penury's sedulous self-torturing thought
On gold, whose master therewith buys his bane;
And long'd-for woman longing all in vain
For lonely man with love's desire distraught;
And wealth, and strength, and power, and pleasantness,
Given unto bodies of whose souls men say,
None poor and weak, slavish and foul, as they:—
Beholding these things, I behold no less
The blushing morn and blushing eve confess
The shame that loads the intolerable day.

D. G. Rossetti

LXX

SIC ITUR

As, at a railway junction, men
Who came together, taking then
One the train up, one down, again

Meet never ! Ah, much more as they
Who take one street's two sides, and say
Hard parting words, but walk one way :

Though moving other mates between,
While carts and coaches intervene,
Each to the other goes unseen ;

Yet seldom, surely, shall there lack
Knowledge they walk not back to back,
But with an unity of track,

Where common dangers each attend,
And common hopes their guidance lend
To light them to the self-same end.

Whether he then shall cross to thee,
Or thou go thither, or it be
Some midway point, ye yet shall see

Each other, yet again shall meet.
Ah, joy ! when with the closing street,
Forgivingly at last ye greet !

A. H. Clough

LXXI

NEXT OF KIN

The shadows gather round me, while you are in the sun :
My day is almost ended, but yours is just begun :

The winds are singing to us both and the streams are singing still,
And they fill your heart with music, but mine they cannot fill.

Your home is built in sunlight, mine in another day:
Your home is close at hand, sweet friend, but mine is far away:
Your bark is in the haven where you fain would be:
I must launch out into the deep, across the unknown sea.

You, white as dove or lily or spirit of the light:
I, stain'd and cold and glad to hide in the cold dark night:
You, joy to many a loving heart and light to many eyes:
I, lonely in the knowledge earth is full of vanities.

Yet when your day is over, as mine is nearly done,
And when your race is finish'd, as mine is almost run,
You, like me, shall cross your hands and bow your graceful head:
Yea, we twain shall sleep together in an equal bed.

C. G. Rossetti

LXXII

THE SPECTRE OF THE PAST

On the great day of my life—
On the memorable day—
Just as the long inward strife
Of the echoes died away,
Just as on my couch I lay
Thinking thought away;
Came a Man into my room,
Bringing with him gloom.

Midnight stood upon the clock,
  And the street sound ceased to rise ;
Suddenly, and with no knock,
  Came that Man before my eyes :
  Yet he seem'd not anywise
  My heart to surprise,
And he sat down to abide
At my fireside.

But he stirr'd within my heart
  Memories of the ancient days ;
And strange visions seem'd to start
  Vividly before my gaze,
  Yea, from the most distant haze
  Of forgotten ways :
And he look'd on me the while
With a most strange smile.

But my heart seem'd well to know
  That his face the semblance had
Of my own face long ago
  Ere the years had made it sad,
  When my youthful looks were clad
  In a smile half glad ;
To my heart he seem'd in truth
All my vanish'd youth.

Then he named me by a name
  Long since unfamiliar grown,
But remember'd for the same
  That my childhood's ears had known ;
  And his voice was like my own
  In a sadder tone
Coming from the happy years
Choked, alas, with tears.

And, as though he nothing knew
  Of that day's fair triumphing,
Or the Present were not true,
  Or not worth remembering,
  All the Past he seem'd to bring
  As a piteous thing
Back upon my heart again,
Yea with a great pain :

'Do you still remember the winding street
In the gray old village?' he seem'd to say;
'And the long school days that the sun made sweet
And the thought of the flowers from far away?
And the faces of friends whom you used to meet
In that village day by day,
—Ay, the face of this one or of that?' he said,
And the names he named were names of the dead
Who all in the churchyard lay.

'And do you remember the far green hills;
Or the long straight path by the side of the stream;
Or the road that led to the farm and the mills,
And the fields where you oft used to wander or dream
Or follow each change of your childish wills
Like the dance of some gay sunbeam?'—
Then, alas, from right weeping I could not refrain,
For indeed all those things I remember'd again,—
As of yesterday they did seem.

And I thought of a day in a far lost Spring,
When the sun with a kiss set the wild flowers free;
When my heart felt the kiss and the shadowy wing
Of some beautiful spirit of things to be,
Who breathed in the song that the wild birds sing
Some deep tender meaning for me,—
Who undid a strange spell in the world as it were,
Who set wide sweet whispers abroad in the air,—
Made a presence I could not see.

'O for what have you wander'd so far—so long?'
Said the voice that was e'en as my voice of old:
'O for what have you done to the Past such wrong?
Was there no fair dream on your own threshold?
In your childhood's home was there no fresh song?
—Was your heart then all so cold?
Why, at length, are you weary, and lone and sad,
But for casting away all the good that you had
With the peace that was yours of old?

'Have you wholly forgotten the words you said,
When you stood by a certain mound of earth,
When you vow'd with your heart that that place you
made
The last burial-place for your love and your mirth,
For the pure past blisses you therein laid
Were surely your whole life's worth?—
O, the angels who deck the lone graves with their
tears
Have cared for this, morning and evening, for years,
But of yours there has been long dearth:

'In the pure pale sheen of a hallow'd night,
When the graves are looking their holiest,
You may see it more glistering and more bright
And holier-looking than all the rest;
You may see that the dews and the stars' strange
light
Are loving that grave the best;
But, perhaps, if you went in the clear noon-day,
After so many years you might scarce find the
way
Ere you tired indeed of the quest:

'For the path that leads to it is almost lost;
And quite tall grass-flowers of sickly blue
Have grown up there and gather'd for years, and
tost
Bitter germs all around them to grow up too;
For indeed all these years not a man has crost
That pathway—not even You!'—
But alas! for these words to my heart he sent,
For I knew it was Marguérite's grave that he meant,
And I felt that the words were true.

A. O'Shaughnessy

LXXIII

LOCKSLEY HALL

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn :
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.——

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's
breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself
another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd
dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be
for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observ-
ance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the
truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to
thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and
a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern
night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden
storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel
eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should
do me wrong;'
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I
have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his
glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the
chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in
music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-
wrought :
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy
lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-
stand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with
my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's
disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength
of youth !
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living
truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule !
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead
of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst thou
less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but
bitter fruit ?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at
the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years
should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging
rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the
mind ?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew
her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak and move :
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore ?
No—she never loved me truly : love is love for evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than mine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings
thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the
mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not
his due.
Half is thine, and half is his : it will be worthy of the
two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty
part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a
daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself
was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-
contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should
I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon
days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to
golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets
overflow.
I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I
should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's
ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds
are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that
Honour feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind
rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the
thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-
flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful
realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal
law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left
me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the
jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out
of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from
point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping
nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process
of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his
youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a
boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger
on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears
a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of
his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the
bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for
their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd
string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's
pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shal-
lower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd
with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto
wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for
some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began
to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-
starr'd;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far
away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the
day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and
happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots
of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunder-bolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

A. Lord Tennyson

LXXIV

STRANGERS YET

Strangers yet !
After years of life together,
After fair and stormy weather,
After travel in far lands,
After touch of wedded hands,—
Why thus join'd? Why ever met,
If they must be strangers yet?

Strangers yet !
After childhood's winning ways,
After care and blame and praise,
Counsel ask'd and wisdom given,
After mutual prayers to Heaven,
Child and parent scarce regret
When they part—are strangers yet.

Strangers yet !
After strife for common ends—
After title of 'old friends,'
After passions fierce and tender,
After cheerful self-surrender,
Hearts may beat and eyes be met,
And the souls be strangers yet.

Strangers yet !
Oh ! the bitter thought to scan
All the loneliness of man :—
Nature, by magnetic laws,
Circle unto circle draws,
But they only touch when met,
Never mingle—strangers yet.

R. M. (Milnes) Lord Houghton

LXXV

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalm'd at eve, that lay
  With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
  Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
  And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
  By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
  Of those, whom year by year unchanged,
Brief absence join'd anew to feel,
  Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were fill'd,
  And onward each rejoicing steer'd—
Ah, neither blame, for neither will'd,
  Or wist, what first with dawn appear'd!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
  Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
  To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze! and O great seas,
  Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
  Together lead them home at last:

One port, methought, alike they sought,
  One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
  At last, at last, unite them there!

A. H. Clough

LXXVI

A SUMMER NIGHT

In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellent as the world;—but see,
A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim,
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon;
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;
Houses, with long white sweep,
Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air,
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away,
The night was far more fair—
But the same restless pacings to and fro,
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say:
Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro,
Never by passion quite possess'd
And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway?—
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall.
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor doth he know how there prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves.
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguish'd face and flying hair
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and, though so great,
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
And, though so task'd, keep free from dust and soil!
I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have long'd deeply once, and long'd in vain—
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to abide there, and breathe free;
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

M. Arnold

LXXVII

THE SILENT VOICES

When the dumb Hour, clothed in black
Brings the Dreams about my bed,
Call me not so often back,
Silent Voices of the dead,
Toward the lowland ways behind me,
And the sunlight that is gone!
Call me rather, silent voices,
Forward to the starry track
Glimmering up the heights beyond me
On, and always on!

A. Lord Tennyson

LXXVIII

THE FUTURE

A wanderer is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the river of Time;
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light,
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.
Whether he wakes,
Where the snowy mountainous pass,
Echoing the screams of the eagles,
Hems in its gorges the bed
Of the new-born clear-flowing stream;
Whether he first sees light
Where the river in gleaming rings
Sluggishly winds through the plain;
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea—
As is the world on the banks,
So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,
Fable and dream
Of the lands which the river of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.
Only the tract where he sails
He wots of; only the thoughts,
Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roam'd on her breast,
Her vigorous, primitive sons?

What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing as Moses felt
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste?
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Border'd by cities and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and shot as the sights which we see.

And we say that repose has fled
For ever the course of the river of Time.
That cities will crowd to its edge
In a blacker, incessanter line;
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream,
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead.
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge

Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

M. Arnold

LXXIX

SLEEP AT SEA

Sound the deep waters:—
  Who shall sound that deep?—
Too short the plummet,
  And the watchmen sleep.
Some dream of effort
  Up a toilsome steep;
Some dream of pasture grounds
  For harmless sheep.

White shapes flit to and fro
  From mast to mast;
They feel the distant tempest
  That nears them fast:
Great rocks are straight ahead,
  Great shoals not past:
They shout to one another
  Upon the blast.

Oh, soft the streams drop music
  Between the hills,
And musical the birds' nests
  Beside those rills;
The nests are types of home
  Love-hidden from ills,
The nests are types of spirits
  Love-music fills.

So dream the sleepers,
  Each man in his place;
The lightning shows the smile
  Upon each face:
The ship is driving,—driving,—
  It drives apace:
And sleepers smile, and spirits
  Bewail their case.

The lightning glares and reddens
  Across the skies;
It seems but sunset
  To those sleeping eyes.
When did the sun go down
  On such a wise?
From such a sunset
  When shall day arise?

'Wake,' call the spirits:
  But to heedless ears:
They have forgotten sorrows
  And hopes and fears;
They have forgotten perils
  And smiles and tears;
Their dream has held them long,
  Long years and years.

'Wake,' call the spirits again:
  But it would take
A louder summons
  To bid them awake.
Some dream of pleasure
  For another's sake;
Some dream forgetful
  Of a lifelong ache.

One by one slowly,
  Ah, how sad and slow !
Wailing and praying
  The spirits rise and go :
Clear stainless spirits
  White, as white as snow ;
Pale spirits, wailing
  For an overthrow.

One by one flitting,
  Like a mournful bird
Whose song is tired at last
  For no mate heard.
The loving voice is silent,
  The useless word ;
One by one flitting
  Sick with hope deferr'd.

Driving and driving
  The ship drives amain :
While swift from mast to mast
  Shapes flit again,
Flit silent as the silence
  Where men lie slain ;
Their shadow cast upon the sails
  Is like a stain.

No voice to call the sleepers,
  No hand to raise :
They sleep to death in dreaming
  Of length of days.
Vanity of vanities,
  The Preacher says :
Vanity is the end
  Of all their ways.

C. G. Rossetti

LXXX

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän:
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you[1] to 'issén, my friend,' a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock[2] ower my 'eäd,

[1] ou as in hour. [2] Cockchafer.
[For fuller glossary, see Notes.]

An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä,
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,[1] fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies[2] afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner[3] 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—

[1] Bittern. [2] Anemones. [3] One or other.

Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
Fourscoor[1] yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd.[2]

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

Loook 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén naw doubt 'what a man a beä sewer-loy!'
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

[1] ou as in hour. [2] Clover.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 's kittle
o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's
oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is
sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to
see it.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the
aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor
nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun
doy.

A. Lord Tennyson

LXXXI

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters
awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em
saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for
thy paains:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy
braains.

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's
parson's 'ouse—
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or
a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to
weeäk.[1]
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén
speäk.

[1] This week.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's daäy—they was ringing the bells.
She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

Do'ant be stunt:[1] taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!'

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle[2] her breäd;
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissen clear,
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

[1] Obstinate. [2] Earn.

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd[1] yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputty, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt[2]—
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.[3]

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

[1] Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.
[2] Makes nothing. [3] The flies are as fierce as anything

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt ; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

Loook thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill !
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see ;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick ;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter awaäy.

A. Lord Tennyson

LXXXII

ST. JOHN BAPTIST

I think he had not heard of the far towns ;
Nor of the deeds of men, nor of kings' crowns ;
Before the thought of God took hold of him,
As he was sitting dreaming in the calm
Of one first noon, upon the desert's rim,
Beneath the tall fair shadows of the palm,
All overcome with some strange inward balm.

He number'd not the changes of the year,
The days, the nights, and he forgot all fear
Of death : each day he thought there should have been

A shining ladder set for him to climb
  Athwart some opening in the heavens, e'en
To God's eternity, and see, sublime—
His face whose shadow passing fills all time.

But he walk'd through the ancient wilderness.
O, there the prints of feet were numberless
  And holy all about him ! And quite plain
He saw each spot an angel silvershod
  Had lit upon ; where Jacob too had lain
The place seem'd fresh,—and, bright and lately trod,
A long track show'd where Enoch walk'd with God.

And often, while the sacred darkness trail'd
Along the mountains smitten and unveil'd
  By rending lightnings,—over all the noise
Of thunders and the earth that quaked and bow'd
  From its foundations—he could hear the voice
Of great Elias prophesying loud
To Him whose face was cover'd by a cloud.

A. O'Shaughnessy

LXXXIII

Heaven overarches earth and sea,
  Earth-sadness and sea-bitterness.
Heaven overarches you and me :
A little while and we shall be—
Please God—where there is no more sea
  Nor barren wilderness.

Heaven overarches you and me,
  And all earth's gardens and her graves.
Look up with me, until we see
The day break and the shadows flee.
What though to-night wrecks you and me
  If so to-morrow saves ?

C. G. Rossetti

LXXXIV

THE TRANCE OF TIME

In childhood, when with eager eyes
The season-measured years I view'd,
All, garb'd in fairy guise,
Pledged constancy of good.

Spring sang of heaven ; the summer flowers
Bade me gaze on, and did not fade ;
Even suns o'er autumn's bowers
Heard my strong wish, and stay'd.

They came and went, the short-lived four ;
Yet, as their varying dance they wove,
To my young heart each bore
Its own sure claim of love.

Far different now ;—the whirling year
Vainly my dizzy eyes pursue ;
And its fair tints appear
All blent in one dusk hue.

Then what this world to thee, my heart?
Its gifts nor feed thee nor can bless.
Thou hast no owner's part
In all its fleetingness.

J. H. Card. Newman

LXXXV

OUR DEAD

Sometimes I think that those we've lost,
Safe lying on th' Eternal Breast,
Can hear no sounds from earth that mar
The perfect sweetness of their rest ;
But when one thought of holy love
Is stirr'd in hearts they love below,
Through some fine waves of ambient air,
They feel, they see it, and they know.

As rays unseen—abysmal light—
  Are caught by films of silver salt
When these are set to watch by night
  The wheelings of the starry vault,—
So may the souls that live and dwell
  In one great soul, the Fount of all,
Feel faintest tremblings in the sphere
  On which such footsteps gently fall.
No evil seen, no murmurs heard,
  No fear of sin, or coming loss,
They wait in light, imperfect yet,
  The final triumphs of the Cross.

Duke of Argyll

LXXXVI

'RETRO ME, SATHANA!'

Get thee behind me. Even as, heavy-curl'd,
  Stooping against the wind, a charioteer
  Is snatch'd from out his chariot by the hair,
So shall Time be ; and as the void car, hurl'd
Abroad by reinless steeds, even so the world :
  Yea even as chariot-dust upon the air,
  It shall be sought and not found anywhere.
Get thee behind me, Satan. Oft unfurl'd,
Thy perilous wings can beat and break like lath
  Much mightiness of men to win thee praise.
  Leave these weak feet to tread in narrow ways.
Thou still, upon the broad vine-shelter'd path,
Mayst wait the turning of the phials of wrath
  For certain years, for certain months and days.

D. G. Rossetti

LXXXVII

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
  Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
  From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
  A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
  You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
  Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
  They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
  Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
  Yea, beds for all who come.

C. G. Rossetti

LXXXVIII

MOTHER COUNTRY

Oh what is that country
  And where can it be,
Not mine own country,
  But dearer far to me?
Yet mine own country,
  If I one day may see
Its spices and cedars,
  Its gold and ivory.

Oh what is a king here,
  Or what is a boor?
Here all starve together
  All dwarf'd and poor;

Here Death's hand knocketh
  At door after door,
He thins the dancers
  From the festal floor.

Oh what is a handmaid,
  Or what is a queen?
All must lie down together
  Where the turf is green,
The foulest face hidden,
  The fairest not seen;
Gone as if never
  They had breathed or been.

Gone from sweet sunshine
  Underneath the sod,
Turn'd from warm flesh and blood
  To senseless clod,
Gone as if never
  They had toil'd or trod,
Gone out of sight of all
  Except our God.

And if that life is life,
  This is but a breath,
The passage of a dream
  And the shadow of death;
But a vain shadow
  If one considereth;
Vanity of vanities,
  As the Preacher saith.

C. G. Rossetti

LXXXIX

ST. AGNES' EVE

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
  Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapour goes;
  May my soul follow soon!

The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, Thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

A. Lord Tennyson

XC

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blesséd damozel lean'd out
From the gold bar of Heaven ;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters still'd at even ;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn ;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseem'd she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers ;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers ;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she lean'd o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing : the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on ;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.

Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
In joy no sorrow claims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their rapturous new names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow'd herself and stoop'd
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she lean'd on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fix'd place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curl'd moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearken'd? When those bells
Possess'd the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

'I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,' she said.
'Have I not pray'd in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?

Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

'When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
We will step down as to a stream,
And bathe there in God's sight.

'We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirr'd continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

'We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith his Name audibly.

'And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hush'd and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know.'

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

'We two,' she said, 'will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

'Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

'He shall fear, haply, and be dumb.
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abash'd or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

'Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumber'd heads
Bow'd with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

'There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.'

She gazed and listen'd and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
'All this is when he comes.' She ceased.
The light thrill'd towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes pray'd, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

D. G. Rossetti

XCI

SONG OF AN ANGEL

At noon a shower had fallen, and the clime
  Breathed sweetly, and upon a cloud there lay
  One more sublime in beauty than the Day,
Or all the Sons of Time;

A gold harp had he, and was singing there
  Songs that I yearn'd to hear; a glory shone
  Of rosy twilights on his cheeks—a zone
Of amaranth on his hair.

He sang of joys to which the earthly heart
  Hath never beat; he sang of deathless Youth,
  And by the throne of Love, Beauty and Truth
Meeting, no more to part;

He sang lost Hope, faint Faith, and vain Desire
  Crown'd there; great works, that on the earth began,
  Accomplish'd; towers impregnable to man
Scaled with the speed of fire;

Of Power, and Life, and wingéd Victory
  He sang—of bridges strown 'twixt star and star—
  And hosts all arm'd in light for bloodless war
Pass, and repass on high;

Lo! in the pauses of his jubilant voice
  He leans to listen: answers from the spheres,
  And mighty paeans thundering he hears
Down the empyreal skies:

Then suddenly he ceased—and seem'd to rest
  His godly-fashion'd arm upon a slope
  Of that fair cloud, and with soft eyes of hope
He pointed towards the West;

And shed on me a smile of beams, that told
  Of a bright World beyond the thunder-piles,
  With blesséd fields, and hills, and happy isles,
And citadels of gold.

F. Tennyson

XCII

A CHRISTMAS HYMN, 1837

It was the calm and silent night !—
  Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
  And now was Queen of land and sea !
No sound was heard of clashing wars ;
  Peace brooded o'er the hush'd domain ;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove and Mars,
  Held undisturb'd their ancient reign,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago !

'Twas in the calm and silent night !
  The senator of haughty Rome
Impatient urged his chariot's flight,
  From lordly revel rolling home !
Triumphal arches gleaming swell
  His breast with thoughts of boundless sway ;
What reck'd the Roman what befell
  A paltry province far away,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago !

Within that province far away
  Went plodding home a weary boor :
A streak of light before him lay,
  Fall'n through a half-shut stable door
Across his path. He pass'd—for nought
  Told what was going on within ;
How keen the stars ! his only thought ;
  The air how calm and cold and thin,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago !

O strange indifference !—low and high
  Drowsed over common joys and cares :
The earth was still—but knew not why ;
  The world was listening—unawares ;

How calm a moment may precede
One that shall thrill the world for ever!
To that still moment none would heed,
Man's doom was link'd no more to sever
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night!
A thousand bells ring out, and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness, charm'd and holy *now!*
The night that erst no name had worn,
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay new-born
The peaceful Prince of Earth and Heaven,
In the solemn midnight
Centuries ago.

A. Domett

XCIII

THE LOSS OF THE 'BIRKENHEAD':

SUPPOSED TO BE TOLD BY A SOLDIER WHO SURVIVED

Right on our flank the crimson sun went down;
The deep sea roll'd around in dark repose;
When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship *Birkenhead* lay hard and fast,
Caught without hope upon a hidden rock;
Her timbers thrill'd as nerves, when through them pass'd
The spirit of that shock.

And ever like base cowards, who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,
Drifted away disorderly the planks
From underneath her keel.

So calm the air, so calm and still the flood,
That low down in its blue translucent glass
We saw the great fierce fish, that thirst for blood,
Pass slowly, then repass.

They tarried, the waves tarried, for their prey!
The sea turn'd one clear smile! Like things asleep
Those dark shapes in the azure silence lay,
As quiet as the deep.

Then amidst oath, and prayer, and rush, and wreck,
Faint screams, faint questions waiting no reply,
Our Colonel gave the word, and on the deck
Form'd us in line to die.

To die!—'twas hard, whilst the sleek ocean glow'd
Beneath a sky as fair as summer flowers:—
All to the boats! cried one:—he was, thank God,
No officer of ours!

Our English hearts beat true:—we would not stir:
That base appeal we heard, but heeded not:
On land, on sea, we had our Colours, sir,
To keep without a spot!

They shall not say in England, that we fought
With shameful strength, unhonour'd life to seek;
Into mean safety, mean deserters, brought
By trampling down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
The oars ply back again, and yet again;
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
Still under steadfast men.

—What follows, why recall?—The brave who died,
Died without flinching in the bloody surf,
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide,
As others under turf:—

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild grave,
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint-heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones, not in vain.

F. H. Doyle

XCIV

THE BRITISH SOLDIER IN CHINA

Last night among his fellow-roughs
He jested, quaff'd and swore :
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never look'd before.
To-day, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown,
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,
Bewilder'd, and alone,
A heart, with English instinct fraught,
He yet can call his own.
Ay ! tear his body limb from limb ;
Bring cord, or axe, or flame !—
He only knows, that not through him
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hopfields round him seem'd
Like dreams to come and go ;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleam'd,
One sheet of living snow :
The smoke above his father's door
In gray soft eddyings hung :—
Must he then watch it rise no more,
Doom'd by himself, so young ?

Yes, Honour calls !—with strength like steel
He put the vision by :
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel ;
An English lad must die !
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
With knee to man unbent,
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink
To his red grave he went.

—Vain, mightiest fleets of iron framed ;
Vain, those all-shattering guns ;
Unless proud England keep, untamed,
The strong heart of her sons !

So, let his name through Europe ring—
A man of mean estate
Who died, as firm as Sparta's king,
Because his soul was great.

F. H. Doyle

XCV

THE SANDS OF DEE

'O Mary, go and call the cattle home,—
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands o' Dee!'
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land—
And never home came she.

'Oh, is it weed or fish or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drownéd maiden's hair,
Above the nets, at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Across the stakes on Dee.'

They row'd her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee.

C. Kingsley

XCVI

LOST ON SCHIHALLION

Shepherd

Oh wherefore cam ye here, Ailie?
What has brocht you here?
Late and lane on this bleak muir and eerie,
A wild place this to be
For a body frail as ye,
Wi' the nicht and yon storm-clouds sae near ye.

Ailie

Oh dinna drive me back,
I canna leave my track,
Though nicht and the tempest should close o'er me.
The warld I've left behind,
And there's nocht I care to find
Save Schihallion and high heaven that are afore me.

Shepherd

Oh speak nae word o' driving,
But wherefore art thou striving
For the thing that canna be, puir Ailie?
Ye had better far return,
Where the peat-fires bienly burn,
And your friends wait ye down at Bohalie.

Ailie

The warld below is cauld and bare,
Up yonder's the place for prayer;
There the vision on my soul will break clearer,
My friends will little miss me,
And there's only One can bless me,
To Him on the hill-top I'll be nearer.

Shepherd

Schihallion's sides sae solid and steep,
And his snow-drifts heap on heap,
What mortal would dream the nicht o' scaling?

Gin the heart pray below,
From nae mountain-top will go
Your prayer to heaven with cry more prevailing.

Ailie

Weak am I and frail, I ken,
But there's might that's not of men
To bear me up—sae na mair entreat me ;
Be the snow-drifts ne'er sae deep,
I have got a tryst to keep
Wi' the angels that up yonder wait to meet me.

* * * * *

The Shepherd home is gone,
And she went on alone ;
Night cam, but she cam not to Bohalie ;
They socht her west and east
Neist day and then the neist
On Schihallion's head they found puir Ailie.

Stiff with ice her limbs and hair,
And her hands fast closed in prayer,
And her white face to heaven meekly turning ;
Down they bore her to her grave,
And they knew her soul was safe
In the home for which sae lang she had been yearning.

J. C. Shairp

XCVII

THE BALLAD OF KEITH OF RAVELSTON

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine ;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill
And through the silver meads ;

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine!—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade;
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

S. Dobell

XCVIII

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

When the young hand of Darnley lock'd in hers
Had knit her to her northern doom—amid
The spousal pomp of flags and trumpeters,
Her fate look'd forth and was no longer hid ;
A jealous brain beneath a southern crown
Wrought spells upon her ; from afar she felt
The waxen image of her fortunes melt
Beneath the Tudor's eye, while the grim frown
Of her own lords o'ermaster'd her sweet smiles—
And nipt her growing gladness, till she mourn'd,
And sank, at last, beneath their cruel wiles ;
But, ever since, all generous hearts have burn'd
To clear her fame, yea, very babes have yearn'd
Over this saddest story of the isles.

C. Tennyson-Turner

XCIX

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet !
In a voice that she will know :
'Margaret ! Margaret !'
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear ;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again !
Call her once and come away ;

This way, this way!
'Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret.'
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell,
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: 'I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee.'

I said: 'Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea caves!'
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say;
Come!' I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
'Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: 'O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blesséd light of the sun!'

And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children ;
Come, children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows coldly ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing : 'Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea.'

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,

Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing: 'There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea.'

M. Arnold

C.

THE 'REVENGE'

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

At Florés in the Azorés Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: ''Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war
that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer
heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from
the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not
left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the
Lord.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship
and to fight,
And he sail'd away from Flores till the Spaniard
came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather
bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good
English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the
devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.'

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a
hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the
foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety
sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left
were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on thro' the long sea-lane
between.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their
decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad
little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of fifteen
hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning
tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

And while now the great *San Philip* hung above us
like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the star
board lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought herself
and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill
content ;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us
hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and
musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that
shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far
over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and
the fifty-three,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built
galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame ;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with
her dead and her shame.

For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and
so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the
world before?

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer
night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly
dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and
the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out
far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us
all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd
that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate
strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of
them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the
powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
'We have fought such a fight for a day and a
night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her
in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of
Spain!'

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the seamen
made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to
let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another
blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the
foe.
And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore
him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard
caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly
foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant
man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant
and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so
cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English
few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they
knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the
deep,
And they mann'd the *Revenge* with a swarthier alien
crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her
own;

When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke
from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to
moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale
blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earth-
quake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their
masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-
shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little *Revenge* herself went down by the
island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

A. Lord Tennyson

CI

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
  Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
  All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
  Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
  Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
  Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
  All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
  Noble six hundred!

A. Lord Tennyson

CII

HERVÉ RIEL

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninéty-two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frighten'd porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint-Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signall'd to the place
'Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!'

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
'Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?' laugh'd they:
'Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarr'd and scored,—
Shall the *Formidable* here, with her twelve and eighty guns,
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter—where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.

Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!'

Then was call'd a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
'Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, link'd together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!'
(Ended Damfreville his speech.)
'Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

'Give the word!' But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepp'd, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor press'd by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

And 'What mockery or malice have we here?' cries Hervé Riel:
'Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?

Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Enter'd free and anchor'd fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this *Formidable* clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,—
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!' cries Hervé Riel.

Not a minute more to wait,
'Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron! cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the wide seas profound!
See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past.
All are harbour'd to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas 'Anchor!'—sure as fate,
Up the English come,—too late!

So, the storm subsides to calm :
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm,
'Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away !'
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance !
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance !
Out burst all with one accord,
'This is Paradise for Hell !
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing !'
What a shout, and all one word,
'Hervé Riel !'
As he stepp'd in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

Then said Damfreville, 'My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips :
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse !
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have ! or my name's not Damfreville.'

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laugh'd through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue :
'Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run ?—

Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!'
That he ask'd and that he got,—nothing more.

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell:
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife the Belle Aurore!

R. Browning

CIII

THE LABORATORY:

ANCIEN RÉGIME

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

He is with her, and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket!

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!
But to light a pastile, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!

Quick—is it finish'd? The colour's too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer?

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me!
That's why she ensnared him: this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, 'No!'
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

For only last night, as they whisper'd, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fix'd, she would fall
Shrivell'd; she fell not; yet this does it all!

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;
Let death be felt and the proof remain:
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face!

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee!
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

R. Browning

CIV

THE RED THREAD OF HONOUR

Eleven men of England
A breast-work charged in vain;
Eleven men of England
Lie stripp'd, and gash'd, and slain.
Slain; but of foes that guarded
Their rock-built fortress well,
Some twenty had been master'd,
When the last soldier fell.

The robber-chief mused deeply,
Above those daring dead;
'Bring here,' at length he shouted,
'Bring quick, the battle thread.
Let Eblis blast for ever
Their souls, if Allah will:
But WE must keep unbroken
The old rules of the Hill.

'Before the Ghiznee tiger
Leapt forth to burn and slay;
Before the holy Prophet
Taught our grim tribes to pray;

Before Secunder's lances
Pierced through each Indian glen;
The mountain laws of honour
Were framed for fearless men.

'Still, when a chief dies bravely,
We bind with green *one* wrist—
Green for the brave, for heroes
ONE crimson thread we twist.
Say ye, oh gallant Hillmen,
For these, whose life has fled,
Which is the fitting colour,
The green one, or the red?'

'Our brethren, laid in honour'd graves, may wear
Their green reward,' each noble savage said;
'To these, whom hawks and hungry wolves shall tear,
Who dares deny the red?'

Thus conquering hate, and stedfast to the right,
Fresh from the heart that haughty verdict came;
Beneath a waning moon, each spectral height
Roll'd back its loud acclaim.

Once more the chief gazed keenly
Down on those daring dead;
From his good sword their heart's blood
Crept to that crimson thread.
Once more he cried, 'The judgment,
Good friends, is wise and true,
But though the red *he* given,
Have we not more to do?

'These were not stirr'd by anger,
Nor yet by lust made bold;
Renown they thought above them,
Nor did they look for gold.
To them their leader's signal
Was as the voice of God:
Unmoved, and uncomplaining,
The path it show'd they trod.

'As, without sound or struggle,
The stars unhurrying march,
Where Allah's finger guides them,
Through yonder purple arch,
These Franks, sublimely silent,
Without a quicken'd breath,
Went, in the strength of duty,
Straight to their goal of death.

'If I were now to ask you,
To name our bravest man,
Ye all at once would answer,
They call'd him Mehrab Khan.
He sleeps among his fathers,
Dear to our native land,
With the bright mark he bled for
Firm round his faithful hand.

'The songs they sing of Roostum
Fill all the past with light;
If truth be in their music,
He was a noble knight.
But were those heroes living,
And strong for battle still,
Would Mehrab Khan or Roostum
Have climb'd, like these, the Hill?'

And they replied, 'Though Mehrab Khan was brave,
As chief, he chose himself what risks to run;
Prince Roostum lied, his forfeit life to save,
Which these had never done.'

'Enough!' he shouted fiercely;
'Doom'd though they be to hell,
Bind fast the crimson trophy
Round BOTH wrists—bind it well.
Who knows but that great Allah
May grudge such matchless men,
With none so deck'd in heaven,
To the fiends' flaming den?'

Then all those gallant robbers
Shouted a stern 'Amen!'
They raised the slaughter'd sergeant,
They raised his mangled ten.
And when we found their bodies
Left bleaching in the wind,
Around BOTH wrists in glory
That crimson thread was twined.

F. H. Doyle

CV

THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR

Come, see the *Dolphin's* anchor forged—'tis at a white heat now;
The bellows ceased, the flames decreased—though on the forge's brow,
The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound,
And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking round,
All clad in leathern panoply, their broad hands only bare;
Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the windlass there.

The windlass strains the tackle chains, the black mound heaves below,
And red and deep a hundred veins burst out at every throe:
It rises, roars, rends all outright—O, Vulcan, what a glow!
'Tis blinding white, 'tis blasting bright—the high sun shines not so;
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such fiery fearful show;
The roof-ribs swarth, the candent hearth, the ruddy lurid row
Of smiths that stand, an ardent band, like men before the foe:

As, quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing monster, slow
Sinks on the anvil—all about the faces fiery grow;
'Hurrah!' they shout, 'leap out—leap out;' bang, bang the sledges go;
Hurrah! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low—
A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow,
The leathern mail rebounds the hail, the rattling cinders strow
The ground around: at every bound the sweltering fountains flow,
And thick and loud, the shrinking crowd at every stroke pant, 'Ho!'

Leap out, leap out, my masters; leap out, and lay on load!
Let's forge a goodly anchor—a bower thick and broad;
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode,
And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road—
The low reef roaring on her lee—the roll of ocean pour'd
From stem to stern, sea after sea; the mainmast by the board;
The bulwarks down, the rudder gone, the boats stove at the chains!
But courage still, brave mariners—the bower yet remains,
And not an inch to flinch he deigns, save when ye pitch sky high;
Then moves his head, as though he said, 'Fear nothing—here am I.'
Swing in your strokes in order, let foot and hand keep time;
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's chime:
But while you sling your sledges, sing—and let the burthen be,
The anchor is the anvil-king, and royal craftsmen we!

Strike in, strike in—the sparks begin to dull their
rustling red:
Our hammers ring with sharper din, our work will
soon be sped.
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery rich
array,
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy couch
of clay;
Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry crafts-
men here,
For the yeo-heave-o' and the heave-away, and the
sighing seamen's cheer;
When, weighing slow, at eve they go—far, far from
love and home;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the
ocean foam.

In livid and obdurate gloom he darkens down at
last;
A shapely one he is, and strong, as e'er from cat was
cast.
O trusted and trustworthy guard, if thou hadst life
like me,
What pleasures would thy toils reward, beneath the
deep green sea!
O deep Sea-diver, who might then behold such sights
as thou?
The hoary monster's palaces! methinks what joy
'twere now
To go plumb plunging down amid the assembly of the
whales,
And feel the churn'd sea round me boil beneath their
scourging tails!
Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea-
unicorn,
And send him foil'd and bellowing back, for all his
ivory horn;
To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade
forlorn;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark to laugh his jaws
to scorn;

To leap down on the kraken's back, where 'mid
Norwegian isles,
He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallow'd miles;
Till snorting, like an under-sea volcano, off he rolls;
Meanwhile to swing, a-buffeting the far-astonish'd
shoals
Of his back-browsing ocean-calves; or, haply in a
cove,
Shell-strewn, and consecrate of old to some Undiné's
love,
To find the long-hair'd mermaidens; or, hard by icy
lands,
To wrestle with the Sea-serpent, upon cerulean sands.

O broad-arm'd Fisher of the deep, whose sports can
equal thine?
The *Dolphin* weighs a thousand tons, that tugs thy
cable line!
And night by night, 'tis thy delight, thy glory day by
day,
Through sable sea and breaker white, the giant game
to play—
But shamer of our little sports! forgive the name I
gave—
A fisher's joy is to destroy—thine office is to save.
O lodger in the sea-kings' halls, couldst thou but
understand
Whose be the white bones by thy side, or who that
dripping band,
Slow swaying in the heaving wave, that round about
thee bend,
With sounds like breakers in a dream blessing their
ancient friend?
Oh, couldst thou know what heroes glide with larger
steps round thee,
Thine iron side would swell with pride; thou'dst leap
within the sea!

S. Ferguson

CVI

HERODIAS

Her long black hair danced round her like a snake
Allured to each charm'd movement she did make;
Her voice came strangely sweet;
She sang, 'O, Herod, wilt thou look on me—
Have I no beauty thy heart cares to see?'
And what her voice did sing her dancing feet
Seem'd ever to repeat.

She sang, 'O, Herod, wilt thou look on me?
What sweet I have, I have it all for thee;'
And through the dance and song
She freed and floated on the air her arms
Above dim veils that hid her bosom's charms:
The passion of her singing was so strong
It drew all hearts along.

Her sweet arms were unfolded on the air,
They seem'd like floating flowers the most fair—
White lilies the most choice;
And in the gradual bending of her hand
There lurk'd a grace that no man could withstand;
Yea, none knew whether hands, or feet, or voice,
Most made his heart rejoice.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CVII

'ITALIA, IO TI SALUTO!'

To come back from the sweet South, to the North
Where I was born, bred, look to die;
Come back to do my day's work in its day,
Play out my play—
Amen, amen, say I.

To see no more the country half my own,
Nor hear the half familiar speech,
Amen, I say ; I turn to that bleak North
Whence I came forth—
The South lies out of reach.

But when our swallows fly back to the South,
To the sweet South, to the sweet South,
The tears may come again into my eyes
On the old wise,
And the sweet name to my mouth.

C. G. Rossetti

CVIII

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now !

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
Hark, where my blossom'd pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture !
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower !

R. Browning

CIX

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Where the quiet-colour'd end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—

Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gather'd councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one)

Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be prest,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guess'd alone,
Stock or stone—

Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago ;
Lust of glory prick'd their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame ;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—

Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
View'd the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colour'd eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguish'd gray
Melt away—

That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king look'd, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he look'd upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topp'd with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men !

When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.

O, heart! oh, blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest.
Love is best!

R. Browning

CX

THE SKYLARK

How the blithe Lark runs up the golden stair
That leans thro' cloudy gates from Heaven to Earth,
And all alone in the empyreal air
Fills it with jubilant sweet songs of mirth;
How far he seems, how far
With the light upon his wings,
Is it a bird, or star
That shines, and sings?

What matter if the days be dark and frore,
That sunbeam tells of other days to be,
And singing in the light that floods him o'er
In joy he overtakes Futurity;
Under cloud-arches vast
He peeps, and sees behind
Great Summer coming fast
Adown the wind!

And now he dives into a rainbow's rivers,
In streams of gold and purple he is drown'd,
Shrilly the arrows of his song he shivers,
As tho' the stormy drops were turn'd to sound;
And now he issues thro',
He scales a cloudy tower,
Faintly, like falling dew,
His fast notes shower.

Let every wind be hush'd, that I may hear
The wondrous things he tells the World below,
Things that we dream of he is watching near,
Hopes that we never dream'd he would bestow;
Alas! the storm hath roll'd
Back the gold gates again,
Or surely he had told
All Heaven to men!

So the victorious Poet sings alone,
And fills with light his solitary home,
And thro' that glory sees new worlds foreshown,
And hears high songs, and triumphs yet to come;
He waves the air of Time
With thrills of golden chords,
And makes the world to climb
On linkéd words.

What if his hair be gray, his eyes be dim,
If wealth forsake him, and if friends be cold,
Wonder unbars her thousand gates to him,
Truth never fails, nor Beauty waxes old;
More than he tells his eyes
Behold, his spirit hears,
Of grief, and joy, and sighs
'Twixt joy and tears.

Blest is the man who with the sound of song
Can charm away the heartache, and forget
The frost of Penury, and the stings of Wrong,
And drown the fatal whisper of Regret!
Darker are the abodes
Of Kings, tho' his be poor,
While Fancies, like the Gods,
Pass thro' his door.

Singing thou scalest Heaven upon thy wings,
Thou liftest a glad heart into the skies;
He maketh his own sunrise, while he sings,
And turns the dusty Earth to Paradise;
I see thee sail along
Far up the sunny streams,
Unseen, I hear his song,
I see his dreams.

F. Tennyson

CXI

THE GIRT WOAK TREE THAT'S IN THE DELL

The girt woak tree that's in the dell!
There's noo tree I do love so well;
Vor times an' times when I wer young,
I there've a-climb'd, an' there've a-zwung,
An' pick'd the eäcorns green, a-shed
In wrestlèn storms vrom his broad head.
An' down below's the cloty brook
Where I did vish with line an' hook,
An' beät, in playsome dips and zwims,
The foamy stream, wi' white-skinn'd lim's.
An' there my mother nimbly shot
Her knittèn-needles, as she zot
At evenèn down below the wide
Woak's head, wi' father at her zide.
An' I've a played wi' many a bwoy,
That's now a man an' gone awoy;
Zoo I do like noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' there, in leäter years, I roved
Wi' thik poor maïd I fondly lov'd,—
The maïd too feäir to die so soon,—
When evenèn twilight, or the moon,
Cast light enough 'ithin the pleäce
To show the smiles upon her feäce,
Wi' eyes so clear's the glassy pool,
An' lips an' cheäks so soft as wool.
There han' in han', wi' bosoms warm,
Wi' love that burn'd but thought noo harm,
Below the wide-bough'd tree we past
The happy hours that went too vast;
An' though she'll never be my wife,
She's still my leäden star o' life.
She's gone: an' she've a-left to me
Her mem'ry in the girt woak tree;
  Zoo I do love noo tree so well
  'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' oh! mid never ax nor hook
Be brought to spweil his steätely look;
Nor ever roun' his ribby zides
Mid cattle rub ther heäiry hides;
Nor pigs rout up his turf, but keep
His lwonesome sheäde vor harmless sheep;
An' let en grow, an' let en spread,
An' let en live when I be dead.
But oh! if men should come an' vell
The girt woak tree that's in the dell,
An' build his planks 'ithin the zide
O' zome girt ship to plough the tide,
Then, life or death! I'd goo to sea,
A sailèn wi' the girt woak tree:
An' I upon his planks would stand,
An' die a-fightèn vor the land,—
The land so dear,—the land so free,—
The land that bore the girt woak tree;
  Vor I do love noo tree so well
  'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

W. Barnes

CXII

TELL-TALE FLOWERS

And has the Spring's all glorious eye
No lesson to the mind?
The birds that cleave the golden sky—
Things to the earth resign'd—
Wild flowers that dance to every wind—
Do they no memory leave behind?

Aye, flowers! The very name of flowers,
That bloom in wood and glen,
Brings Spring to me in Winter's hours,
And childhood's dreams again.
The primrose on the woodland lea
Was more than gold and lands to me.

The violets by the woodland side
Are thick as they could thrive;
I've talk'd to them with childish pride
As things that were alive:
I find them now in my distress—
They seem as sweet, yet valueless.

The cowslips on the meadow lea,
How have I run for them!
I look'd with wild and childish glee
Upon each golden gem:
And when they bow'd their heads so shy
I laugh'd, and thought they danced for joy.

And when a man in early years,
How sweet they used to come,
And give me tales of smiles and tears,
And thoughts more dear than home:
Secrets which words would then reprove—
They told the names of early love.

The primrose turn'd a babbling flower
Within its sweet recess :
I blush'd to see its secret bower,
And turn'd her name to bless.
The violets said the eyes were blue :
I loved, and did they tell me true?

J. Clare

CXIII

ODE ON A FAIR SPRING MORNING

Oh, see how glorious show,
On this fair morn in May, the clear-cut hills,
The dewy lawns, the hawthorns white,
Argent on plains of gold, the growing light
Pure as when first on the young earth
The faint warm sunlight came to birth.
There is a nameless air
Of sweet renewal over all which fills
The earth and sky with life, and everywhere,
Before the scarce seen sun begins to glow,
The birds awake which slumber'd all night long,
And with a gush of song,
First doubting of their strain, then full and wide
Raise their fresh hymns thro' all the country side ;
Already, above the dewy clover,
The soaring lark begins to hover
Over his mate's low nest ;
And soon, from childhood's early rest
In hall and cottage, to the casement rise
The little ones with their fresh morning eyes.

L. Morris

CXIV

AN EVENING SCENE

The sheep-bell tolleth curfew-time ;
  The gnats, a busy rout,
Fleck the warm air ; the dismal owl
  Shouteth a sleepy shout ;
The voiceless bat, more felt than seen,
  Is flitting round about.

The aspen leaflets scarcely stir ;
  The river seems to think ;
Athwart the dusk, broad primroses
  Look coldly from the brink,
Where, listening to the freshet's noise,
  The quiet cattle drink.

The bees boom past ; the white moths rise
  Like spirits from the ground ;
The gray flies hum their weary tune,
  A distant, dream-like sound ;
And far, far off, to the slumb'rous eve,
  Bayeth an old guardhound.

C. Patmore

CXV

NIGHT

An hour, and this majestic day is gone ;
  Another messenger flown in fleet quest
Of Time. Behold ! one wingéd cloud alone,
  Like a spread dragon overhangs the west,
  Bathing the splendour of his crimson crest
In the sun's last suffusion,—he hath roll'd
  His vast length o'er the dewy sky, imprest
With the warm dyes of many-colour'd gold,
Which, now the sun is sunk, wax faint, and gray, and old.

And now the Moon, bursting her watery prison,
  Heaves her full orb into the azure clear,
Pale witness, from the slumbering sea new-risen,
  To glorify the landscape far and near,
  All beauteous things more beautiful appear ;
The sky-crown'd summit of the mountain gleams
  (Smote by the star-point of her glittering spear)
More steadfastly, and all the valley seems
Strown with a softer light, the atmosphere of dreams.

How still ! as though Silence herself were dead,
  And her wan ghost were floating in the air ;
The Moon glides o'er the heaven with printless tread,
  And to her far-off frontier doth repair ;
  O'er-wearied lids are closing everywhere ;—
All living things that own the touch of sleep,
  Are beckon'd, as the wasting moments wear,
Till, one by one, in valley, or from steep,
Unto their several homes they, and their shadows, creep.

C. Whitehead

CXVI

AFTER MANY YEARS

The song that once I dream'd about,
  The tender, touching thing,
As radiant as the rose without—
  The love of wind and wing ;
The perfect verses to the tune
  Of woodland music set,
As beautiful as afternoon,
  Remain unwritten yet.

It is too late to write them now—
  The ancient fire is cold ;
No ardent lights illume the brow,
  As in the days of old.

I cannot dream the dream again :
  But, when the happy birds
Are singing in the sunny rain,
  I think I hear its words.

I think I hear the echo still
  Of long forgotten tones,
When evening winds are on the hills,
  And sunset fires the cones.
But only in the hours supreme,
  With songs of land and sea,
The lyrics of the leaf and stream,
  This echo comes to me.

No longer doth the earth reveal
  Her gracious green and gold :
I sit where youth was once, and feel
  That I am growing old.
The lustre from the face of things
  Is wearing all away ;
Like one who halts with tired wings,
  I rest and muse to-day.

There is a river in the range
  I love to think about ;
Perhaps the searching feet of change
  Have never found it out.
Ah ! oftentimes I used to look
  Upon its banks, and long
To steal the beauty of that brook
  And put it in a song.

I wonder if the slopes of moss,
  In dreams so dear to me—
The falls of flower and flower-like floss—
  Are as they used to be !
I wonder if the waterfalls,
  The singers far and fair,
That gleam'd between the wet, green walls,
  Are still the marvels there !

Ah ! let me hope that in that place
The old familiar things
To which I turn a wistful face
Have never taken wings.
Let me retain the fancy still,
That, past the lordly range,
There always shines, in folds of hill,
One spot secure from change !

I trust that yet the tender screen
That shades a certain nook
Remains, with all its gold and green
The glory of the brook.
It hides a secret to the birds
And waters only known—
The letters of two lovely words—
A poem on a stone.

Perhaps the lady of the past,
Upon these lines may light,
The purest verses and the last
That I may ever write.
She need not fear a word of blame ;
Her tale the flowers keep ;—
The wind that heard me breathe her name
Has been for years asleep.

But in the night, and when the rain
The troubled torrents fills,
I often think I see again
The river in the hills :
And when the day is very near,
And birds are on the wing,
My spirit fancies it can hear
The song I cannot sing.

H. C. Kendall

CXVII

THE GIRT WOLD HOUSE O' MOSSY STWONE

Don't talk ov housen all o' brick,
Wi' rockèn walls nine inches thick,
A-trigg'd together zide by zide
In streets, wi' fronts a straddle wide,
Wi' yards a-sprinkled wi' a mop,
Too little vor a vrog to hop;
But let me live an' die where I
Can zee the ground, an' trees, an' sky.
The girt wold house o' mossy stwone
Had wings vor either sheäde or zun:
An' there the timber'd copse rose high,
Where birds did build an' heäres did lie,
An' beds o' greygles in the lew,
Did deck in May the ground wi' blue.
An' there by leänes a-windèn deep,
Wer mossy banks a-risèn steep;
An' stwonèn steps, so smooth an' wide,
To stiles an' vootpaths at the zide.
An' there, so big's a little ground,
The geärden wer a-wall'd all round:
An' up upon the wall wer bars
A-sheäped all out in wheels an' stars,
Vor vo'k to walk, an' look out drough
Vrom trees o' green to hills o' blue.
An' there wer walks o' peävement, broad
Enough to meäke a carriage-road,
Where steätely leädies woonce did use
To walk wi' hoops an' high-heel shoes,
When yonder hollow woak wer sound,
Avore the walls wer ivy-bound,
Avore the elems met above
The road between em, where they drove
Their coach all up or down the road
A-comèn hwome or gwaïn abroad.

The zummer aïr o' theäse green hill
'V a-heav'd in bosoms now all still,
An' all their hopes an' all their tears
Be unknown things ov other years.

W. Barnes

CXVIII

A VANISHED VILLAGE

Is this the ground where generations lie
Mourn'd by the drooping birch and dewy fern,
And by the faithful, alder-shaded burn,
Which seems to breathe an everlasting sigh?

No sign of habitation meets the eye;
Only some ancient furrows I discern,
And verdant mounds, and from them sadly learn
That hereabout men used to live and die.

Once the blue vapour of the smouldering peat
From half a hundred homes would curl on high,
While round the doors rang children's voices sweet;
Where now the timid deer goes wandering by,
Or a lost lamb sends forth a plaintive bleat,
And the lone glen looks up to the lone sky.

R. Wilton

CXIX

RETURN TO NATURE

On the braes around Glenfinnan
Fast the human homes are thinning,
And the wilderness is winning
To itself these graves again.
Names or dates here no man knoweth,
O'er gray headstones heather groweth,
Up Loch-Shiel the sea-wind bloweth
Over sleep of nameless men.

Who were those forgotten sleepers?
Herdsmen strong, fleet forest-keepers,
Aged men, or widow'd weepers
For their foray-fallen ones?
Babes cut off 'mid childhood's prattle,
Men who lived with herds and cattle,
Clansmen from Culloden battle,
Camerons, or Clandonald's sons?

Blow ye winds, and rains effacing!
Blur the words of love's fond tracing!
Nature to herself embracing
All that human hearts would keep:
What they knew of good or evil
Faded, like the dim primaeval
Day that saw the vast upheaval
Of these hills that hold their sleep.

J. C. Shairp

CXX

THE TWO DESERTS

Not greatly moved with awe am I
To learn that we may spy
Five thousand firmaments beyond our own.
The best that's known
Of the heavenly bodies does them credit small.
View'd close, the Moon's fair ball
Is of ill objects worst,
A corpse in Night's highway, naked, fire-scarr'd, accurst;
And now they tell
That the Sun is plainly seen to boil and burst
Too horribly for hell.
So, judging from these two,
As we must do,
The Universe, outside our living Earth,
Was all conceived in the Creator's mirth,
Forecasting at the time Man's spirit deep,
To make dirt cheap.

Put by the Telescope !
Better without it man may see,
Stretch'd awful in the hush'd midnight,
The ghost of his eternity.
Give me the nobler glass that swells to the eye
The things which near us lie,
Till Science rapturously hails,
In the minutest water-drop,
A torment of innumerable tails.
These at the least do live.
But rather give
A mind not much to pry
Beyond our royal-fair estate
Betwixt these deserts blank of small and great.
Wonder and beauty our own courtiers are,
Pressing to catch our gaze,
And out of obvious ways
Ne'er wandering far.

C. Patmore

CXXI

PHILOMELA

Hark ! ah, the nightingale—
The tawny-throated !
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst !
What triumph ! hark !—what pain !

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal ?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm ?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

M. Arnold

CXXII

EVENING MELODY

O that the pines which crown yon steep
Their fires might ne'er surrender!
O that yon fervid knoll might keep,
While lasts the world, its splendour!

Pale poplars on the breeze that lean,
And in the sunset shiver,
O that your golden stems might screen
For aye yon glassy river!

That yon white bird on homeward wing
Soft-sliding without motion,
And now in blue air vanishing
Like snow-flake lost in ocean,

Beyond our sight might never flee,
Yet forward still be flying;
And all the dying day might be
Immortal in its dying!

Pellucid thus in saintly trance,
  Thus mute in expectation,
What waits the earth? Deliverance?
  Ah no! Transfiguration!

She dreams of that 'New Earth' divine,
  Conceived of seed immortal;
She sings 'Not mine the holier shrine,
  Yet mine the steps and portal!'

A. de Vere

CXXIII

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
  Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
  For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
  A rivulet then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall be,
  For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
  And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
  For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
  A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
  For ever and for ever.

A. Lord Tennyson

CXXIV

A DIRGE

Naiad, hid beneath the bank
  By the willowy river-side,
Where Narcissus gently sank,
  Where unmarried Echo died,
Unto thy serene repose
Waft the stricken Anterôs.

Where the tranquil swan is borne,
  Imaged in a watery glass,
Where the sprays of fresh pink thorn
  Stoop to catch the boats that pass,
Where the earliest orchis grows,
Bury thou fair Anterôs.

Glide we by, with prow and oar:
  Ripple shadows off the wave,
And reflected on the shore
  Haply play about his grave.
Folds of summer-light enclose
All that once was Anterôs.

On a flickering wave we gaze,
  Not upon his answering eyes:
Flower and bird we scarce can praise,
  Having lost his sweet replies:
Cold and mute the river flows
With our tears for Anterôs.

W. Johnson-Cory

CXXV

TO A FRIEND

Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind?—
He much, the old man, who, clearest-soul'd of men,
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus hill, and Smyrna bay, though blind.

Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Clear'd Rome of what most shamed him. But be his

My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

M. Arnold

CXXVI

AN INVOCATION

I never pray'd for Dryads, to haunt the woods again;
More welcome were the presence of hungering, thirsting men,
Whose doubts we could unravel, whose hopes we could fulfil,
Our wisdom tracing backward, the river to the rill;
Were such beloved forerunners one summer day restored,
Then, then we might discover the Muse's mystic hoard.

Oh, dear divine Comatas, I would that thou and I
Beneath this broken sunlight this leisure day might lie;
Where trees from distant forests, whose names were strange to thee,
Should bend their amorous branches within thy reach to be,
And flowers thine Hellas knew not, which art hath made more fair,
Should shed their shining petals upon thy fragrant hair.

Then thou shouldst calmly listen with ever-changing looks
To songs of younger minstrels and plots of modern books,

And wonder at the daring of poets later born,
Whose thoughts are unto thy thoughts as noon-tide is
to morn;
And little shouldst thou grudge them their greater
strength of soul,
Thy partners in the torch-race, though nearer to the
goal.

As when ancestral portraits look gravely from the
walls
Upon the youthful baron who treads their echoing
halls;
And while he builds new turrets, the thrice ennobled
heir
Would gladly wake his grandsire his home and feast
to share;
So from Aegaean laurels that hide thine ancient urn
I fain would call thee hither, my sweeter lore to learn.

Or in thy cedarn prison thou waitest for the bee:
Ah, leave that simple honey, and take thy food from
me.
My sun is stooping westward. Entrancéd dreamer,
haste:
There's fruitage in my garden, that I would have thee
taste.
Now lift the lid a moment: now, Dorian shepherd,
speak:
Two minds shall flow together, the English and the
Greek.

W. Johnson-Cory

CXXVII

SONG OF CALLICLES IN SICILY

Far, far from here,
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,

And by the sea, and in the brakes,
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.
And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes,
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
In breathless quiet, after all their ills;
Nor do they see their country, nor the place
Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills,
Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes!
They had stay'd long enough to see,
In Thebes, the billow of calamity
Over their own dear children roll'd,
Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
For years, they sitting helpless in their home,
A gray old man and woman; yet of old
The Gods had to their marriage come,
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days
In sight of blood; but were rapt, far away,
To where the west-wind plays,
And murmurs of the Adriatic come
To those untrodden mountain-lawns; and there
Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
And all that Theban woe, and stray
For ever through the glens, placid and dumb.

M. Arnold

CXXVIII

CALLICLES BENEATH ETNA

Through the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
Thick breaks the red flame;
All Etna heaves fiercely
Her forest-clothed frame,

Not here, O Apollo !
Are haunts meet for thee.
But, where Helicon breaks down
In cliff to the sea,

Where the moon-silver'd inlets
Send far their light voice
Up the still vale of Thisbe,
O speed, and rejoice !

On the sward at the cliff-top
Lie strewn the white flocks,
On the cliff-side the pigeons
Roost deep in the rocks.

In the moonlight the shepherds,
Soft lull'd by the rills,
Lie wrapt in their blankets
Asleep on the hills.

—What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom ?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flower'd broom ?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme ?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime ?—

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine.
—The leader is fairest,
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows !
They stream up again !
What seeks on this mountain,
The glorified train ?—

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road ;
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode,

—Whose praise do they mention?
Of what is it told?—
What will be for ever;
What was from of old.

First hymn they the Father
Of all things; and then,
The rest of immortals,
The action of men.

The day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm;
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm.

M. Arnold

CXXIX

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—'O venusta Sirmio!'
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian-laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

A. Lord Tennyson

CXXX

THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,* ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence,* 1861

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crownéd hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes ; who knows them if not I ?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time ;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore ?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass ?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well !

Yes, thou art gone ! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray ;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train ;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth ;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare !
Unbreachable the fort

Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall ;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush ! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet !—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride !
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick ! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field !—'Tis done ; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree ! the Tree !

I take the omen ! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail !
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there !—
Ah, vain ! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him ;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old !—
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,

For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone ;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute !
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis ! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear :
Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

M. Arnold

CXXXI

AMPHIBIAN

The fancy I had to-day,
Fancy which turn'd a fear !
I swam far out in the bay,
Since waves laugh'd warm and clear.

I lay and look'd at the sun,
The noon-sun look'd at me :
Between us two, no one
Live creature, that I could see.

Yes ! There came floating by
Me, who lay floating too,
Such a strange butterfly !
Creature as dear as new :

Because the membraned wings
So wonderful, so wide,
So sun-suffused, were things
Like soul and nought beside.

A handbreadth over head !
All of the sea my own,
It own'd the sky instead ;
Both of us were alone.

I never shall join its flight,
For, nought buoys flesh in air.
If it touch the sea—good-night !
Death sure and swift waits there.

Can the insect feel the better
For watching the uncouth play
Of limbs that slip the fetter,
Pretend as they were not clay ?

Undoubtedly I rejoice
That the air comports so well
With a creature which had the choice
Of the land once. Who can tell ?

What if a certain soul
Which early slipp'd its sheath,
And has for its home the whole
Of heaven, thus look beneath,

Thus watch one who, in the world,
Both lives and likes life's way,
Nor wishes the wings unfurl'd
That sleep in the worm, they say ?

But sometimes when the weather
Is blue, and warm waves tempt
To free oneself of tether,
And try a life exempt

From worldly noise and dust,
In the sphere which overbrims
With passion and thought,—why, just
Unable to fly, one swims!

By passion and thought upborne,
One smiles to oneself—'They fare
Scarce better, they need not scorn
Our sea, who live in the air!'

Emancipate through passion
And thought, with sea for sky,
We substitute, in a fashion,
For heaven—poetry:

Which sea, to all intent,
Gives flesh such noon-disport
As a finer element
Affords the spirit-sort.

Whatever they are, we seem:
Imagine the thing they know;
All deeds they do, we dream;
Can heaven be else but so?

And meantime, yonder streak
Meets the horizon's verge;
That is the land, to seek
If we tire or dread the surge:

Land the solid and safe—
To welcome again (confess!)
When, high and dry, we chafe
The body, and don the dress.

Does she look, pity, wonder
At one who mimics flight,
Swims—heaven above, sea under,
Yet always earth in sight?

R. Browning

CXXXII

O life, O death, O world, O time,
O grave, where all things flow,
'Tis yours to make our lot sublime
With your great weight of woe.

Though sharpest anguish hearts may wring,
Though bosoms torn may be,
Yet suffering is a holy thing;
Without it what were we?

R. C. Archbishop Trench

CXXXIII

CONSOLATION

Mist clogs the sunshine.
Smoky dwarf houses
Hem me round everywhere;
A vague dejection
Weighs down my soul.

Yet, while I languish,
Everywhere countless
Prospects unroll themselves,
And countless beings
Pass countless moods.

Far hence, in Asia,
On the smooth convent-roofs,
On the gilt terraces,
Of holy Lassa,
Bright shines the sun.

Gray time-worn marbles
Hold the pure Muses;
In their cool gallery,
By yellow Tiber,
They still look fair.

Strange unloved uproar
Shrills round their portal;
Yet not on Helicon
Kept they more cloudless
Their noble calm.

Through sun-proof alleys
In a lone, sand-hemm'd
City of Africa,
A blind, led beggar,
Age-bow'd, asks alms.

No bolder robber
Erst abode ambush'd
Deep in the sandy waste;
No clearer eyesight
Spied prey afar.

Saharan sand-winds
Sear'd his keen eyeballs;
Spent is the spoil he won.
For him the present
Holds only pain.

Two young, fair lovers,
Where the warm June-wind,
Fresh from the summer fields
Plays fondly round them,
Stand, tranced in joy.

With sweet, join'd voices,
And with eyes brimming:
'Ah,' they cry, 'Destiny,
Prolong the present!
Time, stand still here!'

The prompt stern Goddess
Shakes her head, frowning;
Time gives his hour-glass
Its due reversal;
Their hour is gone.

With weak indulgence
Did the just Goddess
Lengthen their happiness,
She lengthen'd also
Distress elsewhere.

The hour, whose happy
Unalloy'd moments
I would eternalize,
Ten thousand mourners
Well pleased see end.

The bleak, stern hour,
Whose severe moments
I would annihilate,
Is pass'd by others
In warmth, light, joy.

Time, so complain'd of,
Who to of one man
Shows partiality,
Brings round to all men
Some undimm'd hours.

M. Arnold

CXXXIV

RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me !
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made :
Our times are in His hand
Who saith ' A whole I plann'd,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid !

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sigh'd ' Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?'
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearn'd ' Nor Jove, nor Mars ;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends
them all ! '

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finish'd and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but form'd to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-cramm'd beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use :
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn :
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole :
Should not the heart beat once 'How good to live and learn?'

Not once beat 'Praise be Thine !
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too :
Perfect I call Thy plan :
Thanks that I was a man !
Maker, remake, complete, —I trust what Thou shalt do !'

For pleasant is this flesh ;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pull'd ever to the earth, still yearns for rest ;
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best !

Let us not always say
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gain'd ground upon the whole !'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul !'

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reach'd its term :
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the develop'd brute ; a god though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new :
Fearless and unperplex'd,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby ;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold :
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame :
Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray :
A whisper from the west
Shoots—'Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth : here dies another day.'

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
'This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain :
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.'

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day :
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made :
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedest age : wait death nor be afraid !

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Sever'd great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraign'd,
Were they, my soul disdain'd,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Call'd 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger fail'd to plumb,
So pass'd in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weigh'd not as his work, yet swell'd the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be pack'd
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—

Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
'Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!'

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What enter'd into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fix'd thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impress'd.

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Scull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

So, take and use Thy work :
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim !
My times be in Thy hand !
Perfect the cup as plann'd !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same !

R. Browning.

CXXXV

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL:

A PICTURE AT FANO

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me !
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find perform'd thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
—And suddenly my head is cover'd o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world ; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God ! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

If this was ever granted, I would rest
  My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-cover'd both my eyes beside thy breast,
  Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
  And all lay quiet, happy and suppress'd.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repair'd!
  I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
  After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
  What further may be sought for or declared?

R. Browning

CXXXVI

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
  The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
  I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
  The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
  Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attain'd,
  And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gain'd,
  The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
  The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
  And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
  The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
  Of pain, darkness and cold.

For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

R. Browning

CXXXVII

Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been, things remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

A. H. Clough

CXXXVIII

EPILOGUE

TO ASOLANDO

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprison'd—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turn'd his back but march'd breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dream'd, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!'

R. Browning

CXXXIX

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

A. Lord Tennyson

CXL

IN LOVE'S ETERNITY

My body was part of the sun and the dew,
Not a trace of my death to me clave,
There was scarce a man left on the earth whom I knew,
And another was laid in my grave.
I was changed and in heaven, the great sea of blue
Had long wash'd my soul pure in its wave.

My sorrow was turn'd to a beautiful dress,
Very fair for my weeping was I ;
And my heart was renew'd, but it bore none the less
The great wound that had brought me to die,
The deep wound that She gave who wrought all my distress ;
Ah, my heart loved her still in the sky !

My soul had forgiven each separate tear
She had bitterly wrung from my eyes ;
But I thought of her lightness,—ah ! sore was my fear
She would fall somewhere never to rise,
And that no one would love her, to bring her soul near
To the heavens, where love never dies.

She had drawn me with feigning, and held me a day ;
She had taken the passionate price
That my heart gave for love, with no doubt or delay,
For I thought that her smile would suffice :
She had play'd with and wasted and then cast away
The true heart that could never love twice.

And false must she be: she had follow'd the cheat
That ends loveless and hopeless below:
I remember'd her words' cruel worldly deceit
When she bade me forget her and go.
She could ne'er have believed after death we might meet,
Or she would not have let me die so.

I thought, and was sad: the blue fathomless seas
Bore the white clouds in luminous throng:
And the souls that had love were in each one of these:
They pass'd by with a great upward song:
They were going to wander beneath the fair trees,
In high Eden—their joy would be long.

How sweet to look back to that desolate space
When the heaven scarce *my* heaven seem'd!
She came suddenly, swiftly,—a great healing grace
Fill'd her features, and forth from her stream'd.
With a cry our lips met, and a long close embrace
Made the past like a thing I had dream'd.

Ah Love! she began, when I found you were dead,
I was changed, and the world was changed too:
On a sudden I felt that the sunshine had fled,
And the flowers and summer gone too:
Life but mock'd me: I found there was nothing instead,
But to turn back and weep all in you.

When you were not there to fall down at my feet,
And pour out the whole passionate store
Of the heart that was made to make my heart complete,
In true words that my memory bore,—
Then I found that those words were the only words sweet,
And I knew I should hear them no more.

Ah, yes! but your love was a fair magic toy,
That you gave to a child, who scarce deign'd
To glance at it—forsook it for some passing joy,
Never guessing the charm it contain'd;
But you gave it and left it, and none could destroy
The fair talisman where it remain'd.

And surely, no child, but a woman at last
Found your gift where the child let it lie,
Understood the whole secret it held, sweet and vast,
The fair treasure a world could not buy;
And believed not the meaning could ever have past,
Any more than the giver could die.

She ceased. To my soul's deepest sources the sense
Of her words with a full healing crept,
And my heart was deliver'd with rapture intense
From the wound and the void it had kept;
Then I saw that her heart was a heaven immense
As my love; and together we wept.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CXLI

THREE SEASONS

'A cup for hope!' she said,
In springtime ere the bloom was old:
The crimson wine was poor and cold
By her mouth's richer red.

'A cup for love!' how low,
How soft the words; and all the while
Her blush was rippling with a smile
Like summer after snow.

'A cup for memory!'
Cold cup that one must drain alone:
While autumn winds are up and moan
Across the barren sea.

Hope, memory, love:
Hope for fair morn, and love for day,
And memory for the evening gray
And solitary dove.

C. G. Rossetti

CXLII

HALF TRUTH

The words that trembled on your lips
Were utter'd not—I know it well;
The tears that would your eyes eclipse
Were check'd and smother'd, ere they fell:
The looks and smiles I gain'd from you
Were little more than others won,
And yet you are not wholly true,
Nor wholly just what you have done.

You know, at least you might have known,
That every little grace you gave,—
Your voice's somewhat lower'd tone,—
Your hand's faint shake or parting wave,—
Your every sympathetic look
At words that chanced your soul to touch,
While reading from some favourite book,
Were much to me—alas, how much!

You might have seen—perhaps you saw—
How all of these were steps of hope
On which I rose, in joy and awe,
Up to my passion's lofty scope;
How after each, a firmer tread
I planted on the slippery ground,
And higher raised my venturous head,
And ever new assurance found.

Maybe, without a further thought,
It only pleased you thus to please,
And thus to kindly feelings wrought
You measured not the sweet degrees;

Yet, though you hardly understood
Where I was following at your call,
You might—I dare to say you should—
Have thought how far I had to fall.

And thus when fallen, faint, and bruised,
I see another's glad success,
I may have wrongfully accused
Your heart of vulgar fickleness:
But even now, in calm review
Of all I lost and all I won,
I cannot deem you wholly true,
Nor wholly just what you have done.

R. M. (Milnes) Lord Houghton

CXLIII

NESSUN MAGGIOR DOLORE . . .

They seem'd to those who saw them meet
The worldly friends of every day,
Her smile was undisturb'd and sweet,
His courtesy was free and gay.

But yet if one the other's name
In some unguarded moment heard,
The heart, you thought so calm and tame,
Would struggle like a captured bird:

And letters of mere formal phrase
Were blister'd with repeated tears,—
And this was not the work of days,
But had gone on for years and years!

Alas, that Love was not too strong
For maiden shame and manly pride!
Alas, that they delay'd so long
The goal of mutual bliss beside!

Yet what no chance could then reveal,
And neither would be first to own,
Let fate and courage now conceal,
When truth could bring remorse alone.

R. M. (Milnes) Lord Houghton

CXLIV

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

O, Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind;
But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants were the kings,
Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arch'd by . . . what you call
. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept the carnival:
I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it all!

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-day
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red,—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?

Well, (and it was graceful of them) they'd break talk off and afford
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet, he, to finger on his sword,
While you sat and play'd Toccatas, stately at the clavichord?

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminish'd, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions—'Must we die?'
Those commiserating sevenths—'Life might last! we can but try!'

'Were you happy?'—'Yes.'—'And are you still as happy?'—'Yes. And you?'
—'Then, more kisses!'—'Did *I* stop them, when a million seem'd so few?'
Hark! the dominant's persistence, till it must be answer'd to!

So an octave struck the answer. O, they praised you, I dare say!
'Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking, when I hear a master play.'

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death came tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand
nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close
reserve,
In you come with your cold music, till I creep through
every nerve.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a
house was burn'd—
'Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent
what Venice earn'd!
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be
discern'd.

'Yours for instance, you know physics, something of
geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in
their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction,—you'll not die, it
cannot be!

'As for Venice and its people, merely born to bloom
and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly
were the crop:
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing
had to stop?

'Dust and ashes!' So you creak it, and I want the
heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's become
of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly
and grown old.

R. Browning

CXLV

IF SHE BUT KNEW

If she but knew that I am weeping
Still for her sake,
That love and sorrow grow with keeping
Till they must break,
My heart that breaking will adore her,
Be hers and die ;
If she might hear me once implore her,
Would she not sigh ?

If she but knew that it would save me
Her voice to hear,
Saying she pitied me, forgave me,
Must she forbear ?
If she were told that I was dying,
Would she be dumb ?
Could she content herself with sighing ?
Would she not come ?

A. O'Shaughnessy

CXLVI

SONG

Has summer come without the rose,
Or left the bird behind ?
Is the blue changed above thee,
O world ! or am I blind ?
Will you change every flower that grows,
Or only change this spot,
Where she who said, I love thee,
Now says, I love thee not ?

The skies seem'd true above thee,
The rose true on the tree ;
The bird seem'd true the summer through,
But all proved false to me.

World ! is there one good thing in you,
Life, love, or death—or what ?
Since lips that sang, I love thee,
Have said, I love thee not ?

I think the sun's kiss will scarce fall
Into one flower's gold cup ;
I think the bird will miss me,
And give the summer up.
O sweet place ! desolate in tall
Wild grass, have you forgot
How her lips loved to kiss me,
Now that they kiss me not ?

Be false or fair above me,
Come back with any face,
Summer !—do I care what you do ?
You cannot change one place—
The grass, the leaves, the earth, the dew,
The grave I make the spot—
Here, where she used to love me,
Here, where she loves me not.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CXLVII

DEPARTURE

It was not like your great and gracious ways !
Do you, that have nought other to lament,
Never, my Love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,
You went,
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
Upon your journey of so many days
Without a single kiss, or a good-bye ?
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon ;
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
Your harrowing praise.
Well, it was well,

To hear you such things speak,
And I could tell
What made your eyes a growing gloom of love,
As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.
And it was like your great and gracious ways
To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash
To let the laughter flash,
Whilst I drew near,
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.
But all at once to leave me at the last,
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
And go your journey of all days
With not one kiss, or a good-bye,
And the only loveless look the look with which you pass'd:
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

C. Fatmore

CXLVIII

SONG

I made another garden, yea,
For my new love;
I left the dead rose where it lay,
And set the new above.
Why did the summer not begin?
Why did my heart not haste?
My old love came and walk'd therein,
And laid the garden waste.

She enter'd with her weary smile,
Just as of old;
She look'd around a little while,
And shiver'd at the cold.
Her passing touch was death to all,
Her passing look a blight:
She made the white rose-petals fall,
And turn'd the red rose white.

Her pale robe, clinging to the grass,
Seem'd like a snake
That bit the grass and ground, alas!
And a sad trail did make.
She went up slowly to the gate;
And there, just as of yore,
She turn'd back at the last to wait,
And say farewell once more.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CXLIX

THE LOST MISTRESS

All's over, then: does truth sound bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
About your cottage eaves!

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,
I noticed that, to-day;
One day more bursts them open fully
—You know the red turns gray.

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?
May I take your hand in mine?
Mere friends are we,—well, friends the merest
Keep much that I resign:

For each glance of the eye so bright and black,
Though I keep with heart's endeavour,—
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,
Though it stay in my soul for ever!—

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,
Or only a thought stronger;
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,
Or so very little longer!

R. Browning

CL

ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night ;
  Come in the speaking silence of a dream ;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
  As sunlight on a stream ;
    Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finish'd years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
  Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet ;
  Where thirsting longing eyes
    Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
  My very life again though cold in death :
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
  Pulse for pulse, breath for breath :
    Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

C. G. Rossetti

CLI

GREATER MEMORY

In the heart there lay buried for years
Love's story of passion and tears ;
Of the heaven that two had begun,
  And the horror that tore them apart,
When one was love's slayer, but one
  Made a grave for the love in his heart.

The long years pass'd weary and lone,
And it lay there and changed there unknown;
Then one day from its innermost place,
In the shamed and the ruin'd love's stead,
Love arose with a glorified face,
Like an angel that comes from the dead.

It uplifted the stone that was set
On that tomb which the heart held yet;
But the sorrow had moulder'd within,
And there came from the long closed door
A clear image, that was not the sin
Or the grief that lay buried before.

The grief it was long wash'd away
In the weeping of many a day;
And the terrible past lay afar,
Like a dream left behind in the night;
And the memory that woke was a star
Shining pure in the soul's pure light.

There was never the stain of a tear
On the face that was ever so dear;
'Twas the same in each lovelier way;
'Twas the old love's holier part,
And the dream of the earliest day
Brought back to the desolate heart.

It was knowledge of all that had been
In the thought, in the soul unseen;
'Twas the word which the lips could not say
To redeem and recover the past;
It was more than was taken away
Which the heart got back at the last.

The passion that lost its spell,
The rose that died where it fell,
The look that was look'd in vain,
The prayer that seem'd lost evermore,
They were found in the heart again,
With all that the heart would restore.

And thenceforward the heart was a shrine
For that memory to dwell in divine,
Till from life, as from love, the dull leaven
Of grief-stain'd earthliness fell;
And thenceforth in the infinite heaven
That heart and that memory dwell.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CLII

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless—
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air,
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls, as countries, lieth silent, bare,
Under the blenching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death;
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it: the marble eyelids are not wet—
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

E. B. Browning

CLIII

THE BROKEN HEART

News o' grief had overteäken
Dark-ey'd Fanny, now vorseäken;
There she zot, wi' breast a-heavèn,
While vrom zide to zide, wi' grievèn,
Vell her head, wi' tears a-creepèn
Down her cheäks, in bitter weepèn.
There wer still the ribbon-bow
She tied avore her hour ov woe,
An' there wer still the han's that tied it
Hangèn white,
Or wringèn tight,
In ceäre that drown'd all ceäre bezide it.

When a man, wi' heartless slightèn,
Mid become a maïden's blightèn,
He mid ceärelessly vorseäke her,
But must answer to her Meäker ;
He mid slight, wi' selfish blindness,
All her deeds o' lovèn-kindness,
God wull waïgh 'em wi' the slightèn
That mid be her love's requitèn ;
He do look on each deceiver,
He do know
What weight o' woe
Do breäk the heart ov ev'ry griever.

W. Barnes

CLIV

PARTING

Too fair, I may not call thee mine :
Too dear, I may not see
Those eyes with bridal beacons shine ;
Yet, Darling, keep for me—
Empty and hush'd, and safe apart,
One little corner of thy heart.

Thou wilt be happy, dear ! and bless
Thee : happy mayst thou be.
I would not make thy pleasure less ;
Yet, Darling, keep for me—
My life to light, my lot to leaven,
One little corner of thy Heaven.

Good-bye, dear heart ! I go to dwell
A weary way from thee ;
Our first kiss is our last farewell ;
Yet, Darling, keep for me—
Who wander outside in the night,
One little corner of thy light.

G. Massey

CLV

THE MAID'S LAMENT

I loved him not ; and yet now he is gone
I feel I am alone.
I check'd him while he spoke ; yet could he speak,
Alas ! I would not check.
For reasons not to love him once I sought,
And wearied all my thought
To vex myself and him : I now would give
My love, could he but live
Who lately lived for me, and when he found
'Twas vain, in holy ground
He hid his face amid the shades of death.
I waste for him my breath
Who wasted his for me : but mine returns,
And this lorn bosom burns
With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,
And waking me to weep
Tears that had melted his soft heart : for years
Wept he as bitter tears.
Merciful God ! Such was his latest prayer,
These may she never share !
Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold,
Than daisies in the mould,
Where children spell, athwart the churchyard gate,
His name and life's brief date.
Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe'er you be,
And, O, pray too for me !

W. S. Landor

CLVI

LOVESIGHT

When do I see thee most, belovéd one ?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known ?

Or when in the dusk hours (we two alone),
Close-kiss'd and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perish'd leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

D. G. Rossetti

CLVII

A FAREWELL

With all my will, but much against my heart,
We two now part.
My Very Dear,
Our solace is, the sad road lies so clear.
It needs no art,
With faint, averted feet
And many a tear,
In our opposéd paths to persevere.
Go thou to East, I West.
We will not say
There's any hope, it is so far away.
But, O, my Best,
When the one darling of our widowhead,
The nursling Grief,
Is dead,
And no dews blur our eyes
To see the peach-bloom come in evening skies,
Perchance we may,
Where now this night is day,
And even through faith of still averted feet,
Making full circle of our banishment,
Amazéd meet;
The bitter journey to the bourne so sweet
Seasoning the termless feast of our content
With tears of recognition never dry.

C. Patmore

CLVIII

SONG OF THE OLD LOVE

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,
My old sorrow wakes and cries,
For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,
And a scarlet sun doth rise ;
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,
And the icy founts run free,
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,
And plunge, and sail in the sea.

O my lost love, and my own, own love,
And my love that loved me so !
Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below ?
Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,
I remember all that I said,
And now thou wilt hear me no more—no more
Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail
To the ice-fields and the snow ;
Thou wert sad, for thy love did nought avail,
And the end I could not know ;
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,
Whom that day I held not dear ?
How could I know I should love thee away
When I did not love thee anear ?

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain
With the faded bents o'erspread,
We shall stand no more by the seething main
While the dark wrack drives o'erhead ;
We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,
Where thy last farewell was said ;
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again
When the sea gives up her dead.

J. Ingelow

CLIX

A DREAM OF AUTUMN

I heard a man of many winters say,
' Sometimes a sweet dream comes to me by night,
Fluttering my heart with pulses of delight,
In glory bright as day ;

' 'Tis not the stir of manhood, nor the pain,
The flood of passions, and the pomp of life,
The toils, the care, the triumphs, and the strife,
That move my soul again ;

' Ah ! no, my prison-gates are open thrown,
There is a brighter earth, a lovelier sun,
One face I see, I hear one voice, but one,
'Tis She, and She alone !

' It is a golden morning of the spring,
My cheek is pale, and hers is warm with bloom,
And we are left in that old carven room,
And she begins to sing ;

' The open casement quivers in the breeze,
And one large muskrose leans its dewy grace
Into the chamber, like a happy face,
And round it swim the bees ;

' Sometimes her sunny brow she loves to lean
Over her harp-strings ; sometimes her blue eyes
Are diving into the blue morning skies,
Or woodland shadows green ;

' Sometimes she looks adown a garden walk
Whence echoes of blithe converse come and go,
And two or three fair sisters, laughing low,
Go hand in hand, and talk.

' And once or twice all fearfully she gazed
Up to her gray fore-fathers, grim and tall,
With faded brows that frown'd along the wall,
And steadfast eyes amazed.

'She stays her song; I linger idly by;
She lifts her head, and then she casts it down,
One small, fair hand is o'er the other thrown,
With a low, broken sigh;

'I know not what I said; what she replied
Lives, like eternal sunshine, in my heart;
And then I murmur'd, Oh! we never part,
My love, my life, my bride!

'And then, as if to crown that first of hours,
That hour that ne'er was mated by another,
Into the open casement her young brother
Threw a fresh wreath of flowers.

'And silence o'er us, after that great bliss,
Fell, like a welcome shadow; and I heard
The far woods sighing, and a summer bird
Singing amid the trees;

'The sweet bird's happy song, that stream'd around,
The murmur of the woods, the azure skies,
Were graven on my heart, though ears and eyes
Mark'd neither sight nor sound.

'She sleeps in peace beneath the chancel stone,
But ah! so clearly is the vision seen,
The dead seem raised, or Death hath never been,
Were I not here alone.

'Oft, as I wake at morn, I seem to see
A moment, the sweet shadow of that shade,
Her blessèd face, as it were loth to fade,
Turn'd back to look on me.'

F. Tennyson

CLX

SILENCES

'Tis a world of silences. I gave a cry
In the first sorrow my heart could not withstand;
I saw men pause, and listen, and look sad,
As though an answer in their hearts they had;
Some turn'd away, some came and took my hand,
For all reply.

I stood beside a grave. Years had pass'd by;
Sick with unanswer'd life I turn'd to death,
And whisper'd all my question to the grave,
And watch'd the flowers desolately wave,
And grass stir on it with a fitful breath,
For all reply.

I raised my eyes to heaven; my prayer went high
Into the luminous mystery of the blue;
My thought of God was purer than a flame,
And God it seem'd a little nearer came,
Then pass'd; and greater still the silence grew,
For all reply.

—But you! If I can speak before I die,
I spoke to you with all my soul, and when
I look at you 'tis still my soul you see.
Oh, in your heart was there no word for me?
All would have answer'd had you answer'd then
With even a sigh.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CLXI

AMELIA

Whene'er mine eyes do my Amelia greet
It is with such emotion
As when, in childhood, turning a dim street,
I first beheld the ocean.

There, where the little, bright, surf-breathing town,
That show'd me first her beauty and the sea,
Gathers its skirts against the gorse-lit down
And scatters gardens o'er the southern lea,
Abides this Maid
Within a kind, yet sombre Mother's shade,
Who of her daughter's graces seems almost afraid,
Viewing them ofttimes with a scared forecast,
Caught, haply, from obscure love-peril past.
Howe'er that be,
She scants me of my right,
Is cunning careful evermore to balk
Sweet separate talk,
And fevers my delight
By frets, if, on Amelia's cheek of peach,
I touch the notes which music cannot reach,
Bidding 'Good-night!'
Wherefore it came that, till to-day's dear date,
I cursed the weary months which yet I have to wait
Ere I find heaven, one-nested with my mate.
To-day, the Mother gave,
To urgent pleas and promise to behave
As she were there, her long-besought consent
To trust Amelia with me to the grave
Where lay my once-betrothéd, Millicent:
'For,' said she, hiding ill a moistening eye,
'Though, Sir, the word sounds hard,
God makes as if He least knew how to guard
The treasure He loves best, simplicity.'
And there Amelia stood, for fairness shown
Like a young apple-tree, in flush'd array
Of white and ruddy flower, auroral, gay,
With chilly blue the maiden branch between;
And yet to look on her moved less the mind
To say 'How beauteous!' than 'How good and kind!'
And so we went alone
By walls o'er which the lilac's numerous plume
Shook down perfume;
Trim plots close blown
With daisies, in conspicuous myriads seen,
Engross'd each one

With single ardour for her spouse, the sun ;
Garths in their glad array
Of white and ruddy branch, auroral, gay,
With azure chill the maiden flower between ;
Meadows of fervid green,
With sometime sudden prospect of untold
Cowslips, like chance-found gold ;
And broadcast buttercups at joyful gaze,
Rending the air with praise,
Like the six-hundred-thousand-voicéd shout
Of Jacob camp'd in Midian put to rout ;
Then through the Park,
Where Spring to livelier gloom
Quicken'd the cedars dark,
And, 'gainst the clear sky cold,
Which shone afar
Crowded with sunny alps oracular,
Great chestnuts raised themselves abroad like cliffs of
bloom :
And everywhere,
Amid the ceaseless rapture of the lark,
With wonder new
We caught the solemn voice of single air,
'Cuckoo !'
And when Amelia, 'bolden'd, saw and heard
How bravely sang the bird,
And all things in God's bounty did rejoice,
She who, her Mother by, spake seldom word,
Did her charm'd silence doff,
And, to my happy marvel, her dear voice
Went as a clock does, when the pendulum's off.
Ill Monarch of man's heart the Maiden who
Does not aspire to be High-Pontiff too !
So she repeated soft her Poet's line,
'By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature, are we thine !'
And I, up the bright steep she led me, trod,
And the like thought pursued
With, 'What is gladness without gratitude,
And where is gratitude without a God?'
And of delight, the guerdon of His laws,
She spake, in learnéd mood ;

And I, of Him loved reverently, as Cause,
Her sweetly, as Occasion of all good.
Nor were we shy,
For souls in heaven that be
May talk of heaven without hypocrisy.
And now, when we drew near
The low, gray Church, in its sequester'd dell,
A shade upon me fell.
Dead Millicent indeed had been most sweet,
But I how little meet
To call such graces in a Maiden mine!
A boy's proud passion free affection blunts;
His well-meant flatteries oft are blind affronts;
And many a tear
Was Millicent's before I, manlier, knew
That maidens shine
As diamonds do,
Which, though most clear,
Are not to be seen through;
And, if she put her virgin self aside
And sate her, crownless, at my conquering feet,
It should have bred in me humility, not pride.
Amelia had more luck than Millicent,
Secure she smiled and warm from all mischance
Or from my knowledge or my ignorance,
And glow'd content
With my—some might have thought too much—superior age,
Which seem'd the gage
Of steady kindness all on her intent.
Thus nought forbade us to be fully blent.
While, therefore, now
Her pensive footstep stirr'd
The darnell'd garden of unheedful death,
She ask'd what Millicent was like, and heard
Of eyes like her's, and honeysuckle breath,
And of a wiser than a woman's brow,
Yet fill'd with only woman's love, and how
An incidental greatness character'd
Her unconsider'd ways.
But all my praise
Amelia thought too slight for Millicent,

And on my lovelier-freighted arm she leant,
For more attent ;
And the tea-rose I gave,
To deck her breast, she dropp'd upon the grave.
'And this was her's,' said I, decoring with a band
Of mildest pearls Amelia's milder hand.
'Nay, I will wear it for *her* sake,' she said :
For dear to maidens are their rivals dead.
And so,
She seated on the black yew's tortured root,
I on the carpet of sere shreds below,
And nigh the little mound where lay that other,
I kiss'd her lips three times without dispute,
And, with bold worship suddenly aglow,
I lifted to my lips a sandall'd foot,
And kiss'd it three times thrice without dispute.
Upon my head her fingers fell like snow,
Her lamb-like hands about my neck she wreathed,
Her arms like slumber o'er my shoulders crept,
And with her bosom, whence the azalea breathed,
She did my face full favourably smother,
To hide the heaving secret that she wept !
Now would I keep my promise to her Mother ;
Now I arose, and raised her to her feet,
My best Amelia, fresh-born from a kiss,
Moth-like, full-blown in birthdew shuddering sweet,
With great, kind eyes, in whose brown shade
Bright Venus and her Baby play'd !
At inmost heart well pleased with one another,
What time the slant sun low
Through the plough'd field does each clod sharply show,
And softly fills
With shade the dimples of our homeward hills,
With little said,
We left the 'wilder'd garden of the dead,
And gain'd the gorse-lit shoulder of the down
That keeps the north-wind from the nestling town,
And caught, once more, the vision of the wave,
Where, on the horizon's dip,
A many-sailéd ship
Pursued alone her distant purpose grave ;

And, by steep steps rock-hewn, to the dim street
I led her sacred feet ;
And so the Daughter gave,
Soft, moth-like, sweet,
Showy as damask-rose and shy as musk,
Back to her Mother, anxious in the dusk.
And now 'Good-night !'
Me shall the phantom months no more affright.
For heaven's gates to open, well waits he
Who keeps himself the key.

C. Patmore

CLXII

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again !

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee :
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide ;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same ;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be ;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me :
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

A. Lord Tennyson

CLXIII

TO THE END

I wonder if the Angels
Love with such love as ours,
If for each other's sake they pluck
And keep eternal flowers.
Alone I am and weary,
Alone yet not alone:
Her soul talks with me by the way
From tedious stone to stone,
A blesséd Angel treads with me
The awful paths unknown.

If her spirit went before me
Up from night to day,
It would pass me like the lightning
That kindles on its way.
I should feel it like the lightning
Flashing fresh from Heaven:
I should long for Heaven sevenfold more,
Yea and sevenfold seven:
Should pray as I have not pray'd before,
And strive as I have not striven.

She will learn new love in Heaven,
Who is so full of love;
She will learn new depths of tenderness
Who is tender like a dove.
Her heart will no more sorrow,
Her eyes will weep no more:
Yet it may be she will yearn
And look back from far before:
Lingering on the golden threshold
And leaning from the door.

C. G. Rossetti

CLXIV

THE ONE HOPE

When vain desire at last and vain regret
  Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
  What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,—
  Or may the soul at once in a green plain
  Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
And cull the dew-drench'd flowering amulet?

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
  Between the scriptured petals softly blown
  Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
  Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

D. G. Rossetti

CLXV

A DEAD ROSE

O Rose! who dares to name thee?
No longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet:
But pale, and hard, and dry, as stubble-wheat,—
  Kept seven years in a drawer—thy titles shame
    thee.

The breeze that used to blow thee
Between the hedge-row thorns, and take away
An odour up the lane to last all day,—
  If breathing now,—unsweeten'd would forgo thee.

The sun that used to smite thee,
And mix his glory in thy gorgeous urn,
Till beam appear'd to bloom, and flower to burn,—
  If shining now,—with not a hue would light thee.

The dew that used to wet thee,
And, white first, grow incarnadined, because
It lay upon thee where the crimson was,—
If dropping now,—would darken where it met thee.

The fly that lit upon thee,
To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet,
Along thy leaf's pure edges, after heat,—
If lighting now,—would coldly overrun thee.

The bee that once did suck thee,
And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,
And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,—
If passing now,—would blindly overlook thee.

The heart doth recognize thee,
Alone, alone! The heart doth smell thee sweet,
Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete—
Though seeing now those changes that disguise thee.

E. B. Browning

CLXVI

LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squander'd and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murder'd self, with low last breath.
'I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?'
'And I—and I—thyself,' (lo! each one saith,)
'And thou thyself to all eternity!'

D. G. Rossetti

CLXVII

THE SUMMER IS ENDED

Wreathe no more lilies in my hair,
For I am dying, Sister sweet:
Or, if you will for the last time
Indeed, why make me fair
Once for my winding-sheet.

Pluck no more roses for my breast,
For I like them fade in my prime:
Or, if you will, why pluck them still,
That they may share my rest
Once more for the last time.

Weep not for me when I am gone,
Dear tender one, but hope and smile:
Or, if you cannot choose but weep,
A little while weep on,
Only a little while.

C. G. Rossetti.

CLXVIII

RETURNING HOME

To leave unseen so many a glorious sight,
To leave so many lands unvisited,
To leave so many worthiest books unread,
Unrealized so many visions bright;—

Oh! wretched yet inevitable spite
Of our brief span, that we must yield our breath,
And wrap us in the unfeeling coil of death,
So much remaining of unproved delight.

But hush, my soul, and vain regrets, be still'd;
Find rest in Him who is the complement
Of whatsoe'er transcends our mortal doom,
Of baffled hope and unfulfill'd intent;
In the clear vision and aspect of whom
All longings and all hopes shall be fulfill'd.

R. C. Archbishop Trench

CLXIX

IN A LONDON SQUARE

Put forth thy leaf, thou lofty plane,
  East wind and frost are safely gone;
With zephyr mild and balmy rain
  The summer comes serenely on;
Earth, air, and sun and skies combine
  To promise all that's kind and fair:—
But thou, O human heart of mine,
  Be still, contain thyself, and bear.

December days were brief and chill,
  The winds of March were wild and drear,
And, nearing and receding still,
  Spring never would, we thought, be here.
The leaves that burst, the suns that shine,
  Had, not the less, their certain date:—
And thou, O human heart of mine,
  Be still, refrain thyself, and wait.

A. H. Clough

CLXX

LASCIATE OGNI SPERANZA . . .

I am! yet what I am who cares, or knows?
My friends forsake me, like a memory lost.
I am the self-consumer of my woes,
They rise and vanish, an oblivious host,
Shadows of life, whose very soul is lost.
And yet I am—I live—though I am toss'd

Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,
Into the living sea of waking dream,
Where there is neither sense of life, nor joys,
But the huge shipwreck of my own esteem
And all that's dear. Even those I loved the best
Are strange—nay, they are stranger than the rest.

I long for scenes where man has never trod—
For scenes where woman never smiled or wept—
There to abide with my Creator, God,
And sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept,
Full of high thoughts, unborn. So let me lie,
The grass below ; above, the vaulted sky.

J. Clare

CLXXI

THE BOURNE

Underneath the growing grass,
Underneath the living flowers,
Deeper than the sound of showers :
There we shall not count the hours
By the shadows as they pass.

Youth and health will be but vain,
Beauty reckon'd of no worth :
There a very little girth
Can hold round what once the earth
Seem'd too narrow to contain.

C. G. Rossetti

CLXXII

SONG

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me ;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree :
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet ;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
  I shall not feel the rain ;
I shall not hear the nightingale
  Sing on, as if in pain :
And dreaming through the twilight
  That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
  And haply may forget.

C. G. Rossetti

CLXXIII

THE FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

If you go over desert and mountain,
  Far into the country of sorrow,
  To-day and to-night and to-morrow,
And maybe for months and for years ;
  You shall come, with a heart that is bursting
  For trouble and toiling and thirsting,
You shall certainly come to the fountain
At length,—to the Fountain of Tears.

Very peaceful the place is, and solely
  For piteous lamenting and sighing,
  And those who come living or dying
Alike from their hopes and their fears ;
  Full of cypress-like shadows the place is,
  And statues that cover their faces :
But out of the gloom springs the holy
And beautiful Fountain of Tears.

And it flows and it flows with a motion
  So gentle and lovely and listless,
  And murmurs a tune so resistless
To him who hath suffer'd and hears—
  You shall surely—without a word spoken,
  Kneel down there and know your heart broken,
And yield to the long curb'd emotion
That day by the Fountain of Tears.

For it grows and it grows, as though leaping
  Up higher the more one is thinking;
  And ever its tunes go on sinking
More poignantly into the ears:
  Yea, so blessèd and good seems that fountain,
  Reach'd after dry desert and mountain,
You shall fall down at length in your weeping
And bathe your sad face in the tears.

Then, alas! while you lie there a season,
  And sob between living and dying,
  And give up the land you were trying
To find 'mid your hopes and your fears;
  —O the world shall come up and pass o'er you;
  Strong men shall not stay to care for you,
Nor wonder indeed for what reason
Your way should seem harder than theirs.

But perhaps, while you lie, never lifting
  Your cheek from the wet leaves it presses,
  Nor caring to raise your wet tresses
And look how the cold world appears,—
  O perhaps the mere silences round you—
  All things in that place grief hath found you,
Yea, e'en to the clouds o'er you drifting,
May soothe you somewhat through your tears.

You may feel, when a falling leaf brushes
  Your face, as though some one had kiss'd you,
  Or think at least some one who miss'd you
Hath sent you a thought,—if that cheers;
  Or a bird's little song, faint and broken,
  May pass for a tender word spoken:
—Enough, while around you there rushes
That life-drowning torrent of tears.

And the tears shall flow faster and faster,
  Brim over, and baffle resistance,
  And roll down blear'd roads to each distance
Of past desolation and years;
  Till they cover the place of each sorrow,
  And leave you no Past and no morrow:
For what man is able to master
And stem the great Fountain of Tears?

But the floods of the tears meet and gather ;
The sound of them all grows like thunder :
—O into what bosom I wonder,
Is pour'd the whole sorrow of years ?
For Eternity only seems keeping
Account of the great human weeping :
May God, then, the Maker and Father—
May He find a place for the tears !

A. O'Shaughnessy

CLXXIV

THE WRECK

Hide me, Mother ! my Fathers belong'd to the church of old,
I am driven by storm and sin and death to the ancient fold,
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to the Faith that saves,
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and the roar of waves,
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a noble name,
I am flung from the rushing tide of the world as a waif of shame,
I am roused by the wail of a child, and awake to a livid light,
And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted a grave by night,
I would hide from the storm without, I would flee from the storm within,
I would make my life one prayer for a soul that died in his sin,
I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was the deeper fall ;
I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face, I will tell you all.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a heedless and innocent bride—
I never have wrong'd his heart, I have only wounded his pride—

Spain in his blood and the Jew——dark-visaged, stately and tall—
A princelier-looking man never stept thro' a Prince's hall.
And who, when his anger was kindled, would venture to give him the nay?
And a man men fear is a man to be loved by the women they say.
And I could have loved him too, if the blossom can doat on the blight,
Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost that sears it at night;
He would open the books that I prized, and toss them away with a yawn,
Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which my nature was drawn,
The word of the Poet by whom the deeps of the world are stirr'd,
The music that robes it in language beneath and beyond the word!
My Shelley would fall from my hands when he cast a contemptuous glance
From where he was poring over his Tables of Trade and Finance;
My hands, when I heard him coming, would drop from the chords or the keys,
But ever I fail'd to please him, however I strove to please—
All day long far-off in the cloud of the city, and there
Lost, head and heart, in the chances of dividend, consol, and share—
And at home if I sought for a kindly caress, being woman and weak,
His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow on the cheek:
And so, when I bore him a girl, when I held it aloft in my joy,
He look'd at it coldly, and said to me 'Pity it isn't a boy.'
The one thing given me, to love and to live for, glanced at in scorn!
The child that I felt I could die for—as if she were basely born!

I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted now in a tomb;
The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed my heart to the gloom;
I threw myself all abroad—I would play my part with the young
By the low foot-lights of the world—and I caught the wreath that was flung.

Mother, I have not—however their tongues may have babbled of me—
Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all but a dwarf was he,
And all but a hunchback too; and I look'd at him, first, askance,
With pity—not he the knight for an amorous girl's romance!
Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in the light of a dowerless smile,
Having lands at home and abroad in a rich West-Indian isle;
But I came on him once at a ball, the heart of a listening crowd—
Why, what a brow was there! he was seated—speaking aloud
To women, the flower of the time, and men at the helm of state—
Flowing with easy greatness and touching on all things great,
Science, philosophy, song—till I felt myself ready to weep
For I knew not what, when I heard that voice,—as mellow and deep
As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd from an organ,—roll
Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice was the voice of the soul;
And the sun of the soul made day in the dark of his wonderful eyes.
Here was the hand that would help me, would heal me—the heart that was wise!

And he, poor man, when he learnt that I hated the
ring I wore,
He helpt me with death, and he heal'd me with sorrow
for evermore.

For I broke the bond. That day my nurse had brought
me the child.
The small sweet face was flush'd, but it coo'd to the
Mother and smiled.
'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with baby?' She
shook her head,
And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it, and turn'd in
her haste and fled.

Low warm winds had gently breathed us away from
the land—
Ten long sweet summer days upon deck, sitting hand
in hand—
When he clothed a naked mind with the wisdom and
wealth of his own,
And I bow'd myself down as a slave to his intellectual
throne,
When he coin'd into English gold some treasure of
classical song,
When he flouted a statesman's error, or flamed at a
public wrong,
When he rose as it were on the wings of an eagle
beyond me, and past
Over the range and the change of the world from the
first to the last,
When he spoke of his tropical home in the canes by
the purple tide,
And the high star-crowns of his palms on the deep-
wooded mountain-side,
And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt to the brink of
his bay,
And trees like the towers of a minster, the sons of a
winterless day.
'Paradise there!' so he said, but I seem'd in Paradise
then
With the first great love I had felt for the first and
greatest of men;

Ten long days of summer and sin—if it must be so—
But days of a larger light than I ever again shall know—
Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life to my latest breath;
'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in truest Love no Death.'

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble plaintively sweet
Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell fluttering down at my feet;
I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled it, Stephen and I,
But it died, and I thought of the child for a moment, I scarce know why.

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as many will say,
My sin to my desolate little one found me at sea on a day,
When her orphan wail came borne in the shriek of a growing wind,
And a voice rang out in the thunders of Ocean and Heaven 'Thou hast sinn'd.'
And down in the cabin were we, for the towering crest of the tides
Plunged on the vessel and swept in a cataract off from her sides,
And ever the great storm grew with a howl and a hoot of the blast
In the rigging, voices of hell—then came the crash of the mast.
'The wages of sin is death,' and there I began to weep,
'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast me into the deep,
For ah God, what a heart was mine to forsake her even for you.'
'Never the heart among women,' he said, 'more tender and true,'

'The heart! not a mother's heart, when I left my darling alone.'
'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the father will care for his own.'
'The heart of the father will spurn her,' I cried, 'for the sin of the wife,
The cloud of the mother's shame will enfold her and darken her life.'
Then his pale face twitch'd; 'O Stephen, I love you, I love you, and yet'—
As I lean'd away from his arms—'would God, we had never met!'
And he spoke not—only the storm; till after a little, I yearn'd
For his voice again, and he call'd to me 'Kiss me!' and there—as I turn'd—
'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I clung to the sinking form,
And the storm went roaring above us, and he—was out of the storm.

And then, then, Mother, the ship stagger'd under a thunderous shock,
That shook us asunder, as if she had struck and crash'd on a rock;
For a huge sea smote every soul from the decks of *The Falcon* but one;
All of them, all but the man that was lash'd to the helm had gone!
And I fell—and the storm and the days went by, but I knew no more—
Lost myself—lay like the dead by the dead on the cabin floor,
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to the loss that was mine,
With a dim dream, now and then, of a hand giving bread and wine,
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship stood still, and the skies were blue,
But the face I had known, O Mother, was not the face that I knew,

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw so amazed me, that I
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling myself over and die !
But one—he was waving a flag—the one man left on the wreck—
'Woman'—he graspt at my arm—'stay there'—I crouch'd upon deck—
'We are sinking, and yet there's hope : look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail'
In a tone so rough that I broke into passionate tears, and the wail
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was nearing us—then
All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on the child again.

They lower'd me down the side, and there in the boat I lay
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as we glided away,
And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull dipt under the smiling main,
'Had I stay'd with *him*, I had now—with *him*—been out of my pain.'

They took us aboard : the crew were gentle, the captain kind ;
But *I* was the only slave of an often-wandering mind ;
For whenever a rougher gust might tumble a stormier wave,
'O Stephen,' I moan'd 'I am coming to thee in thine Ocean-grave.'
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over a peace-fuller sea,
I found myself moaning again 'O child, I am coming to thee.'

The broad white brow of the Isle—that bay with the colour'd sand—
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew to the land ;

All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch into spray
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd—'my child'—
for I still could pray—
'May her life be as blissfully calm, be never gloom'd
by the curse
Of a sin, not hers!'
Was it well with the child?
I wrote to the nurse
Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart; and
an answer came
Not from the nurse—nor yet to the wife—to her maiden
name!
I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew that hand too
well—
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the 'deaths' in a
paper, fell.
'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever, and want of
care!
And gone—that day of the storm—O Mother, she
came to me there.

A. Lord Tennyson

CLXXV

ELLEN BRINE OF ALLENBURN

Noo soul did hear her lips complaïn,
An' she's a-gone vrom all her païn,
An' others' loss to her is gaïn,
For she do live in heaven's love;
Vull manv a longsome day an' week
She bore her aïlèn, still, an' meek;
A-workèn while her strangth held on
An' guidèn housework, when 'twer gone.
Vor Ellen Brine ov Allenburn
Oh! there be souls to murn.

The last time I'd a-cast my zight
Upon her feäce, a-feäded white,
Wer in a zummer's mornèn light
In hall avore the smwold'rèn vier,

The while the childern beät the vloor,
In pläy, wi' tiny shoes they wore,
An' call'd their mother's eyes to view
The feäts their little limbs could do.
Oh ! Ellen Brine ov Allenburn,
They childern now mus' murn.

Then woone, a-stoppèn vrom his reäce,
Went up, an' on her knee did pleäce
His hand, a-lookèn in her feäce,
An' wi' a smilèn mouth so small,
He said, ' You promised us to goo
To Shroton feäir, an' teäke us two ! '
She heärd it wi' her two white ears,
An' in her eyes there sprung two tears,
Vor Ellen Brine ov Allenburn
Did veel that they mus' murn.

September come, wi' Shroton feäir,
But Ellen Brine wer never there !
A heavy heart wer on the meäre,
Their father rod his hwomeward road.
'Tis true he brought zome feärèns back,
Vor them two childern all in black ;
But they had now, wi' playthings new,
Noo mother vor to shew em to,
Vor Ellen Brine ov Allenburn
Would never mwore return.

W. Barnes

CLXXVI

GOING HOME

The ancient river glimmer'd in its bed,
High overhead the stars of Egypt burn'd,
When our slow-dying Edith join'd the dead :
She whom the Arab and the Nubian mourn'd :
How in the shadow of old Thebes we wept,
And down the long-drawn Nile from day to day !
Her sweet face gone—her bright hair hid away
Save what the ring or gleaming locket kept ;

And, when we felt the Midland waters rise
Beneath our keel, and England nearer come—
'Mid our forecasting questions and replies,
Back came the sorrow like a sad surprise ;
Those dear white cliffs would never greet her eyes,
Nor her cheek flush, to find herself at home.

C. Tennyson-Turner

CLXXVII

IN MEMORIAM

'Tis right for her to sleep between
Some of those old Cathedral walls,
And right too that her grave is green
With all the dew and rain that falls.

'Tis well the organ's solemn sighs
Should soar and sink around her rest,
And almost in her ear should rise
The prayers of those she loved the best.

'Tis also well this air is stirr'd
By Nature's voices loud and low,
By thunder and the chirping bird,
And grasses whispering as they grow.

For all her spirit's earthly course
Was as a lesson and a sign
How to o'errule the hard divorce
That parts things natural and divine.

Undaunted by the clouds of fear,
Undazzled by a happy day,
She made a Heaven about her here,
And took how much ! with her away.

R. M. (Milnes) Lord Houghton

CLXXVIII

TO ——, ON HER SISTER'S DEATH

O Thou, whose dim and tearful gaze
Dwells on the shade of blessings gone!
Whose fancy some lost form surveys,
Half-deeming it once more thine own;

O check that shuddering sob, control
That lip all quivering with despair;
The thrillings of the startled soul
That wakes and finds no loved one there.

Yet though no more she share, her love
Thy way of woe still guides and cheers;
And from her cup of bliss above
One drop she mingles with thy tears.

J. Keble

CLXXIX

CONSOLATIONS IN BEREAVEMENT

Death was full urgent with thee, Sister dear,
And startling in his speed;—
Brief pain, then languor till thy end came near—
Such was the path decreed,
The hurried road
To lead thy soul from earth to thine own God's abode.

Death wrought with thee, sweet maid, impatiently:—
Yet merciful the haste
That baffles sickness;—dearest, thou didst die,
Thou wast not made to taste
Death's bitterness,
Decline's slow-wasting charm, or fever's fierce distress.

Death came unheralded :—but it was well ;
For so thy Saviour bore
Kind witness, thou wast meet at once to dwell
On His eternal shore ;
All warning spared,
For none He gives where hearts are for prompt change prepared.

Death wrought in mystery ; both complaint and cure
To human skill unknown :—
God put aside all means, to make us sure
It was His deed alone ;
Lest we should lay
Reproach on our poor selves, that thou wast caught away.

Death urged as scant of time :—lest, Sister dear,
We many a lingering day
Had sicken'd with alternate hope and fear,
The ague of delay ;
Watching each spark
Of promise quench'd in turn, till all our sky was dark.

Death came and went :—that so thy image might
Our yearning hearts possess,
Associate with all pleasant thoughts and bright,
With youth and loveliness ;
Sorrow can claim,
Mary, nor lot nor part in thy soft soothing name.

Joy of sad hearts, and light of downcast eyes !
Dearest, thou art enshrined
In all thy fragrance in our memories ;
For we must ever find
Bare thought of thee
Freshen this weary life, while weary life shall be.

J. H. Card. Newman

CLXXX

RIZPAH

17—

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me.'
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drench'd with the rain.

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are *you?* do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you*
know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost
and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only
made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may
go your way.

Nay,—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an old
dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour
of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to
die.
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he never has
told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he
was but a child—
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he was
always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy—he never
could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would
have been one of his best.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never
would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he
swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when
all was done
He flung it among his fellows—I'll none of it, said my
son.

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I
told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him
for robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had always
borne a good name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—isn't
that enough shame?

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set
him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him,
passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible
fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him
and hang'd him there.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my
last good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O mother!'
I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something
further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me
away.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that
was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me
down on my bed.
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the dark to me
year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that
I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid
and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had
worked their will.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was
left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you
call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones
that had laugh'd and had cried—
Theirs? O no! they are mine—not theirs—they had
moved in my side.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd
'em. I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the church-
yard wall.

My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

They would scratch him up—they would hang him again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will toward men—
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'—let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering.' Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—and the last may be first.
Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy, with Willy, I know not where.

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all
your desire :
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be
gone to the fire ?
I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may
leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as
a stone.

Madam, I beg your pardon ! I think that you mean
to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice
in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call
in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from
the gibbet—for hark !
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking
the walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud——Good-night. I am
going. He calls.

A. Lord Tennyson

CLXXXI

ANASTASIS

Tho' death met love upon thy dying smile,
And staid him there for hours, yet the orbs of sight
So speedily resign'd their aspect bright,
That Christian hope fell earthward for awhile,
Appall'd by dissolution ; but on high
A record lives of thine identity !
Thou shalt not lose one charm of lip or eye ;
The hues and liquid lights shall wait for thee,
And the fair tissues, wheresoe'er they be !
Daughter of heaven ! our grieving hearts repose
On the dear thought that we once more shall see
Thy beauty—like Himself our Master rose—
So shall that beauty its old rights maintain,
And thy sweet spirit own those eyes again.

C. Tennyson-Turner

CLXXXII

THE AFTERNOTE OF THE HOUR

The hour had struck, but still the air was fill'd
With the long sequence of that mighty tone ;
A wild Aeolian afternote, that thrill'd
My spirit, as I kiss'd that dear headstone ;
A voice that seem'd through all the Past to go—
From the bell's mouth the lonely cadence swept,
Like the faint cry of unassisted woe,
Till, in my profitless despair, I wept ;
My hope seem'd wreck'd ! but soon I ceased to mourn ;
A nobler meaning in that voice I found,
Whose scope lay far beyond that burial-ground ;
'Twas grief, but grief to distant glory bound !
Faith took the helm of that sweet wandering sound,
And turn'd it heavenwards, to its proper bourne.

C. Tennyson-Turner

CLXXXIII

MARY—A REMINISCENCE

She died in June, while yet the woodbine sprays
Waved o'er the outlet of this garden-dell ;
Before the advent of these Autumn days
And dark unblossom'd verdure. As befel,
I from my window gazed, yearning to forge
Some comfort out of anguish so forlorn ;
The dull rain stream'd before the bloomless gorge,
By which, erewhile, on each less genial morn,
Our Mary pass'd, to gain her shelter'd lawn,
With Death's disastrous rose upon her cheek.
How often had I watch'd her, pale and meek,
Pacing the sward ! and now I daily seek
The track, by those slow pausing footsteps worn,
How faintly worn ! though trodden week by week.

C. Tennyson-Turner

CLXXXIV

MARY

CONTINUED

And when I seek the chamber where she dwelt,
Near one loved chair a well-worn spot I see,
Worn by the shifting of a feeble knee
While the poor head bow'd lowly—it would melt
The worldling's heart with instant sympathy:
The match-box and the manual, lying there,
Those sad sweet signs of wakefulness and prayer,
Are darling tokens of the Past to me:
The little rasping sound of taper lit
At midnight, which aroused her slumbering bird:
The motion of her languid frame that stirr'd
For ease in some new posture—tho' a word
Perchance, of sudden anguish, follow'd it;
All this how often had I seen and heard!

C. Tennyson-Turner

CLXXXV

'IF I WERE DEAD'

'If I were dead, you'd sometimes say, Poor Child!'
The dear lips quiver'd as they spake,
And the tears brake
From eyes which, not to grieve me, brightly smiled.
Poor Child, poor Child!
I seem to hear your laugh, your talk, your song.
It is not true that Love will do no wrong.
Poor Child!
And did you think, when you so cried and smiled
How I, in lonely nights, should lie awake,
And of those words your full avengers make?
Poor Child, poor Child!
And now, unless it be
That sweet amends thrice told are come to thee,
O God, have Thou *no* mercy upon me!
Poor Child!

C. Patmore

CLXXXVI

LOVE AFTER DEATH

There is an earthly glimmer in the Tomb :
  And, heal'd in their own tears and with long sleep,
  My eyes unclose and feel no need to weep ;
But, in the corner of the narrow room,
Behold Love's spirit standeth, with the bloom
  That things made deathless by Death's self may keep.
  O what a change ! for now his looks are deep,
And a long patient smile he can assume :
While Memory, in some soft low monotone,
  Is pouring like an oil into mine ear
  The tale of a most short and hollow bliss,
That I once throbb'd indeed to call my own,
  Holding it hardly between joy and fear,—
  And how that broke, and how it came to this.

A. O'Shaughnessy

CLXXXVII

READEN OV A HEAD-STWONE

As I wer readèn ov a stwone
In Grenley church-yard all alwone,
A little maïd ran up, wi' pride
To zee me there, an' push'd a-zide
A bunch o' bennets that did hide
  A verse her father, as she zaïd,
  Put up above her mother's head,
    To tell how much he loved her.

The verse wer short, but very good,
I stood an' larn'd en where I stood :—
'Mid God, dear Meäry, gi'e me greäce
To vind, lik' thee, a better pleäce,
Where I woonce mwore mid zee thy feäce ;
  An' bring thy childern up to know
  His word, that they mid come an' show
    Thy soul how much I lov'd thee.'

'Where's father, then,' I zaid, 'my chile?'
'Dead too,' she answer'd wi' a smile;
'An' I an' brother Jim do bide
At Betty White's, o' t'other side
O' road.' 'Mid He, my chile,' I cried,
'That's father to the fatherless,
Become thy father now, an' bless,
An' keep, an' leäd, an' love thee.'

Though she've a-lost, I thought, so much,
Still He don't let the thoughts o't touch
Her litsome heart by day or night;
An' zoo, if we could teäke it right,
Do show He'll meäke His burdens light
To weaker souls, an' that His smile
Is sweet upon a harmless chile,
When they be dead that lov'd it.

W. Barnes

CLXXXVIII

PLORATA VERIS LACHRYMIS

O now, my true and dearest bride,
Since thou hast left my lonely side,
My life has lost its hope and zest.
The sun rolls on from east to west,
But brings no more that evening rest,
Thy loving-kindness made so sweet,
And time is slow that once was fleet,
As day by day was waning.

The last sad day that show'd thee lain
Before me, smiling in thy pain,
The sun soar'd high along his way
To mark the longest summer day,
And show to me the latest play
Of thy sweet smile, and thence, as all
The days' lengths shrunk from small to small,
My joy began its waning.

And now 'tis keenest pain to see
Whate'er I saw in bliss with thee.
The softest airs that ever blow,
The fairest days that ever glow,
Unfelt by thee, but bring me woe;
And sorrowful I kneel in pray'r,
Which thou no longer, now, canst share,
As day by day is waning.

How can I live my lonesome days?
How can I tread my lonesome ways?
How can I take my lonesome meal?
Or how outlive the grief I feel?
Or how again look on to weal?
Or sit, at rest, before the heat
Of winter fires, to miss thy feet,
When evening light is waning.

Thy voice is still I loved to hear,
Thy voice is lost I held so dear.
Since death unlocks thy hand from mine,
No love awaits me such as thine;
Oh! boon the hardest to resign!
But if we meet again at last
In heav'n, I little care how fast
My life may now be waning.

W. Barnes

CLXXXIX

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

A. Lord Tennyson

CXC

'*BREAK, BREAK, BREAK*'

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill !
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

A. Lord Tennyson

End of the Golden Treasury

Second Series

NOTES

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AND

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

NOTES

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1	1	IN this and a certain number of other poems portions, large or small, have been omitted (as in the earlier volume) where the piece could be thus brought, it is hoped, to a closer lyrical unity: or where the immensely increased length of the Victorian lyrics (as stated in the Preface) outran the limited space.
8	7	*clote*, water-lily: *tuns*, chimneys.
9	—	*Paladore*, old traditional name for Shaftesbury: *en*, him; *tweil*, toil.
12	10	This, with other poems in the same style and metre, is taken from Patmore's *Unknown Eros*. They are of a very singular and attractive originality: full of powerful thought, and a peculiar passionate intensity. But it is not always easy to follow their strongly-marked symbolical character, which occasionally may approach paradox.
17	12	*scroll of prayer:* 'The extract from the *Book of the Dead*, which was put into the hands of the deceased': C. T. T.
19	16	*Emmie*. 'It should be remembered that this is a little drama, in which the Hospital Nurse, not the Poet, is supposed to be speaking throughout. The two children, whose story was published in a Parish magazine, are the

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only characters here described from actual life': (written on the authority of A. T., 1884).

19 16 St. I *oorali*, also *curari* and *woorali:* a drug extracted from *Strychnos toxifera:* It acts by paralyzing the nerves of motion, whilst the sensitiveness remains unimpaired.

23 17 In its sweet simplicity worthy of Blake's *Songs of Innocence.*

24 19 The poems by Robert Browning are here reprinted by permission of his son R. Barrett Browning, and of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.

25 20 Clare, born and bred in a day-labourer's cottage, struggling with bitterest poverty, by these experiences became a poet of the poor in an almost unique sense. His mind failed, and the best of his verse (to which all our examples belong) was in truth written during lucid intervals, while he was confined in an asylum. It has hence an almost unapproachable sadness; he reverts always with pathetic yearning to the village scenes of a youth, which now shone before him like a vision of lost happiness.

32 26 It is in his command of pathos (witness Nos. 12 and 15), in his exquisite precision of language, his perfect art, that Charles seems to resemble his next younger brother Alfred. This sonnet exemplifies his curious skill in painting, and almost animating into life, the mechanical appliances of the farm. In the last six lines he refers to Vergil, thinking of the

> arbuteae crates et mystica vannus Iacchi,

and the picture of the plough which follows: (*Georg.* I. 166).

34 27 *Was it:* For this skilfully written passage Arnold refers us to ll. 465–485 in the *Birds* of Aristophanes. But he was most indebted to the splendid dithyrambic ode, ll. 685–

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723. Arnold's affectionate interest and insight into the animal world is well shown in this (and other) poems, written near the close of his too brief lifetime.

34 28 The Clarence is a small river in the northern part of New South Wales. — This fine poem might be called an Australian *Yarrow Unvisited*. The writer presently says,

> The slightest glimpse of yonder place
> Untrodden and alone,
> Might wholly kill that nameless grace,
> The charm of the Unknown.

He was himself Australian; his life short and unhappy. — This poem, with a few others, is taken from that useful and interesting collection, *The Poets and the Poetry of the Century*, edited by Mr. A. H. Miles.

36 29 St. 5 *And the flower in soft explosion:* when the seed is ripe for fertilizing and the anthers burst. One who knew the poet well writes, 'His love for and observation of Nature was extraordinary from earliest childhood,' and was expanded by his employment in the Natural History province of the British Museum.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy's metrical gift seems to me the finest, after Tennyson's, of any of our later poets: he has a haunting music all his own. Within a narrow range of interests and experience, he is also high in pure passionate imagination: he has to the full the *Ecstasy* which Plato requires in the true poet: although wasted too often in fanciful extravagance and a gloom due to personal misfortune. — Among our Victorian poets, he and William Barnes, I will venture the opinion, have met with the least due recognition of their eminent powers.

37 30 l. 5 *Trophonian pallor:* Refers to a cave-oracle at Lebadaea in Boeotia so gloomy and

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haunted by supernatural terror that those who entered it were said never to have smiled again.

40 33 Alfred Tennyson rated the *Scholar Gipsy* as Arnold's finest poem. His explanatory note follows: 'There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtility of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others: that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned.' — Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661.

48 36 *Amaturus*, with Nos. 124, 126, is reprinted from *Ionica*, by permission of the publisher, Mr. G. Allen.

49 37 This lovely song is a kind of counterpart to Hood's *Fair Inez*, but in a more impassioned key.

54 43 In its simple brightness and airy music Barnes here touches the Elizabethan lyrical chord; but goes beyond it in depth of feeling. L. 4 *athirt*, athwart.

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56	48	l. 5 *vu'st*, first.
58	50	Theocritus has no correspondent passage. The allusion may be to the fragmentary Idyll iii, ascribed to Bion of Smyrna.
65	60	This simple love-song, which even Tennyson never surpassed in beauty, is at the same time curiously dramatic. The lover's little wood borders on the high trees and Hall of Maud's father, who is expecting there the 'new-made' lord, his intended son-in-law. Maud meanwhile has ventured to cross the boundary, and the birds form a kind of chorus to the meeting: those in 'our wood' rejoicing that she is 'here,' the rooks on the other hand inviting her to the Hall and the rival suitor. — It is a wonder of art how Tennyson has set forth the whole situation, and the romance of first-love, in so few words. But not one of them is wasted.
66	—	St. 2 Many poets have thought it a beautiful touch to speak of a girl's footsteps as too light to bend the flowers. Tennyson has here given a finer image through plain truth to the structure of the daisy, the crimson florets which encircle the underside of the blossom. Poetry of beauty so pure and unalloyed as this must surely have poured itself forth from 'The Mind's internal Heaven.'
69	65	Ashe's tender little ditty, without a trace of imitation, recalls Wordsworth's best early simple sentiment. It is reproduced by permission of Messrs. G. Bell & Sons.
71	69	With this noble sonnet compare Shakespeare's Tired with all these, for restful death I cry . . .
81	73	l. 5 *the poet sings:* Nessun maggior dolore Che ricordarsi del tempo felice Nella miseria. — Dante, *Inferno*, C. v.

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87 73 l. 6 *a cycle:* any number of years of what is popularly described as Chinese immobility.

92 77 The poet's last lines, dictated on his deathbed. If a friendship of near half a century may allow me to say it, those solemn words, *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, give the true key to Alfred Tennyson's inmost nature, his life and his poetry.

98 80 In this and the next poem Tennyson's own notes have been retained. The additional glossary following was written at his suggestion or dictation.

St. 1 *'asta beän*, hast thou been: *thoort*, thou art: *moänt 'a*, may not have. St. 2 *a says*, he says: *point*, pint. St. 3 *'issen*, Himself: *towd*, told: *boy*, by. St. 4 *a ma' beä*, he may be: *cast oop*, cast up against me.

99 — St. 5 *owt*, ought. St. 6 *'siver*, howsoever: *boy 'um*, by him. St. 7 *stubb'd*, broke up for cultivation. St. 8 *moind*, remember: *boggle*, bogle, haunting spirit: *the lot*, the piece of waste land: *raäved an' rembled*, tore up and threw away. St. 9 *keäper's it wur*, it was the keeper's ghost: *at 'soize*, at the assizes. St. 10 *dubbut*, do but.

100 — *yows*, ewes. St. 11 *ta-year*, this year: *haäte hoonderd*, eight hundred.

— — St. 12 *thutty*, thirty. St. 13 *a moost*, He must: *cauve*, calve: *hoälms*, small mounds. St. 14 *quoloty*, gentry: *thessen*, themselves: *sewerloy*, surely. St. 15 *howd*, hold.

101 — St. 16 *kittle*, boiler: *huzzin' an' maäzin'*, worrying with hiss and amazing. St. 17 *'loättler*, teetotaller: *a's hallus i' the owd taäle*, is always telling the same old story: *floy*, fly.

— 81 St. 2 *craw to pluck*, affair to dispute: *woä*, go slower, lad.

102 — St. 6 *as 'ant nowt*, as has nothing. St. 7 *weänt*, wont: *ligs*, lies.

103 — St. 8 *shut on*, clear of: *i' the grip*, in the

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little draining ditch. St. 10, *burn*, born. St. 11 *esh*, ash.

104 81 St. 13 *ammost*, almost: *'id*, hidden away: *tued an' moil'd*, put himself in a stew and toiled. St. 14 *run oop*, his land ran up: *brig*, bridge.

107 85 ll. 1–4. The allusion is to stellar photography; the light rays from stars invisible to us through their immense distance chemically affect the sensitive plate. This is a beautiful instance of scientific fact transformed into poetry. A. Tennyson affords many analogous examples.

116 92 Alfred Domett left England for New Zealand (of which colony he became Prime Minister) in 1842: 'His departure was apparently somewhat sudden. Robert Browning, his intimate companion and friend,' celebrated it in the lively verses

> What's become of Waring,
> Since he gave us all the slip?

The fine specimen of his poetry here given was published in 1837.

117 93 This text exhibits the author's final revision. The *Birkenhead*, steam troop-ship, struck near Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope, Feb. 25, 1852. Four hundred and thirty-eight officers, soldiers, and seamen were lost: including the military commander, Colonel Seton of the 74th.

119 94 'Some Seiks, and a private of the Buffs [the East Kent regiment], having remained behind with the grog-carts, fell into the hands of the Chinese. On the next morning, they were brought before the authorities, and commanded to perform the *Kotou*. The Seiks obeyed; but Moyse, the English soldier, declaring that he would not prostrate himself before any Chinaman alive, was immediately knocked upon the head, and

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his body thrown on a dunghill.' — *China Correspondent of the 'Times.'* This incident took place during the English campaign of 1860. Lord Elgin was then our ambassador to China.

121 96 *lane*, alone: *bienly*, cheerfully: *sclid*, slippery: *the nicht*, to-night: *gin*, if. — The event dates not long before 1874; the woman was a poor Highlander. Schihallion is a stern and lofty mountain in central Perthshire.

128 100 Tennyson in this poem has had in view the animated description of the sea-fight (1591) left us by Grenville's kinsman, Sir Walter Ralegh.

133 101 The Charge at Balaclava (25 Oct. 1854) lasted twenty-five minutes, and left more than two-thirds of our men dead or wounded.

139 103 The worst spirit of the Renaissance, in Italy and in France (and not without contemporary followers among us), breathes through this terribly powerful poem.

141 104 This incident was 'told to the author by the late Sir Charles Napier.' The British attack, like that at Balaclava, was made under an order misunderstood: see *These were . . . As without . . .* p. 142–3. The fortress, Truckee, was considered impregnable. The temper of Mehrab Khan is admirably rendered by the lines placed in his mouth by Sir F. H. Doyle in a brief ode to his honour: they recall Lovelace's *Althea:*

> The noble heart, as from a tower,
> Looks down on life that wears a stain;
> He lives too long, who lives an hour
> Beneath the clanking of a chain.

144 105 This nobly, if roughly, energetic ballad raises a regret that the writer should have so largely given away his genius to the attempt to vivify the ancient Irish legends,

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scattered over as they are with beauty, to English readers. It must be feared they are too remote, too lost from tradition, for that process.

sledges, sledge-hammers: *bower*, one of the large naval anchors, hung at the vessel's bows; whence spoken of as a *hammock: the chains*, lower fastenings of the shrouds into her sides: *cat* or cathead, projecting timber on which the anchor is hung: *lubber*, clumsy, lazy.

148 107 When the Grecian generals, after the Persian fleet had been ruined at Salamis, met to settle who deserved the first and the second prizes for valour, the story runs that each man gave for himself his first vote, his second for Themistoclés. If the civilized nations of the world met to decide in like wise for the best and the next best country, would not their second votes, with our impassioned poetess, Salute Italy, — so giving her the virtual primacy?

154 111 *cloty*, covered with water-lilies: *zot*, set: *leädden*, leading: *mid*, might. Let me express a hope that the (really very) slight difficulties offered by the Dorset speech will not hinder true lovers of poetry from making friends with this genuine, original, exquisite Singer? — If they once do so, it will be a friendship for life.

162 117 *greygles*, wild hyacinth: *lew*, shelter, lee: *'V a-heav'd*, have heaved.

163 118 Composed at the Old Burying Place, Glencripisdale.'

168 124 Anterôs, in this admirably musical dirge, seems used to signify Love unrequited.

— 125 *the old man*, Homer: 'The name Europe, (Εὐρώπη, *the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite. The name Asia, again,

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comes, it has been thought, from the fens of the marshy rivers of Asia Minor, such as the Cayster or Maeander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them. (M.A.) *That halting slave;* the semi-Stoic Epictetus, banished from Rome by Domitian: the most practical teacher of the ancient world, and beyond Aurelius in his religious instincts, in his more cheerful philosophy. *Singer of sweet Colonus:* Sophocles.

169 126 *Comatas:* a shepherd poet whom the bees came to feed when imprisoned, because the Muses had touched his lips with nectar. Cf. Theocritus, Id. vii.

173 129 Tennyson visited this peninsula with his son Hallam in 1883. He has here united allusions to the little poem addressed by Catullus to his country home, and to his lament over a beloved brother, — two of the most exquisite lyrics in all literature, — in a lyric itself worthy to stand beside them.

174 130 *Thyrsis.* A. H. Clough died 13 Nov. 1861. 'Throughout this poem there is a reference to the preceding piece, *The Scholar Gipsy*.' Clough left Oxford in spring, 1848, breaking away with delight 'from what he felt to be the thraldom of his position' there, and recommencing work at University Hall, London, in Oct. 1849. Here, however, 'he could not rest'; the old sense of thraldom returned. These movements are, in some degree, beautifully yet fancifully represented in *Thyrsis.* But reference to the *Life* of Clough (prefixed to his Poems, 1869) shows that Arnold, yielding perhaps to the idealizing character of Elegiac poetry, when cast in Idyllic form, has given a far too gloomy general picture of Clough's career. From his youth, indeed, his verse had little of the 'happy, country tone' ascribed to it.

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the moral and religious problems of life weighing already on his meditative, tremulously sensitive nature: and it was really in the later happy years which followed his marriage that the 'troubled sound' ceased to be the leading note of his poetry, and so far from becoming 'mute,' to that time his most pleasing, his brightest verse, largely belonged.

184 133 *Strange unloved uproar:* This poem was 'written during the siege of Rome by the French, 1849.'

191 135 The picture, here assigned to Guercino (to judge by the photograph issued by the Browning Society), is most probably the graceful work of a pupil: it has more tenderness, less strength, than that Master's work.

193 138 *Asolando* is the title given by R. Browning to his last volume.

194 139 St. 2, l. 3 Tennyson here refers to his *De Profundis*,—'Out of the depths, my child' . . .

203 145 Of *If she but knew* . . ., as of Nos. 146, 148, and others by poor O'Shaughnessy, might be said, in Sir H. Wotton's words upon Milton's early lyrics, *Ipsa mollities*, — 'sweet tenderness itself.' This hardly known poet often treats the main subject of his song with an originality, a pathos, so singular, that it might be thought Love had never before been sung of. He constantly reminds us of his favourite musician, sharing with Chopin that exquisite tenderness of touch, the melody, the delicacy (which Ruskin gives as the note of all the highest art), ascribed to that fascinating composer.

207 150 Miss Rossetti, in that circle of sentiment and of thought within which she generally moves, has an invention so fertile, such a nimble wit, as the old phrase has it, a power of impressing unity upon the idea of each little song so perfect, that no poet dealt with

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in this book, with exception of Alfred Tennyson, has rendered choice more perplexing, or, probably, to many among her many admirers, more unsatisfactory. Her singularly original genius, like O'Shaughnessy's, tempts to discussion. But these notes have perhaps indulged too much in what might be better left to the reader's discernment.

240 176 'A death in the Thebaid.'

241 177 'Salisbury, Nov. 1843': on the death of Mrs. Edward Denison, wife to the Bishop.

242 179 'Oxford, April, 1828': written after the sudden death of Miss Newman. The exquisite tenderness of her honoured brother sighs through this pathetic dirge.

244 180 This tale is placed in the eighteenth century, when the barbarous custom of hanging certain criminals in chains was common. One such gibbet stood till later days (according to J. M. W. Turner's plate in his *Liber Studiorum*) upon Hindhead Hill opposite Haslemere.

248 181 *Thou shalt not lose:* Compare Petrarch, speaking of souls in heaven,

> Tanti volti che 'l Tempo e Morte han guasti
> Torneranno al lor più fiorito stato.

251 187 *en*, it: *mid*, might, may.

252 — *litsome*, lightsome.

253 189 *one I loved:* Arthur Hallam: Written after Tennyson's visit to the Pyrenees, summer of 1861.

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