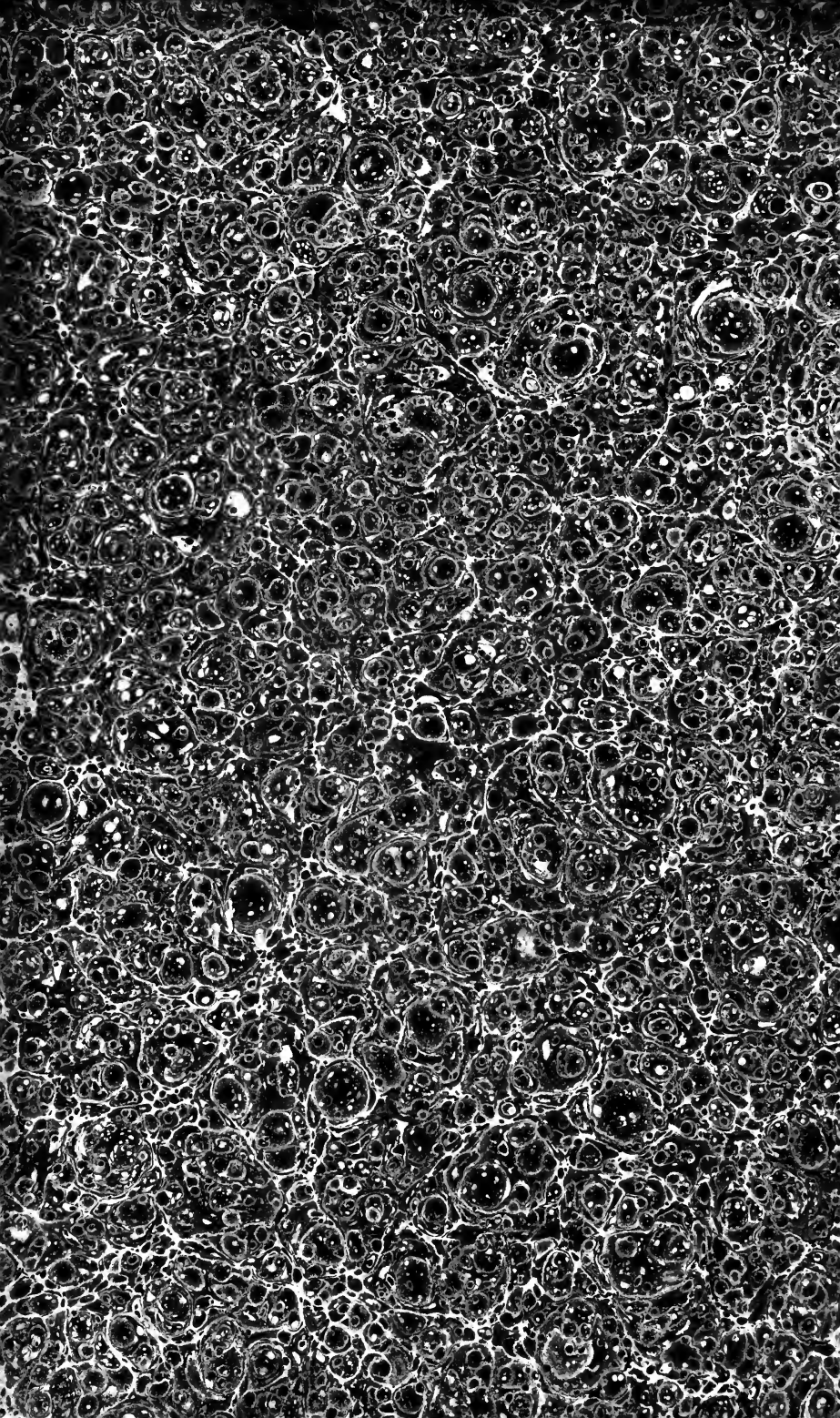

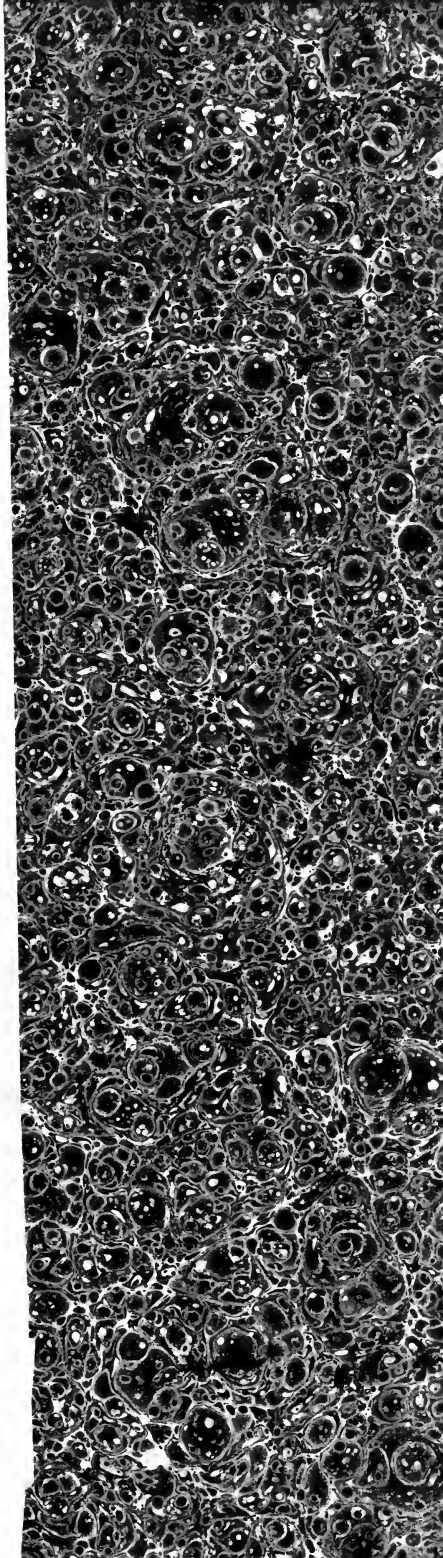

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

CAMOENS,

AND OTHER POETS,

WITH

ORIGINAL POETRY,

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MODERN GREECE," AND THE "RESTORATION OF THE WORKS OF ART TO ITALY."

Siamo nati veramente in un secolo in cui gl'ingegni e gli studj degli uomini sono rivolti all' utilità. L'Agricoltura, le Arti, il Commercio acquistano tutto dì novi lumi dalle ricerche de' Saggi; e il voler farsi un nome *tentando di dilettare*, quand' altri v'aspira con più giustizia giovando, sembra impresa dura e difficile.

SAVIOLI.

OXFORD:

PRINTED BY S. AND J. COLLINGWOOD;

For J. MURRAY, London; and J. PARKER, Oxford.

1818.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

CAMOENS,

AND OTHER POETS,

WITH

ORIGINAL POETRY,

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MODERN GREECE," AND THE "VINDICATION OF THE WORKS OF LORD BYRON."

Siano pur veramente in un secolo in cui filosofia e ... sono quasi divoli all' ... l'Agricoltura, le Arti, il Commercio ... siano tutto di nuovi lumi delle ricerche de' sagaci, e di volere fare un nuovo Catechismo di Alchimia, ... dirai v'aspira con più sensibile piacere, ... sia impresa dare e difficile.

PARADISI.

OXFORD:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL JACKSON PRICE;

For J. Murray, London; and J. Parker, Oxford.

1818.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

CAMOENS

AND OTHER POETS.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 70.

Na metade do Ceo subido ardia.

HIGH in the glowing heavens, with cloudless beam,
The sun had reached the zenith of his reign,
And for the living fount, the gelid stream,
Each flock forsook the herbage of the plain:

Midst the dark foliage of the forest-shade,
The birds had sheltered from the scorching ray;
Hushed were their melodies—and grove and glade
Resounded but the shrill cicada's lay:

When, through the grassy vale, a love-lorn swain,
To seek the maid who but despised his pain,
Breathing vain sighs of fruitless passion roved:
"Why pine for her," the slighted wanderer cried,
"By whom thou art not loved?"—and thus replied
An echo's murmuring voice—"*Thou art not loved!*"

CAMOENS.

SONNET 282.

From Psalm CXXXVII.

Na ribeira do Euprates assentado.

WRAPT in sad musings, by Euphrates' stream
I sat, retracing days for ever flown,
While rose thine image on the exile's dream,
O much-loved Salem! and thy glories gone.

When they, who caused the ceaseless tears I shed,
Thus to their captive spoke,—" Why sleep thy lays?
" Sing of thy treasures lost, thy splendor fled,
" And all thy triumphs in departed days!

" Know'st thou not, Harmony's resistless charm
" Can soothe each passion, and each grief disarm?
" Sing then, and tears will vanish from thine eye."
With sighs I answered,—When the cup of woe
Is filled, till misery's bitter draught o'erflow,
The mourner's cure is not to sing,—but die.

CAMOENS.

PART OF ECLOGUE 15.

Se lá no assento da maior alteza.

IF in thy glorious home above
Thou still recallest earthly love,
If yet retained a thought may be
Of him, whose heart hath bled for thee;

Remember still how deeply shrined,
Thine image in his joyless mind,
Each well-known scene, each former care,
Forgotten—thou alone art there!

Remember that thine eye-beams light
Hath fled for ever from his sight,
And, with that vanished sunshine lost,
Is every hope he cherished most.

Think that his life, from thee apart,
Is all but weariness of heart,
Each stream, whose music once was dear,
Now murmurs discord to his ear.

Through thee, the morn, whose cloudless rays
Woke him to joy in other days,
Now, in the light of beauty drest,
Brings but new sorrows to his breast.

Through thee, the heavens are dark to him,
The sun's meridian blaze is dim;
And harsh were e'en the bird of eve,
But that her song still loves to grieve.

All it hath been, his heart forgets,
So altered by its long regrets;
Each wish is changed, each hope is o'er,
And joy's light spirit wakes no more.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 271.

A formosura desta fresca serra.

THIS mountain-scene, with sylvan grandeur crowned;
These chestnut-woods, in summer verdure bright;
These founts and rivulets, whose mingling sound
Lulls every bosom to serene delight;

Soft on these hills the sun's declining ray;
This clime, where all is new; these murmuring seas;
Flocks, to the fold that bend their lingering way;
Light clouds, contending with the genial breeze;

And all that Nature's lavish hands dispense,
In gay luxuriance, charming every sense,
Ne'er, in thy absence, can delight my breast;
Nought, without thee, my weary soul beguiles;
And joy may beam, yet, midst her brightest smiles,
A secret grief is mine, that will not rest.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 186.

Os olhos onde o casto Amor ardia.

THOSE eyes, whence Love diffused his purest light,
Proud in such beaming orbs his reign to show;
That face, with tints of mingling lustre bright,
Where the rose mantled o'er the living snow;

The rich redundance of that golden hair,
Brighter than sunbeams of meridian day;
That form so graceful, and that hand so fair,
Where now those treasures?—mouldering into clay!

Thus, like some blossom prematurely torn,
Hath young Perfection wither'd in its morn,
Touched by the hand that gathers but to blight!
Oh! how could Love survive his bitter tears?
Shed, not for her, who mounts to happier spheres,
But for his own sad fate, thus wrapt in starless night!

CAMOENS.

SONNET 108.

Brandas aguas do Tejo que passando.

FAIR Tajo! thou, whose calmly-flowing tide
Bathes the fresh verdure of these lovely plains,
Enlivening all where'er thy waves may glide,
Flowers, herbage, flocks, and sylvan nymphs, and swains:

Sweet stream! I know not when my steps again
Shall tread thy shores; and while to part I mourn,
I have no hope to meliorate my pain,
No dream that whispers—I may yet return!

My frowning destiny, whose watchful care
Forbids me blessings, and ordains despair,
Commands me thus to leave thee, and repine:
And I must vainly mourn the scenes I fly,
And breathe on other gales my plaintive sigh,
And blend my tears with other waves than thine!

CAMOENS.

SONNET 23.

TO A LADY, WHO DIED AT SEA.

Chara minha inimiga, em cuja mao.

THOU, to whose power my hopes, my joys, I give,
O fondly loved! my bosom's dearest care!
Earth, which denied to lend thy form a grave,
Yields not one spell to soothe my deep despair!

Yes! the wild seas entomb those charms divine,
Dark o'er thy head th' eternal billows roll;
But while one ray of life or thought is mine,
Still shalt thou live, the inmate of my soul.

And if the tones of my uncultured song
Have power the sad remembrance to prolong,
Of love so ardent, and of faith so pure;
Still shall my verse thine epitaph remain,
Still shall thy charms be deathless in my strain,
While Time, and Love, and Memory, shall endure.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 19.

Alma minha gentil, que te partiste.

SPIRIT beloved! whose wing so soon hath flown
The joyless precincts of this earthly sphere,
How is yon Heaven eternally thine own,
Whilst I deplore thy loss, a captive here.

Oh! if allowed in thy divine abode
Of aught on earth an image to retain,
Remember still the fervent love which glowed
In my fond bosom, pure from every stain.

And if thou deem that all my faithful grief,
Caused by thy loss, and hopeless of relief,
Can merit thee, sweet native of the skies!
Oh! ask of Heaven, which called thee soon away,
That I may join thee in those realms of day,
Swiftly, as *thou* hast vanished from mine eyes.

CAMOENS.

Que estranho caso de amor!

HOW strange a fate in love is mine!
How dearly prized the pains I feel!
Pangs, that to rend my soul combine,
With avarice I conceal:
For did the world the tale divine,
My lot would then be deeper woe,
And mine is grief, that none must know.

To mortal ears I may not dare
Unfold the cause, the pain I prove;
'Twould plunge in ruin and despair
Or me, or her I love.
My soul delights alone to bear
Her silent, unsuspected woe,
And none shall pity, none shall know.

Thus buried in my bosom's urn,
Thus in my inmost heart concealed,

Let me alone the secret mourn,
In pangs unsoothed and unrevealed.
For whether happiness or woe,
Or life or death its power bestow,
It is what none on earth must know.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 58.

Se as penas com que Amor tao mal me trata.

SHOULD Love, the tyrant of my suffering heart,
Yet long enough protract his votary's days,
To see the lustre from those eyes depart,
The lode-stars now *, that fascinate my gaze;

To see rude Time the living roses blight,
That o'er thy cheek their loveliness unfold,
And all unpitying, change thy tresses bright,
To silvery whiteness, from their native gold;

Oh! then thy heart an equal change will prove,
And mourn the coldness that repelled my love,
When tears and penitence will all be vain;
And I shall see thee weep for days gone by,
And in thy deep regret and fruitless sigh,
Find amplest vengeance for my former pain.

* "Your eyes are lode-stars."

SHAKSPEARE.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 178.

Já cantei, já chorei a dura guerra.

OFT have I sung and mourned the bitter woes,
Which Love for years hath mingled with my fate,
While he the tale forbade me to disclose,
That taught his votaries their deluded state.

Nymphs! who dispense Castalia's living stream,
Ye, who from Death oblivion's mantle steal,
Grant me a strain in powerful tone supreme,
Each grief by love inflicted to reveal:

That those, whose ardent hearts adore his sway,
May hear experience breathe a warning lay,
How false his smiles, his promises how vain!
Then, if ye deign this effort to inspire,
When the sad task is o'er, my plaintive lyre,
For ever hushed, shall slumber in your fane.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 80.

Como quando do mar tempestuoso.

SAVED from the perils of the stormy wave,
And faint with toil, the wanderer of the main,
But just escaped from shipwreck's billowy grave,
Trembles to hear its horrors named again.

How warm his vow, that Ocean's fairest mien
No more shall lure him from the smiles of home!
Yet soon, forgetting each terrific scene,
Once more he turns, o'er boundless deeps to roam.

Lady! thus I, who vainly oft in flight
Seek refuge from the dangers of thy sight,
Make the firm vow, to shun thee and be free:
But my fond heart, devoted to its chain,
Still draws me back where countless perils reign,
And grief and ruin spread their snares for me.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 239.

From Psalm CXXXVII.

Em Babylonia sobre os rios, quando.

BESIDE the streams of Babylon, in tears
Of vain desire, we sat; remembering thee,
O hallowed Sion! and the vanished years,
When Israel's chosen sons were blest and free:

Our harps, neglected and untuned, we hung
Mute on the willows of the stranger's land;
When songs, like those that in thy fanes we sung,
Our foes demanded from their captive-band.

How shall our voices, on a foreign shore,
(We answer'd those whose chains the exile wore,)
The songs of God, our sacred songs, renew?
If I forget, midst grief and wasting toil,
Thee, O Jerusalem! my native soil!
May my right-hand forget its cunning too!

CAMOENS.

SONNET 128.

Huma admiravel herva se conhece.

THERE blooms a plant, whose gaze, from hour to hour,
Still to the sun with fond devotion turns,
Wakes, when Creation hails his dawning power,
And most expands, when most her idol burns:

But when he seeks the bosom of the deep,
His faithful plant's reflected charms decay;
Then fade her flowers, her leaves discoloured weep,
Still fondly pining for the vanished ray.

Thou whom I love, the daystar of my sight!
When thy dear presence wakes me to delight,
Joy in my soul unfolds her fairest flower:
But in thy heaven of smiles alone it blooms,
And, of their light deprived, in grief consumes,
Born but to live within thine eye-beam's power.

CAMOENS.

Polo meu apartamento.

AMIDST the bitter tears that fell
In anguish at my last farewell,
Oh! who would dream that joy could dwell,
To make that moment bright?
Yet be my judge, each heart! and say,
Which then could most my bosom sway,
Affliction, or delight?

It was, when Hope, opprest with woes,
Seemed her dim eyes in death to close,
That Rapture's brightest beam arose
In sorrow's darkest night.
Thus, if my soul survive that hour,
'Tis that my fate o'ercame the power
Of anguish with delight.

For oh! her love, so long unknown,
She *then* confest, was all my own,
And in that parting hour alone
Revealed it to my sight.

And now what pangs will rend my soul,
Should fortune still, with stern control,
Forbid me this delight.

I know not if my bliss were vain,
For all the force of parting pain
Forbade suspicious doubts to reign,
When exiled from her sight:
Yet now what double wo for me,
Just at the close of eve, to see
The dayspring of delight.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 205.

Quem diz que Amor he falso, o enganoso.

HE who proclaims that Love is light and vain,
Capricious, cruel, false in all his ways;
Ah! sure too well hath merited his pain,
Too justly finds him all he thus pourtrays:

For Love is pitying, Love is soft and kind;
Believe not him who dares the tale oppose;
Oh! deem him one whom stormy passions blind,
One to whom earth and heaven may well be foes.

If Love bring evils, view them all in me!
Here let the world his utmost rigour see,
His utmost power exerted to annoy:
But all his ire is still the ire of Love;
And such delight in all his woes I prove,
I would not change their pangs for aught of other joy!

CAMOENS.

SONNET 133.

Doces, e claras aguas do Mondego.

WAVES of Mondego! brilliant and serene,
Haunts of my thought, where memory fondly strays;
Where hope allured me with perfidious mien,
Witching my soul, in long-departed days;

Yes! I forsake your banks; but still my heart
Shall bid remembrance all your charms restore,
And, suffering not one image to depart,
Find lengthening distance but endear you more.

Let fortune's will, through many a future day,
To distant realms this mortal frame convey,
Sport of each wind, and tost on every wave!
Yet my fond soul, to pensive memory true,
On thought's light pinion still shall fly to you,
And still, bright waters! in your current lave.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 181.

Onde acharei lugar tão apartado.

WHERE shall I find some desert-scene so rude,
Where loneliness so undisturbed may reign,
That not a step shall ever there intrude
Of roving man, or nature's savage train?

Some tangled thicket, desolate and drear,
Or deep wild forest, silent as the tomb,
Boasting no verdure bright, no fountain clear,
But darkly suited to my spirit's gloom?

That there, midst frowning rocks, alone with grief
Entombed in life, and hopeless of relief,
In lonely freedom I may breathe my woes—
For oh! since nought my sorrows can allay,
There shall my sadness cloud no festal day,
And days of gloom shall soothe me to repose.

CAMOENS.

SONNET 278.

Eu vivia de lagrimas isento.

EXEMPT from every grief, 'twas mine to live
In dreams so sweet, enchantments so divine,
A thousand joys propitious Love can give,
Were scarcely worth one rapturous pain of mine.

Bound by soft spells, in dear illusions blest,
I breathed no sigh for fortune or for power;
No care intruding to disturb my breast,
I dwelt entranc'd in Love's Elysian bower:

But Fate, such transports eager to destroy,
Soon rudely woke me from the dream of joy,
And bade the phantoms of delight begone!
Bade hope and happiness at once depart,
And left but memory to distract my heart,
Retracing every hour of bliss for ever flown.

CAMOENS.

Mi nueve y dulce querella.

No searching eye can pierce the veil
That o'er my secret love is thrown;
No outward signs reveal its tale,
But to my bosom known.
Thus, like the spark, whose vivid light
In the dark flint is hid from sight,
It dwells within, alone.

METASTASIO.

Dunque si sfoga in pianto.

IN tears, the heart opprest with grief
Gives language to its woes;
In tears, its fulness finds relief,
When rapture's tide o'erflows!
Who then unclouded bliss would seek
On this terrestrial sphere;
When e'en Delight can only speak,
Like Sorrow—in a tear?

VINCENZO DA FILICAJA.

Italia, Italia! O tu cui diè la sorte.

ITALIA! thou, by lavish Nature graced
With ill-starr'd beauty, which to thee hath been
A fatal dowry, whose effects are traced
In the deep sorrows graven on thy mien;

Oh! that more strength, or fewer charms were thine,
That those might fear thee more, or love thee less,
Who seem to worship at thy beauty's shrine,
Then leave thee to the death-pang's bitterness!

Not then the herds of Gaul would drain the tide
Of that Eridanus thy blood hath dyed;
Nor from the Alps would legions, still renew'd,
Pour down; nor wouldst thou wield a foreign brand,
Nor fight thy battles with the stranger's hand,
Still doomed to serve, subduing or subdued!

PASTORINI.

Genova mia, se con asciutto ciglio.

IF thus thy fallen grandeur I behold,
My native Genoa! with a tearless eye,
Think not thy son's ungrateful heart is cold,
But know—I deem rebellious every sigh!

Thy glorious ruins proudly I survey,
Trophies of firm resolve, of patriot might!
And in each trace of devastation's way,
Thy worth, thy courage, meet my wandering sight.

Triumphs far less than suffering virtue shine!
And on the spoilers high revenge is thine,
While thy strong spirit unsubdued remains.
And lo! fair Liberty rejoicing flies,
To kiss each noble relic, while she cries,
" *Hail! though in ruins, thou wert ne'er in chains!*"

LOPE DE VEGA.

Estese el cortesano.

LET the vain courtier waste his days,
Lured by the charms that wealth displays,
The couch of down, the board of costly fare;
Be his to kiss th' ungrateful hand,
That waves the sceptre of command,
And rear full many a palace in the air;
Whilst I enjoy, all unconfined,
The glowing sun, the genial wind,
And tranquil hours, to rustic toil assigned;
And prize far more, in peace and health,
Contented indigence, than joyless wealth.

Not mine in Fortune's fane to bend,
At Grandeur's altar to attend,
Reflect his smile, and tremble at his frown;
Nor mine a fond aspiring thought,
A wish, a sigh, a vision, fraught
With Fame's bright phantom, Glory's deathless crown!
Nectareous draughts and viands pure,
Luxuriant nature will ensure;

These the clear fount, and fertile field,
Still to the wearied shepherd yield;
And when repose and visions reign,
Then we are equals all, the monarch and the swain.

FRANCISCO MANUEL.

ON ASCENDING A HILL LEADING TO A CONVENT.

No baxes temeroso, o peregrino.

PAUSE not with lingering foot, O pilgrim, here;
Pierce the deep shadows of the mountain-side;
Firm be thy step, thy heart unknown to fear,
To brighter worlds this thorny path will guide.

Soon shall thy feet approach the calm abode,
So near the mansions of supreme delight;
Pause not—but tread this consecrated road,
'Tis the dark basis of the heavenly height.

Behold, to cheer thee on the toilsome way,
How many a fountain glitters down the hill!
Pure gales, inviting, softly round thee play,
Bright sunshine guides—and wilt thou linger still?
Oh! enter there, where, freed from human strife,
Hope is reality, and time is life.

DELLA CASA.

VENICE.

Questi palazzi, e queste logge or colte.

THESE marble domes, by wealth and genius graced,
With sculptured forms, bright hues, and Parian stone,
Were once rude cabins midst a lonely waste,
Wild shores of solitude, and isles unknown.

Pure from each vice, 'twas here a venturous train
Fearless in fragile barks explored the sea;
Not theirs a wish to conquer or to reign,
They sought these island-precincts—to be free.

Ne'er in their souls ambition's flame arose,
No dream of avarice broke their calm repose;
Fraud, more than death, abhorred each artless breast:
Oh! now, since Fortune gilds their brightening day,
Let not those virtues languish and decay,
O'erwhelmed by luxury, and by wealth opprest!

IL MARCHESE CORNELIO BENTIVOGLIO.

L' anima bella, che dal vero Eliso.

THE sainted spirit, which from bliss on high
Descends like dayspring to my favoured sight,
Shines in such noontide radiance of the sky,
Scarce do I know that form, intensely bright!

But with the sweetness of her well-known smile,
That smile of peace! she bids my doubts depart,
And takes my hand, and softly speaks the while,
And heaven's full glory pictures to my heart.

Beams of that heaven in *her* my eyes behold,
And now, e'en now, in thought my wings unfold,
To soar with her, and mingle with the blest!
But ah! so swift her buoyant pinion flies,
That I, in vain aspiring to the skies,
Fall to my native sphere, by earthly bonds deprest.

METASTASIO.

Al furor d'avversa sorte.

HE shall not dread Misfortune's angry mien,
Nor feebly sink beneath her tempest rude,
Whose soul hath learned, through many a trying scene,
To smile at fate, and suffer unsubdued.

In the rough school of billows, clouds, and storms,
Nursed and matured, the pilot learns his art:
Thus Fate's dread ire, by many a conflict, forms
The lofty spirit and enduring heart!

METASTASIO.

Quella onda che ruina.

THE torrent-wave, that breaks with force
Impetuous down the Alpine height,
Complains and struggles in its course,
But sparkles, as the diamond bright.

The stream in shadowy valley deep
May slumber in its narrow bed;
But silent in unbroken sleep,
Its lustre and its life are fled.

METASTASIO.

Leggiadra rosa, le cui pure foglie.

SWEET rose! whose tender foliage to expand,
Her fostering dews the morning lightly shed,
Whilst gales of balmy breath thy blossoms fanned,
And o'er thy leaves the soft suffusion spread;

That hand, whose care withdrew thee from the ground,
To brighter worlds thy favoured charms hath borne;
Thy fairest buds, with grace perennial crowned,
There breathe and bloom, released from every thorn.

Thus, far removed, and now, transplanted flower!
Exposed no more to blast or tempest rude,
Sheltered with tenderest care from frost or shower,
And each rough season's chill vicissitude,
Now may thy form in bowers of peace assume
Immortal fragrance, and unwithering bloom.

METASTASIO.

Che speri, instabil Dea, di sassi, e spine.

FORTUNE! why thus, where'er my footsteps tread,
Obstruct each path with rocks and thorns like these?
Think'st thou that *I* thy threatening mien shall dread,
Or toil and pant thy waving locks to seize?

Reserve the frown severe, the menace rude,
For vassal-spirits that confess thy sway!
My constant soul could triumph unsubdued,
Were the wide universe destruction's prey.

Am I to conflicts new, in toils untried?
No! I have long thine utmost power defied,
And drawn fresh energies from every fight.
Thus from rude strokes of hammers and the wheel,
With each successive shock the tempered steel
More keenly piercing proves, more dazzling bright.

METASTASIO.

Parlagli d' un periglio.

WOULDST thou to Love of danger speak?—
Veiled are his eyes, to perils blind!
Wouldst thou from Love a reason seek?—
He is a child, of wayward mind!

But with a doubt, a jealous fear,
Inspire him once—the task is o'er;
His mind is keen, his sight is clear,
No more an infant, blind no more.

METASTASIO.

Sprezza il furor del vento.

UNBENDING midst the wintry skies,
Rears the firm oak his vigorous form,
And stern in rugged strength, defies
The rushing of the storm;

Then severed from his native shore,
O'er ocean-worlds the sail to bear,
Still with those winds he braved before,
He proudly struggles there.

METASTASIO.

Sol può dir che sia contento.

OH! those alone, whose severed hearts
Have mourned through lingering years in vain,
Can tell what bliss fond Love imparts,
When Fate unites them once again:

Sweet is the sigh, and blest the tear,
Whose language hails that moment bright,
When past afflictions but endear
The presence of delight!

METASTASIO.

Ah! frenate le piante imbelle.

AH! cease—those fruitless tears restrain,
I go misfortune to defy,
To smile at fate with proud disdain,
To triumph—not to die!

I with fresh laurels go to crown
My closing days at last,
Securing all the bright renown
Acquired in dangers past.

QUEVEDO.

ROME BURIED IN HER OWN RUINS.

Buscas en Roma á Roma, ó peregrino!

AMIDST these scenes, O pilgrim! seek'st thou Rome?
Vain is thy search—the pomp of Rome is fled;
Her silent Aventine is glory's tomb;
Her walls, her shrines, but relics of the dead.

That hill, where Cæsars dwelt in other days,
Forsaken mourns, where once it towered sublime;
Each mouldering medal now far less displays
The triumphs won by Latium, than by Time.

Tyber alone survives—the passing wave,
That bathed her towers, now murmurs by her grave,
Wailing, with plaintive sound, her fallen fanes.
Rome! of thine ancient grandeur all is past,
That seemed for years eternal framed to last,
Nought but the wave, a fugitive—remains.

EL CONDE JUAN DE TARSIS.

Tu, que la dulce vida en tiernas anos.

THOU, who hast fled from life's enchanted bowers,
In youth's gay spring, in beauty's glowing morn,
Leaving thy bright array, thy path of flowers,
For the rude convent-garb, and couch of thorn;

Thou that, escaping from a world of cares,
Hast found thy haven in devotion's fane,
As to the port the fearful bark repairs,
To shun the midnight-perils of the main;

Now the glad hymn, the strain of rapture pour,
While on thy soul the beams of glory rise!
For if the pilot hail the welcome shore,
With shouts of triumph swelling to the skies;
Oh! how shouldst *thou* the exulting pæan raise,
Now heaven's bright harbour opens on thy gaze!

TORQUATO TASSO.

Negli anni acerbi tuoi, purpurea rosa.

THOU in thy morn wert like a glowing rose,
To the mild sunshine only half displayed,
That shunned its bashful graces to disclose,
And in its veil of verdure sought a shade;

Or like Aurora did thy charms appear,
(Since mortal form ne'er vied with aught so bright,)
Aurora, smiling from her tranquil sphere,
O'er vale and mountain shedding dew and light;

Now riper years have doomed no grace to fade,
Nor youthful charms, in all their pride arrayed,
Excel, or equal, thy neglected form.
Thus, full expanded, lovelier is the flower,
And the bright daystar, in its noontide hour,
More brilliant shines, in genial radiance warm.

BERNARDO TASSO.

Quest' ombra che giammai non vide il sole.

THIS green recess, where through the bowery gloom
Ne'er e'en at noontide hours the sunbeam played,
Where violet-beds in soft luxuriance bloom,
Midst the cool freshness of the myrtle-shade;

Where through the grass a sparkling fountain steals,
Whose murmuring wave, transparent as it flows,
No more its bed of yellow sand conceals,
Than the pure crystal hides the glowing rose;

This bower of peace, thou soother of our care,
God of soft slumbers, and of visions fair!
A lowly shepherd consecrates to thee!
Then breathe around some spell of deep repose,
And charm his eyes in balmy dew to close,
Those eyes, fatigued with grief, from tear-drops never free.

PETRARCH.

Chi vuol veder quantunque può natura.

THOU that wouldst mark, in form of human birth,
All heaven and nature's perfect skill combined,
Come gaze on her, the daystar of the earth,
Dazzling, not me alone, but all mankind:

And haste! for Death, who spares the guilty long,
First calls the brightest and the best away;
And to her home, amidst the cherub-throng,
The angelic mortal flies, and will not stay!

Haste! and each outward charm, each mental grace,
In one consummate form thine eye shall trace,
Model of loveliness, for earth too fair!
Then thou shalt own, how faint my votive lays,
My spirit dazzled by perfection's blaze—
But if thou still delay, for long regret prepare.

PETRARCH.

Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde.

IF to the sighing breeze of summer-hours
Bend the green leaves; if mourns a plaintive bird;
Or from some fount's cool margin, fringed with flowers,
The soothing murmur of the wave is heard;

Her, whom the heavens reveal, the earth denies,
I see and hear: though dwelling far above,
Her spirit, still responsive to my sighs,
Visits the lone retreat of pensive love.

"Why thus in grief consume each fruitless day,"
(Her gentle accents thus benignly say,)
"While from thine eyes the tear unceasing flows?
"Weep not for me, who, hastening on my flight,
"Died, to be deathless; and on heavenly light
"Whose eyes but opened, when they seemed to close!"

VERSI SPAGNUOLI DI PIETRO BEMBO.

O Muerte! que sueles ser.

THOU, the stern monarch of dismay,
Whom nature trembles to survey,
Oh Death! to me, the child of grief,
Thy welcome power would bring relief,
Changing to peaceful slumber many a care.
And though thy stroke may thrill with pain
Each throbbing pulse, each quivering vein;
The pangs that bid existence close,
Ah! sure are far less keen than those,
Which cloud its lingering moments with despair.

FRANCESCO LORENZINI.

O Zefiretto, che movendo vai.

SYLPH of the breeze! whose dewy pinions light
Wave gently round the tree I planted here,
Sacred to her, whose soul hath winged its flight
To the pure ether of her lofty sphere;

Be it thy care, soft spirit of the gale!
To fan its leaves in summer's noontide hour;
Be it thy care, that wintry tempests fail
To rend its honours from the sylvan bowers.

Then shall it spread, and rear th' aspiring form,
Pride of the wood, secure from every storm,
Graced with her name, a consecrated tree!
So may thy Lord, the monarch of the wind,
Ne'er with rude chains thy tender pinions bind,
But grant thee still to rove, a wanderer wild and free!

GESNER.

MORNING SONG.

Willkommen, fruhe morgensonn.

HAIL! morning sun, thus early bright;
Welcome, sweet dawn! thou younger day!
Through the dark woods that fringe the height
Beams forth, e'en now, thy ray.

Bright on the dew, it sparkles clear,
Bright on the water's glittering fall,
And life, and joy, and health appear,
Sweet morning! at thy call.

Now thy fresh breezes lightly spring
From beds of fragrance, where they lay,
And roving wild on dewy wing,
Drive slumber far away.

Fantastic dreams, in swift retreat,
Now from each mind withdraw their spell,
While the young loves delighted meet,
On Rosa's cheek to dwell.

Speed, zephyr! kiss each opening flower,
Its fragrant spirit make thine own;
Then wing thy way to Rosa's bower,
Ere her light sleep is flown.

There, o'er her downy pillow, fly,
Wake the sweet maid to life and day;
Breathe on her balmy lip a sigh,
And o'er her bosom play;

And whisper, when her eyes unveil,
That I, since morning's earliest call,
Have sighed her name to every gale,
By the lone waterfall.

GERMAN SONG.

Madchen, lernet Amor kennen.

LISTEN, fair maid, my song shall tell
How Love may still be known full well,
His looks the traitor prove:
Dost thou not see that absent smile,
That fiery glance replete with guile?
Oh! doubt not then—'tis Love.

When varying still the sly disguise,
Child of caprice, he laughs and cries,
Or with complaint would move;
To day is bold, to-morrow shy,
Changing each hour, he knows not why,
Oh! doubt not then—'tis Love.

There's magic in his every wile,
His lips, well practised to beguile,
Breathe roses when they move;
See, now with sudden rage he burns,
Disdains, implores, commands, by turns;
Oh! doubt not then—'tis Love.

He comes, without the bow and dart,
That spare not e'en the purest heart;
His looks the traitor prove;
That glance is fire, that mien is guile,
Deceit is lurking in that smile,
Oh! trust him not—'tis Love!

CHAULIEU.

Grotte, d'ou sort ce clair ruisseau.

THOU grot, whence flows this limpid spring,
Its margin fringed with moss and flowers,
Still bid its voice of murmurs bring
Peace to my musing hours.

Sweet Fontenay! where first for me
The dayspring of existence rose,
Soon shall my dust return to thee,
And midst my sires repose.

Muses, that watched my childhood's morn,
Midst these wild haunts, with guardian eye,
Fair trees, that here beheld me born,
Soon shall ye see me die.

GARCILASO DE VEGA.

Coyed de vuestra alegre primavera.

ENJOY the sweets of life's luxuriant May,
Ere envious Age is hastening on his way,
With snowy wreathes to crown the beauteous brow:
The rose will fade when storms assail the year,
And Time, who changeth not his swift career,
Constant in this, will change all else below!

ORIGINAL POETRY.

LINES

WRITTEN IN A HERMITAGE ON THE SEA-SHORE.

O WANDERER! would thy heart forget
Each earthly passion and regret,
And would thy wearied spirit rise
To commune with its native skies;
Pause for awhile, and deem it sweet
To linger in this calm retreat;
And give thy cares, thy griefs, a short suspense,
Amidst wild scenes of lone magnificence.

Unmixed with aught of meaner tone,
Here nature's voice is heard alone:
When the loud storm, in wrathful hour,
Is rushing on its wing of power,
And spirits of the deep awake,
And surges foam, and billows break,
And rocks and ocean-caves around,
Reverberate each awful sound;
That mighty voice, with all its dread control,
To loftiest thought shall wake thy thrilling soul.

But when no more the sea-winds rave,
When peace is brooding on the wave,

And from earth, air, and ocean rise
No sounds but plaintive melodies;
Soothed by their softly mingling swell,
As daylight bids the world farewell,
The rustling wood, the dying breeze,
The faint, low rippling of the seas,
A tender calm shall steal upon thy breast,
A gleam reflected from the realms of rest.

Is thine a heart the world hath stung,
Friends have deceived, neglect hath wrung?
Has thou some grief that none may know,
Some lonely, secret, silent woe?
Or have thy fond affections fled
From earth, to slumber with the dead?
Oh! pause awhile—the world disown,
And dwell with nature's self alone!
And though no more she bids arise
Thy soul's departed energies,
And though thy joy of life is o'er,
Beyond her magic to restore;
Yet shall her spells o'er every passion steal,
And soothe the wounded heart they cannot heal.

DIRGE OF A CHILD.

NO bitter tears for thee be shed,
Blossom of being! seen and gone!
With flowers alone we strew thy bed,
O blest departed One!
Whose all of life, a rosy ray,
Blushed into dawn, and passed away.

Yes! thou art fled, ere guilt had power
To stain thy cherub-soul and form,
Closed is the soft ephemeral flower,
That never felt a storm!
The sunbeam's smile, the zephyr's breath,
All that it knew from birth to death.

Thou wert so like a form of light,
That Heaven benignly called thee hence,
Ere yet the world could breathe one blight
O'er thy sweet innocence:
And thou, that brighter home to bless,
Art passed, with all thy loveliness!

Oh! hadst thou still on earth remained,
Vision of beauty! fair, as brief!
How soon thy brightness had been stained
With passion or with grief!
Now not a sullying breath can rise,
To dim thy glory in the skies.

We rear no marble o'er thy tomb,
No sculptured image there shall mourn;
Ah! fitter far the vernal bloom
Such dwelling to adorn.
Fragrance, and flowers, and dews, must be
The only emblems meet for thee.

Thy grave shall be a blessed shrine,
Adorned with Nature's brightest wreath,
Each glowing season shall combine
Its incense there to breathe;
And oft, upon the midnight air,
Shall viewless harps be murmuring there.

And oh! sometimes in visions blest,
Sweet spirit! visit our repose,

And bear from thine own world of rest,
Some balm for human woes!
What form more lovely could be given
Than thine, to messenger of heaven?

INVOCATION.

HUSHED is the world in night and sleep,
Earth, Sea, and Air, are still as death;
Too rude to break a calm so deep,
Were music's faintest breath.
Descend, bright Visions! from aërial bowers,
Descend to gild your own soft, silent hours.

In hope or fear, in toil or pain,
The weary day have mortals past,
Now, dreams of bliss, be yours to reign,
And all your spells around them cast;
Steal from their hearts the pang, their eyes the tear,
And lift the veil that hides a brighter sphere.

Oh! bear your softest balm to those,
Who fondly, vainly, mourn the dead,
To them that world of peace disclose,
Where the bright soul is fled:
Where Love, immortal in his native clime,
Shall fear no pang from fate, no blight from time.

Or to his loved, his distant land,
On your light wings the exile bear;
To feel once more his heart expand,
In his own genial mountain-air;
Hear the wild echoes well-known strains repeat,
And bless each note, as heaven's own music, sweet.

But oh! with Fancy's brightest ray,
Blest dreams! the bard's repose illume;
Bid forms of heaven around him play,
And bowers of Eden bloom!
And waft *his* spirit to its native skies,
Who finds no charm in life's realities.

No voice is on the air of night,
Through folded leaves no murmurs creep,
Nor star nor moonbeam's trembling light
Falls on the placid brow of sleep.
Descend, bright visions, from your airy bower,
Dark, silent, solemn, is your favourite hour.

TO THE MEMORY OF

GENERAL SIR E—D P—K—M.

BRAVE spirit! mourned with fond regret,
Lost in life's pride, in valour's noon,
Oh! who could deem *thy* star should set
So darkly and so soon?

Fatal, though bright, the fire of mind,
Which marked and closed thy brief career,
And the fair wreath, by Hope entwined,
Lies withered on thy bier.

The soldier's death hath been thy doom,
The soldier's tear thy meed shall be;
Yet, son of war! a prouder tomb
Might Fate have reared for thee.

Thou shouldst have died, O high-souled chief!
In those bright days of glory fled,
When triumph so prevailed o'er grief,
We scarce could mourn the dead.

Noontide of fame! each tear-drop then
Was worthy of a warrior's grave—
When shall affection weep again
So proudly o'er the brave?

There, on the battle-fields of Spain,
Midst Roncesvalles' mountain-scene,
Or on Vittoria's blood-red plain,
Meet had thy death-bed been.

We mourn not that a hero's life,
Thus in its ardent prime should close;
Hadst thou but fallen in nobler strife,
But died midst conquered foes!

Yet hast thou still (though victory's flame
In that last moment cheered thee not)
Left Glory's isle another name,
That ne'er may be forgot:

And many a tale of triumph won
Shall breathe that name in Memory's ear,
And long may England mourn a son
Without reproach or fear.

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR H—Y E—LL—S,

WHO FELL IN THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

"Happy are they who die in youth, when their renown is around them."
OSSIAN.

WEEP'ST thou for him, whose doom was sealed
On England's proudest battle-field?
For him, the lion-heart, who died
In victory's full, resistless tide?
Oh! mourn him not!
By deeds like his that field was won,
And Fate could yield to Valour's son
No brighter lot.

He heard his band's exulting cry,
He saw the vanquished eagles fly;
And envied be his death of fame,
It shed a sunbeam o'er his name,
That nought shall dim—
No cloud obscured his glory's day,
It saw no twilight of decay—
Weep not for him!

And breathe no dirge's plaintive moan,
A hero claims far loftier tone!
Oh! proudly should the war-song swell,
Recording how the mighty fell
In that dread hour,
When England, midst the battle-storm,
Th' avenging angel—reared her form
In tenfold power.

Yet, gallant heart! to swell thy praise,
Vain were the minstrel's noblest lays;
Since he, the soldier's guiding-star,
The Victor-chief, the lord of war,
Has owned thy fame:
And oh! like *his* approving word,
What trophied marble could record
A warrior's name?

GUERILLA SONG,

Founded on the story related of the Spanish Patriot, Mina.

OH! forget not the hour, when through forest and vale,
We returned with our chief to his dear native halls;
Through the woody Sierra there sighed not a gale,
And the moonbeam was bright on his battlement-walls;
And nature lay sleeping, in calmness and light,
Round the home of the valiant, that rose on our sight.

We entered that home—all was loneliness round,
The stillness, the darkness, the peace of the grave;
Not a voice, not a step, bade its echoes resound,
Ah! such was the welcome that waited the brave!
For the spoilers had passed, like the poison-wind's breath,
And the loved of his bosom lay silent in death.

Oh! forget not that hour—let its image be near,
In the light of our mirth, in the dreams of our rest,
Let its tale awake feelings too deep for a tear,
And rouse into vengeance each arm and each breast,
Till cloudless the dayspring of liberty shine
O'er the plains of the olive, and hills of the vine.

THE AGED INDIAN.

WARRIORS! my noon of life is past,
The brightness of my spirit flown;
I crouch before the wintry blast,
Amidst my tribe I dwell alone;
The heroes of my youth are fled,
They rest among the warlike dead.

Ye slumberers of the narrow cave!
My kindred-chiefs in days of yore,
Ye fill an unremembered grave,
Your fame, your deeds, are known no more.
The records of your wars are gone,
Your names forgot, by all but one.

Soon shall that one depart from earth,
To join the brethren of his prime;
Then will the memory of your birth
Sleep with the hidden things of time!
With him, ye sons of former days!
Fades the last glimmering of your praise.

His eyes, that hailed your spirit's flame,
Still kindling in the combat's shock,
Have seen, since darkness veiled your fame,
Sons of the desert and the rock!
Another, and another race,
Rise to the battle and the chace.

Descendants of the mighty dead!
Fearless of heart, and firm of hand!
Oh! let me join their spirits fled,
Oh! send me to their shadowy land.
Age hath not tamed Ontara's heart,
He shrinks not from the friendly dart.

These feet no more can chase the deer,
The glory of this arm is flown—
Why should the feeble linger here,
When all the pride of life is gone?
Warriors! why still the stroke deny,
Think ye Ontara fears to die?

He feared not in his flower of days,
When strong to stem the torrent's force,

When through the desert's pathless maze,
His way was as an eagle's course!
When war was sunshine to his sight,
And the wild hurricane, delight!

Shall then the warrior tremble *now?*
Now, when his envied strength is o'er?
Hung on the pine his idle bow,
His pirogue useless on the shore?
When age hath dimmed his failing eye,
Shall he, the joyless, fear to die?

Sons of the brave! delay no more,
The spirits of my kindred call;
'Tis but one pang, and all is o'er!
Oh! bid the aged cedar fall!
To join the brethren of his prime,
The mighty of departed time.

EVENING, AMONGST THE ALPS.

SOFT skies of Italy! how richly drest,
Smile these wild scenes in your purpureal glow!
What glorious hues, reflected from the west,
Float o'er the dwellings of eternal snow!

Yon torrent, foaming down the granite steep,
Sparkles all brilliance in the setting beam;
Dark glens beneath in shadowy beauty sleep,
Where pipes the goatherd by his mountain-stream.

Now from yon peak departs the vivid ray,
That still at eve its lofty temple knows;
From rock and torrent fade the tints away,
And all is wrapt in twilight's deep repose:
While through the pine-wood gleams the vesper-star,
And roves the Alpine gale o'er solitudes afar.

DIRGE OF THE HIGHLAND CHIEF IN "WAVERLY."

SON of the mighty and the free!
High-minded leader of the brave!
Was it for lofty chief like thee,
To fill a nameless grave?
Oh! if, amidst the valiant slain,
The warrior's bier had been thy lot,
E'en though on red Culloden's plain,
We then had mourned thee not.

But darkly closed thy dawn of fame,
That dawn whose sunbeam rose so fair;
Vengeance alone may breathe thy name,
The watchword of Despair!
Yet oh! if gallant spirit's power
Hath e'er ennobled death like thine,
Then glory marked *thy* parting hour,
Last of a mighty line!

O'er thy own towers the sunshine falls,
But cannot chase their silent gloom;

Those beams, that gild thy native walls,
Are sleeping on thy tomb!
Spring on thy mountains laughs the while,
Thy green woods wave in vernal air,
But the loved scenes may vainly smile—
Not e'en thy dust is there.

On thy blue hills no bugle-sound
Is mingling with the torrent's roar,
Unmarked the wild deer sport around—
Thou lead'st the chace no more!
Thy gates are closed, thy halls are still,
Those halls where pealed the choral strain,
They hear the wind's deep murmuring thrill—
And all is hushed again.

No banner from the lonely tower
Shall wave its blazoned folds on high;
There the tall grass and summer flower,
Unmarked shall spring and die.
No more thy bard, for other ear,
Shall wake the harp once loved by thine—
Hushed be the strain *thou* canst not hear,
Last of a mighty line!

THE CRUSADER'S WAR-SONG.

CHIEFTAINS, lead on! our hearts beat high,
Lead on to Salem's towers!
Who would not deem it bliss to die,
Slain in a cause like ours?
The brave, who sleep in soil of thine,
Lie not entombed, but shrined, O Palestine!

Souls of the slain in holy war!
Look from your sainted rest!
Tell us ye rose in Glory's car,
To mingle with the blest;
Tell us how short the death-pang's power,
How bright the joys of your immortal bower!

Strike the loud harp, ye minstrel train!
Pour forth your loftiest lays;
Each heart shall echo to the strain
Breathed in the warrior's praise.
Bid every string triumphant swell
Th' inspiring sounds that heroes love so well.

Salem! amidst the fiercest hour,
The wildest rage of fight,
Thy name shall lend our falchions power,
And nerve our hearts with might.
Envied be those for thee that fall,
Who find their graves beneath thy sacred wall.

For them no need that sculptured tomb
Should chronicle their fame,
Or pyramid record their doom,
Or deathless verse their name;
It is enough that dust of thine
Should shroud their forms, O blessed Palestine!

Chieftains, lead on! our hearts beat high
For combat's glorious hour;
Soon shall the red-cross banner fly
On Salem's loftiest tower!
We burn to mingle in the strife,
Where *but* to die ensures eternal life.

THE DEATH OF CLANRONALD.

It was in the battle of Sheriffmoor that young Clanronald fell, leading on the Highlanders of the right wing. His death dispirited the assailants, who began to waver. But Glengary, chief of a rival branch of the Clan Colla, started from the ranks, and, waving his bonnet round his head, cried out, "To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for mourning!" The Highlanders received a new impulse from his words, and, charging with redoubled fury, bore down all before them.—See the Quarterly Review, article of "Culloden "Papers."

OH! ne'er be Clanronald the valiant forgot!
Still fearless and first in the combat, he fell;
But we paused not one tear-drop to shed o'er the spot,
We spared not one moment to murmur 'Farewell.'
We heard but the battle-word giv'n by the chief,
"To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!"

And wildly, Clanronald! we echoed the vow,
With the tear on our cheek, and the sword in our hand;
Young son of the brave! we may weep for thee now,
For well has thy death been avenged by thy band,
When they joined, in wild chorus, the cry of the chief,
"To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!"

Thy dirge in that hour was the bugle's wild call,
The clash of the claymore, the shout of the brave;
But now thy own bard may lament for thy fall,
And the soft voice of melody sigh o'er thy grave,
While Albyn remembers the words of the chief,
" To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!"

Thou art fallen, O fearless one! flower of thy race!
Descendant of heroes! thy glory is set!
But thy kindred, the sons of the battle and chace,
Have proved that thy spirit is bright in them yet!
Nor vainly have echoed the words of the chief,
" To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!"

TO THE EYE.

THRONE of expression! whence the spirit's ray
Pours forth so oft the light of mental day,
Where fancy's fire, affection's melting beam,
Thought, genius, passion, reign in turn supreme,
And many a feeling, words can ne'er impart,
Finds its own language to pervade the heart;
Thy power, bright orb, what bosom hath not felt,
To thrill, to rouse, to fascinate, to melt?
And by some spell of undefined control,
With magnet-influence touch the secret soul!

Light of the features! in the morn of youth
Thy glance is nature, and thy language, truth:
And ere the world, with all-corrupting sway,
Hath taught e'en *thee* to flatter and betray,
Th' ingenuous heart forbids thee to reveal,
Or speak one thought that interest would conceal;
While yet thou seem'st the cloudless mirror, given
But to reflect the purity of heaven;
Oh! then how lovely, there unveiled to trace
Th' unsullied brightness of each mental grace!

When Genius lends thee all his living light,
Where the full beams of intellect unite,
When Love illumes thee with his varying ray,
Where trembling Hope and tearful Rapture play;
Or Pity's melting cloud thy beam subdues,
Tempering its lustre with a veil of dews;
Still does thy power, whose all-commanding spell
Can pierce the mazes of the soul so well;
Bid some new feeling to existence start,
From its deep slumbers in the inmost heart.

And oh! when thought, in ecstasy sublime,
That soars triumphant o'er the bounds of time,
Fires thy keen glance with inspiration's blaze,
The light of heaven, the hope of nobler days,
(As glorious dreams, for utterance far too high,
Flash through the mist of dim mortality;)
Who does not own, that through thy lightning beams,
A flame unquenchable, unearthly, streams?
That pure, though captive effluence of the sky,
The vestal-ray, the spark that cannot die!

THE HERO'S DEATH.

LIFE'S parting beams were in his eye,
Life's closing accents on his tongue,
When round him, pealing to the sky,
The shout of victory rung!
Then, ere his gallant spirit fled,
A smile so bright illumed his face—
Oh! never, of the light it shed,
Shall memory lose a trace!

His was a death, whose rapture high
Transcended all that life could yield;
His warmest prayer was so to die,
On the red battle-field!
And they may feel, who loved him most,
A pride so holy and so pure—
Fate hath no power o'er those who boast
A treasure thus secure!

STANZAS

ON

THE LATE NATIONAL CALAMITY,

THE DEATH OF THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

" Hélas! nous composions son histoire de tout ce qu'on peut imaginer
" de plus glorieux——Le passé et le présent nous garantissoient l'avenir——
" Telle étoit l'agréable histoire que nous faisions; et pour achever ces nobles
" projets, il n'y avoit que la durée de sa vie; dont nous ne croyions pas de-
" voir être en peine, car, qui eût pu seulement penser, que les années eus-
" sent dû manquer, à une jeunesse qui sembloit si vive?" BOSSUET.

MARKED ye the mingling of the city's throng,
Each mien, each glance, with expectation bright?
Prepare the pageant, and the choral song,
The pealing chimes, the blaze of festal light!
And hark! what rumor's gathering sound is nigh?
Is it the voice of joy, that murmur deep?
Away, be hushed! ye sounds of revelry!
Back to your homes, ye multitudes, to weep!
Weep! for the storm hath o'er us darkly past,
And England's royal flower is broken by the blast!

II.

Was it a dream? so sudden and so dread
That awful fiat o'er our senses came!
So loved, so blest, is that young spirit fled,
Whose early grandeur promised years of fame?
Oh! when hath life possessed, or death destroyed
More lovely hopes, more cloudlessly that smiled?
When hath the spoiler left so dark a void?
For all is lost—the mother and her child!
Our morning-star hath vanished, and the tomb
Throws its deep-lengthened shade o'er distant years to
come.

III.

Angel of Death! did no presaging sign
Announce thy coming, and thy way prepare?
No warning voice, no harbinger was thine,
Danger and fear seemed past—but thou wert there!
Prophetic sounds along the earthquake's path
Foretel the hour of nature's awful throes;
And the volcano, ere it burst in wrath,
Sends forth some herald from its dread repose:
But *thou*, dark Spirit! swift and unforeseen,
Cam'st like the lightning's flash, when heaven is all serene.

IV.

And she is gone—the royal and the young,
In soul commanding, and in heart benign;
Who, from a race of Kings and Heroes sprung,
Glowed with a spirit lofty as her line.
Now may the voice she loved on earth so well,
Breathe forth her name, unheeded and in vain;
Nor can those eyes on which her own would dwell,
Wake from that breast one sympathy again:
The ardent heart, the towering mind are fled,
Yet shall undying love still linger with the dead.

V.

Oh! many a bright existence we have seen
Quenched, in the glow and fulness of its prime;
And many a cherished flower, ere now, hath been
Cropt, ere its leaves were breathed upon by time.
We have lost Heroes in their noon of pride,
Whose fields of triumph gave them but a bier;
And we have wept when soaring Genius died,
Checked in the glory of his mid career!
But here our hopes were centered—all is o'er,
All thought in this absorbed—she was—and is no more!

VI.

We watched her childhood from its earliest hour,
From every word and look blest omens caught;
While that young mind developed all its power,
And rose to energies of loftiest thought.
On her was fixed the Patriot's ardent eye,
One hope still bloomed—one vista still was fair;
And when the tempest swept the troubled sky,
She was our dayspring—all was cloudless *there;*
And oh! how lovely broke on England's gaze,
E'en through the mist and storm, the light of distant days.

VII.

Now hath one moment darkened future years,
And changed the track of ages yet to be!—
Yet, mortal! midst the bitterness of tears,
Kneel, and adore th' inscrutable decree!
Oh! while the clear perspective smiled in light,
Wisdom should *then* have tempered hope's excess,
And, lost One! when we saw thy lot so bright,
We might have trembled at its loveliness:
Joy is no earthly flower—nor framed to bear,
In its exotic bloom, life's cold, ungenial air.

VIII.

All smiled around thee—Youth, and Love, and Praise,
Hearts all devotion and all truth were thine!
On thee was rivetted a nation's gaze,
As on some radiant and unsullied shrine.
Heiress of empires! thou art passed away,
Like some fair vision, that arose to throw,
O'er one brief hour of life, a fleeting ray,
Then leave the rest to solitude and wo!
Oh! who shall dare to woo such dreams again!
Who hath not wept to know, that tears for thee were vain?

IX.

Yet there is one who loved thee—and whose soul
With mild affections nature formed to melt;
His mind hath bowed beneath the stern control
Of many a grief—but *this* shall be unfelt!
Years have gone by—and given his honoured head
A diadem of snow—his eye is dim—
Around him Heaven a solemn cloud hath spread,
The past, the future, are a dream to him!
Yet, in the darkness of his fate, alone
He dwells on earth, while thou, in life's full pride, art gone!

X.

The Chastener's hand is on us—we may weep,
But not repine—for many a storm hath past,
And, pillowed on her own majestic deep,
Hath England slept, unshaken by the blast!
And War hath raged o'er many a distant plain,
Trampling the vine and olive in his path;
While she, that regal daughter of the main,
Smiled, in serene defiance of his wrath!
As some proud summit, mingling with the sky,
Hears calmly far below the thunders roll and die.

XI.

Her voice hath been th' awakener—and her name,
The gathering word of nations—in her might,
And all the awful beauty of her fame,
Apart she dwelt, in solitary light.
High on her cliffs, alone and firm she stood,
Fixing the torch upon her beacon-tower;
That torch, whose flame, far streaming o'er the flood,
Hath guided Europe through her darkest hour!—
Away, vain dreams of glory!—in the dust
Be humbled, ocean-queen! and own thy sentence just!

XII.

Hark! 'twas the death-bell's note! which, full and deep,
Unmixed with aught of less majestic tone,
While all the murmurs of existence sleep,
Swells on the stillness of the air alone!
Silent the throngs that fill the darkened street,
Silent the slumbering Thames, the lonely mart;
And all is still, where countless thousands meet,
Save the full throbbing of the awe-struck heart!
All deeply, strangely, fearfully serene,
As in each ravaged home th' avenging one had been.

XIII.

The sun goes down in beauty—his farewell,
Unlike the world he leaves, is calmly bright;
And his last mellowed rays around us dwell,
Lingering, as if on scenes of young delight.
They smile and fade—but, when the day is o'er,
What slow procession moves, with measured tread?—
Lo! those who weep, with her who weeps no more,
A solemn train—the mourners and the dead!
While, throned on high, the moon's untroubled ray
Looks down, as earthly hopes are passing thus away.

XIV.

But other light is in that holy pile,
Where, in the house of silence, kings repose;
There, through the dim arcade, and pillared aisle,
The funeral-torch its deep-red radiance throws.
There pall, and canopy, and sacred strain,
And all around the stamp of wo may bear;
But Grief, to whose full heart those forms are vain,
Grief unexpressed, unsoothed by them—is there.
No darker hour hath Fate for him who mourns,
Than when the all he loved, as dust to dust returns.

XV.

We mourn—but not *thy* fate, departed One!
We pity—but the living, not the dead;
A cloud hangs o'er us—[a] "the bright day is done,"
And with a father's hopes, a nation's fled.
And he, the chosen of thy youthful breast,
Whose soul with thine had mingled every thought;
He, with thine early, fond affections blest,
Lord of a mind with all things lovely fraught;

[a] "The bright day is done,
"And we are for the dark."
SHAKSPEARE.

What but a desart to his eye, that earth,
Which but retains of thee the memory of thy worth?

XVI.

Oh! there are griefs for nature too intense,
Whose first rude shock but stupifies the soul;
Nor hath the fragile and o'erlaboured sense
Strength e'en to *feel*, at once, their dread countrol.
But when 'tis past, that still and speechless hour
Of the sealed bosom, and the tearless eye,
Then the roused mind awakes, with tenfold power,
To grasp the fulness of its agony!
Its death-like torpor vanished—and its doom;
To cast its own dark hues o'er life and nature's bloom.

XVII.

And such *his* lot, whom thou hast loved and left,
Spirit! thus early to thy home recalled!
So sinks the heart, of hope and thee bereft,
A warrior's heart! which danger ne'er appalled.
Years may pass on—and, as they roll along,
Mellow those pangs which now his bosom rend;
And he once more, with life's unheeding throng,
May, though alone in soul, in seeming blend;

Yet still, the guardian-angel of his mind,
Shall thy loved image dwell, in Memory's temple shrined.

XVIII.

Yet must the days be long, ere time shall steal
Aught from his grief, whose spirit dwells with thee;
Once deeply bruised, the heart at length may heal,
But all it was—oh! never more shall be—
The flower, the leaf, o'erwhelmed by winter-snow,
Shall spring again, when beams and showers return;
The faded cheek again with health may glow,
And the dim eye with life's warm radiance burn;
But the pure freshness of the mind's young bloom,
Once lost, revives alone in worlds beyond the tomb.

XIX.

But thou—thine hour of agony is o'er,
And thy brief race in brilliance hath been run,
While Faith, that bids fond nature grieve no more,
Tells that thy crown—though not on earth—is won.
Thou, of the world so early left, hast known
Nought but the bloom and sunshine—and for thee,
Child of propitious stars! for thee alone,

[b] The course of love ran smooth, and brightly free—
Not long such bliss to mortal could be given,
It is enough for earth, to catch one glimpse of heaven.

XX.

What though, ere yet the noonday of thy fame
Rose in its glory on thine England's eye,
The grave's deep shadows o'er thy prospect came?
Ours is that loss—and thou wert blest to die!
Thou mightst have lived to dark and evil years,
To mourn thy people changed, thy skies o'ercast;
But thy spring-morn was all undimmed by tears,
And thou wert loved and cherished to the last!
And thy young name, ne'er breathed in ruder tone,
Thus dying, thou hast left to love and grief alone.

XXI.

Daughter of Kings! from that high sphere look down,
Where still in hope, affection's thoughts may rise;
Where dimly shines to thee that mortal crown,
Which earth displayed to claim thee from the skies.

[b] "The course of true love never did run smooth." SHAKSPEARE.

Look down! and if thy spirit yet retain
Memory of aught that once was fondly dear,
Soothe, though unseen, the hearts that mourn in vain,
And, in their hours of loneliness—be near!
Blest was thy lot e'en here—and one faint sigh,
Oh! tell those hearts, hath made that bliss eternity!

Nov. 23, 1817.

THE

SIEGE OF VALENCIA;

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE LAST CONSTANTINE:

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

Hallò sola en Numancia todo quanto
Debe con justo titulo cantarse,
Y lo que puede dar materia al canto.

Numancia Cervantes.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1823.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

CONTENTS.

THE LAST CONSTANTINE.

. . . . . Thou strivest nobly,
When hearts of sterner stuff perhaps had sunk:
And o'er thy fall, if it be so decreed,
Good men will mourn, and brave men will shed tears.
. . . . . .
. . . . . Fame I look not for,
But to sustain, in Heaven's all seeing eye,
Before my fellow men, in mine own sight,
With graceful virtue and becoming pride,
The dignity and honour of a man,
Thus station'd as I am, I will do all
That man may do.

Miss Baillie's Constantine Palæologus.

THE LAST CONSTANTINE.

I.

The fires grew pale on Rome's deserted shrines,
In the dim grot the Pythia's voice had died;
—Shout, for the City of the Constantines,
The rising City of the billow-side,
The City of the Cross!—great Ocean's bride,
Crown'd from her birth she sprung!—Long ages pass'd,
And still she look'd in glory o'er the tide,
Which at her feet barbaric riches cast,
Pour'd by the burning East, all joyously and fast.

II.

Long ages pass'd!—they left her porphyry halls
Still trod by kingly footsteps. Gems and gold
Broider'd her mantle, and her castled walls
Frown'd in their strength; yet there were signs which told
The days were full. The pure high faith of old
Was changed; and on her silken couch of sleep
She lay, and murmur'd if a rose-leaf's fold
Disturb'd her dreams; and call'd her slaves to keep
Their watch, that no rude sound might reach her o'er the deep.

III.

But there are sounds that from the regal dwelling
Free hearts and fearless only may exclude;
'Tis not alone the wind at midnight swelling,
Breaks on the soft repose, by Luxury woo'd!
There are unbidden footsteps, which intrude
Where the lamps glitter, and the wine-cup flows,
And darker hues have stain'd the marble, strew'd
With the fresh myrtle, and the short-lived rose,
And Parian walls have rung to the dread march of foes.

IV.

A voice of multitudes is on the breeze,
Remote, yet solemn as the night-storm's roar,
Through Ida's giant-pines! Across the seas
A murmur comes, like that the deep winds bore
From Tempè's haunted river to the shore
Of the reed-crown'd Eurotas; when, of old,
Dark Asia sent her battle-myriads o'er
Th' indignant wave which would not be controll'd,
But, past the Persian's chain, in boundless freedom roll'd.

V.

And it is thus again!—Swift oars are dashing
The parted waters, and a light is cast
On their white foam-wreaths, from the sudden flashing
Of Tartar spears, whose ranks are thickening fast.
There swells a savage trumpet on the blast,
A music of the deserts, wild and deep,
Wakening strange echoes, as the shores are past
Where low midst Ilion's dust her conquerors sleep,
O'ershadowing with high names each rude sepulchral heap.

VI.

War from the West!—the snows on Thracian hills
Are loosed by Spring's warm breath; yet o'er the lands
Which Hæmus girds, the chainless mountain rills
Pour down less swiftly than the Moslem bands.
War from the East!—midst Araby's lone sands,
More lonely now the few bright founts may be,
While Ismael's bow is bent in warrior-hands
Against the Golden City of the sea[1]:
—Oh! for a soul to fire thy dust, Thermopylæ!

VII.

Hear yet again, ye mighty!—Where are they,
Who, with their green Olympic garlands crown'd,
Leap'd up, in proudly beautiful array,
As to a banquet gathering, at the sound
Of Persia's clarion?—Far and joyous round,
From the pine-forests, and the mountain-snows,
And the low sylvan valleys, to the bound
Of the bright waves, at Freedom's voice they rose!
—Hath it no thrilling tone to break the tomb's repose?

VIII.

They slumber with their swords!—The olive-shades
In vain are whispering their immortal tale!
In vain the spirit of the past pervades
The soft winds, breathing through each Grecian vale.
—Yet must *Thou* wake, though all unarm'd and pale,
Devoted City!—Lo! the Moslem's spear,
Red from its vintage, at thy gates; his sail
Upon thy waves, his trumpet in thine ear!
—Awake! and summon those, who yet, perchance, may hear!

IX.

Be hush'd, thou faint and feeble voice of weeping!
Lift ye the banner of the Cross on high,
And call on chiefs, whose noble sires are sleeping
In their proud graves of sainted chivalry,
Beneath the palms and cedars, where they sigh
To Syrian gales!—The sons of each brave line,
From their baronial halls shall hear your cry,
And seize the arms which flash'd round Salem's shrine,
And wield for you the swords once waved for Palestine!

X.

All still, all voiceless!—and the billow's roar
Alone replies!—Alike *their* soul is gone,
Who shared the funeral-feast on Æta's shore,
And *theirs*, that o'er the field of Ascalon
Swell'd the crusader's hymn!—Then gird thou on
Thine armour, Eastern Queen! and meet the hour
Which waits thee ere the day's fierce work is done
With a strong heart; so may thy helmet tower
Unshiver'd through the storm, for generous hope is power!

XI.

But linger not,—array thy men of might!
The shores, the seas, are peopled with thy foes.
Arms through thy cypress groves are gleaming bright,
And the dark huntsmen of the wild, repose
Beneath the shadowy marble porticoes
Of thy proud villas. Nearer and more near,
Around thy walls the sons of battle close;
Each hour, each moment, hath its sound of fear,
Which the deep grave alone is charter'd not to hear.

XII.

Away! bring wine, bring odours, to the shade[2],
Where the tall pine and poplar blend on high!
Bring roses, exquisite, but soon to fade!
Snatch every brief delight,—since we must die!—
Yet is the hour, degenerate Greeks! gone by,
For feast in vine-wreath'd bower, or pillar'd hall;
Dim gleams the torch beneath yon fiery sky,
And deep and hollow is the tambour's call,
And from the startled hand th' untasted cup will fall.

XIII.

The night, the glorious oriental night,
Hath lost the silence of her purple heaven,
With its clear stars! The red artillery's light,
Athwart her worlds of tranquil splendor driven,
To the still firmament's expanse hath given
Its own fierce glare, wherein each cliff and tower
Starts wildly forth; and now the air is riven
With thunder-bursts, and now dull smoke-clouds low'r,
Veiling the gentle moon, in her most hallow'd hour.

XIV.

Sounds from the waters, sounds upon the earth,
Sounds in the air, of battle! Yet with these
A voice is mingling, whose deep tones give birth
To Faith and Courage! From luxurious ease
A gallant few have started! O'er the seas,
From the Seven Towers[3], their banner waves its sign,
And Hope is whispering in the joyous breeze,
Which plays amidst its folds. That voice was *thine;*
Thy soul was on that band, devoted Constantine.

XV.

Was Rome thy parent? Didst thou catch from *her*
The fire that lives in thine undaunted eye?
—That city of the throne and sepulchre
Hath given proud lessons how to reign and die!
Heir of the Cæsars! did that lineage high,
Which, as a triumph to the grave, hath pass'd
With its long march of sceptred imag'ry[4],
Th' heroic mantle o'er thy spirit cast?
—Thou! of an eagle-race the noblest and the last!

XVI.

Vain dreams! upon that spirit hath descended
Light from the living Fountain, whence each thought
Springs pure and holy! In that eye is blended
A spark, with Earth's triumphal memories fraught,
And, far within, a deeper meaning, caught
From worlds unseen. A hope, a lofty trust,
Whose resting-place on buoyant wing is sought
(Though through its veil, seen darkly from the dust,)
In realms where Time no more hath power upon the just.

XVII.

Those were proud days, when on the battle plain,
And in the sun's bright face, and midst th' array
Of awe-struck hosts, and circled by the slain,
The Roman cast his glittering mail away[5],
And, while a silence, as of midnight, lay
O'er breathless thousands, at his voice who started,
Call'd on the unseen, terrific powers that sway
The heights, the depths, the shades; then, fearless-hearted,
Girt on his robe of death, and for the grave departed.

XVIII.

But then, around him as the javelins rush'd,
From earth to heaven swell'd up the loud acclaim;
And, ere his heart's last free libation gush'd,
With a bright smile the warrior caught his name,
Far-floating on the winds! And Vict'ry came,
And made the hour of that immortal deed
A life, in fiery feeling! Valour's aim
Had sought no loftier guerdon. Thus to bleed,
Was to be Rome's high star!—He died—and had his meed.

XIX.

But praise—and dearer, holier praise, be theirs,
Who, in the stillness and the solitude
Of hearts press'd earthwards by a weight of cares,
Uncheer'd by Fame's proud hope, th' ethereal food
Of restless energies, and only view'd
By Him whose eye, from his eternal throne,
Is on the soul's dark places; have subdued
And vow'd themselves, with strength till then unknown,
To some high martyr-task, in secret and alone.

XX.

Theirs be the bright and sacred names enshrined
Far in the bosom! for their deeds belong,
Not to the gorgeous faith which charm'd mankind
With its rich pomp of festival and song,
Garland, and shrine, and incense-bearing throng;
But to that Spirit, hallowing, as it tries
Man's hidden soul in whispers, yet more strong
Than storm or earthquake's voice; for *thence* arise
All that mysterious world's unseen sublimities.

XXI.

Well might *thy* name, brave Constantine! awake
Such thought, such feeling!—But the scene again
Bursts on my vision, as the day-beams break
Thro' the red sulphurous mists: the camp, the plain,
The terraced palaces, the dome-capt fane,
With its bright cross fix'd high in crowning grace;
Spears on the ramparts, galleys on the main,
And, circling all with arms, that turban'd race,
The sun, the desert, stamp'd in each dark haughty face.

XXII.

Shout, ye seven hills! Lo! Christian pennons streaming
Red o'er the waters[6]! Hail, deliverers, hail!
Along your billowy wake the radiance gleaming,
Is Hope's own smile! They crowd the swelling sail,
On, with the foam, the sunbeam, and the gale,
Borne, as a victor's car! The batteries pour
Their clouds and thunders; but the rolling veil
Of smoke floats up th' exulting winds before!
—And oh! the glorious burst of that bright sea and shore!

XXIII.

The rocks, waves, ramparts, Europe's, Asia's coast,
All throng'd! one theatre for kingly war!
A monarch girt with his Barbaric host,
Points o'er the beach his flashing scymetar!
Dark tribes are tossing javelins from afar,
Hands waving banners o'er each battlement,
Decks, with their serried guns, array'd to bar
The promis'd aid; but hark! a shout is sent
Up from the noble barks!—the Moslem line is rent!

XXIV.

On, on thro' rushing flame, and arrowy shower,
The welcome prows have cleft their rapid way,
And, with the shadows of the vesper-hour,
Furl'd their white sails, and anchor'd in the bay.
Then were the streets with song and torch-fire gay,
Then the Greek wines flow'd mantling in the light
Of festal halls;—and there was joy!—the ray
Of dying eyes, a moment wildly bright,
The sunset of the soul, ere lost to mortal sight!

XXV.

For, vain that feeble succour! Day by day
Th' imperial towers are crumbling, and the sweep
Of the vast engines, in their ceaseless play,
Comes powerful, as when Heaven unbinds the deep!
—Man's heart is mightier than the castled steep,
Yet will it sink when earthly hope is fled;
Man's thoughts work darkly in such hours, and sleep
Flies far; and in *their* mien, the walls who tread,
Things, by the brave untold, may fearfully be read!

XXVI.

It was a sad and solemn task to hold
Their midnight-watch on that beleaguer'd wall!
As the sea-wave beneath the bastions roll'd,
A sound of fate was in its rise and fall!
The heavy clouds were as an empire's pall,
The giant-shadows of each tower and fane
Lay like the grave's; a low mysterious call
Breathed in the wind, and from the tented plain
A voice of omens rose, with each wild martial strain.

XXVII.

For they might catch the Arab charger's neighing,
The Thracian drum, the Tartar's drowsy song;
Might almost hear the soldan's banner swaying,
The watch-word mutter'd in some eastern tongue.
Then flash'd the gun's terrific light along
The marble streets, all stillness—not repose;
And boding thoughts came o'er them, dark and strong;
For heaven, earth, air, speak auguries to those
Who see their number'd hours fast pressing to the close.

XXVIII.

But strength is from the mightiest! There is one
Still in the breach, and on the rampart seen,
Whose cheek shows paler with each morning sun,
And tells, in silence, how the night hath been,
In kingly halls, a vigil: yet serene,
The ray set deep within his thoughtful eye,
And there is that in his collected mien,
To which the hearts of noble men reply,
With fires, partaking not this frame's mortality!

XXIX.

Yes! call it not of lofty minds the fate,
To pass o'er earth in brightness, but alone;
High power was made their birthright, to create
A thousand thoughts responsive to their own!
A thousand echoes of their spirit's tone
Start into life, where'er their path may be,
Still following fast; as when the wind hath blown
O'er Indian groves[7], a wanderer wild and free,
Kindling and bearing flames afar from tree to tree!

XXX.

And it is thus with thee! thy lot is cast
On evil days, thou Cæsar! yet the few
That set their generous bosoms to the blast
Which rocks thy throne—the fearless and the true,
Bear hearts wherein thy glance can still renew
The free devotion of the years gone by,
When from bright dreams th' ascendant Roman drew
Enduring strength!—states vanish—ages fly—
But leave one task unchanged—to suffer and to die!

XXXI.

These are our nature's heritage. But thou,
The crown'd with empire! thou wert call'd to share
A cup more bitter. On thy fever'd brow
The semblance of that buoyant hope to wear,
Which long had pass'd away; alone to bear
The rush and pressure of dark thoughts, that came
As a strong billow in their weight of care;
And, with all this, to smile! for earth-born frame,
These are stern conflicts, yet they pass, unknown to fame!

XXXII.

Her glance is on the triumph, on the field,
On the red scaffold; and where'er, in sight
Of human eyes, the human soul is steel'd
To deeds that seem as of immortal might,
Yet are proud nature's! But her meteor-light
Can pierce no depths, no clouds; it falls not where,
In silence, and in secret, and in night,
The noble heart doth wrestle with despair,
And rise more strong than death from its unwitness'd prayer.

XXXIII.

Men have been firm in battle: they have stood
With a prevailing hope on ravaged plains,
And won the birthright of their hearths with blood,
And died rejoicing, midst their ancient fanes,
That so their children, undefiled with chains,
Might worship there in peace. But they that stand
When not a beacon o'er the wave remains,
Link'd but to perish with a ruin'd land,
Where Freedom dies with them—call *these* a martyr-band!

XXXIV.

But the world heeds them not. Or if, perchance,
Upon their strife it bend a careless eye,
It is but as the Roman's stoic glance
Fell on that stage where man's last agony
Was made *his* sport, who, knowing *one* must die,
Reck'd not *which* champion; but prepared the strain,
And bound the bloody wreath of victory,
To greet the conqueror; while, with calm disdain,
The vanquish'd proudly met the doom he met in vain.

XXXV.

The hour of Fate comes on! and it is fraught
With *this* of Liberty, that now the need
Is past to veil the brow of anxious thought,
And clothe the heart, which still beneath must bleed,
With Hope's fair-seeming drapery. We are freed
From tasks like these by Misery; one alone
Is left the brave, and rest shall be thy meed,
Prince, watcher, wearied one! when thou hast shown
How brief the cloudy space which parts the grave and throne!

XXXVI.

The signs are full. They are not in the sky,
Nor in the many voices of the air,
Nor the swift clouds. No fiery hosts on high
Toss their wild spears; no meteor-banners glare,
No comet fiercely shakes its blazing hair,
And yet the signs are full: too truly seen
In the thinn'd ramparts, in the pale despair
Which lends one language to a people's mien,
And in the ruin'd heaps where walls and towers have been!

XXXVII.

It is a night of beauty; such a night
As, from the sparry grot or laurel-shade,
Or wave in marbled cavern rippling bright,
Might woo the nymphs of Grecian fount and glade
To sport beneath its moonbeams, which pervade
Their forest-haunts: a night, to rove alone,
Where the young leaves by vernal winds are sway'd,
And the reeds whisper, with a dreamy tone
Of melody, that seems to breathe from worlds unknown.

XXXVIII.

A night, to call from green Elysium's bowers
The shades of elder bards; a night, to hold
Unseen communion with th' inspiring powers
That made deep groves their dwelling-place of old;
A night, for mourners, o'er the hallow'd mould,
To strew sweet flowers; for revellers to fill
And wreath the cup; for sorrows to be told,
Which love hath cherish'd long;—vain thoughts! be still!
—It is a night of fate, stamp'd with Almighty Will!

XXXIX.

It *should* come sweeping in the storm, and rending
The ancient summits in its dread career!
And with vast billows, wrathfully contending,
And with dark clouds, o'ershadowing every sphere!
—But He, whose footstep shakes the earth with fear,
Passing to lay the sovereign cities low,
Alike in His omnipotence is near,
When the soft winds o'er spring's green pathway blow,
And when His thunders cleave the monarch-mountain's brow.

XL.

The heavens in still magnificence look down
On the hush'd Bosphorus, whose ocean-stream
Sleeps, with its paler stars: the snowy crown
Of far Olympus[8], in the moonlight-gleam
Towers radiantly, as when the Pagan's dream
Throng'd it with gods, and bent th' adoring knee!
—But that is past—and now the One Supreme
Fills not alone *those* haunts; but earth, air, sea,
And Time, which presses on, to finish his decree.

XLI.

Olympus, Ida, Delphi! ye, the thrones
And temples of a visionary might,
Brooding in clouds above your forest-zones,
And mantling thence the realms beneath with night;
Ye have look'd down on battles! Fear, and Flight,
And arm'd Revenge, all hurrying past below!
But there is yet a more appalling sight
For earth prepared, than ere, with tranquil brow,
Ye gazed on from your world of solitude and snow!

XLII.

Last night a sound was in the Moslem camp,
And Asia's hills re-echoed to a cry
Of savage mirth !—Wild horn, and war-steeds' tramp,
Blent with the shout of barbarous revelry,
The clash of desert-spears ! Last night the sky
A hue of menace and of wrath put on,
Caught from red watch-fires, blazing far and high,
And countless, as the flames, in ages gone,
Streaming to heaven's bright queen from shadowy Lebanon!

XLIII.

But all is stillness now. May this be sleep
Which wraps those eastern thousands? Yes, perchance
Along yon moonlight shore and dark-blue deep,
Bright are their visions with the Houri's glance,
And they behold the sparkling fountains dance
Beneath the bowers of paradise, that shed
Rich odours o'er the faithful; but the lance,
The bow, the spear, now round the slumberers spread,
Ere Fate fulfil such dreams, must rest beside the dead.

XLIV.

May this be sleep, this hush?—A sleepless eye
Doth hold its vigil midst that dusky race!
One that would scan th' abyss of destiny,
E'en now is gazing on the skies, to trace,
In those bright worlds, the burning isles of space,
Fate's mystic pathway: they the while, serene,
Walk in their beauty; but Mohammed's face
Kindles beneath their aspect[9], and his mien,
All fired with stormy joy, by that soft light is seen.

XLV.

Oh! wild presumption of a conqueror's dream,
To gaze on those pure altar-fires, enshrined
In depths of blue infinitude, and deem
They shine to guide the spoiler of mankind
O'er fields of blood!—But with the restless mind
It hath been ever thus! and they that weep
For worlds to conquer, o'er the bounds assign'd
To human search, in daring pride would sweep,
As o'er the trampled dust wherein they soon must sleep.

XLVI.

But ye! that beam'd on Fate's tremendous night,
When the storm burst o'er golden Babylon,
And ye, that sparkled with your wonted light
O'er burning Salem, by the Roman won;
And ye, that calmly viewed the slaughter done
In Rome's own streets, when Alaric's trumpet-blast
Rung through the Capitol; bright spheres! roll on!
Still bright, though empires fall; and bid man cast
His humbled eyes to earth, and commune with the past.

XLVII.

For it hath mighty lessons! from the tomb,
And from the ruins of the tomb, and where,
Midst the wreck'd cities in the desert's gloom,
All tameless creatures make their savage lair,
Thence comes its voice, that shakes the midnight air,
And calls up clouds to dim the laughing day,
And thrills the soul;—yet bids us not despair,
But make one rock our shelter and our stay,
Beneath whose shade all else is passing to decay!

XLVIII.

The hours move on. I see a wavering gleam
O'er the hush'd waters tremulously fall,
Pour'd from the Cæsars' palace: now the beam
Of many lamps is brightening in the hall,
And from its long arcades and pillars tall
Soft graceful shadows undulating lie
On the wave's heaving bosom, and recall
A thought of Venice, with her moonlight sky,
And festal seas and domes, and fairy pageantry.

XLIX.

But from that dwelling floats no mirthful sound!
The swell of flute and Grecian lyre no more,
Wafting an atmosphere of music round,
Tells the hush'd seaman, gliding past the shore,
How monarchs revel there!—Its feasts are o'er—
Why gleam the lights along its colonnade?
—I see a train of guests in silence pour
Through its long avenues of terraced shade,
Whose stately founts and bowers for joy alone were made!

L.

In silence, and in arms!—With helm—with sword—
These are no marriage-garments!—Yet e'en now
Thy nuptial feast should grace the regal board,
Thy Georgian bride should wreath her lovely brow
With an imperial diadem[10]!—but thou,
O fated prince! art call'd, and these with thee,
To darker scenes; and thou hast learn'd to bow
Thine Eastern sceptre to the dread decree,
And count it joy enough to perish—being free!

LI.

On through long vestibules, with solemn tread,
As men, that in some time of fear and woe,
Bear darkly to their rest the noble dead,
O'er whom by day their sorrows may not flow,
The warriors pass: their measured steps are slow,
And hollow echoes fill the marble halls,
Whose long-drawn vistas open as they go,
In desolate pomp; and from the pictured walls,
Sad seems the light itself, which on their armour falls!

LII.

And they have reach'd a gorgeous chamber, bright
With all we dream of splendour; yet a gloom
Seems gather'd o'er it to the boding sight,
A shadow that anticipates the tomb!
Still from its fretted roof the lamps illume
A purple canopy, a golden throne;
But it is empty!—Hath the stroke of doom
Fall'n there already?—Where is He, the One,
Born that high seat to fill, supremely and alone?

LIII.

Oh! there are times whose pressure doth efface
Earth's vain distinctions!—when the storm beats loud,
When the strong towers are tottering to their base,
And the streets rock,—who mingle in the crowd?
—Peasant and chief, the lowly and the proud,
Are in that throng!—Yes, life hath many an hour
Which makes us kindred, by one chast'ning bow'd,
And feeling but, as from the storm we cower,
What shrinking weakness feels before unbounded power!

LIV.

Yet then that Power, whose dwelling is on high,
Its loftiest marvels doth reveal, and speak,
In the deep human heart more gloriously,
Than in the bursting thunder!—Thence the weak,
They that seem'd form'd, as flower-stems, but to break
With the first wind, have risen to deeds, whose name
Still calls up thoughts that mantle to the cheek,
And thrill the pulse!—Ay, strength no pangs could tame
Hath look'd from woman's eye upon the sword and flame!

LV.

And this is of such hours!—That throne is void,
And its lord comes, uncrown'd. Behold him stand,
With a calm brow, where woes have not destroy'd
The Greek's heroic beauty, midst his band,
The gather'd virtue of a sinking land,
Alas! how scanty!—Now is cast aside
All form of princely state; each noble hand
Is prest by turns in his: for earthly pride
There is no room in hearts where earthly hope hath died!

LVI.

A moment's hush—and then he speaks—he speaks!
But not of hope! *that* dream hath long gone by:
His words are full of memory—as he seeks,
By the strong names of Rome and Liberty,
Which yet are living powers that fire the eye,
And rouse the heart of manhood; and by all
The sad yet grand remembrances that lie
Deep with earth's buried heroes; to recall
The soul of other years, if but to grace their fall!

LVII.

His words are full of faith!—And thoughts, more high
Than Rome ere knew, now fill his glance with light;
Thoughts which give nobler lessons how to die
Than e'er were drawn from Nature's haughty might!
And to that eye, with all the spirit bright,
Have theirs replied in tears, which may not shame
The bravest in such moments!—'Tis a sight
To make all earthly splendours cold and tame,
—That generous burst of soul, with its electric flame!

LVIII.

They weep—those champions of the Cross—they weep,
Yet vow themselves to death!—Aye, midst that train
Are martyrs, privileged in tears to steep
Their lofty sacrifice!—The pang is vain,
And yet its gush of sorrow shall not stain
A warrior's sword.—Those men are strangers here[11]—
The homes, they never may behold again,
Lie far away, with all things blest and dear,
On laughing shores, to which their barks no more shall steer!

LIX.

[12] Know'st thou the land where bloom the orange bowers?
Where through dark foliage gleam the citron's dyes?
—It is their own. They see their father's towers,
Midst its Hesperian groves in sunlight rise:
They meet in soul, the bright Italian eyes,
Which long and vainly shall explore the main
For their white sail's return: the melodies
Of that sweet land are floating o'er their brain—
—Oh! what a crowded world one moment may contain!

LX.

Such moments come to thousands!—few may die
Amidst their native shades. The young, the brave,
The beautiful, whose gladdening voice and eye
Made summer in a parent's heart, and gave
Light to their peopled homes; o'er land and wave
Are scatter'd fast and far, as rose-leaves fall
From the deserted stem. They find a grave
Far from the shadow of th' ancestral hall,
—A lonely bed is theirs, whose smiles were hope to all!

LXI.

But life flows on, and bears us with its tide,
Nor may we, lingering, by the slumberers dwell,
Though they were those once blooming at our side
In youth's gay home!—Away! what sound's deep swell
Comes on the wind?—It is an empire's knell,
Slow, sad, majestic, pealing through the night!
For the last time speaks forth the solemn bell,
Which calls the Christians to their holiest rite,
With a funereal voice of solitary might.

LXII.

Again, and yet again!—A startling power
In sounds like these lives ever; for they bear,
Full on remembrance, each eventful hour,
Chequering life's crowded path. They fill the air
When conquerors pass, and fearful cities wear
A mien like joy's; and when young brides are led
From their paternal homes; and when the glare
Of burning streets, on midnight's cloud, waves red,
And when the silent house receives its guest—the dead[13].

LXIII.

But to those tones what thrilling soul was given,
On that last night of empire!—As a spell
Whereby the life-blood to its source is driven,
On the chill'd heart of multitudes they fell.
Each cadence seem'd a prophecy, to tell
Of sceptres passing from their line away,
An angel-watcher's long and sad farewell,
The requiem of a faith's departing sway,
A throne's, a nation's dirge, a wail for earth's decay.

LXIV.

Again, and yet again!—from yon high dome,
Still the slow peal comes awfully; and they
Who never more to rest in mortal home,
Shall throw the breastplate off at fall of day,
Th' imperial band, in close and arm'd array,
As men that from the sword must part no more,
Take through the midnight streets their silent way,
Within their ancient temple to adore,
Ere yet its thousand years of christian pomp are o'er.

LXV.

It is the hour of sleep: yet few the eyes,
O'er which forgetfulness her balm hath shed,
In the beleaguer'd city. Stillness lies
With moonlight, o'er the hills and waters spread,
But not the less, with signs and sounds of dread,
The time speeds on. No voice is raised to greet
The last brave Constantine; and yet the tread
Of many steps is in the echoing street,
And pressure of pale crowds, scarce conscious why they meet.

LXVI.

Their homes are luxury's yet: why pour they thence
With a dim terror in each restless eye?
Hath the dread car, which bears the pestilence,
In darkness, with its heavy wheels, roll'd by,
And rock'd their palaces, as if on high
The whirlwind pass'd?—From couch and joyous board
Hath the fierce phantom beckon'd them to die?
—No!—what are these?—for them a cup is pour'd[14]
More dark with wrath;—*Man* comes—the spoiler and the sword.

LXVII.

Still, as the monarch and his chieftains pass
Through those pale throngs, the streaming torchlight throws
On some wild form, amidst the living mass,
Hues, deeply red, like lava's, which disclose
What countless shapes are worn by mortal woes!
Lips bloodless, quivering limbs, hands clasp'd in prayer,
Starts, tremblings, hurryings, tears; all outward shows
Betokening inward agonies, were there:
—Greeks! Romans! all but such as image brave despair!

LXVIII.

But high above that scene, in bright repose,
And beauty borrowing from the torches' gleams
A mien of life, yet where no life-blood flows,
But all instinct with loftier being seems,
Pale, grand, colossal; lo! th' embodied dreams
Of yore!—Gods, heroes, bards, in marble wrought,
Look down, as powers, upon the wild extremes
Of mortal passion!—Yet 'twas man that caught,
And in each glorious form enshrined immortal thought!

LXIX.

Stood ye not thus amidst the streets of Rome?
That Rome which witness'd, in her sceptred days,
So much of noble death?—When shrine and dome,
Midst clouds of incense, rung with choral lays,
As the long triumph pass'd, with all its blaze
Of regal spoil, were ye not proudly borne,
O sovereign forms! concentering all the rays
Of the soul's lightnings?—did ye not adorn
The pomp which earth stood still to gaze on and to mourn?

LXX.

Hath it been thus?—Or did ye grace the halls,
Once peopled by the mighty?—Haply there,
In your still grandeur, from the pillar'd walls
Serene ye smiled on banquets of despair,
Where hopeless courage wrought itself to dare
The stroke of its deliverance, midst the glow
Of living wreaths, the sighs of perfumed air,
The sound of lyres, the flower-crown'd goblet's flow[15]:
—Behold again!—high hearts make nobler offerings now!

LXXI.

The stately fane is reach'd—and at its gate
The warriors pause; on life's tumultuous tide
A stillness falls, while he, whom regal state
Hath mark'd from all, to be more sternly tried
By suffering, speaks:—each ruder voice hath died,
While his implores forgiveness!—"If there be
One midst your throngs, my people!—whom in pride,
Or passion, I have wrong'd; such pardon, free
As mortals hope from Heaven, accord that man to me!"

LXXII.

But all is silence; and a gush of tears
Alone replies!—He hath not been of those
Who, fear'd by many, pine in secret fears
Of all; th' environ'd but by slaves and foes,
To whom day brings not safety, night repose,
For they have *heard the voice cry* "*Sleep no more!*"
Of them he hath not been, nor such, as close
Their hearts to misery, till the time is o'er,
When it speaks low and kneels th' oppressor's throne
before!

LXXIII.

He hath been loved—but who may trust the love
Of a degenerate race?—in other mould
Are cast the free and lofty hearts, that prove
Their faith through fiery trials.—Yet behold,
And call him not forsaken!—Thoughts untold
Have lent his aspect calmness, and his tread
Moves firmly to the shrine.—What pomps unfold
Within its precincts!—Isles and seas have shed
Their gorgeous treasures there, around th' imperial dead.

LXXIV.

'Tis a proud vision—that most regal pile
Of ancient days!—The lamps are streaming bright
From its rich altar, down each pillar'd aisle,
Whose vista fades in dimness; but the sight
Is lost in splendours, as the wavering light
Developes, on those walls, the thousand dyes
Of the vein'd marbles, which array their height,
And from yon dome[16], the lode-star of all eyes,
Pour such an iris-glow as emulates the skies.

LXXV.

But gaze thou not on these; though heaven's own hues,
In their soft clouds and radiant tracery vie;
Though tints, of sun-born glory, may suffuse
Arch, column, rich mosaic: pass thou by
The stately tombs, where eastern Cæsars lie,
Beneath their trophies; pause not here, for know,
A deeper source of all sublimity
Lives in man's bosom, than the world can show,
In nature or in art, above, around, below.

LXXVI.

Turn thou to mark (tho' tears may dim thy gaze)
The steel-clad group before yon altar-stone;
Heed not, tho' gems and gold around it blaze,
Those heads unhelm'd, those kneeling forms alone,
Thus bow'd, look glorious here. The light is thrown
Full from the shrine on one, a nation's lord,
A sufferer!—but his task shall soon be done—
E'en now, as Faith's mysterious cup is pour'd,
See to that noble brow, peace, not of earth, restored!

LXXVII.

The rite is o'er. The band of brethren part,
Once—and *but* once—to meet on earth again!
Each, in the strength of a collected heart,
To dare what man may dare—and know 'tis vain!
The rite is o'er: and thou, majestic fane!
The glory is departed from thy brow!
Be clothed with dust!—the Christian's farewell strain
Hath died within thy walls; thy Cross must bow;
Thy kingly tombs be spoil'd; thy golden shrines laid low!

LXXVIII.

The streets grow still and lonely—and the star,
The last bright lingerer in the path of morn,
Gleams faint; and in the very lap of war,
As if young Hope with Twilight's ray were born,
Awhile the city sleeps:—her throngs, o'erworn
With fears and watchings, to their homes retire;
Nor is the balmy air of dayspring torn
With battle-sounds [17]; the winds in sighs expire,
And Quiet broods in mists, that veil the sunbeam's fire.

LXXIX.

The city sleeps!—aye! on the combat's eve,
And by the scaffold's brink, and midst the swell
Of angry seas, hath Nature won reprieve
Thus, from her cares. The brave have slumber'd well,
And e'en the fearful, in their dungeon-cell,
Chain'd between Life and Death!—Such rest be thine,
For conflicts wait thee still!—Yet who can tell
In that brief hour, how much of Heaven may shine
Full on thy spirit's dream?—Sleep, weary Constantine!

LXXX.

Doth the blast rise?—the clouded East is red,
As if a storm were gathering; and I hear
What seems like heavy rain-drops, or the tread,
The soft and smother'd step, of those that fear
Surprise from ambush'd foes. Hark! yet more near
It comes, a many-ton'd and mingled sound;
A rustling, as of winds where boughs are sear,
A rolling, as of wheels that shake the ground
From far; a heavy rush, like seas that burst their bound!

LXXXI.

Wake, wake! They come from sea and shore ascending
In hosts your ramparts! Arm ye for the day!
Who now may sleep amidst the thunders rending,
Thro' tower and wall, a path for their array?
Hark! how the trumpet cheers them to the prey,
With its wild voice, to which the seas reply!
And the earth rocks beneath their engine's sway,
And the far hills repeat their battle-cry,
Till that fierce tumult seems to shake the vaulted sky!

LXXXII.

They fail not now, the generous band, that long
Have rang'd their swords around a falling throne;
Still in those fearless men the walls are strong,
Hearts, such as rescue empires, are their own!
—Shall those high energies be vainly shown?
No! from their towers th' invading tide is driven
Back, like the Red-sea waves, when God had blown
With his strong winds[18]!—the dark-brow'd ranks are riven—
Shout, warriors of the cross!—for victory is of Heaven!

LXXXIII.

Stand firm!—Again the crescent host is rushing,
And the waves foam, as on the galleys sweep,
With all their fires and darts, tho' blood is gushing
Fast o'er their sides, as rivers to the deep.
Stand firm!—there yet is hope—th' ascent is steep,
And from on high no shaft descends in vain;
—But those that fall swell up the mangled heap,
In the red moat, the dying and the slain,
And o'er that fearful bridge th' assailants mount again!

LXXXIV.

Oh! the dread mingling, in that awful hour,
Of all terrific sounds!—the savage tone
Of the wild horn, the cannon's peal, the shower
Of hissing darts, the crash of walls o'erthrown,
The deep dull tambour's beat!—man's voice alone
Is there unheard! Ye may not catch the cry
Of trampled thousands—prayer, and shriek, and moan,
All drown'd, as that fierce hurricane sweeps by,
But swell the unheeded sum earth pays for victory!

LXXXV.

War-clouds have wrapt the city!—thro' their dun
O'erloaded canopy, at times a blaze,
As of an angry storm-presaging sun,
From the Greek fire shoots up[19]; and lightning rays
Flash, from the shock of sabres, thro' the haze,
And glancing arrows cleave the dusky air!
—Aye! *this* is in the compass of our gaze,—
But fearful things, unknown, untold, are there,
Workings of Wrath and Death, and Anguish, and Despair!

LXXXVI.

Woe, shame and woe!—A chief, a warrior flies,
A red-cross champion, bleeding, wild, and pale!
— Oh God! that nature's passing agonies,
Thus, o'er the spark which dies not, should prevail!
Yes! rend the arrow from thy shatter'd mail,
And stanch the blood-drops, Genoa's fallen son[20]!
Fly swifter yet! the javelins pour as hail!
—But there are tortures which thou canst not shun,
The spirit is *their* prey;—thy pangs are but begun!

LXXXVII.

Oh! happy, in their homes, the noble dead!
The seal is set on their majestic fame;
Earth has drunk deep the generous blood they shed,
Fate has no power to dim their stainless name!
They may not, in one bitter moment, shame
Long glorious years; from many a lofty stem
Fall graceful flowers, and eagle-hearts grow tame,
And stars drop, fading, from the diadem;
But the bright *past* is theirs—there is no change for *them*!

LXXXVIII.

Where art thou, Constantine?—Where Death is reaping
His sevenfold harvest! Where the stormy light,
Fast as th' artillery's thunderbolts are sweeping,
Throws meteor-bursts o'er battle's noonday-night?
Where the towers rock and crumble from their height,
As to the earthquake, and the engines ply
Like red Vesuvio; and where human might
Confronts all this, and still brave hearts beat high,
While scymetars ring loud on shivering panoply.

LXXXIX.

Where art thou, Constantine?—Where christian blood
Hath bathed the walls in torrents, and in vain!
Where Faith and Valour perish in the flood,
Whose billows, rising o'er their bosoms, gain
Dark strength each moment: where the gallant slain
Around the banner of the cross lie strew'd,
Thick as the vine-leaves on the autumnal plain;
Where all, save one high spirit, is subdued,
And through the breach press on th' o'erwhelming multitude.

XC.

Now is he battling midst a host alone,
As the last cedar stems awhile the sway
Of mountain-storms, whose fury hath o'erthrown
Its forest-brethren in their green array!
And he hath cast his purple robe away,
With its imperial bearings; that his sword
An iron ransom from the chain may pay,
And win, what haply Fate may yet accord,
A soldier's death, the all now left an empire's lord!

XCI.

Search for him now, where bloodiest lie the files
Which once were men, the faithful and the brave!
Search for him now, where loftiest rise the piles
Of shatter'd helms and shields, which could not save;
And crests and banners, never more to wave
In the free winds of heaven!—He is of those
O'er whom the host may rush, the tempest rave,
And the steeds trample, and the spearmen close,
Yet wake them not!—so deep their long and last repose!

XCII.

Woe to the vanquish'd! thus it hath been still,
Since Time's first march!—Hark, hark, a people's cry!
Aye! now the conquerors in the streets fulfil
Their task of wrath! In vain the victims fly;
Hark! now each piercing tone of agony
Blends in the city's shriek!—The lot is cast.
Slaves, 'twas your *choice*, thus, rather thus, to die,
Than where the warrior's blood flows warm and fast,
And rous'd and mighty hearts beat proudly to the last!

XCIII.

Oh! well doth Freedom battle!—Men have made,
E'en midst their blazing roofs, a noble stand,
And on the floors, where once their children play'd,
And by the hearths, round which their household band
At evening met; aye! struggling hand to hand,
Within the very chambers of their sleep,
There have they taught the spoilers of the land,
In chainless hearts what fiery strength lies deep,
To guard free homes!—but ye! kneel, tremblers! kneel,
and weep!

XCIV.

'Tis eve—the storm hath died—the valiant rest
Low on their shields; the day's fierce work is done,
And blood-stain'd seas and burning towers attest
Its fearful deeds. An empire's race is run!
Sad, midst his glory, looks the parting sun
Upon the captive city. Hark! a swell
(Meet to proclaim barbaric war-fields won)
Of fierce triumphal sounds, that wildly tell,
The Soldan comes within the Cæsars' halls to dwell!

XCV.

Yes! with the peal of cymbal and of gong,
He comes,—the Moslem treads those ancient halls!
But all is stillness there, as Death had long
Been lord alone within those gorgeous walls.
And half that silence of the grave appals
The conqueror's heart. Aye, thus with Triumph's hour,
Still comes the boding whisper, which recalls
A thought of those impervious clouds that low'r
O'er Grandeur's path, a sense of some far mightier Power!

XCVI.

" The owl upon Afrasiab's towers hath sung
Her watch-song, and around th' imperial throne
The spider weaves his web[21] !" Still darkly hung
That verse of omen, as a prophet's tone,
O'er his flush'd spirit. Years on years have flown
To prove its truth: kings pile their domes in air,
That the coil'd snake may bask on sculptur'd stone,
And nations clear the forest, to prepare
For the wild fox and wolf more stately dwellings there!

XCVII.

But thou! that on thy ramparts proudly dying,
As a crown'd leader in such hours should die,
Upon thy pyre of shiver'd spears art lying,
With the heavens o'er thee for a canopy,
And banners for thy shroud!—No tear, no sigh,
Shall mingle with thy dirge; for thou art now
Beyond vicissitude! Lo! rear'd on high,
The Crescent blazes, while the Cross must bow;
But where no change can reach, there, Constantine, art thou!

XCVIII.

" After life's fitful fever thou sleep'st well!"
We may not mourn thee!—Sceptred chiefs, from whom
The earth received her destiny, and fell
Before them trembling—to a sterner doom
Have oft been call'd. For them the dungeon's gloom,
With its cold starless midnight, hath been made
More fearful darkness, where, as in a tomb,
Without a tomb's repose, the chain hath weigh'd
Their very soul to dust, with each high power decay'd.

XCIX.

Or in the eye of thousands they have stood,
To meet the stroke of Death—but not like thee!
From bonds and scaffolds hath appeal'd *their* blood,
But thou didst fall unfetter'd, arm'd, and free,
And kingly, to the last!—And if it be,
That, from the viewless world, whose marvels none
Return to tell, a spirit's eye can see
The things of earth; still may'st thou hail the sun,
Which o'er thy land shall dawn, when Freedom's fight is won!

C.

And the hour comes, in storm!—A light is glancing
Far through the forest-god's Arcadian shades!
—'Tis not the moonbeam, tremulously dancing,
Where lone Alpheus bathes his haunted glades;
A murmur, gathering power, the air pervades,
Round dark Cithæron, and by Delphi's steep;
—'Tis not the song and lyre of Grecian maids,
Nor pastoral reed that lulls the vales to sleep,
Nor yet the rustling pines, nor yet the sounding deep!

CI.

Arms glitter on the mountains, which, of old,
Awoke to freedom's first heroic strain,
And by the streams, once crimson as they roll'd
The Persian helm and standard to the main;
And the blue waves of Salamis again
Thrill to the trumpet; and the tombs reply,
With their ten thousand echoes, from each plain,
Far as Platæa's, where the mighty lie,
Who crown'd so proudly there the bowl of liberty[22]!

CII.

Bright land, with glory mantled o'er by song!
Land of the vision-peopled hills and streams,
And fountains, whose deserted banks along,
Still the soft air with inspiration teems;
Land of the graves, whose dwellers shall be themes
To verse for ever; and of ruin'd shrines,
That scarce look desolate beneath such beams,
As bathe in gold thine ancient rocks and pines!
—When shall thy sons repose in peace beneath their vines?

CIII.

Thou wert not made for bonds, nor shame, nor fear!
—Do the hoar oaks and dark-green laurels wave
O'er Mantinea's earth?—doth Pindus rear
His snows, the sunbeam and the storm to brave?
And is there yet on Marathon a grave?
And doth Eurotas lead his silvery line
By Sparta's ruins?—And shall man, a slave,
Bow'd to the dust, amid such scenes repine?
—If e'er a soil was mark'd for Freedom's step—'tis thine!

CIV.

Wash from that soil the stains, with battle-showers!
—Beneath Sophia's dome the Moslem prays,
The crescent gleams amidst the olive-bowers,
In the Comneni's[23] halls the Tartar sways:
But not for long!—the spirit of those days,
When the three hundred made their funeral pile
Of Asia's dead, is kindling, like the rays
Of thy rejoicing sun, when first his smile
Warms the Parnassian rock, and gilds the Delian isle.

CV.

If then 'tis given thee to arise in might,
Trampling the scourge, and dashing down the chain,
Pure be thy triumphs, as thy name is bright!
The cross of victory should not know a stain!
So may that faith once more supremely reign,
Through which we lift our spirits from the dust!
And deem not, e'en when virtue dies in vain,
She dies forsaken; but repose our trust
On Him whose ways are dark, unsearchable—but just.

NOTES.

Note 1.

——— *While Ismael's bow, &c.*

THE army of Mahomet the Second, at the siege of Constantinople, was thronged with fanatics of all sects and nations, who were not enrolled amongst the regular troops. The sultan himself marched upon the city from Adrianople; but his army must have been principally collected in the Asiatic provinces, which he had previously visited.

Note 2.

——— *Bring wine, bring odours, &c.*

Huc vina, et unguenta, et nimium brevis
Flores amœnæ ferre jube rosæ.

Hor. lib. ii. od. 3.

Note 3.

From the Seven Towers, &c.

The Castle of the Seven Towers is mentioned in the Byzantine history, as early as the sixth century of the Christian era, as an edifice which contributed materially to the defence of Constantinople; and it was the principal bulwark of the town on the coast of the Propontis, in the later periods of the empire. For a description of this building, see *Pouqueville's Travels.*

Note 4.

With its long march of sceptred imagery.

An allusion to the Roman custom of carrying in procession, at the funerals of their great men, the images of their ancestors.

Note 5.

The Roman cast his glittering mail away.

The following was the ceremony of consecration with which Decius devoted himself in battle. He was ordered by Valerius, the pontifex maximus, to quit his military habit, and put on the robe he wore in the senate. Valerius then covered his head with a veil; commanded him to put forth his hand under his robe to his chin, and, standing with both feet upon a javelin, to repeat these words: "O Janus, Jupiter, Mars, Romulus, Bellona, and ye Lares and Novensiles! All ye heroes who dwell in heaven, and all ye

gods who rule over us and our enemies, especially ye gods of hell! I honour you, invoke you, and humbly entreat you to prosper the arms of the Romans, and to transfer all fear and terror from them to their enemies; and I do, for the safety of the Roman people, and their legions, devote myself, and with myself the army and auxiliaries of the enemy, to the infernal gods, and the goddess of the earth." Decius then, girding his robe around him, mounted his horse, and rode full speed into the thickest of the enemy's battalions. The Latins were, for a while, thunderstruck at this spectacle; but at length recovering themselves, they discharged a shower of darts, under which the consul fell.

Note 6.

See Gibbon's animated description of the arrival of five Christian ships, with men and provisions, for the succour of the besieged, not many days before the fall of Constantinople.—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 215.

Note 7.

As when the wind hath blown
O'er Indian groves, &c.

The summits of the lofty rocks in the Carnatic, particularly about the Ghauts, are sometimes covered with the bamboo tree, which grows in thick clumps, and is of such uncommon aridity, that in the sultry season of the year the friction occasioned by a strong dry wind will literally produce sparks of fire, which frequently setting the woods in

a blaze, exhibit to the spectator stationed in a valley surrounded by rocks, a magnificent, though imperfect circle of fire.—*Notes to Kindersley's Specimens of Hindoo Literature.*

Note 8.

——————— *The snowy crown*
Of far Olympus, &c.

Those who steer their westward course through the middle of the Propontis may at once descry the high lands of Thrace and Bithynia, and never lose sight of the lofty summit of Mount Olympus, covered with eternal snows.—*Decline and Fall, &c.* vol. iii. p. 8.

Note 9.

——————— *Mohammed's face*
Kindles beneath their aspect, &c.

Mahomet II. was greatly addicted to the study of astrology. His calculations in this science led him to fix upon the morning of the 29th of May as the fortunate hour for a general attack upon the city.

Note 10.

Thy Georgian bride, &c.

Constantine Palæologus was betrothed to a Georgian princess; and the very spring which witnessed the fall of

Constantinople had been fixed upon as the time for conveying the imperial bride to that city.

Note 11.

Those men are strangers here.

Many of the adherents of Constantine, in his last noble stand for the liberties, or rather the honour, of a falling empire, were foreigners and chiefly Italians.

Note 12.

Know'st thou the land, &c.

This and the next line are an almost literal translation from a beautiful song of Goëthe's:

Kennst du das land, wo die zitronen blühn,
Mit dunkeln laub die gold orangen glühn? &c.

Note 13.

The idea expressed in this stanza is beautifully amplified in Schiller's poem "Das Lied der Glocke."

Note 14.

Hath the fierce phantom, &c.

It is said to be a Greek superstition that the plague is announced by the heavy rolling of an invisible chariot, heard

in the streets at midnight; and also by the appearance of a gigantic spectre, who summons the devoted person by name.

Note 15.

Ye smiled on banquets of despair.

Many instances of such banquets, given and shared by persons resolved upon death, might be adduced from ancient history. That of Vibius Virius, at Capua, is amongst the most memorable.

Note 16.

Yon dome, the lode-star of all eyes.

For a minute description of the marbles, jaspers, and porphyries, employed in the construction of St. Sophia, see *The Decline and Fall,* &c., vol. vii. p. 120.

Note 17.

Nor is the balmy air of dayspring torn
With battle-sounds, &c.

The assault of the city took place at day-break, and the Turks were strictly enjoined to advance in silence, which had also been commanded, on pain of death, during the preceding night. This circumstance is finely alluded to by Miss Baillie, in her tragedy of Constantine Palæologus:

"Silent shall be the march: nor drum, nor trump,
Nor clash of arms, shall to the watchful foe
Our near approach betray: silent and soft,
As the pard's velvet foot on Lybia's sands,
Slow stealing with crouch'd shoulders on her prey."
Constantine Palæologus, Act iv.

"The march and labour of thousands" must, however, as Gibbon observes, "have inevitably produced a strange confusion of discordant clamours, which reached the ears of the watchmen on the towers."

Note 18.

The dark-brow'd ranks are riven.

"After a conflict of two hours, the Greeks still maintained and preserved their advantage," says Gibbon. The strenuous exertions of the janizaries first turned the fortune of the day.

Note 19.

From the Greek fire shoots up, &c.

"A circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople is the re-union of the ancient and modern artillery. The bullet and the battering-ram were directed against the same wall; nor had the discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the liquid and unextinguishable fire." —*Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. xii. p. 213.

Note 20.

And stanch the blood-drops, Genoa's fallen son!

"The immediate loss of Constantinople may be ascribed to the bullet, or arrow, which pierced the gauntlet of John Justiniani (a Genoese chief). The sight of his blood, and exquisite pain, appalled the courage of the chief, whose arms and counsels were the firmest rampart of the city."—*Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. xii. p. 229.

Note 21.

The owl upon Afrasiab's towers hath sung
Her watch-song, &c.

Mahomet II., on entering, after his victory, the palace of the Byzantine emperors, was strongly impressed with the silence and desolation which reigned within its precincts. "A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind, and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry: 'The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace, and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab.'"—*Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. xii. p. 240.

Note 22.

The Bowl of Liberty—

One of the ceremonies by which the battle of Platæa was annually commemorated was, to crown with wine a

cup called the *Bowl of Liberty,* which was afterwards poured forth in libation.

Note 23.

In the Comneni's halls—

The Comneni were amongst the most distinguished of the families who filled the Byzantine throne in the declining years of the eastern empire.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ELYSIUM.

"In the Elysium of the ancients, we find none but heroes and persons who had either been fortunate or distinguished on earth; the children, and apparently the slaves and lower classes, that is to say, Poverty, Misfortune, and Innocence, were banished to the infernal regions."

CHATEAUBRIAND, *Génie du Christianisme.*

FAIR wert thou, in the dreams
Of elder time, thou land of glorious flowers,
And summer-winds, and low-ton'd silvery streams,
Dim with the shadows of thy laurel-bowers!
Where, as they pass'd, bright hours
Left no faint sense of parting, such as clings
To earthly love, and joy in loveliest things!

Fair wert thou, with the light
On thy blue hills and sleepy waters cast,
From purple skies ne'er deepening into night,
Yet soft, as if each moment were their last
Of glory, fading fast
Along the mountains!—but *thy* golden day
Was not as those that warn us of decay.

And ever, through thy shades,
A swell of deep Eolian sound went by,
From fountain-voices in their secret glades,
And low reed-whispers, making sweet reply
To summer's breezy sigh!
And young leaves trembling to the wind's light breath,
Which ne'er had touch'd them with a hue of death!

And the transparent sky
Rung as a dome, all thrilling to the strain
Of harps that, midst the woods, made harmony
Solemn and sweet; yet troubling not the brain
With dreams and yearnings vain,
And dim remembrances, that still draw birth
From the bewildering music of the earth.

And who, with silent tread,
Mov'd o'er the plains of waving Asphodel?
Who, of the hosts, the night-o'erpeopling dead,
Amidst the shadowy amaranth-bowers might dwell,
And listen to the swell
Of those majestic hymn-notes, and inhale
The spirit wandering in th' immortal gale?

They of the sword, whose praise,
With the bright wine at nations' feasts, went round!
They of the lyre, whose unforgotten lays
On the morn's wing had sent their mighty sound,
And in all regions found
Their echoes midst the mountains!—and become
In man's deep heart, as voices of his home!

They of the daring thought!
Daring and powerful, yet to dust allied;
Whose flight thro' stars, and seas, and depths had sought
The soul's far birth-place—but without a guide!
Sages and seers, who died,
And left the world their high mysterious dreams,
Born midst the olive-woods, by Grecian streams.

But they, of whose abode
Midst her green valleys earth retain'd no trace,
Save a flower springing from their burial-sod,
A shade of sadness on some kindred face,
A void and silent place
In some sweet home;—thou hadst no wreaths for these,
Thou sunny land! with all thy deathless trees!

The peasant, at his door
Might sink to die, when vintage-feasts were spread,
And songs on every wind!—From *thy* bright shore
No lovelier vision floated round his head,
Thou wert for nobler dead!
He heard the bounding steps which round him fell,
And sigh'd to bid the festal sun farewell!

The slave, whose very tears
Were a forbidden luxury, and whose breast
Shut up the woes and burning thoughts of years,
As in the ashes of an urn compress'd;
—*He* might not be thy guest!
No gentle breathings from thy distant sky
Came o'er *his* path, and whisper'd "Liberty!"

Calm, on its leaf-strewn bier,
Unlike a gift of nature to decay,
Too rose-like still, too beautiful, too dear,
The child at rest before its mother lay;
E'en so to pass away,
With its bright smile!—Elysium! what wert *thou*,
To her, who wept o'er that young slumberer's brow?

Thou hadst no home, green land!
For the fair creature from her bosom gone,
With life's first flowers just opening in her hand,
And all the lovely thoughts and dreams unknown,
Which in its clear eye shone
Like the spring's wakening!—But that light was past—
—Where went the dew-drop, swept before the blast?

Not where thy soft winds play'd,
Not where thy waters lay in glassy sleep!——
Fade, with thy bowers, thou land of visions, fade!
From thee no voice came o'er the gloomy deep,
And bade man cease to weep!
Fade, with the amaranth-plain, the myrtle-grove,
Which could not yield one hope to sorrowing love!

For the most lov'd are they,
Of whom Fame speaks not with her clarion-voice
In regal halls!—the shades o'erhang their way,
The vale, with its deep fountains, is their choice,
And gentle hearts rejoice
Around their steps!—till silently they die,
As a stream shrinks from summer's burning eye.

And the world knows not then,
Not then, nor ever, what pure thoughts are fled!
Yet these are they, that on the souls of men
Come back, when night her folding veil hath spread,
The long-remember'd dead!
But not with *thee* might aught save Glory dwell—
—Fade, fade away, thou shore of Asphodel!

GREEK SONGS.

I.

THE STORM OF DELPHI*.

FAR through the Delphian shades
An Eastern trumpet rung!
And the startled eagle rush'd on high,
With a sounding flight through the fiery sky,
And banners, o'er the shadowy glades,
To the sweeping winds were flung.

Banners, with deep-red gold
All waving, as a flame,
And a fitful glance from the bright spear-head
On the dim wood-paths of the mountain shed,
And a peal of Asia's war-notes told
That in arms the Persian came.

* See the account cited from Herodotus, in Mitford's Greece.

He came, with starry gems
On his quiver and his crest;
With starry gems, at whose heart the day
Of the cloudless orient burning lay,
And they cast a gleam on the laurel-stems,
As onward his thousands press'd.

But a gloom fell o'er their way,
And a heavy moan went by!
A moan, yet not like the wind's low swell,
When its voice grows wild amidst cave and dell,
But a mortal murmur of dismay,
Or a warrior's dying sigh!

A gloom fell o'er their way!
'Twas not the shadow cast
By the dark pine-boughs, as they cross'd the blue
Of the Grecian heavens with their solemn hue;
—The air was fill'd with a mightier sway,
—But on the spearmen pass'd!

And hollow, to their tread,
Came the echoes of the ground,

And banners droop'd, as with dews o'erborne,
And the wailing blast of the battle-horn
Had an alter'd cadence, dull and dead,
Of strange foreboding sound.

—But they blew a louder strain,
When the steep defiles were pass'd!
And afar the crown'd Parnassus rose,
To shine thro' heaven with his radiant snows,
And in golden light the Delphian fane
Before them stood at last!

In golden light it stood,
Midst the laurels gleaming lone,
For the Sun-God yet, with a lovely smile,
O'er its graceful pillars look'd awhile,
Tho' the stormy shade on cliff and wood
Grew deep, round its mountain-throne.

And the Persians gave a shout!
But the marble-walls replied,
With a clash of steel, and a sullen roar
Like heavy wheels on the ocean-shore,

And a savage trumpet's note peal'd out,
Till their hearts for terror died!

On the armour of the God,
Then a viewless hand was laid;
There were helm and spear, with a clanging din,
And corslet brought from the shrine within,
From the inmost shrine of the dread abode,
And before its front array'd.

And a sudden silence fell
Thro' the dim and loaded air!
On the wild bird's wing, and the myrtle-spray,
And the very founts, in their silvery way,
With a weight of sleep came down the spell,
Till man grew breathless there.

But the pause was broken soon!
'Twas not by song or lyre;
For the Delphian maids had left their bowers,
And the hearths were lone in the city's towers,
But there burst a sound thro' the misty noon,
That battle-noon of fire!

It burst from earth and heaven!
It roll'd from crag and cloud!
For a moment of the mountain-blast,
With a thousand stormy voices pass'd,
And the purple gloom of the sky was riven,
When the thunder peal'd aloud.

And the lightnings in their play
Flash'd forth, like javelins thrown;
Like sun-darts wing'd from the silver bow,
They smote the spear and the turban'd brow,
And the bright gems flew from the crests like spray,
And the banners were struck down!

And the massy oak-boughs crash'd
To the fire-bolts from on high,
And the forest lent its billowy roar,
While the glorious tempest onward bore,
And lit the streams, as they foam'd and dash'd,
With the fierce rain sweeping by.

Then rush'd the Delphian men
On the pale and scatter'd host;

Like the joyous burst of a flashing wave,
They rush'd from the dim Corycian cave,
And the singing blast o'er wood and glen
Roll'd on, with the spears they toss'd.

There were cries of wild dismay,
There were shouts of warrior-glee,
There were savage sounds of the tempest's mirth,
That shook the realm of their eagle-birth;
But the mount of song, when they died away,
Still rose, with its temple, free!

And the Pæan swell'd ere long,
Io Pæan! from the fane;
Io Pæan! for the war-array,
On the crown'd Parnassus riven that day!
—Thou shalt rise *as* free, thou mount of song!
With thy bounding streams again.

II.

THE BOWL OF LIBERTY *.

BEFORE the fiery sun,
The sun that looks on Greece with cloudless eye,
In the free air, and on the war-field won,
Our fathers crown'd the Bowl of Liberty.

Amidst the tombs they stood,
The tombs of heroes! with the solemn skies,
And the wide plain around, where patriot-blood
Had steep'd the soil in hues of sacrifice.

They call'd the glorious dead,
In the strong faith which brings the viewless nigh,
And pour'd rich odours o'er their battle-bed,
And bade them to the rite of Liberty.

* This and the following piece appeared originally in the New Monthly Magazine.

They call'd them from the shades,
The golden fruited shades, where minstrels tell
How softer light th' immortal clime pervades,
And music floats o'er meads of Asphodel.

Then fast the bright-red wine *
Flow'd to *their* names who taught the world to die,
And made the land's green turf a living shrine,
Meet for the wreath and Bowl of Liberty.

So the rejoicing earth
Took from her vines again the blood she gave,
And richer flowers to deck the tomb drew birth
From the free soil, thus hallow'd to the brave.

We have the battle-fields,
The tombs, the names, the blue majestic sky,
We have the founts the purple vintage yields;
—When shall *we* crown the Bowl of Liberty!

* For an account of this ceremony, anciently performed in commemoration of the battle of Platæa, see *Potter's Antiquities of Greece*, vol. i. p. 389.

III.

THE VOICE OF SCIO.

A voice from Scio's isle,
A voice of song, a voice of old,
Swept far as cloud or billow roll'd,
And earth was hush'd the while.

The souls of nations woke!
Where lies the land whose hills among,
That voice of Victory hath not rung,
As if a trumpet spoke?

To sky, and sea, and shore
Of those whose blood, on Ilion's plain,
Swept from the rivers to the main,
A glorious tale it bore.

Still, by our sun-bright deep,
With all the fame that fiery lay
Threw round them, in its rushing way,
The sons of battle sleep.

And kings their turf have crown'd!
And pilgrims o'er the foaming wave
Brought garlands there: so rest the brave,
Who thus their bard have found!

A voice from Scio's isle,
A voice as deep hath risen again!
As far shall peal its thrilling strain,
Where'er our sun may smile!

Let not its tones expire!
Such power to waken earth and heaven,
And might and vengeance ne'er was given
To mortal song or lyre!

Know ye not whence it comes?
—From ruin'd hearths, from burning fanes,
From kindred blood on yon red plains,
From desolated homes!

'Tis with us through the night!
'Tis on our hills, 'tis in our sky—
—Hear it, ye heavens! when swords flash high,
O'er the mid-waves of fight!

IV.

THE SPARTAN'S MARCH*.

"The Spartans used not the trumpet in their march into battle, says Thucydides, because they wished not to excite the rage of their warriors. Their charging-step was made to the 'Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders.' The valour of a Spartan was too highly tempered to require a stunning or rousing impulse. His spirit was like a steed too proud for the spur."—CAMPBELL *on the Elegiac Poetry of the Greeks.*

'TWAS morn upon the Grecian hills,
Where peasants dress'd the vines,
Sunlight was on Cithæron's rills,
Arcadia's rocks and pines.

And brightly, through his reeds and flowers,
Eurotas wander'd by,
When a sound arose from Sparta's towers
Of solemn harmony.

* Originally published in the Edinburgh Magazine.

Was it the hunters' choral strain
  To the woodland-goddess pour'd?
Did virgin-hands in Pallas' fane
  Strike the full-sounding chord?

But helms were glancing on the stream,
  Spears ranged in close array,
And shields flung back a glorious beam
  To the morn of a fearful day!

And the mountain-echoes of the land
  Swell'd through the deep-blue sky,
While to soft strains moved forth a band
  Of men that moved to die.

They march'd not with the trumpet's blast,
  Nor bade the horn peal out,
And the laurel-groves, as on they pass'd,
  Rung with no battle-shout!

They ask'd no clarion's voice to fire
  Their souls with an impulse high;
But the Dorian reed and the Spartan lyre
  For the sons of liberty!

And still sweet flutes, their path around,
  Sent forth Eolian breath;
They needed not a sterner sound
  To marshal them for death!

So moved they calmly to their field,
  Thence never to return,
Save bearing back the Spartan shield,
  Or on it proudly borne!

V.

THE URN AND SWORD.

THEY sought for treasures in the tomb,
Where gentler hands were wont to spread
Fresh boughs and flowers of purple bloom,
And sunny ringlets, for the dead*.

They scatter'd far the greensward-heap,
Where once those hands the bright wine pour'd;
—What found they in the home of sleep?
—A mouldering urn, a shiver'd sword!

An urn, which held the dust of one
Who died when hearths and shrines were free;
A sword, whose work was proudly done,
Between our mountains and the sea.

And these are treasures!—undismay'd,
Still for the suffering land we trust,
Wherein the past its fame hath laid,
With freedom's sword, and valour's dust.

* See Potter's Grecian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 234.

VI.

THE MYRTLE-BOUGH.

STILL green, along our sunny shore
  The flowering myrtle waves,
As when its fragrant boughs of yore
  Were offer'd on the graves;
The graves, wherein our mighty men
Had rest, unviolated then.

Still green it waves! as when the hearth
  Was sacred through the land;
And fearless was the banquet's mirth,
  And free the minstrel's hand;
And guests, with shining myrtle crown'd,
Sent the wreath'd lyre and wine-cup round.

Still green! as when on holy ground
  The tyrant's blood was pour'd:
—Forget ye not what garlands bound
  The young deliverer's sword!
—Though earth may shrowd Harmodius now,
We still have sword and myrtle-bough!

THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA:

A DRAMATIC POEM.

Jndicio ha dado esta no vista hazaña
Del valor que en los siglos venideros
Tendrán los Hijos de la fuerte España,
Hijos de tal padres herederos.

Hallò sola en Numancia todo quanto
Debe con justo titulo cantarse,
Y lo que puede dar materia al canto.

Numancia de Cervantes.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of Spain records two instances of the severe and self-devoting heroism, which forms the subject of the following dramatic poem. The first of these occurred at the siege of Tarifa, which was defended in 1294 for Sancho, King of Castile, during the rebellion of his brother, Don Juan, by Guzman, surnamed the Good *. The second is related of Alonso Lopez de Texeda, who, until his garrison had been utterly disabled by pestilence, maintained the city of Zamora for the children of Don Pedro the Cruel, against the forces of Henrique of Trastamara †.

Impressive as were the circumstances which distinguished both these memorable sieges, it appeared to

* See Quintana's 'Vidas de Españoles celebres,' p. 53.

† See the Preface to Southey's 'Chronicle of the Cid.'

the author of the following pages that a deeper interest, as well as a stronger colour of nationality might be imparted to the scenes in which she has feebly attempted "to describe high passions and high actions;" by connecting a religious feeling with the patriotism and high-minded loyalty which had thus been proved "faithful unto death," and by surrounding her ideal dramatis personæ with recollections derived from the heroic legends of Spanish chivalry. She has, for this reason, employed the agency of imaginary characters, and fixed upon "*Valencia del Cid*" as the scene to give them

"A local habitation and a name."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALVAR GONZALEZ . .	*Governor of Valencia.*
ALPHONSO, CARLOS	*His Sons.*
HERNANDEZ	*A Priest.*
ABDULLAH . . .	*A Moorish Prince, Chief of the Army besieging Valencia.*
GARCIAS	*A Spanish Knight.*
ELMINA	*Wife to Gonzalez.*
XIMENA	*Her Daughter.*
THERESA	*An Attendant.*

Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALAN FITZWALTER . . . Governor of Valencia.

ALFONSO } . . . His Sons.
GARCIA }

HERNANDO . . . . A Page.

ADORNA . . . . } A Moorish Prince, Chief of the
. . . Army besieging Valencia.

GARCIA . . . . . A Spanish Knight.

ELVIRA . . . . . Wife to Garcia.

ZAIDNA . . . . . Her Daughter.

THERESA . . . . . Her Attendant.

Officers, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA.

SCENE I.

Room in a Palace of Valencia.

XIMENA *singing to a Lute.*

BALLAD.

" THOU hast not been with a festal throng,
At the pouring of the wine;
Men bear not from the Hall of Song,
A mien so dark as thine!
—There 's blood upon thy shield,
There 's dust upon thy plume,
—Thou hast brought, from some disastrous field,
That brow of wrath and gloom!"

" And is there blood upon my shield?
—Maiden! it well may be!

We have sent the streams from our battle-field,
All darken'd to the sea!
We have given the founts a stain,
Midst their woods of ancient pine;
And the ground is wet—but not with rain,
Deep-dyed—but not with wine!

"The ground is wet—but not with rain—
We have been in war array,
And the noblest blood of Christian Spain
Hath bathed her soil to-day.
I have seen the strong man die,
And the stripling meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by,
In the Roncesvalles' Strait.

"In the gloomy Roncesvalles' Strait
There are helms and lances cleft;
And they that moved at morn elate
On a bed of heath are left!
There 's many a fair young face,
Which the war steed hath gone o'er;
At many a board there is kept a place
For those that come no more!"

"Alas! for love, for woman's breast,
If woe like this must be!
—Hast thou seen a youth with an eagle crest,
And a white plume waving free?
With his proud quick flashing eye,
And his mien of knightly state?
Doth he come from where the swords flash'd high,
In the Roncesvalles' Strait?"

"In the gloomy Roncesvalles' Strait
I saw and mark'd him well;
For nobly on his steed he sate,
When the pride of manhood fell!
—But it is not *youth* which turns
From the field of spears again;
For the boy's high heart too wildly burns,
Till it rests amidst the slain!"

"Thou canst not say that *he* lies low,
The lovely and the brave!
Oh! none could look on his joyous brow,
And think upon the grave!
Dark, dark perchance the day
Hath been with valour's fate,

But *he* is on his homeward way,
From the Roncesvalles' Strait!"

"There is dust upon his joyous brow,
And o'er his graceful head;
And the war-horse will not wake him now,
Tho' it bruise his greensward bed!
—I have seen the stripling die,
And the strong man meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by,
In the Roncesvalles' Strait!"

ELMINA *enters.*

ELMINA.

Your songs are not as those of other days,
Mine own Ximena!—Where is now the young
And buoyant spirit of the morn, which once
Breath'd in your spring-like melodies, and woke
Joy's echo from all hearts?

XIMENA.

My mother, this
Is not the free air of our mountain-wilds;

And these are not the halls, wherein my voice
First pour'd those gladdening strains.

ELMINA.

Alas! thy heart
(I see it well) doth sicken for the pure
Free-wandering breezes of the joyous hills,
Where thy young brothers, o'er the rock and heath,
Bound in glad boyhood, e'en as torrent-streams
Leap brightly from the heights. Had we not been
Within these walls thus suddenly begirt,
Thou shouldst have track'd ere now, with step as light,
Their wild wood-paths.

XIMENA.

I would not but have shared
These hours of woe and peril, tho' the deep
And solemn feelings wakening at their voice,
Claim all the wrought-up spirit to themselves,
And will not blend with mirth. The storm doth hush
All floating whispery sounds, all bird-notes wild
O' th' summer-forest, filling earth and heaven
With its own awful music.—And 'tis well!
Should not a hero's child be train'd to hear
The trumpet's blast unstartled, and to look
In the fix'd face of Death without dismay?

ELMINA.

Woe! woe! that aught so gentle and so young
Should thus be call'd to stand i' the tempest's path,
And bear the token and the hue of death
On a bright soul so soon! I had not shrunk
From mine own lot, but thou, my child, shouldst move
As a light breeze of heaven, thro' summer-bowers,
And not o'er foaming billows. We are fall'n
On dark and evil days!

XIMENA.

Aye, days, that wake
All to their tasks!—Youth may not loiter now
In the green walks of spring; and womanhood
Is summon'd unto conflicts, heretofore
The lot of warrior-souls. But we will take
Our toils upon us nobly! Strength is born
In the deep silence of long-suffering hearts;
Not amidst joy.

ELMINA.

Hast thou some secret woe
That thus thou speak'st?

XIMENA.

What sorrow should be mine,
Unknown to thee?

ELMINA.

Alas! the baleful air
Wherewith the pestilence in darkness walks
Thro' the devoted city, like a blight
Amidst the rose-tints of thy cheek hath fall'n,
And wrought an early withering!—Thou hast cross'd
The paths of Death, and minister'd to those
O'er whom his shadow rested, till thine eye
Hath changed its glancing sunbeam for a still,
Deep, solemn radiance, and thy brow hath caught
A wild and high expression, which at times
Fades unto desolate calmness, most unlike
What youth's bright mien should wear. My gentle child!
I look on thee in fear!

XIMENA.

Thou hast no cause
To fear for me. When the wild clash of steel,
And the deep tambour, and the heavy step
Of armed men, break on our morning dreams;
When, hour by hour, the noble and the brave
Are falling round us, and we deem it much
To give them funeral-rites, and call them blest
If the good sword, in its own stormy hour,
Hath done its work upon them, ere disease

Had chill'd their fiery blood;—it is no time
For the light mien wherewith, in happier hours,
We trod the woodland mazes, when young leaves
Were whispering in the gale.—My Father comes—
Oh! speak of me no more. I would not shade
His princely aspect with a thought less high
Than his proud duties claim.

GONZALEZ *enters.*

ELMINA.

My noble lord!
Welcome from this day's toil!—It is the hour
Whose shadows, as they deepen, bring repose
Unto all weary men; and wilt not thou
Free thy mail'd bosom from the corslet's weight,
To rest at fall of eve?

GONZALEZ.

There may be rest
For the tired peasant, when the vesper-bell
Doth send him to his cabin, and beneath
His vine and olive, he may sit at eve,
Watching his children's sport: but unto *him*
Who keeps the watch-place on the mountain-height,

When Heaven lets loose the storms that chasten realms
—Who speaks of rest?

XIMENA.

My father, shall I fill
The wine-cup for thy lips, or bring the lute
Whose sounds thou lovest?

GONZALEZ.

If there be strains of power
To rouse a spirit, which in triumphant scorn
May cast off nature's feebleness, and hold
Its proud career unshackled, dashing down
Tears and fond thoughts to earth; give voice to those!
I have need of such, Ximena! we must hear
No melting music now.

XIMENA.

I know all high
Heroic ditties of the elder time,
Sung by the mountain-Christians [1], in the holds
Of th' everlasting hills, whose snows yet bear
The print of Freedom's step; and all wild strains
Wherein the dark serranos * teach the rocks
And the pine forests deeply to resound

* "Serranos," mountaineers.

The praise of later champions. Wouldst thou hear
The war-song of thine ancestor, the Cid?

GONZALEZ.

Aye, speak of him; for in that name is power,
Such as might rescue kingdoms! Speak of him!
We are his children! They that can look back
I' th' annals of their house on such a name,
How should *they* take dishonour by the hand,
And o'er the threshold of their father's halls
First lead her as a guest?

ELMINA.

Oh, why is this?
How my heart sinks!

GONZALEZ.

It must not fail thee *yet*,
Daughter of heroes!—thine inheritance
Is strength to meet all conflicts. Thou canst number
In thy long line of glorious ancestry
Men, the bright offering of whose blood hath made
The ground it bathed e'en as an altar, whence
High thoughts shall rise for ever. Bore they not,
Midst flame and sword, their witness of the Cross,
With its victorious inspiration girt
As with a conqueror's robe, till th' infidel

O'erawed, shrank back before them?—Aye, the earth
Doth call them martyrs, but *their* agonies
Were of a moment, tortures whose brief aim
Was to destroy, within whose powers and scope
Lay nought but dust.—And earth doth call them *martyrs!*
Why, Heaven but claim'd their blood, their lives, and not
The things which grow as tendrils round their hearts;
No, not their children!

ELMINA.

Mean'st thou?—know'st thou aught?—
I cannot utter it—My sons! my sons!
Is it of them?—Oh! wouldst thou speak of them?

GONZALEZ.

A mother's heart divineth but too well!

ELMINA.

Speak, I adjure thee!—I can bear it all.—
Where are my children?

GONZALEZ.

In the Moorish camp
Whose lines have girt the city.

XIMENA.

But they live?
—All is not lost, my mother!

ELMINA.

Say, they live.

GONZALEZ.

Elmina, still they live.

ELMINA.

But captives!—They
Whom my fond heart had imaged to itself
Bounding from cliff to cliff amidst the wilds
Where the rock-eagle seem'd not more secure
In its rejoicing freedom!—And my boys
Are captives with the Moor!—Oh! how was this?

GONZALEZ.

Alas! our brave Alphonso, in the pride
Of boyish daring, left our mountain-halls,
With his young brother, eager to behold
The face of noble war. Thence on their way
Were the rash wanderers captured.

ELMINA.

'Tis enough.
—And when shall they be ransom'd?

GONZALEZ.

There is ask'd
A ransom far too high.

ELMINA.

What! have we wealth
Which might redeem a monarch, and our sons
The while wear fetters?—Take thou all for them,

And we will cast our worthless grandeur from us,
As 'twere a cumbrous robe!—Why, *thou* art one,
To whose high nature pomp hath ever been
But as the plumage to a warrior's helm,
Worn or thrown off as lightly. And for me,
Thou knowest not how serenely I could take
The peasant's lot upon me, so my heart,
Amidst its deep affections undisturb'd,
May dwell in silence.

XIMENA.

Father! doubt thou not
But we will bind ourselves to poverty,
With glad devotedness, if this, but this,
May win them back.—Distrust us not, my father!
We can bear all things.

GONZALEZ.

Can ye bear disgrace?

XIMENA.

We were not *born* for this.

GONZALEZ.

No, thou sayst well!
Hold to that lofty faith.—My wife, my child!
Hath earth no treasures richer than the gems
Torn from her secret caverns?—If by them

Chains may be riven, then let the captive spring
Rejoicing to the light!—But he, for whom
Freedom and life may but be worn with shame,
Hath nought to do, save fearlessly to fix
His stedfast look on the majestic heavens,
And proudly die!

ELMINA.

Gonzalez, *who* must die?

GONZALEZ (*hurriedly*).

They on whose lives a fearful price is set,
But to be paid by treason!—Is 't enough?
Or must I yet seek words?

ELMINA.

That look saith more!
Thou canst not mean——

GONZALEZ.

I do! why dwells there not
Power in a glance to speak it?—They must die!
They—must their names be told—*Our sons* must die
Unless I yield the city!

XIMENA.

Oh! look up!
My mother, sink not thus!—Until the grave
Shut from our sight its victims, there is hope.

ELMINA (*in a low voice*).

Whose knell was in the breeze?—No, no, not *theirs!*
Whose was the blessed voice that spoke of hope?
—And there *is* hope!—I will not be subdued—
I will not hear a whisper of despair!
For Nature is all-powerful, and her breath
Moves like a quickening spirit o'er the depths
Within a father's heart.—Thou too, Gonzalez,
Wilt tell me there is hope!

GONZALEZ (*solemnly*).

Hope but in Him
Who bade the patriarch lay his fair young son
Bound on the shrine of sacrifice, and when
The bright steel quiver'd in the father's hand
Just raised to strike, sent forth his awful voice
Through the still clouds, and on the breathless air,
Commanding to withhold!—Earth has no hope,
It rests with Him.

ELMINA.

Thou canst not tell me this!
Thou father of my sons, within whose hands
Doth lie thy children's fate.

GONZALEZ.

If there have been

Men in whose bosoms Nature's voice hath made
Its accents as the solitary sound
Of an o'erpowering torrent, silencing
Th' austere and yet divine remonstrances
Whisper'd by faith and honour, lift thy hands,
And, to that Heaven, which arms the brave with strength,
Pray, that the father of thy sons may ne'er
Be thus found wanting!

ELMINA.

Then their doom is seal'd!
Thou wilt not save thy children?

GONZALEZ.

Hast thou cause,
Wife of my youth! to deem it lies within
The bounds of possible things, that I should link
My name to that word—*traitor?*—They that sleep
On their proud battle-fields, thy sires and mine,
Died not for this!

ELMINA.

Oh, cold and hard of heart!
Thou shouldst be born for empire, since thy soul
Thus lightly from all human bonds can free
Its haughty flight!—Men! men! too much is yours
Of vantage; ye, that with a sound, a breath,

A shadow, thus can fill the desolate space
Of rooted up affections, o'er whose void
Our yearning hearts must wither!—So it is,
Dominion must be won!—Nay, leave me not—
My heart is bursting, and I *must* be heard!
Heaven hath given power to mortal agony
As to the elements in their hour of might
And mastery o'er creation!—Who shall dare
To mock that fearful strength?—I *must* be heard!
Give me my sons!

GONZALEZ.

That they may live to hide
With covering hands th' indignant flush of shame
On their young brows, when men shall speak of him
They call'd their father!—Was the oath, whereby,
On th' altar of my faith, I bound myself,
With an unswerving spirit to maintain
This free and christian city for my God,
And for my king, a writing traced on sand?
That passionate tears should wash it from the earth,
Or e'en the life-drops of a bleeding heart
Efface it, as a billow sweeps away
The last light vessel's wake?—Then never more
Let man's deep vows be trusted!—though enforced

By all th' appeals of high remembrances,
And silent claims o' th' sepulchres, wherein
His fathers with their stainless glory sleep,
On their good swords! Thinkst thou *I* feel no pangs?
He that hath given me sons, doth know the heart
Whose treasure she recalls.—Of this no more.
'Tis vain. I tell thee that th' inviolate cross
Still, from our ancient temples, must look up
Through the blue heavens of Spain, though at its foot
I perish, with my race. Thou *darest* not ask
That I, the son of warriors—men who died
To fix it on that proud supremacy—
Should tear the sign of our victorious faith,
From its high place of sunbeams, for the Moor
In impious joy to trample!

ELMINA.

Scorn me not
In mine extreme of misery!—Thou art strong—
Thy heart is not as mine.—My brain grows wild;
I know not what I ask!—And yet 'twere but
Anticipating fate—since it must fall,
That cross *must* fall at last! There is no power,
No hope within this city of the grave,
To keep its place on high. Her sultry air

Breathes heavily of death, her warriors sink
Beneath their ancient banners, ere the Moor
Hath bent his bow against them; for the shaft
Of pestilence flies more swiftly to its mark,
Than the arrow of the desert. Ev'n the skies
O'erhang the desolate splendour of her domes
With an ill omen's aspect, shaping forth,
From the dull clouds, wild menacing forms and signs
Foreboding ruin. *Man* might be withstood,
But who shall cope with famine and disease,
When leagued with armed foes?—Where now the aid,
Where the long-promised lances of Castile?
—We are forsaken, in our utmost need,
By heaven and earth forsaken!

GONZALEZ.

If this be,
(And yet I will not deem it) we must fall
As men that in severe devotedness
Have chosen their part, and bound themselves to death,
Through high conviction that their suffering land,
By the free blood of martyrdom alone,
Shall call deliverance down.

ELMINA.

Oh! I have stood

Beside thee through the beating storms of life,
With the true heart of unrepining love,
As the poor peasant's mate doth cheerily,
In the parch'd vineyard, or the harvest-field,
Bearing her part, sustain with him the heat
And burden of the day;—But now the hour,
The heavy hour is come, when human strength
Sinks down, a toil-worn pilgrim, in the dust,
Owning that woe is mightier!—Spare me yet
This bitter cup, my husband!—Let not her,
The mother of the lovely, sit and mourn
In her unpeopled home, a broken stem,
O'er its fall'n roses dying!

GONZALEZ.

Urge me not,
Thou that through all sharp conflicts hast been found
Worthy a brave man's love, oh! urge me not
To guilt, which through the midst of blinding tears,
In its own hues thou seest not!—Death may scarce
Bring aught like this!

ELMINA.

All, all thy gentle race,
The beautiful beings that around thee grew,
Creatures of sunshine! Wilt thou doom them all?

—She too, thy daughter—doth her smile unmark'd
Pass from thee, with its radiance, day by day?
Shadows are gathering round her—seest thou not?
The misty dimness of the spoiler's breath
Hangs o'er her beauty, and the face which made
The summer of our hearts, now doth but send,
With every glance, deep bodings through the soul,
Telling of early fate.

GONZALEZ.

I see a change
Far nobler on her brow!—She is as one,
Who, at the trumpet's sudden call, hath risen
From the gay banquet, and in scorn cast down
The wine-cup, and the garland, and the lute
Of festal hours, for the good spear and helm,
Beseeming sterner tasks.—Her eye hath lost
The beam which laugh'd upon th' awakening heart,
E'en as morn breaks o'er earth. But far within
Its full dark orb, a light hath sprung, whose source
Lies deeper in the soul.—And let the torch
Which but illumed the glittering pageant, fade!
The altar-flame, i' th' sanctuary's recess,
Burns quenchless, being of heaven!—She hath put on
Courage, and faith, and generous constancy,

Ev'n as a breastplate.—Aye, men look on her,
As she goes forth serenely to her tasks,
Binding the warrior's wounds, and bearing fresh
Cool draughts to fever'd lips; they look on her,
Thus moving in her beautiful array
Of gentle fortitude, and bless the fair
Majestic vision, and unmurmuring turn
Unto their heavy toils.

ELMINA.

And seest thou not
In that high faith and strong collectedness,
A fearful inspiration?—*They* have cause
To tremble, who behold th' unearthly light
Of high, and, it may be, prophetic thought,
Investing youth with grandeur!—From the grave
It rises, on whose shadowy brink thy child
Waits but a father's hand to snatch her back
Into the laughing sunshine.—Kneel with me,
Ximena, kneel beside me, and implore
That which a deeper, more prevailing voice
Than ours doth ask, and will not be denied;
—His children's lives!

XIMENA.

Alas! this may not be,
Mother!—I cannot. [*Exit* XIMENA.

GONZALEZ.

My heroic child!
—A terrible sacrifice thou claim'st, O God!
From creatures in whose agonizing hearts
Nature is strong as death!

ELMINA.

Is 't thus in thine?
Away!—what time is given thee to resolve
On?—what I cannot utter!—Speak! thou know'st
Too well what I would say.

GONZALEZ.

Until—ask not!
The time is brief.

ELMINA.

Thou saidst—I heard not right—

GONZALEZ.

The time is brief.

ELMINA.

What! must we burst all ties
Wherewith the thrilling chords of life are twined;
And, for this task's fulfilment, can it be
That man, in his cold heartlessness, hath dared
To number and to mete us forth the sands
Of hours, nay, moments?—Why, the sentenced wretch,

He on whose soul there rests a brother's blood
Pour'd forth in slumber, is allow'd more time
To wean his turbulent passions from the world
His presence doth pollute!—It is not thus!
We must have Time to school us.

GONZALEZ.

We have but
To bow the head in silence, when Heaven's voice
Calls back the things we love.

ELMINA.

Love! love!—there are soft smiles and gentle words,
And there are faces, skilful to put on
The look we trust in—and 'tis mockery all!
—A faithless mist, a desert-vapour, wearing
The brightness of clear waters, thus to cheat
The thirst that semblance kindled!—There is none,
In all this cold and hollow world, no fount
Of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within
A mother's heart.—It is but pride, wherewith
To his fair son the father's eye doth turn,
Watching his growth. Aye, on the boy he looks,
The bright glad creature springing in his path,
But as the heir of his great name, the young
And stately tree, whose rising strength ere long

Shall bear his trophies well.—And this is love!
This is *man*'s love!—What marvel?—*you* ne'er made
Your breast the pillow of his infancy,
While to the fulness of your heart's glad heavings
His fair cheek rose and fell; and his bright hair
Waved softly to your breath!—*You* ne'er kept watch
Beside him, till the last pale star had set,
And morn, all dazzling, as in triumph, broke
On your dim weary eye; not *yours* the face
Which, early faded thro' fond care for him,
Hung o'er his sleep, and, duly as Heaven's light,
Was there to greet his wakening! *You* ne'er smooth'd
His couch, ne'er sung him to his rosy rest,
Caught his least whisper, when his voice from yours
Had learn'd soft utterance; press'd your lip to his,
When fever parch'd it; hush'd his wayward cries,
With patient, vigilant, never-wearied love!
No! these are *woman*'s tasks!—In these her youth,
And bloom of cheek, and buoyancy of heart,
Steal from her all unmark'd!—My boys! my boys!
Hath vain affection borne with all for this?
—Why were ye given me?

GONZALEZ.

Is there strength in man
Thus to endure?—That thou couldst read, thro' all

Its depths of silent agony, the heart
Thy voice of woe doth rend!

ELMINA.

Thy heart!—*thy* heart!—Away! it feels not *now!*
But an hour comes to tame the mighty man
Unto the infant's weakness; nor shall Heaven
Spare you that bitter chastening!—May you live
To be alone, when loneliness doth seem
Most heavy to sustain!—For me, my voice
Of prayer and fruitless weeping shall be soon
With all forgotten sounds; my quiet place
Low with my lovely ones, and we shall sleep,
Tho' kings lead armies o'er us, we shall sleep,
Wrapt in earth's covering mantle!—you the while
Shall sit within your vast, forsaken halls,
And hear the wild and melancholy winds
Moan thro' their drooping banners, never more
To wave above your race. Aye, then call up
Shadows—dim phantoms from ancestral tombs,
But all—all *glorious*—conquerors, chieftains, kings—
To people that cold void!—And when the strength
From your right arm hath melted, when the blast
Of the shrill clarion gives your heart no more
A fiery wakening; if at last you pine
For the glad voices, and the bounding steps,

Once thro' your home re-echoing, and the clasp
Of twining arms, and all the joyous light
Of eyes that laugh'd with youth, and made your board
A place of sunshine;—When those days are come,
Then, in your utter desolation, turn
To the cold world, the smiling, faithless world,
Which hath swept past you long, and bid it quench
Your soul's deep thirst with *fame!* immortal *fame!*
Fame to the sick of heart!—a gorgeous robe,
A crown of victory, unto him that dies
I' th' burning waste, for water!

GONZALEZ.

This from *thee!*
Now the last drop of bitterness is pour'd.
Elmina—I forgive thee! [*Exit* ELMINA.
Aid me, Heaven!
From whom alone is power!—Oh! thou hast set
Duties, so stern of aspect, in my path,
They almost, to my startled gaze, assume
The hue of things less hallow'd! Men have sunk
Unblamed beneath such trials!—Doth not He
Who made us know the limits of our strength?
My wife! my sons!—Away! I must not pause
To give my heart one moment's mastery thus!
[*Exit* GONZALEZ.

Scene—The Aisle of a Gothic Church.

HERNANDEZ, GARCIAS, *and others.*

HERNANDEZ.

The rites are closed. Now, valiant men, depart,
Each to his place—I may not say, of rest;
Your faithful vigils for your sons may win
What must not be your own. Ye are as those
Who sow, in peril and in care, the seed
Of the fair tree, beneath whose stately shade
They may not sit. But bless'd be they who toil
For after-days!—All high and holy thoughts
Be with you, warriors, thro' the lingering hours
Of the night-watch!

GARCIAS.

Aye, father! we have need
Of high and holy thoughts, wherewith to fence
Our hearts against despair. Yet have I been
From youth a son of war. The stars have look'd
A thousand times upon my couch of heath,
Spread midst the wild sierras, by some stream

Whose dark-red waves look'd e'en as tho' their source
Lay not in rocky caverns, but the veins
Of noble hearts; while many a knightly crest
Roll'd with them to the deep. And in the years
Of my long exile and captivity,
With the fierce Arab, I have watch'd beneath
The still, pale shadow of some lonely palm,
At midnight, in the desert; while the wind
Swell'd with the lion's roar, and heavily
The fearfulness and might of solitude
Press'd on my weary heart.

HERNANDEZ *(thoughtfully).*

Thou little know'st
Of what is solitude!—I tell thee, those
For whom—in earth's remotest nook—howe'er
Divided from their path by chain on chain
Of mighty mountains, and the amplitude
Of rolling seas—there beats one human heart,
There breathes one being unto whom their name
Comes with a thrilling and a gladdening sound
Heard o'er the din of life! are not alone!
Not on the deep, nor in the wild, alone;
For there is that on earth with which they hold
A brotherhood of soul!—Call *him* alone,

Who stands shut out from this!—And let not those
Whose homes are bright with sunshine and with love,
Put on the insolence of happiness,
Glorying in that proud lot!—A lonely hour
Is on its way to each, to all; for Death
Knows no companionship.

GARCIAS.

I have look'd on Death
In field, and storm, and flood. But never yet
Hath aught weigh'd down my spirit to a mood
Of sadness, dreaming o'er dark auguries,
Like this, our watch by midnight. Fearful things
Are gathering round us. Death upon the earth,
Omens in Heaven!—The summer-skies put forth
No clear bright stars above us, but at times,
Catching some comet's fiery hue of wrath,
Marshal their clouds to armies, traversing
Heaven with the rush of meteor-steeds, the array
Of spears and banners, tossing like the pines
Of Pyrenean forests, when the storm
Doth sweep the mountains.

HERNANDEZ.

Aye, last night I too
Kept vigil, gazing on the angry heavens;

And I beheld the meeting and the shock
Of those wild hosts i' th' air, when, as they closed,
A red and sultry mist, like that which mantles
The thunder's path, fell o'er them. Then were flung
Thro' the dull glare, broad cloudy banners forth,
And chariots seem'd to whirl, and steeds to sink,
Bearing down crested warriors. But all this
Was dim and shadowy;—then swift darkness rush'd
Down on th' unearthly battle, as the deep
Swept o'er the Egyptian's armament.—I look'd—
And all that fiery field of plumes and spears
Was blotted from heaven's face!—I look'd again—
And from the brooding mass of cloud leap'd forth
One meteor-sword, which o'er the reddening sea
Shook with strange motion, such as earthquakes give
Unto a rocking citadel!—I beheld,
And yet my spirit sunk not.

GARCIAS.

Neither deem
That mine hath blench'd.—But these are sights and sounds
To awe the firmest.—Know'st thou what we hear
At midnight from the walls?—Were 't but the deep
Barbaric horn, or Moorish tambour's peal,
Thence might the warrior's heart catch impulses,

Quickening its fiery currents. But our ears
Are pierced by other tones. We hear the knell
For brave men in their noon of strength cut down,
And the shrill wail of woman, and the dirge
Faint swelling thro' the streets. Then e'en the air
Hath strange and fitful murmurs of lament,
As if the viewless watchers of the land
Sigh'd on its hollow breezes!—To my soul,
The torrent-rush of battle, with its din
Of trampling steeds and ringing panoply,
Were, after these faint sounds of drooping woe,
As the free sky's glad music unto him
Who leaves a couch of sickness.

HERNANDEZ *(with solemnity).*

If to plunge
In the mid-waves of combat, as they bear
Chargers and spearmen onwards; and to make
A reckless bosom's front the buoyant mark
On that wild current, for ten thousand arrows;
If *thus* to dare were valour's noblest aim,
Lightly might fame be won!—but there are things
Which ask a spirit of more exalted pitch,
And courage temper'd with a holier fire!
Well mayst thou say, that these are fearful times,

Therefore be firm, be patient!—There is strength,
And a fierce instinct, e'en in common souls,
To bear up manhood with a stormy joy,
When red swords meet in lightning!—But our task
Is more, and nobler!—We have to endure,
And to keep watch, and to arouse a land,
And to defend an altar!—If we fall,
So that our blood make but the millionth part
Of Spain's great ransom, we may count it joy
To die upon her bosom, and beneath
The banner of her faith!—Think but on this,
And gird your hearts with silent fortitude,
Suffering, yet hoping all things—Fare ye well.

GARCIAS.

Father, farewell. [*Exeunt* GARCIAS *and his followers.*

HERNANDEZ.

These men have earthly ties
And bondage on their natures!—To the cause
Of God, and Spain's revenge, they bring but half
Their energies and hopes. But he whom Heaven
Hath call'd to be th' awakener of a land,
Should have his soul's affections all absorb'd
In that majestic purpose, and press on
To its fulfilment, as a mountain-born
And mighty stream, with all its vassal-rills

Sweeps proudly to the ocean, pausing not
To dally with the flowers.
Hark! What quick step
Comes hurrying through the gloom at this dead hour?

ELMINA *enters.*

ELMINA.

Are not all hours as one to misery?—Why
Should *she* take note of time, for whom the day
And night have lost their blessed attributes
Of sunshine and repose?

HERNANDEZ.

I know thy griefs;
But there are trials for the noble heart
Wherein its own deep fountains must supply
All it can hope of comfort. Pity's voice
Comes with vain sweetness to th' unheeding ear
Of anguish, e'en as music heard afar
On the green shore, by him who perishes
Midst rocks and eddying waters.

ELMINA.

Think thou not
I sought thee but for pity. I am come
For that which grief is privileged to demand
With an imperious claim, from all whose form,

Whose human form, doth seal them unto suffering!
Father! I ask thine *aid.*

HERNANDEZ.

There is no aid
For thee or for thy children, but with Him
Whose presence is around us in the cloud,
As in the shining and the glorious light.

ELMINA.

There is no aid!—Art thou a man of God?
Art thou a man of sorrow—(for the world
Doth call thee such)—and hast thou not been taught
By God and sorrow—mighty as they are,
To own the claims of misery?

HERNANDEZ.

Is there power
With me to save thy sons?—Implore of Heaven!

ELMINA.

Doth not Heaven work its purposes by man?
I tell thee, *thou* canst save them!—Art thou not
Gonzalez' counsellor?—Unto him thy words
Are e'en as oracles——

HERNANDEZ.

And therefore?—Speak!
The noble daughter of Pelayo's line

Hath nought to ask, unworthy of the name
Which is a nation's heritage.—Dost thou shrink?

ELMINA.

Have pity on me, father!—I must speak
That, from the thought of which, but yesterday,
I had recoil'd in scorn!—But this is past.
Oh! we grow humble in our agonies,
And to the dust—their birth-place—bow the heads
That wore the crown of glory!—I am weak—
My chastening is far more than I can bear.

HERNANDEZ.

These are no times for weakness. On our hills
The ancient cedars, in their gather'd might,
Are battling with the tempest; and the flower
Which cannot meet its driving blast must die.
—But thou hast drawn thy nurture from a stem
Unwont to bend or break.—Lift thy proud head,
Daughter of Spain!—What wouldst thou with thy lord?

ELMINA.

Look not upon me thus!—I have no power
To tell thee. Take thy keen disdainful eye
Off from my soul!—What! am I sunk to this?
I, whose blood sprung from heroes!—How my sons
Will scorn the mother that would bring disgrace

On their majestic line!—My sons! my sons!
—Now is all else forgotten!—I had once
A babe that in the early spring-time lay
Sickening upon my bosom, till at last,
When earth's young flowers were opening to the sun,
Death sunk on his meek eyelid, and I deem'd
All sorrow light to mine!—But now the fate
Of all my children seems to brood above me
In the dark thunder-clouds!—Oh! I have power
And voice unfaltering now to speak my prayer
And my last lingering hope, that thou shouldst win
The father to relent, to save his sons!

HERNANDEZ.

By yielding up the city?

ELMINA.

Rather say
By meeting that which gathers close upon us
Perchance one day the sooner!—Is 't not so?
Must we not yield at last?—How long shall man
Array his single breast against disease,
And famine, and the sword?

HERNANDEZ.

How long?—While he,
Who shadows forth his power more gloriously

In the high deeds and sufferings of the soul,
Than in the circling heavens, with all their stars,
Or the far-sounding deep, doth send abroad
A spirit, which takes affliction for its mate,
In the good cause, with solemn joy!—How long?
—And who art *thou*, that, in the littleness
Of thine own selfish purpose, would'st set bounds
To the free current of all noble thought
And generous action, bidding its bright waves
Be stay'd, and flow no further?—But the Power
Whose interdict is laid on seas and orbs,
To chain them in from wandering, hath assign'd
No limits unto that which man's high strength
Shall, through its aid, achieve!

ELMINA.

Oh! there are times,
When *all* that hopeless courage can achieve
But sheds a mournful beauty o'er the fate
Of those who die in vain.

HERNANDEZ.

Who dies in vain
Upon his country's war-fields, and within
The shadow of her altars?—Feeble heart!
I tell thee that the voice of noble blood,

Thus pour'd for faith and freedom, hath a tone
Which, from the night of ages, from the gulf
Of death, shall burst, and make its high appeal
Sound unto earth and heaven! Aye, let the land,
Whose sons, through centuries of woe, have striven,
And perish'd by her temples, sink awhile,
Borne down in conflict!—But immortal seed
Deep, by heroic suffering, hath been sown
On all her ancient hills; and generous hope
Knows that the soil, in its good time, shall yet
Bring forth a glorious harvest!—Earth receives
Not one red drop, from faithful hearts, in vain.

ELMINA.

Then it must be!—And ye will make those lives,
Those young bright lives, an offering—to retard
Our doom one day!

HERNANDEZ.

The mantle of that day
May wrap the fate of Spain!

ELMINA.

What led me here?
Why did I turn to *thee* in my despair?
Love hath no ties upon thee; what had I
To hope from *thee*, thou lone and childless man!

Go to thy silent home!—there no young voice
Shall bid thee welcome, no light footstep spring
Forth at the sound of thine!—What knows thy heart?

HERNANDEZ.

Woman! how dar'st thou taunt me with my woes?
Thy children too shall perish, and I say
It shall be well!—Why tak'st thou thought for them?
Wearing thy heart, and wasting down thy life
Unto its dregs, and making night thy time
Of care yet more intense, and casting health,
Unpriz'd, to melt away, i' th' bitter cup
Thou minglest for thyself?—Why, what hath earth
To pay thee back for this?—Shall they not live,
(If the sword spare them now) to prove how soon
All love may be forgotten?—Years of thought,
Long faithful watchings, looks of tenderness,
That changed not, though to change be this world's law?
Shall they not flush thy cheek with shame, whose blood
Marks, e'en like branding iron?—to thy sick heart
Make death a want, as sleep to weariness?
Doth not all hope end thus?—or e'en at best,
Will they not leave thee?—far from thee seek room
For th' overflowings of their fiery souls,
On life's wide ocean?—Give the bounding steed,

Or the wing'd bark to youth, that his free course
May be o'er hills and seas; and weep thou not
In thy forsaken home, for the bright world
Lies all before him, and be sure he wastes
No thought on thee!

ELMINA.

Not so! it is not so!
Thou dost but torture me!—*My* sons are kind,
And brave, and gentle.

HERNANDEZ.

Others too have worn
The semblance of all good. Nay, stay thee yet;
I will be calm, and thou shalt learn how earth,
The fruitful in all agonies, hath woes
Which far outweigh thine own.

ELMINA.

It may not be!
Whose grief is like a mother's for her sons?

HERNANDEZ.

My son lay stretch'd upon his battle-bier,
And there were hands wrung o'er him, which had caught
Their hue from his young blood!

ELMINA.

What tale is this?

HERNANDEZ.

Read you no records in this mien, of things
Whose traces on man's aspect are not such
As the breeze leaves on water?—Lofty birth,
War, peril, power?—Affliction's hand is strong,
If it erase the haughty characters
They grave so deep!—I have not always been
That which I am. The name I bore is not
Of those which perish!—I was once a chief—
A warrior!—nor as now, a lonely man!
I was a father!

ELMINA.

Then thy heart can *feel!*
Thou wilt have pity!

HERNANDEZ.

Should I pity *thee?*
Thy sons will perish gloriously—their blood——

ELMINA.

Their blood! my children's blood!—Thou speak'st as 'twere
Of casting down a wine-cup, in the mirth
And wantonness of feasting!—My fair boys!
—Man! hast *thou* been a father?

HERNANDEZ.

Let them die!
Let them die *now*, thy children! so thy heart
Shall wear their beautiful image all undimm'd,
Within it, to the last! Nor shalt thou learn
The bitter lesson, of what worthless dust
Are framed the idols, whose false glory binds
Earth's fetter on our souls!—Thou think'st it much
To mourn the early dead; but there are tears
Heavy with deeper anguish! We endow
Those whom we love, in our fond passionate blindness,
With power upon our souls, too absolute
To be a mortal's trust! Within their hands
We lay the flaming sword, whose stroke alone
Can reach our hearts, and *they* are merciful,
As they are strong, that wield it not to pierce us!
—Aye, fear them, fear the loved!—Had I but wept
O'er my son's grave, as o'er a babe's, where tears
Are as spring dew-drops, glittering in the sun,
And brightening the young verdure, *I* might still
Have loved and trusted!

ELMINA (*disdainfully*).

But he fell in war!
And hath not glory medicine in her cup
For the brief pangs of nature?

HERNANDEZ.

Glory!—Peace,
And listen!—By my side the stripling grew,
Last of my line. I rear'd him to take joy
I' th' blaze of arms, as eagles train their young
To look upon the day-king!—His quick blood
Ev'n to his boyish cheek would mantle up,
When the heavens rang with trumpets, and his eye
Flash with the spirit of a race whose deeds—
—But this availeth not!—Yet he *was* brave.
I've seen him clear himself a path in fight
As lightning through a forest, and his plume
Waved like a torch, above the battle-storm,
The soldier's guide, when princely crests had sunk,
And banners were struck down.—Around my steps
Floated his fame, like music, and I lived
But in the lofty sound. But when my heart
In one frail ark had ventur'd all, when most
He seem'd to stand between my soul and heaven,
—Then came the thunder-stroke!

ELMINA.

'Tis ever thus!
And the unquiet and foreboding sense
That thus 'twill ever be, doth link itself
Darkly with all deep love!—He died?

HERNANDEZ.

Not so!
—Death! Death!—Why, earth should be a paradise,
To make that name so fearful!—Had he died,
With his young fame about him for a shroud,
I had not learn'd the might of agony,
To bring proud natures low!—No! he fell off—
—Why do I tell thee this?—What right hast *thou*
To learn how pass'd the glory from my house?
Yet listen!—He forsook me!—He, that was
As mine own soul, forsook me! trampled o'er
The ashes of his sires!—Aye, leagued himself
E'en with the infidel, the curse of Spain,
And, for the dark eye of a Moorish maid,
Abjured his faith, his God!—Now, talk of death!

ELMINA.

Oh! I can pity thee——

HERNANDEZ.

There's more to hear.
I braced the corslet o'er my heart's deep wound,
And cast my troubled spirit on the tide
Of war and high events, whose stormy waves
Might bear it up from sinking;——

ELMINA.

And ye met
No more?

HERNANDEZ.

Be still!—We did!—we met *once* more.
God had his own high purpose to fulfil,
Or think'st thou that the sun in his bright heaven
Had look'd upon such things?—We met *once more.*
—That was an hour to leave its lightning-mark
Sear'd upon brain and bosom!—there had been
Combat on Ebro's banks, and when the day
Sank in red clouds, it faded from a field
Still held by Moorish lances. Night closed round,
A night of sultry darkness, in the shadow
Of whose broad wing, ev'n unto death I strove
Long with a turban'd champion; but my sword
Was heavy with God's vengeance—and prevail'd.
He fell—my heart exulted—and I stood
In gloomy triumph o'er him—Nature gave
No sign of horror, for 'twas Heaven's decree!
He strove to speak—but I had done the work
Of wrath too well—yet in his last deep moan
A dreadful something of familiar sound
Came o'er my shuddering sense.—The moon look'd forth,

And I beheld—speak not!—'twas he—my son!
My boy lay dying there! He raised one glance,
And knew me—for he sought with feeble hand
To cover his glazed eyes. A darker veil
Sank o'er them soon.—I will not have thy look
Fix'd on me thus!—Away!

ELMINA.

Thou hast seen this,
Thou hast *done* this—and yet thou liv'st?

HERNANDEZ.

I live!
And know'st thou wherefore?—On my soul there fell
A horror of great darkness, which shut out
All earth, and heaven, and hope. I cast away
The spear and helm, and made the cloister's shade
The home of my despair. But a deep voice
Came to me through the gloom, and sent its tones
Far through my bosom's depths. And I awoke,
Aye, as the mountain cedar doth shake off
Its weight of wintry snow, e'en so I shook
Despondence from my soul, and knew myself
Seal'd by that blood wherewith my hands were dyed,
And set apart, and fearfully mark'd out
Unto a mighty task!—To rouse the soul

Of Spain, as from the dead; and to lift up
The cross, her sign of victory, on the hills,
Gathering her sons to battle!—And my voice
Must be as freedom's trumpet on the winds,
From Roncesvalles to the blue sea-waves
Where Calpe looks on Afric; till the land
Have fill'd her cup of vengeance!—Ask me *now*
To yield the Christian city, that its fanes
May rear the minaret in the face of Heaven!
—But death shall have a bloodier vintage-feast
Ere that day come!

ELMINA.

I ask thee this no more,
For I am hopeless now.—But yet one boon—
Hear me, by all thy woes!—Thy voice hath power
Through the wide city—here I cannot rest:—
Aid me to pass the gates!

HERNANDEZ.

And wherefore?

ELMINA.

Thou,
That *wert* a father, and art now—alone!
Canst *thou* ask 'wherefore?'—Ask the wretch whose sands
Have not an hour to run, whose failing limbs

Have but one earthly journey to perform,
Why, on his pathway to the place of death,
Aye, when the very axe is glistening cold
Upon his dizzy sight, his pale, parch'd lip
Implores a cup of water?—Why, the stroke
Which trembles o'er him in itself shall bring
Oblivion of all wants, yet who denies
Nature's last prayer?—I tell thee that the thirst
Which burns my spirit up is agony
To be endured no more!—And I *must* look
Upon my children's faces, I must hear
Their voices, ere they perish!—But hath Heaven
Decreed that they *must* perish?—Who shall say
If in yon Moslem camp there beats no heart
Which prayers and tears may melt?

HERNANDEZ.

There!—with the Moor!
Let him fill up the measure of his guilt!
—'Tis madness all!—How wouldst thou pass th' array
Of armed foes?

ELMINA.

Oh! free doth sorrow pass,
Free and unquestion'd, through a suffering world! [2]

HERNANDEZ.

This must not be. Enough of woe is laid
E'en now, upon thy lord's heroic soul,
For man to bear, unsinking. Press thou not
Too heavily th' o'erburthen'd heart.—Away!
Bow down the knee, and send thy prayers for strength
Up to Heaven's gate.—Farewell!

[*Exit* HERNANDEZ.

ELMINA.

Are all men thus?
—Why, wer't not better they should fall e'en now
Than live to shut their hearts, in haughty scorn,
Against the sufferer's pleadings?—But no, no!
Who can be like *this* man, that slew his son,
Yet wears his life still proudly, and a soul
Untamed upon his brow?

(*After a pause.*)

There's one, whose arms
Have borne my children in their infancy,
And on whose knees they sported, and whose hand
Hath led them oft—a vassal of their sire's;
And I will seek him: he may lend me aid,
When all beside pass on.

DIRGE HEARD WITHOUT.

Thou to thy rest art gone,
High heart! and what are we,
While o'er our heads the storm sweeps on,
That we should mourn for thee?

Free grave and peaceful bier
To the buried son of Spain!
To those that live, the lance and spear,
And well if not the chain!

Be *theirs* to weep the dead
As they sit beneath their vines,
Whose flowery land hath borne no tread
Of spoilers o'er its shrines!

Thou hast thrown off the load
Which we must yet sustain,
And pour our blood where *thine* hath flow'd,
Too blest if not in vain!

We give thee holy rite,
Slow knell, and chaunted strain!

—For those that fall to-morrow night,
May be left no funeral-train.

Again, when trumpets wake,
We must brace our armour on;
But a deeper note *thy* sleep must break—
—Thou to thy rest art gone!

Happier in *this* than all,
That, now thy race is run,
Upon thy name no stain may fall,
Thy work hath well been done!

ELMINA.

"Thy work hath well been done!"—so thou mayst rest!
—There is a solemn lesson in those words—
But now I may not pause.

[*Exit* ELMINA.

Scene—A Street in the City.

HERNANDEZ, GONZALEZ.

HERNANDEZ.

Would they not hear?

GONZALEZ.

They heard, as one that stands
By the cold grave which hath but newly closed
O'er his last friend doth hear some passer-by,
Bid him be comforted!—Their hearts have died
Within them!—We must perish, not as those
That fall when battle's voice doth shake the hills,
And peal through Heaven's great arch, but silently,
And with a wasting of the spirit down,
A quenching, day by day, of some bright spark,
Which lit us on our toils!—Reproach me not;
My soul is darken'd with a heavy cloud—
—Yet fear not I shall yield!

HERNANDEZ.

Breathe not the word,
Save in proud scorn!—Each bitter day, o'erpass'd

By slow endurance, is a triumph won
For Spain's red cross. And be of trusting heart!
A few brief hours, and those that turn'd away
In cold despondence, shrinking from your voice,
May crowd around their leader, and demand
To be array'd for battle. We must watch
For the swift impulse, and await its time,
As the bark waits the ocean's. You have chosen
To kindle up their souls, an hour, perchance,
When they were weary; they had cast aside
Their arms to slumber; or a knell, just then
With its deep hollow tone, had made the blood
Creep shuddering through their veins; or they had caught
A glimpse of some new meteor, and shaped forth
Strange omens from its blaze.

GONZALEZ.

Alas! the cause
Lies deeper in their misery!—I have seen,
In my night's course through this beleaguer'd city
Things, whose remembrance doth not pass away
As vapours from the mountains.—There were some,
That sat beside their dead, with eyes, wherein
Grief had ta'en place of sight, and shut out all
But its own ghastly object. To my voice

Some answer'd with a fierce and bitter laugh,
As men whose agonies were made to pass
The bounds of sufferance, by some reckless word,
Dropt from the light of spirit.—Others lay—
—Why should I tell thee, father! how despair
Can bring the lofty brow of manhood down
Unto the very dust?—And yet for this,
Fear not that I embrace my doom—Oh God!
That 'twere *my* doom alone!—with less of fix'd
And solemn fortitude.—Lead on, prepare
The holiest rites of faith, that I by them
Once more may consecrate my sword, my life,
—But what are these?—Who hath not dearer lives
Twined with his own?—I shall be lonely soon—
Childless!—Heaven wills it so. Let us begone.
Perchance before the shrine my heart may beat
With a less troubled motion.

[*Exeunt* GONZALEZ *and* HERNANDEZ.

Scene—A Tent in the Moorish Camp.

ABDULLAH, ALPHONSO, CARLOS.

ABDULLAH.

These are bold words: but hast thou look'd on death,
Fair stripling?—On thy cheek and sunny brow
Scarce fifteen summers of their laughing course
Have left light traces. If thy shaft hath pierced
The ibex of the mountains, if thy step
Hath climb'd some eagle's nest, and thou hast made
His nest thy spoil, 'tis much!—And fear'st thou not
The leader of the mighty?

ALPHONSO.

I have been
Rear'd amongst fearless men, and midst the rocks
And the wild hills, whereon my fathers fought
And won their battles. There are glorious tales
Told of their deeds, and I have learn'd them all.
How should I fear thee, Moor?

ABDULLAH.

So, thou hast seen
Fields, where the combat's roar hath died away

Into the whispering breeze, and where wild flowers
Bloom o'er forgotten graves!—But know'st thou aught
Of those, where sword from crossing sword strikes fire,
And leaders are borne down, and rushing steeds
Trample the life from out the mighty hearts
That ruled the storm so late?—Speak not of death,
Till thou hast look'd on such.

ALPHONSO.

I was not born
A shepherd's son, to dwell with pipe and crook,
And peasant-men, amidst the lowly vales;
Instead of ringing clarions, and bright spears,
And crested knights!—I am of princely race,
And, if my father would have heard my suit,
I tell thee, infidel! that long ere now,
I should have seen how lances meet; and swords
Do the field's work.

ABDULLAH.

Boy! know'st thou there are sights
A thousand times more fearful?—Men may die
Full proudly, when the skies and mountains ring
To battle-horn and tecbir*.—But not all
So pass away in glory. There are those,

* *Tecbir*, the war-cry of the Moors and Arabs.

Midst the dead silence of pale multitudes,
Led forth in fetters—dost thou mark me, boy?
To take their last look of th' all gladdening sun,
And bow, perchance, the stately head of youth,
Unto the death of shame!—Hadst thou seen this——

ALPHONSO (*to* CARLOS).

Sweet brother, God is with us—fear thou not!
We have had heroes for our sires—this man
Should not behold us tremble.

ABDULLAH.

There are means
To tame the loftiest natures. Yet again,
I ask thee, wilt thou, from beneath the walls,
Sue to thy sire for life; or wouldst thou die,
With this, thy brother?

ALPHONSO.

Moslem! on the hills,
Around my father's castle, I have heard
The mountain-peasants, as they dress'd the vines,
Or drove the goats, by rock and torrent, home,
Singing their ancient songs; and these were all
Of the Cid Campeador; and how his sword
Tizona[3] clear'd its way through turban'd hosts,
And captured Afric's kings, and how he won

Valencia from the Moor[4].—I will not shame
The blood we draw from him!

(*A Moorish Soldier enters*).

SOLDIER.

Valencia's lord
Sends messengers, my chief.

ABDULLAH.

Conduct them hither.

[*The Soldier goes out, and re-enters with* ELMINA, *disguised, and an Attendant.*

CARLOS (*springing forward to the Attendant*).

Oh! take me hence, Diego; take me hence
With thee, that I may see my mother's face
At morning, when I wake. Here dark-brow'd men
Frown strangely, with their cruel eyes, upon us.
Take me with thee, for thou art good and kind,
And well I know, thou lov'st me, my Diego!

ABDULLAH.

Peace, boy!—What tidings, Christian, from thy lord?
Is he grown humbler, doth he set the lives
Of these fair nurslings at a city's worth?

ALPHONSO (*rushing forward impatiently*).

Say not, he doth!—Yet wherefore art thou here?

If it be so—I could weep burning tears
For very shame!—If this *can* be, return!
Tell him, of all his wealth, his battle-spoils,
I will but ask a war-horse and a sword,
And that beside him in the mountain-chase,
And in his halls and at his stately feasts,
My place shall be no more!—but no!—I wrong,
I wrong my father!—Moor! believe it not!
He is a champion of the cross and Spain,
Sprung from the Cid;—and I too, I can die
As a warrior's high-born child!

ELMINA.

Alas! Alas!
And wouldst thou die, thus early die, fair boy?
What hath life done to thee, that thou shouldst cast
Its flower away, in very scorn of heart,
Ere yet the blight be come?

ALPHONSO.

That voice doth sound——

ABDULLAH.

Stranger, who art thou?—this is mockery! speak!

ELMINA (*throwing off a mantle and helmet, and embracing her sons*).

My boys! whom I have rear'd through many hours

Of silent joys and sorrows, and deep thoughts
Untold and unimagined; let me die
With you, now I have held you to my heart,
And seen once more the faces, in whose light
My soul hath lived for years!

CARLOS.

Sweet mother! now
Thou shalt not leave us more.

ABDULLAH.

Enough of this!
Woman! what seek'st thou here?—How hast thou dared
To front the mighty thus amidst his hosts?

ELMINA.

Think'st thou there dwells no courage but in breasts
That set their mail against the ringing spears,
When helmets are struck down?—Thou little know'st
Of nature's marvels!—Chief! my heart is nerved
To make its way through things which warrior-men,
—Aye, they that master death by field or flood,
Would look on, ere they braved!—I have no thought,
No sense of fear!—Thou 'rt mighty! but a soul
Wound up like mine is mightier, in the power
Of that one feeling, pour'd through all its depths,
Than monarchs with their hosts!—Am I not come
To die with these, my children?

ABDULLAH.

Doth thy faith
Bid thee do this, fond Christian?—Hast thou not
The means to save them?

ELMINA.

I have prayers, and tears,
And agonies!—and he—my God—the God
Whose hand, or soon or late, doth find its hour
To bow the crested head—hath made these things
Most powerful in a world where all must learn
That one deep language, by the storm call'd forth
From the bruised reeds of earth!—For thee, perchance,
Affliction's chastening lesson hath not yet
Been laid upon thy heart, and thou may'st love
To see the creatures, by its might brought low,
Humbled before thee. [*She throws herself at his feet.*
Conqueror! I can kneel!
I, that drew birth from princes, bow myself
E'en to thy feet! Call in thy chiefs, thy slaves,
If this will swell thy triumph, to behold
The blood of kings, of heroes, thus abased!
Do this, but spare my sons!

ALPHONSO (*attempting to raise her*).

Thou shouldst not kneel

Unto this infidel!—Rise, rise, my mother!
This sight doth shame our house!

ABDALLAH.

Thou daring boy!
They that in arms have taught thy father's land
How chains are worn, shall school that haughty mien
Unto another language.

ELMINA.

Peace, my son!
Have pity on my heart!—Oh, pardon, Chief!
He is of noble blood!—Hear, hear me yet!
Are there no lives through which the shafts of Heaven
May reach your soul?—He that loves aught on earth,
Dares far too much, if he be merciless!
Is it for those, whose frail mortality
Must one day strive alone with God and death,
To shut their souls against th' appealing voice
Of nature, in her anguish?—Warrior! Man!
To you too, aye, and haply with your hosts,
By thousands and ten thousands marshall'd round,
And your strong armour on, shall come that stroke
Which the lance wards not!—Where shall your high heart
Find refuge then, if in the day of might
Woe hath lain prostrate, bleeding at your feet,
And you have pitied not?

ABDULLAH.

These are vain words.

ELMINA.

Have you no children?—fear you not to bring
The lightning on their heads?—In your own land
Doth no fond mother, from the tents, beneath
Your native palms, look o'er the deserts out,
To greet your homeward step?—You have not yet
Forgot so utterly her patient love—
—For is not woman's, in all climes, the same?—
That you should scorn *my* prayer!—Oh Heaven! his eye
Doth wear no mercy!

ABDULLAH.

Then it mocks you not.
I have swept o'er the mountains of your land,
Leaving my traces, as the visitings
Of storms, upon them!—Shall I now be stay'd!
Know, unto me it were as light a thing,
In this, my course, to quench your children's lives,
As, journeying through a forest, to break off
The young wild branches that obstruct the way
With their green sprays and leaves.

ELMINA.

Are there such hearts
Amongst thy works, oh God?

ABDULLAH.

Kneel not to me.
Kneel to your lord! on his resolves doth hang
His children's doom. He may be lightly won
By a few bursts of passionate tears and words.

ELMINA (*rising indignantly*).

Speak not of noble men!—he bears a soul
Stronger than love or death.

ALPHONSO (*with exultation*).

I knew 'twas thus!
He could not fail!

ELMINA.

There is no mercy, none,
On this cold earth!—To strive with such a world,
Hearts should be void of love!—We will go hence,
My children! we are summon'd. Lay your heads,
In their young radiant beauty, once again
To rest upon this bosom. He that dwells
Beyond the clouds which press us darkly round,
Will yet have pity, and before his face
We three will stand together! Moslem! now
Let the stroke fall at once!

ABDULLAH.

'Tis thine own will.
These might e'en yet be spared.

ELMINA.

Thou wilt not spare!
And he beneath whose eye their childhood grew,
And in whose paths they sported, and whose ear
From their first lisping accents caught the sound
Of that word—*Father*—once a name of love—
Is——Men shall call him *stedfast.*

ABDULLAH.

Hath the blast
Of sudden trumpets ne'er at dead of night,
When the land's watchers fear'd no hostile step,
Startled the slumberers from their dreamy world,
In cities, whose heroic lords have been
Stedfast as thine?

ELMINA.

There 's meaning in thine eye,
More than thy words.

ABDULLAH (*pointing to the city*).

Look to yon towers and walls!
Think you no hearts within their limits pine,
Weary of hopeless warfare, and prepared
To burst the feeble links which bind them still
Unto endurance?

ELMINA.

Thou hast said too well.
But what of this?

ABDULLAH.

Then there are those, to whom
The Prophet's armies not as foes would pass
Yon gates, but as deliverers. Might they not
In some still hour, when weariness takes rest,
Be won to welcome us?—Your children's steps
May yet bound lightly through their father's halls!

ALPHONSO (*indignantly*).

Thou treacherous Moor!

ELMINA.

Let me not thus be tried
Beyond all strength, oh Heaven!

ABDULLAH.

Now, 'tis for *thee*,
Thou Christian mother! on thy sons to pass
The sentence—life or death!—the price is set
On their young blood, and rests within thy hands.

ALPHONSO.

Mother! thou tremblest!

ABDULLAH.

Hath thy heart resolved?

ELMINA (*covering her face with her hands*).

My boy's proud eye is on me, and the things
Which rush, in stormy darkness, through my soul,
Shrink from his glance. I cannot answer *here*.

ABDULLAH.

Come forth. We'll commune elsewhere.

CARLOS (*to his mother*).

Wilt thou go?
Oh! let me follow thee!

ELMINA.

Mine own fair child!
—Now that thine eyes have pour'd once more on mine
The light of their young smile, and thy sweet voice
Hath sent its gentle music through my soul,
And I have felt the twining of thine arms—
—How shall I leave thee?

ABDULLAH.

Leave him, as 'twere but
For a brief slumber, to behold his face
At morning, with the sun's.

ALPHONSO.

Thou hast no look
For me, my mother!

ELMINA.

Oh! that I should live
To say, I *dare* not look on thee!—Farewell,
My first born, fare thee well!

ALPHONSO.

Yet, yet beware!
It were a grief more heavy on thy soul,
That I should blush for thee, than o'er my grave
That thou shouldst proudly weep!

ABDULLAH.

Away! we trifle here. The night wanes fast.
Come forth!

ELMINA.

One more embrace! My sons, farewell!

[*Exeunt* ABDULLAH *with* ELMINA *and her Attendant.*

ALPHONSO.

Hear me yet once, my mother!
Art thou gone?
But one word more!

[*He rushes out, followed by* CARLOS.

Scene—The Garden of a Palace in Valencia.

XIMENA, THERESA.

THERESA.

Stay yet awhile. A purer air doth rove
Here through the myrtles whispering, and the limes,
And shaking sweetness from the orange boughs,
Than waits you in the city.

XIMENA.

There are those
In their last need, and on their bed of death,
At which no hand doth minister but mine
That wait me in the city. Let us hence.

THERESA.

You have been wont to love the music made
By founts, and rustling foliage, and soft winds,
Breathing of citron-groves. And will you turn
From these to scenes of death?

XIMENA.

To me the voice
Of summer, whispering through young flowers and leaves,

Now speaks too deep a language! and of all
Its dreamy and mysterious melodies,
The breathing soul is sadness!—I have felt
That summons through my spirit, after which
The hues of earth are changed, and all her sounds
Seem fraught with secret warnings.—There is cause
That I should bend my footsteps to the scenes
Where Death is busy, taming warrior-hearts,
And pouring winter through the fiery blood,
And fettering the strong arm!—For now no sigh
In the dull air, nor floating cloud in heaven,
No, not the lightest murmur of a leaf,
But of his angel's silent coming bears
Some token to my soul.—But nought of this
Unto my mother!—These are awful hours!
And on their heavy steps, afflictions crowd
With such dark pressure, there is left no room
For one grief more.

THERESA.

Sweet lady, talk not thus!
Your eye this morn doth wear a calmer light,
There 's more of life in its clear tremulous ray
Than I have mark'd of late. Nay, go not yet;
Rest by this fountain, where the laurels dip

Their glossy leaves. A fresher gale doth spring
From the transparent waters, dashing round
Their silvery spray, with a sweet voice of coolness,
O'er the pale glistening marble. 'Twill call up
Faint bloom, if but a moment's, to your cheek.
Rest here, ere you go forth, and I will sing
The melody you love.

THERESA *sings.*

Why is the Spanish maiden's grave
So far from her own bright land?
The sunny flowers that o'er it wave
Were sown by no kindred hand.

'Tis not the orange-bough that sends
Its breath on the sultry air,
'Tis not the myrtle-stem that bends
To the breeze of evening there!

But the Rose of Sharon's eastern bloom
By the silent dwelling fades,
And none but strangers pass the tomb
Which the Palm of Judah shades.

The lowly Cross, with flowers o'ergrown,
  Marks well that place of rest;
But who hath graved, on its mossy stone,
  A sword, a helm, a crest?

These are the trophies of a chief,
  A lord of the axe and spear!
—Some blossom pluck'd, some faded leaf,
  Should grace a maiden's bier!

Scorn not her tomb—deny not her
  The honours of the brave!
O'er that forsaken sepulchre,
  Banner and plume might wave.

She bound the steel, in battle tried,
  Her fearless heart above,
And stood with brave men, side by side,
  In the strength and faith of love!

That strength prevail'd—that faith was bless'd!
  True was the javelin thrown,
Yet pierced it not her warrior's breast,
  She met it with her own!

And nobly won, where heroes fell
In arms for the holy shrine,
A death which saved what she loved so well,
And a grave in Palestine.

Then let the Rose of Sharon spread
Its breast to the glowing air,
And the Palm of Judah lift its head,
Green and immortal there!

And let yon grey stone, undefaced,
With its trophy mark the scene,
Telling the pilgrim of the waste,
Where Love and Death have been.

XIMENA.

Those notes were wont to make my heart beat quick,
As at a voice of victory; but to-day
The spirit of the song is changed, and seems
All mournful. Oh! that ere my early grave
Shuts out the sunbeam, I might hear one peal
Of the Castilian trumpet, ringing forth
Beneath my father's banner!—In that sound
Were life to you, sweet brothers!—But for me—

Come on—our tasks await us. They who know
Their hours are number'd out, have little time
To give the vague and slumberous languor way,
Which doth steal o'er them in the breath of flowers,
And whisper of soft winds.

ELMINA *enters hurriedly.*

ELMINA.

This air will calm my spirit, ere yet I meet
His eye, which must be met.—Thou here, Ximena!

[*She starts back on seeing* XIMENA.

XIMENA.

Alas! my mother! In that hurrying step
And troubled glance I read—

ELMINA (*wildly*).

Thou read'st it not!
Why, who would live, if unto mortal eye
The things lay glaring, which within our hearts
We treasure up for God's?—Thou read'st it not!
I say, thou canst not!—There 's not one on earth
Shall know the thoughts, which for themselves have made
And kept dark places in the very breast
Whereon he hath laid his slumber, till the hour
When the graves open!

XIMENA.

Mother! what is this?
Alas! your eye is wandering, and your cheek
Flush'd, as with fever! To your woes the night
Hath brought no rest.

ELMINA.

Rest!—who should rest?—not he
That holds one earthly blessing to his heart
Nearer than life!—No! if this world have aught
Of bright or precious, let not him who calls
Such things his own, take rest!—Dark spirits keep watch,
And they to whom fair honour, chivalrous fame,
Were as heaven's air, the vital element
Wherein they breathed, may wake, and find their souls
Made marks for human scorn!—Will they bear on
With life struck down, and thus disrobed of all
Its glorious drapery?—Who shall tell us this?
—Will *he* so bear it?

XIMENA.

Mother! let us kneel,
And blend our hearts in prayer!—What else is left
To mortals when the dark hour's might is on them?
—Leave us, Theresa.—Grief like this doth find
Its balm in solitude. [*Exit* THERESA.

My mother! peace
Is heaven's benignant answer to the cry
Of wounded spirits. Wilt thou kneel with me?

ELMINA.

Away! 'tis but for souls unstain'd to wear
Heaven's tranquil image on their depths.—The stream
Of my dark thoughts, all broken by the storm,
Reflects but clouds and lightnings!—Didst thou speak
Of peace?—'tis fled from earth!—but there is joy!
Wild, troubled joy!—And who shall know, my child!
It is not happiness?—Why, our own hearts
Will keep the secret close!—Joy, joy! if but
To leave this desolate city, with its dull
Slow knells and dirges, and to breathe again
Th' untainted mountain-air!—But hush! the trees,
The flowers, the waters, must hear nought of this!
They are full of voices, and will whisper things——
—We'll speak of it no more.

XIMENA.

Oh! pitying heaven!
This grief doth shake her reason!

ELMINA (*starting*).

Hark! a step!
'Tis—'tis thy father's!—come away—not now—
He must not see us now!

XIMENA.

Why should this be?

GONZALEZ *enters, and detains* ELMINA.

GONZALEZ.

Elmina, dost thou shun me?—Have we not,
E'en from the hopeful and the sunny time
When youth was as a glory round our brows,
Held on through life together?—And is this,
When eve is gathering round us, with the gloom
Of stormy clouds, a time to part our steps
Upon the darkening wild?

ELMINA (*coldly*).

There needs not this.
Why shouldst thou think I shunn'd thee?

GONZALEZ.

Should the love
That shone o'er many years, th' unfading love,
Whose only change hath been from gladdening smiles
To mingling sorrows and sustaining strength,
Thus lightly be forgotten?

ELMINA.

Speak'st *thou* thus?
—I have knelt before thee with that very plea,
When it avail'd me not!—But there are things

Whose very breathings on the soul erase
All record of past love, save the chill sense,
Th' unquiet memory of its wasted faith,
And vain devotedness!—Aye! they that fix
Affection s perfect trust on aught of earth,
Have many a dream to start from!

GONZALEZ.

This is but
The wildness and the bitterness of grief,
Ere yet th' unsettled heart hath closed its long
Impatient conflicts with a mightier power,
Which makes all conflict vain.
——Hark! was there not
A sound of distant trumpets, far beyond
The Moorish tents, and of another tone
Than th' Afric horn, Ximena?

XIMENA.

Oh, my father!
I know that horn too well.—'Tis but the wind,
Which, with a sudden rising, bears its deep
And savage war-note from us, wafting it
O'er the far hills.

GONZALEZ.

Alas! this woe must be!

I do but shake my spirit from its height
So startling it with hope!—But the dread hour
Shall be met bravely still. I can keep down
Yet for a little while—and Heaven will ask
No more—the passionate workings of my heart;
—And thine—Elmina?

ELMINA.

'Tis—I am prepared.
I *have* prepared for all.

GONZALEZ

Oh, well I knew
Thou wouldst not fail me!—Not in vain my soul,
Upon thy faith and courage, hath built up
Unshaken trust.

ELMINA (*wildly*).

Away!—thou know'st me not!
Man dares too far, his rashness would invest
This our mortality with an attribute
Too high and awful, boasting that he knows
One human heart!

GONZALEZ.

These are wild words, but yet
I will not doubt thee!—Hast thou not been found
Noble in all things, pouring thy soul's light

Undimm'd o'er every trial?—And, as our fates,
So must our names be, undivided!—Thine,
I' th' record of a warrior's life, shall find
Its place of stainless honour.—By his side——

ELMINA.

May this be borne?—How much of agony
Hath the heart room for?—Speak to me in wrath—
I can endure it!—But no gentle words!
No words of love! no praise!—Thy sword might slay,
And be more merciful!

GONZALEZ.

Wherefore art thou thus?
Elmina, my beloved!

ELMINA.

No more of love!
—Have I not said there's that within my heart,
Whereon it falls as living fire would fall
Upon an unclosed wound?

GONZALEZ.

Nay, lift thine eyes
That I may read *their* meaning!

ELMINA.

Never more
With a free soul—What have I said?—'twas nought!

Take thou no heed! The words of wretchedness
Admit not scrutiny. Wouldst thou mark the speech
Of troubled dreams?

GONZALEZ.

I have seen thee in the hour
Of thy deep spirit's joy, and when the breath
Of grief hung chilling round thee; in all change,
Bright health and drooping sickness; hope and fear;
Youth and decline; but never yet, Elmina,
Ne'er hath thine eye till now shrunk back perturb'd
With shame or dread, from mine!

ELMINA.

Thy glance doth search
A wounded heart too deeply.

GONZALEZ.

Hast thou there
Aught to conceal?

ELMINA.

Who hath not?

GONZALEZ.

Till this hour
Thou never hadst!—Yet hear me!—by the free
And unattainted fame which wraps the dust
Of thine heroic fathers——

ELMINA.

This to me!

—Bring your inspiring war-notes, and your sounds
Of festal music round a dying man!
Will his heart echo them?—But if thy words
Were spells, to call up, with each lofty tone,
The grave's most awful spirits, they would stand
Powerless, before my anguish!

GONZALEZ.

Then, by her,
Who there looks on thee in the purity
Of her devoted youth, and o'er whose name
No blight must fall, and whose pale cheek must ne'er
Burn with that deeper tinge, caught painfully
From the quick feeling of dishonour.—Speak!
Unfold this mystery!—By thy sons——

ELMINA.

My sons!
And canst *thou* name them?

GONZALEZ.

Proudly!—Better far
They died with all the promise of their youth,
And the fair honour of their house upon them,
Than that with manhood's high and passionate soul

To fearful strength unfolded, they should live,
Barr'd from the lists of crested chivalry,
And pining, in the silence of a woe,
Which from the heart shuts daylight;—o'er the shame
Of those who gave them birth!—But *thou* couldst ne'er
Forget their lofty claims!

ELMINA (*wildly*).

'Twas but for them!
'Twas for them only!—Who shall dare arraign
Madness of crime?—And he who made us, knows
There are dark moments of all hearts and lives,
Which bear down reason!

GONZALEZ.

Thou, whom I have loved
With such high trust, as o'er our nature threw
A glory, scarce allow'd;—what hast thou done?
——Ximena, go thou hence!

ELMINA.

No, no! my child!
There's pity in thy look!—All other eyes
Are full of wrath and scorn!—Oh! leave me not!

GONZALEZ.

That I should live to see thee thus abased!
—Yet speak?—What hast thou done?

ELMINA.

Look to the gate!
Thou 'rt worn with toil—but take no rest to-night!
The western gate!—Its watchers have been won—
The Christian city hath been bought and sold!
They will admit the Moor!

GONZALEZ.

They have been won!
Brave men and tried so long!—Whose work was this?

ELMINA.

Think'st thou all hearts like thine?—Can mothers stand
To see their children perish?

GONZALEZ.

Then the guilt
Was thine?

ELMINA.

—Shall mortal dare to call it guilt?
I tell thee, Heaven, which made all holy things,
Made nought more holy than the boundless love
Which fills a mother's heart!—I say, 'tis woe
Enough, with such an aching tenderness,
To love aught earthly!—and in vain! in vain!
—We are press'd down too sorely!

GONZALEZ (*in a low desponding voice*).

Now my life
Is struck to worthless ashes!—In my soul
Suspicion hath ta'en root. The nobleness
Henceforth is blotted from all human brows,
And fearful power, a dark and troublous gift,
Almost like prophecy, is pour'd upon me,
To read the guilty secrets in each eye
That once look'd bright with truth!
—Why then I have gain'd
What men call wisdom!—A new sense, to which
All tales that speak of high fidelity,
And holy courage, and proud honour, tried,
Search'd, and found stedfast, even to martyrdom,
Are food for mockery!—Why should I not cast
From my thinn'd locks the wearing helm at once,
And in the heavy sickness of my soul
Throw the sword down for ever?—Is there aught
In all this world of gilded hollowness,
Now the bright hues drop off its loveliest things,
Worth striving for again?

XIMENA.

Father! look up!
Turn unto me, thy child!

GONZALEZ.

Thy face is fair;
And hath been unto me, in other days,
As morning to the journeyer of the deep;
But now—'tis too like hers!

ELMINA (*falling at his feet*).

Woe, shame and woe,
Are on me in their might!—forgive, forgive!

GONZALEZ (*starting up*).

Doth the Moor deem that *I* have part or share,
Or counsel in this vileness?—Stay me not!
Let go thy hold—'tis powerless on me now—
I linger here, while treason is at work!

[*Exit* GONZALEZ.

ELMINA.

Ximena, dost *thou* scorn me?

XIMENA.

I have found
In mine own heart too much of feebleness,
Hid, beneath many foldings, from all eyes
But *His* whom nought can blind;—to dare do aught
But pity thee, dear mother!

ELMINA.

Blessings light
On thy fair head, my gentle child, for this!

Thou kind and merciful!—My soul is faint—
Worn with long strife!—Is there aught else to do,
Or suffer, ere we die?—Oh God! my sons!
—I have betray'd them!—All their innocent blood
Is on my soul!

XIMENA.

How shall I comfort thee?
—Oh! hark! what sounds come deepening on the wind,
So full of solemn hope!

(*A procession of Nuns passes across the Scene, bearing relics, and chanting.*)

CHANT.

A sword is on the land!
He that bears down young tree and glorious flower,
Death is gone forth, he walks the wind in power!
—Where is the warrior's hand?
Our steps are in the shadows of the grave,
Hear us, we perish! Father, hear, and save!

If, in the days of song,
The days of gladness, we have call'd on thee,
When mirthful voices rang from sea to sea,
And joyous hearts were strong;

Now, that alike the feeble and the brave
Must cry, "We perish!"—Father! hear, and save!

The days of song are fled!
The winds come loaded, wafting dirge-notes by,
But they that linger soon unmourn'd must die;
—The dead weep not the dead!
—Wilt thou forsake us midst the stormy wave?
We sink, we perish!—Father, hear, and save!

Helmet and lance are dust!
Is not the strong man wither'd from our eye?
The arm struck down that held our banners high?
—Thine is our spirit's trust!
Look through the gathering shadows of the grave!
Do we not perish?—Father, hear, and save!

HERNANDEZ *enters.*

ELMINA.

Why comest thou, man of vengeance?—What have I
To do with thee?—Am I not bow'd enough?
Thou art no mourner's comforter!

HERNANDEZ.

Thy lord

Hath sent me unto thee. Till this day's task
Be closed, thou daughter of the feeble heart!
He bids thee seek him not, but lay thy woes
Before Heaven's altar, and in penitence
Make thy soul's peace with God.

ELMINA.

Till this day's task
Be closed!—there is strange triumph in thine eyes—
Is it that I have fallen from that high place
Whereon I stood in fame?—But I can feel
A wild and bitter pride in thus being past
The power of thy dark glance!—My spirit now
Is wound about by one sole mighty grief;
Thy scorn hath lost its sting.—Thou mayst reproach—

HERNANDEZ.

I come not to reproach thee. Heaven doth work
By many agencies; and in its hour
There is no insect which the summer breeze
From the green leaf shakes trembling, but may serve
Its deep unsearchable purposes, as well
As the great ocean, or th' eternal fires,
Pent in earth's caves!—Thou hast but speeded that,
Which, in th' infatuate blindness of thy heart,
Thou wouldst have trampled o'er all holy ties,
But to avert one day!

ELMINA.

My senses fail—
Thou saidst—speak yet again!—I could not catch
The meaning of thy words.

HERNANDEZ.

E'en now thy lord
Hath sent our foes defiance. On the walls
He stands in conference with the boastful Moor,
And awful strength is with him. Through the blood
Which this day must be pour'd in sacrifice
Shall Spain be free. On all her olive-hills
Shall men set up the battle-sign of fire,
And round its blaze, at midnight, keep the sense
Of vengeance wakeful in each other's hearts
E'en with thy children's tale!

XIMENA.

Peace, father! peace!
Behold she sinks!—the storm hath done its work
Upon the broken reed. Oh! lend thine aid
To bear her hence. [*They lead her away.*

Scene—A Street in Valencia. Several Groups of Citizens and Soldiers, many of them lying on the Steps of a Church. Arms scattered on the Ground around them.

AN OLD CITIZEN.

The air is sultry, as with thunder-clouds.
I left my desolate home, that I might breathe
More freely in heaven's face, but my heart feels
With this hot gloom o'erburthen'd. I have now
No sons to tend me. Which of you, kind friends,
Will bring the old man water from the fount,
To moisten his parch'd lip? [*A citizen goes out.*

SECOND CITIZEN.

This wasting siege,
Good Father Lopez, hath gone hard with you!
'Tis sad to hear no voices through the house,
Once peopled with fair sons!

THIRD CITIZEN.

Why, better thus,
Than to be haunted with their famish'd cries,
E'en in your very dreams!

OLD CITIZEN.

Heaven's will be done!

These are dark times! I have not been alone
In my affliction.

THIRD CITIZEN (*with bitterness*).

Why, we have but this thought
Left for our gloomy comfort!—And 'tis well!
Aye, let the balance be awhile struck even
Between the noble's palace and the hut,
Where the worn peasant sickens!—They that bear
The humble dead unhonour'd to their homes,
Pass now i' th' streets no lordly bridal train,
With its exulting music; and the wretch
Who on the marble steps of some proud hall
Flings himself down to die, in his last need
And agony of famine, doth behold
No scornful guests, with their long purple robes,
To the banquet sweeping by. Why, this is just!
These are the days when pomp is made to feel
Its human mould!

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Heard you last night the sound
Of Saint Jago's bell?—How sullenly
From the great tower it peal'd!

FIFTH CITIZEN.

Aye, and 'tis said

No mortal hand was near when so it seem'd
To shake the midnight streets.

OLD CITIZEN.

Too well I know
The sound of coming fate!—'Tis ever thus
When Death is on his way to make it night
In the Cid's ancient house[5].—Oh! there are things
In this strange world of which we have all to learn
When its dark bounds are pass'd.—Yon bell, untouch'd,
(Save by the hands we see not) still doth speak—
—When of that line some stately head is mark'd,—
With a wild hollow peal, at dead of night,
Rocking Valencia's towers. I have heard it oft,
Nor known its warning false.

FOURTH CITIZEN.

And will our chief
Buy with the price of his fair children's blood
A few more days of pining wretchedness
For this forsaken city?

OLD CITIZEN.

Doubt it not!
—But with that ransom he may purchase still
Deliverance for the land!—And yet 'tis sad
To think that such a race, with all its fame,

Should pass away!—For she, his daughter too,
Moves upon earth as some bright thing whose time
To sojourn there is short.

FIFTH CITIZEN.

Then woe for us
When she is gone!—Her voice—the very sound
Of her soft step was comfort, as she moved
Through the still house of mourning!—Who like her
Shall give us hope again?

OLD CITIZEN.

Be still!—she comes,
And with a mien how changed!—A hurrying step,
And a flush'd cheek!—What may this bode?—Be still!

XIMENA *enters, with Attendants carrying a Banner.*

XIMENA.

Men of Valencia! in an hour like this,
What do ye here?

A CITIZEN.

We die!

XIMENA.

Brave men die *now*
Girt for the toil, as travellers suddenly

By the dark night o'ertaken on their way!
These days require such death!—It is too much
Of luxury for our wild and angry times,
To fold the mantle round us, and to sink
From life, as flowers that shut up silently,
When the sun's heat doth scorch them!—Hear ye not?

A CITIZEN.

Lady! what wouldst thou with us?

XIMENA.

Rise and arm!
E'en now the children of your chief are led
Forth by the Moor to perish!—Shall this be,
Shall the high sound of such a name be hush'd,
I' th' land to which for ages it hath been
A battle-word, as 'twere some passing note
Of shepherd-music?—Must this work be done,
And ye lie pining here, as men in whom
The pulse which God hath made for noble thought
Can so be thrill'd no longer?

CITIZEN.

'Tis even so!
Sickness, and toil, and grief, have breath'd upon us,
Our hearts beat faint and low.

XIMENA.

Are ye so poor
Of soul, my countrymen! that ye can draw
Strength from no deeper source than that which sends
The red blood mantling through the joyous veins,
And gives the fleet step wings?—Why, how have age
And sensitive womanhood ere now endured,
Through pangs of searching fire, in some proud cause,
Blessing that agony?—Think ye the Power
Which bore them nobly up, as if to teach
The torturer where eternal Heaven had set
Bounds to his sway, was earthy, of this earth,
This dull mortality?—Nay, then look on me!
Death's touch hath mark'd me, and I stand amongst you,
As one whose place, i' th' sunshine of your world,
Shall soon be left to fill!—I say, the breath
Of th' incense, floating through yon fane, shall scarce
Pass from your path before me! But even now,
I have that within me, kindling through the dust,
Which from all time hath made high deeds its voice
And token to the nations;—Look on me!
Why hath Heaven pour'd forth courage, as a flame
Wasting the womanish heart, which must be still'd
Yet sooner for its swift consuming brightness,

If not to shame your doubt, and your despair,
And your soul's torpor?—Yet, arise and arm!
It may not be too late.

A CITIZEN.

Why, what are we,
To cope with hosts?—Thus faint, and worn, and few,
O'ernumber'd and forsaken, is 't for us
To stand against the mighty?

XIMENA.

And for whom
Hath He, who shakes the mighty with a breath
From their high places, made the fearfulness,
And ever-wakeful presence of his power,
To the pale startled earth most manifest,
But for the weak?—Was 't for the helm'd and crown'd
That suns were stay'd at noonday?—Stormy seas
As a rill parted?—Mail'd archangels sent
To wither up the strength of kings with death?
—I tell you, if these marvels have been done,
'Twas for the wearied and th' oppress'd of men,
They needed such!—And generous faith hath power
By her prevailing spirit, e'en yet to work
Deliverances, whose tale shall live with those
Of the great elder time!—Be of good heart!

Who is forsaken?—He that gives the thought
A place within his breast!—'Tis not for you.
—Know ye this banner?

CITIZENS (*murmuring to each other*).

Is she not inspired?
Doth not Heaven call us by her fervent voice?

XIMENA.

Know ye this banner?

CITIZENS.

'Tis the Cid's.

XIMENA.

The Cid's!
Who breathes that name but in th' exulting tone
Which the heart rings to?—Why, the very wind
As it swells out the noble standard's fold
Hath a triumphant sound!—The Cid's!—it moved
Even as a sign of victory through the land,
From the free skies ne'er stooping to a foe!

OLD CITIZEN.

Can ye still pause, my brethren?—Oh! that youth
Through this worn frame were kindling once again!

XIMENA.

Ye linger still?—Upon this very air,
He that was born in happy hour for Spain[6]

Pour'd forth his conquering spirit!—'Twas the breeze
From your own mountains which came down to wave
This banner of his battles, as it droop'd
Above the champion's death-bed. Nor even then
Its tale of glory closed.—They made no moan
O'er the dead hero, and no dirge was sung[7],
But the deep tambour and shrill horn of war
Told when the mighty pass'd!—They wrapt him not
With the pale shroud, but braced the warrior's form
In war-array, and on his barbed steed,
As for a triumph, rear'd him; marching forth
In the hush'd midnight from Valencia's walls,
Beleaguer'd then, as now. All silently
The stately funeral moved:—but who was he
That follow'd, charging on the tall white horse,
And with the solemn standard, broad and pale,
Waving in sheets of snow-light?—And the cross,
The bloody cross, far-blazing from his shield,
And the fierce meteor-sword?—They fled, they fled!
The kings of Afric, with their countless hosts,
Were dust in his red path!—The scimetar
Was shiver'd as a reed!—for in that hour
The warrior-saint that keeps the watch for Spain,
Was arm'd betimes!—And o'er that fiery field

The Cid's high banner stream'd all joyously,
For still its lord was there!

CITIZENS (*rising tumultuously*).

Even unto death
Again it shall be follow'd!

XIMENA.

Will he see
The noble stem hewn down, the beacon-light
Which his house for ages o'er the land
Hath shone through cloud and storm, thus quench'd at once?
Will he not aid his children in the hour
Of this their uttermost peril?—Awful power
Is with the holy dead, and there are times
When the tomb hath no chain they cannot burst?
—Is it a thing forgotten, how he woke
From its deep rest of old, remembering Spain
In her great danger?—At the night's mid-watch
How Leon started, when the sound was heard
That shook her dark and hollow-echoing streets,
As with the heavy tramp of steel-clad men,
By thousands marching through!—For he had risen!
The Campeador was on his march again,

And in his arms, and follow'd by his hosts
Of shadowy spearmen!—He had left the world
From which we are dimly parted, and gone forth,
And call'd his buried warriors from their sleep,
Gathering them round him to deliver Spain;
For Afric was upon her!—Morning broke—
Day rush'd through clouds of battle;—but at eve
Our God had triumph'd, and the rescued land
Sent up a shout of victory from the field,
That rock'd her ancient mountains.

THE CITIZENS.

Arm! to arms!
On to our chief!—We have strength within us yet
To die with our blood roused!—Now, be the word,
For the Cid's house!

[*They begin to arm themselves.*

XIMENA.

Ye know his battle-song?
The old rude strain wherewith his bands went forth
To strike down Paynim swords!

(*She sings*)

THE CID'S BATTLE SONG.

The Moor is on his way!
With the tambour-peal and the tecbir-shout,
And the horn o'er the blue seas ringing out,
He hath marshall'd his dark array!

Shout through the vine-clad land!
That her sons on all their hills may hear,
And sharpen the point of the red wolf spear,
And the sword for the brave man's hand!

(*The* CITIZENS *join in the song, while they continue arming themselves*).

Banners are in the field!
The chief must rise from his joyous board,
And turn from the feast ere the wine be pour'd,
And take up his father's shield!

The Moor is on his way!
Let the peasant leave his olive-ground,
And the goats roam wild through the pine-woods round!
—There is nobler work to-day!

Send forth the trumpet's call!
Till the bridegroom cast the goblet down,
And the marriage-robe and the flowery crown,
And arm in the banquet-hall!

And stay the funeral-train!
Bid the chanted mass be hush'd awhile,
And the bier laid down in the holy aile,
And the mourners girt for Spain!

(*They take up the banner, and follow* XIMENA *out. Their voices are heard gradually dying away at a distance*).

Ere night, must swords be red!
It is not an hour for knells and tears,
But for helmets braced, and serried spears!
To-morrow for the dead!

The Cid is in array!
His steed is barbed, his plume waves high,
His banner is up in the sunny sky,
Now, joy for the Cross to-day!

Scene—The Walls of the City. The Plain beneath, with the Moorish Camp and Army.

GONZALEZ, GARCIAS, HERNANDEZ.

(*A wild Sound of Moorish Music heard from below*).

HERNANDEZ.

What notes are these in their deep mournfulness
So strangely wild?

GARCIAS.

'Tis the shrill melody
Of the Moor's ancient death-song. Well I know
The rude barbaric sound; but, till this hour,
It seem'd not fearful.—Now, a shuddering chill
Comes o'er me with its tones.—Lo! from yon tent
They lead the noble boys!

HERNANDEZ.

The young, and pure,
And beautiful victims!—'Tis on things like these
We cast our hearts in wild idolatry,
Sowing the winds with hope!—Yet this is well.
Thus brightly crown'd with life's most gorgeous flowers,

And all unblemish'd, earth should offer up
Her treasures unto Heaven!

GARCIAS (*to* GONZALEZ).

My chief, the Moor
Hath led your child forth.

GONZALEZ (*starting*).

Are my sons there?
I knew they could not perish; for yon Heaven
Would ne'er behold it!—Where is he that said
I was no more a father?—They look changed—
Pallid and worn, as from a prison-house!
Or is 't mine eye sees dimly?—But their steps
Seem heavy, as with pain.—I hear the clank—
Oh God! their limbs are fetter'd!

ABDULLAH (*coming forward beneath the walls*).

Christian! look
Once more upon thy children. There is yet
One moment for the trembling of the sword;
Their doom is still with thee.

GONZALEZ.

Why should this man
So mock us with the semblance of our kind?
—Moor! Moor! thou dost too daringly provoke,
In thy bold cruelty, th' all-judging One,

Who visits for such things!—Hast thou no sense
Of thy frail nature?—'Twill be taught thee yet,
And darkly shall the anguish of my soul,
Darkly and heavily, pour itself on thine,
When thou shalt cry for mercy from the dust,
And be denied!

ABDULLAH.

Nay, is it not thyself,
That hast no mercy and no love within thee?
These are thy sons, the nurslings of thy house;
Speak! must they live or die?

(GONZALEZ *in violent emotion*).

Is it Heaven's will
To try the dust it kindles for a day,
With infinite agony!—How have I drawn
This chastening on my head!—They bloom'd around me,
And my heart grew too fearless in its joy,
Glorying in their bright promise!—If we fall,
Is there no pardon for our feebleness?

(HERNANDEZ, *without speaking, holds up a Cross before him*).

ABDULLAH.

Speak!

GONZALEZ (*snatching the Cross, and lifting it up*).

Let the earth be shaken through its depths,
But *this* must triumph!

ABDULLAH (*coldly*).

Be it as thou wilt.
—Unsheath the scimetar! [*To his Guards.*

GARCIAS (*to* GONZALEZ).

Away, my chief!
This is your place no longer. There are things
No human heart, though battle-proof as yours,
Unmadden'd may sustain.

GONZALEZ.

Be still! I have now
No place on earth but this!

ALPHONSO (*from beneath*).

Men! give me way,
That I may speak forth once before I die!

GARCIAS.

The princely boy!—how gallantly his brow
Wears its high nature in the face of death!

ALPHONSO.

Father!

GONZALEZ.

My son! my son!—Mine eldest-born!

ALPHONSO.

Stay but upon the ramparts!—Fear thou not—
There is good courage in me: oh! my father!
I will not shame thee!—only let me fall
Knowing thine eye looks proudly on thy child,
So shall my heart have strength.

GONZALEZ.

Would, would to God,
That I might die for thee, my noble boy!
Alphonso, my fair son!

ALPHONSO.

Could I have lived,
I might have been a warrior!—Now, farewell!
But look upon me still!—I will not blench
When the keen sabre flashes—Mark me well!
Mine eyelids shall not quiver as it falls,
So thou wilt look upon me!

GARCIAS (*to* GONZALEZ).

Nay, my lord!
We must begone!—Thou *canst* not bear it!

GONZALEZ.

Peace!
—Who hath told *thee* how much man's heart can bear?
—Lend me thine arm—my brain whirls fearfully—

How thick the shades close round!—my boy! my boy!
Where art thou in this gloom?

GARCIAS.

Let us go hence!
This is a dreadful moment!

GONZALEZ.

Hush!—what saidst thou?
Now let me look on him!—Dost *thou* see aught
Through the dull mist which wraps us?

GARCIAS.

I behold—
Oh! for a thousand Spaniards to rush down—

GONZALEZ.

Thou seest—My heart stands still to hear thee speak!
—There seems a fearful hush upon the air,
As 't were the dead of night!

GARCIAS.

The hosts have closed
Around the spot in stillness. Through the spears,
Ranged thick and motionless, I see him not;
—But now—

GONZALEZ.

He bade me keep mine eye upon him,—
And all is darkness round me!—Now?

GARCIAS.

A sword,
A sword, springs upward, like a lightning burst,
Through the dark serried mass!—Its cold blue glare
Is wavering to and fro—'tis vanish'd—hark!

GONZALEZ.

I heard it, yes!—I heard the dull dead sound
That heavily broke the silence!—Didst thou speak?
—I lost thy words—come nearer!

GARCIAS.

'Twas—'tis past!—
The sword fell *then!*

HERNANDEZ (*with exultation*).

Flow forth thou noble blood!
Fount of Spain's ransom and deliverance, flow
Uncheck'd and brightly forth!—Thou kingly stream!
Blood of our heroes! blood of martyrdom!
Which through so many warrior-hearts hast pour'd
Thy fiery currents, and hast made our hills
Free, by thine own free offering!—Bathe the land,
But there thou shalt not sink!—Our very air
Shall take thy colouring, and our loaded skies
O'er th' infidel hang dark and ominous,
With battle-hues of thee!—And thy deep voice

Rising above them to the judgment-seat
Shall call a burst of gather'd vengeance down,
To sweep th' oppressor from us!—For thy wave
Hath made his guilt run o'er!

GONZALEZ (*endeavouring to rouse himself*).

'Tis all a dream!
There is not one—no hand on earth could harm
That fair boy's graceful head!—Why look you thus?

ABDULLAH (*pointing to* CARLOS.)

Christian! e'en yet thou hast a son!

GONZALEZ.

E'en yet!

CARLOS.

My father! take me from these fearful men!
Wilt thou not save me, father?

GONZALEZ (*attempting to unsheath his sword*).

Is the strength
From mine arm shiver'd?—Garcias, follow me!

GARCIAS.

Whither, my chief?

GONZALEZ.

Why, we can die as well
On yonder plain,—aye, a spear's thrust will do
The little that our misery doth require,

Sooner than e'en this anguish! Life is best
Thrown from us in such moments.

[*Voices heard at a distance.*

HERNANDEZ.

Hush! what strain
Floats on the wind?

GARCIAS.

'Tis the Cid's battle song!
What marvel hath been wrought?

[*Voices approaching heard in chorus.*

The Moor is on his way!
With the tambour peal and the tecbir shout,
And the horn o'er the blue seas ringing out,
He hath marshall'd his dark array!

XIMENA *enters, followed by the* CITIZENS, *with the Banner.*

XIMENA.

Is it too late?—My father, these are men
Through life and death prepared to follow thee
Beneath this banner!—Is their zeal too late?
—Oh! there 's a fearful history on thy brow!
What hast thou seen?

GARCIAS.

It is not *all* too late.

XIMENA.

My brothers!

HERNANDEZ.

All is well.

(*To* GARCIAS.) Hush! wouldst thou chill
That which hath sprung within them, as a flame
From th' altar-embers mounts in sudden brightness?
I say, 'tis not too late, ye men of Spain!
On to the rescue!

XIMENA.

Bless me, oh my father!
And I will hence, to aid thee with my prayers,
Sending my spirit with thee through the storm,
Lit up by flashing swords!

GONZALEZ (*falling upon her neck*).

Hath aught been spared?
Am I not all bereft?—Thou 'rt left me still!
Mine own, my loveliest one, thou 'rt left me still!
Farewell!—thy father's blessing, and thy God's,
Be with thee, my Ximena!

XIMENA.

Fare thee well!

If, ere thy steps turn homeward from the field,
The voice is hush'd that still hath welcomed thee,
Think of me in thy victory!

HERNANDEZ.

Peace! no more!
This is no time to melt our nature down
To a soft stream of tears!—Be of strong heart!
Give me the banner! Swell the song again!

THE CITIZENS.

Ere night, must swords be red!
It is not an hour for knells and tears,
But for helmets braced and serried spears!
—To-morrow for the dead!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

Scene—Before the Altar of a Church.

ELMINA *rises from the steps of the Altar.*

ELMINA.

The clouds are fearful that o'erhang thy ways,
Oh, thou mysterious Heaven!—It cannot be
That I have drawn the vials of thy wrath,
To burst upon me through the lifting up
Of a proud heart, elate in happiness!
No! in my day's full noon, for me life's flowers
But wreath'd a cup of trembling; and the love,
The boundless love, my spirit was form'd to bear,
Hath ever, in its place of silence, been
A trouble and a shadow, tinging thought
With hues too deep for joy!—I never look'd
On my fair children, in their buoyant mirth,
Or sunny sleep, when all the gentle air
Seem'd glowing with their quiet blessedness,
But o'er my soul there came a shuddering sense
Of earth, and its pale changes; even like that
Which vaguely mingles with our glorious dreams,

A restless and disturbing consciousness
That the bright things must fade!—How have I shrunk
From the dull murmur of th' unquiet voice,
With its low tokens of mortality,
Till my heart fainted midst their smiles!—their smiles!
—Where are those glad looks now?—Could they go down,
With all their joyous light, that seem'd not earth's,
To the cold grave?—My children!—Righteous Heaven!
There floats a dark remembrance o'er my brain
Of one who told me, with relentless eye,
That *this* should be the hour!

XIMENA *enters.*

XIMENA.

They are gone forth
Unto the rescue!—strong in heart and hope,
Faithful, though few!—My mother, let thy prayers
Call on the land's good saints to lift once more
The sword and cross that sweep the field for Spain,
As in old battle; so thine arms e'en yet
May clasp thy sons!—For me, my part is done!
The flame, which dimly might have linger'd yet
A little while, hath gather'd all its rays
Brightly to sink at once; and it is well!

The shadows are around me; to thy heart
Fold me, that I may die.

ELMINA.

My child!—What dream
Is on thy soul?—Even now thine aspect wears
Life's brightest inspiration!

XIMENA.

Death's!

ELMINA.

Away!
Thine eye hath starry clearness, and thy cheek
Doth glow beneath it with a richer hue
Than tinged its earliest flower!

XIMENA.

It well may be!
There are far deeper and far warmer hues
Than those which draw their colouring from the founts
Of youth, or health, or hope.

ELMINA.

Nay, speak not thus!
There 's that about thee shining which would send
E'en through *my* heart a sunny glow of joy,
Wer 't not for these sad words. The dim cold air
And solemn light, which wrap these tombs and shrines

As a pale gleaming shroud, seem kindled up
With a young spirit of ethereal hope
Caught from thy mien!—Oh no! this is not death!

XIMENA.

Why should not He, whose touch dissolves our chain,
Put on his robes of beauty when he comes
As a deliverer?—He hath many forms,
They should not all be fearful!—If his call
Be but our gathering to that distant land
For whose sweet waters we have pined with thirst,
Why should not its prophetic sense be borne
Into the heart's deep stillness, with a breath
Of summer-winds, a voice of melody,
Solemn, yet lovely?—Mother! I depart!
—Be it thy comfort, in the after-days,
That thou hast seen me thus!

ELMINA.

Distract me not
With such wild fears! Can I bear on with life
When thou art gone?—Thy voice, thy step, thy smile,
Pass'd from my path?—Alas! even now thine eye
Is changed—thy cheek is fading!

XIMENA.

Aye, the clouds

Of the dim hour are gathering o'er my sight,
And yet I fear not, for the God of Help
Comes in that quiet darkness!—It may soothe
Thy woes, my mother! if I tell thee now,
With what glad calmness I behold the veil
Falling between me and the world, wherein
My heart so ill hath rested.

ELMINA.

Thine!

XIMENA.

Rejoice
For her, that, when the garland of her life
Was blighted, and the springs of hope were dried,
Received her summons hence; and had no time,
Bearing the canker at th' impatient heart,
To wither, sorrowing for that gift of Heaven,
Which lent one moment of existence light,
That dimm'd the rest for ever!

ELMINA.

How is this?
My child, what mean'st thou?

XIMENA.

Mother! I have loved,
And been beloved!—the sunbeam of an hour,

Which gave life's hidden treasures to mine eye,
As they lay shining in their secret founts,
Went out, and left them colourless.—'Tis past—
And what remains on earth?—the rainbow mist,
Through which I gazed, hath melted, and my sight
Is clear'd to look on all things as they are!
—But this is far too mournful!—Life's dark gift
Hath fallen too early and too cold upon me!
—Therefore I would go hence!

ELMINA.

And thou hast loved
Unknown——

XIMENA.

Oh! pardon, pardon that I veil'd
My thoughts from thee!—But thou hadst woes enough,
And mine came o'er me when thy soul had need
Of more than mortal strength!—For I had scarce
Given the deep consciousness that I was loved
A treasure's place within my secret heart,
When earth's brief joy went from me!
'Twas at morn
I saw the warriors to their field go forth,
And he—my chosen—was there amongst the rest,
With his young, glorious brow!—I look'd again—

The strife grew dark beneath me—but his plume
Waved free above the lances.—Yet again—
—It had gone down! and steeds were trampling o'er
The spot to which mine eyes were riveted,
Till blinded by th' intenseness of their gaze!
—And then—at last—I hurried to the gate,
And met him there!—I met him!—on his shield,
And with his cloven helm, and shiver'd sword,
And dark hair steep'd in blood!—They bore him past—
Mother!—I saw his face!—Oh! such a death
Works fearful changes on the fair of earth,
The pride of woman's eye!

ELMINA.

Sweet daughter, peace!
Wake not the dark remembrance; for thy frame——

XIMENA.

—There *will* be peace ere long. I shut my heart,
Even as a tomb, o'er that lone silent grief,
That I might spare it thee!—But now the hour
Is come when that which would have pierced thy soul
Shall be its healing balm. Oh! weep thou not,
Save with a gentle sorrow!

ELMINA.

Must it be?
Art thou indeed to leave me?

XIMENA (*exultingly*).

Be thou glad!
I say, rejoice above thy favour'd child!
Joy, for the soldier when his field is fought,
Joy, for the peasant when his vintage-task
Is closed at eve!—But most of all for her,
Who, when her life had changed its glittering robes
For the dull garb of sorrow, which doth cling
So heavily around the journeyers on,
Cast down its weight—and slept!

ELMINA.

Alas! thine eye
Is wandering—yet how brightly!—Is this death,
Or some high wondrous vision?—Speak, my child!
How is it with thee now?

XIMENA (*wildly*).

I see it still!
'Tis floating, like a glorious cloud on high,
My father's banner!—Hear'st thou not a sound?
The trumpet of Castile?—Praise, praise to Heaven!
—Now may the weary rest!—Be still!—Who calls
The night so fearful?—— [*She dies.*

ELMINA.

No! she is not dead!

—Ximena!—speak to me!—Oh! yet a tone
From that sweet voice, that I may gather in
One more remembrance of its lovely sound,
Ere the deep silence fall!—What! is all hush'd?
—No, no!—it cannot be!—How should we bear
The dark misgivings of our souls, if Heaven
Left not such beings with us?—But is this
Her wonted look?—too sad a quiet lies
On its dim fearful beauty!—Speak, Ximena!
Speak!—my heart dies within me!—She is gone,
With all her blessed smiles!—My child! my child!
Where art thou?—Where is that which answer'd me,
From thy soft-shining eyes?—Hush! doth she move?
—One light lock seem'd to tremble on her brow,
As a pulse throbb'd beneath;—'twas but the voice
Of my despair that stirr'd it!—She is gone!

[*She throws herself on the body.* GONZALEZ *enters, alone, and wounded.*

ELMINA (*rising as he approaches*).

I must not *now* be scorn'd!—No, not a look,
A whisper of reproach!—Behold my woe!
—Thou canst not scorn me now!

GONZALEZ.

Hast thou heard *all?*

ELMINA.

Thy daughter on my bosom laid her head,
And pass'd away to rest.—Behold her there,
Even such as death hath made her! [8]

GONZALEZ (*bending over* XIMENA's *body*).

Thou art gone
A little while before me, oh, my child!
Why should the traveller weep to part with those
That scarce an hour will reach their promised land
Ere he too cast his pilgrim staff away,
And spread his couch beside them?

ELMINA.

Must it be
Henceforth enough that *once* a thing so fair
Had its bright place amongst us?—Is this all,
Left for the years to come?—We will not stay!
Earth's chain each hour grows weaker.

GONZALEZ (*still gazing upon* XIMENA).

And thou 'rt laid
To slumber in the shadow, blessed child!
Of a yet stainless altar, and beside
A sainted warrior's tomb!—Oh, fitting place
For thee to yield thy pure heroic soul

Back unto him that gave it!—And thy cheek
Yet smiles in its bright paleness!

ELMINA.

Hadst thou seen
The look with which she pass'd!

GONZALEZ (*still bending over her*).

Why, 'tis almost
Like joy to view thy beautiful repose!
The faded image of that perfect calm
Floats, e'en as long-forgotten music, back
Into my weary heart!—No dark wild spot
On *thy* clear brow doth tell of bloody hands
That quench'd young life by violence!—We have seen
Too much of horror, in one crowded hour,
To weep for aught, so gently gather'd hence!
—Oh! *man* leaves other traces!

ELMINA (*suddenly starting*).

It returns
On my bewilder'd soul!—Went ye not forth
Unto the rescue?—And thou 'rt here alone!
—Where are my sons?

GONZALEZ (*solemnly*).

We were too late!

ELMINA.

Too late!

Hast thou nought else to tell me?

GONZALEZ.

I brought back

From that last field the banner of my sires,

And my own death-wound.

ELMINA.

Thine!

GONZALEZ.

Another hour

Shall hush its throbs for ever. I go hence,

And with me——

ELMINA.

No!—Man *could* not lift his hands—

—Where hast thou left thy sons?

GONZALEZ.

I *have* no sons.

ELMINA.

What hast thou said?

GONZALEZ.

That now there lives not one

To wear the glory of mine ancient house,

When I am gone to rest.

ELMINA (*throwing herself on the ground, and speaking in a low hurried voice*).

In one brief hour, all gone!—and *such* a death!
—I see their blood gush forth!—their graceful heads—
—Take the dark vision from me, oh, my God!
And such a death for *them!*—I was not there!
They were but mine in beauty and in joy,
Not in that mortal anguish!—All, all gone!
—Why should I struggle more?—What *is* this Power,
Against whose might, on all sides pressing us,
We strive with fierce impatience, which but lays
Our own frail spirits prostrate?
(*After a long pause*).
Now I know
Thy hand, my God!—and they are soonest crush'd
That most withstand it!—I resist no more.
(*She rises*).—A light, a light springs up from grief and death,
Which with its solemn radiance doth reveal
Why we have thus been tried!

GONZALEZ.

Then I may still
Fix my last look on thee, in holy love,
Parting, but yet with hope!

ELMINA (*falling at his feet*).

Canst thou forgive?

—Oh, I have driven the arrow to thy heart,
That should have buried it within mine own,
And borne the pang in silence!—I have cast
Thy life's fair honour, in my wild despair,
As an unvalued gem upon the waves,
Whence thou hast snatch'd it back, to bear from earth,
All stainless, on thy breast.—Well hast thou done—
But I—canst thou forgive?

GONZALEZ.

Within this hour
I have stood upon that verge whence mortals fall,
And learn'd how 'tis with one whose sight grows dim,
And whose foot trembles on the gulf's dark side.
—Death purifies all feeling—We will part
In pity and in love.

ELMINA.

Death!—And thou too
Art on thy way!—Oh, joy for thee, high heart!
Glory and joy for thee!—The day is closed,
And well and nobly hast thou borne thyself
Through its long battle-toils, though many swords
Have enter'd thine own soul!—But on my head

Recoil the fierce invokings of despair,
And I am left far distanced in the race,
The lonely one of earth!—Aye, this is just.
I am not worthy that upon my breast
In this, thine hour of victory, thou shouldst yield
Thy spirit unto God!

GONZALEZ.

Thou art! thou art!
Oh! a life's love, a heart's long faithfulness,
Ev'n in the presence of eternal things,
Wearing their chasten'd beauty all undimm'd,
Assert their lofty claims; and these are not
For one dark hour to cancel!—We are here,
Before that altar which received the vows
Of our unbroken youth, and meet it is
For such a witness, in the sight of Heaven,
And in the face of death, whose shadowy arm
Comes dim between us, to record th' exchange
Of our tried hearts' forgiveness.—Who are they,
That in one path have journey'd, needing not
Forgiveness at its close?

(*A Citizen enters hastily*).

CITIZEN.

The Moors! the Moors!

GONZALEZ.

How! is the city storm'd?
Oh! righteous Heaven!—for this I look'd not yet!
Hath all been done in vain?—Why then, 'tis time
For prayer, and then to rest!

CITIZEN.

The sun shall set,
And not a Christian voice be left for prayer,
To-night within Valencia?—Round our walls
The paynim host is gathering for th' assault,
And we have none to guard them.

GONZALEZ.

Then my place
Is here no longer.—I had hoped to die
Ev'n by the altar and the sepulchre
Of my brave sires—but this was not to be!
Give me my sword again, and lead me hence
Back to the ramparts. I have yet an hour,
And it hath still high duties.—Now, my wife!
Thou mother of my children—of the dead—
Whom I name unto thee in stedfast hope—
Farewell!

ELMINA.

No, *not* farewell!—My soul hath risen

To mate itself with thine; and by thy side
Amidst the hurtling lances I will stand,
As one on whom a brave man's love hath been
Wasted not utterly.

GONZALEZ.

I thank thee, Heaven!
That I have tasted of the awful joy
Which thou hast given to temper hours like this,
With a deep sense of thee, and of thine ends
In these dread visitings!
(*To* ELMINA). We will not part,
But with the spirit's parting!

ELMINA.

One farewell
To her, that mantled with sad loveliness,
Doth slumber at our feet!—My blessed child!
Oh! in thy heart's affliction thou wert strong,
And holy courage did pervade thy woe,
As light the troubled waters!—Be at peace!
Thou whose bright spirit made itself the soul
Of all that were around thee!—And thy life
E'en then was struck, and withering at the core!
—Farewell!—thy parting look hath on me fall'n,
E'en as a gleam of heaven, and I am now

More like what thou hast been!—My soul is hush'd,
For a still sense of purer worlds hath sunk
And settled on its depths with that last smile
Which from thine shone forth.—Thou hast not lived
In vain—my child, farewell!

GONZALEZ.

Surely for thee
Death had no sting, Ximena!—We are blest,
To learn one secret of the shadowy pass,
From such an aspect's calmness. Yet once more
I kiss thy pale young cheek, my broken flower!
In token of th' undying love and hope,
Whose land is far away. [*Exeunt.*

Scene—The Walls of the City.

HERNANDEZ.—*A few Citizens gathered round him.*

HERNANDEZ.

Why, men have cast the treasures, which their lives
Had been worn down in gathering, on the pyre,
Aye, at their household hearths have lit the brand,
Ev'n from that shrine of quiet love to bear
The flame which gave their temples and their homes,
In ashes, to the winds!—They have done this,
Making a blasted void where once the sun
Look'd upon lovely dwellings; and from earth
Razing all record that on such a spot
Childhood hath sprung, age faded, misery wept,
And frail Humanity knelt before her God;
—They have done *this*, in their free nobleness,
Rather than see the spoiler's tread pollute
Their holy places!—Praise, high praise be theirs,
Who have left man such lessons!—And these things,
Made your own hills their witnesses!—The sky,
Whose arch bends o'er you, and the seas, wherein

Your rivers pour their gold, rejoicing saw
The altar, and the birth-place, and the tomb,
And all memorials of man's heart and faith,
Thus proudly honour'd!—Be ye not outdone
By the departed!—Though the godless foe
Be close upon us, we have power to snatch
The spoils of victory from him. Be but strong!
A few bright torches and brief moments yet
Shall baffle his flush'd hope, and we may die,
Laughing him unto scorn.—Rise, follow me,
And thou, Valencia! triumph in thy fate,
The ruin, not the yoke, and make thy towers
A beacon unto Spain!

CITIZEN.

We 'll follow thee!
—Alas! for our fair city, and the homes
Wherein we rear'd our children!—But away!
The Moor shall plant no crescent o'er our fanes!

VOICE (*from a Tower on the Walls*).

Succours!—Castile! Castile!

CITIZENS (*rushing to the spot*).

It is even so!
Now blessing be to Heaven, for we are saved!
Castile, Castile!

VOICE (*from the Tower*).

Line after line of spears,
Lance after lance, upon the horizon's verge,
Like festal lights from cities bursting up,
Doth skirt the plain!—In faith, a noble host!

ANOTHER VOICE.

The Moor hath turn'd him from our walls, to front
Th' advancing might of Spain!

CITIZENS (*shouting*).

Castile! Castile!

(GONZALEZ *enters, supported by* ELMINA *and a Citizen*).

GONZALEZ.

What shouts of joy are these?

HERNANDEZ.

Hail, chieftain! hail!
Thus ev'n in death 'tis given thee to receive
The conqueror's crown!—Behold our God hath heard,
And arm'd himself with vengeance!—Lo! they come!
The lances of Castile!

GONZALEZ.

I knew, I knew
Thou wouldst not utterly, my God, forsake

Thy servant in his need!—My blood and tears
Have not sunk vainly to th' attesting earth!
Praise to thee, thanks and praise, that I have lived
To see this hour!

ELMINA.

And I too bless thy name,
Though thou hast proved me unto agony!
Oh God!—Thou God of chastening!

VOICE (*from the Tower*).

They move on!
I see the royal banner in the air,
With its emblazon'd towers!

GONZALEZ.

Go, bring ye forth
The banner of the Cid, and plant it here,
To stream above me, for an answering sign
That the good cross doth hold its lofty place
Within Valencia still!—What see ye now?

HERNANDEZ.

I see a kingdom's might upon its path,
Moving, in terrible magnificence,
Unto revenge and victory!—With the flash
Of knightly swords, up-springing from the ranks,
As meteors from a still and gloomy deep,

And with the waving of ten thousand plumes,
Like a land's harvest in the autumn-wind,
And with fierce light, which is not of the sun,
But flung from sheets of steel—it comes, it comes,
The vengeance of our God!

GONZALEZ.

I hear it now,
The heavy tread of mail-clad multitudes,
Like thunder-showers upon the forest-paths.

HERNANDEZ.

Aye, earth knows well the omen of that sound,
And she hath echoes, like a sepulchre's,
Pent in her secret hollows, to respond
Unto the step of death!

GONZALEZ.

Hark! how the wind
Swells proudly with the battle-march of Spain!
Now the heart feels its power!—A little while
Grant me to live, my God!—What pause is this?

HERNANDEZ.

A deep and dreadful one!—the serried files
Level their spears for combat; now the hosts
Look on each other in their brooding wrath,
Silent, and face to face.

VOICES HEARD WITHOUT, CHANTING.

Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit! rest thee now!
E'en while with ours thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow.

Dust, to its narrow house beneath!
Soul, to its place on high!
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more may fear to die.

ELMINA (*to* GONZALEZ).

It is the death-hymn o'er thy daughter's bier!
—But I am calm, and e'en like gentle winds,
That music, through the stillness of my heart,
Sends mournful peace.

GONZALEZ.

Oh! well those solemn tones
Accord with such an hour, for all her life
Breath'd of a hero's soul!

[*A sound of trumpets and shouting from the plain.*

HERNANDEZ.

Now, now they close!—Hark! what a dull dead sound

Is in the Moorish war-shout!—I have known
Such tones prophetic oft.—The shock is given—
Lo! they have placed their shields before their hearts,
And lower'd their lances with the streamers on,
And on their steeds bent forward!—God for Spain!
The first bright sparks of battle have been struck
From spear to spear, across the gleaming field!
—There is no sight on which the blue sky looks
To match with this!—'Tis not the gallant crests,
Nor banners with their glorious blazonry;
The very nature and high soul of man
Doth now reveal itself!

GONZALEZ.

Oh, raise me up,
That I may look upon the noble scene!
—It will not be!—That this dull mist would pass
A moment from my sight!—Whence rose that shout,
As in fierce triumph?

HERNANDEZ (*clasping his hands*).

Must I look on this?
The banner sinks—'tis taken!

GONZALEZ.

Whose?

HERNANDEZ.

Castile's!

GONZALEZ.

Oh, God of Battles!

ELMINA.

Calm thy noble heart!
Thou wilt not pass away without thy meed.
Nay, rest thee on my bosom.

HERNANDEZ.

Cheer thee yet!
Our knights have spurr'd to rescue.—There is now
A whirl, a mingling of all terrible things,
Yet more appalling than the fierce distinctness
Wherewith they moved before!—I see tall plumes
All wildly tossing o'er the battle's tide,
Sway'd by the wrathful motion, and the press
Of desperate men, as cedar-boughs by storms.
Many a white streamer there is dyed with blood,
Many a false corslet broken, many a shield
Pierced through!—Now, shout for Santiago, shout!
Lo! javelins with a moment's brightness cleave
The thickening dust, and barbed steeds go down
With their helm'd riders!—Who, but One, can tell
How spirits part amidst that fearful rush
And trampling on of furious multitudes?

GONZALEZ.

Thou 'rt silent!—See'st thou more?—My soul grows dark.

HERNANDEZ.

And dark and troubled, as an angry sea,
Dashing some gallant armament in scorn
Against its rocks, is all on which I gaze!
—I can but tell thee how tall spears are cross'd,
And lances seem to shiver, and proud helms
To lighten with the stroke!—But round the spot,
Where, like a storm-fell'd mast, our standard sank,
The heart of battle burns.

GONZALEZ.

Where is that spot?

HERNANDEZ.

It is beneath the lonely tuft of palms,
That lift their green heads o'er the tumult still,
In calm and stately grace.

GONZALEZ.

There, didst thou say?
Then God is with us, and we *must* prevail!
For on that spot they died!—My children's blood
Calls on th' avenger thence!

ELMINA.

They perish'd there!

—And the bright locks that waved so joyously
To the free winds, lay trampled and defiled
Ev'n on that place of death!—Oh, Merciful!
Hush the dark thought within me!

HERNANDEZ (*with sudden exultation*).

Who is he,
On the white steed, and with the castled helm,
And the gold-broider'd mantle, which doth float
E'en like a sunny cloud above the fight;
And the pale cross, which from his breast-plate gleams
With star-like radiance?

GONZALEZ (*eagerly*).

Didst thou say the cross?

HERNANDEZ.

On his mail'd bosom shines a broad white cross,
And his long plumage through the darkening air
Streams like a snow-wreath.

GONZALEZ.

That should be—

HERNANDEZ.

The king!
—Was it not told us how he sent, of late,
To the Cid's tomb, e'en for the silver cross,
Which he who slumbers there was wont to bind
O'er his brave heart in fight[9]?

GONZALEZ (*springing up joyfully*).

My king! my king!
Now all good saints for Spain!—My noble king!
And thou art there!—That I might look once more
Upon thy face!—But yet I thank thee, Heaven!
That thou hast sent him, from my dying hands
Thus to receive his city!

[*He sinks back into* ELMINA'S *arms.*

HERNANDEZ.

He hath clear'd
A pathway midst the combat, and the light
Follows his charge through yon close living mass,
E'en as the gleam on some proud vessel's wake
Along the stormy waters!—'Tis redeem'd—
The castled banner!—It is flung once more
In joy and glory, to the sweeping winds!
—There seems a wavering through the paynim hosts—
Castile doth press them sore—Now, now rejoice!

GONZALEZ.

What hast thou seen?

HERNANDEZ.

Abdullah falls! He falls!
The man of blood!—the spoiler!—he hath sunk
In our king's path!—Well hath that royal sword

Avenged thy cause, Gonzalez!

They give way,

The Crescent's van is broken!—On the hills
And the dark pine-woods may the infidel
Call vainly, in his agony of fear,
To cover him from vengeance!—Lo! they fly!
They of the forest and the wilderness
Are scatter'd, e'en as leaves upon the wind!
Woe to the sons of Afric!—Let the plains,
And the vine-mountains, and Hesperian seas,
Take their dead unto them!—that blood shall wash
Our soil from stains of bondage.

GONZALEZ (*attempting to raise himself*).

Set me free!

Come with me forth, for I must greet my king,
After his battle-field!

HERNANDEZ.

Oh, blest in death!

Chosen of Heaven, farewell!—Look on the Cross,
And part from earth in peace!

GONZALEZ.

Now charge once more!

God is with Spain, and Santiago's sword
Is reddening all the air!—Shout forth 'Castile!'

The day is ours!—I go; but fear ye not!
For Afric's lance is broken, and my sons
Have won their first good field! [*He dies.*

ELMINA.

Look on me yet!
Speak one farewell, my husband!—must thy voice
Enter my soul no more!—Thine eye is fix'd—
Now is my life uprooted,—and 'tis well.

(*A Sound of triumphant Music is heard, and many Castilian Knights and Soldiers enter*).

A CITIZEN.

Hush your triumphal sounds, although ye come
E'en as deliverers!—But the noble dead,
And those that mourn them, claim from human hearts
Deep silent reverence.

ELMINA (*rising proudly*).

No, swell forth, Castile!
Thy trumpet-music, till the seas and heavens,
And the deep hills, give every stormy note
Echoes to ring through Spain!—How, know ye not
That all array'd for triumph, crown'd and robed
With the strong spirit which hath saved the land,
Ev'n now a conqueror to his rest is gone?
—Fear not to break that sleep, but let the wind

Swell on with victory's shout!—*He* will not hear—
Hath earth a sound more sad?

HERNANDEZ.

Lift ye the dead,
And bear him with the banner of his race
Waving above him proudly, as it waved
O'er the Cid's battles, to the tomb, wherein
His warrior-sires are gather'd. [*They raise the body.*

ELMINA.

Aye, 'tis thus
Thou shouldst be honour'd!—And I follow thee
With an unfaltering and a lofty step,
To that last home of glory. She that wears
In her deep heart the memory of thy love
Shall thence draw strength for all things, till the God,
Whose hand around her hath unpeopled earth,
Looking upon her still and chasten'd soul,
Call it once more to thine!

(*To the Castilians*).

Awake, I say,
Tambour and trumpet, wake!—And let the land
Through all her mountains hear your funeral peal!
—So should a hero pass to his repose. [*Exeunt omnes.*

NOTES.

Note 1.

Mountain Christians, those natives of Spain, who, under their prince, Pelayo, took refuge amongst the mountains of the northern provinces, where they maintained their religion and liberty, whilst the rest of their country was overrun by the Moors.

Note 2.

Oh, free doth sorrow pass, &c.

Frey geht das Unglück durch die ganze Erde.
Schiller's Death of Wallenstien, act iv. sc. 2.

Note 3.

Tizona, the fire-brand. The name of the Cid's favourite sword, taken in battle from the Moorish king Bucar.

Note 4.

How he won Valencia from the Moor, &c.

Valencia, which has been repeatedly besieged, and taken by the armies of different nations, remained in the possession of the Moors for an hundred and seventy years after the Cid's death. It was regained from them by King Don Jayme of Aragon, surnamed the Conqueror; after whose success I have ventured to suppose it governed by a descendant of the Campeador.

Note 5.

It was a Spanish tradition, that the great bell of the cathedral of Saragossa always tolled spontaneously before a king of Spain died.

Note 6.

"El que en buen hora nasco;" he that was born in happy hour. An appellation given to the Cid in the ancient chronicles.

Note 7.

For this, and the subsequent allusions to Spanish legends, see *The Romances and Chronicle of the Cid.*

Note 8.

"La voilà, telle que la mort nous l'a faite!"—*Bossuet, Oraisons Funébres.*

Note 9.

This circumstance is recorded of King Don Alfonso, the last of that name. He sent to the Cid's tomb for the cross which that warrior was accustomed to wear upon his breast when he went to battle, and had it made into one for himself; "because of the faith which he had, that through it he should obtain the victory."—*Southey's Chronicle of the Cid.*

SONGS OF THE CID*.

The following ballads are not translations from the Spanish, but are founded upon some of the 'wild and wonderful' traditions preserved in the romances of that language, and the ancient poem of the Cid.

THE CID'S DEPARTURE INTO EXILE.

WITH sixty knights in his gallant train,
Went forth the Campeador of Spain;
For wild sierras and plains afar,
He left the lands of his own Bivar[1].

To march o'er field, and to watch in tent;
From his home in good Castile he went;
To the wasting siege and the battle's van;
—For the noble Cid was a banish'd man!

* Originally published in the New Monthly Magazine.

Through his olive-woods the morn-breeze play'd,
And his native streams wild music made,
And clear in the sunshine his vineyards lay,
When for march and combat he took his way.

With a thoughtful spirit his way he took,
And he turn'd his steed for a parting look,
For a parting look at his own fair towers;
—Oh! the Exile's heart hath weary hours!

The pennons were spread, and the band array'd,
But the Cid at the threshold a moment stay'd;
It *was* but a moment—the halls were lone,
And the gates of his dwelling all open thrown.

There was not a steed in the empty stall,
Nor a spear nor a cloak on the naked wall,
Nor a hawk on the perch, nor a seat at the door,
Nor the sound of a step on the hollow floor[2].

Then a dim tear swell'd to the warrior's eye,
As the voice of his native groves went by;
And he said—"My foemen their wish have won—
—Now the will of God be in all things done!"

But the trumpet blew, with its note of cheer,
And the winds of the morning swept off the tear,
And the fields of his glory lay distant far,
—He is gone from the towers of his own Bivar!

THE CID'S DEATH-BED.

It was an hour of grief and fear
Within Valencia's walls,
When the blue spring-heaven lay still and clear
Above her marble halls.

There were pale cheeks and troubled eyes,
And steps of hurrying feet,
Where the Zambra's[3] notes were wont to rise,
Along the sunny street.

It was an hour of fear and grief,
On bright Valencia's shore,
For Death was busy with her chief,
The noble Campeador.

The Moor-king's barks were on the deep,
With sounds and signs of war,
For the Cid was passing to his sleep,
In the silent Alcazar.

No moan was heard through the towers of state,
  No weeper's aspect seen,
But by the couch Ximena sate,
  With pale, yet stedfast mien[4].

Stillness was round the leader's bed,
  Warriors stood mournful nigh,
And banners, o'er his glorious head,
  Were drooping heavily.

And feeble grew the conquering hand,
  And cold the valiant breast;
—He had fought the battles of the land,
  And his hour was come to rest.

What said the Ruler of the field?
  —His voice is faint and low;
The breeze that creeps o'er his lance and shield
  Hath louder accents now.

" Raise ye no cry, and let no moan
  Be made when I depart;
The Moor must hear no dirge's tone,
  Be ye of mighty heart!

"Let the cymbal-clash and the trumpet-strain
From your walls ring far and shrill,
And fear ye not, for the saints of Spain
Shall grant you victory still.

"And gird my form with mail-array,
And set me on my steed,
So go ye forth on your funeral-way,
And God shall give you speed.

"Go with the dead in the front of war,
All arm'd with sword and helm, [5]
And march by the camp of King Bucar,
For the good Castilian realm.

"And let me slumber in the soil
Which gave my fathers birth;
I have closed my day of battle-toil,
And my course is done on earth."

—Now wave, ye glorious banners, wave! [6]
Through the lattice a wind sweeps by,
And the arms, o'er the death-bed of the brave,
Send forth a hollow sigh.

Now wave, ye banners of many a fight!
  As the fresh wind o'er you sweeps;
The wind and the banners fall hush'd as night,
  The Campeador—he sleeps!

Sound the battle-horn on the breeze of morn,
  And swell out the trumpet's blast,
Till the notes prevail o'er the voice of wail,
  For the noble Cid hath pass'd!

THE CID'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.

The Moor had beleaguer'd Valencia's towers,
And lances gleam'd up through her citron-bowers,
And the tents of the desert had girt her plain,
And camels were trampling the vines of Spain;
For the Cid was gone to rest.

There were men from wilds where the death-wind sweeps,
There were spears from hills where the lion sleeps,
There were bows from sands where the ostrich runs,
For the shrill horn of Afric had call'd her sons
To the battles of the West.

The midnight bell, o'er the dim seas heard,
Like the roar of waters, the air had stirr'd;
The stars were shining o'er tower and wave,
And the camp lay hush'd, as a wizard's cave;
But the Christians woke that night.

They rear'd the Cid on his barbed steed,
Like a warrior mail'd for the hour of need,
And they fix'd the sword in the cold right hand,
Which had fought so well for his father's land,
And the shield from his neck hung bright.

There was arming heard in Valencia's halls,
There was vigil kept on the rampart walls;
Stars had not faded, nor clouds turn'd red,
When the knights had girded the noble dead,
And the burial-train moved out.

With a measured pace, as the pace of one,
Was the still death-march of the host begun;
With a silent step went the cuirass'd bands,
Like a lion's tread on the burning sands,
And they gave no battle-shout.

When the first went forth, it was midnight deep,
In heaven was the moon, in the camp was sleep.
When the last through the city's gates had gone,
O'er tent and rampart the bright day shone,
With a sun-burst from the sea.

There were knights five hundred went arm'd before,
And Bermudez the Cid's green standard bore;[6]
To its last fair field, with the break of morn,
Was the glorious banner in silence borne,
On the glad wind streaming free.

And the Campeador came stately then,
Like a leader circled with steel-clad men!
The helmet was down o'er the face of the dead,
But his steed went proud, by a warrior led,
For he knew that the Cid was there.

He was there, the Cid, with his own good sword,
And Ximena following her noble lord;
Her eye was solemn, her step was slow,
But there rose not a sound of war or woe,
Not a whisper on the air.

The halls in Valencia were still and lone,
The churches were empty, the masses done;
There was not a voice through the wide streets far,
Nor a foot-fall heard in the Alcazar,
—So the burial-train moved out.

With a measured pace, as the pace of one,
Was the still death-march of the host begun;
With a silent step went the cuirass'd bands,
Like a lion's tread on the burning sands;
—And they gave no battle-shout.

But the deep hills peal'd with a cry ere long,
When the Christians burst on the Paynim throng!
—With a sudden flash of the lance and spear,
And a charge of the war-steed in full career,
It was Alvar Fañez came![7]

He that was wrapt with no funeral shroud,
Had pass'd before, like a threatening cloud!
And the storm rush'd down on the tented plain,
And the Archer-Queen,[8] with her bands lay slain,
For the Cid upheld his fame.

Then a terror fell on the King Bucar,
And the Lybian kings who had join'd his war;
And their hearts grew heavy, and died away,
And their hands could not wield an assagay,
For the dreadful things they saw!

For it seem'd where Minaya his onset made,
There were seventy thousand knights array'd,
All white as the snow on Nevada's steep,
And they came like the foam of a roaring deep;
—'Twas a sight of fear and awe!

And the crested form of a warrior tall,
With a sword of fire, went before them all;
With a sword of fire, and a banner pale,
And a blood-red cross on his shadowy mail,
He rode in the battle's van!

There was fear in the path of his dim white horse,
There was death in the Giant-warrior's course!
Where his banner stream'd with its ghostly light,
Where his sword blazed out, there was hurrying flight,
For it seem'd not the sword of man!

The field and the river grew darkly red,
As the kings and leaders of Afric fled;
There was work for the men of the Cid that day!
—They were weary at eve, when they ceased to slay,
As reapers whose task is done!

The kings and the leaders of Afric fled!
The sails of their galleys in haste were spread;
But the sea had its share of the Paynim-slain,
And the bow of the desert was broke in Spain;
—So the Cid to his grave pass'd on!

THE CID'S RISING.

'Twas the deep mid-watch of the silent night,
And Leon in slumber lay,
When a sound went forth, in rushing night,
Like an army on its way! [9]
In the stillness of the hour,
When the dreams of sleep have power,
And men forget the day.

Through the dark and lonely streets it went,
Till the slumberers woke in dread;—
The sound of a passing armament,
With the charger's stony tread.
There was heard no trumpet's peal,
But the heavy tramp of steel,
As a host's, to combat led.

Through the dark and lonely streets it pass'd,
And the hollow pavement rang,
And the towers, as with a sweeping blast,
Rock'd to the stormy clang!

But the march of the viewless train
Went on to a royal fane,
Where a priest his night-hymn sang.

There was knocking that shook the marble floor,
And a voice at the gate, which said—
" That the Cid Ruy Diez, the Campeador,
Was there in his arms array'd;
And that with him, from the tomb,
Had the Count Gonzalez come,
With a host, uprisen to aid!

" And they came for the buried king that lay
At rest in that ancient fane;
For he must be arm'd on the battle-day,
With them, to deliver Spain!"
—Then the march went sounding on,
And the Moors, by noontide sun,
Were dust on Tolosa's plain.

NOTES.

Note 1.

Bivar, the supposed birth-place of the Cid, was a castle, about two leagues from Burgos.

Note 2.

Tornaba la cabeza, e estabalos catando:
Vio puertas abiertas, e uzos sin cañados,
Alcandaras vacias, sin pielles e sin mantos:
E sin falcones, e sin adtores mudados.
Sospirò mio Cid. *Poem of the Cid.*

Note 3.

The zambra, a Moorish dance. When Valencia was taken by the Cid, many of the Moorish families chose to remain there, and reside under his government.

Note 4.

The calm fortitude of Ximena is frequently alluded to in the romances.

Note 5.

Banderas antiguas, tristes
De victorias un tiempo amadas,
Tremolando estan al viento
Y lloran aunque no hablan, &c.

Herder's translation of these romances (Der Cid, nach Spanischen Romanzen besungen) are remarkable for their spirit and scrupulous fidelity.

Note 6.

"And while they stood there they saw the Cid Ruy Diez coming up with three hundred knights; for he had not been in the battle, and they knew his *green pennon*."—*Southey's Chronicle of the Cid.*

Note 7.

Alvar Fañez Minaya, one of the Cid's most distinguished warriors.

Note 8.

———*The archer queen*———

A Moorish Amazon, who, with a band of female warriors, accompanied King Bucar from Africa. Her arrows were so unerring, that she obtained the name of the Star of archers.

Una Mora muy gallarda,
Gran maestra en el tirar,
Con Saetas del Aljava,
De los arcos de Turquia
Estrella era nombrada,
Por la destreza que avia
En el herir de la Xára.

Note 9.

See Southey's Chronicle of the Cid, p. 352.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*.

'Twas night in Babylon: yet many a beam
Of lamps, far-glittering from her domes on high,
Shone, brightly mingling in Euphrates' stream,
With the clear stars of that Chaldean sky,
Whose azure knows no cloud:—each whisper'd sigh
Of the soft night-breeze through her terrace-bowers
Bore deepening tones of joy and melody,
O'er an illumin'd wilderness of flowers;
And the glad city's voice went up from all her towers.

But prouder mirth was in the kingly hall,
Where, midst adoring slaves, a gorgeous band!
High at the stately midnight-festival,
Belshazzar sat enthroned.—There Luxury's hand
Had shower'd around all treasures that expand

* Originally published in Mrs. Joanna Baillie's Collection of Poems from living Authors.

Beneath the burning East;—all gems that pour
The sunbeams back;—all sweets of many a land,
Whose gales waft incense from their spicy shore;
—But mortal Pride look'd on, and still demanded more.

With richer zest the banquet may be fraught,
A loftier theme may swell th' exulting strain!
The Lord of nations spoke,—and forth were brought
The spoils of Salem's devastated fane:
Thrice holy vessels!—pure from earthly stain,
And set apart, and sanctified to Him,
Who deign'd within the oracle to reign,
Reveal'd, yet shadow'd; making noon-day dim,
To that most glorious cloud between the Cherubim.

They came, and louder peal'd the voice of song,
And pride flash'd brighter from the kindling eye,
And He who sleeps not heard th' elated throng,
In mirth that plays with thunderbolts, defy
The Rock of Zion!—Fill the nectar high,
High in the cups of consecrated gold!
And crown the bowl with garlands, ere they die,
And bid the censers of the Temple hold
Offerings to Babel's gods, the mighty ones of old!

Peace!—is it but a phantom of the brain,
Thus shadow'd forth the senses to appal,
Yon fearful vision?—Who shall gaze again
To search its cause?—Along the illumin'd wall,
Startling, yet riveting the eyes of all,
Darkly it moves,—a hand, a human hand,
O'er the bright lamps of that resplendent hall
In silence tracing, as a mystic wand,
Words all unknown, the tongue of some far distant land.

There are pale cheeks around the regal board,
And quivering limbs, and whispers deep and low,
And fitful starts!—the wine, in triumph pour'd,
Untasted foams, the song hath ceas'd to flow,
The waving censer drops to earth—and lo!
The King of Men, the Ruler, girt with might,
Trembles before a shadow!—Say not so!
—The child of dust, with guilt's foreboding sight,
Shrinks from the Dread Unknown, th' avenging Infinite!

But haste ye!—bring Chaldea's gifted seers,
The men of prescience!—haply to *their* eyes,
Which track the future through the rolling spheres,
Yon mystic sign may speak in prophecies.
They come—the readers of the midnight skies,

They that give voice to visions—but in vain!
Still wrapt in clouds the awful secret lies,
It hath no language midst the starry train,
Earth has no gifted tongue Heaven's mysteries to explain.

Then stood forth one, a child of other sires,
And other inspiration!—One of those
Who on the willows hung their captive lyres,
And sat, and wept, where Babel's river flows.
His eye was bright, and yet the deep repose
Of his pale features half o'eraw'd the mind,
And imaged forth a soul, whose joys and woes
Were of a loftier stamp than aught assign'd
To Earth; a being seal'd and sever'd from mankind.

Yes!—what was earth to him, whose spirit pass'd
Time's utmost bounds?—on whose unshrinking sight
Ten thousand shapes of burning glory cast
Their full resplendence?—Majesty and might
Were in his dreams;—for him the veil of light
Shrouding heaven's inmost sanctuary and throne,
The curtain of th' unutterably bright
Was rais'd!—to him, in fearful splendour shown,
Ancient of days! e'en thou, mad'st thy dread presence known.

He spoke:—the shadows of the things to come
Pass'd o'er his soul:—"O King, elate in pride!
God hath sent forth the writing of thy doom,
The one, the living God, by thee defied!
He, in whose balance earthly lords are tried,
Hath weigh'd, and found thee wanting. 'Tis decreed
The conqueror's hands thy kingdom shall divide,
The stranger to thy throne of power succeed!
The days are full, they come;—the Persian and the Mede!"

There fell a moment's thrilling silence round,
A breathless pause! the hush of hearts that beat
And limbs that quiver:—is there not a sound,
A gathering cry, a tread of hurrying feet?
—'Twas but some echo, in the crowded street,
Of far-heard revelry; the shout, the song.
The measured dance to music wildly sweet,
That speeds the stars their joyous course along;—
Away! nor let a dream disturb the festal throng!

Peace yet again!—Hark! steps in tumult flying,
Steeds rushing on, as o'er a battle-field!
The shout of hosts exulting or defying,
The press of multitudes that strive or yield!

And the loud startling clash of spear and shield,
Sudden as earthquake's burst!—and, blent with these,
The last wild shriek of those whose doom is seal'd
In their full mirth!—all deepening on the breeze
As the long stormy roar of far-advancing seas!

And nearer yet the trumpet's blast is swelling,
Loud, shrill, and savage, drowning every cry!
And lo! the spoiler in the regal dwelling,
Death bursting on the halls of revelry!
Ere on their brows one fragile rose-leaf die,
The sword hath raged through joy's devoted train,
Ere one bright star be faded from the sky,
Red flames, like banners, wave from dome and fane,
Empire is lost and won, Belshazzar with the slain.

Fall'n is the golden city! in the dust
Spoiled of her crown, dismantled of her state,
She that hath made the Strength of Towers her trust,
Weeps by her dead, supremely desolate!
She that beheld the nations at her gate,
Thronging in homage, shall be call'd no more
Lady of kingdoms!—Who shall mourn her fate?
Her guilt is full, her march of triumph o'er;—
—What widow'd land shall now *her* widowhood deplore?

Sit thou in silence! Thou that wert enthroned
On many waters! thou, whose augurs read
The language of the planets, and disown'd
The mighty name it blazons!—Veil thy head,
Daughter of Babylon! the sword is red
From thy destroyers' harvest, and the yoke
Is on thee, O most proud!—for thou hast said,
"I am, and none beside!"—Th' Eternal spoke,
Thy glory was a spoil, thine idol-gods were broke.

But go thou forth, O Israel! wake! rejoice!
Be clothed with strength, as in thine ancient day!
Renew the sound of harps, th' exulting voice,
The mirth of timbrels!—loose the chain, and say
God hath redeem'd his people!—from decay
The silent and the trampled shall arise;
—Awake; put on thy beautiful array,
Oh long-forsaken Zion!—to the skies
Send up on every wind thy choral melodies!

And lift thy head!—Behold thy sons returning,
Redeem'd from exile, ransom'd from the chain!
Light hath revisited the house of mourning;
She that on Judah's mountains wept in vain

Because her children were not—dwells again
Girt with the lovely!—through thy streets once more,
City of God! shall pass the bridal train,
And the bright lamps their festive radiance pour,
And the triumphal hymns thy joy of youth restore!

THE CHIEFTAIN'S SON.

Yes, it is ours!—the field is won,
A dark and evil field!
Lift from the ground my noble son,
And bear him homewards on his bloody shield!

Let me not hear your trumpets ring,
Swell not the battle-horn!
Thoughts far too sad those notes will bring,
When to the grave my glorious flower is borne!

Speak not of victory!—in the name
There is too much of woe!
Hush'd be the empty voice of Fame—
Call me back *his* whose graceful head is low.

Speak not of victory!—from my halls
The sunny hour is gone!
The ancient banner on my walls
Must sink ere long—I had but him—but one!

Within the dwelling of my sires
The hearths will soon be cold,
With me must die the beacon-fires
That stream'd at midnight from the mountain-hold.

And let them fade, since *this* must be,
My lovely and my brave!
Was thy bright blood pour'd forth for me,
And is there but for stately youth a grave?

Speak to me once again, my boy!
Wilt thou not hear my call?
Thou wert so full of life and joy,
I had not dreamt of *this*—that thou couldst fall!

Thy mother watches from the steep
For thy returning plume;
How shall I tell her that thy sleep
Is of the silent house, th' untimely tomb?

Thou didst not seem as one to die,
With all thy young renown!
—Ye saw his falchion's flash on high,
In the mid-fight, when spears and crests went down!

Slow be your march!—the field is won!
A dark and evil field!
Lift from the ground my noble son,
And bear him homewards on his bloody shield.

THE FUNERAL GENIUS;

AN ANCIENT STATUE.

"Debout, couronné de fleurs, les bras élevés et posés sur sa tête, et le dos appuyé contre un pin, ce génie semble exprimer par son attitude le répos des morts. Les bas-reliefs des tombeaux offrent souvent des figures semblables."
—VISCONTI, *Description des Antiques du Musée Royal.*

THOU shouldst be look'd on when the starlight falls
Through the blue stillness of the summer-air,
Not by the torch-fire wavering on the walls;
It hath too fitful and too wild a glare!
And thou!—thy rest, the soft, the lovely, seems
To ask light steps, that will not break its dreams.

Flowers are upon thy brow; for so the dead
Were crown'd of old, with pale spring-flowers like these:
Sleep on thine eye hath sunk; yet softly shed,
As from the wing of some faint southern breeze:
And the pine-boughs o'ershadow thee with gloom
Which of the grove seems breathing—not the tomb.

They fear'd not death, whose calm and gracious thought
Of the last hour, hath settled thus in thee!
They who thy wreath of pallid roses wrought,
And laid thy head against the forest-tree,
As that of one, by music's dreamy close,
On the wood-violets lull'd to deep repose.

They fear'd not death!—yet who shall say his touch
Thus lightly falls on gentle things and fair?
Doth he bestow, or will he leave so much
Of tender beauty as thy features wear?
Thou sleeper of the bower! on whose young eyes
So still a night, a night of summer, lies!

Had they seen aught like thee?—Did some fair boy
Thus, with his graceful hair, before them rest?
—His graceful hair, no more to wave in joy,
But drooping, as with heavy dews oppress'd!
And his eye veil'd so softly by its fringe,
And his lip faded to the white-rose tinge?

Oh! happy, if to them the one dread hour
Made known its lessons from a brow like thine!
If all their knowledge of the spoiler's power

Came by a look, so tranquilly divine!
—Let him, who *thus* hath seen the lovely part,
Hold well that image to his thoughtful heart!

But thou, fair slumberer! was there less of woe,
Or love, or terror, in the days of old,
That men pour'd out their gladdening spirit's flow,
Like sunshine, on the desolate and cold,
And gave thy semblance to the shadowy king
Who for deep souls had then a deeper sting?

In the dark bosom of the earth they laid
Far more than we—for loftier faith is ours!
Their gems were lost in ashes—yet they made
The grave a place of beauty and of flowers,
With fragrant wreaths, and summer-boughs array'd,
And lovely sculpture gleaming through the shade.

Is it for *us* a darker gloom to shed
O'er its dim precincts?—do we not entrust
But for a time, its chambers with our dead,
And strew immortal seed upon the dust?
—Why should *we* dwell on that which lies beneath,
When living light hath touch'd the brow of death?

THE TOMBS OF PLATÆA.

FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAMS.

And there they sleep!—the men who stood
In arms before th' exulting sun,
And bathed their spears in Persian blood,
And taught the earth how freedom might be won.

They sleep!—th' Olympic wreaths are dead,
Th' Athenian lyres are hush'd and gone;
The Dorian voice of song is fled—
—Slumber, ye mighty! slumber deeply on!

They sleep, and seems not all around
As hallow'd unto glory's tomb?
Silence is on the battle ground,
The heavens are loaded with a breathless gloom.

And stars are watching on their height,
But dimly seen through mist and cloud,
And still and solemn is the light
Which folds the plain, as with a glimmering shroud.

And thou, pale night-queen! here thy beams
Are not as those the shepherd loves,
Nor look they down on shining streams,
By Naiads haunted, in their laurel groves:

Thou seest no pastoral hamlet sleep,
In shadowy quiet, midst its vines;
No temple gleaming from the steep,
Midst the grey olives, or the mountain pines:

But o'er a dim and boundless waste,
Thy rays, e'en like a tomb-lamp's, brood,
Where man's departed steps are traced
But by his dust, amidst the solitude.

And be it thus!—What slave shall tread
O'er freedom's ancient battle-plains?
Let deserts wrap the glorious dead,
When their bright land sits weeping o'er her chains:

Here, where the Persian clarion rung,
And where the Spartan sword flash'd high,
And where the Pæan strains were sung,
From year to year swell'd on by liberty!

Here should no voice, no sound, be heard,
Until the bonds of Greece be riven,
Save of the leader's charging word,
Or the shrill trumpet, pealing up through heaven!

Rest in your silent homes, ye brave!
No vines festoon your lonely tree*!
No harvest o'er your war-field wave,
Till rushing winds proclaim—the land is free!

* A single tree appears in Mr. Williams's impressive picture.

THE VIEW FROM CASTRI.

FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAMS.

THERE have been bright and glorious pageants here,
Where now grey stones and moss-grown columns lie;
There have been words, which earth grew pale to hear,
Breath'd from the cavern's misty chambers nigh:
There have been voices, through the sunny sky,
And the pine-woods, their choral hymn-notes sending,
And reeds and lyres, their Dorian melody,
With incense-clouds around the temple blending,
And throngs, with laurel-boughs, before the altar bending.

There have been treasures of the seas and isles
Brought to the day-god's now forsaken throne;
Thunders have peal'd along the rock-defiles,
When the far-echoing battle-horn made known
That foes were on their way!—the deep-wind's moan
Hath chill'd th' invader's heart with secret fear,
And from the Sybil-grottoes, wild and lone,

Storms have gone forth, which, in their fierce career,
From his bold hand have struck the banner and the spear.

The shrine hath sunk!—but thou unchanged art there!
Mount of the voice and vision, robed with dreams!
Unchanged, and rushing through the radiant air,
With thy dark-waving pines, and flashing streams,
And all thy founts of song! their bright course teems
With inspiration yet; and each dim haze,
Or golden cloud which floats around thee, seems
As with its mantle, veiling from our gaze
The mysteries of the past, the gods of elder days!

Away, vain phantasies!—doth less of power
Dwell round thy summit, or thy cliffs invest,
Though in deep stillness now, the ruin's flower
Wave o'er the pillars mouldering on thy breast?
—Lift through the free blue heavens thine arrowy crest!
Let the great rocks their solitude regain!
No Delphian lyres now break thy noontide rest
With their full chords:—but silent be the strain!
Thou hast a mightier voice to speak th' Eternal's reign*!

* This, with the preceding, and several of the following pieces, have appeared in the Edinburgh Magazine.

THE FESTAL HOUR.

When are the lessons given
That shake the startled earth?—When wakes the foe,
While the friend sleeps!—When falls the traitor's blow?
When are proud sceptres riven,
High hopes o'erthrown?—It is, when lands rejoice,
When cities blaze, and lift th' exulting voice,
And wave their banners to the kindling heaven!

Fear ye the festal hour!
When mirth o'erflows, then tremble!—'Twas a night
Of gorgeous revel, wreaths, and dance, and light,
When through the regal bower
The trumpet peal'd, ere yet the song was done,
And there were shrieks in golden Babylon,
And trampling armies, ruthless in their power.

The marble shrines were crown'd:
Young voices, through the blue Athenian sky,
And Dorian reeds, made summer-melody,
And censers waved around;

And lyres were strung, and bright libations pour'd,
When, through the streets, flash'd out th' avenging sword,
Fearless and free, the sword with myrtles bound*!

Through Rome a triumph pass'd.
Rich in her sun-god's mantling beams went by
That long array of glorious pageantry,
With shout and trumpet-blast.
An empire's gems their starry splendour shed
O'er the proud march; a king in chains was led;
A stately victor, crown'd and robed, came last†.

And many a Dryad's bower
Had lent the laurels, which, in waving play,
Stirr'd the warm air, and glisten'd round his way,
As a quick-flashing shower.
—O'er his own porch, meantime, the cypress hung,
Through his fair halls a cry of anguish rung—
Woe for the dead!—the father's broken flower!

* The sword of Harmodius.

† Paulus Æmilius, one of whose sons died a few days before, and another shortly after, his triumph on the conquest of Macedon, when Perseus, king of that country, was led in chains.

A sound of lyre and song,
In the still night, went floating o'er the Nile,
Whose waves, by many an old mysterious pile,
Swept with that voice along;
And lamps were shining o'er the red wine's foam,
Where a chief revell'd in a monarch's dome,
And fresh rose-garlands deck'd a glittering throng.

'Twas Antony that bade
The joyous chords ring out!—but strains arose
Of wilder omen at the banquet's close!
Sounds, by no mortal made*,
Shook Alexandria through her streets that night,
And pass'd—and with another sunset's light,
The kingly Roman on his bier was laid.

Bright midst its vineyards lay
The fair Campanian city†, with its towers

* See the description given by Plutarch, in his life of Antony, of the supernatural sounds heard in the streets of Alexandria, the night before Antony's death.

† Herculaneum, of which it is related, that all the inhabitants were assembled in the theatres, when the shower of ashes, which covered the city, descended.

And temples gleaming through dark olive-bowers,
Clear in the golden day;
Joy was around it as the glowing sky,
And crowds had fill'd its halls of revelry,
And all the sunny air was music's way.

A cloud came o'er the face
Of Italy's rich heaven!—its crystal blue
Was changed, and deepen'd to a wrathful hue
Of night, o'ershadowing space,
As with the wings of death!—in all his power
Vesuvius woke, and hurl'd the burning shower,
And who could tell the buried city's place?

Such things have been of yore,
In the gay regions where the citrons blow,
And purple summers all their sleepy glow
On the grape-clusters pour;
And where the palms to spicy winds are waving,
Along clear seas of melted sapphire, laving,
As with a flow of light, their southern shore.

Turn we to other climes!
Far in the Druid-Isle a feast was spread,

Midst the rock-altars of the warrior-dead*,
And ancient battle-rhymes
Were chanted to the harp; and yellow mead
Went flowing round, and tales of martial deed,
And lofty songs of Britain's elder time.

But ere the giant-fane
Cast its broad shadows on the robe of even,
Hush'd were the bards, and, in the face of Heaven,
O'er that old burial-plain
Flash'd the keen Saxon dagger!—Blood was streaming,
Where late the mead-cup to the sun was gleaming,
And Britain's hearths were heap'd that night in vain.

For they return'd no more!
They that went forth at morn, with reckless heart,
In that fierce banquet's mirth to bear their part;
And, on the rushy floor,
And the bright spears and bucklers of the walls,
The high wood-fires were blazing in their halls;
But not for them—they slept—their feast was o'er!

* Stonehenge, said by some traditions to have been erected to the memory of Ambrosius, an early British king; and by others mentioned as a monumental record of the massacre of British chiefs here alluded to.

Fear ye the festal hour!
Aye, tremble when the cup of joy o'erflows!
Tame down the swelling heart!—the bridal rose,
And the rich myrtle's flower
Have veil'd the sword!—Red wines have sparkled fast
From venom'd goblets, and soft breezes pass'd,
With fatal perfume, through the revel's bower.

Twine the young glowing wreath!
But pour not all your spirit in the song,
Which through the sky's deep azure floats along,
Like summer's quickening breath!
The ground is hollow in the path of mirth,
Oh! far too daring seems the joy of earth,
So darkly press'd and girdled in by death!

SONG

OF

THE BATTLE OF MORGARTEN.

"In the year 1315, Switzerland was invaded by Duke Leopold of Austria, with a formidable army. It is well attested, that this prince repeatedly declared he 'would trample the audacious rustics under his feet;' and that he had procured a large stock of cordage, for the purpose of binding their chiefs, and putting them to death.

"The 15th October, 1315, dawned. The sun darted its first rays on the shields and armour of the advancing host; and this being the first army ever known to have attempted the frontiers of the cantons, the Swiss viewed its long line with various emotions. Montfort de Tettnang led the cavalry into the narrow pass, and soon filled the whole space between the mountain (Mount Sattel) and the lake. The fifty men on the eminence (above Morgarten) raised a sudden shout, and rolled down heaps of rocks and stones among the crowded ranks. The confederates on the mountain, perceiving the impression made by this attack, rushed down in close array, and fell upon the flank of the disordered column. With massy clubs they dashed in pieces the armour of the enemy, and dealt their blows and thrusts with long pikes. The narrowness of the defile admitted of no evolutions, and a slight frost having injured the road, the horses were impeded in all their motions; many leaped into the lake; all were startled; and at last the whole column gave way, and fell suddenly back on the infantry; and these last, as the nature of the country did not allow them to open their files, were run over by the

fugitives, and many of them trampled to death. A general rout ensued, and Duke Leopold was, with much difficulty, rescued by a peasant, who led him to Winterthur, where the historian of the times saw him arrive in the evening, pale, sullen, and dismayed."—PLANTA's *History of the Helvetic Confederacy.*

THE wine-month * shone in its golden prime,
And the red grapes clustering hung,
But a deeper sound, through the Switzer's clime,
Than the vintage-music, rung.
A sound, through vaulted cave,
A sound, through echoing glen,
Like the hollow swell of a rushing wave;
—'Twas the tread of steel-girt men.

And a trumpet, pealing wild and far,
Midst the ancient rocks was blown,
Till the Alps replied to that voice of war,
With a thousand of their own.
And through the forest glooms
Flash'd helmets to the day,
And the winds were tossing knightly plumes,
Like the larch-boughs in their play.

* *Wine-month*—the German name for October.

In Hasli's* wilds there was gleaming steel,
As the host of the Austrian pass'd;
And the Schreckhorn's† rocks, with a savage peal,
Made mirth of his clarion's blast.
Up midst the Righi‡ snows
The stormy march was heard,
With the charger's tramp, whence fire-sparks rose,
And the leader's gathering word.

But a band, the noblest band of all,
Through the rude Morgarten strait,
With blazon'd streamers, and lances tall,
Moved onwards, in princely state.
They came, with heavy chains,
For the race despis'd so long—
—But amidst his Alp-domains,
The herdsman's arm is strong!

The sun was reddening the clouds of morn
When they enter'd the rock-defile,
And shrill as a joyous hunter's horn
Their bugles rung the while.

* Hasli, a wild district in the canton of Berne.
† Schreckhorn, *the peak of terror*, a mountain in the canton of Berne.
‡ Righi, a mountain in the canton of Schwytz.

But on the misty height,
Where the mountain-people stood,
There was stillness, as of night,
When storms at distance brood.

There was stillness, as of deep dead night,
And a pause—but not of fear,
While the Switzers gaz'd on the gathering might
Of the hostile shield and spear.
On wound those columns bright
Between the lake and wood,
But they look'd not to the misty height
Where the mountain-people stood.

The pass was fill'd with their serried power,
All helm'd and mail-array'd,
And their steps had sounds like a thunder-shower
In the rustling forest-shade.
There were prince and crested knight,
Hemm'd in by cliff and flood,
When a shout arose from the misty height
Where the mountain-people stood.

And the mighty rocks came bounding down,
Their startled foes among,

With a joyous whirl from the summit thrown—
—Oh! the herdsman's arm is strong!
They came, like lauwine* hurl'd
From Alp to Alp in play,
When the echoes shout through the snowy world,
And the pines are borne away.

The fir-woods crash'd on the mountain-side,
And the Switzers rush'd from high,
With a sudden charge, on the flower and pride
Of the Austrian chivalry:
Like hunters of the deer,
They storm'd the narrow dell,
And first in the shock, with Uri's spear,
Was the arm of William Tell†.

There was tumult in the crowded strait,
And a cry of wild dismay,
And many a warrior met his fate
From a peasant's hand that day!

* *Lauwine*, the Swiss name for the avalanche.

† William Tell's name is particularly mentioned amongst the confederates at Morgarten.

And the empire's banner then,
From its place of waving free,
Went down before the shepherd-men,
The men of the Forest-sea*.

With their pikes and massy clubs they brake
The cuirass and the shield,
And the war-horse dash'd to the reddening lake,
From the reapers of the field!
The field—but not of sheaves—
Proud crests and pennons lay,
Strewn o'er it thick as the birch-wood leaves,
In the autumn-tempest's way.

Oh! the sun in heaven fierce havoc view'd,
When the Austrian turn'd to fly,
And the brave, in the trampling multitude,
Had a fearful death to die!
And the leader of the war
At eve unhelm'd was seen,
With a hurrying step on the wilds afar,
And a pale and troubled mien.

* *Forest-sea*, the lake of the four cantons is also so called.

But the sons of the land which the freeman tills,
Went back from the battle-toil,
To their cabin homes midst the deep green hills,
All burden'd with royal spoil.
There were songs and festal fires
On the soaring Alps that night,
When children sprung to greet their sires,
From the wild Morgarten fight.

CHORUS.

TRANSLATED FROM MANZONI'S 'CONTE DI CARMOGNOLA.'

HARK! from the right bursts forth a trumpet's sound!
A loud shrill trumpet from the left replies!
On every side, hoarse echoes from the ground,
To the quick tramp of steeds and warriors rise,
Hollow and deep:—and banners all around,
Meet hostile banners waving through the skies.
Here steel-clad bands in marshall'd order shine,
And there a host confronts their glittering line.

Lo! half the field, already from the sight
Hath vanish'd, hid by closing groups of foes!
Swords crossing swords, flash lightning o'er the fight,
And the strife deepens, and the life-blood flows!
—Oh! who are these?—What stranger in his might
Comes bursting on the lovely land's repose?
What patriot hearts have nobly vow'd to save
Their native soil, and make its dust their grave?

One race, alas! these foes, one kindred race,
Were born and rear'd the same bright scenes among!
The stranger calls them brothers—and each face
That brotherhood reveals;—one common tongue
Dwells on their lips;—the earth on which ye trace
Their heart's blood, is the soil from whence they sprung.
One mother gave them birth—this chosen land,
Girdled with Alps and seas, by Nature's guardian hand.

Oh, grief and horror!—Who the first could dare
Against a brother's breast the sword to wield?
What cause unhallow'd and accursed, declare!
Hath bathed with carnage this ignoble field?
—Think'st thou they know?—they but inflict and share
Misery and death, the motive unreveal'd!
Sold to a leader, sold *himself* to die,
With him they strive, they fall—and ask not why.

But are there none who love them?—Have they none,
No wives, no mothers, who might rush between,
And win with tears the husband and the son,
Back to their homes from this polluted scene?

And they, whose hearts, when life's bright day is done,
Unfold to thoughts more solemn and serene,
Thoughts of the tomb; why cannot *they* assuage
The storms of passion with the voice of age?

Ask not!—the peasant at his cabin-door
Sits, calmly pointing to the distant cloud
Which skirts th' horizon, menacing to pour
Destruction down, o'er fields he hath not plough'd.
Thus, where no echo of the battle's roar
Is heard afar, e'en thus the reckless crowd,
In tranquil safety number o'er the slain,
Or tell of cities burning on the plain.

There mayst thou mark the boy, with earnest gaze,
Fix'd on his mother's lips, intent to know,
By names of insult, those, whom future days
Shall see him meet in arms, their deadliest foe!
There proudly many a glittering dame displays
Bracelet and zone, with radiant gems that glow,
By husbands, lovers, home in triumph borne,
From the sad brides of fallen warriors torn.

Woe to the victors and the vanquish'd! Woe!
The earth is heap'd, is loaded with the slain,
Loud and more loud the cries of fury grow,
A sea of blood is swelling o'er the plain!
But from th' embattled front already, lo!
A band recedes—it flies—all hope is vain,
And venal hearts, despairing of the strife,
Wake to the love, the clinging love of life.

As the light grain disperses in the air,
Borne from the winnowing by the gales around,
Thus fly the vanquish'd, in their wild despair,
Chas'd—sever'd—scatter'd—o'er the ample ground.
But mightier bands, that lay in ambush there,
Burst on their flight—and hark! the deepening sound
Of fierce pursuit!—still nearer and more near,
The rush of war-steeds trampling in the rear!

The day is won!—they fall—disarm'd they yield,
Low at the conqueror's feet all suppliant lying!
Midst shouts of victory pealing o'er the field,
Oh! who may hear the murmurs of the dying?

—Haste! let the tale of triumph be reveal'd!
E'en now the courier to his steed is flying,
He spurs—he speeds—with tidings of the day,
To rouse up cities in his lightning way.

Why pour ye thus from your deserted homes,
Oh, eager multitudes! around him pressing?
Each hurrying where his breathless courser foams,
Each tongue, each eye, infatuate hope confessing!
Know ye not *whence* th' ill omen'd herald comes,
And dare ye dream he comes with words of blessing?
—Brothers, by brothers slain, lie low and cold—
Be ye content!—the glorious tale is told.

I hear the voice of joy, th' exulting cry!
They deck the shrine, they swell the choral strains;
E'en now the homicides assail the sky
With pæans, which indignant Heaven disdains!
But, from the soaring Alps, the stranger's eye
Looks watchful down on our ensanguin'd plains,
And with the cruel rapture of a foe,
Numbers the mighty, stretch'd in death below.

Haste! form your lines again, ye brave and true!
Haste, haste! your triumphs and your joys suspending!
Th' invader comes; your banners raise anew,
Rush to the strife, your country's cause defending!
Victors! why pause ye?—Are ye weak and few?
Aye, such he deem'd you! and for *this* descending,
He waits you on the field ye know too well,
The same red war-field where your brethren fell.

Oh! thou devoted land! that canst not rear
In peace thine offspring; thou, the lost and won,
The fair and fatal soil, that dost appear
Too narrow still for each contending son;
Receive the stranger, in his fierce career,
Parting thy spoils!—thy chastening is begun!
And, wresting from thy chiefs the guardian sword,
Foes, whom thou ne'er hadst wrong'd, sit proudly at thy board.

Are these infatuate too? Oh! who hath known
A people e'er by guilt's vain triumph blest?
The wrong'd, the vanquish'd, suffer not alone,
Brief is the joy that swells th' oppressor's breast.

What though not yet his day of pride be flown,
Though yet Heaven's vengeance spare his towering crest,
Well hath it mark'd him—and ordain'd the hour
When his last sigh shall own its mightier power.

Are we not creatures of one hand divine?
Form'd in one mould, to one redemption born?
Kindred alike, where'er our skies may shine,
Where'er our sight first drank the vital morn?
Brothers! one bond around our souls should twine,
And woe to him by whom that bond is torn!
Who mounts by trampling broken hearts to earth,
Who bears down spirits of immortal birth!

ENGLAND'S DEAD.

Son of the ocean isle!
Where sleep your mighty dead?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is rear'd o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger! track the deep,
Free, free, the white sail spread!
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'ersway'd,
With fearful power the noon-day reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade.

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done!
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far, by Ganges' banks at night,
Is heard the tiger's roar.

But let the sound roll on!
It hath no tone of dread,
For those that from their toils are gone;
—*There* slumber England's dead

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung.

But let the floods rush on!
Let the arrow's flight be sped!
Why should *they* reck whose task is done?
There slumber England's dead!

The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine-boughs through the sky,
Like rose-leaves on the breeze.

But let the storm rage on!
Let the forest-wreaths be shed!
For the Roncesvalles' field is won,
There slumber England's dead.

On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
To chain her with their power.

But let the ice drift on!
Let the cold-blue desert spread!
Their course with mast and flag is done,
There slumber England's dead.

The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave!
Are not the rocks their funeral piles,
The seas and shores their grave?

Go, stranger! track the deep,
Free, free the white sail spread!
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

THE MEETING OF THE BARDS.

WRITTEN FOR AN EISTEDDVOD, OR MEETING OF WELSH BARDS.

Held in London, May 22d, 1822.

The *Gorseddau*, or meetings of the British bards, were anciently ordained to be held in the open air, on some conspicuous situation, whilst the sun was above the horizon; or, according to the expression employed on these occasions, "in the face of the sun, and in the eye of light." The places set apart for this purpose were marked out by a circle of stones, called the circle of federation. The presiding bard stood on a large stone, (Maen Gorsedd, or the stone of assembly), in the centre. The sheathing of a sword upon this stone was the ceremony which announced the opening of a *Gorsedd*, or meeting. The bards always stood in their uni-coloured robes, with their heads and feet uncovered, within the circle of federation.—See OWEN's *Translation of the Heroic Elegies of Llywarc Hen.*

WHERE met our bards of old?—the glorious throng,
They of the mountain and the battle-song?
They met—oh! not in kingly hall or bower,
But where wild Nature girt herself with power:
They met—where streams flash'd bright from rocky caves,
They met—where woods made moan o'er warriors' graves,

And where the torrent's rainbow spray was cast
And where dark lakes were heaving to the blast,
And midst th' eternal cliffs, whose strength defied
The crested Roman, in his hour of pride;
And where the Carnedd*, on its lonely hill,
Bore silent record of the mighty still;
And where the Druid's ancient Cromlech† frown'd,
And the oaks breathed mysterious murmurs round.
There throng'd th' inspired of yore!—on plain or height,
In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light,
And, baring unto heaven each noble head,
Stood in the circle, where none else might tread.

Well might their lays be lofty!—soaring thought
From Nature's presence tenfold grandeur caught:
Well might bold Freedom's soul pervade the strains,
Which startled eagles from their lone domains,
And, like a breeze, in chainless triumph, went
Up through the blue resounding firmament!

Whence came the echoes to those numbers high?
—'Twas from the battle fields of days gone by!

* *Carnedd*, a stone-barrow, or cairn.

† *Cromlech*, a Druidical monument, or altar. The word means a stone of covenant.

And from the tombs of heroes, laid to rest
With their good swords, upon the mountain's breast;
And from the watch-towers on the heights of snow,
Sever'd, by cloud and storm, from all below;
And the turf-mounds*, once girt by ruddy spears,
And the rock-altars of departed years.

Thence, deeply mingling with the torrent's roar,
The winds a thousand wild responses bore;
And the green land, whose every vale and glen
Doth shrine the memory of heroic men,
On all her hills awakening to rejoice,
Sent forth proud answers to her children's voice.
For us, not ours the festival to hold,
Midst the stone-circles, hallow'd thus of old;
Not where great Nature's majesty and might
First broke, all-glorious, on our infant sight;
Not near the tombs, where sleep our free and brave,
Not by the mountain-llyn†, the ocean wave,
In these late days we meet!—dark Mona's shore,
Eryri's‡ cliffs resound with harps no more!

* The ancient British chiefs frequently harangued their followers from small artificial mounts of turf.—See *Pennant.*

† *Llyn*, a lake or pool. ‡ *Eryri*, Snowdon.

But, as the stream (though time or art may turn
The current, bursting from its cavern'd urn,
To bathe soft vales of pasture and of flowers,
From Alpine glens, or ancient forest-bowers,)
Alike, in rushing strength or sunny sleep,
Holds on its course, to mingle with the deep;
Thus, though our paths be changed, still warm and free,
Land of the bard! our spirit flies to thee!
To thee our thoughts, our hopes, our hearts belong,
Our dreams are haunted by thy voice of song!
Nor yield our souls one patriot-feeling less,
To the green memory of thy loveliness,
Than theirs, whose harp-notes peal'd from every height,
In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light!

THE VOICE OF SPRING*.

I COME, I come! ye have call'd me long,
I come o'er the mountains with light and song!
Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose-stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves, opening as I pass.

I have breathed on the south, and the chesnut flowers
By thousands have burst from the forest-bowers,
And the ancient graves, and the fallen fanes,
Are veil'd with wreaths on Italian plains;
—But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb!

I have look'd o'er the hills of the stormy north,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth,

* Originally published in the New Monthly Magazine.

The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the rein-deer bounds o'er the pastures free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright, where my foot hath been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a glowing sigh,
And call'd out each voice of the deep blue sky;
From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian clime,
To the swan's wild note, by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir-branch into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain,
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain brows,
They are flinging spray o'er the forest-boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves!

Come forth, O ye children of gladness, come!
Where the violets lie may be now your home.
Ye of the rose lip and dew-bright eye,
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly!

With the lyre, and the wreath, and the joyous lay,
Come forth to the sunshine, I may not stay.

Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,
The waters are sparkling in grove and glen!
Away from the chamber and sullen hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth!
Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
And youth is abroad in my green domains.

But ye!—ye are changed since ye met me last!
There is something bright from your features pass'd!
There is that come over your brow and eye,
Which speaks of a world where the flowers must die!
—Ye smile! but your smile hath a dimness yet—
Oh! what have ye look'd on since last we met?

Ye are changed, ye are changed!—and I see not here
All whom I saw in the vanish'd year!
There were graceful heads, with their ringlets bright,
Which toss'd in the breeze with a play of light,
There were eyes, in whose glistening laughter lay
No faint remembrance of dull decay!

There were steps that flew o'er the cowslip's head,
As if for a banquet all earth were spread;
There were voices that rung through the sapphire sky,
And had not a sound of mortality!
Are they gone? is their mirth from the mountains pass'd?
—Ye have look'd on death since ye met me last!

I know whence the shadow comes o'er you now,
Ye have strewn the dust on the sunny brow!
Ye have given the lovely to earth's embrace,
She hath taken the fairest of beauty's race,
With their laughing eyes and their festal crown,
They are gone from amongst you in silence down!

They are gone from amongst you, the young and fair,
Ye have lost the gleam of their shining hair!
—But I know of a land where there falls no blight,
I shall find them there, with their eyes of light!
Where Death midst the blooms of the morn may dwell,
I tarry no longer—farewell, farewell!

The summer is coming, on soft winds borne,
Ye may press the grape, ye may bind the corn!

For me, I depart to a brighter shore,
Ye are mark'd by care, ye are mine no more.
I go where the loved who have left you dwell,
And the flowers are not death's—fare ye well, farewell!

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

By the same Author.

TALES AND HISTORIC SCENES, *Second Edition,* 8vo.

RESTORATION OF WORKS OF ART TO ITALY, *Second Edition,* 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

MODERN GREECE, *Second Edition,* 8vo. 5*s.* 6*d.*

SCEPTIC, AND STANZAS TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE KING, *Second Edition,* 8vo. 4*s.*

TRANSLATIONS FROM CAMOENS, 8vo. 4*s.*