

Edgar Allan Poe



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Rebekah Carver.



POEMS

BY

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Complete

WITH AN ORIGINAL MEMOIR



NEW YORK

W. J. WIDDLETON, PUBLISHER

M.DCCCLXIX.

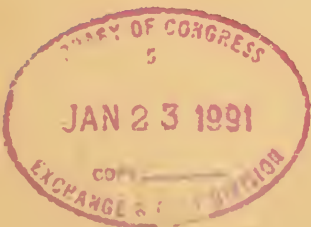
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In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District
of New York.

ALVORD, PRINTER.



PREFACE TO THE POEMS.

THESE trifles are collected and republished chiefly with a view to their redemption from the many improvements to which they have been subjected while going at random "the rounds of the press." I am naturally anxious that what I have written should circulate as I wrote it, if it circulate at all. In defence of my own taste, nevertheless, it is incumbent upon me to say that I think nothing in this volume of much value to the public, or very creditable to myself. Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making at any time any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence; they must not—they cannot at will be excited, with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations of mankind.

E. A. P.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
PREFACE TO THE POEMS,	5
CONTENTS,	7
MEMOIR OF EDGAR ALLAN POE,	11
THE RAVEN,	43
LENORE,	53
HYMN,	56
A VALENTINE,	57
THE COLISEUM,	59
TO HELEN,	62
TO — — —,	66
ULALUME,	68
THE BELLS,	73
AN ENIGMA,	79
ANNABEL LEE,	80

TO MY MOTHER,	83
THE HAUNTED PALACE,	84
THE CONQUEROR WORM,	87
TO F——S S. O——D.,	89
TO ONE IN PARADISE,	90
THE VALLEY OF UNREST.	92
THE CITY IN THE SEA,	94
THE SLEEPER,	97
SILENCE,	101
A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM,	102
DREAMLAND,	104
TO ZANTE,	107
EULALIE,	108
ELDORADO,	110
ISRAFEL,	112
FOR ANNIE,	116
TO ———,	122
BRIDAL BALLAD,	123
TO F——,	125
SCENES FROM "POLITIAN,"	127
SONNET—TO SCIENCE,	183
AL AARAAF,	184
TO THE RIVER ———,	205
TAMERLANE,	206

CONTENTS.

7

TO ———,	219
A DREAM,	220
ROMANCE,	222
FAIRY-LAND,	224
THE LAKE—TO ———,	227
SONG,	229
TO M. L. S——,	231
NOTES TO AL AARAAF,	232
THE POETIC PRINCIPLE,	245

MEMOIR
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE.

MEMOIR
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EDGAR ALLAN POE.

It would be well for all poets, perhaps, if nothing more were known of their lives than what they infuse into their poetry. Too close a knowledge of the weaknesses and errors of the inspired children of Parnassus cannot but impair, in some degree, the delicate aroma of their songs. The inner life of the poet—the secrets of his inspiration, the mysterious processes by which his pearls of thought are pro-

duced—can never be made known; and the accidents of his daily life have but little more interest than those which fall to common men. Under all circumstances the poet is a mystery, and the utterances of his fancy are but the drapery of the veiled statue, which still leaves the figure itself unknown. A dissection of the song-bird gives us no insight into the secret of his melodious notes. Some of the great modern poets have had their whole lives exposed with minute accuracy; but in what are we the wiser for the knowledge we have obtained of them? We only know they lived and suffered like other men; and their inspirations are still a cause of wonder and delight. The subtle secret of their power is still hidden from our search; and though we know more

of the daily habits of the men, we know no more of the hidden power of the poet. But there is still a yearning to know how the men lived, whose genius has charmed and instructed us; and a vague feeling exists that, in probing the lives of poets, we may learn something of the art by which they produced their works. But it is like the useless labor of Reynolds, who scraped a painting by Titian, to learn the secret of his coloring.

Of all the poets whose lives have been a puzzle and a mystery to the world, there is no one more difficult to be understood than EDGAR ALLAN POE. It is impossible to carry in the mind a double idea of a man, and to believe him to be both a saint and a fiend; yet such is the embarrassment felt by those

who have first read the poems of this strange being, and then read any of the biographies of him which pretend to anything like an accurate account of his life. Like his own Raven, he is to his readers, "bird or fiend"—they know not which. But a close study of his works will reveal the fact, which may serve in some degree to remove this embarrassment, that there is nowhere discoverable in them a consciousness of moral responsibility. They are full of the subtleties of passion, of grief, despair and longing, but they contain nothing that indicates a sense of moral rectitude. They are the productions of one whose religion was a worship of the Beautiful, and who knew no beauty but that which was purely sensuous. There were but two kinds of beauty

for him, and they were Form and Color. He revelled in an ideal world of perfect shows, and was made wretched by any imperfections of art. The Lenore whose loss he deplores was a being fair to the eye—a beautiful creature, like Undine, without a soul. With this key to the character of the poet, there is no difficulty in fully comprehending the strange inconsistencies, the basenesses and nobleness which his wayward life exhibited.

Some of the biographers of Poe have been harshly judged for the view given of his character; and it has naturally been supposed that private pique has led to the exaggeration of his personal defects. But such imputations are unjust. A truthful delineation of his career would give a darker hue to his charac-

ter than it has received from any of his biographers. In fact, he has been more fortunate than most poets in his historians. Lowell and Willis have sketched him with gentleness, and a reverent feeling for his genius; and Griswold, his literary executor, in his fuller biography, has generously suppressed much that he might have given. This is neither the proper time nor place to write a full history of this unhappy genius. Those who scan his marvellous poems closely may find therein the man, for it is impossible for the true poet to veil himself from his readers. What he writes he is.

The waywardness of Poe was an inheritance. Though descended from a family of great respectability, his immediate parents were dis-

solute in their morals, and members of a profession which always begets irregularity of habits. The paternal grandfather of the poet was a distinguished officer in the Maryland line during the war of the Revolution; and his great-grandfather, John Poe, married a daughter of Admiral McBride, of the British Navy. His father, the fourth son of the Revolutionary officer, was a native of Maryland, and studied for the bar, but becoming enamored of a beautiful actress, named Elizabeth Arnold, he abandoned the law, and adopted the stage as a profession. They lived together six or seven years, wandering from theatre to theatre, when they both died within a very short time of each other, in Richmond, Virginia, leaving three children in utter destitution.

Edgar, the second child, who was born in Baltimore, in January, 1811, was a remarkably bright and beautiful boy; and he attracted the attention of a wealthy merchant in Richmond who had known his parents, and who had no children of his own. Mr. Allan adopted the little orphan, and he was afterwards called Edgar Allan. The precocious child was petted by his adopted parents, who took pride in his forwardness and beauty; he was sent to the best schools, and was regarded as the heir to their property. In 1816, Mr. and Mrs. Allan made a journey to Europe, and Edgar accompanied them. He was placed at the school of the Rev. Dr. Bransby, at Stoke Newington, near London, where he remained some four or five years; but all we know of him during this

period of his life, is what he has himself told us in the tale entitled "William Wilson," wherein he describes with great minuteness his recollections of his school-days in England, and gives a characteristic picture of the school-house and its surroundings.

On his return to the United States, in the year 1822, he was placed for a few months at an academy at Richmond, and then was transferred to the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville. The students at Charlottesville were noted at that time for their reckless and dissolute manner of life, and young Poe was the most dissolute and reckless among them. Though extremely slight in person, and almost effeminate in his manner, he is represented to have been foremost in all

athletic sports and games; and there is good testimony to his having performed the almost impossible feat of swimming, for a wager, from Richmond to Warwick, a distance of seven miles, against a current of two or three knots an hour. Notwithstanding his dissolute habits and extravagance at the university, he excelled in his studies, was always at the head of his class, and would doubtless have graduated with honor, had he not been expelled on account of his profligacy and wild excesses.

His allowance of money had been liberal at the University, but he quitted it in debt; and when his indulgent friend refused to accept his drafts, to meet his gambling losses, Poe wrote him an abusive letter, and quitted the country with the design of offering his services

to the Greeks, who were then fighting for their emancipation from the Turks. But he never reached Greece, and all that is known of his career in Europe is, that he found himself in St. Petersburg, in extreme destitution, where the American minister, Mr. Middleton, was called upon to save him from arrest, on account of an indiscretion. Through the kind offices of this gentleman the young adventurer was sent home to America; and, on his arrival at Richmond, Mr. Allan received him with kindness, forgave him his past misconduct, and procured him a cadetship in the United States Military Academy at West Point. Unfortunately for him, just before he left Richmond for his new appointment, Mrs. Allan, the wife of his benefactor, died. She had always

treated him with motherly affection, and he had paid more deference to her than to any one else. At West Point he applied himself with great energy and success for awhile to his new course of studies; but the rigid discipline of that institution ill sorted with the irrepressible recklessness of his nature, and after ten months he was ignominiously expelled.

After leaving "the Point," he returned to Richmond, and was again kindly received and welcomed to his home by Mr. Allan. But there was a change in the house where the wayward boy had been a pet. There was a new and a younger mistress. Mr. Allan had taken a second wife—a lady much younger than himself, and who was disposed to treat the expelled cadet as a son. But he soon con-

trived to quarrel with her, and was compelled to abandon the house of his adopted father, never to return. The cause of the quarrel which led to this final disruption between Poe and his generous patron has been variously stated ; the family of Mr. Allan give a version of it which throws a dark shade on the character of the poet. But let it have been as it may, it must have been of a very grave nature, for, on the death of Mr. Allan, shortly after, in 1834, the name of his adopted son, who, it was supposed, would inherit nearly all his wealth, was not mentioned in his will.

On leaving the house of his benefactor for the last time, Poe was left without a friend, and thrown upon his own resources. He had published a volume of poems in Baltimore,

just after his expulsion from West Point, under the title of "Al Aaraaf," and "Tamerlane," to which a few smaller poems were added. These were the production of his early youth—probably between his fifteenth and sixteenth years, though the exact date of their composition cannot be ascertained. The commendations bestowed upon these precocious poems encouraged him to devote himself to literature as a profession. But his first attempts to earn a living by writing must have been discouraging, for soon after publishing his first volume, he was driven by his necessities to enlist as a private soldier in the army. Here he was recognized by officers who had known him at West Point, and who interested themselves to obtain his discharge,

and, if possible, a commission. But their kind intentions were frustrated by his desertion. The next attempt he made in literature proved more successful. He had fruitlessly tried to find a publisher for a volume of stories; but, on a premium of one hundred dollars for a tale in prose, and a similar reward for a poem, being offered by the publisher of a literary periodical in Baltimore, Poe was awarded both prizes, though he was only allowed to retain the prize for the tale, as it was thought not prudent to give both prizes to the same writer. The tale chosen was the "Manuscript found in a Bottle," a composition which contains many of his most marked peculiarities of style and invention. The award was made in October, 1833, and, fortunately for the young author, there

was one gentleman on the committee who made the decision, who had it in his power to render him essential service.

This was John P. Kennedy, the novelist, author of "Horse-shoe Robinson," and eminent as a lawyer and a statesman. To this gentleman Poe came, on hearing of his success, poorly clad, pale, and emaciated. He told his story and his ambition, and at once gained the confidence and affection of the more prosperous author. He was in utter want, and had not yet received the amount to which he was entitled for his story. Mr. Kennedy took him by the hand, furnished him with means to render him immediately comfortable, and enabled him to make a respectable appearance, and in a short time afterwards procured for him a situation, as

editor of the "Literary Messenger," a monthly magazine, published in Richmond. In his new place he continued for awhile to work with great industry, and wrote a great number of reviews and tales; but he fell into his old habits, and, after a debauch, quarrelled with the proprietor of the "Messenger," and was dismissed.

It was one of the strange peculiarities of Poe, to make humble and penitent appeals for forgiveness and reconciliation to those he had offended by his abuse and insolence; and he was no sooner conscious of his error in quarrelling with the publisher of the "Messenger," than he endeavored to regain the position he had lost. He was successful; and though he often fell into his old habits, yet he retained

his connection with the work until January, 1837, when he abandoned the "Messenger," and left Richmond for New York. During his last residence in Richmond, while working for a salary of ten dollars a week, he married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, a young, amiable and gentle girl, without fortune or friends, and as ill-calculated as himself to buffet the waves of an adverse fortune. In New York he wrote for the literary periodicals, but soon removed to Philadelphia, where he was employed as editor of "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine." He continued but a year in his post; and, after several quarrels with the proprietor of the magazine, left him, to establish a magazine of his own. To have a magazine of his own, which he could manage as he

pleased, was always the great ambition of his life. He had invented a title, selected a motto, written the introduction, and made the entire plans for the great work, which was to be called "The Stylus;" it was the chimera which he nursed, the castle in the air which he longed for, the rainbow of his cloudy hopes. But he did not succeed in establishing it then, and was soon installed as editor of "Graham's Magazine." As a matter of course he quarrelled with Graham, and then went to New York, where he engaged as a sub-editor on the "Mirror," a daily paper, of which N. P. Willis was the editor. But he did not remain long at this employment, which was wholly unsuited to him, and he left the "Mirror" without quarrelling with the proprie-

tor. During his engagements on these different periodicals, he had written some of his finest prose tales; had published an anonymous work in the style of Robinson Crusoe, entitled, the "Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym," and a collection of his tales in a volume which he called, the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," and gained another prize by his story of the "Gold Bug." He was beginning to be known as a fierce and terrible critic, rather than as a poet or writer of tales, when the publication of his poem of the "Raven," in the "American Review," a New York monthly magazine, first attracted the attention of the literary world to his singular and powerful genius. Up to the appearance of this wild fantasy, he had not been generally recog-

nized as a poet, and had known nothing of society. But he became at once a lion, and his writings were eagerly sought after by publishers. The prospect lay bright before him; he abandoned for awhile the vices which so fearfully beset him; he was living quietly in a pleasant and rural neighborhood in Westchester, near the city, with his delicate wife and her mother, and a brilliant future appeared to be in store for him. But he could never keep clear from magazine editing, and he joined Mr. C. F. Briggs in editing the "Broadway Journal," a literary weekly periodical; but the inevitable quarrel ensued, and this project was abandoned at the end of a year. It was while editing the "Broadway Journal," that he engaged in a furious onslaught

upon Longfellow, whom he accused of plagiarizing from his poems, and, at the same time, involved himself in numberless disputes and quarrels with other authors. But he also gained the affection and admiration of many estimable literary people, some of whom he alienated by appearing before them when in a state of intoxication. He delivered a lecture on poetry, but attracted no hearers, and he was so chagrined by his disappointment that he fell again into his old habits, and disgusted his new friends by his gross misconduct; he involved himself in another quarrel with some of the literati of Boston, and, to show his contempt for them, went there and delivered a poem in public which he pretended to have written in his tenth year. On his return to

New York, he was again reduced to great straits, and in 1848 he advertised a series of lectures, in order to raise sufficient means to put into execution his long-cherished plan of a magazine; but he delivered only one lecture on the Cosmogony of the Universe, which was afterwards published under the title of "Enreka, a prose poem." His wife had died the year previous, and during her illness he was reduced to such extremities, that public appeals, which were generously responded to, were made on his behalf by the papers of New York.

Not long after the death of his wife, he formed an intimacy with an accomplished literary lady of Rhode Island, a widow, and was engaged to be married to her. It was to her

that he addressed the poem, "Annabel Lee." The day was appointed for their marriage; but he had, in the meantime, formed other plans; and, to disentangle himself from this engagement, he visited the house of his affianced bride, where he conducted himself with such indecent violence, that the aid of the police had to be called in to expel him. This, of course, put an end to the engagement. In a short time after, he went to Richmond, and there gained the confidence and affections of a lady of good family and considerable fortune. The day was appointed for their marriage, and he left Virginia to return to New York to fulfil some literary arrangements previous to the consummation of this new engagement. He had written to his friends that he had, at

last, a prospect of happiness. The Lost Lenore was found. He arrived in Baltimore, on his way to the North, and gave his baggage into the charge of a porter, intending to leave in an hour for Philadelphia. Stepping into an hotel to obtain some refreshments, he met some of his former companions, who invited him to drink with them. In a few moments all was over with him. He spent the night in revelry, wandered out into the street in a state of insanity, and was found in the morning literally dying from exposure and a single night's excesses. He was taken to a hospital, and on the 7th of October, 1849, at the age of thirty-eight, he closed his troubled life. Three days before, he had left his newly-affianced bride, to prepare for their nuptials.

He lies in a burying-ground in Baltimore, his native city, without a stone to mark the place of his last rest.

In person, Edgar Allan Poe was slight, and hardly of the medium height; his motions were quick and nervous; his air was abstracted, and his countenance generally serious and pale. He never laughed, and rarely smiled; but in conversation he was vivacious, earnest and respectful; and though he appeared generally under restraint, as though guarding against a half-subdued passion, yet his manners were engaging, and he never failed to win the confidence and kind feelings of those with whom he conversed for the first time; and there were a few, who knew him long and intimately, who could never believe that he

was ever otherwise than the pleasant, intelligent, respectful and earnest companion he appeared to them. Though he was at times so reckless and profligate in his conduct, and so indifferent to external proprieties, he was generally scrupulously exact in everything he did. He dressed with extreme neatness and perfectly good taste, avoiding all ornaments and everything of a bizarre appearance. He was painfully alive to all imperfections of art; and a false rhyme, an ambiguous sentence, or even a typographical error, threw him into an ecstasy of passion. It was this sensitiveness to all artistic imperfections, rather than any malignity of feeling, which made his criticism so severe, and procured him a host of enemies among persons towards whom he never enter-

tained any personal ill-will. He criticised his own productions with the same severity that he exercised towards the writings of others; and all his poems, though he sometimes represented them as offsprings of a sudden inspiration, were the work of elaborate study. His handwriting was always neat and singularly uniform, and his manuscripts were invariably on long slips of paper, about four inches wide, which he never folded, but always made into a roll. Nothing that he ever did had the appearance of haste or slovenliness, and he preserved with religious care every scrap he had ever written, and every letter he ever received, so that he left behind him the amplest materials for the composition of his literary life. At his own request these remnants of his existence

were intrusted to Doctor Griswold, a gentleman with whom he had quarrelled, and had lampooned in his lectures. Doctor Griswold in a generous spirit accepted the charge, and produced, from the papers intrusted to him, the best biography of the strange being that has been published, which was appended to the collection of his works, in four volumes, published in New York, by Widdleton.

P O E M S.



THE RAVEN.

ONCE upon a midnight dreary,
While I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious
Volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping,
Suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping,
Rapping at my chamber door.
“ ’Tis some visiter I muttered,
“ Tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember
It was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember
Wrought its ghost upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow ;—
Vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—
Sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden
Whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain
Rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic
Terrors never felt before ;
So that now, to still the beating
Of my heart, I stood repeating,
“ ’Tis some visiter entreating
Entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visiter entreating
Entrance at my chamber door ;
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger ;
Hesitating then no longer,
“ Sir,” said I, “ or Madam, truly
Your forgiveness I implore ;

But the fact is I was napping,
And so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping,
Tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—
Here I opened wide the door :—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering,
Long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals
Ever dared to dream before ;
But the silence was unbroken,
And the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken
Was the whispered word, " Lenore ?"
This I whispered, and an echo
Murmured back the word, " Lenore !"—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning,
All my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping
Something louder than before.

“Surely,” said I, “surely that is
Something at my window lattice ;
Let me see, then what thereat is,
And this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment
And this mystery explore ;—
’Tis the wind and nothing more.”

Open here I flung the shutter,
When, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven
Of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he ;
Not a minute stopped or stayed he ;
But with mien of lord or lady,
Perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas
Just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling
My sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum
Of the countenance it wore,

“ Though thy crest be shorn and shaven,
Thou,” I said, “ art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven
Wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is
On the Night’s Plutonian shore !”
Quoth the Raven, “ Nevermore ”

Much I marvelled this ungainly
Fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—
Little relevancy bore ;
For we cannot help agreeing
That no living human being
Ever yet was blest with seeing
Bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured
Bust above his chamber door,
With such name as “ Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely
On that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in
That one word he did outpour.

Nothing farther then he uttered ;
Not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered,
“ Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me,
As my Hopes have flown before.”
Then the bird said, “ Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken
By reply so aptly spoken,
“ Doubtless,” said I, “ what it utters
Is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master
Whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster
Till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that
Melancholy burden bore
Of ‘ Never—nevermore.’ ”

But the Raven still beguiling
All my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in
Front of bird and bust and door ;

Then upon the velvet sinking,
I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking

What this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly,
Gaunt and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing,
But no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now
Burned into my bosom’s core ;
This and more I sat divining,
With my head at ease reclining
On the cushion’s velvet lining
That the lamplight gloated o’er,
But whose velvet violet lining
With the lamplight gloating o’er
She shall press, ah, nevermore !

Then methought the air grew denser,
Perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls
Tinkled on the tufted floor.

“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—
By these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe
From thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe,
And forget this lost Lenore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

‘Prophet!’ said I, “thing of evil!—
Prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether
Tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted,
On this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—
Tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—
Tell me—tell me, I implore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil—
Prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—
By that God we both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden
If, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden
Whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden
Whom the angels name Lenore.”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting,
Bird or fiend,” I shrieked, upstarting—
“Get thee back into the tempest
And the Night’s Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token
Of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—
Quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and
‘Take thy form from off my door!’”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting,
Still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas
Just above my chamber door ;

And his eyes have all the seeming
Of a demon's that is dreaming
And the lamplight o'er him streaming
Throws his shadow on the floor
And my soul from out that shadow
That lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

LENORE.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl !
The spirit flown forever !
Let the bell toll !—a saintly soul
Floats on the Stygian river ;
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear ?—
Weep now or never more !
See ! on yon drear and rigid bier
Low lies thy love, Lenore !
Come ! let the burial rite be read—
The funeral song be sung !—
An anthem for the queenliest dead
That ever died so young—
A dirge for her the doubly dead
In that she died so young.

“ Wretches ye loved her for her wealth
And hated her for her pride,
And when she fell in feeble health,
Ye blessed her—that she died !

How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?—
The requiem how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye,—
By yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence
That died, and died so young? ”

Peccavimus ; but rave not thus !
And let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly
The dead may feel no wrong !
The sweet Lenore hath “ gone before.”
With Hope that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child
That should have been thy bride—
For her, the fair and *debonair*,
That now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair,
But not within her eyes—
The life still there upon her hair—
The death upon her eyes.

“ Avaunt ! to-night my heart is light.
No dirge will I upraise,

But waft the angel on her flight
With a Pæan of old days!
Let *no* bell toll!—lest her sweet soul,
Amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float
Up from the damned Earth.
To friends above, from fiends below,
The indignant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate
Far up within the Heaven—
From grief and groan to a golden throne
Beside the King of Heaven.”

H Y M N .

AT morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria ! thou hast heard my hymn !
In joy and wo—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still !
When the hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee ;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine !

A VALENTINE.

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Lœda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman— an amulet
That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The triviallest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet's, too.

Its letters, although naturally lying

Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—

Still form a synonym for Truth.—Cease trying!

You will not read the riddle, though you do the best
you *can* do.

[To translate the address, read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth, and so on to the end. The name will thus appear.]

THE COLISEUM.

TYPE of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length—at length—after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie)
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls !
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat !
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle !
Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones !

But stay ! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—
These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened
 shafts—
These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—
These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—
These stones—alas ! these gray stones—are they all—
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me ?

“ Not all ”—the Echoes answer me—“ not all ”
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.

We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent—we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—
Not all the magic of our high renown—
Not all the wonder that encircles us—
Not all the mysteries that in us lie—
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory *

TO HELEN.

I SAW thee once—once only—years ago :
I must not say *how* many—but *not* many.
It was a July midnight ; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven.
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
Upon the upturned faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe—
Fell on the upturned faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
Fell on the upturned faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half reclining ; while the moon
Fell on the upturned faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturned—alas, in sorrow !

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
Was it not Fate, (whose name is also Sorrow,)
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses ?
No footstep stirred : the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven !—oh, God !
How my heart beats in coupling those two words !)—
Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted !)
The pearly lustre of the moon went out :
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more : the very roses' odors
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All—all expired save thee—save less than thou :
Save only the divine light in thine eyes—
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.

I saw but them—they were the world to me.
I saw but them—saw only them for hours--
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!
How dark a wo! yet how sublime a hope!
How silently serene a sea of pride!
How daring an ambition! yet how deep—
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained.*
They *would not* go—they never yet have gone.
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since.
They follow me—they lead me through the years.
'They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire

'They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope,)
And are far up in Heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night ;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun !

TO ——— .

Not long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained "the power of words"—denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue :
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,"—
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
Untought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
Than even seraph harper, Israfel,
(Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,")
Could hope to utter. And I ! my spells are broken.

The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I cannot write—I cannot speak or think—
Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling,
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid unpurpled vapors, far away
To where the prospect terminates—*thee only*.

U L A L U M E .

THE skies they were ashen and sober ;
The leaves they were crisped and sere—
The leaves they were withering and sere ;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year ;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriae rivers that roll—

As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaa-nek
In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaa-nek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
Our memories were treacherous and sere—
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year—
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
(Though once we had journeyed down here)—
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent,
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,

Out of which a miraculous crescent
 Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian :
 She rolls through an ether of sighs—
 She revels in a region of sighs :
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion,
 To point us the path to the skies—
 To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust :—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger !
 Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."

In terror she spoke, letting sink her
 Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming :
 Let us on by this tremulous light !
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light !
Its Sybilic splendor is beaming
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night :—
 See!—it flickers up the sky through the night !
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
 And be sure it will lead us aright,
We safely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright,
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
 And tempted her out of her gloom—
 And conquered her scruples and gloom ;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
 By the door of a legended tomb ;

And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere—
And I cried—"It was surely October
On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

THE BELLS.

I.

HEAR the sledges with the bells—

Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,

In the icy air of night!

While the stars that oversprinkle

All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight ;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the tintinabulation that so musically wells

From the bells, bells, bells, bells,

Bells, bells, bells—

From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells !
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells !
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight !
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon !
On, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells !
How it swells !
How it dwells
On the Future ! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III.

Hear the loud alarum bells—

Brazen bells!

What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!

In the startled ear of night

How they scream out their affright!

Too much horrified to speak,

They can only shriek, shriek,

Out of tune,

In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,

In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire

Leaping higher, higher, higher,

With a desperate desire,

And a resolute endeavor,

Now—now to sit or never,

By the side of the pale-faced moon.

Oh, the bells, bells, bells!

What a tale their terror tells

Of Despair!

How they clang, and clash, and roar

What a horror they outpour

On the bosom of the palpitating air!

Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows ;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells !

I V .

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells !
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels !
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone !
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.

And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
 All alone,
And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
 In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
 They are Ghouls :
 And their king it is who tolls ;
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
 Rolls
 A pæan from the bells !
And his merry bosom swells
 With the pæan of the bells !
And he dances, and he yells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the pæan of the bells—
 Of the bells :
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the throbbing of the bells—

Of the bells, bells, bells—

To the sobbing of the bells ;
Keeping time, time, time,

As he knells, knells, knells,

In a happy Runie rhyme,

To the rolling of the bells—

Of the bells, bells, bells—

To the tolling of the bells,

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells—

Bells, bells, bells—

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

A N E N I G M A .

“SELDOM we find,” says Solomon Don Dunce,

“Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.

Through all the flimsy things we see at once

As easily as through a Naples bonnet—

Trash of all trash !—how *can* a lady don it?

Yct heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—

Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff

Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.”

And, veritably, Sol is right enough.

The general tuckermanities are arrant

Bubbles—ephemeral and *so* transparent—

But *this* is, now,—you may depend upon it—

Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint

Of the dear names that lie concealed within 't.

ANNABEL LEE.

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE ;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea :
But we loved with a love which was more than love—
I and my ANNABEL LEE ;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;
So that her highborn kinsman came,
 And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE :

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams

Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;

And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes

Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side

Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,

In the sepulchre there by the sea,

In her tomb by the sounding sea.

TO MY MOTHER.

BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you--
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother-- my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

THE HAUNTED PALACE.

IN the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago,)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogene !)
In state his glory well-befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn !—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate !)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh—but smile no more.

THE CONQUEROR WORM.

Lo! 'tis a gala night
 Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
 In veils, and drowned in tears.
Sit in a theatre, to see
 A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
 Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
 Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
 That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
 Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And the angels sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, “Man,”
And its hero the Conqueror Worm

TO F——S S. O——D.

THOU wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not!
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love—a simple duty.

TO ONE IN PARADISE.

Thou wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last !
Ah, starry Hope ! that didst arise
But to be overcast !
A voice from out the Future cries,
“ On ! on ! ”—but o’er the Past
(Dim gulf !) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast !

For, alas ! alas ! with me
 'The light of Life is o'er !
 “ No more—no more—no more—”
(Such language holds the solemn sea
 To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree
 Or the stricken eagle soar !

And all my days are trances,
 And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
 And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
 By what eternal streams.

THE VALLEY OF UNREST.

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell ;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visiter shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides !

Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave :—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep :—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

THE CITY IN THE SEA.

Lo ! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not !)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town ;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—

Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves ;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jeweled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed ;
For no ripples curl, alas !
Along that wilderness of glass —

No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air !
The wave—there is a movement there !
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

THE SLEEPER.

AT midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave ;
The lily lolls upon the wave ;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest ;

Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take.
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?
The wafted airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop—
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!

Strange is thy pallor ! strange thy dress !
Strange above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness !

The lady sleeps ! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep !
Heaven have her in its sacred keep !
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by !

My love, she sleeps ! Oh, may her sleep
As it is lasting, so be deep !
Soft may the worms about her creep !
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft has flung its black
And wingèd pannels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the erected palls,
Of her grand family funerals—

Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin !
It was the dead who groaned within.

S I L E N C E .

THERE are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown ; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless : his name's " No More."
He is the corporate Silence : dread him not !
No power hath he of evil in himself ;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot !)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man,) commend thyself to God !

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM.

TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow—
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone*?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—

How few ! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep !
O God ! can I can not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp ?
O God ! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave ?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream ?

DREAMLAND.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the dews that drip all over ;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore ;

Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire ;
Lakes that eudlessly outspread
Their lone waters—lone and dead—
Their still waters—still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—
By the gray woods,—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls,—
By each spot the most unholy—
In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh, 'tis an Eldorado !
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it ;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed ;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid ;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

TO ZANTE.

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take !
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake !
How many scenes of what departed bliss !
How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes !
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes !
No more ! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all ! Thy charms shall please *no more*—
Thy memory *no more !* Accursèd ground
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle ! O purple Zante !
“ Isola doro ! Flor di Levante ! ”

EULALIE.

I DWELT alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie
Became my blushing bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie
Became my smiling bride.

Ah, less—less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pear',
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's
Most unregarded curl—
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's
Most humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt—now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie •
Upturns her matron eye—
While ever to her young Eulalie
Upturns her violet eye.

ELDORADO

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
“Shadow,” said he,
“Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?”

“Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,”
The shade replied,—
“If you seek for Eldorado!”

ISRAFEL.*

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 “ Whose heart-strings are a lute ; ”
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

* And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who
was the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—KORAN.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamored moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven,)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings—
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown up God—
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
 Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song ;
To thee the laurels belong,
 Best bard, because the wisest !
Merrily live, and long !

The ecstasies above
 With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
 With the fervor of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute !

Yes, Heaven is thine ; but this
 Is a world of sweets and sour ;
 Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
 Is the sunshine of ours

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,

He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

FOR ANNIE.

THANK Heaven ! the crisis—
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last—
And the fever called “ Living ”
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length—
But no matter !—I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart :—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing !

The sickness—the nausea—
The pitiless pain—
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain—
With the fever called “ Living ”
That burned in my brain.

And oh ! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst

For the naphthaline river
Of Passion accurst :—
I have drunk of a water
That quenches all thirst :—

Of a water that flows
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah ! let it never
Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
And narrow my bed ;
For man never slept
In a different bed—
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes,

Forgetting, or never
 Regretting its roses—
Its old agitations
 Of myrtles and roses :

For now, while so quietly
 Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
 About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
 Commingle with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
 Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
 Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
 And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
 Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
 She fondly caressed,

And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
Now, in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me.
Thinking me dead :—

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

TO ———

I HEED not that my earthly lot
Hath—little of Earth in it—
That years of love have been forgot
In the hatred of a minute :—
I mourn not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate.
Who am a passer by.

BRIDAL BALLAD.

THE ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow ;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well ;
But, when first he breathed his vow
I felt my bosom swell—
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed *his* who 'ell
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to re-assure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow
While a reverie came o'er me,
And to the church-yard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
"Oh, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be broken,
And, though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That *proves* me happy now!

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how!
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

T O F ———

BELOVED ! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path—
(Drear path, alas ! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)---
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

SCENES FROM "POLITIAN;"

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA

SCENES FROM "POLITIAN;"

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA.

I.

ROME.—*A Hall in a Palace.* ALESSANDRA and CASTIGLIONE.

ALESSANDRA.

Thou art sad, Castiglione.

CASTIGLIONE.

Sad !—not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome !

A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,

Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy !

ALESSANDRA.

Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing
Thy happiness !—what ails thee, cousin of mine ?
Why didst thou sigh so deeply ?

CASTIGLIONE.

Did I sigh ?

I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,
A silly—a most silly fashion I have
When I am *very* happy. Did I sigh ? (*sighing.*)

ALESSANDRA.

Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou hast indulged
Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.
Late hours and wine, Castiglione,—these
Will ruin thee ! thou art already altered—

Thy looks are haggard—nothing so wears away
The constitution as late hours and wine.

CASTIGLIONE (*musings*).

Nothing, fair cousin, nothing—not even deep sorrow—
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.
I will amend.

ALESSANDRA.

Do it! I would have thee drop
Thy riotous company, too—fellows low born—
Ill suit the like with old Di Broglia's heir
And Alessandra's husband.

CASTIGLIONE.

I will drop them

ALESSANDRA.

Thou wilt—thou must. Attend thou also more
To thy dress and equipage—they are over plain
For thy lofty rank and fashion—much depends
Upon appearances.

CASTIGLIONE.

I'll see to it.

ALESSANDRA.

Then see to it!—pay more attention, sir,
To a becoming carriage—much thou wantest
In dignity.

CASTIGLIONE.

Much, much, oh much I want
In proper dignity.

ALESSANDRA (*haughtily*).

Thou mockest me, sir .

CASTIGLIONE (*abstractedly*).

Sweet, gentle Lalage !

ALESSANDRA.

Heard I aright ?

I speak to him—he speaks of Lalage !

Sir Count ! (*places her hand on his shoulder*) what
art thou dreaming ?—he's not well !

What ails thee, sir ?

CASTIGLIONE (*starting*).

Cousin ! fair cousin !—madam !

I crave thy pardon—indeed I am not well—

Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.
This air is most oppressive !—Madam—the Duke !

Enter DI BROGLIO.

DI BROGLIO.

My son, I've news for thee !—hey ?—what's the
matter ? (*observing Alessandra.*)

I' the pouts ? Kiss her, Castiglione ! kiss her,
You dog ! and make it up, I say, this minute !
I've news for you both. Politian is expected
Hourly in Rome—Politian, Earl of Leicester !
We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit
To the imperial city.

ALESSANDRA.

What ! Politian
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester ?

DI BROGLIO.

The same, my love.
We'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young
In years, but gray in fame. I have not seen him,
But Rumor speaks of him as of a prodigy
Preëminent in arts, and arms, and wealth,
And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding.

ALESSANDRA.

I have heard much of this Politian.
Gay, volatile and giddy—is he not?
And little given to thinking.

DI BROGLIO.

Far from it, love.
No branch, they say, of all philosophy
So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.
Learned as few are learned.

ALESSANDRA.

'Tis very strange!

I have known men have seen Politian
And sought his company. They speak of him
As of one who entered madly into life,
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

CASTIGLIONE.

Ridiculous! Now *I* have seen Politian
And know him well—nor learned nor mirthful he.
He is a dreamer and a man shut out
From common passions.

DI BROGLIO.

Children, we disagree.

Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air
Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear
Politian was a *melancholy* man? (Exeunt.

II.

ROME.—*A Lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand mirror. In the background JACINTA (a servant maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.*

LALAGE.

Jacinta, is it thou?

JACINTA (*pertly*).

Yes, Ma'am, I'm here.

LALAGE.

I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.
Sit down!—let not my presence trouble you—
Sit down!—for I am humble, most humble.

JACINTA (*aside*).

"Tis time.

(JACINTA seats herself in a side-long manner upon the chair, resting her elbows upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous look. LALAGE continues to read.)

LALAGE.

"It in another climate, so he said,
"Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!"
 (*pauses—turns over some leaves, and resumes.*)
"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower—
"But Ocean ever to refresh mankind
"Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."
O, beautiful!—most beautiful!—how like
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!
O happy land! (*pauses.*) She died!—the maiden died!

O still more happy maiden who couldst die !

Jacinta !

(JACINTA *returns no answer, and* LALAGE
presently resumes.)

Again !—a similar tale

Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea !

Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play—

"She died full young"—one Bossola answers him—

"I think not so—her infelicity

"Seemed to have years too many"—Ah, luckless lady !

Jacinta ! (*still no answer.*)

Here's a far sterner story,

But like—oh, very like in its despair—

Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily

A thousand hearts—losing at length her own.

She died. Thus endeth the history—and her maids

Lean over her and weep—two gentle maids

With gentle names—Eiros and Charmion !

Rainbow and Dove !——Jacinta !

JACINTA (*pettishly*).

Madam, what is it ?

LALAGE.

Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind
As go down in the library and bring me
The Holy Evangelists.

JACINTA.

Pshaw ! *(Exit.*

LALAGE.

If there be balm
For the wounded spirit in Gilead it is there !
Dew in the night-time of my bitter trouble
Will there be found—"dew sweeter far than that
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill."

*(re-enter JACINTA, and throws a volume on
the table.)*

There, ma'am, 's the book. Indeed she is very
troublesome. *(Aside.*

LALAGE (*astonished*).

What didst thou say, Jacinta? Have I done aught
To grieve thee or to vex thee?—I am sorry.
For thou hast served me long and ever been
Trustworthy and respectful. (*resumes her reading.*)

JACINTA (*aside*).

I can't believe
She has any more jewels—no—no—she gave me all.

LALAGE.

What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me
Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.
How fares good Ugo?—and when is it to be?
Can I do aught?—is there no farther aid
Thou needest, Jacinta?

JACINTA.

Is there no *farther* aid !
That's meant for me (*aside*). I'm sure, Madam, you
need not
Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

LALAGE.

Jewels ! Jacinta,—now indeed, Jacinta,
I thought not of the jewels.

JACINTA.

Oh ! perhaps not !
But then I might have sworn it. After all,
There's Ugo says the ring is only paste,
For he's sure the Count Castiglione never
Would have given a real diamond to such as you ,

And at the best I'm certain, Madam, you cannot
Have use for jewels *now*. But I might have sworn it.
(*Exit.*)

(*LALAGE bursts into tears and leans her
head upon the table—after a short pause
raises it.*)

LALAGE.

Poor Lalage!—and is it come to this?
Thy servant maid!—but courage!—'tis but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!

(*Taking up the mirror.*)

Ha! here at least's a friend—too much a friend
In earlier days—a friend will not deceive thee.
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale—a pretty tale—and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.
It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased—remembers me
Of Joy departed—Hope, the Seraph Hope,

Inurnèd and entombed !—now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true !—thou liest
not !

Thou hast no end to gain—no heart to break—
Castiglione lied who said he loved—
Thou true !—he false !—false !—false !

(While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment, and approaches unobserved.)

MONK.

Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter ! in Heaven. 'Think of eternal things !
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray !

LALAGE *(arising hurriedly)*.

I cannot pray !—My soul is at war with God !
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses—go ! I cannot pray—

'The sweet airs from the garden worry me !
'Thy presence grieves me—go !—thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread—thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe !

MONK.

Think of thy precious soul !

LALAGE.

'Think of my early days !—think of my father
And mother in Heaven ! think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door !
Think of my little sisters !—think of them !
And think of me !—think of my trusting love
And confidence—his vows—my ruin—think—think
' Of my unspeakable misery !—begone !
Yet stay ! yet stay !—what was it thou saidst of
 prayer
And penitence ? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne ?

MONK.

I did.

LALAGE.

"Tis well.

'There *is* a vow were fitting should be made—
A sacred vow, imperative, and urgent,
A solemn vow !

MONK.

Daughter, this zeal is well !

LALAGE.

Father, this zeal is anything but well !
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing !

A crucifix whereon to register

This sacred vow ?

(He hands her his own.)

Not that—Oh! no!—no!—no!

(Shuddering.)

Not that! Not that!—I tell thee, holy man.

Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!

Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,—

I have a crucifix! Methinks 'twere fitting

The deed—the vow—the symbol of the deed—

And the deed's register should tally, father!

*(Draws a cross-handled dagger and raises
it on high.)*

Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine

Is written in Heaven!

MONK.

Thy words are madness, daughter,

And speak a purpose unholy—thy lips are livid—

Thine eyes are wild—tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late!—oh, be not—be not rash!
Swear not the oath—oh, swear it not!

LALAGE.

'Tis sworn!

III.

An apartment in a Palace. POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR.

BALDAZZAR.

———Arouse thee now, Politian!
Thou must not—nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not
Give way unto these humors. Be thyself!
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,
And live, for now thou diest!

POLITIAN.

Not so, Baldazzar!

Surely I live.

BALDAZZAR.

Politian, it doth grieve me
To see thee thus.

POLITIAN.

Baldazzar, it doth grieve me
To give thee cause for grief, my honored friend.
Command me, sir ! what wouldst thou have me do ?
At thy behest I will shake off that nature
Which from my forefathers I did inherit,
Which from my mother's milk I did imbibe,
And be no more Politian, but some other.
Command me, sir !

BALDAZZAR.

To the field, then—to the field—
To the senate or the field.

POLITIAN.

Alas! alas!

'There is an imp would follow me even there!

'There is an imp *hath* followed me even there!

'There is——what voice was that?

BALDAZZAR.

I heard it not.

I heard not any voice except thine own,

And the echo of thine own.

POLITIAN.

'Then I but dreamed.

BALDAZZAR.

Give not thy soul to dreams: the camp—the court

Befit thee—Fame awaits thee—Glory calls—

And her the trumpet-tongued thou wilt not hear
In hearkening to imaginary sounds
And phantom voices.

POLITIAN.

It is a phantom voice !
Didst thou not hear it *then* ?

BALDAZZAR.

I heard it not.

POLITIAN.

Thou heardst it not !——Baldazzar, speak no more
To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.
Oh ! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,
Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities
Of the populous Earth ! Bear with me yet awhile !
We have been boys together——schoolfellows——

And now are friends—yet shall not be so long—
For in the eternal city thou shalt do me
A kind and gentle office, and a Power—
A Power august, benignant and supreme—
Shall then absolve thee of all farther duties
Unto thy friend.

BALDAZZAR.

Thou speakest a fearful riddle
I *will* not understand.

POLITIAN.

Yet now as Fate
Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,
The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,
And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!
I *cannot* die, having within my heart
So keen a relish for the beautiful
As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air
Is balmy now than it was wont to be—

Rich melodies are floating in the winds—
A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth—
And with a holier lustre the quiet moon
Sitteth in Heaven.—Hist! hist! thou canst not say
Thou hearest not *now*, Baldazzar?

BALDAZZAR.

Indeed I hear not.

POLITIAN.

Not hear it!—listen, now!—listen!—the faintest sound
And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!
A lady's voice!—and sorrow in the tone!
Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!
Again!—again!—how solemnly it falls
Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice
Surely I never heard—yet it were well
Had I *but* heard it with its thrilling tones
In earlier days!

BALDAZZAR.

I myself hear it now.

Be still!—the voice, if I mistake not greatly,
Proceeds from yonder lattice—which you may see
Very plainly through the window—it belongs,
Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke.
The singer is undoubtedly beneath
The roof of his Excellency—and perhaps
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke
As the betrothed of Castiglione,
His son and heir.

POLITIAN.

Be still!—it comes again!

VOICE (*very faintly*).

"And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus

Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and wo among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay—say nay!"

BALDAZZAR.

The song is English, and I oft have heard it
In merry England—never so plaintively—
Hist! hist! it comes again!

VOICE (*more loudly*).

"Is it so strong
As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and wo among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay—say nay!"

BALDAZZAR.

"Tis hushed and all is still !

POLITIAN.

All is not still !

BALDAZZAR.

Let us go down.

POLITIAN.

Go down, Baldazzar, go !

BALDAZZAR.

The hour is growing late—the Duke awaits us,—
Thy presence is expected in the hall
Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian ?

VOICE (*distinctly*).

"Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and wo among,
And is thy heart so strong?
Say nay—say nay!"

BALDAZZAR.

Let us descend!—'tis time. Politian, give
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,
Your bearing lately savored much of rudeness
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

POLITIAN.

Remember? I do. Lead on! I *do* remember.

(*Going.*)

Let us descend. Believe me I would give,
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice—

"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear
Once more that silent tongue."

BALDAZZAR.

Let me beg you, sir,
Descend with me—the Duke may be offended.
Let us go down, I pray you.

VOICE (*loudly*).

Say nay! say nay!

POLITIAN (*aside*).

'Tis strange!—'tis very strange—methought the voice
Chimed in with my desires, and bade me stay!

(*Approaching the window*.)

Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven! or be it Fate,

Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make
Apology unto the Duke for me ;
I go not down to-night.

BALDAZZAR.

Your lordship's pleasure
Shall be attended to. Good night, Politian.

POLITIAN.

Good night, my friend, good night.

IV.

The gardens of a Palace—Moonlight. LALAGE and POLITIAN.

LALAGE.

And dost thou speak of love
To *me*, Politian?—dost thou speak of love
To Lalage?—ah, wo—ah, wo is me!
'This mockery is most cruel—most cruel indeed!

POLITIAN.

Weep not! oh, sob not thus!—thy bitter tears
Will madden me. Oh mourn not, Lalage—
Be comforted! I know—I know it all,
And *still* I speak of love. Look at me, brightest
And beautiful Lalage!—turn here thine eyes!

Thou askest me if I could speak of love,
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.
Thou askest me that—and thus I answer thee—
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee.

(*Kneeling.*)

Sweet Lalage, *I love thee—love thee—love thee ;*
Thro' good and ill—thro' weal and wo I *love thee.*
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for *thee.* And do I love ?

(*Arising.*)

Even for thy woes I love thee—even for thy woes—
Thy beauty and thy woes.

LALAGE.

Alas, proud Earl,
Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me !
How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens.

Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,
Could the dishonored Lalage abide ?
Thy wife, and with a tainted memory—
My seared and blighted name, how would it tally
With the ancestral honors of thy house,
And with thy glory ?

POLITIAN.

Speak not to me of glory !

I hate—I loathe the name ; I do abhor
The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.
Art thou not Lalage and I Politian ?
Do I not love—art thou not beautiful—
What need we more ? Ha ! glory !—now speak not
of it.

By all I hold most sacred and most solemn—
By all my wishes now—my fears hereafter—
By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven—
There is no deed I would more glory in,
Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory
And trample it under foot. What matters it—
What matters it, my fairest, and my best,

That we go down unhonored and forgotten
Into the dust—so we descend together.
Descend together—and then—and then, perchance——

LALAGE.

Why dost thou pause, Politian?

POLITIAN.

And then, perchance,
Arise together, Lalage, and roam
The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,
And still——

LALAGE.

Why dost thou pause, Politian?

POLITIAN.

And still *together—together*.

LALAGE.

Now, Earl of Leicester !
Thou *lovest* me, and in my heart of hearts
I feel thou lovest me truly.

POLITIAN.

Oh, Lalage !

*(Throwing himself upon his knee.)*And lovest thou *me* ?

LALAGE.

Hist ! hush ! within the gloom
Of yonder trees methought a figure passed—
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless—
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.

(Walks across and returns.)

I was mistaken—'twas but a giant bough
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!

POLITIAN.

My Lalage—my love! why art thou moved?
Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience' self,
Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,
Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind
Is chilly—and these melancholy boughs
Throw over all things a gloom.

LALAGE.

Politian!

Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land
With which all tongues are busy—a land new found—
Miraculously found by one of Genoa—
A thousand leagues within the golden west?
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,

And mountains, around whose towering summits the
winds

Of Heaven untrammelled flow—which air to breathe
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter
In days that are to come?

POLITIAN.

O, wilt thou—wilt thou
Fly to that Paradise—my Lalage, wilt thou
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.
And life shall then be mine, for I will live
For thee, and in thine eyes—and thou shalt be
No more a mourner—but the radiant Joys
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,
My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,
My all;—oh, wilt thou—wilt thou, Lalage,
Fly thither with me?

LALAGE.

A deed is to be done—
Castiglione lives !

POLITIAN.

And he shall die ! (*Exit.*)

LALAGE (*after a pause*).

And—he—shall—die !———alas !
Castiglione die ? Who spoke the words ?
Where am I ?—what was it he said ?—Politian !
Thou *art* not gone—thou art not *gone*, Politian !
I *feel* thou art not gone—yet dare not look.
Lest I behold thee not ; thou *couldst* not go
With those words upon thy lips—O, speak to me !
X And let me hear thy voice—one word—one word,
To say thou art not gone,—one little sentence,
To say how thou dost scorn—how thou dost hate
My womanly weakness. Ha ! ha ! thou *art* not gone—

O speak to me ! I *knew* thou wouldst not go !
I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, *durst* not go.
Villain, thou *art* not gone—thou mockest me !
And thus I clutch thee—thus!————He is gone, he
is gone—
Gone—gone. Where am I?——'tis well—'tis very
well !
So that the blade be keen—the blow be sure,
'Tis well, 'tis *very* well—alas ! alas !

V.

The suburbs. POLITIAN alone.

POLITIAN.

This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,
And much I fear me ill—it will not do
To die ere I have lived!—Stay—stay thy hand,
O Azrael, yet awhile!—Prince of the Powers
Of Darkness and the Tomb, O pity me!
O pity me! let me not perish now,
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!
Give me to live yet—yet a little while:
'Tis I who pray for life—I who so late
Demanded but to die!—what sayeth the Count?

Enter BALDAZZAR.

BALDAZZAR.

That knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud
Between the Earl Politian and himself,
He doth decline your cartel.

POLITIAN.

What didst thou say?
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?
With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes
Laden from yonder bowers!—a fairer day,
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks
No mortal eyes have seen!—*what* said the Count?

BALDAZZAR.

That he, Castiglione, not being aware
Of any feud existing, or any cause
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself
Cannot accept the challenge.

POLITIAN.

It is most true—

All this is very true. When saw you, sir,
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid,
Ungenial Britain which we left so lately,
A heaven so calm as this—so utterly free
From the evil taint of clouds?—and he did *say*?

BALDAZZAR.

No more, my lord, than I have told you, sir :
The Count Castiglione will not fight,
Having no cause for quarrel.

POLITIAN.

Now this is true—

All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,
And I have not forgotten it—thou'lt do me
A piece of service ; wilt thou go back and say

Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,
Hold him a villain?— thus much, I prythee, say
Unto the Count—it is exceeding just
He should have cause for quarrel.

BALDAZZAR.

My lord!—my friend!—

POLITIAN (*aside*).

'Tis he!—he comes himself! (*aloud*.) Thou reasonest
well.

I know what thou wouldst say—not send the message —
Well!—I will think of it—I will not send it.
Now prythee, leave me—hither doth come a person
With whom affairs of a most private nature
I would adjust.

BALDAZZAR.

I go—to-morrow we meet
Do we not?—at the Vatican.

POLITIAN.

At the Vatican.

(*Exit* BALDAZZAR

Enter CASTIGLIONE.

CASTIGLIONE.

The Earl of Leicester here !

POLITIAN.

I *am* the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,
Dost thou not ? that I am here.

CASTIGLIONE.

My lord, some strange,
Some singular mistake—misunderstanding—

Hath without doubt arisen : thou hast been urged
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,
To me, Castiglione; the bearer being
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware
Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,
Having given thee no offence. Ha !—am I right ?
'Twas a mistake ?—undoubtedly—we all
Do err at times.

POLITIAN.

Draw, villain, and prate no more !

CASTIGLIONE.

Ha !—draw ?—and villain ? have at thee then at once,
Proud Earl ! *(Draws*

POLITIAN *(drawing)*.

Thus to the expiatory tomb,
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee
In the name of Lalage !

CASTIGLIONE (*letting fall his sword and recoiling to the extremity of the stage*).

Of Lalage !

Hold off—thy sacred hand !—avaunt, I say !

Avaunt—I will not fight thee—indeed I dare not.

POLITIAN.

Thou wilt not fight with me, didst say, Sir Count ?

Shall I be baffled thus ?—now this is well ;

Didst say thou *darest* not ? Ha !

CASTIGLIONE.

I dare not—dare not—

Hold off thy hand—with that beloved name

So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee—

I cannot—dare not.

POLITIAN.

Now by my halidom
I do believe thee !—coward, I do believe thee—

CASTIGLIONE.

Ha !—coward !—this may not be !

*(Clutches his sword and staggers towards
POLITIAN, but his purpose is changed
before reaching him, and he falls upon
his knee at the feet of the Earl.)*

Alas ! my lord,
It is—it is—most true. In such a cause
I am the veriest coward. O pity me !

POLITIAN *(greatly softened)*.

Alas !—I do—indeed I pity thee.

CASTIGLIONE.

And Lalage——

POLITIAN.

Scoundrel!—arise and die!

CASTIGLIONE.

It needeth not be—thus—thus—O let me die
Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting
That in this deep humiliation I perish.
For in the fight I will not raise a hand
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home—
(*Baring his bosom.*)

Here is no let or hindrance to thy weapon—
Strike home. *I will not fight thee.*

POLITIAN.

Now s'Death and Hell!
Am I not—am I not sorely—grievously tempted

'To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir,
Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare
For public insult in the streets—before
The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee—
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee—
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest—
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain,—I'll taunt thee,
Dost hear? with *cowardice*—thou *wilt not* fight me?
Thou liest! thou *shalt*! (Exit.

CASTIGLIONE.

Now this indeed is just!
Most righteous and most just, avenging Heaven!

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

PRIVATE reasons—some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson's first poems—have induced me, after some hesitation, to re-publish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood. They are printed *verbatim*—without alteration from the original edition—the date of which is too remote to be judiciously acknowledged.

E. A. P.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

SONNET.—TO SCIENCE.

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!

Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.

Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,

Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?

How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,

Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering

To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies.

Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?

Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?

And driven the Hamadryad from the wood

To seek a shelter in some happier star?

Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,

The Elfin from the green grass, and from me

The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

A L A A R A A F . *

P A R T I .

O ! NOTHING earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the gems of Circassy—
O ! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill—
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That, like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
Oh, nothing of the dross of ours—
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
'That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
Adorn yon world afar, afar—
'The wandering star.

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace—for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns—a temporary rest—
An oasis in desert of the blest.
Away—away—'mid seas of rays that roll
Empyrean splendor o'er th' unchained soul—
The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destined eminence—
To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode
And late to ours, the favored one of God—
But, now, the ruler of an anchored realm,
She throws aside the sceptre—leaves the helm.
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth,
Whence sprang the "Idea of Beauty" into birth,
(Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt)
She looked into Infinity—and knelt.
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled—
Fit emblems of the model of her world—

Seen but in beauty—not impeding sight
Of other beauty glittering through the light—
A wreath that twined each starry form around,
And all the opal'd air in color bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers : of lilies such as reared the head
° On the fair Capo Deucato, and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang
Upon the flying footsteps of——deep pride—
° Of her who loved a mortal—and so died.
The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
Upreared its purple stem around her knees :
° And gemmy flower of Trebizond misnamed—
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it shamed
All other loveliness : its honied dew
(The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
Deliriously sweet, was dropped from Heaven,
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
In Trebizond—and on a sunny flower
So like its own above that, to this hour,
It still remaineth, torturing the bee
With madness, and unwonted reverie :

In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf
And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief
Disconsolate linger—grief that hangs her head,
Repenting follies that full long have fled,
Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
Like guilty beauty, chastened and more fair :
Nycatanthes too, as sacred as the light
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night :
° And Clytia pondering between many a sun,
While pettish tears adown her petals run :
' And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth—
And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
Its way to Heaven from garden of a king :
° And Valisnerian lotus thither flown
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone :
° And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante !
Isola d'oro !—Fior di Levante !
And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever
' With Indian Cupid down the holy river—
Fair flowers, and fairy ! to whose care is given
' To bear the Goddess' song, in odors, up to Heaven :

‘ Spirit ! that dwellest where,
 In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair,
 In beauty vie !
Beyond the line of blue—
 The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
 Of thy barrier and thy bar—
Of the barrier overgone
 By the comets who were cast
From their pride and from their throne
 To be drudges till the last—
To be carriers of fire
 (The red fire of their heart)
With speed that may not tire
 And with pain that shall not part—
Who livest—*that* we know—
 In Eternity—we feel—
But the shadow of whose brow
 What spirit shall reveal ?
Though the beings whom thy Nesace,
 Thy messenger hath known
Have dreamed for thy Infinity
 ^h A model of their own .
Thy will is done, O God !

The star hath ridden high
Through many a tempest, but she rode
Beneath thy burning eye ;
And here, in thought, to thee—
In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire, and so be
A partner of thy throne—
' By winged Fantasy,
My embassy is given,
'Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven."

She ceased—and buried then her burning cheek
Abashed, amid the lilies, there to seek
A shelter from the fervor of His eye ;
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirred not—breathed not—for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air !
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name " the music of the sphere."
Ours is a world of words : Quiet we call
" Silence "—which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and even ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings—

But ah ! not so when, thus, in realms on high
 The eternal voice of God is passing by,
 And the red winds are withering in the sky !

“ What though in worlds which sightless cycles
 run,

Linked to a little system, and one sun—
 Where all my love is folly, and the crowd
 Still think my terrors but the thunder-cloud,
 The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath—
 (Ah ! will they cross me in my angrier path ?)
 What though in worlds which own a single sun
 The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,
 Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
 To bear my secrets through the upper Heaven.
 Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
 With all thy train, athwart the moony sky—
 “ Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night,
 And wing to other worlds another light !
 Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
 To the proud orbs that twinkle—and so be
 To ev’ry heart a barrier and a ban
 Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man ! ”

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-moonèd eve !—on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
The birth-place of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain
' Her way—but left not yet her Therasæan reign.

PART II.

High on a mountain of enamelled head—
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a muttered “hope to be forgiven,”
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—
Of rosy head, that towering far away
Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
While the moon danced with the fair stranger light—
Upreared upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th’ unburthened air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair.
* Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
Through the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die—
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.

A dome, by linked light from Heaven let down,
 Sat gently on these columns as a crown—
 A window of one circular diamond, there,
 Looked out above into the purple air,
 And rays from God shot down that meteor chain.
 And hallowed all the beauty twice again,
 Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
 Some eager spirit flapped his dusky wing.
 But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
 The dimness of this world : that grayish green
 That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave
 Lurked in each cornice, round each architrave—
 And every sculptured cherub thereabout
 That from his marble dwelling peerèd out,
 Seemed earthly in the shadow of his niche—
 Achaian statues in a world so rich ?
 ° Friezes from 'Tadmor and Persepolis—
 From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
 ° Of beautiful Gomorrah ! O, the wave
 Is now upon thee—but too late to save !

Sound loves to revel in a summer night :
 Witness the murmur of the gray twilight

‘ That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—
That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim.
And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
‘ Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud ?

But what is this ?—it cometh—and it brings
A music with it—’tis the rush of wings—
A pause—and then a sweeping, falling strain
And Nesace is in her halls again.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart ;
And zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe
She paused and panted, Zanthé ! all beneath,
The fairy light that kissed her golden hair
And longed to rest, yet could but sparkle there !

‘ Young flowers were whispering in melody
To happy flowers that night—and tree to tree ;

Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell ;
Yet silence came upon material things—
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings—
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang
Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang :

“ ’Neath the blue bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
“ The moonbeam away—
Bright beings ! that ponder,
With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance through the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like——eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise ! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeching
These star-litten hours—

And shake from your tresses
Encumbered with dew
The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too—
(O! how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true Love
That lulled ye to rest!
Up!—shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight;
And true love caresses—
O! leave them apart!
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,

Like the lone Albatross,
Incumbent on night
 (As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
 On the harmony there?

Ligeia ! wherever
 Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
 Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
 In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
 Which *thy* vigilance keep—
The sound of the rain
 Which leaps down to the flower.
And dances again
 In the rhythm of the shower—
'The murmur that springs
 From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—
 But are modelled, alas!—
Away, then, my dearest,
 Oh ! hie thee away

To springs that lie clearest
 Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,
 In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
 That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,
 Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
 Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
 ' Have slept with the bee—
Arouse them my maiden,
 On moorland and lea—
Go ! breathe on their slumber,
 All softly in ear,
The musical number
 They slumbered to hear—
For what can awaken
 An angel so soon
Whose sleep hath been taken
 Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
 Of witchery may test,

The rhythmical number
Which lulled him to rest ? ”

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
A thousand seraphs burst th’ Empyrean through,
Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—
Seraphs in all but “ Knowledge,” the keen light
That fell, refracted, through thy bounds, afar
O Death ! from eye of God upon that star :
Sweet was that error—sweeter still that death—
Sweet was that error—e’en with *us* the breath
Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
To them ’twere the Simoom, and would destroy—
For what (to them) availeth it to know
That Truth is Falsehood—or that Bliss is Wo ?
Sweet was their death—with them to die was rife
With the last ecstasy of satiate life—
Beyond that death no immortality—
But sleep that pondereth and is not “ to be ”—
And there—oh ! may my weary spirit dwell—
* Apart from Heaven’s Eternity—and yet how far
from Hell !
What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn ?

But two : they fell : for Heaven no grace imparts
To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover—
O ! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over) .
Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known ?
Unguided Love hath fallen—'mid “ tears of perfect
moan.”

He was a goodly spirit—he who fell :
A wanderer by moss-y-mantled well—
A gazer on the lights that shine above—
A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love :
What wonder ? for each star is eye-like there,
And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair—
And they, and every mossy spring were holy
To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.
The night had found (to him a night of wo)
Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo—
Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky,
And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
Here sat he with his love—his dark eye bent
With eagle gaze along the firmament :
Now turned it upon her—but ever then
It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

" Ianthe, dearest, see ! bow dim that ray !
How lovely 'tis to look so far away !
She seemed not thus upon that autumn eve
I left her gorgeous halls—nor mourned to leave.
That eve—that eve—I should remember well—
The sun-ray dropped, in Lemnos, with a spell
On th' Arabesque carving of a gilded hall
Wherein I sat, and on the draperied wall—
And on my eyelids—O the heavy light !
How drowsily it weighed them into night !
On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan :
But O that light !—I slumbered—Death, the while,
Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
So softly that no single silken hair
Awoke that slept—or knew that he was there.

The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
" Was a proud temple called the Parthenon—
More beauty clung around her column'd wall
" Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal,
And when old Time my wing did disenthral
Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower,

And years I left behind me in an hour.
What time upon her airy bounds I hung
One half the garden of her globe was flung
Unrolling as a chart unto my view—
Tenantless cities of the desert too !
Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,
And half I wished to be again of men.”

“ My Angelo ! and why of them to be ?
A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee—
And greener fields than in yon world above,
And woman’s loveliness—and passionate love.”

“ But, list, Ianthe ! when the air so soft
° Failed, as my pennon’d spirit leapt aloft,
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy—but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurled—
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And rolled, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar
And fell—not swiftly as I rose before,

But with a downward, tremulous motion through
Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto !
Nor long the measure of my falling hours,
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours--
Dread star ! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Dædalion on the timid Earth."

" We came—and to thy Earth—but not to us
Be given our lady's bidding to discuss :
We came, my love ; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
Nor ask a reason, save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God—
But, Angelo, than thine gray Time unfurled
Never his fairy wing o'er fairer world !
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea—
But when its glory swelled upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
We paused before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled—as doth Beauty's then !"

Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away
The night that waned and waned and brought no day.
They fell : for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

TO THE RIVER —.

FAIR river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
The playful magazines of art
In old Alberto's daughter ;

But when within thy wave she looks—
Which glistens then, and trembles—
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles ;
For in his heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies—
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

T A M E R L A N E .

KIND solace in a dying hour !
Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revell'd in—
I have no time to dote or dream :
You call it hope—that fire of fire !
It is but agony of desire :
If I *can* hope—Oh God ! I can—
Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bow'd from its wild pride into shame,
O yearning heart ! I did inherit
Thy withering portion with the fame,

The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the Jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell ! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—
O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours !
The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

I have not always been as now :
The fever'd diadem on my brow
I claim'd and won usurpingly——
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given
Rome to the Cæsar—this to me ?
The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life :
The mists of the Taglay have shed

Nightly their dews upon my head,
And I believe the wingèd strife
And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell
('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
While the red flashing of the light
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,
Appeared to my half-closing eye
The pageantry of monarchy,
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
Came hurriedly upon me, telling
Of human battle, where my voice,
My own voice, silly child!—was swelling
(O! how my spirit would rejoice,
And leap within me at the cry)
The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head
Unshelter'd—and the heavy wind

Rendered me mad, and deaf, and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
Laurels upon me : and the rush—
The torrent of the chilly air
Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires—with the captive's prayer—
The hum of suitors—and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,
Usurp'd a tyranny which men
Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power,
My innate nature—be it so :
But, father, there liv'd one who, then,
Then—in my boyhood—when their fire
Burn'd with a still intenser glow,
(For passion must, with youth, expire)
E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas !—to tell
The loveliness of loving well !

Nor would I now attempt to trace
The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are——shadows on th' unstable wind :
Thus I remember having dwelt
 Some page of early lore upon,
With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters—with their meaning—melt
 To fantasies—with none.

O, she was worthy of all love !
 Love—as in infancy, was mine—
"Twas such as angel minds above
 Might envy ; her young heart the shrine
On which my every hope and thought
 Were incense—then a goodly gift,
 For they were childish and upright—
Pure——as her young example taught :
 Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
 Trust to the fire within for light ?

We grew in age—and love—together—
Roaming the forest, and the wild ;
My breast her shield in wintry weather—
And when the friendly sunshine smiled,
And she would mark the opening skies,
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is—the heart :
For 'mid that sunshine and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
And pour my spirit out in tears—
There was no need to speak the rest—
No need to quiet any fears
Of her—who ask'd no reason why,
But turned on me her quiet eye !

Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone—

I had no being—but in thee :
The world, and all it did contain
In the earth—the air—the sea—
Its joy—its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure—the ideal,
Dim, vanities of dreams by night—
And dimmer nothings which were real—
(Shadows—and a more shadowy light !)
Parted upon their misty wings,
And, so, confusedly, became
Thine image and—a name—a name !
Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you known
The passion, father? You have not :
A cottager, I mark'd a throne
Of half the world as all my own,
And murmured at such lowly lot—
But, just like any other dream,
Upon the vapor of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam
Of beauty which did while it thro'

The minute—the hour—the day—oppress
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown
Of a high mountain which look'd down
Afar from its proud natural towers
Of rock and forest, on the hills—
The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers,
And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,
But mystically—in such guise
That she might deem it nought beside
The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly—
A mingled feeling with my own—
The flush on her bright cheek, to me
Seem'd to become a queenly throne
Too well that I should let it be
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then,
And donn'd a visionary crown——
Yet it was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me—
But that, among the rabble—men,
Lion ambition is chained down—
And crouches to a keeper's hand—
Not so in deserts where the grand—
The wild—the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand !—
Is not she queen of Earth ? her pride
Above all cities ? in her hand
Their destinies ? in all beside
Of glory which the world hath known
Stands she not nobly and alone ?
Falling—her veriest stepping-stone
Shall form the pedestal of a throne—
And who her sovereign ? Timour—he
Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily—
A diadem'd outlaw !

O, human love ! thou spirit given
On Earth of all we hope in Heaven !
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain,
And failing in thy power to bless.
But leav'st the heart a wilderness :
Idea ! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound,
And beauty of so wild a birth—
Farewell ! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see
No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly—
And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye.
'Twas sunset : when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one

Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly
But *cannot* from a danger nigh.

What though the moon—the white moon
Shed all the splendor of her noon,
Her smile is chilly—and *her* beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath)
A portrait taken after death.
And boyhood is a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one—
For all we live to know is known,
And all we seek to keep hath flown—
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noon-day beauty—which is all.

I reach'd my home—my home no more—
For all had flown who made it so.
I pass'd from out its mossy door,
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,

A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known—
O, I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below
A humbler heart—a deeper wo.

Father, I firmly do believe—
I *know*—for Death who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive,
Hath left his iron gate ajar,
And rays of truth you cannot see
Are flashing thro' Eternity——
I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in every human path—
Else how, when in the holy grove
I wandered of the idol, Love,
Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt offerings
From the most unpolluted things,
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven

No mote may shun—no tiniest fly—
The light'ning of his eagle eye—
How was it that Ambition crept,
Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till, growing bold, he laughed and leapt
In the tangles of Love's very hair?

T O ———

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
Of lip-begotten words—

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined,
Then desolately fall,
O God ! on my funereal mind
Like starlight on a pall—

Thy heart—*thy* heart !—I wake and sigh,
And sleep to dream till day
Of the truth that gold can never buy—
Of the baubles that it may.

A D R E A M .

In visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed—
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him with a ray
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream—that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
So trembled from afar—
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star ?

ROMANCE.

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say—
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.

And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

FAIRY - LAND.

DIM vales—and shadowy floods—
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over
Huge moons there wax and wane—
Again—again—again—
Every moment of the night—
Forever changing places—
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces.
About twelve by the moon-dial,
One more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best)
Comes down—still down—and down,
With its centre on the crown

Of a mountain's eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be—
O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
Over spirits on the wing—
Over every drowsy thing—
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light—
And then, how deep!—O, deep!
Is the passion of their sleep.
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
Like——almost anything—
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before—
Videlicet a tent—
Which I think extravagant:
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,

Of which those butterflies
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again,
(Never contented things!)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

THE LAKE—TO —.

IN spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less—
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound.
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody—
Then—ah then I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.

Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight—

A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love were thine

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining—
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

S O N G .

I SAW thee on thy bridal day—

When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee :

And in thine eye a kindling light

(Whatever it might be)

Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—

As such it well may pass—

Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas !

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay;
The world all love before thee.

TO M. L. S——.

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning—
Of all to whom thine absence is the night—
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun—of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope—for life—ah! above all,
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In Truth—in Virtue—in Humanity—
Of all who, on Despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!"
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes—
Of all who owe thee most—whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship—oh, remember

The truest—the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by him—
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

NOTES TO AL AARAAF.

PART I.

Note ^a page 184. *Al Aaraaf.*

A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe which appeared suddenly in the heavens—attained, in a few days, a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter—then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.

^b P. 186. *On the fair Capo Deucato.*

On Santa Maura—olim Deucadia.

^c P. 186. *Of her who loved a mortal—and so died.*

Sappho.

‘ P. 186. *And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnamed*

This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee, feeding upon its blossom, becomes intoxicated.

‘ P. 187. *And Clytia pondering between many a sun.*

Clytia—the Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better known term, the turnsol—which turns continually towards the sun, covers itself, like Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds, which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day.—B. DE ST. PIERRE.

P. 187. *And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth.*

There is cultivated in the king’s garden, at Paris, a species of serpentine aloes without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhales a strong odor of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till towards the month of July—you then perceive it gradually open its petals—expand them—fade and die.—ST. PIERRE.

‘ P. 187. *And Valisnerian lotus thither flown.*

There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet—thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river.

¹ P. 187. *And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante.*

The Hyacinth.

¹ P. 187. *And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever;
With Indian Cupid down the holy river.*

It is a fiction of the Indians, that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges—and that he still loves the cradle of his childhood.

¹ P. 187. *To bear the Goddess' song in odors up to Heaven.*

And golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.—REV. ST. JOHN.

¹ P. 188. *A model of their own.*

The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form.—*Vide CLARKE'S SERMONS*, vol. 1, page 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine; but it will be seen immediately, that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the church.—DR. SUMNER'S NOTES ON MILTON'S CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the opinion, as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His disciples were called Anthropolophites.—*Vide* DU PIN.

Among Milton's minor poems are these lines :

“Dicite sacrorum presides nœmorum Deæ, &c.
 Quis ille primus cujus ex imagine
 Natura solers finxit humanum genus?
 Eternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,
 Unusque et universus exemplar Dei.”

And afterwards—

“Non cui profundum Cæcitas lumen dedit
 Dirceus augur vidit hunc alto sinu,” &c.

¹ P. 189. *By winged Fantasy.*

Seltsamen Tochter Jovis
 Seinem Schosskinde
 Der Phantasie.—GÖETHE.

^m P. 190.

What though in worlds which sightless cycles run.

Sightless—too small to be seen.—LEGGE.

° P. 190. *Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night.*

I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fire-flies ;—they will collect in a body and fly off, from a common centre, into innumerable radii.

° P. 191. *Her way—but left not yet her Therasæan reign.*

Therasæa, or Therasea, the island mentioned by Seneca, which, in a moment, arose from the sea to the eyes of astonished mariners.

PART II.

- P. 192. *Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
Through the ebon air.*

Some star which from the ruined roof
Of shaken Olympus, by mischance, did fall.—ΜΗΤΡΩΝ.

- P. 193. *Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis.*

Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says, “ Je connois bien l’admiration qu’inspirent ces ruines—mais un palais erigé au pied d’une chaîne des rochers sterils—peut il être un chef d’œuvre des arts ! ”

- P. 193. *Of beautiful Gomorrah ! O, the wave.*

Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation ; but, on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities ingulfed in the “ Dead Sea.” In the Valley of Siddim were five—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen (ingulfed)—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said [Tacitus, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maun

drell, Troilo, D'Arvieux] that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, &c., are seen above the surface. At *any* season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the "Asphaltites."

^d P. 194. *That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco.*

Eyraco—Chaldea.

^e P. 194. *Is not its form—its voice, most palpable
and loud?*

I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon.

^f P. 194. *Young flowers were whispering in melody.*

Fairies use flowers for their charactery.—MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

^g P. 195. *The moonbeam away.*

In Scripture is this passage—"The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night." It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes.

^b P. 197. *Like the lone Albatross.*

The Albatross is said to sleep on the wing.

ⁱ P. 197. *The murmur that springs.*

I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain, and quote from memory :—"The verie essence and, as it were, springe-heade and origine of all musiche is the verie pleasaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe."

^j P. 198. *Have slept with the bee.*

The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight.

The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir W. Scott, or rather from Claude Halcro—in whose mouth I admired its effect :

"Oh I were there an island
Though ever so wild,
Where woman might smile, and
No man be beguiled," &c.

^k P. 199. *Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far from Hell.*

With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell,

where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment.

Un no rompido sueño—

Un dia puro—allegre—libre

Quiera—

Libre de amor—de zelo—

De odio—de esperanza—de rezelo.—LUIS PONCE DE LEON.

Sorrow is not excluded from “Al Aaraaf,” but it is that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its less holy pleasures—the price of which, to those souls who make choice of “Al Aaraaf” as their residence after life, is final death and annihilation.

¹ P. 200. *Unguided love hath fallen—'mid “tears of perfect moan.”*

There be tears of perfect moan

Wept for thee in Helicon.—MILTON.

^m P. 201. *Was a proud temple, called the Parthenon.*

It was entire in 1687—the most elevated spot in Athens.

^a P. 201. *Than e'en thy glowing bosom beats withal.*

Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows

Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.—MARLOWE.

• P. 202. *Failed as my pennon'd spirit leaped aloft.*

Pennon—for pinion.—MILTON.

THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.

THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.

IN speaking of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing, very much at random, the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration, some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning, permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, "a long poem," is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating ex-

citement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all, cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags—fails—a revulsion ensues—and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the “Paradise Lost” is to be devoutly admired throughout, with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical, only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its Unity—its totality of effect or impression—we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical pre-judgment can force us to admire; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again; omitting the first book—that is to say, commencing with

the second—we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned—that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun, is a nullity : and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the *Iliad*, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics ; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of Art. The modern epic is, of the suppositious ancient model, but an inconsiderate and blindfold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem *were* popular in reality—which I doubt—it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd—yet we are indebted for it to the quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere *size*, abstractly considered—there can be nothing in mere *bulk*, so far as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets ! A mountain, to

be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime—but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even “The Columbiad.” Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollock by the pound—but what else are we to *infer* from their continual prating about “sustained effort?” If, by “sustained effort,” any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort—if this indeed be a thing commendable—but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort’s account. It is to be hoped that common sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of Art, rather by the impression it makes—by the effect it produces—than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of “sustained effort” which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another—nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By-and-by, this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the

meantime, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring ; but, in general, they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public attention ; and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem—in keeping it out of the popular view—is afforded by the following exquisite little Serenade :

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?—
To thy chamber-window, sweet !

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odors fall
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
O, beloved as thou art !

O, lift me from the grass !
I die, I faint, I fail !
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas !
My heart beats loud and fast :
Oh ! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last !

Very few, perhaps, are familiar with these lines—yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm, yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all—but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved, to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern midsummer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis—the very best, in my opinion, which he has ever written—has, no doubt, through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept

back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view.

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight-tide—
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walked she ; but, viewlessly,
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charmed the air ;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true—
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo—
But honored well are charms to sell
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale ;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail—
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray ;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way !—
But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven
By man is cursed away !

In this composition we find it difficult to recognise the Willis who has written so many mere “ verses of society.” The lines are not only richly ideal, but full of energy ; while they breathe an earnestness—an evident sincerity of sentiment—for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania—while the idea that, to merit in poetry, prolixity is indispensable—has, for some years past, been gradually dying out of the public mind, by mere dint of its own absurdity—we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral ; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the

work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea ; and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true Poetic dignity and force :—but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified—more supremely noble than this very poem—this poem *per se*—this poem which is a poem and nothing more—this poem written solely for the poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would, nevertheless, limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song, is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox, to wreathe her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth, we need severity rather than

efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, unimpassioned. In a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle, because it is just this position which, in the mind, it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme; but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the *offices* of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents

herself with displaying the charms :—waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity—her disproportion—her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious—in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus, plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odors, and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colors, and odors, and sentiments, a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odors, and colors, and sentiments, which greet *him* in common with all mankind—he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the

star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us—but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry—or when by Music, the most entrancing of the Poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears—we weep then—not as the Abbate Gravina supposes—through excess of pleasure, but through a certain, petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp *now*, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness—this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted—has given to the world all *that* which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and *to feel* as poetic.

The Poetic Sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes—in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in the Dance—very especially in Music—

and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the Landscape Garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that Music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected—is so vitally important an adjunct, that he is simply silly who declines its assistance, I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles—the creation of supernal Beauty. It *may* be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained *in fact*. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which *cannot* have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of Poetry with Music in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development. The old Bards and Minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess—and Thomas Moore, singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate, then :—I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the soul*, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore—using the word as inclusive of the sublime—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes :—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or

even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work:—but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration, than by the citation of the Prœm to Mr. Longfellow's "Waif."

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an Eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
That my soul cannot resist;

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor ;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cars, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than—

—————The bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Down the corridors of Time.

The idea of the last quartrain is also very effective. The poem, on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This “ease,” or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone—as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so:—a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt—and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of “The

North American Review," should be, upon *all* occasions, merely "quiet," must necessarily, upon *many* occasions, be simply silly, or stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy," or "natural," than a Cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the wax-works.

Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June."

I quote only a portion of it :

There, through the long, long summer hours
The golden light should lie,
And thick, young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale, close beside my cell ;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife-bee and humming-bird.

And what, if cheerful shouts, at noon,
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
With fairy laughter blent ?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument ?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow •
But if, around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear
The thought of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
The gladness of the scene ;
Whose part in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
Is—that his grave is green ;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his living voice.

The rhythmical flow here is even voluptuous—nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul—while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me

remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true beauty. It is, nevertheless,

A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the "Health" of Edward Coate Pinkney :

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon ;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words ;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burden'd bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
 The measures of her hours ;
 Her feelings have the fragrancy,
 The freshness of young flowers ;
 And lovely passions, changing oft,
 So fill her, she appears
 The image of themselves by turns.—
 The idol of past years !

Of her bright face one glance will trace
 A picture on the brain,
 And of her voice in echoing hearts
 A sound must long remain :
 But memory, such as mine of her,
 So very much endears,
 When death is nigh my latest sigh
 Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill'd this cup to one made up
 Of loveliness alone,
 A woman, of her gentle sex
 The seeming paragon—
 Her health ! and would on earth there stood
 Some more of such a frame,
 That life might be all poetry,
 And weariness a name.

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinkney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists, by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American

Letters, in conducting the thing called "The North American Review." The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces, we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It was by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Bocealini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book:—whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics—but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be properly *put* to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it require to be demonstrated as such:—and thus, to point out

too particularly the merits of a work of Art is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore, is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning—"Come rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by anything in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of Love—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate human hearts, than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words :

Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still here.
Here still is the smile, that no cloud can o'ereast,
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

Oh ! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame ?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Thou hast call'd me thy Angel in moments of bliss,
And thy Angel I'll be, 'mid the horrors of this,—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue.
And shield thee, and save thee,—or perish there too !

It has been the fashion of late days to deny Moore Imagination, while granting him Fancy—a distinction originating with Coleridge—than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake. Never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language I can call to mind no poem more profoundly—more wicrdly *imaginative*, in the best sense, than the lines commencing—"I would I were by that dim lake"—which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest—and, speaking of Fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful of modern poets, was Thomas Hood. His "Fair Ines" had always, for me, an inexpressible charm :

O saw ye not fair Ines ?
 She's gone into the West,
 To dazzle when the sun is down,
 And rob the world of rest :
 She took our daylight with her,
 The smiles that we love best,
 With morning blushes on her cheek,
 And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the full of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivall'd bright :
And blessed will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write !

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whisper'd thee so near !
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear ?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With a band of noble gentlemen,
And banners wav'd before ;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore ;
It would have been a beauteous dream,
—If it had been no more !

Alas, alas, fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng ;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
 That vessel never bore
 So fair a lady on its deck,
 Nor danced so light before,—
 Alas for pleasure on the sea,
 And sorrow on the shore !
 The smile that blest one lover's heart
 Has broken many more !

“The Haunted House,” by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written—one of the *truest*—one of the most unexceptionable—one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal—imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the universally appreciated “Bridge of Sighs.”

One more Unfortunate,
 Weary of breath,
 Rashly importunate.
 Gone to her death .

Take her up tenderly,
 Lift her with care ;—
 Fashion'd so slenderly,
 Young, and so fair !

Look at her garments.
 Clinging like cerement ;

Whilst the wave constantly
 Drips from her clothing ;
 Take her up instantly,
 Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully
 Think of her mournfully,
 Gently and humanly ;
 Not of the stains of her,
 All that remains of her
 Now, is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
 Into her mutiny
 Rash and undutiful ;
 Past all dishonor,
 Death has left on her
 Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
 One of Eve's family—
 Wipe those poor lips of hers,
 Oozing so clammily ;
 Loop up her tresses
 Escaped from the comb,
 Her fair auburn tresses ;
 Whilst wonderment guesses
 Where was her home ?

Who was her father ?
 Who was her mother
 Had she a sister ?
 Had she a brother ?
 Or was there a dearer one
 Still, and a nearer one
 Yet, than all other ?

Alas ! for the rarity
 Of Christian charity
 Under the sun !
 Oh ! it was pitiful !
 Near a whole city full,
 Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
 Fatherly, motherly,
 Feelings had changed ;

Love, by harsh evidence,
 Thrown from its eminence ;
 Even God's providence
 Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
 So far in the river,
 With many a light
 From window and casement,
 From garret to basement,
 She stood, with amazement,
 Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
 Made her tremble and shiver ;
 But not the dark arch,
 Or the black flowing river :
 Mad from life's history,
 Glad to death's mystery
 Swift to be hurl'd—
 Anywhere, anywhere
 Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
 No matter how coldly
 The rough river ran,—
 Over the brink of it,
 Picture it,—think of it,
 Dissolute man !
 Lave in it, drink of it
 Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,
 Lift her with care ;
 Fashion'd so slenderly,
 Young, and so fair !

Ere her limbs frigidly
 Stiffen too rigidly,
 Decently,—kindly,—
 Smooth and compose them;
 And her eyes, close them,
 Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
 Through muddy impurity,
 As when with the daring
 Last look of despairing
 Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
 Spurred by contumely,
 Cold inhumanity,
 Burning insanity,
 Into her rest,—
 Cross her hands humbly,
 As if praying dumbly,
 Over her breast!
 Owning her weakness,
 Her evil behavior,
 And leaving, with meekness,
 Her sins to her Saviour!

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron, is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves:

Though the day of my destiny's over,
 And the star of my fate hath declined,
 Thy soft heart refused to discover
 The faults which so many could find;
 Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
 It shrunk not to share it with me,
 And the love which my spirit hath painted
 It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
 The last smile which answers to mine,
 I do not believe it beguiling,
 Because it reminds me of thine ;
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,
 As the breasts I believed in with me,
 If their billows excite an emotion,
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
 And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
 Though I feel that my soul is delivered
 To pain—it shall not be its slave.
 There is many a pang to pursue me :
 They may crush, but they shall not condemn -
 They may torture, but shall not subdue me—
 'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me
 Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
 Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
 Though slandered, thou never couldst shake,—
 Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
 Though parted, it was not to fly,
 Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me
 Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
 Nor the war of the many with one—
 If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
 'Twas folly not sooner to shun :
 And if dearly that error hath cost me,
 And more than I once could foresee,
 I have found that whatever it lost me,
 It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that which I most cherished
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

Although the rhythm, here, is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea, that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman.

From Alfred Tennyson—although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived—I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him, and *think* him the noblest of poets—not because the impressions he produces are, at *all* times, the most profound—not because the poetical excitement which he induces is, at *all* times, the most intense—but because it *is*, at all times, the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, “The Princess:”

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavored to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is, strictly and simply, the Human Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in *an*

elevating excitement of the Soul—quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart—or of that Truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason. For, in regard to Passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade, rather than to elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary—Love—the true, the divine Eros—the Uranian, as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus—is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth—if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth, we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience, at once, the true poetical effect—but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven—in the volutes of the flower—in the clustering of low shrubberies—in the waving of the grain-fields—in the slanting of tall, Eastern trees—in the blue distance of mountains—in the

grouping of elouds—in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks—in the gleaming of silver rivers—in the repose of sequestered lakes—in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds—in the harp of *Æolus*—in the sighing of the night-wind—in the repining voice of the forest—in the surf that complains to the shore—in the fresh breath of the woods—in the scent of the violet—in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth—in the suggestive odor that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts—in all unworldly motives—in all holy impulses—in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman—in the grace of her step—in the lustre of her eye—in the melody of her voice—in her soft laughter—in her sigh—in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments—in her burning enthusiasms—in her gentle charities—in her meek and devotional endurances—but above all—ah, far above all—he kneels to it—he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty—of her *love*.

Let me conclude—by the recitation of yet another

brief poem—one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called “The Song of the Cavalier.” With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus to appreciate the real excellence of the poem. To do this fully, we must identify ourselves, in fancy, with the soul of the old cavalier.

Then mounte ! then mounte, brave gallants, all,
And don your helmes amaine ;
Peathe's couriers, Fame and Honor, call
Us to the field againe.
No shrewish teares shall fill our eye
When the sword-hilt's in our hand,—
Heart-whole we'll part, and no whit sighe
For the fayrest of the land ;
Let piping swaine, and craven wight,
Thus weepe and puling crye,
Our business is like men to fight,
And hero-like to die.

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