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POEMS:

BY THOMAS HOOD.

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NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM.
1846.

PREFACE.

This collection of Mr. Hood's serious Poems is made in fulfilment of his own desire. It was among his last instructions to those who were dearest to him.

If its reception should justify the earnest hope which the writer had allowed himself to entertain, it will be followed by a volume composed of the more thoughtful pieces in his Poems of wit and humor.

It is believed that the most sacred duty which his friends owed to his memory will thus have been discharged; and that in any future recital of the names of writers who have contributed to the stock of genuine English poetry, Thomas Hood will find honorable mention.

Some minor pieces printed for the first time are placed at the commencement of the Volume.

London, *December*, 1845.

To these few and touching words of the London Preface, the American publishers have only to add that the sacredness of Hood's dying request has been religiously observed in the reprint—not a line of the Poems having been omitted. All will be found either in the present volume or in the recently published "Prose and Verse" in the Library. In the latter collection are included that wonderful composition the Legend of Miss Killmansegg, the Elm Tree, the Dream of Eugene Aram, various Odes and Bal-

lads, the Song of the Shirt, and the chief of the humanitarian poems by which Hood in his last days became so endeared to the world.

The London Press has but one voice in speaking of Mr. Hood and his writings—admiration mingled with pathetic regret. Says the Daily News (no doubt Mr. Dickens himself holding the pen) in language echoed by many others :—

"'This collection of Mr. Hood's serious poems is made in fulfilment of his own desire. It was among his last instructions to those who were dearest to him.'

"Much is expressed in this opening paragraph of the brief and unaffected preface to this book. Around the death-bed of the great genius whose name it bears, consoling recollections of the thoughtful exercise of high powers diffused peace and resignation. No wish to blot one line in these, his best and worthiest efforts, troubled his repose. But, arrived at the last sad test and trial of all that is good and durable in life, he could contemplate his legacy to mankind, and thank God for its Christian spirit, and look with hope and trust to its results, when he should be no more.

"Pity for the erring, mercy to the weak, scorn of hypocrisy and bigotry; the preservation, through a rough life, of every humanising and tender thought to which its youth gave birth, were the sustaining impulses to this desire, as they are the spirit of these poems. If any man can read The Bridge of Sighs, without the deepest sympathy and compassion, or The Song of a Shirt, without being touched to the soul, in his awakened sorrow for the miseries in which so many of his fellow-creatures pine and wear away their lives, let him

Pray Heaven for a human heart,

that he may come, in time, to have some portion in the last bequest of THOMAS HOOD.

"Passing from these productions as being widely known of late, and (for the same reason) from THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM, THE HAUNTED HOUSE, and THE GOLDEN LEGEND OF MISS KILLMANSEGG (all of extraordinary merit), we will confine our extracts to two minor pieces, with which our readers may be less acquainted. There is, in the first, a sentiment so touching and so universal, that there will probably be no collection of poems in the English tongue for centuries to come, in which it will not find a place:—

STANZAS.

Farewell Life! my senses swim,
And the world is growing dim:
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night—
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapor chill;
Strong the earthy odor grows—
I smell the mould above the rose!

Welcome Life! the Spirit strives!
Strength returns and hope revives;
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn,—
O'er the earth there comes a bloom;
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapor cold—
I smell the rose above the mould!

April, 1845.

"The next (the ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF CLAPHAM ACADEMY) is of a different class, but who has not this poem in his mind and his experience?

"The preface, from which we have already quoted, expresses a hope 'that in any future recital of the names of writers who have contributed to the stock of genuine English poetry, Thomas Hood will find honorable mention.' Before it can be otherwise, not only must the character of genuine English poetry be altogether changed, but with it the recollections, fancies, affections, and very nature of men.

"We may be allowed to add one parting word; not of the Author, but the deceased friend. That he was a man of a most free and noble spirit, who harbored none of the grudging jealousies too often attendant on the pursuit of literature; who found no detraction from his own merits in the success and praise of another; who, beset by great infirmity of body, and many sharp anxieties of mind, could travel far out of his way to swell, with his generous pen, the triumph of a young writer, with whom he had, at that time, little or no acquaintance, saving through his works;—no one living should know better, than the writer of this faltering tribute to his memory."

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SONNETS.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

POEMS.

THE LEE-SHORE.

Sleet! and Hail! and Thunder!
  And ye Winds that rave,
Till the sands thereunder
  Tinge the sullen wave—

Winds, that like a Demon,
  Howl with horrid note
Round the toiling Seaman,
  In his tossing boat—

From his humble dwelling,
  On the shingly shore,
Where the billows swelling,
  Keep such hollow roar—

From that weeping Woman,
  Seeking with her cries,
Succor superhuman
  From the frowning skies—

From the Urchin pining
  For his Father's knee—
From the lattice shining,
  Drive him out to sea!

Let broad leagues dissever
  Him from yonder foam;—
Oh, God! to think Man ever
  Comes too near his Home!

THE DEATH-BED.

We watch'd her breathing thro' the night,
  Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
  Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seem'd to speak,
  So slowly mov'd about,
As we had lent her half our powers
  To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
  Our fears our hopes belied—
We thought her dying when she slept,
  And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,
  And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids clos'd—she had
  Another morn than ours.

TO MY DAUGHTER.

ON HER BIRTHDAY.

DEAR Fanny! nine long years ago,
While yet the morning sun was low,
And rosy with the eastern glow
  The landscape smil'd;
Whilst low'd the newly-waken'd herds—
Sweet as the early song of birds,
I heard those first, delightful words,
  "Thou hast a child!"

Along with that uprising dew
Tears glisten'd in my eyes, though few,
To hail a dawning quite as new
  To me, as Time:
It was not sorrow—not annoy—
But like a happy maid, though coy,
With grief-like welcome, even Joy
  Forestalls its prime.

So may'st thou live, dear! many years,
In all the bliss that life endears,
Not without smiles, nor yet from tears
  Too strictly kept:

When first thy infant littleness
I folded in my fond caress,
The greatest proof of happiness
Was this—I wept.

Sept., 1839.

LINES

ON SEEING MY WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN SLEEPING IN THE SAME CHAMBER.

And has the earth lost its so spacious round,
The sky its blue circumference above,
That in this little chamber there is found
Both earth and heaven—my universe of love!
All that my God can give me or remove,
Here sleeping, save myself, in mimic death.
Sweet that in this small compass I behove
To live their living and to breathe their breath!
Almost I wish that with one common sigh
We might resign all mundane care and strife,
And seek together that transcendent sky,
Where Father, Mother, Children, Husband, Wife,
Together pant in everlasting life!

Coblentz, Nov., 1835.

TO A CHILD

EMBRACING HIS MOTHER.

I.

Love thy mother, little one!
Kiss and clasp her neck again,—
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
  Love thy mother, little one!

II.

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee,—
Hereafter thou may'st shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
  Gaze upon her living eyes!

III.

Press her lips the while they glow
With love that they have often told,—
Hereafter thou may'st press in wo,
And kiss them till thine own are cold.
  Press her lips the while they glow!

IV.

Oh, revere her raven hair!
Altho' it be not silver-grey;
Too early Death, led on by Care,
May snatch save one dear lock away.
  Oh! revere her raven hair!

V.

Pray for her at eve and morn,
That Heaven may long the stroke defer,—
For thou may'st live the hour forlorn
When thou wilt ask to die with her.
  Pray for her at eve and morn!

STANZAS.

Farewell Life! my senses swim,
And the world is growing dim:
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night—
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapor chill;
Strong the earthy odor grows—
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Welcome Life! the Spirit strives!
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Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapor cold—
I smell the rose above the mould!

April, 1845.

TO A FALSE FRIEND.

Our hands have met, but not our hearts;
Our hands will never meet again.
Friends, if we have ever been,
Friends we cannot now remain:
I only know I lov'd you once,
I only know I lov'd in vain;
Our hands have met, but not our hearts;
Our hands will never meet again!

Then farewell to heart and hand!
I would our hands had never met:
Even the outward form of love
Must be resign'd with some regret.
Friends, we still might seem to be,
If my wrong could e'er forget
Our hands have join'd but not our hearts:
I would our hands had never met!

THE POET'S PORTION.

What is mine—a treasury—a dower—
A magic talisman of mighty power?
A poet's wide possession of the earth.
He has th' enjoyment of a flower's birth
Before its budding—ere the first red streaks,—
And Winter cannot rob him of their cheeks.
Look—if his dawn be not as other men's!
Twenty bright flushes—or another kens
The first of sunlight is abroad—he sees
Its golden 'lection of the topmost trees,
And opes the splendid fissures of the morn.
When do his fruits delay, when doth his corn
Linger for harvesting? Before the leaf
Is commonly abroad, in his pil'd sheaf
The flagging poppies lose their ancient flame.
No sweet there is, no pleasure I can name,
But he will sip it first—before the lees.
'Tis his to taste rich honey,—ere the bees
Are busy with the brooms. He may forestall
June's rosy advent for his coronal:
Before th' expectant buds upon the bough,
Twining his thoughts to bloom upon his brow.
Oh! blest to see the flower in its seed,
Before its leafy presence; for indeed

Leaves are but wings, on which the summer flies,
And each thing perishable fades and dies,
Escap'd in thought; but his rich thinkings be
Like overflows of immortality.
So that what there is steep'd shall perish never,
But live and bloom, and be a joy for ever.

TIME, HOPE, AND MEMORY.

I HEARD a gentle maiden, in the spring,
Set her sweet sighs to music, and thus sing:
"Fly through the world, and I will follow thee,
Only for looks that may turn back on me;

Only for roses that your chance may throw—
Though wither'd—I will wear them on my brow,
To be a thoughtful fragrance to my brain;
Warm'd with such love, that they will bloom again.

Thy love before thee, I must tread behind,
Kissing thy foot-prints, though to me unkind;
But trust not all her fondness though it seem,
Lest thy true love should rest on a false dream.

Her face is smiling, and her voice is sweet;
But smiles betray, and music sings deceit;
And words speak false;—yet, if they welcome prove,
I'll be their echo, and repeat their love.

Only if waken'd to sad truth at last,
The bitterness to come, and sweetness past;
When thou art vext, then, turn again, and see
Thou hast lov'd Hope, but Memory lov'd thee."

FLOWERS.

I WILL not have the mad Clytie,
Whose head is turn'd by the sun;
The tulip is a courtly quean,
Whom, therefore, I will shun;
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand;
The wolfsbane I should dread;
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,
And so is no mate for me—
And the daisy's cheek is tipp'd with a blush,
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom's betroth'd to the bee;—
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

TO ——.

Still glides the gentle streamlet on,
With shifting current new and strange;
The water that was here is gone,
But those green shadows never change.

Serene or ruffled by the storm,
On present waves, as on the past,
The mirror'd grove retains its form,
The self-same trees their semblance cast.

The hue each fleeting globule wears,
That drop bequeaths it to the next;
One picture still the surface bears,
To illustrate the murmur'd text.

So, love, however time may flow,
Fresh hours pursuing those that flee,
One constant image still shall show
My tide of life is true to thee.

TO ——.

Let us make a leap, my dear,
In our love, of many a year,
And date it very far away,
On a bright clear summer day,
When the heart was like a sun
To itself, and falsehood none;
And the rosy lips a part
Of the very loving heart,
And the shining of the eye
But a sign to know it by;—
When my faults were all forgiven,
And my life deserv'd of Heaven.
Dearest, let us reckon so,
And love for all that long ago;
Each absence count a year complete,
And keep a birthday when we meet.

TO ——.

I LOVE thee—I love thee!
  'Tis all that I can say;—
It is my vision in the night,
  My dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart,
  The blessing when I pray:
I love thee—I love thee!
  Is all that I can say.

I love thee—I love thee!
  Is ever on my tongue;
In all my proudest poesy,
  That chorus still is sung;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
  Amidst the gay and young:
I love thee—I love thee!
  A thousand maids among.

I love thee—I love thee!
  Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
  Whose tender tones entrance;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
  That still these words enhance,
I love thee—I love thee!
  Whatever be thy chance.

SERENADE.

Ah, sweet, thou little knowest how
  I wake and passionate watches keep;
And yet while I address thee now,
  Methinks thou smilest in thy sleep.
'Tis sweet enough to make me weep,
  That tender thought of love and thee,
That while the world is hush'd so deep,
  Thy soul's perhaps awake to me!

Sleep on, sleep on, sweet bride of sleep!
  With golden visions for thy dower,
While I this midnight vigil keep,
  And bless thee in thy silent bower;
To me 'tis sweeter than the power
  Of sleep, and fairy dreams unfurl'd,
That I alone, at this still hour,
  In patient love outwatch the world.

VERSES IN AN ALBUM.

Far above the hollow
Tempest, and its moan,
Singeth bright Apollo
In his golden zone,—
Cloud doth never shade him,
Nor a storm invade him,
On his joyous throne.

So when I behold me
In an orb as bright,
How thy soul doth fold me
In its throne of light!
Sorrow never paineth,
Nor a care attaineth,
To that blessed height.

BALLAD.

It was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast;
It was the time of roses,—
We pluck'd them as we pass'd!

That churlish season never frown'd
On early lovers yet!
Oh, no—the world was newly crown'd
With flowers when first we met.

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast;
It was the time of roses,—
We pluck'd them as we pass'd!

* * * *.

THE ROMANCE OF COLOGNE.

'Tis even—on the pleasant banks of Rhine
The thrush is singing and the dove is cooing;
A Youth and Maiden on the turf recline
Alone—and he is wooing.

Yet woos in vain, for to the voice of love
No kindly sympathy the Maid discovers,
Though round them both, and in the air above,
The tender spirit hovers.

Untouch'd by lovely Nature and her laws,
The more he pleads, more coyly she represses;
Her lips denies, and now her hand withdraws,
Rejecting his addresses.

Fair is she as the dreams young poets weave,
Bright eyes and dainty lips and tresses curly,
In outward loveliness a child of Eve,
But cold as nymph of Lurley.

The more Love tries her pity to engross,
The more she chills him with a strange behavior;
Now tells her beads, now gazes on the Cross
And image of the Saviour.

Forth goes the lover with a farewell moan,
As from the presence of a thing unhuman;—
Oh, what unholy spell hath turn'd to stone
The young warm heart of woman!

* * * * * *

'Tis midnight—and the moonbeam, cold and wan,
On bower and river quietly is sleeping,
And o'er the corse of a self-murder'd man
The Maiden fair is weeping.

In vain she looks into his glassy eyes,
No pressure answers to her hands so pressing;
In her fond arms impassively he lies,
Clay-cold to her caressing.

Despairing, stunn'd, by her eternal loss,
She flies to succor that may best beseem her;
But, lo! a frowning figure veils the Cross,
And hides the blest Redeemer!

With stern right hand it stretches forth a scroll,
Wherein she reads, in melancholy letters,
The cruel, fatal pact that placed her soul
And her young heart in fetters.

"Wretch! sinner! renegade! to truth and God,
Thy holy faith for human love to barter!"
No more she hears, but on the bloody sod
Sinks, Bigotry's last martyr!

And side by side the hapless Lovers lie;
Tell me, harsh Priest! by yonder tragic token,
What part hath God in such a bond, whereby
Or hearts or vows are broken?

TO ——.

COMPOSED AT ROTTERDAM.

I GAZE upon a city,—
A city new and strange,—
Down many a watery vista
My fancy takes a range;
From side to side I saunter,
And wonder where I am;
And can *you* be in England,
And *I* at Rotterdam!

Before me lie dark waters
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams
Sleep, restless in their sleep;
A sort of vulgar Venice
Reminds me where I am;
Yes, yes, you are in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

Tall houses with quaint gables,
Where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges,
And trees in formal line,

And masts of spicy vessels
From western Surinam,
All tell me you're in England,
But I'm in Rotterdam.

Those sailors, how outlandish
The face and form of each!
They deal in foreign gestures,
And use a foreign speech;
A tongue not learn'd near Isis,
Or studied by the Cam,
Declares that you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

And now across a market
My doubtful way I trace,
Where stands a solemn statue,
The Genius of the place;
And to the great Erasmus
I offer my salaam;
Who tells me you're in England,
But I'm at Rotterdam.

The coffee-room is open—
I mingle in its crowd,—
The dominos are noisy—
The hookahs raise a cloud;
The flavor now of Fearon's,
That mingles with my dram,
Reminds me you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

Then here it goes, a bumper—
The toast it shall be mine,
In schiedam, or in sherry,
Tokay, or hock of Rhine;
It well deserves the brightest,
Where sunbeam ever swam—
"The girl I love in England"
I drink at Rotterdam!

March, 1835.

I.

TO THE OCEAN.

(Coblentz, May, 1835.)

SHALL I rebuke thee, Ocean, my old love,
That once, in rage with the wild winds at strife,
Thou darest menace my unit of a life,
Sending my clay below, my soul above,
Whilst roar'd thy waves, like lions when they rove
By night, and bound upon their prey by stealth ?
Yet did'st thou ne'er restore my fainting health ?—
Did'st thou ne'er murmur gently like the dove ?
Nay, did'st thou not against my own dear shore
Full break, last link between my land and me ?—
My absent friends talk in thy very roar,
In thy waves' beat their kindly pulse I see,
And, if I must not see my England more,
Next to her soil, my grave be found in thee !

II.

LEAR.

A POOR old king, with sorrow for my crown,
Thron'd upon straw, and mantled with the wind—
For pity, my own tears have made me blind
That I might never see my children's frown;
And may be madness, like a friend, has thrown
A folded fillet over my dark mind,
So that unkindly speech may sound for kind,—
Albeit I know not.—I am childish grown—
And have not gold to purchase wit withal—
I that have once maintain'd most royal state—
A very bankrupt now that may not call
My child, my child—all-beggar'd save in tears,
Wherewith I daily weep an old man's fate,
Foolish—and blind—and overcome with years!

III.

SONNET TO A SONNET.

Rare composition of a poet-knight,
Most chivalrous amongst chivalric men,
Distinguish'd for a polish'd lance and pen
In tuneful contest and in tourney-fight;
Lustrous in scholarship, in honor bright,
Accomplish'd in all graces current then,
Humane as any in historic ken,
Brave, handsome, noble, affable, polite;
Most courteous to that race become of late
So fiercely scornful of all kind advance,
Rude, bitter, coarse, implacable in hate
To Albion, plotting ever her mischance,—
Alas, fair verse! how false and out of date
Thy phrase "sweet enemy" applied to France!

IV.

FALSE POETS AND TRUE.

Look how the lark soars upward and is gone,
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky !
His voice is heard, but body there is none
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die
Obscur'd, and hid by death's oblivious shroud,
And Earth inherits the rich melody
Like raining music from the morning cloud.
Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud,
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space :
The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd
Of undistinguish'd birds, a twittering race ;
But only lark and nightingale forlorn
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

V.

TO ——.

My heart is sick with longing, tho' I feed
On hope ; Time goes with such a heavy pace
That neither brings nor takes from thy embrace,
As if he slept—forgetting his old speed :
For, as in sunshine only we can read
The march of minutes on the dial's face.
So in the shadows of this lonely place
There is no love, and Time is dead indeed.
But when, dear lady, I am near thy heart,
Thy smile is time, and then so swift it flies,
It seems we only meet to tear apart
With aching hands and lingering of eyes.
Alas, alas ! that we must learn hours' flight
By the same light of love that makes them bright !

VI.

FOR THE 14TH OF FEBRUARY.

No popular respect will I omit
To do thee honor on this happy day,
When every loyal lover tasks his wit
His simple truth in studious rhymes to pay,
And to his mistress dear his hopes convey.
Rather thou knowest I would still outrun
All calendars with Love's,—whose date alway
Thy bright eyes govern better than the Sun,—
For with thy favor was my life begun ;
And still I reckon on from smiles to smiles,
And not by summers, for I thrive on none
But those thy cheerful countenance compiles :
Oh ! if it be to choose and call thee mine,
Love, thou art every day my Valentine.

VII.

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

I.

Oh, 'tis a touching thing, to make one weep,—
A tender infant with its curtain'd eye,
Breathing as it would neither live nor die
With that unchanging countenance of sleep!
As if its silent dream, serene and deep,
Had lin'd its slumber with a still blue sky,
So that the passive cheeks unconscious lie
With no more life than roses—just to keep
The blushes warm, and the mild, odorous breath.
O blossom boy! so calm is thy repose,
So sweet a compromise of life and death,
'Tis pity those fair buds should e'er unclose
For memory to stain their inward leaf,
Tinging thy dreams with unacquainted grief.

VIII.

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

II.

THINE eyelids slept so beauteously, I deem'd
No eyes could wake so beautiful as they :
Thy rosy cheeks in such still slumbers lay,
I lov'd their peacefulness, nor ever dream'd
Of dimples ;—for those parted lips so seem'd,
I never thought a smile could sweetlier play,
Nor that so graceful life could chase away
Thy graceful death,—till those blue eyes upbeam'd.
Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drown'd,
And roses bloom more rosily for joy,
And odorous silence ripens into sound,
And fingers move to sound.—All-beauteous boy !
How thou dost waken into smiles, and prove,
If not more lovely, thou art more like Love !

IX.

THE World is with me, and its many cares,
Its woes—its wants—the anxious hopes and fears
That wait on all terrestrial affairs—
The shades of former and of future years—
Foreboding fancies, and prophetic tears,
Quelling a spirit that was once elate.
Heavens! what a wilderness the world appears,
Where Youth, and Mirth, and Health are out of date!
But no—a laugh of innocence and joy
Resounds, like music of the fairy race,
And, gladly turning from the world's annoy,
I gaze upon a little radiant face,
And bless, internally, the merry boy
Who "makes a *son-shine* in a shady place."

THE PLEA

OF

THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

1827.

TO

CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

My dear Friend,

I thank my literary fortune that I am not reduced, like many better wits, to barter dedications, for the hope or promise of patronage, with some nominally great man; but that where true affection points, and honest respect, I am free to gratify my head and heart by a sincere inscription. An intimacy and dearness, worthy of a much earlier date than our acquaintance can refer to, direct me at once to your name: and with this acknowledgment of your ever kind feeling towards me, I desire to record a respect and admiration for you as a writer, which no one acquainted with our literature, save Elia himself, will think disproportionate or misplaced. If I had not these better reasons to govern me, I should be guided to the same selection by your intense yet critical relish for the works of our great Dramatist, and for that favorite play in particular which has furnished the subject of my verses.

It is my design, in the following Poem, to celebrate, by an allegory, that immortality which Shakspeare has conferred on the Fairy mythology by his Midsummer Night's Dream. But for him, those pretty children of our childhood would leave barely their names to our maturer years; they belong, as the mites upon the plum, to the bloom of fancy, a thing generally too frail and beautiful to withstand the rude handling of time: but the Poet has made this most perishable part of the mind's creation equal to the most enduring; he has so intertwined the Elfins with human sympathies, and linked them by so many delightful associations with the productions of nature, that they are as real to the mind's eye, as their green magical circles to the outer sense.

It would have been a pity for such a race to go extinct, even though they were but as the butterflies that hover about the leaves and blossoms of the visible world.

I am,

My dear Friend,

Yours most truly,

T. HOOD.

THE PLEA

OF

THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES.

I.

'Twas in that mellow season of the year
When the hot Sun singes the yellow leaves
Till they be gold,—and with a broader sphere
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves;
When more abundantly the spider weaves,
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier clime;
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,
Touch'd with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their prime,

II.

So that, wherever I address'd my way,
I seem'd to track the melancholy feet
Of him that is the Father of Decay,
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet;—
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat
To some unwasted regions of my brain,
Charm'd with the light of summer and the heat,
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,
And sprout fresh flowers in mine own domain.

III.

It was a shady and sequester'd scene,
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,
Planted with his own laurels evergreen,
And roses that for endless summer blow;
And there were founting springs to overflow
Their marble basins,—and cool green arcades
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades,—
With timid coneys cropping the green blades.

IV.

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish,
Argent and gold; and some of Tyrian skin,
Some crimson-barr'd; and ever at a wish
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom;
Whilst others with fresh hues row'd forth to win
My changeable regard,—for so we doom
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

V.

And there were many birds of many dyes,
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,
Besides some vocalists, without a name,
That oft on fairy errands come and go,
With accents magical;—and all were tame,
And peckled at my hand where'er I came.

VI.

And for my sylvan company, in lieu
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,
Sate Queen Titania with her pretty crew,
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,
For she was gracious to my childish years,
And made me free of her enchanted round;
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound.

VII

"Ah me," she cries, "was ever moonlight seen
So clear and tender for our midnight trips?
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene
My lieges all!"—Away the goblin skips
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,
Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,
Like a fray'd bird in the grey owlet's beak.

VIII.

And lo! upon my fix'd delighted ken
Appear'd the loyal Fays.—Some by degrees
Crept from the primrose buds that open'd then,
And some from bell-shap'd blossoms like the bees,
Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,
Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass;
Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
Dropp'd like shed blossoms, silent to the grass,
Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

IX.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain ;
And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,
Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy rain,
Then circling the bright Moon, had wash'd her car,
And still bedew'd it with a various stain :
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

X.

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,
Was absent, whether some distemper'd spleen
Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been
Sometime obnoxious), kept him from his queen,
And made her now peruse the starry skies
Prophetical with such an absent mien ;
Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,
And oft the Moon was incensed with her sighs—

XI.

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon
Their hushing dances languish'd to a stand,
Like midnight leaves when, as the Zephyrs swoon,
All on their drooping stems they sink unfann'd,—
So into silence droop'd the fairy band,
To see their empress dear so pale and still,
Crowding her softly round on either hand,
As pale as frosty snow-drops, and as chill,
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

XII.

"Alas," quoth she, "ye know our fairy lives
Are leased upon the fickle faith of men;
Not measured out against fate's mortal knives,
Like human gossamers, we perish when
We fade, and are forgot in worldly ken,—
Though poesy has thus prolong'd our date,
Thanks be to the sweet Bard's auspicious pen
That rescued us so long!—howbeit of late
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

XIII.

"And this dull day my melancholy sleep
Hath been so thronged with images of wo,
That even now I cannot choose but weep
To think this was some sad prophetic show
Of future horror to befall us so,—
Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—
Yea, our poor empire's fall and overthrow,—
For this was my long vision's dreadful stress,
And when I waked my trouble was not less.

XIV.

"Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,
Such leaden weight dragg'd these Icarian wings,
My faithless wand was wavering and weak,
And slimy toads had trespass'd in our rings—
The birds refused to sing for me—all things
Disown'd their old allegiance to our spells;
The rude bees prick'd me with their rebel stings;
And, when I pass'd, the valley-lily's bells
Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.

XV.

"And ever on the faint and flagging air
A doleful spirit with a dreary note
Cried in my fearful ear, 'Prepare! prepare!'
Which soon I knew came from a raven's throat,
Perch'd on a cyprus bough not far remote,—
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,
That always cometh with his soot-black coat
To make hearts dreary:—for he is a blot
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot!—

XVI.

"Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,
With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit
Startled me all aheap!—and soon I saw
The horridest shape that ever raised my awe,—
A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,
With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,
And this was sure the deadliest of them all!

XVII.

"Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown;
So from his barren poll one hoary lock
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,
Well nigh to where his frosty brows did frown
Like jagged icicles at cottage eves;
And for his coronal he wore some brown
And bristled ears gather'd from Ceres' sheaves,
Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.

XVIII.

"And lo! upon a mast rear'd far aloft,
He bore a very bright and crescent blade,
The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,
In meditative spite, that, sore dismay'd,
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade;
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by:
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made
The trembling birds betake them to the sky,
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.

XIX.

"And ever as he sigh'd, his foggy breath
Blurr'd out the landscape like a flight of smoke:
Thence knew I this was either dreary Death
Or Time, who leads all creatures to his stroke,
Ah wretched me!"—Here, even as she spoke,
The melancholy Shape came gliding in,
And lean'd his back against an antique oak,
Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin,
They scarce were seen against the Dryad's skin.

XX.

Then what a fear seized all the little rout!
Look how a flock of panick'd sheep will stare—
And huddle close—and start—and wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—
So did that sudden Apparition scare
All close aheap those small affrighted things;
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings;
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings?

XXI.

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear
And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,
Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges dear:
"Alas!" quoth she, "is there no nodding wheat
Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet,—
Or wither'd leaves to ravish from the tree,—
Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat?
Think but what vaunting monuments there be
Builded in spite and mockery of thee.

XXII.

"O fret away the fabric walls of Fame,
And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust:
Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each high name,
And waste old armors of renown with rust:
Do all of this, and thy revenge is just:
Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,
And check Ambition's overweening lust,
That dares exterminating war with Time,—
But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

XXIII.

"Frail feeble sprites!—the children of a dream!
Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,
Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,
Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then;—
So do we flutter in the glance of youth
And fervid fancy,—and so perish when
The eye of faith grows aged;—in sad truth,
Feeling thy sway, O Time! though not thy tooth!

XXIV.

"Where be those old divinities forlorn,
That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?
Alas! their memories are dimm'd and torn,
Like the remainder tatters of a dream:
So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem;—
For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,
That holds the wastes of every human scheme.
O spare us then,—and these our pretty elves,
We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves!"

XXV.

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name
Those old Olympians, scatter'd by the whirl
Of fortune's giddy wheel, and brought to shame,
Methought a scornful and malignant curl
Show'd on the lips of that malicious churl,
To think what noble havoes he had made;
So that I fear'd he all at once would hurl
The harmless fairies into endless shade,—
Howbeit he stopp'd awhile to whet his blade.

XXVI.

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail
Rise up in concert from their mingled dread;
Pity it was to see them, all so pale,
Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed;—
But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,
That hung between two branches of a briar,
And 'gan to swing and gambol heels o'er head,
Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,
For him no present grief could long inspire.

XXVII.

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,
Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,
Bedews a pathway from her throne;—and stops
Before the foot of her arch enemy.
And with her little arms enfolds his knee,
That shows more gristly from that fair embrace;
But she will ne'er depart. "Alas!" quoth she,
"My painful fingers I will here enlace
Till I have gain'd your pity for our race.

XXVIII.

"What have we ever done to earn this grudge,
And hate—(if not too humble for thy hating?)—
Look o'er our labors and our lives, and judge
If there be any ills of our creating;
For we are very kindly creatures, dating
With nature's charities still sweet and bland:—
O think this murder worthy of debating!"—
Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,
To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

XXIX.

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,
Clad all in white like any chorister,
Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings,
That made soft music at each little stir,
But something louder than a bee's demur
Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,
And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—
And O his voice was sweet, touch'd with the gloom
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom!

XXX.

Quoth he, "We make all melodies our care,
That no false discords may offend the Sun,
Music's great master—tuning everywhere
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one
Duly to place and season, so that none
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn
The shrill sweet lark; and when the day is done,
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.

XXXI.

"We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,
That make a chorus with their single note;
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place,
That duly they may get their tunes by rote;
And oft, like echoes, answering remote,
We hide in thickets from the feather'd throng,
And strain in rivalship each throbbing throat,
Singing in shrill responses all day long,
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

XXXII.

"Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love
The raining music from a morning cloud,
When vanish'd larks are carolling above,
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud;—
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell
Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel."

XXXIII.

Then Saturn thus :—" Sweet is the merry lark,
That carols in man's ear so clear and strong ;
And youth must love to listen in the dark
That tuneful elegy of Tereus' wrong ;
But I have heard that ancient strain too long,
For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,
And I grow weary for some newer song ;
For wherefore had I wings, unless to range
Through all things mutable from change to change ?

XXXIV.

" But wouldst thou hear the melodies of Time,
Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll
Over hush'd cities, and the midnight chime
Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll
Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,
Saying, Time shall be final of all things,
Whose late, last voice must elegise the whole,—
O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,
And make the wide air tremble while it rings ! "

XXXV.

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,
Saying, " We be the handmaids of the Spring,
In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,
Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.
We tend upon buds' birth and blossoming,
And count the leafy tributes that they owe—
As, so much to the earth—so much to fling
In showers to the brook—so much to go
In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.

XXXVI.

"The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green;
Pansies, and those veil'd nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen;
And golden daffodils, pluck'd for May's Queen;
And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath;
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
Whose tuneful voice, turn'd fragrance in his breath,
Kiss'd by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

XXXVII.

"The widow'd primrose weeping to the moon,
And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright
A cool libation hoarded for the noon
Is kept—and she that purifies the light,
The virgin lily, faithful to her white,
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame;
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's spright,
Our every godchild; by whatever name—
Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the same!"

XXXVIII.

Then that old Mower stamp'd his heel, and struck
His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,
Saying, "Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck
With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crown'd
With flow'ry chaplets, save when they are found
Wither'd?—Whenever have I pluck'd a rose,
Except to scatter its vain leaves around?
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,
And bring decay on every flow'r that blows.

XXXIX.

"Or when am I so wroth as when I view
The wanton pride of Summer ;—how she decks
The birth-day world with blossoms ever new,
As if Time had not lived, and heap'd great wrecks
Of years on years ?—O then I bravely vex
And catch the gay Months in their gaudy plight,
And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,
And raise great trophies to my ancient might."

XL.

Then saith another, "We are kindly things,
And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—
Witness these hearts embroider'd on our wings,
To show our constant patronage of love :—
We sit at even, in sweet bow'rs above
Lovers, and shake rich odors on the air,
To mingle with their sighs ; and still remove
The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

XLI.

"And we are near the mother when she sits
Beside the infant in its wicker bed ;
And we are in the fairy scene that flits
Across its tender brain : sweet dreams we shed,
And whilst the tender little soul is fled
Away, to sport with our young elves, the while
We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,
So that their careful parents they beguile.

XLII.

"O then, if ever thou hast breath'd a vow
At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise
Crush'd the dear curl on a regardful brow
That did not frown thee from thy honey prize—
If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within
To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,
Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,
For Love's dear sake, let us thy pity win!"

XLIII

Then Saturn fiercely thus:—"What joy have I
In tender babes, that have devour'd mine own,
Whenever to the light I heard them cry,
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone?
Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,
In monstrous dints of my enormous tooth;
And,—but the peopled world is too full grown
For hunger's edge,—I would consume all youth
At one great meal, without delay or ruth!

XLIV.

"For I am well nigh craz'd and wild to hear
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,
Saying, We shall not die nor disappear,
But in these other selves, ourselves succeed,
Ev'n as ripe flowers pass into their seed
Only to be renew'd from prime to prime,
All of which boastings I am forced to read,
Besides a thousand challenges to Time
Which bragging lovers have compil'd in rhyme.

XLV.

"Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o' nights,
There will I steal, and with my hurried hand
Startle them suddenly from their delights
Before the next encounter hath been plann'd,
Ravishing hours in little minutes spann'd;
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my dart,
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart."

XLVI.

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in green,
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly stood
Each at his proper ease, as they had been
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—
So came this chief right frankly, and made good
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn's cup:—

XLVII.

"We be small foresters and gay, who tend
On trees, and all their furniture of green,
Training the young boughs airily to bend,
And show blue snatches of the sky between;
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen
Birds' crafty dwellings as may hide them best,
But most the timid blackbird's—she, that seen,
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.

XLVIII.

"We bend each tree in proper attitude,
And founting willows train in silvery falls;
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,
And verdant aisles leading to Dryads' halls,
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls;—
We shape all plumy trees against the sky,
And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,
Men say, the tapping woodpecker is nigh.

XLIX.

"Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow cell,
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees' rind,
That haply some lone musing wight may spell
Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—
Or chastest Laura,—sweetly call'd to mind
In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down;—
And sometimes we enrich grey stems, with twined
And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose brown
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.

L.

"And, lastly, for mirth's sake and Christmas cheer,
We bear the seedling berries, for increase,
To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,
Careful that mistletoe may never cease;—
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace
Of sombre forests, or to see light break
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release
Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad's sake."

LI.

Then Saturn, with a frown :—" Go forth, and fell
Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell
To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky
Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy
The next green generation of the tree ;
But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er they fly,—
Which in the bleak air I would rather see,
Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be.

LII.

" For I dislike all prime, and verdant pets,
Ivy except, that on the aged wall
Preys with its worm-like roots, and daily frets
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,
King-like, worn down by its own coronal :—
Neither in forest haunts love I to won,
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves on,
Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.

LIII.

" For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,
Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs ;
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes ;—
But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,
And must be courted with the gauds of spring ;
Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap, and cries,
What shall we always do, but love and sing ?—
And Time is reckon'd a discarded thing."

LIV.

Here in my dream it made me fret to see
How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while
Had blithely jested with calamity,
With mistim'd mirth mocking the doleful style
Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile
To see him so reflect their grief aside,
Turning their solemn looks to half a smile—
Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide ;—
But soon a novel advocate I spied.

LV.

Quoth he—" We teach all natures to fulfil
Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—
The bee's sweet alchemy,—the spider's skill,—
The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—
And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—
The lapwing's cunning to preserve her nest,—
But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet
And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,
Its tender pity of poor babes distrest.

LVI.

" Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins
Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves
From our example ; so the spider spins,
And eke the silk-worm, pattern'd by ourselves :
Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves
Of early bees, and busy toils commence,
Watch'd of wise men, that know not we are elves,
But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense,
And praise our human-like intelligence.

LVII.

"Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,
And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,
What time the leaves are scatter'd by the gale,
Mindful of that old forest burying ;—
As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,
For whom our craft most curiously contrives,
If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,
To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,
And we will pay the ransom in full hives."

LVIII.

"Now by my glass," quoth Time, "ye do offend
In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,
And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,
But they lay up for need a timely store.
And travail with the seasons evermore ;
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath pass'd away,
And none but I can tell what hide he wore ;
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,
In riddling wonder his great bones survey."

LIX.

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun
Hath all embroider'd with its crooked gold,
It was so quaintly wrought, and overrun
With spangled traceries,—most meet for one
That was a warden of the pearly streams ;—
And as he stept out of the shadows dun,
His jewels sparkled in the pale moon's gleams,
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

LX.

Quoth he,—" We bear the gold and silver keys
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below
Course thro' the veiny earth,—which when they freeze
Into hard chrysolites, we bid to flow,
Creeping like subtle snakes, when, as they go,
We guide their windings to melodious falls,
At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and low,
Poets have tun'd their smoothest madrigals,
To sing to ladies in their banquet halls.

LXI.

" And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat
Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn
Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn,
And languid fish, unpois'd, grow sick and yearn,—
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,
And little channels dig, wherein we turn
The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

LXII.

" Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,
With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—
In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—
And all reflections in a streamlet made,
Haply of thy own love, that, disarray'd,
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—
By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,
And winking stars reduplicate at night,
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight."

LXIII.

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks
Mov'd not the spiteful Shade :—Quoth he, "Your taste
Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks
And slavish rivulets that run to waste
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste
To swell the vast dominion of the sea,
In whose great presence I am held disgrac'd,
And neighbor'd with a king that rivals me
In ancient might and hoary majesty.

LXIV.

"Whereas I rul'd in Chaos, and still keep
The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,
Before the briny fountains of the deep
Brimm'd up the hollow cavities of earth ;—
I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,
Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,
And infant Titans of enormous girth,
Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks,
Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.

LXV.

"Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,
That scar'd the world ?—By this sharp scythe they fell,
And half the sky was curdled with their blood :
So have all primal giants sigh'd farewell.
No Wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,
Nor pearly Naiads. All their days are done
That strove with Time, untimely, to excel ;
Wherefore I raz'd their progenies, and none
But my great shadow intercepts the sun !"

LXVI.

Then saith the timid Fay—"Oh, mighty Time!
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans' fall,
For they were stain'd with many a bloody crime:
Great giants work great wrongs,—but we are small,
For love goes lowly; but Oppression's tall,
And with surpassing strides goes foremost still
Where love indeed can hardly reach at all;
Like a poor dwarf o'erburthen'd with good will,
That labors to efface the tracks of ill.—

LXVII.

"Man even strives with Man, but we eschew
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor;
Nay, we are gentle as sweet heaven's dew,
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite:
For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,
But only when all love hath taken flight,
And youth's warm gracious heart is harden'd quite.

LXVIII.

"So are our gentle natures intertwin'd
With sweet humanities, and closely knit
In kindly sympathy with human kind.
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,
All hopeless maids and lovers,—nor omit
Magical succors unto hearts forlorn:—
We charm man's life, and do not perish it;—
So judge us by the helps we show'd this morn,
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

LXIX.

"'Twas nigh sweet Amwell ;—for the Queen had task'd
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet bask'd ;
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see,
Planted in moss-grown rushes to the knee,
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim ;—
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

LXX.

"His face was ashy pale, and leaden care
Had sunk the levell'd arches of his brow,
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to fare
Over those melancholy springs and slow,
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,
And fell anon into the chilly stream ;
Which, as his mimick'd image show'd below,
Wrinkled his face with many a needless seam,
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.

LXXI.

"And lo! upon the air we saw him stretch
His passionate arms ; and, in a wayward strain,
He 'gan to elegize that fellow wretch
That with mute gestures answer'd him again,
Saying, 'Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain
Life's sad weak captive in a prison strong,
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong ?—
Thou wear'st that mortal livery too long !'

LXXII.

"This, with more spleenful speeches and some tears,
When he had spent upon the imaged wave,
Speedily I conven'd my elfin peers
Under the lily-cups, that we might save
This woful mortal from a wilful grave
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,
Seeing he was mere melancholy's slave,
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,
And straight was tangled in her secret net.

LXXIII.

"Therefore, as still he watch'd the water's flow,
Daintily we transform'd, and with bright fins
Came glancing through the gloom; some from below
Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,
Snatching the light upon their purple skins;
Then under the broad leaves made slow retire
One like a golden galley bravely wins
Its radiant course,—another glows like fire,—
Making that wayward man our pranks admire.

LXXIV.

"And so he banish'd thought, and quite forgot
All contemplation of that wretched face;
And so we wil'd him from that lonely spot
Along the river's brink: till, by heaven's grace,
He met a gentle haunter of the place,
Full of sweet wisdom gather'd from the brooks,
Who there discuss'd his melancholy case
With wholesome texts learn'd from kind nature's books,
Meanwhile he newly trimm'd his lines and hooks."

LXXV.

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now—
"Let me remember how I sav'd a man,
Whose fatal noose was fasten'd on a bough,
Intended to abridge his sad life's span;
For haply I was by when he began
His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,
And overheard his melancholy plan,
How he had made a vow to end his days,
And therefore follow'd him in all his ways,

LXXVI.

"Through brake and tangled copse, for much he loath'd
All populous haunts, and roam'd in forests rude,
To hide himself from man. But I had cloth'd
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued,
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,
Till we were come beside an ancient tree
Late blasted by a storm. Here he renew'd
His loud complaints,—choosing that spot to be
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

LXXVII.

"It was a wild and melancholy glen,
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,
Push'd through the rotten sod for fear's remark;
A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,
With many blasted oaks moss-grown and grey.

LXXVIII.

"But here upon his final desperate clause
Suddenly I pronounc'd so sweet a strain,
Like a pang'd nightingale, it made him pause,
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,
The sad remainder oozing from his brain
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,
Which through his ardent eyes began to drain;—
Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclos'd their shears:—
So pity me and all my fated peers!"

LXXIX.

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hush'd:
When with the hoary shape a fresh tongue pleads,
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blush'd
To read the record of her own good deeds:—
"It chanc'd," quoth she, "in seeking through the meads
For honied cowslips, sweetest in the morn,
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads,
And Echo answer'd to the huntsman's horn,
We found a babe left in the swarths forlorn.

LXXX.

"A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting;
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring;
And too soon banish'd from a mother's petting,
To churlish nurture and the wide world's fretting,
For alien pity and unnatural care;—
Alas! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

LXXXI.

"His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipp'd shell;
And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
But quickly roll'd themselves to pearls, and fell,
Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
Or haply wander'd to the dimpled well,
Which love beside his mouth had sweetly plann'd,
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

LXXXII.

"Pity it was to see those frequent tears
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;
There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
As any mother's heart might leap to prize;
Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
Soften'd betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild;—
Just touch'd with thought, and yet not over wise,
They show'd the gentle spirit of a child,
Not yet by care or any craft defil'd.

LXXXIII.

"Pity it was to see the ardent sun
Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so warm;
For kindly shade or shelter he had none,
Nor mother's gentle breast, come fair or storm.
Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform
Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,
All round the infant noisily we swarm,
Haply some passing rustic to advise—
Whilst providential Heav'n our care espies,

LXXXIV.

"And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,
Who, wond'ring at our loud unusual note,
Strays curiously aside, and so doth find
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,
And laps the foundling in his russet coat,
Who thence was nurtur'd in his kindly cot :—
But how he prosper'd let proud London quote,
How wise, how rich, and how renown'd he got,
And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

LXXXV.

"Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,
Whose holds were fraught with costly merchandize,—
Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames,
And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies :
Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,
The mart of merchants from the East and West ;
Whose slender summit, pointing to the skies,
Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—

LXXXVI

"The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,
Inspirited with dew to leap and sing :—
So let us also live, eternal King!
Partakers of the green and pleasant earth :—
Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth :—
Enough there is of joy's decrease and dearth!

LXXXVII.

"Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty,
Perish'd and gone, and hasting to decay;—
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty
Or spite it is to havoc and to slay:
Too many a lovely race raz'd quite away,
Hath left large gaps in life and human loving:—
Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, reproving
Thy desolating hand for our removing."

LXXXVIII.

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,
And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck
Grappling with Time, who clutch'd him like a fly,
Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck!
He, whilst his fellows griev'd, poor wight, had stuck
His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,
And now his ear, and now his beard, would pluck;
Whereas the angry churl had snatch'd him now,
Crying, "Thou impish mischief, who art thou?"

LXXXIX.

"Alas!" quoth Puck, "a little random elf,
Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,
For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,
But for no other purpose, worth, or need;
And yet withal of a most happy breed;—
And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,
My partner dear in many a prankish deed
To make dame Laughter hold her jolly sides,
Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

XC.

"'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,
Till e'en the patient man breathes half a curse;
We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,
And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,
Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse:
And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,
We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse;
But any graver purpose to fulfil,
We have not wit enough, and scarce the will.

XCI.

"We never let the canker melancholy
To gather on our faces like a rust,
But gloss our features with some change of folly,
Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,
But only sorrowing when sorrow must:
We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,
But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust
To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood
Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

XCII.

"Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,
Who gloze her lively universal law,
As if she had not form'd our cheerful feature
To be so tickled with the slightest straw!
So let them vex their mumping mouths, and draw
The corners downward, like a wat'ry moon,
And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw—
We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
Or nurse November on the lap of June.

XCIII.

"For ours are winging sprites, like any bird,
That shun all stagnant settlements of grief;
And even in our rest our hearts are stirr'd,
Like insects settled on a dancing leaf:—
This is our small philosophy in brief,
Which thus to teach hath set me all agape:
But dost thou relish it? O hoary chief!
Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my nape,
And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape."

XCIV.

Then Saturn thus:—shaking his crooked blade
O'erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash
In all the fairies' eyes, dismally fray'd!
His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash—
Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash—
"Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing!
Whom naught can frighten, sadden, or abash,—
To hope my solemn countenance to wring
To idiot smiles!—but I will prune thy wing!

XCV.

"Lo! this most awful handle of my scythe
Stood once a May-pole, with a flowery crown,
Which rustics danc'd around, and maidens blithe,
To wanton pipings:—but I pluck'd it down,
And robed the May Queen in a churchyard gown,
Turning her buds to rosemary and rue;
And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,
And laid each lusty leaper in the dew;—
So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew!"

XCVI.

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch
His mortal engine with each grisly hand,
Which frights the elfin progeny so much,
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand
All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,
With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe!—
Meanwhile, some moving argument I plann'd,
To make the stern Shade merciful,—when lo!
He drops his fatal scythe without a blow!

XCVII.

For, just at need, a timely Apparition
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt;
Making him change his horrible position,
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,
That dares Time's irresistible affront,
Whose strokes have scarr'd even the gods of old;—
Whereas this seem'd a mortal, at mere hunt
For coneys, lighted by the moonshine cold,
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

XCVIII.

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,
And holds her beauty for a while in gaze,
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap;
And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,
As if in question of this magic chance,
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap;
And then upon old Saturn turns askance,
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance:—

XCIX

"Oh, these be Fancy's revellers by night!
Stealthy companions of the downy moth—
Diana's motes, that flit in her pale light,
Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth;—
These be the feasters on night's silver cloth,—
The gnat with shrilly trump is their convener,
Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,
With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,
Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

C.

"These be the pretty genii of the flow'rs,
Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—
Midsummer's phantoms in her dreaming hours,
King Oberon, and all his merry crew,
The darling puppets of romance's view;
Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,
Famous for patronage of lovers true;—
No harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,
So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal them."

CI.

O what a cry was Saturn's then!—it made
The fairies quake. "What care I for their pranks,
However they may lovers choose to aid,
Or dance their roundelays on flow'ry banks?—
Long must they dance before they earn my thanks,—
So step aside, to some far safer spot,
Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,
And leave them in the sun, like weeds, to rot,
And with the next day's sun to be forgot."

CII.

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen ;
But still the gracious Shade disarm'd his aim,
Stepping with brave alacrity between,
And made his sere arm powerless and tame.
His be perpetual glory, for the shame
Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat !—
But I must tell, how here Titania came
With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat
His kindly succor, in sad tones, but sweet.

CIII.

Saying, "Thou seest a wretched queen before thee,
The fading power of a failing land,
Who for her kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,
Now menac'd by this tyrant's spoiling hand ;
No one but thee can hopefully withstand
That crooked blade, he longeth so to lift.
I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand,
Which only times all ruins by its drift,
Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

CIV.

" Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,
That hangs upon his bald and barren crown ;
And we will sing to see him so rebuff'd,
And lend our little mights to pull him down,
And make brave sport of his malicious frown,
For all his boastful mockery o'er men.
For thou wast born I know for this renown,
By my most magical and inward ken,
That readeth ev'n at Fate's forestalling pen.

CV.

"Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,
And by thy brow's most fair and ample span,
Thought's glorious palace, fram'd for fancies high,
And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,
I know the signs of an immortal man,—
Nature's chief darling, and illustrious mate,
Destin'd to foil old Death's oblivious plan,
And shine untarnish'd by the fogs of Fate,
Time's famous rival till the final date!

CVI.

"O shield us then from this usurping Time,
And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams;
And teach thee tunes, to wed unto thy rhyme,
And dance about thee in all midnight gleams,
Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,
Such as no mortal's eye hath ever seen:
And, for thy love to us in our extremes,
Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,
Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been!

CVII.

"And we'll distil thee aromatic dews,
To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flow'rs;
And flavor'd syrops in thy drinks infuse,
And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bow'rs,
And with our games divert thy weariest hours,
With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.
And, this churl dead, there'll be no hasting hours
To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies:"—
Here she was stopp'd by Saturn's furious cries.

CVIII.

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,
Saying, "Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop
Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,
Or make th' autumnal flow'rs turn pale, and droop;
Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop
Under fat sheaves,—or blast the piny grove;—
But here thou shalt not harm this pretty groupe,
Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,
But leas'd on Nature's loveliness and love.

CIX.

"'Tis these that free the small entangled fly,
Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty snare;—
These be the petty surgeons that apply
The healing balsams to the wounded hare,
Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care!—
These be providers for the orphan brood,
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,
Quitting with gaping bill her darling's food,
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

CX.

"'Tis these befriend the timid trembling stag,
When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,
He feels his saving speed begin to flag;
For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,
And prompt fresh shifts in his alarum'd ears,
So piteously they view all bloody morts;
Or if the gunner, with his arm, appears,
Like noisy pyes and jays, with harsh reports,
They warn the wild fowl of his deadly sports.

CXI.

"For these are kindly ministers of nature,
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress;
Pretty they be, and very small of stature,—
For mercy still consorts with littleness;—
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,
And mischief grossest in this world of wrong;—
So do these charitable dwarfs redress
The tenfold ravages of giants strong,
To whom great malice and great might belong.

CXII.

"Likewise to them are Poets much beholden
For secret favors in the midnight glooms;
Brave Spenser quaff'd out of their goblets golden,
And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms,
And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms
Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,
Like humming bees busy about the brooms,—
And glanc'd this fair queen's witchery full oft,
And in her magic wain soar'd far aloft.

CXIII.

"Nay I myself, though mortal, once was nurs'd
By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,
And in my childish ear glib Mab rehears'd
Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,
Telling me wonders of the moon and earth;
My gramarye at her grave lap I conn'd,
Where Puck hath been conven'd to make me mirth;
I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,
And toy'd with Oberon's permitted wand.

CXIV.

"With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed me,
And delicate cates after my sunset meal,
And took me by my childish hand, and led me
By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,
Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,
Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes:
And when the West sparkled at Phœbus' wheel,
With fairy euphrasy they purg'd mine eyes,
To let me see their cities in the skies.

CXV.

"'Twas they first school'd my young imagination
To take its flights like any new-fledg'd bird,
And show'd the span of winged meditation
Stretch'd wider than things grossly seen or heard.
With sweet swift Ariel how I soar'd and stirr'd
The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow'rs!
'Twas they endear'd what I have still preferr'd,
Nature's blest attributes and balmy pow'rs,
Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and flow'rs!

CXVI.

"Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty
Will I regard them in my honoring rhyme,
With love for love, and homages to beauty,
And magic thoughts gather'd in night's cool clime,
With studious verse trancing the dragon Time,
Strong as old Merlin's necromantic spells;
So these dear monarchs of the summer's prime
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery cells."

CXVII.

Look how a poison'd man turns livid black,
Drugg'd with a cup of deadly hellebore,
That sets his horrid features all at rack,—
So seem'd these words into the ear to pour
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,
Wherewith his grisly arm he rais'd once more,
And bade the cluster'd sinews all engage,
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

CXVIII

Whereas the blade flash'd on the dinted ground,
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar
On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound;
But Time was long benumb'd, and stood ajar
And then with baffled rage took flight afar,
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,
Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

CXIX.

Howbeit he vanish'd in the forest shade,
Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,
And, like Narcissus, to a sound decay'd;—
Meanwhile the fays cluster'd the gracious Bard,
The darling centre of their dear regard:
Besides of sundry dances on the green,
Never was mortal man so brightly starr'd,
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.
"Nod to him, Elves!" cries the melodious queen.

CXX.

"Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him,
And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,
And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,
The silk-worm now had spun our dreary shroud;—
But he hath all dispers'd death's tearful cloud,
And Time 's dread effigy scar'd quite away:
Bow to him then, as though to me ye bow'd,
And his dear wishes prosper and obey
Wherever love and wit can find a way!

CXXI.

"'Noint him with fairy dews of magic savors,
Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,
Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favors,
Plant in his walks the purple violet,
And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,
To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine
And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget
Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,
To vie the thoughts about his brow benign!

CXXII.

"Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,
But tell them all how mild he is of heart,
Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near him,
And eke the dappled does, yet never start;
Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,
Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,
Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart;—
But bid the sacred swallow haunt his eaves,
To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

CXXIII.

"Or when he goes the nimble squirrel's visitor,
Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,
For, tell him, this is Nature's kind Inquisitor,—
Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience shuts,
For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts,—
Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,
However he may watch their straw-built huts;—
So let him learn the crafts of all small things,
Which he will hint most aptly when he sings."

CXXIV.

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand
Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head;
Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,
Wears still the glory which her waving shed,
Such as erst crown'd the old Apostle's head,
To show the thoughts there harbor'd were divine,
And on immortal contemplations fed:—
Goodly it was to see that glory shine
Around a brow so lofty and benign!

CXXV.

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood
Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,
That had their mortal enemy withstood,
And stay'd their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.
Long while this strife engag'd the pretty band;
But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,
Challeng'd the dawn creeping o'er eastern land,
And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,
Which sounds the knell of every elfish charm.

CXXVI.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise
From plashy mead and undiscover'd stream,
Earth 's morning incense to the early skies,
Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.
Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme—
A shapeless shade, that fancy disavow'd,
And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.
Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,
Like flocking linnets, vanish'd in a cloud.

HERO AND LEANDER.

1827.

TO

S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

It is not with a hope my feeble praise
Can add one moment's honor to thy own,
That with thy mighty name I grace these lays;
I seek to glorify myself alone:
For that some precious favor thou hast shown
To my endeavor in a by-gone time,
And by this token, I would have it known
Thou art my friend, and friendly to my rhyme!
It is my dear ambition now to climb
Still higher in thy thought,—if my bold pen
May thrust on contemplations more sublime.—
But I am thirsty for thy praise, for when
We gain applauses from the great in name,
We seem to be partakers of *their* fame.

HERO AND LEANDER.

I.

Oh Bards of old! what sorrows have ye sung,
And tragic stories, chronicled in stone,—
Sad Philomel restor'd her ravish'd tongue,
And transform'd Niobe in dumbness shown;
Sweet Sappho on her love for ever calls,
And Hero on the drown'd Leander falls!

II.

Was it that spectacles of sadder plights,
Should make our blisses relish the more high?
Then all fair dames, and maidens, and true knights,
Whose flourish'd fortunes prosper in Love's eye,
Weep here, unto a tale of ancient grief,
Trac'd from the course of an old bas-relief.

III.

There stands Abydos!—here is Sestos' steep,
Hard by the gusty margin of the sea,
Where sprinkling waves continually do leap;
And that is where those famous lovers be,
A builded gloom shot up into the grey,
As if the first tall watch-tow'r of the day.

IV.

Lo! how the lark soars upward and is gone;
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky,
His voice is heard, though body there is none,
And rain-like music scatters from on high;
But Love would follow with a falcon spite,
To pluck the minstrel from his dewy height.

V.

For Love hath fram'd a ditty of regrets,
Tun'd to the hollow sobbings on the shore,
A vexing sense, that with like music frets,
And chimes this dismal burthen o'er and o'er,
Saying, Leander's joys are past and spent,
Like stars extinguish'd in the firmament.

VI.

For ere the golden crevices of morn
Let in those regal luxuries of light,
Which all the variable east adorn,
And hang rich fringes on the skirts of night,
Leander, weaning from sweet Hero's side,
Must leave a widow where he found a bride.

VII.

Hark! how the billows beat upon the sand!
Like pawing steeds impatient of delay;
Meanwhile their rider, ling'ring on the land,
Dallies with love, and holds farewell at bay
A too short span.—How tedious slow is grief!
But parting renders time both sad and brief.

VIII.

"Alas (he sigh'd), that this first glimpsing light,
Which makes the wide world tenderly appear,
Should be the burning signal for my flight,
From all the world's best image, which is here;
Whose very shadow, in my fond compare,
Shines far more bright than Beauty's self elsewhere."

IX.

Their cheeks are white as blossoms of the dark,
Whose leaves close up and show the outward pale,
And those fair mirrors where their joys did spark,
All dim and tarnish'd with a dreary veil,
No more to kindle till the night's return,
Like stars replenish'd at Joy's golden urn.

X.

Ev'n thus they creep into the spectral grey,
That cramps the landscape in its narrow brim,
As when two shadows by old Lethe stray,
He clasping her, and she entwining him;
Like trees wind-parted that embrace anon,
True love so often goes before 'tis gone.

XI.

For what rich merchant but will pause in fear,
To trust his wealth to the unsafe abyss?
So Hero dotes upon her treasure here,
And sums the loss with many an anxious kiss,
Whilst her fond eyes grow dizzy in her head,
Fear aggravating fear with shows of dread.

XII.

She thinks how many have been sunk and drown'd,
And spies their snow-white bones below the deep,
Then calls huge congregated monsters round,
And plants a rock wherever he would leap;
Anon she dwells on a fantastic dream,
Which she interprets of that fatal stream.

XIII.

Saying, "That honey'd fly I saw was thee,
Which lighted on a water-lily's cup,
When, lo! the flow'r, enamor'd of my bee,
Closed on him suddenly and lock'd him up,
And he was smother'd in her drenching dew;
Therefore this day thy drowning I shall rue."

XIV.

But next, remembering her virgin fame,
She clips him in her arms and bids him go,
But seeing him break loose, repents her shame
And plucks him back upon her bosom's snow;
And tears unfix her iced resolve again,
As steadfast frosts are thaw'd by show'rs of rain.

XV.

O for a type of parting!—Love to love
Is like the fond attraction of two spheres,
Which needs a godlike effort to remove,
And then sink down their sunny atmospheres,
In rain and darkness on each ruin'd heart,
Nor yet their melodies will sound apart.

XVI.

So brave Leander sunders from his bride;
The wrenching pang disparts his soul in twain;
Half stays with her, half goes towards the tide,—
And life must ache, until they join again.
Now would'st thou know the wideness of the wound,
Mete every step he takes upon the ground.

XVII.

And for the agony and bosom-throe,
Let it be measur'd by the wide vast air,
For that is infinite, and so is woe,
Since parted lovers breathe it everywhere.
Look how it heaves Leander's laboring chest,
Panting, at poise, upon a rocky crest!

XVIII.

From which he leaps into the scooping brine,
That shocks his bosom with a double chill;
Because, all hours, till the slow sun's decline,
That cold divorcer will betwixt them still;
Wherefore he likens it to Styx' foul tide,
Where life grows death upon the other side.

XIX.

Then sadly he confronts his two-fold toil
Against rude waves and an unwilling mind,
Wishing, alas! with the stout rower's toil,
That like a rower he might gaze behind,
And watch that lonely statue he hath left
On her bleak summit, weeping and bereft!

XX.

Yet turning oft, he sees her troubled locks
Pursue him still the farthest that they may;
Her marble arms that overstretch the rocks,
And her pale passion'd hands that seem to pray
In dumb petition to the gods above:
Love prays devoutly when it prays for love!

XXI.

Then with deep sighs he blows away the wave,
That hangs superfluous tears upon his cheek,
And bans his labor like a hopeless slave,
That, chain'd in hostile galley, faint and weak,
Plies on despairing through the restless foam,
Thoughtful of his lost love, and far-off home.

XXII.

The drowsy mist before him chill and dark,
Like a dull lethargy o'erleans the sea,
Where he rows on against the utter blank,
Steering as if to dim eternity,—
Like Love's frail ghost departing with the dawn;
A failing shadow in the twilight drawn.

XXIII.

And soon is gone,—or nothing but a faint
And failing image in the eye of thought,
That mocks his model with an after-paint,
And stains an atom like the paint he sought;
Then with her earnest vows she hopes to fee,
The old and hoary majesty of sea.

XXIV.

"O King of waves, and brother of high Jove,
Preserve my sumless venture there afloat;
A woman's heart, and its whole wealth of love,
Are all embark'd upon that little boat;
Nay, but two loves, two lives, a double fate,
A perilous voyage for so dear a freight.

XXV.

"If impious mariners be stain'd with crime,
Shake not in awful rage thy hoary locks;
Lay by thy storms until another time,
Lest my frail bark be dash'd against the rocks:
O rather smoothe thy deeps, that he may fly
Like Love himself, upon a seeming sky!

XXVI.

"Let all thy herded monsters sleep beneath,
Nor gore him with crook'd tusks, or wreathed horns;
Let no fierce sharks destroy him with their teeth,
Nor spine-fish wound him with their venom'd thorns;
But if he faint, and timely succor lack,
Let ruthful dolphins rest him on their back.

XXVII.

"Let no false dimpling whirlpools suck him in,
Nor slimy quicksands smother his sweet breath;
Let no jagg'd corals tear his tender skin,
Nor mountain billows bury him in death;"—
And with that thought forestalling her own fears,
She drown'd his painted image in her tears.

XXVIII.

By this, the climbing sun, with rest repair'd,
Look'd through the gold embrasures of the sky,
And ask'd the drowsy world how she had far'd ;—
The drowsy world shone brighten'd in reply ;
And smiling off her fogs, his slanting beam
Spied young Leander in the middle stream.

XXIX.

His face was pallid, but the hectic morn,
Had hung a lying crimson on his cheeks,
And slanderous sparkles in his eyes forlorn ;
So death lies ambush'd in consumptive streaks ;
But inward grief was writhing o'er its task,
As heart-sick jesters weep behind the mask.

XXX.

He thought of Hero and the lost delight,
Her last embracings, and the space between ;
He thought of Hero and the future night,
Her speechless rapture and enamor'd mien,
When, lo ! before him, scarce two galleys' space,
His thought 's confronted with another face !

XXXI.

Her aspect 's like a moon divinely fair,
But makes the midnight darker that it lies on ;
'Tis so beclouded with her coal-black hair
That densely skirts her luminous horizon,
Making her doubly fair, thus darkly set,
As marble lies advantag'd upon jet.

XXXII.

She 's all too bright, too argent, and too pale,
To be a woman ;—but a woman's double,
Reflected on the wave so faint and frail,
She tops the billows like an air-blown bubble ;
Or dim creation of a morning dream,
Fair as the wave-bleach'd lily of the stream.

XXXIII.

The very rumor strikes his seeing dead :
Great beauty like great fear first stuns the sense :
He knows not if her lips be blue or red,
Nor of her eyes can give true evidence :
Like murder's witness swooning in the court,
His sight falls senseless by its own report.

XXXIV.

Anon resuming, it declares her eyes
Are tinct with azure, like two crystal wells
That drink the blue complexion of the skies,
Or pearls outpeeping from their silvery shells :
Her polish'd brow, it is an ample plain,
To lodge vast contemplations of the main.

XXXV.

Her lips might corals seem, but corals near,
Stray through her hair like blossoms on a bower ;
And o'er the weaker red still domineer,
And make it pale by tribute to more power ;
Her rounded cheeks are of still paler hue,
Touch'd by the bloom of water, tender blue.

XXXVI.

Thus he beholds her rocking on the water;
Under the glossy umbrage of her hair,
Like pearly Amphitrite's fairest daughter,
Naiad, or Nereid,—or Syren fair,
Mislodging music in her pitiless breast,
A nightingale within a falcon's nest.

XXXVII.

They say there be such maidens in the deep,
Charming poor mariners, that all too near
By mortal lullabies fall dead asleep,
As drowsy men are poison'd through the ear;
Therefore Leander's fears begin to urge,
This snowy swan is come to sing his dirge.

XXXVIII.

At which he falls into a deadly chill,
And strains his eyes upon her lips apart;
Fearing each breath to feel that prelude shrill,
Pierce through his marrow, like a breath-blown dart
Shot sudden from an Indian's hollow cane,
With mortal venom fraught, and fiery pain.

XXXIX.

Here then, poor wretch, how he begins to crowd
A thousand thoughts within a pulse's space;
There seem'd so brief a pause of life allow'd,
His mind stretch'd universal, to embrace
The whole wide world, in an extreme farewell,—
A moment's musing—but an age to tell.

XL.

For there stood Hero, widow'd at a glance,
The foreseen sum of many a tedious fact,
Pale cheeks, dim eyes, and wither'd countenance,
A wasted ruin that no wasting lack'd;
Time's tragic consequents ere time began,
A world of sorrow in a tear-drop's span.

XLI.

A moment's thinking is an hour in words,—
An hour of words is little for some woes;
Too little breathing a long life affords,
For love to paint itself by perfect shows;
Then let his love and grief unwrong'd lie dumb,
Whilst Fear, and that it fears, together come.

XLII.

As when the crew, hard by some jutty cape,
Struck pale and panick'd by the billows' roar,
Lay by all timely measures of escape,
And let their bark go driving on the shore:
So fray'd Leander, drifting to his wreck,
Gazing on Scylla, falls upon her neck.

XLIII.

For he hath all forgot the swimmer's art,
The rower's cunning, and the pilot's skill,
Letting his arms fall down in languid part,
Sway'd by the waves, and nothing by his will,
Till soon he jars against that glossy skin,
Solid like glass, though seemingly as thin.

XLIV.

Lo! how she startles at the warning shock,
And straightway girds him to her radiant breast,
More like his safe smooth harbor than his rock;
Poor wretch, he is so faint and toil-opprest,
He cannot loose him from his grappling foe,
Whether for love or hate, she lets not go.

XLV.

His eyes are blinded with the sleety brine,
His ears are deafen'd with the wildering noise;
He asks the purpose of her fell design,
But foamy waves choke up his struggling voice;
Under the ponderous sea his body dips,
And Hero's name dies bubbling on his lips.

XLVI.

Look how a man is lower'd to his grave;
A yearning hollow in the green earth's lap;
So he is sunk into the yawning wave,
The plunging sea fills up the watery gap;
Anon he is all gone, and nothing seen,
But likeness of green turf and hillocks green.

XLVII.

And where he swam, the constant sun lies sleeping,
Over the verdant plain that makes his bed;
And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
Like gamesome boys over the churchyard dead;
The light in vain keeps looking for his face,
Now screaming sea-fowl settle in his place.

XLVIII.

Yet weep and watch for him though all in vain!
Ye moaning billows, seek him as ye wander!
Ye gazing sunbeams, look for him again!
Ye winds, grow hoarse with asking for Leander!
Ye did but spare him for more cruel rape,
Sea-storm and ruin in a female shape!

XLIX.

She says 'tis love hath bribed her to this deed,
The glancing of his eyes did so bewitch her,
O bootless theft! unprofitable meed!
Love's treasury is sack'd, but she no richer;
The sparkles of his eyes are cold and dead,
And all his golden locks are turn'd to lead!

L.

She holds the casket, but her simple hand
Hath spill'd its dearest jewel by the way;
She hath life's empty garment at command,
But her own death lies covert in the prey;
As if a thief should steal a tainted vest,
Some dead man's spoil, and sicken of his pest.

LI.

Now she compels him to her deeps below,
Hiding his face beneath her plenteous hair,
Which jealously she shakes all round her brow,
For dread of envy, though no eyes are there
But seals', and all brute tenants of the deep,
Which heedless through the wave their journeys keep.

LII.

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore him, murmuring with joyous haste
In too rash ignorance, as he had been
Born to the texture of that watery waste;
That which she breath'd and sigh'd, the emerald wave,
How could her pleasant home become his grave!

LIII.

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore her treasure, with a face too nigh
To mark how life was alter'd in its mien,
Or how the light grew torpid in his eye,
Or how his pearly breath unprison'd there,
Flew up to join the universal air.

LIV.

She could not miss the throbbings of his heart,
Whilst her own pulse so wanton'd in its joy;
She could not guess he struggled to depart,
And when he strove no more, the hapless boy!
She read his mortal stillness for content,
Feeling no fear where only love was meant.

LV.

Soon she alights upon her ocean-floor,
And straight unyokes her arms from her fair prize;
Then on his lovely face begins to pore,
As if to glut her soul;—her hungry eyes
Have grown so jealous of her arms' delight;
It seems, she hath no other sense but sight.

LVI.

But O sad marvel! O most bitter strange!
What dismal magic makes his cheek so pale,
Why will he not embrace,—why not exchange
Her kindly kisses;—wherefore not exhale
Some odorous message from life's ruby gates,
Where she his first sweet embassy awaits?

LVII.

Her eyes, poor watchers, fix'd upon his looks,
Are grappled with a wonder near to grief,
As one, who pores on undecipher'd books,
Strains vain surmise, and dodges with belief;
So she keeps gazing with a mazy thought,
Framing a thousand doubts that end in naught.

LVIII.

Too stern inscription for a page so young,
The dark translation of his look was death!
But death was written in an alien tongue,
And learning was not by to give it breath;
So one deep woe sleeps buried in its seal,
Which Time, untimely, hasteth to reveal.

LIX.

Meanwhile she sits unconscious of her hap,
Nursing Death's marble effigy, which there
With heavy head lies pillow'd in her lap,
And elbows all unhinged;—his sleeking hair
Creeps o'er her knees, and settles where his hand
Leans with lax fingers crook'd against the sand;

LX.

And there lies spread in many an oozy trail,
Like glossy weeds hung from a chalky base,
That shows no whiter than his brow is pale;
So soon the wintry death had bleach'd his face
Into cold marble,—with blue chilly shades,
Showing wherein the freezy blood pervades.

LXI.

And o'er his steadfast cheek a furrow'd pain
Hath set, and stiffen'd like a storm in ice,
Showing by drooping lines the deadly strain
Of mortal anguish;—yet you might gaze twice
Ere Death it seem'd, and not his cousin, Sleep,
That through those creviced lids did underpeep.

LXII.

But all that tender bloom about his eyes,
Is Death's own vi'lets, which his utmost rite
It is to scatter when the red rose dies;
For blue, is chilly, and akin to white:
Also he leaves some tinges on his lips,
Which he hath kiss'd with such cold frosty nips.

LXIII.

"Surely," quoth she, "he sleeps, the senseless thing,
Oppress'd and faint with toiling in the stream!"
Therefore she will not mar his rest, but sing
So low, her tune shall mingle with his dream;
Meanwhile, her lily fingers tasks to twine
His uncrispt locks uncurling in the brine.

LXIV.

"O lovely boy!"—thus she attun'd her voice,—
"Welcome, thrice welcome, to a sea-maid's home,
My love-mate thou shalt be, and true heart's choice;
How have I long'd such a twin-self should come,—
A lonely thing, till this sweet chance befel,
My heart kept sighing like a hollow shell.

LXV.

"Here thou shalt live, beneath this secret dome,
An ocean-bow'r; defended by the shade
Of quiet waters, a cool emerald gloom
To lap thee all about. Nay, be not fray'd,
Those are but shady fishes that sail by
Like antic clouds across my liquid sky!

LXVI.

"Look how the sunbeam burns upon their scales,
And shows rich glimpses of their Tyrian skins,
They flash small lightnings from their vigorous tails,
And winking stars are kindled at their fins;
These shall divert thee in thy weariest mood,
And seek thy hand for gamesomeness and food.

LXVII.

"Lo! those green pretty leaves with tassel bells,
My flow'rets those, that never pine for drowth;
Myself did plant them in the dappled shells,
That drink the wave with such a rosy mouth,—
Pearls wouldst thou have beside? crystals to shine?
I had such treasures once,—now they are thine.

LXVIII.

"Now, lay thine ear against this golden sand,
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea,
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land,—
Is 't not a rich and wondrous melody ?
I have lain hours, and fancied in its tone
I heard the languages of ages gone !

LXIX.

"I too can sing when it shall please thy choice,
And breathe soft tunes through a melodious shell,
Though heretofore I have but set my voice
To some long sighs, grief harmonized, to tell
How desolate I fared ;—but this sweet change
Will add new notes of gladness to my range !

LXX.

"Or bid me speak, and I will tell thee tales,
Which I have framed out of the noise of waves ;
Ere now, I have commun'd with senseless gales,
And held vain colloquies with barren caves ;
But I could talk to thee whole days and days,
Only to word my love a thousand ways.

LXXI.

"But if thy lips will bless me with their speech,
Then ope, sweet oracles ! and I'll be mute ;
I was born ignorant for thee to teach,
Nay all love's lore to thy dear looks impute ;
Then ope thine eyes, fair teachers, by whose light
I saw to give away my heart aright !"

LXXII.

But cold and deaf the sullen creature lies,
Over her knees, and with concealing clay,
Like hoarding Avarice locks up his eyes,
And leaves her world impoverish'd of day;
Then at his cruel lips she bends to plead,
But there the door is closed against her need.

LXXIII.

Surely he sleeps.—so her false wits infer!
Alas! poor sluggard, ne'er to wake again!
Surely he sleeps, yet without any stir
That might denote a vision in his brain;
Or if he does not sleep, he feigns too long,
Twice she hath reach'd the ending of her song.

LXXIV.

Therefore 'tis time she tells him to uncover
Those radiant jesters, and disperse her fears,
Whereby her April face is shaded over,
Like rainy clouds just ripe for showering tears;
Nay, if he will not wake, so poor she gets,
Herself must rob those lock'd up cabinets.

LXXV.

With that she stoops above his brow, and bids
Her busy hands forsake his tangled hair,
And tenderly lift up those coffer-lids,
That she might gaze upon the jewels there,
Like babes that pluck an early bud apart,
To know the dainty color of its heart.

LXXVI.

Now, picture one, soft creeping to a bed,
Who slowly parts the fringe-hung canopies,
And then starts back to find the sleeper dead;
So she looks in on his uncover'd eyes,
And seeing all within so drear and dark,
Her own bright soul dies in her like a spark.

LXXVII

Backward she falls, like a pale prophetess,
Under the swoon of holy divination:
And what had all surpass'd her simple guess,
She now resolves in this dark revelation;
Death's very mystery,—oblivious death;—
Long sleep,—deep night, and an entranced breath.

LXXVIII.

Yet life, though wounded sore, not wholly slain,
Merely obscur'd, and not extinguish'd, lies;
Her breath that stood at ebb, soon flows again,
Heaving her hollow breast with heavy sighs,
And light comes in and kindles up the gloom,
To light her spirit from its transient tomb.

LXXIX.

Then like the sun, awaken'd at new dawn,
With pale bewilder'd face she peers about,
And spies blurr'd images obscurely drawn,
Uncertain shadows in a haze of doubt;
But her true grief grows shapely by degrees,
A perish'd creature lying on her knees.

LXXX.

And now she knows how that old Murther preys,
Whose quarry on her lap lies newly slain:
How he roams all abroad and grimly slays,
Like a lean tiger in Love's own domain;
Parting fond mates,—and oft in flowery lawns
Bereaves mild mothers of their milky fawns.

LXXXI.

O too dear knowledge! O pernicious earning!
Foul curse engraven upon beauty's page!
Ev'n now the sorrow of that deadly learning
Ploughs up her brow, like an untimely age,
And on her cheek stamps verdict of death's truth,
By canker blights upon the bud of youth!

LXXXII.

For as unwholesome winds decay the leaf,
So her cheeks' rose is perish'd by her sighs,
And withers in the sickly breath of grief;
Whilst unacquainted rheum bedims her eyes,
Tears, virgin tears, the first that ever leapt
From those young lids, now plentifully wept.

LXXXIII.

Whence being shed, the liquid crystalline
Drops straightway down, refusing to partake
In gross admixture with the baser brine,
But shrinks and hardens into pearls opaque,
Hereafter to be worn on arms and ears;
So one maid's trophy is another's tears!

LXXXIV.

"O foul Arch-Shadow, thou old cloud of Night
(Thus in her frenzy she began to wail),
Thou blank oblivion—blotter out of light,
Life's ruthless murderer, and dear love's bale!
Why hast thou left thy havoc incomplete,
Leaving me here, and slaying the more sweet?

LXXXV.

"Lo! what a lovely ruin thou hast made,
Alas! alas! thou hast no eyes to see,
And blindly slew'st him in misguided shade.
Would I had lent my doting sense to thee!
But now I turn to thee, a willing mark,
Thine arrows miss me in the aimless dark!

LXXXVI.

"O doubly cruel!—twice misdoing spite,
But I will guide thee with my helping eyes,
Or walk the wide world through, devoid of sight,
Yet thou shalt know me by my many sighs.
Nay, then thou should'st have spared my rose, false Death,
And known Love's flow'r by smelling his sweet breath;

LXXXVII.

"Or, when thy furious rage was round him dealing,
Love should have grown from touching of his skin,
But like cold marble thou art all unfeeling,
And hast no ruddy springs of warmth within,
And being but a shape of freezing bone,
Thy touching only turned my love to stone!

LXXXVIII.

"And here, alas! he lies across my knees,
With cheeks still colder than the stilly wave,
The light beneath his eyelids seems to freeze,
Here then, since Love is dead and lacks a grave,
O come and dig it in my sad heart's core—
That wound will bring a balsam for its sore!

LXXXIX.

"For art thou not a sleep where sense of ill,
Lies stingless, like a sense benumb'd with cold,
Healing all hurts only with sleep's good-will,
So shall I slumber, and perchance behold
My living love in dreams,—O happy night,
That lets me company his banish'd spright!

XC.

"O poppy Death!—sweet poisoner of sleep!
Where shall I seek for thee, oblivious drug,
That I may steep thee in my drink, and creep
Out of life's coil. Look, Idol! how I hug
Thy dainty image in this strict embrace,
And kiss this clay-cold model of thy face!

XCI.

"Put out, put out these sun-consuming lamps,
I do but read my sorrows by their shine,
O come and quench them with thy oozy damps,
And let my darkness intermix with thine;
Since love is blinded, wherefore should I see
Now love is death,—death will be love to me!

XCII.

"Away, away, this vain complaining breath,
It does but stir the troubles that I weep,
Let it be hush'd and quieted, sweet Death,
The wind must settle ere the wave can sleep,—
Since love is silent, I would fain be mute,
O Death, be gracious to my dying suit!"

XCIII

Thus far she pleads, but pleading naught avails her,
For Death, her sullen burthen, deigns no heed,
Then with dumb craving arms, since darkness fails her,
She prays to heav'n's fair light, as if her need
Inspir'd her there were Gods to pity pain,
Or end it,—but she lifts her arms in vain!

XCIV.

Poor gilded Grief! the subtle light by this
With mazy gold creeps through her watery mine,
And, diving downward through the green abyss,
Lights up her palace with an amber shine;
There, falling on her arms,—the crystal skin
Reveals the ruby tide that fares within.

XCV.

Look how the fulsome beam would hang a glory
On her dark hair, but the dark hairs repel it;
Look how the perjur'd glow suborns a story
On her pale lips, but lips refuse to tell it;
Grief will not swerve from grief, however told
On coral lips, or character'd in gold;

XCVI.

Or else, thou maid! safe anchor'd on Love's neck,
Listing the hapless doom of young Leander,
Thou would'st not shed a tear for that old wreck,
Sitting secure where no wild surges wander;
Whereas the woe moves on with tragic pace,
And shows its sad reflection in thy face.

XCVII.

Thus having travell'd on, and track'd the tale,
Like the due course of an old bas-relief,
Where Tragedy pursues her progress pale,
Brood here awhile upon that sea-maid's grief,
And take a deeper imprint from the frieze
Of that young Fate, with Death upon her knees.

XCVIII.

Then whilst the melancholy muse withal
Resumes her music in a sadder tone,
Meanwhile, the sunbeam strikes upon the wall,
Conceive that lovely siren to live on,
Ev'n as Hope whisper'd, the Promethean light
Would kindle up the dead Leander's spright.

XCIX.

"'Tis light," she says, "that feeds the glittering stars,
And those were stars set in his heavenly brow,
But this salt cloud, this cold sea-vapor, mars
Their radiant breathing, and obscures them now,
Therefore I 'll lay him in the clear blue air,
And see how these dull orbs will kindle there."

C.

Swiftly as dolphins glide, or swifter yet,
With dead Leander in her fond arms' fold,
She cleaves the meshes of that radiant net,
The sun hath twin'd above of liquid gold,
Nor slacks, till on the margin of the land,
She lays his body on the glowing sand.

CI.

There, like a pearly waif, just past the reach
Of foamy billows he lies cast. Just then,
Some listless fishers, straying down the beach,
Spy out this wonder. Thence the curious men,
Low crouching, creep into a thicket brake,
And watch her doings till their rude hearts ache.

CII.

First she begins to chafe him till she faints,
Then falls upon his mouth with kisses many,
And sometimes pauses in her own complaints
To list his breathing, but there is not any,—
Then looks into his eyes where no light dwells,
Light makes no pictures in such muddy wells.

CIII.

The hot sun parches his discover'd eyes,
The hot sun beats on his discolor'd limbs,
The sand is oozy whereupon he lies,
Soiling his fairness;—then away she swims,
Meaning to gather him a daintier bed,
Plucking the cool fresh weeds, brown, green, and red.

CIV.

But, simple-witted thief, while she dives under,
Another robs her of her amorous theft;
The ambush'd fishermen creep forth to plunder,
And steal the unwatch'd treasure she has left;
Only his void impression dints the sands;
Leander is purloin'd by stealthy hands!

CV.

Lo! how she shudders off the beaded wave!
Like Grief all over tears, and senseless falls,
His void imprint seems hollow'd for her grave,
Then, rising on her knees, looks round and calls
On Hero! Hero! having learn'd this name
Of his last breath, she calls him by the same.

CVI.

Then with her frantic hands she rends her hairs,
And casts them forth, sad keepsakes to the wind,
As if in plucking those she pluck'd her cares;
But grief lies deeper, and remains behind
Like a barb'd arrow, rankling in her brain,
Turning her very thoughts to throbs of pain.

CVII.

Anon her tangled locks are left alone,
And down upon the sand she meekly sits,
Hard by the foam as humble as a stone,
Like an enchanted maid beside her wits,
That ponders with a look serene and tragic,
Stunn'd by the mighty mystery of magic.

CVIII.

Or think of Ariadne's utter trance,
Craz'd by the flight of that disloyal traitor,
Who left her gazing on the green expanse
That swallow'd up his track,—yet this would mate her,
Ev'n in the cloudy summit of her woe,
When o'er the far sea-brim she saw him go.

CIX.

For even so she bows, and bends her gaze
O'er the eternal waste, as if to sum
Its waves by weary thousands all her days,
Dismally doom'd! meanwhile the billows come,
And coldly dabble with her quiet feet,
Like any bleaching stones they wont to greet.

CX.

And thence into her lap have boldly sprung,
Washing her weedy tresses to and fro,
That round her crouching knees have darkly hung,
But she sits careless of waves' ebb and flow,
Like a lone beacon on a desert coast,
Showing where all her hope was wreck'd and lost.

CXI.

Yet whether in the sea or vaulted sky,
She knoweth not her love's abrupt resort,
So like a shape of dreams he left her eye,
Winking with doubt. Meanwhile, the churl's report
Has throng'd the beach with many a curious face,
That peeps upon her from its hiding-place.

CXII.

And here a head, and there a brow half seen,
Dodges behind a rock. Here on his hands,
A mariner his crumpled cheeks doth lean
Over a rugged crest. Another stands,
Holding his harmful arrow at the head,
Still check'd by human caution and strange dread.

CXIII.

One stops his ears,—another close beholder
Whispers unto the next his grave surmise;
This crouches down,—and just above his shoulder,
A woman's pity saddens in her eyes,
And prompts her to befriend that lonely grief,
With all sweet helps of sisterly relief.

CXIV.

And down the sunny beach she paces slowly,
With many doubtful pauses by the way;
Grief hath an influence so hush'd and holy,—
Making her twice attempt, ere she can lay
Her hand upon that sea-maid's shoulder white,
Which makes her startle up in wild affright.

CXV.

And, like a seal, she leaps into the wave
That drowns the shrill remainder of her scream;
Anon the sea fills up the watery cave,
And seals her exit with a foamy seam,—
Leaving those baffled gazers on the beach,
Turning in uncouth wonder each to each.

CXVI.

Some watch, some call, some see her head emerge,
Wherever a brown weed falls through the foam;
Some point to white eruptions of the surge:—
But she is vanish'd to her shady home,
Under the deep, inscrutable,—and there
Weeps in a midnight made of her own hair.

CXVII.

Now here, the sighing winds, before unheard,
Forth from their cloudy caves begin to blow,
Till all the surface of the deep is stirr'd,
Like to the panting grief it hides below;
And heav'n is cover'd with a stormy rack,
Soiling the waters with its inky black.

CXVIII.

The screaming fowl resigns her finny prey,
And labors shoreward with a bending wing,
Rowing against the wind her toilsome way;
Meanwhile, the curling billows chafe, and fling
Their dewy frost still further on the stones,
That answer to the wind with hollow groans.

CXIX.

And here and there a fisher's far-off bark
Flies with the sun's last glimpse upon its sail,
Like a bright flame amid the waters dark,
Watch'd with the hope and fear of maidens pale;
And anxious mothers that upturn their brows,
Freighting the gusty wind with frequent vows,

CXX.

For that the horrid deep has no sure track
To guide love safe into his homely haven.
And lo! the storm grows blacker in its wrath,
O'er the dark billow brooding like a raven,
That bodes of death and widow's sorrowing,
Under the dusky covert of his wing.

CXXI.

And so day ended. But no vesper spark
Hung forth its heavenly sign; but sheets of flame
Play'd round the savage features of the dark,
Making night horrible. That night, there came
A weeping maiden to high Sestos' steep,
And tore her hair and gaz'd upon the deep.

CXXII.

And wav'd aloft her bright and ruddy torch,
Whose flame the boastful wind so ruddy fann'd,
That oft it would recoil, and basely scorch
The tender covert of her sheltering hand;
Which yet, for love's dear sake, disdain'd retire,
And, like a glorying martyr, brav'd the fire.

CXXIII.

For that was love's own sign and beacon guide
Across the Hellespont's wide weary space,
Wherein he nightly struggled with the tide;
Look what a red it forges on her face,
As if she blush'd at holding such a light,
Ev'n in the unseen presence of the night!

CXXIV

Whereas her tragic cheek is truly pale,
And colder than the rude and ruffian air
That howls into her ear a horrid tale
Of storm, and wreck, and uttermost despair,
Saying, "Leander floats amid the surge,
And those are dismal waves that sing his dirge."

CXXV.

And hark!—a grieving voice, trembling and faint,
Blends with the hollow sobbings of the sea;
Like the sad music of a siren's plaint,
But shriller than Leander's voice should be,
Unless the wintry death had changed its tone,—
Wherefore she thinks she hears his spirit moan.

CXXVI.

For now, upon each brief and breathless pause,
Made by the raging winds, it plainly calls,
On Hero! Hero!—whereupon she draws
Close to the dizzy brink, that ne'er appals
Her brave and constant spirit to recoil,
However the wild billows toss and toil.

CXXVII.

"Oh! dost thou live under the deep, deep sea?
I thought such love as thine could never die;
If thou hast gain'd an immortality,
From the kind pitying sea-god, so will I;
And this false cruel tide that used to sever
Our hearts, shall be our common home for ever!

CXXVIII.

"There we will sit and sport upon one billow,
And sing our ocean ditties all the day,
And lie together on the same green pillow,
That curls above us with its dewy spray;
And ever in one presence live and dwell,
Like two twin pearls within the selfsame shell.

CXXIX.

One moment then, upon the dizzy verge
She stands;—with face upturn'd against the sky;
A moment more, upon the foamy surge
She gazes, with a calm despairing eye;
Feeling that awful pause of blood and breath
Which life endures when it confronts with death;—

CXXX.

Then from the giddy steep she madly springs,
Grasping her maiden robes, that vainly kept
Panting abroad, like unavailing wings,
To save her from her death.—The sea-maid wept,
And in a crystal cave her cross enshrin'd,
No meaner sepulchre should Hero find!

LYCUS, THE CENTAUR.

1827.

TO

J. H. REYNOLDS, ESQ.

My dear Reynolds,

You will remember "Lycus."—It was written in the pleasant spring-time of our friendship, and I am glad to maintain that association, by connecting your name with the Poem. It will gratify me to find that you regard it with the old partiality for the writings of each other, which prevailed in those days For my own sake, I must regret that your pen goes now into far other records than those which used to delight me

Your true Friend and Brother,

T. HOOD.

LYCUS, THE CENTAUR.

FROM AN UNROLLED MANUSCRIPT OF APOLLONIUS CURIUS.

THE ARGUMENT.

Lycus, detained by Circe in her magical dominion, is beloved by a Water Nymph, who, desiring to render him immortal, has recourse to the Sorceress. Circe gives her an incantation to pronounce, which should turn Lycus into a horse; but the horrible effect of the charm causing her to break off in the midst, he becomes a Centaur.

WHO hath ever been lured and bound by a spell
To wander, fore-doom'd, in that circle of hell
Where Witchery works with her will like a god,
Works more than the wonders of time at a nod,—
At a word,—at a touch,—at a flash of the eye,
But each form is a cheat, and each sound is a lie,
Things born of a wish—to endure for a thought,
Or last for long ages—to vanish to naught,
Or put on new semblance? O Jove, I had given
The throne of a kingdom to know if that heaven,
And the earth and its streams were of Circe, or whether
They kept the world's birth-day and brighten'd together!
For I lov'd them in terror and constantly dreaded
That the earth where I trod, and the cave where I bedded,
The face I might dote on, should live out the lease
Of the charm that created, and suddenly cease:

And I gave me to slumber, as if from one dream
To another—each horrid—and drank of the stream
Like a first taste of blood, lest as water I quaff'd
Swift poison, and never should breathe from the draught,—
Such drink as her own monarch husband drain'd up
When he pledg'd her, and Fate clos'd his eyes in the cup.
And I pluck'd of the fruit with held breath, and a fear
That the branch would start back and scream out in my ear;
For once, at my suppering, I pluck'd in the dusk
An apple, juice-gushing and fragrant of musk;
But by daylight my fingers were crimson'd with gore,
And the half-eaten fragment was flesh at the core;
And once—only once—for the love of its blush,
I broke a bloom bough, but there came such a gush
On my hand, that it fainted away in weak fright,
While the leaf-hidden woodpecker shriek'd at the sight;
And oh! such an agony thrill'd in that note,
That my soul, startling up, beat its wings in my throat,
As it long'd to be free of a body whose hand
Was doom'd to work torments a Fury had plann'd!

There I stood without stir, yet how willing to flee,
As if rooted and horror-turn'd into a tree,—
Oh! for innocent death,—and to suddenly win it,
I drank of the stream, but no poison was in it;
I plung'd in its waters, but ere I could sink,
Some invisible fate pull'd me back to the brink;
I sprang from the rock, from its pinnacle height,
But fell on the grass with a grasshopper's flight;
I ran at my fears—they were fears and no more,
For the bear would not mangle my limbs, nor the boar,
But moan'd,—all their brutaliz'd flesh could not smother
The horrible truth,—we were kin to each other!

They were mournfully gentle, and group'd for relief
All foes in their skin, but all friends in their grief:
The leopard was there,—baby-mild in its feature;
And the tiger, black barr'd, with the gaze of a creature
That knew gentle pity; the bristle-back'd boar,
His innocent tusks stain'd with mulberry gore;
And the laughing hyena—but laughing no more;
And the snake, not with magical orbs to devise
Strange death, but with woman's attraction of eyes;
The tall ugly ape, that still bore a dim shine
Through his hairy eclipse of a manhood divine;
And the elephant stately, with more than its reason,
How thoughtful in sadness! but this is no season
To reckon them up from the lag-bellied toad
To the mammoth, whose sobs shook his ponderous load.
There were woes of all shapes, wretched forms, when I came,
That hung down their heads with a human-like shame;
The elephant hid in the boughs, and the bear
Shed over his eyes the dark veil of his hair;
And the womanly soul turning sick with disgust,
Tried to vomit herself from her serpentine crust;
While all groaned their groans into one at their lot,
As I brought them the image of what they were not.

Then rose a wild sound of the human voice choking
Through vile brutal organs—low tremulous croaking;
Cries swallow'd abruptly—deep animal tones
Attun'd to strange passion, and full utter'd groans;
All shuddering weaker, till hush'd in a pause
Of tongues in mute motion and wide-yearning jaws;
And I guess'd that those horrors were meant to tell o'er
The tale of their woes; but the silence told more
That writhed on their tongues; and I knelt on the sod,

And pray'd with my voice to the cloud-stirring God,
For the sad congregation of supplicants there,
That upturn'd to his heaven brute faces of prayer;
And I ceased, and they utter'd a moaning so deep
That I wept for my heart-ease—but they could not weep,
And gazed with red eye-balls, all wistfully dry,
At the comfort of tears in a stag's human eye.
Then I motion'd them round, and, to soothe their distress,
I caress'd, and they bent them to meet my caress,
Their necks to my arm, and their heads to my palm,
And with poor grateful eyes suffered meekly and calm
Those tokens of kindness, withheld by hard fate
From returns that might chill the warm pity to hate;
So they passively bow'd—save the serpent, that leapt
To my breast like a sister, and pressingly crept
In embrace of my neck, and with close kisses blister'd
My lips in rash love,—then drew backward, and glister'd
Her eyes in my face, and loud hissing affright,
Dropt down, and swift started away from my sight!

This sorrow was theirs, but thrice wretched my lot,
Turn'd brute in my soul, though my body was not,
When I fled from the sorrow of womanly faces,
That shrouded their woe in the shade of lone places,
And dash'd off bright tears, till their fingers were wet,
And then wiped their lids with long tresses of jet:
But I fled—though they stretch'd out their hands, all entangled
With hair, and blood-stain'd of the breasts they had mangled,—
Though they call'd—and perchance but to ask, had I seen
Their loves, or to tell the vile wrongs that had been:
But I stay'd not to hear, lest the story should hold
Some hell-form of words, some enchantment once told,
Might translate me in flesh to a brute; and I dreaded

'o gaze on their charms, lest my faith should be wedded
Vith some pity,—and love in that pity perchance—
'o a thing not all lovely; for once at a glance
Iethought, where one sat, I descried a bright wonder
'hat flow'd like a long silver rivulet under
'he long fenny grass, with so lovely a breast,
ould it be a snake-tail made the charm of the rest?

So I roam'd in that circle of horrors, and Fear
Valk'd with me, by hills, and in valleys, and near
luster'd trees for their gloom—not to shelter from heat—
ut lest a brute-shadow should grow at my feet;
nd besides that full oft in the sunshiny place,
ark shadows would gather like clouds on its face,
the horrible likeness of demons (that none
ould see, like invisible flames in the sun);
ut grew to one monster that seized on the light,
ike the dragon that strangles the moon in the night;
ierce sphinxes, long serpents, and asps of the South;
Vild birds of huge beak, and all horrors that drouth
ngenders of slime in the land of the pest,
ile shapes without shape, and foul bats of the West,
ringing Night on their wings; and the bodies wherein
reat Brahma imprisons the spirits of sin,
Iany-handed, that blent in one phantom of fight
ike a Titan, and threatfully warr'd with the light;
have heard the wild shriek that gave signal to close,
Vhen they rush'd on that shadowy Python of foes,
'hat met with sharp beaks and wide gaping of jaws,
Vith flappings of wings, and fierce grasping of claws,
nd whirls of long tails:—I have seen the quick flutter
f fragments dissever'd,—and necks stretch'd to utter
ong screamings of pain,—the swift motion of blows,

And wrestling of arms—to the flight at the close,
When the dust of the earth startled upward in rings,
And flew on the whirlwind that follow'd their wings.

Thus they fled—not forgotten—but often to grow
Like fears in my eyes, when I walk'd to and fro
In the shadows, and felt from some beings unseen
The warm touch of kisses, but clean or unclean
I knew not, nor whether the love I had won
Was of heaven or hell—till one day in the sun,
In its very noon-blaze, I could fancy a thing
Of beauty, but faint as the cloud-mirrors fling
On the gaze of the shepherd that watches the sky,
Half-seen and half-dream'd in the soul of his eye.
And when in my musings I gaz'd on the stream,
In motionless trances of thought, there would seem
A face like that face, looking upward through mine;
With its eyes full of love, and the dim-drowned shine
Of limbs and fair garments, like clouds in that blue
Serene:—there I stood for long hours but to view
Those fond earnest eyes that were ever uplifted
Towards me, and wink'd as the water-weed drifted
Between; but the fish knew that presence, and plied
Their long curvy tails, and swift darted aside.

There I gazed for lost time, and forgot all the things
That once had been wonders—the fishes with wings,
And the glimmer of magnified eyes that look'd up
From the glooms of the bottom like pearls in a cup,
And the huge endless serpent of silvery gleam,
Slow winding along like a tide in the stream.
Some maid of the waters, some Naiad, methought
Held me dear in the pearl of her eye—and I brought

My wish to that fancy; and often I dash'd
My limbs in the water, and suddenly splash'd
The cool drops around me, yet clung to the brink,
Chill'd by watery fears, how that Beauty might sink
With my life in her arms to her garden, and bind me
With its long tangled grasses, or cruelly wind me
In some eddy to hum out my life in her ear,
Like a spider-caught bee,—and in aid of that fear
Came the tardy remembrance—Oh falsest of men!
Why was not that beauty remember'd till then?
My love, my safe love, whose glad life would have run
Into mine—like a drop—that our fate might be one,
That now, even now,—may-be,—clasp'd in a dream,
That form which I gave to some jilt of the stream,
And gaz'd with fond eyes that her tears tried to smother
On a mock of those eyes that I gave to another!

Then I rose from the stream, but the eyes of my mind,
Still full of the tempter, kept gazing behind
On her crystalline face, while I painfully leapt
To the bank, and shook off the curst waters, and wept
With my brow in the reeds; and the reeds to my ear
Bow'd, bent by no wind, and in whispers of fear,
Growing small with large secrets, foretold me of one
That loved me,—but oh to fly from her, and shun
Her love like a pest—though her love was as true
To mine as her stream to the heavenly blue;
For why should I love her with love that would bring
All misfortune, like Hate, on so joyous a thing?
Because of her rival,—even Her whose witch-face
I had slighted, and therefore was doom'd in that place
To roam, and had roam'd, where all horrors grew rank,
Nine days ere I wept with my brow on that bank;

Her name be not named, but her spite would not fail
To our love like a blight; and they told me the tale
Of Scylla, and Picus, imprison'd to speak
His shrill-screaming woe through a woodpecker's beak.

Then they ceased—I had heard as the voice of my star
That told me the truth of my fortunes—thus far
I had read of my sorrow, and lay in the hush
Of deep meditation,—when lo! a light crush
Of the reeds, and I turn'd and look'd round in the night
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipp'd of the light
Narrow-winking, the realized nymph of the stream,
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam
Of a fountain, and o'er her white arms she kept throwing
Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing
In falls to her feet, aud the blue waters roll'd
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,
Sun-spangled, gold-broider'd, and fled far behind,
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclin'd
In the reeds, and I hunger'd to see her unseal
The buds of hor eyes that would ope and reveal
The blue that was in them; and they op'd, and she rais'd
Two orbs of pure crystal, and timidly gazed
With her eyes on my eyes; but their color and shine
Was of that which they look'd on, and mostly of mine—
For she loved me,—except when she blush'd, and they sank,
Shame-humbled, to number the stones on the bank,
Or her play-idle fingers, while lisping she told me
How she put on her veil, and in love to behold me,
Would wing through the sun till she fainted away
Like a mist, and then flew to her waters and lay
In love-patience long hours, and sore dazzled her eyes
In watching for mine 'gainst the midsummer skies.

But now they were heal'd,—O my heart, it still dances
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances,
And my image how small when it sank in the deep
Of her eyes where her soul was,—Alas! now they weep,
And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes
Shed invisible tears? Who beholds where her sighs
Flow in eddies, or sees the ascent of the leaf
She has pluck'd with her tresses? Who listens her grief
Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat
Them together? Ah! surely her flowers float adown
To the sea unaccepted, and little ones drown
For need of her mercy,—even he whose twin-brother
Will miss him for ever; and the sorrowful mother
Imploreth in vain for his body to kiss
And cling to, all dripping and cold as it is,
Because that soft pity is lost in hard pain!
We loved,—how we loved!—for I thought not again
Of the woes that were whisper'd like fears in that place
If I gave me to beauty. Her face was the face
Far away, and her eyes were the eyes that were drown'd
For my absence,—her arms were the arms that sought round,
And clasp'd me to naught; for I gazed and became
Only true to my falsehood, and had but one name
For two loves, and call'd ever on Ægle, sweet maid
Of the sky-loving waters,—and was not afraid
Of the sight of her skin;—for it never could be,
Her beauty and love were misfortunes to me!

Thus our bliss had endured for a time-shorten'd space,
Like a day made of three, and the smile of her face
Had been with me for joy,—when she told me indeed
Her love was self-task'd with a work that would need

Some short hours, for in truth 'twas the veriest pity
Our love should not last, and then sang me a ditty,
Of one with warm lips that should love her, and love her
When suns were burnt dim and long ages past over.
So she fled with her voice, and I patiently nested
My limbs in the reeds, in still quiet, and rested
Till my thoughts grew extinct, and I sank in a sleep
Of dreams,—but their meaning was hidden too deep
To be read what their woe was;—but still it was woe
That was writ on all faces that swam to and fro
In that river of night;—and the gaze of their eyes
Was sad,—and the bend of their brows,—and their cries
Were seen, but I heard not. The warm touch of tears
Travell'd down my cold cheeks, and I shook till my fears
Awaked me, and lo! I was couch'd in a bower,
The growth of long summers rear'd up in an hour!
Then I said, in the fear of my dream, I will fly
From this magic, but could not, because that my eye
Grew love-idle among the rich blooms; and the earth
Held me down with its coolness of touch, and the mirth
Of some bird was above me,—who, even in fear,
Would startle the thrush? and methought there drew near
A form as of Ægle,—but it was not the face
Hope made, and I know the witch-Queen of that place,
Even Circe the Cruel, that came like a Death
Which I fear'd, and yet fled not, for want of my breath.
There was thought in her face, and her eyes were not raised
From the grass at her foot, but I saw, as I gazed,
Her spite—and her countenance changed with her mind
As she plann'd how to thrall me with beauty, and bind
My soul to her charms,—and her long tresses play'd
From shade into shine and from shine into shade,
Like a day in mid-autumn,—first fair, O how fair!

With long snaky locks of the adder-black hair
That clung round her neck,—those dark locks that I prize,
For the sake of a maid that once loved me with eyes
Of that fathomless hue,—but they changed as they roll'd,
And brighten'd, and suddenly blazed into gold
That she comb'd into flames, and the locks that fell down
Turn'd dark as they fell, but I slighted their brown,
Nor loved, till I saw the light ringlets shed wild,
That innocence wears when she is but a child;
And her eyes,—O I ne'er had been witch'd with their shine,
Had they been any other, my Ægle, than thine!

Then I gave me to magic, and gazed till I madden'd
In the full of their light,—but I sadden'd and sadden'd
The deeper I look'd,—till I sank on the snow
Of her bosom, a thing made of terror and woe,
And answer'd its throb with the shudder of fears,
And hid my cold eyes from her eyes with my tears,
And strain'd her white arms with the still languid weight
Of a fainting distress. There she sat like the Fate
That is nurse unto Death, and bent over in shame
To hide me from her—the true Ægle—that came
With the words on her lips the false witch had foregiv'n
To make me immortal—for now I was even
At the portals of Death, who but waited the hush
Of world-sounds in my ear to cry welcome, and rush
With my soul to the banks of his black-flowing river.
O would it had flown from my body for ever,
Ere I listen'd those words, when I felt with a start,
The life-blood rush back in one throb to my heart,
And saw the pale lip where the rest of that spell
Had perish'd in horror—and heard the farewell
Of that voice that was drown'd in the dash of the stream!

How fain had I follow'd, and plunged with that scream
Into death, but my being indignantly lagg'd
Through the brutaliz'd flesh that I painfully dragg'd
Behind me:—"O Circe! O mother of Spite!
Speak the last of that curse! and imprison me quite
In the husk of a brute,—that no pity may name
The man that I was,—that no kindred may claim
The monster I am! Let me utterly be
Brute-buried, and Nature's dishonor with me
Uninscribed!"—But she listen'd my prayer, that was praise
To her malice, with smiles, and advised me to gaze
On the river for love,—and perchance she would make
In pity a maid without eyes for my sake,
And she left me like Scorn. Then I ask'd of the wave,
What monster I was, and it trembled and gave
The true shape of my grief, and I turn'd with my face
From all waters for ever, and fled through that place,
Till with horror more strong than all magic I pass'd
Its bounds. and the world was before me at last.

There I wander'd in sorrow, and shunn'd the abodes
Of men, that stood up in the likeness of Gods,
But I saw from afar the warm shine of the sun
On their cities, where man was a million, not one;
And I saw the white smoke of their altars ascending,
That show'd where the hearts of the many were blending,
And the wind in my face brought shrill voices that came
From the trumpets that gather'd whole bands in one fame
As a chorus of man,—and they stream'd from the gates
Like a dusky libation pour'd out to the Fates.
But at times there were gentler processions of peace
That I watch'd with my soul in my eyes till their cease,
There were women! there men! but to me a third sex

I saw them all dots—yet I loved them as specks:
And oft to assuage a sad yearning of eyes
I stole near the city, but stole covert-wise
Like a wild beast of love, and perchance to be smitten
By some hand that I rather had wept on than bitten!
Oh, I once had a haunt near a cot where a mother
Daily sat in the shade with her child, and would smother
Its eyelids in kisses, and then in its sleep
Sang dreams in its ear of its manhood, while deep
In a thicket of willows I gazed o'er the brooks
That murmur'd between us and kiss'd them with looks;
But the willows unbosom'd their secret, and never
I return'd to a spot I had startled for ever,
Though I oft long'd to know, but could ask it of none,
Was the mother still fair, and how big was her son?

For the hunters of fields they all shunn'd me by flight,
The men in their horror, the women in fright;
None ever remain'd save a child once that sported
Among the wild bluebells, and playfully courted
The breeze; and beside him a speckled snake lay
Tight strangled, because it had hiss'd him away
From the flow'r at his finger; he rose and drew near
Like a Son of Immortals, one born to no fear,
But with strength of black locks and with eyes azure bright
To grow to large manhood of merciful might.
He came, with his face of bold wonder, to feel,
The hair of my side, and to lift up my heel,
And question'd my face with wide eyes; but when under
My lids he saw tears,—for I wept at his wonder,
He stroked me, and utter'd such kindliness then,
That the once love of women, the friendship of men
In past sorrow, no kindness e'er came like a kiss

On my heart in its desolate day such as this!
And I yearn'd at his cheeks in my love, and down bent,
And lifted him up in my arms with intent
To kiss him,—but he cruel-kindly, alas!
Held out to my lips a pluck'd handful of grass!
Then I dropt him in horror, but felt as I fled
The stone he indignantly hurl'd at my head,
That dissever'd my ear,—but I felt not, whose fate
Was to meet more distress in his love than his hate!

Thus I wander'd, companion'd of grief and forlorn,
Till I wish'd for that land where my being was born,
But what was that land with its love, where my home
Was self-shut against me; for why should I come
Like an after-distress to my grey-bearded father,
With a blight to the last of his sight?—let him rather
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn
To his son even such as he left him. Oh, how
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but now
Like Gods to my humbled estate?—or how bear
The steeds once the pride of my eyes and the care
Of my hands? Then I turn'd me self-banish'd, and came
Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same
As myself. I have heard how they met by a stream
In games, and were suddenly changed by a scream
That made wretches of many, as she roll'd her wild eyes
Against heav'n, and so vanish'd.—The gentle and wise
Lose their thoughts in deep studies, and others their ill
In the mirth of mankind where they mingle them still.

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

I.

Alas! That breathing Vanity should go
  Where Pride is buried,—like its very ghost,
Uprisen from the naked bones below,
  In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast
Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,
  Shedding its chilling superstition most
On young and ignorant natures—as it wont
To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bedfont!

II.

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,
  Behold two maidens, up the quiet green
Shining, far distant, in the summer air
  That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between
Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they were
  Two far-off ships,—until they brush between
The churchyard's humble walls, and watch and wait
On either side of the wide open'd gate.

III.

And there they stand—with haughty necks before
God's holy house, that points towards the skies—
Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,
And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes:
And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,
Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,
With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face;—

IV.

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,
May wear the happiness of rich attire;
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,
May change the soul's warm glances for the fire
Of lifeless diamonds;—and for health deny'd,—
With art, that blushes at itself, inspire
Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a glory
That has no life in life, nor after-story.

V.

The aged priest goes shaking his grey hair
In meekest censuring, and turns his eye
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in pray'r,
And sighs, and clasps his hands, and passes by.
Good-hearted man! what sullen soul would wear
Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly
Put on thy censure, that might win the praise
Of one so grey in goodness and in days?

VI.

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame
  Of this ungodly shine of human pride,
And sadly blends his reverence and blame
  In one grave bow, and passes with a stride
Impatient :—many a red-hooded dame
  Turns her pain'd head, but not her glance, aside
From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,
That heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

VII.

"I have a lily in the bloom at home,"
  Quoth one, "and by the blessed Sabbath day
I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come
  And read a lesson upon vain array ;—
And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some
  Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say—
Making my reverence,—'Ladies, an you please,
King Solomon's not half so fine as these.'"

VIII.

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run
  His earthly course,—"Nay, Goody, let your text
Grow in the garden.—We have only one—
  Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next ?
Summer will come again, and summer sun,
  And lilies too,—but I were sorely vext
To mar my garden, and cut short the blow
Of the last lily I may live to grow."

IX.

"The last!" quoth she, "and though the last it were—
Lo! those two wantons, where they stand so proud
With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,
And painted cheeks, like Dagons to be bow'd
And curtsey'd to!—last Sabbath after pray'r,
I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud
If they were angels—but I made him know
God's bright ones better, with a bitter blow!"

X.

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk
That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng,
Hand-coupled urchins in restrained talk,
And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,
And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,
And gold-bedizen'd beadle flames along,
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene;

XI.

And blushing maiden—modestly array'd
In spotless white,—still conscious of the glass;
And she, the lonely widow, that hath made
A sable covenant with grief,—alas!
She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,
While the poor kindly-hearted, as they pass,
Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress
Her boy,—so rosy!—and so fatherless!

XII.

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near
  The fair white temple, to the timely call
Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—
  Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl
Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
  Of the low porch, and heav'n has won them all,
—Saving those two, that turn aside and pass,
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

XIII.

Ah me! to see their silken manors trail'd
  In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—
Flaunting the grass where widowhood has wail'd
  In blotted black,—over the heapy mould
Panting wave-wantonly! They never quail'd
  How the warm vanity abused the cold;
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone:

XIV.

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,
  Shocking the awful presence of the dead;
Where gracious natures would their eyes benight,
  Nor wear their being with a lip too red,
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright
  Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their tread,
Meting it into steps, with inward breath,
In very pity to bereaved death.

XV.

Now in the church, time-sober'd minds resign
  To solemn pray'r, and the loud chanted hymn,—
With glowing picturings of joys divine
  Painting the mistlight where the roof is dim;
But youth looks upward to the window shine,
  Warming with rose and purple and the swim
Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains
Of gorgeous-light through many-color'd panes;

XVI.

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath
  Enrobed his angels,—and with absent eyes
Hearing of Heav'n, and its directed path,
  Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious skies
Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's wrath
  Consumes his pity, and he glows, and cries
With a deep voice that trembles in its might,
And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light:

XVII

"O that the vacant eye would learn to look
  On very beauty, and the heart embrace
True loveliness, and from this holy book
  Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace
Of love indeed! O that the young soul took
  Its virgin passion from the glorious face
Of fair religion, and address'd its strife,
To win the riches of eternal life!

XVIII.

"Doth the vain heart love glory that is none,
  And the poor excellence of vain attire?
O go, and drown your eyes against the sun,
  The visible ruler of the starry quire,
Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,
  Dazzling the brain with orbs of living fire;
And the faint soul down darkens into night,
And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

XIX.

"O go, and gaze,—when the low winds of ev'n
  Breathe hymns, and Nature's many forests nod
Their gold-crown'd heads; and the rich blooms of heav'n
  Sun-ripen'd give their blushes up to God;
And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riv'n
  By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod
Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense
May quench its longings of magnificence!

XX.

"Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade away—
  Day into darkness—darkness into death—
Death into silence; the warm light of day,
  The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath
Of even—all shall wither and decay,
  Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath
The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes
That break and vanish in the aching eyes."

XXI.

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant shed
  Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and pour
Their sin to earth,—and with low drooping head
  Receive the solemn blessing, and implore
Its grace—then soberly with chastened tread,
  They meekly press towards the gusty door,
With humbled eyes that go to graze upon
The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

XXII.

The lowly grass!—O water-constant mind!
  Fast-ebbing holiness!—soon-fading grace
Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind
  Through the low porch had wash'd it from the face
For ever!—How they lift their eyes to find
  Old vanities.—Pride wins the very place
Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now
With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow!

XXIII.

And lo! with eager looks they seek the way
  Of old temptation at the lowly gate;
To feast on feathers, and on vain array,
  And painted cheeks, and the rich glistering state
Of jewel-sprinkled locks.—But where are they,
  The graceless haughty ones that used to wait
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffen'd eye?—
None challenge the old homage bending by.

XXIV

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom
  Of rich apparel where it glow'd before,—
For Vanity has faded all to gloom,
  And lofty Pride has stiffen'd to the core,
For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—
  Set for a warning token evermore,
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring eyes.

XXV.

The aged priest goes on each sabbath morn,
  But shakes not sorrow under his grey hair;
The solemn clerk goes lavender'd and shorn,
  Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair;—
And ancient lips that pucker'd up in scorn,
  Go smoothly breathing to the house of pray'r;
And in the garden-plot, from day to day,
The lily blooms its long white life away.

XXVI.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,
  In pride of plume, where plumy Death had trod,
Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,
  Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod;—
There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see
  Two sombre Peacocks.——Age, with sapient nod
Marking the spot, still tarries to declare
How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.

MINOR POEMS.

1827.

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

Oh, when I was a tiny boy
My days and nights were full of joy,
  My mates were blithe and kind!—
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
  To cast a look behind!

A hoop was an eternal round
Of pleasure. In those days I found
  A top a joyous thing;—
But now those past delights I drop,
My head, alas! is all my top,
  And careful thoughts the string!

My marbles—once my bag was stor'd—
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,
  With Theseus for a taw!
My playful horse has slipt his string,
Forgotten all his capering,
  And harness'd to the law!

My kite—how fast and far it flew!
Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew
  My pleasure from the sky!
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams
  Will never soar so high!

My joys are wingless all and dead;
My dumps are made of more than lead;
  My flights soon find a fall;
My fears prevail, my fancies droop,
Joy never cometh with a hoop,
  And seldom with a call!

My football 's laid upon the shelf;
I am a shuttlecock myself
  The world knocks to and fro;—
My archery is all unlearn'd,
And grief against myself has turn'd
  My arrows and my bow!

No more in noontide sun I bask;
My authorship 's an endless task,
  My head 's ne'er out of school:
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,
I have too many foes to fight,
  And friends grown strangely cool!

The very chum that shared my cake
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,
  It makes me shrink and sigh:—
On this I will not dwell and hang,
The changeling would not feel a pang
  Though these should meet his eye!

No skies so blue or so serene
As then;—no leaves look half so green
  As cloth'd the play-ground tree!
All things I lov'd are alter'd so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
  That change resides in me!

O, for the garb that mark'd the boy,
The trousers made of corduroy,
  Well ink'd with black and red;
The crownless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
  Repose upon my head!

O, for the riband round the neck!
The careless dog's-ears apt to deck
  My book and collar both!
How can this formal man be styled
Merely an Alexandrine child,
  A boy of larger growth?

O for that small, small beer anew!
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-blue
  That wash'd my sweet meals down;
The master even!—and that small Turk
That fagg'd me!—worse is now my work—
  A fag for all the town!

O for the lessons learn'd by heart!
Ay, though the very birch's smart
  Should mark those hours again;
I'd "kiss the rod," and be resign'd
Beneath the stroke, and even find
  Some sugar in the cane!

The Arabian Nights rehears'd in bed!
The Fairy Tales in school-time read,
  By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun!
The angel form that always walk'd
In all my dreams, and look'd and talk'd
  Exactly like Miss Brown!

The *omne bene*—Christmas come!
The prize of merit, won for home—
  Merit had prizes then!
But now I write for days and days,
For fame—a deal of empty praise,
  Without the silver pen!

Then home, sweet home! the crowded coach—
The joyous shout—the loud appproach—
  The winding horns like rams'!
The meeting sweet that made me thrill,
The sweetmeats almost sweeter still,
  No 'satis' to the 'jams!'—

When that I was a tiny boy,
My days and nights were full of joy,
  My mates were blithe and kind!
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
  To cast a look behind!

THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER.

SUMMER is gone on swallows' wings,
And Earth has buried all her flowers:
No more the lark, the linnet sings,
But Silence sits in faded bowers.
There is a shadow on the plain
Of Winter ere he comes again,—
There is in woods a solemn sound
Of hollow warnings whisper'd round,
As Echo in her deep recess
For once had turn'd a prophetess.
Shuddering Autumn stops to list,
And breathes his fear in sudden sighs,
With clouded face, and hazel eyes
That quench themselves, and hide in mist.

Yes, Summer 's gone like pageant bright;
Its glorious days of golden light
Are gone—the mimic suns that quiver,
Then melt in Time's dark-flowing river.
Gone the sweetly-scented breeze
That spoke in music to the trees;
Gone for damp and chilly breath,
As if fresh blown o'er marble seas,
Or newly from the lungs of Death.—

Gone its virgin roses' blushes,
Warm as when Aurora rushes
Freshly from the god's embrace,
With all her shame upon her face.
Old Time hath laid them in the mould;
Sure he is blind as well as old,
Whose hand relentless never spares
Young cheeks so beauty-bright as theirs!
Gone are the flame-ey'd lovers now
From where so blushing-blest they tarried
Under the hawthorn's blossom-bough,
Gone; for Day and Night are married.
All the light of love is fled:—
Alas! that negro breasts should hide
The lips that were so rosy red,
At morning and at even-tide!

Delightful Summer! then adieu
Till thou shalt visit us anew:
But who without regretful sigh
Can say, adieu, and see thee fly?
Not he that e'er hath felt thy pow'r,
His joy expanding like a flow'r
That cometh after rain and snow,
Looks up at heaven, and learns to glow:—
Not he that fled from Babel-strife
To the green sabbath-land of life
To dodge dull Care 'mid cluster'd trees,
And cool his forehead in the breeze,—
Whose spirit, weary-worn perchance,
Shook from its wings a weight of grief,
And perch'd upon an aspen leaf,
For every breath to make it dance.

Farewell!—on wings of sombre stain,
That blacken in the last blue skies,
Thou fly'st; but thou wilt come again
On the gay wings of butterflies.
Spring at thy approach will sprout
Her new Corinthian beauties out,
Leaf-woven homes, where twitter-words
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds;
Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,
And April smiles to sunny hours.
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights
Full of soft breath and echo-lights,
As if the god of sun-time kept
His eyes half-open while he slept.
Roses shall be where roses were,
Not shadows, but reality;
As if they never perish'd there,
But slept in immortality:
Nature shall thrill with new delight,
And Time's relumin'd river run
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright,
As if its source were in the sun!

But say, hath Winter then no charms?
Is there no joy, no gladness warms
His aged heart? no happy wiles
To cheat the hoary one to smiles?
Onward he comes—the cruel North
Pours his furious whirlwind forth
Before him—and we breathe the breath
Of famish'd bears that howl to death.
Onward he comes from rocks that blanch
O'er solid streams that never flow,

His tears all ice, his locks all snow,
Just crept from some huge avalanche—
A thing half-breathing and half-warm,
As if one spark began to glow
Within some statue's marble form,
Or pilgrim stiffen'd in the storm.
O! will not Mirth's light arrows fail
To pierce that frozen coat of mail?
O! will not Joy but strive in vain
To light up those glaz'd eyes again?

No! take him in, and blaze the oak,
And pour the wine, and warm the ale;
His sides shall shake to many a joke,
His tongue shall thaw in many a tale,
His eyes grow bright, his heart be gay,
And even his palsy charm'd away.
What heeds he then the boisterous shout
Of angry winds that scold without,
Like shrewish wives at tavern door?
What heeds he then the wild uproar
Of billows bursting on the shore?
In dashing waves, in howling breeze,
There is a music that can charm him;
When safe, and shelter'd, and at ease,
He hears the storm that cannot harm him.

But hark! those shouts! that sudden din
Of little hearts that laugh within.
O! take him where the youngsters play,
And he will grow as young as they!
They come! they come! each blue-ey'd Sport,
The Twelfth-Night King and all his court—

'Tis Mirth fresh crown'd with misletoe!
Music with her merry fiddles,
Joy "on light fantastic toe,"
Wit with all his jests and riddles,
Singing and dancing as they go.
And Love, young Love, among the rest,
A welcome—nor unbidden guest.

But still for Summer dost thou grieve?
Then read our Poets—they shall weave
A garden of green fancies still,
Where thy wish may rove at will.
They have kept for after treats
The essences of summer sweets,
And echoes of its songs that wind
In endless music through the mind:
They have stamp'd in visible traces
The "thoughts that breathe," in words that shine—
The flights of soul in sunny places—
To greet and company with thine.
These shall wing thee on to flow'rs—
The past or future, that shall seem
All the brighter in thy dream
For blowing in such desert hours.
The summer never shines so bright
As thought of in a winter's night;
And the sweetest loveliest rose
Is in the bud before it blows.
The dear one of the lover's heart
Is painted to his longing eyes,
In charms she ne'er can realize—
But when she turns again to part.
Dream thou then, and bind thy brow

With wreath of fancy roses now,
And drink of Summer in the cup
Where the Muse hath mix'd it up;
The "dance, and song, and sun-burnt mirth,"
With the warm nectar of the earth:
Drink! 'twill glow in every vein,
And thou shalt dream the winter through:
Then waken to the sun again,
And find thy Summer Vision true!

SONG.

FOR MUSIC.

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here!

Thy gown shall be snow-white silk,
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipp'd in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls!

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dow'r—
But Fairies have broken their wands,
And wishing has lost its pow'r!

ODE:

AUTUMN.

I.

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn ;
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

II.

Where are the songs of Summer ?—With the sun,
Oping the dusky eyelids of the south,
Till shade and silence waken up as one,
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.
Where are the merry birds ?—Away, away,
On panting wings through the inclement skies,
Lest owls should prey
Undazzled at noon-day,
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.

III.

Where are the blooms of Summer?—In the west,
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest
Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her flow'rs
To a most gloomy breast.
Where is the pride of Summer,—the green prime,—
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—Three
On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime
Trembling,—and one upon the old oak tree!
Where is the Dryad's immortality?—
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

IV.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd hoard,
The ants have brimm'd their garners with ripe grain,
And honey bees have stor'd
The sweets of summer in their luscious cells;
The swallows all have winged across the main;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.
Alone, alone,
Upon a mossy stone,
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drowned past
In the hush'd mind's mysterious far away,
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into that distance, grey upon the grey.

V.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded
Under the languid downfall of her hair;
She wears a coronal of flowers faded
Upon her forehead, and a face of care;—
There is enough of wither'd everywhere
To make her bower,—and enough of gloom;
There is enough of sadness to invite,
If only for the rose that died, whose doom
Is Beauty's,—she that with the living bloom
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light:
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear,—
Enough of chilly droppings from her bowl;
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

HYMN TO THE SUN.

GIVER of glowing light!
Though but a god of other days,
The kings and sages
Of wiser ages
Still live and gladden in thy genial rays!

King of the tuneful lyre,
Still poets' hymns to thee belong;
Though lips are cold
Whereon of old
Thy beams all turn'd to worshipping and song!

Lord of the dreadful bow,
None triumph now for Python's death;
But thou dost save
From hungry grave
The life that hangs upon a summer breath.

Father of rosy day,
No more thy clouds of incense rise;
But waking flow'rs,
At morning hours,
Give out their sweets to meet thee in the skies.

God of the Delphic fane,
No more thou listenest to hymns sublime;
But they will leave
On winds at eve,
A solemn echo to the end of time.

TO A COLD BEAUTY.

I.

LADY, wouldst thou heiress be
  To Winter's cold and cruel part?
When he sets the rivers free,
  Thou dost still lock up thy heart;—
Thou that shouldst outlast the snow,
But in the whiteness of thy brow?

II.

Scorn and cold neglect are made
  For winter gloom and winter wind,
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,
  Breathing it to words unkind,—
Breath which only should belong
To love, to sunlight, and to song!

III.

When the little buds unclose,
  Red, and white, and pied, and blue,
And that virgin flow'r, the rose,
  Opes her heart to hold the dew,
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up
With no jewel in its cup?

IV.

Let not cold December sit
  Thus in Love's peculiar throne:
Brooklets are not prison'd now,
  But crystal frosts are all agone,
And that which hangs upon the spray,
It is no snow, but flow'r of May!

AUTUMN.

I.

THE Autumn skies are flush'd with gold,
And fair and bright the rivers run;
These are but streams of winter cold,
And painted mists that quench the sun.

II.

In secret boughs no sweet birds sing,
In secret boughs no bird can shroud;
These are but leaves that take to wing,
And wintry winds that pipe so loud.

III.

'Tis not trees' shade, but cloudy glooms
That on the cheerless valleys fall,
The flowers are in their grassy tombs,
And tears of dew are on them all.

THE SEA OF DEATH.

A FRAGMENT.

——— Methought I saw
Life swiftly treading over endless space ;
And, at her foot-print, but a bygone pace,
The ocean-past, which, with increasing wave,
Swallow'd her steps like a pursuing grave.

Sad were my thoughts that anchor'd silently
On the dead waters of that passionless sea,
Unstirr'd by any touch of living breath :
Silence hung over it, and drowsy Death,
Like a gorged sea-bird, slept with folded wings
On crowded carcases—sad passive things
That wore the thin grey surface, like a veil
Over the calmness of their features pale.

And there were spring-faced cherubs that did sleep
Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,
How beautiful ! with bright unruffled hair
On sleek unfretted brows, and eyes that were
Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse !
And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant lips,
Meekly apart, as if the soul intense
Spake out in dreams of its own innocence :

And so they lay in loveliness, and kept
The birth-night of their peace, that Life e'en wept
With very envy of their happy fronts ;
For there were neighbor brows scarr'd by the brunts
Of strife and sorrowing—where Care had set
His crooked autograph, and marr'd the jet
Of glossy locks, with hollow eyes forlorn,
And lips that curl'd in bitterness and scorn—
Wretched,—as they had breathed of this world's pain,
And so bequeath'd it to the world again
Through the beholder's heart in heavy sighs.
So lay they garmented in torpid light,
Under the pall of a transparent night,
Like solemn apparitions lull'd sublime
To everlasting rest,—and with them Time
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.

BALLAD.

She's up and gone, the graceless Girl!
  And robb'd my failing years;
My blood before was thin and cold
  But now 'tis turn'd to tears;—
My shadow falls upon my grave,
  So near the brink I stand,
She might have stayed a little yet,
  And led me by the hand!

Aye, call her on the barren moor,
  And call her on the hill,
'Tis nothing but the heron's cry,
  And plover's answer shrill;
My child is flown on wilder wings,
  Than they have ever spread,
And I may even walk a waste
  That widen'd when she fled.

Full many a thankless child has been,
  But never one like mine;
Her meat was served on plates of gold,
  Her drink was rosy wine;
But now she'll share the robin's food,
  And sup the common rill,
Before her feet will turn again
  To meet her father's will!

BALLAD.

Sigh on, sad heart, for Love's eclipse
  And Beauty's fairest queen,
Tho' 'tis not for my peasant lips
  To soil her name between:
A king might lay his sceptre down,
  But I am poor and naught,
The brow should wear a golden crown
  That wears her in its thought.

The diamonds glancing in her hair,
  Whose sudden beams surprise,
Might bid such humble hopes beware
  The glancing of her eyes;
Yet looking once, I look'd too long,
  And if my love is sin,
Death follows on the heels of wrong.
  And kills the crime within.

Her dress seem'd wove of lily leaves,
  It was so pure and fine,
O lofty wears, and lowly weaves,
  But hodden grey is mine:
And homely hose must step apart,
  Where garter'd princes stand,
But may he wear my love at heart
  That wins her lily hand!

Alas! there's far from russet frieze
  To silks and satin gowns,
But I doubt if God made like degrees,
  In courtly hearts and clowns.
My father wrong'd a maiden's mirth,
  And brought her cheeks to blame,
And all that's lordly of my birth,
  Is my reproach and shame!

'Tis vain to weep,—'tis vain to sigh,
  'Tis vain this idle speech,
For where her happy pearls do lie,
  My tears may never reach;
Yet when I 'm gone, e'en lofty pride
  May say of what has been,
His love was nobly born and died,
  Tho' all the rest was mean!

My speech is rude,—but speech is weak
  Such love as mine to tell,
Yet had I words, I dare not speak,
  So, Lady, fare thee well;
I will not wish thy better state
  Was one of low degree,
But I must weep that partial fate
  Made such a churl of me.

THE WATER LADY.

Alas, the moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see!—
I saw a maiden on a stream,
And fair was she!

I stayed awhile, to see her throw
Her tresses back, that all beset
The fair horizon of her brow
With clouds of jet.

I stayed a little while to view
Her cheek, that wore in place of red
The bloom of water, tender blue,
Daintily spread.

I stayed to watch, a little space,
Her parted lips if she would sing;
The waters closed above her face,
With many a ring.

And still I stay'd a little more,
Alas! she never comes again;
I throw my flow'rs from the shore,
And watch in vain.

I know my life will fade away,
I know that I must vainly pine,
For I am made of mortal clay,
But she's divine!

THE EXILE.

The swallow with summer
  Will wing o'er the seas,
The wind that I sigh to
  Will visit thy trees.
The ship that it hastens
  Thy ports will contain,
But me—I must never
  See England again!

There 's many that weep there,
  But one weeps alone,
For the tears that are falling
  So far from her own;
So far from thy own, love,
  We know not our pain;
If death is between us,
  Or only the main.

When the white cloud reclines
  On the verge of the sea,
I fancy the white cliffs,
  And dream upon thee;
But the cloud spreads its wings
  To the blue heav'n and flies.
We never shall meet, love,
  Except in the skies!

TO AN ABSENTEE.

O'er hill, and dale, and distant sea,
Through all the miles that stretch between,
My thought must fly to rest on thee,
And would, though worlds should intervene.

Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks
The farther we are forc'd apart,
Affection's firm elastic links
But bind the closer round the heart.

For now we sever each from each,
I learn what I have lost in thee;
Alas, that nothing less could teach,
How great indeed my love should be!

Farewell! I did not know thy worth,
But thou art gone, and now 'tis priz'd;
So angels walked unknown on earth,
But when they flew were recognized!

SONG.

I.

The stars are with the voyager
  Wherever he may sail;
The moon is constant to her time;
  The sun will never fail;
But follow, follow round the world,
  The green earth and the sea,
So love is with the lover's heart,
  Wherever he may be.

II.

Wherever he may be, the stars
  Must daily lose their light;
The moon will veil her in the shade;
  The sun will set at night.
The sun may set, but constant love
  Will shine when he 's away;
So that dull night is never night,
  And day is brighter day.

ODE TO THE MOON.

I.

MOTHER of light! how fairly dost thou go
Over those hoary crests, divinely led!—
Art thou that huntress of the silver bow
Fabled of old? Or rather dost thou tread
Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,
Like the wild Chamois from her Alpine snow,
Where hunter never climb'd,—secure from dread?
How many antique fancies have I read
Of that mild presence! and how many wrought!
Wondrous and bright,
Upon the silver light,
Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought!

II.

What art thou like?—Sometimes I see thee ride
A far-bound galley on its perilous way,
Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray;—
Sometimes behold thee glide,
Cluster'd by all thy family of stars,
Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide,
Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars;—
Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,
Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,

Till in some Latmian cáve I see thee creep,
To catch the young Endymion asleep,—
Leaving thy splendor at the jagged porch!

III.

Oh! thou art beautiful, howe'er it be!
Huntress, or Dian, or whatever nam'd;
And he, the veriest Pagan, that first fram'd
A silver idol, and ne'er worshipp'd thee!—
It is too late, or thou should'st have my knee;
Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,
And not divine the crescent on thy brows!—
Yet, call thee nothing but the mere mild Moon,
Behind those chestnut boughs,
Casting their dappled shadows at my feet;
I will be grateful for that simple boon,
In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,
And bless thy dainty face whene'er we meet.

IV.

In nights far gone,—ay, far away and dead,—
Before Care-fretted with a lidless eye,—
I was thy wooer on my little bed,
Letting the early hours of rest go by,
To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,
And feed thy snow-white swans, before I slept;
For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—
Thou wert the fairies' armorer, that kept
Their burnish'd helms, and crowns, and corslets bright,
Their spears, and glittering mails;
And ever thou didst spill in winding streams
Sparkles and midnight gleams,
For fishes to new gloss their argent scales!—

V.

Why sighs!—why creeping tears?—why clasped hands?—
Is it to count the boy's expended dower?
That fairies since have broke their gifted wands?
That young Delight, like any o'erblown flow'r,
Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground?—
Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,
Thou art a sadder dial to old Time
Than ever I have found
On sunny garden-plot, or moss-grown tow'r,
Motto'd with stern and melancholy rhyme.

VI.

Why should I grieve for this?—O I must yearn,
Whilst Time, conspirator with Memory,
Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,
Richly emboss'd with childhood's revelry,
With leaves and cluster'd fruits, and flow'rs eterne,—
(Eternal to the world, though not to me),
Aye there will those brave sports and blossoms be,
The deathless wreath, and undecay'd festoon,
When I am bears'd within,—
Less than the pallid primrose to the Moon,
That now she watches through a vapor thin.

VII.

So let it be:—Before I liv'd to sigh,
Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,
Beautiful Orb! and so, whene'er I lie
Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.
Blest be thy loving light, where'er it spills,
And blessed thy fair face, O Mother mild!

Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,
Still lend thy lonely lamp to lovers fond,
And blend their plighted shadows into one :—
Still smile at even on the bedded child,
And close his eyelids with thy silver wand !—

TO ——.

WELCOME, dear Heart, and a most kind good-morrow;
The day is gloomy, but our looks shall shine:—
Flow'rs I have none to give thee, but I borrow
Their sweetness in a verse to speak for thine.

Here are red roses, gather'd at thy cheeks,
The white were all too happy to look white:
For love the rose, for faith the lily speaks;
It withers in false hands, but here 'tis bright!

Dost love sweet Hyacinth? Its scented leaf
Curls manifold,—all love's delights blow double:
'Tis said this flow'ret is inscribed with grief,—
But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.

I pluck'd the Primrose at night's dewy noon;
Like Hope, it show'd its blossoms in the night;—
'Twas, like Endymion, watching for the Moon!
And here are Sun-flowers, amorous of light!

These golden Buttercups are April's seal,—
The Daisy stars her constellations be:
These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,
Therefore I pluck no Daisies but for thee!

Here 's Daisies for the morn, Primrose for gloom,
Pansies and Roses for the noontide hours:—
A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—
So may thy life be measur'd out by flow'rs!

THE FORSAKEN.

The dead are in their silent graves,
And the dew is cold above,
And the living weep and sigh,
Over dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,
But now the living cause my pain:
How couldst thou steal me from my tears,
To leave me to my tears again?

My Mother rests beneath the sod,—
Her rest is calm and very deep:
I wish'd that she could see our loves,—
But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,
The morning saw them turn'd to grey,
Once they were black and well belov'd,
But thou art chang'd,—and so are they!

The useless lock I gave thee once,
To gaze upon and think of me,
Was ta'en with smiles,—but this was torn
In sorrow that I send to thee!

I.

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKSPEARE.

How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled!
Hues of all flow'rs that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
Look here how honor glorifies the dead,
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold!—
Such is the memory of poets old,
Who on Parnassus' hill have bloom'd elate;
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
And turn'd to clay, whereof they were create;
But God Apollo hath them all enroll'd,
And blazon'd on the very clouds of fate!

II.

TO FANCY.

Most delicate Ariel! submissive thing,
Won by the mind's high magic to its hest,—
Invisible embassy, or secret guest,—
Weighing the light air on a lighter wing;—
Whether into the midnight moon, to bring
Illuminate visions to the eye of rest,—
Or rich romances from the florid West,—
Or to the sea, for mystic whispering,—
Still by thy charm'd allegiance to the will,
The fruitful wishes prosper in the brain,
As by the fingering of fairy skill,—
Moonlight, and waters, and soft music's strain,
Odors, and blooms, and *my* Miranda's smile,
Making this dull world an enchanted isle.

III.

TO AN ENTHUSIAST.

Young ardent soul, graced with fair Nature's truth,
Spring warmth of heart, and fervency of mind,
And still a large late love of all thy kind,
Spite of the world's cold practice and Time's tooth,—
For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth,
Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind
Thine eyes with tears,—that thou hast not resign'd
The passionate fire and fierceness of thy youth:
For as the current of thy life shall flow,
Gilded by shine of sun or shadow-stain'd,
Through flow'ry valley or unwholesome fen,
Thrice blessed in thy joy, or in thy woe
Thrice cursed of thy race,—thou art ordain'd
To share beyond the lot of common men.

IV.

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spright
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this,—but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

V.

By ev'ry sweet tradition of true hearts,
Graven by Time, in love with his own lore;
By all old martyrdoms and antique smarts,
Wherein Love died to be alive the more;
Yea, by the sad impression on the shore,
Left by the drown'd Leander, to endear
That coast for ever, where the billow's roar
Moaneth for pity in the Poet's ear;
By Hero's faith, and the foreboding tear
That quench'd her brand's last twinkle in its fall;
By Sappho's leap, and the low rustling fear
That sigh'd around her flight; I swear by all,
The world shall find such pattern in my act,
As if Love's great examples still were lack'd.

VI.

ON RECEIVING A GIFT.

Look how the golden ocean shines above
Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their girth;
So does the bright and blessed light of love
Its own things glorify, and raise their worth.
As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,
And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,
Ev'n so our tokens shine; nay, they outshine
Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed;
For where be ocean waves but half so clear,
So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,
As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,
That hath no dregs to be upturn'd by storm?
Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,
And more than gold to doting Avarice.

VII.

SILENCE.

There is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hush'd—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

VIII.

The curse of Adam, the old curse of all,
Though I inherit in this feverish life
Of worldly toil, vain wishes, and hard strife,
And fruitless thought, in Care's eternal thrall,
Yet more sweet honey than of bitter gall
I taste, through thee, my Eva, my sweet wife.
Then what was Man's lost Paradise!—how rife
Of bliss, since love is with him in his fall!
Such as our own pure passion still might frame,
Of this fair earth, and its delightful bow'rs,
If no fell sorrow, like the serpent, came
To trail its venom o'er the sweetest flow'rs;—
But oh! as many and such tears are ours,
As only should be shed for guilt and shame!

IX.

Love, dearest Lady, such as I would speak
Lives not within the humor of the eye ;—
Not being but an outward phantasy,
That skims the surface of a tinted cheek,—
Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak,
As if the rose made summer,—and so lie
Amongst the perishable things that die,
Unlike the love which I would give and seek :
Whose health is of no hue—to feel decay
With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.
Love is its own great loveliness alway,
And takes new lustre from the touch of time ;
Its bough owns no December and no May,
But bears its blossom into Winter's clime.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK.

AN ALLEGORY.

THERE 's a murmur in the air,
  And noise in every street—
The murmur of many tongues,
  The noise of numerous feet—
While round the Workhouse door
  The Laboring Classes flock;
For why? the Overseer of the Poor
  Is setting the Workhouse Clock.

Who does not hear the tramp
  Of thousands speeding along
Of either sex and various stamp,
  Sickly, crippled, or strong,
Walking, limping, creeping,
  From court, and alley, and lane,
But all in one direction sweeping,
  Like rivers that seek the main?
Who does not see them sally
  From mill, and garret, and room,
In lane, and court, and alley,
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,
  Furnished with shuttle and loom—
Poor slaves of Civilisation's galley—

And in the road and footways rally,
  As if for the Day of Doom?
Some, of hardly human form,
  Stunted, crooked, and crippled by toil;
  Dingy with smoke, and dust, and oil,
  And smirch'd besides with vicious soil,
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm.
  Father, mother, and careful child,
  Looking as if it had never smiled—
The Sempstress, lean, and weary, and wan,
With only the ghosts of garments on—
  The Weaver, her sallow neighbor;
The grim and sooty Artisan;
Every soul—child, woman, or man,
  Who lives—or dies—by labor.

Stirred by an overwhelming zeal,
  And social impulse, a terrible throng!
Leaving shuttle, and needle, and wheel,
Furnace, and grindstone, spindle, and reel,
Thread, and yarn, and iron, and steel—
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal—
  Gushing, rushing, crushing along,
A very torrent of Man!
  Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,
  Grown at last to a hurricane strong,
Stop its course who can!
  Stop who can its onward course
  And irresistible moral force;
O! vain and idle dream!
  For surely as men are all akin,
  Whether of fair or sable skin,
According to Nature's scheme,

That Human Movement contains within,
A Blood-Power stronger than Steam.

Onward, onward, with hasty feet,
They swarm—and westward still—
Masses born to drink and eat,
But starving amidst Whitechapel's meat,
And famishing down Cornhill!
Through the Poultry—but still unfed—
Christian charity, hang your head!
Hungry—passing the Street of Bread;
Thirsty—the Street of Milk;
Ragged—beside the Ludgate Mart,
So gorgeous, through Mechanic-Art,
With cotton, and wool, and silk!

At last, before that door
That bears so many a knock,
Ere ever it opens to Sick or Poor,
Like sheep they huddle and flock—
And would that all the Good and Wise
Could see the Million of hollow eyes,
With a gleam deriv'd from Hope and the skies,
Upturn'd to the Workhouse Clock!

Oh! that the Parish Powers,
Who regulate Labor's hours,
The daily amount of human trial,
Weariness, pain, and self-denial,
Would turn from the artificial dial
That striketh ten or eleven,
And go, for once, by that older one
That stands in the light of Nature's sun,
And takes its time from Heaven!

To the Editor of the Athenæum.

My dear Sir,—The following Ode was written anticipating the tone of some strictures on my writings, by the gentleman to whom it is addressed. I have not seen his book; but I know by hearsay that some of my verses are characterized as "profaneness and ribaldry"—citing, in proof, the description of a certain sow, from whose jaw a cabbage sprout—

Protruded, as the dove so staunch
For peace supports an olive branch.

If the printed works of my Censor had not prepared me for any misapplication of *types*, I should have been surprised by this misapprehension of one of the commonest emblems. In some cases the dove unquestionably stands for the Divine Spirit; but the same bird is also a lay representative of the peace of this world, and, as such, has figured time out of mind in allegorical pictures. The sense in which it was used by me is plain from the context; at least, it would be plain to any one but a fisher for faults, predisposed to carp at some things, to dab at others, and to flounder in all. But I am possibly in error. It is the female swine, perhaps, that is profaned in the eyes of the Oriental tourist. Men find strange ways of marking their intolerance; and the spirit is certainly strong enough, in Mr. W.'s works, to set up a creature as sacred, in sheer opposition to the Mussulman, with whom she is a beast of abomination. It would only be going the whole sow.

I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,

Thos. Hood.

1837.

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQUIRE.

Close, close your eyes with holy dread,
And weave a circle round him thrice;
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise!—*Coleridge.*

It's very hard them kind of men
Won't let a body be.—*Old Ballad.*

A WANDERER, Wilson, from my native land,
Remote, O Rae, from godliness and thee,
Where rolls between us the eternal sea,
Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—
Beyond the broadest Scotch of London Wall;
Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call;
Across the wavy waste between us stretch'd,
A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,
Wherein my likeness you have darkly etch'd,
And tho' I have not seen the shadow sketch'd,
Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features:—in a line to paint
Their moral ugliness, I'm not a saint.
Not one of those self-constituted saints,
Quacks—not physicians—in the cure of souls,
Censors who sniff out mortal taints,
And call the devil over his own coals—

Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,
Who write down judgments with a pen hard-nibb'd;
Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,
Commending sinners, not to ice thick-ribb'd,
But endless flames, to scorch them up like flax—
Yet sure of heav'n themselves, as if they'd cribb'd
Th' impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace
Exists, I know, in my fictitious face;
There wants a certain cast about the eye;
A certain lifting of the nose's tip;
A certain curling of the nether lip,
In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky;
In brief it is an aspect deleterious,
A face decidedly not serious,
A face profane, that would not do at all
To make a face at Exeter Hall,—
That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and pray,
And laud each other face to face,
Till ev'ry farthing-candle *ray*
Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace!

Well!—be the graceless lineaments confest!
I do enjoy this bounteous beauteous earth;
And dote upon a jest
"Within the limits of becoming mirth;"—
No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,
Nor think I 'm pious when I 'm only bilious—
Nor study in my sanctum supercilious
To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.
I pray for grace—repent each sinful act—
Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible;

And love my neighbor far too well, in fact,
To call and twit him with a godly tract
That's turn'd by application to a libel.
My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.

What else? no part I take in party fray,
With tropes from Billinsgate's slang-whanging tartars,
I fear no Pope—and let great Ernest play
At Fox and Goose with Fox's Martyrs!
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,
I own I shake my sides at ranters,
And treat sham-Abr'am saints with wicked banters,
I even own, that there are times—but then
It 's when I 've got my wine—I say d——canters!

I 've no ambition to enact the spy
On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry—
'Tis said that people ought to guard their noses
Who thrust them into matters none of theirs;
And tho' no delicacy discomposes
Your Saint, yet I consider faith and pray'rs
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,
No food was fit to eat till I had chew'd it.
On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk;
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk,—
For man may pious texts repeat,
And yet religion have no inward seat;

'Tis not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,
A man has got his bellyfull of meat
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth!

Mere verbiage,—it is not worth a carrot!
Why, Socrates or Plato—where's the odds?—
Once taught a jay to supplicate the Gods,
And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot!

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is
Not a whit better than a Mantis,—
An insect, of what clime I can't determine,
That lifts its paws most parson-like, and thence,
By simple savages—thro' sheer pretence—
Is reckon'd quite a saint amongst the vermin.

But where's the reverence, or where the *nous*,
To ride on one's religion thro' the lobby,
Whether as stalking-horse or hobby,
To show its pious paces to "the House?"

I honestly confess that I would hinder
The Scottish member's legislative rigs,
That spiritual Pinder,
Who looks on erring souls as straying pigs,
That must be lash'd by law, wherever found,
And driv'n to church, as to the parish pound.
I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,
I view that grovelling idea as one
Worthy some parish clerk's ambitious son,
A charity-boy who longs to be a beadle.

On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd
How much a man can differ from his neighbor:

One wishes worship freely giv'n to God,
Another wants to make it statute-labor—
The broad distinction in a line to draw,
As means to lead us to the skies above,
You say—Sir Andrew and his love of law,
And I—the Saviour with his law of love.

Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,
Like the magnetic needle to the Pole;
But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,
Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than knowledge,
Fresh from St. Andrew's College,
Should nail the conscious needle to the north?

I do confess that I abhor and shrink
From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,
That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink
The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly—
My soul revolts at such a bare hypocrisy,
And will not, dare not, fancy in accord
The Lord of Hosts with an Exclusive Lord
Of this world's aristocracy.
It will not own a notion so unholy,
As thinking that the rich by easy trips
May go to heav'n, whereas the poor and lowly
Must work their passage, as they do in ships.

One place there is—beneath the burial sod
Where all mankind are equalized by death;
Another place there is—the Fane of God,
Where all are equal who draw living breath;—
Juggle who will *elsewhere* with his own soul,
Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—

He who can come beneath that awful cope,
In the dread presence of a Maker just,
Who metes to ev'ry pinch of human dust
One even measure of immortal hope—
He who can stand within that holy door,
With soul unbow'd by that pure spirit-level,
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor,—
Might sit for Hell and represent the Devil!

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,
In your last Journey-Work, perchance you ravage,
Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say
I'm but a heedless, creedless, godless, savage;
A very Guy, deserving fire and fagots,—
A Scoffer, always on the grin,
And sadly given to the mortal sin
Of liking Mawworms less than merry maggots!

The humble records of my life to search,
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts;
But sometimes I have "sat at good men's feasts,"
And I have been "where bells have knoll'd to church."
Dear bells! how sweet the sounds of village bells
When on the undulating air they swim!
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as farewells!
And trembling all about the breezy dells
As flutter'd by the wings of Cherubim.
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;
And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love,—
With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon;—
O Pagans, Heathens, Infidels, and Doubters!
If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,
Will the harsh voices of church cads and touters?

A man may cry Church! Church! at ev'ry word,
With no more piety than other people—
A daw 's not reckon'd a religious bird
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.
The Temple is a good, a holy place,
But quacking only gives it an ill savor;
While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,
And bring religion's self into disfavor!

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon,
Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger,
Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,
Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,
Against the wicked remnant of the week,
A saving bet against his sinful bias—
"Rogue that I am," he whispers to himself,
"I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,
But who on earth can say I am not pious?"

In proof how over-righteousness re-acts,
Accept an anecdote well bas'd on facts.

One Sunday morning—(at the day don't fret)—
In riding with a friend to Ponder's End
Outside the stage, we happen'd to commend
A certain mansion that we saw To Let.
"Aye," cried our coachman, with our talk to grapple,
"You're right! no house along the road comes nigh it!
'Twas built by the same man as built yon chapel,
And master wanted once to buy it,—
But t'other driv the bargain much too hard—
He ax'd sure-*ly* a sum purdigious!

But being so particular religious,
Why, *that*, you see, put master on his guard!"

Church is "a little heav'n below,
I have been there and still would go,"—
Yet I am none of those who think it odd
A man can pray unbidden from the cassóck,
And, passing by the customary hassock,
Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,
And sue in formâ pauperis to God.

As for the rest,—intolerant to none,
Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,
Ev'n the poor Pagan's homage to the Sun
I would not harshly scorn, lest even there
I spurn'd some elements of Christian pray'r—
An aim, tho' erring, at a "world ayont"—
Acknowledgment of good—of man's futility,
A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed
That very thing so many Christians want—
Humility.

Such, unto Papists, Jews or turban'd Turks,
Such is my spirit—(I don't mean my wraith!)
Such, may it please you, is my humble faith;
I know, full well, you do not like my *works!*
I have not sought, 'tis true, the Holy Land,
As full of texts as Cuddie Headrigg's mother,
The Bible in one hand,
And my own common-place-book in the other—
But you have been to Palestine—alas!
Some minds improve by travel, others, rather,
Resemble copper wire, or brass,

Which gets the narrower by going farther!
Worthless are all such Pilgrimages—very!
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive
The human heats and rancor to revive
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury.
A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,
To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,
Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,
Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and smoke,
At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,
Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull
Hunts an old woman in a scarlet cloke?

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,
Scotland, renown'd for sanctity of old,
Far distant Catholics to rate and scold
For—doing as the Romans do at Rome?
With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit
The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,
About the graceless images to flit,
And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,
Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch collops—?
People who hold such absolute opinions
Should stay at home, in Protestant dominions,
Not travel like male Mrs. Trollopes.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,
Yet weak at the same time,
Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,
That grasps the nearest stem with tendril-rings;
And as the climate and the soil may grant,
So is the sort of tree to which it clings.
Consider then, before, like Hurlothrumbo,

You aim your club at any creed on earth,
That, by the simple accident of birth,
You might have been High Priest to Mumbo Jumbo.

For me—thro' heathen ignorance perchance,
Not having knelt in Palestine,—I feel
None of that griffinish excess of zeal,
Some travellers would blaze with here in France.
Dolls I can see in Virgin-like array,
Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker
Like crazy Quixotte at the puppet's play,
If their "offence be rank," should mine be *rancour?*
Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan
To cure the dark and erring mind;
But who would rush at a benighted man,
And give him two black eyes for being blind?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop
Around a canker'd stem should twine,
What Kentish boor would tear away the prop
So roughly as to wound, nay kill the bine?

The images, 'tis true, are strangely dress'd,
With gauds and toys extremely out of season;
The carving nothing of the very best,
The whole repugnant to the eye of reason,
Shocking to Taste, and to Fine Arts a treason—
Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect
One truly *Catholic*, one common form,
At which uncheck'd
All Christian hearts may kindle or keep warm.

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,
One bright and balmy morning, as I went

From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,
That made me breathe a pray'r upon the spot—
While Nature of herself, as if to trace
The emblem's use, had trail'd around its base
The blue significant Forget-Me-Not ?
Methought, the claims of charity to urge
More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,
The pious choice had pitch'd upon the verge
Of a delicious slope,
Giving the eye much variegated scope ;—
"Look round," it whisper'd, "on that prospect rare,
Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue ;
Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,
But"—(how the simple legend pierc'd me thro' !)
"PRIEZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX."

With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd cells,
Religion lives, and feels herself at home ;
But only on a formal visit dwells
Where wasps instead of bees have formed the comb.

Shun pride, O Rae !—whatever sort beside
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride !
A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,
A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
A London pride—in short, there be on earth
A host of prides, some better and some worse ;
But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and hard,
Fancy a peacock in a poultry yard.
Behold him in conceited circles sail,

Strutting and dancing, and now planted stiff,
In all his pomp of pageantry, as if
He felt "the eyes of Europe" on his tail!
As for the humble breed retain'd by man,
He scorns the whole domestic clan—
He bows, he bridles,
He wheels, he sidles,
At last, with stately dodgings in a corner
He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her
Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!
"Look here," he cries (to give him words),
"Thou feather'd clay—thou scum of birds!"
Flirting the rustling plumage in her eyes,—
"Look here, thou vile predestin'd sinner,
Doomed to be roasted for a dinner,
Behold these lovely variegated dyes!
These are the rainbow colors of the skies,
That heav'n has shed upon me *con amore*—
A Bird of Paradise?—a pretty story!
I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!
Look at my crown of glory!
Thou dingy, dirty, drabbled, draggled jill!"
And off goes Partlet, wriggling from a kick,
With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!
That little simile exactly paints
How sinners are despis'd by saints.
By saints!—the Hypocrites that ope heav'n's door
Obsequious to the sinful man of riches—
But put the wicked, naked, barelegg'd poor,
In parish stocks instead of breeches.

The Saints!—the Bigots that in public spout,
Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian,

And go like walking "Lucifers" about
Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints!—the aping Fanatics that talk
All cant and rant, and rhapsodies highflown—
That bid you baulk
A Sunday walk,
And shun God's work as you should shun your own.

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra pious,
Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,
By trundling with a mere mechanic bias,
To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints!—the Pharisees, whose beadle stands
Beside a stern coercive kirk.
A piece of human mason-work,
Calling all sermons contrabands,
In that great Temple that's not made with hands!

Thrice blessed, rather, is the man with whom
The gracious prodigality of nature,
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,
The bounteous providence in ev'ry feature,
Recall the good Creator to his creature,
Making all earth a fane, all heav'n its dome!
To *his* tun'd spirit the wild heather-bells
Ring Sabbath knells;
The jubilate of the soaring lark
Is chant of clerk;
For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet;
The sod's a cushion for his pious want;
And, consecrated by the heav'n within it,

The sky-blue pool, a font.
Each cloud-capp'd mountain is a holy altar;
An organ breathes in every grove;
And the full heart's a Psalter,
Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love!

Sufficiently by stern necessitarians
Poor Nature, with her face begrim'd by dust,
Is stok'd, cok'd, smok'd, and almost chok'd; but must
Religion have its own Utilitarians,
Labell'd with evangelical phylacteries,
To make the road to heav'n a railway trust,
And churches—that's the naked fact—mere factories?

Oh! simply open wide the Temple door,
And let the solemn, swelling, organ greet,
With *Voluntaries* meet,
The willing advent of the rich and poor!
And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,
With rich vibrations from the vocal throng—
From quiet shades that to the woods belong,
And brooks with music of their own,
Voices may come to swell the choral song
With notes of praise they learn'd in musings lone.

How strange it is while on all vital questions,
That occupy the House and public mind,
We always meet with some humane suggestions
Of gentle measures of a healing kind,
Instead of harsh severity and vigor,
The Saint alone his preference retains
For bills of penalties and pains,
And marks his narrow code with legal rigor!

Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,
What men of all political persuasion
Extol—and even use upon occasion—
That Christian principle, conciliation?
But possibly the men who make such fuss
With Sunday pippins and old Trots infirm,
Attach some other meaning to the term,
As thus:

One market morning, in my usual rambles,
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,
Where meat was hung in many a joint and quarter,
I had to halt awhile, like other folks,
To let a killing butcher coax
A score of lambs and fatted sheep to slaughter.
A sturdy man he look'd to fell an ox,
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak
Of well-greas'd hair down either cheek,
As if he dee-dash-dee'd some other flocks
Beside those woolly-headed stubborn blocks
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle—
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers group'd,
While, now and then, a thirsty creature stoop'd
And meekly snuff'd, but did not taste the puddle.

Fierce bark'd the dog, and many a blow was dealt,
That loin, and chump, and scrag and saddle felt,
Yet still, that fatal step they all declin'd it,—
And shunn'd the tainted door as if they smelt
Onions, mint sauce, and lemon juice behind it.
At last there came a pause of brutal force,
The cur was silent, for his jaws were full
Of tangled locks of tarry wool,

The man had whoop'd and hollow'd till dead hoarse,
The time was ripe for mild expostulation,
And thus it stammer'd from a stander-by—
"Zounds!—my good fellow,—it quite makes me—why,
It really—my dear fellow—do just try
Conciliation!"

Stringing his nerves like flint,
The sturdy butcher seiz'd upon the hint,—
At least he seiz'd upon the foremost wether,—
And hugg'd and lugg'd and tugg'd him neck and crop
Just *nolens volens* thro' the open shop—
If tails come off he didn't care a feather,—
Then walking to the door, and smiling grim,
He rubb'd his forehead and his sleeve together—
"There!—I've *con*ciliated him!"

Again—good-humoredly to end our quarrel—
(Good humor should prevail!)
I'll fit you with a tale
Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass
Was seiz'd with symptoms of such deep decline,
Cough, hectic, flushes, ev'ry evil sign,
That, as their wont is at such desperate pass,
The Doctors gave her over—to an ass.
Accordingly, the grisly Shade to bilk,
Each morn the patient quaff'd a frothy bowl
Of asinine new milk,
Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal
Which got proportionably spare and skinny—
Meanwhile the neighbors cried "poor Mary Ann!

She can't get over it! she never can!"
When lo! to prove each prophet was a ninny
The one that died was the poor wetnurse Jenny.

To aggravate the case,
There were but two grown donkeys in the place;
And most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,
The other long-ear'd creature was a male,
Who never in his life had given a pail
Of milk, or even chalk and water.
No matter: at the usual hour of eight
Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,
With Mister Simon Gubbins on its back,—
"Your sarvant, Miss,—a werry spring-like day,—
Bad time for hasses tho'! good lack! good lack!
Jenny be dead, Miss,—but I'ze brought ye Jack,
He doesn't give no milk—but he can bray."

So runs the story,
And, in vain self-glory,
Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for his blindness—
But what the better are their pious saws
To ailing souls, than dry hee-haws,
Without the milk of human kindness?

THE TWO SWANS.

A FAIRY TALE.

I.

IMMORTAL Imogen, crown'd queen above
The lilies of thy sex, vouchsafe to hear
A fairy dream in honor of true love—
True above ills, and frailty, and all fear—
Perchance a shadow of his own career
Whose youth was darkly prison'd and long twined
By serpent-sorrow, till white Love drew near,
And sweetly sang him free, and round his mind
A bright horizon threw, wherein no grief may wind.

II.

I saw a tower builded on a lake,
Mock'd by its inverse shadow, dark and deep—
That seem'd a still intenser night to make,
Wherein the quiet waters sunk to sleep,—
And, whatsoe'er was prisoned in that keep,
A monstrous Snake was warden :—round and round
In sable ringlets I beheld him creep
Blackest amid black shadows to the ground,
Whilst his enormous head the topmost turret crown'd.

III.

From whence he shot fierce light against the stars,
Making the pale moon paler with affright;
And with his ruby eye out-threaten'd Mars,
That blazed in the mid-heavens, hot and bright—
Nor slept, nor wink'd, but with a steadfast spite,
Watch'd their wan looks and tremblings in the skies,
And that he might not slumber in the night,
The curtain-lids were pluck'd from his large eyes,
So he might never drowse, but watch his secret prize.

IV.

Prince or princess in dismal durance, pent,
Victims of old Enchantment's love or hate,
Their lives must all in painful sighs be spent,
Watching the lonely waters soon and late,
And clouds that pass and leave them to their fate,
Or company their grief with heavy tears:—
Meanwhile that Hope can spy no golden gate
For sweet escapement, but in darksome fears
They weep and pine away, as if immortal years.

V.

No gentle bird with gold upon its wing
Will perch upon the grate—the gentle bird
Is safe in leafy dell, and will not bring
Freedom's sweet key-note and commission word
Learn'd of a fairy's lips, for pity stirr'd—
Lest while he trembling sings, untimely guest!
Watch'd by that cruel Snake and darkly heard,
He leave a widow on her lonely nest,
To press in silent grief the darlings of her breast.

VI.

No gallant knight, adventurous, in his bark,
Will seek the fruitful perils of the place,
To rouse with dipping oar the waters dark
That bear that serpent image on their face,
And Love, brave Love! though he attempt the base,
Nerved to his royal death, he may not win
His captive lady from the strict embrace
Of that foul Serpent, clasping her within
His sable folds—like Eve enthralled by the old Sin.

VII.

But there is none——no knight in panoply,
Nor Love, intrench'd in his strong steely coat:
No little speck—no sail—no helper nigh,
No sign—no whispering—no plash of boat:—
The distant shores show dimly and remote,
Made of a deeper mist,—serene and grey,—
And slow and mute the cloudy shadows float
Over the gloomy wave, and pass away,
Chased by the silver beams that on their marges play.

VIII.

And bright and silvery the willows sleep
Over the shady verge—no mad winds tease
Their hoary heads; but quietly they weep
There sprinkling leaves—half fountains and half trees:
There lilies be—and fairer than all these,
A solitary Swan her breast of snow
Launches against the wave that seems to freeze
Into a chaste reflection, still below
Twin shadow of herself wherever she may go.

IX.

And forth she paddles in the very noon
Of solemn midnight like an elfin thing,
Charm'd into being by the argent moon—
Whose silver light for love of her fair wing
Goes with her in the shade, still worshipping
Her dainty plumage:—all around her grew
A radiant circlet, like a fairy ring;
And all behind, a tiny little clue
Of light, to guide her back across the waters blue.

X.

And sure she is no meaner than a fay,
Redeem'd from sleepy death, for beauty's sake,
By old ordainment:—silent as she lay,
Touch'd by a moonlight wand I saw her wake,
And cut her leafy slough, and so forsake
The verdant prison of her lily peers,
That slept amidst the stars upon the lake—
A breathing shape—restored to human fears,
And new-born love and grief—self-conscious of her tears.

XI.

And now she clasps her wings around her heart,
And near that lonely isle begins to glide
Pale as her fears, and oft-times with a start
Turns her impatient head from side to side
In universal terrors—all too wide
To watch; and often to that marble keep
Upturns her pearly eyes, as if she spied
Some foe, and crouches in the shadows steep
That in the gloomy wave go diving fathoms deep.

XII.

And well she may, to spy that fearful thing
All down the dusky walls in circlets wound;
Alas! for what rare prize, with many a ring
Girding the marble casket round and round?
His folded tail, lost in the gloom profound,
Terribly darkeneth the rocky base;
But on the top his monstrous head is crown'd
With prickly spears, and on his doubtful face
Gleam his unwearied eyes, red watchers of the place.

XIII.

Alas! of the hot fires that nightly fall,
No one will scorch him in those orbs of spite,
So he may never see beneath the wall
That timid little creature, all too bright,
That stretches her fair neck, slender and white,
Invoking the pale moon, and vainly tries
Her throbbing throat, as if to charm the night
With song—but, hush—it perishes in sighs,
And there will be no dirge sad-swelling, though she dies!

XIV.

She droops, she sinks—she leans upon the lake,
Fainting again into a lifeless flower;
But soon the chilly springs anoint and wake
Her spirit from its death, and with new power
She sheds her stifled sorrows in a shower
Of tender song, timed to her falling tears—
That wins the shady summit of that tower,
And, trembling all the sweeter for its fears,
Fills with imploring moan that cruel monster's ears.

XV.

And, lo! the scaly beast is all deprest,
Subdued like Argus by the might of sound—
What time Apollo his sweet lute addrest
To magic converse with the air, and bound
The many monster eyes, all slumber-drown'd:—
So on the turret-top that watchful Snake
Pillows his giant head, and lists profound,
As if his wrathful spite would never wake,
Charm'd into sudden sleep for Love and Beauty's sake!

XVI.

His prickly crest lies prone upon his crown,
And thirsty lip from lip disparted flies,
To drink that dainty flood of music down—
His scaly throat is big with pent-up sighs—
And whilst his hollow ear entranced lies,
His looks for envy of the charmed sense
Are fain to listen, till his steadfast eyes,
Stung into pain by their own impotence,
Distil enormous tears into the lake immense.

XVII.

Oh, tuneful swan! oh, melancholy bird!
Sweet was that midnight miracle of song,
Rich with ripe sorrow, needful of no word
To tell of pain, and love, and love's deep wrong—
Hinting a piteous tale—perchance how long
Thy unknown tears were mingled with the lake,
What time disguised thy leafy mates among—
And no eye knew what human love and ache
Dwelt in those dewy leaves, and heart so nigh to break.

XVIII.

Therefore no poet will ungently touch
The water-lily, on whose eyelids dew
Trembles like tears; but ever hold it such
As human pain may wander through and through,
Turning the pale leaf paler in its hue—
Wherein life dwells, transfigured, not entomb'd,
By magic spells. Alas! who ever knew
Sorrow in all its shapes, leafy and plumed,
Or in gross husks of brutes eternally inhumed?

XIX.

And now the winged song has scaled the height
Of that dark dwelling, builded for despair,
And soon a little casement flashing bright
Widens self-open'd into the cool air—
That music like a bird may enter there,
And soothe the captive in his stony cage;
For there is naught of grief, or painful care,
But plaintive song may happily engage
From sense of its own ill, and tenderly assuage.

XX.

And forth into the light, small and remote,
A creature, like the fair son of a king,
Draws to the lattice in his jewell'd coat
Against the silver moonlight glistening,
And leans upon his white hand, listening
To that sweet music that with tenderer tone
Salutes him, wondering what kindly thing
Is come to soothe him with so tuneful moan,
Singing beneath the walls as if for him alone!

XXI.

And while he listens, the mysterious song,
Woven with timid particles of speech,
Twines into passionate words that grieve along
The melancholy notes, and softly teach
The secrets of true love,—that trembling reach,
His earnest ear, and through the shadows dun
He missions like replies, and each to each
Their silver voices mingle into one,
Like blended streams that make one music as they run.

XXII.

"Ah! Love, my hope is swooning in my heart,—
Ay, sweet, my cage is strong and hung full high—
Alas! our lips are held so far apart,
Thy words come faint, they have so far to fly!—
If I may only shun that serpent-eye,—
Ah, me! that serpent-eye doth never sleep;—
Then, nearer thee, Love's martyr, I will die!—
Alas, alas! that word has made me weep!
For pity's sake remain safe in thy marble keep!

XXIII.

"My marble keep! it is my marble tomb—
Nay, sweet! but thou hast there thy living breath—
Aye to expend in sighs for this hard doom;
But I will come to thee and sing beneath,
And nightly so beguile this serpent wreath;
Nay, I will find a path from these despairs.
Ah, needs then thou must tread the back of death,
Making his stony ribs thy stony stairs.—
Behold his ruby eye, how fearfully it glares!"

XXIV.

Full sudden at these words the princely youth
Leaps on the scaly back that slumbers, still
Unconscious of his foot, yet not for ruth,
But numb'd to dulness by the fairy skill
Of that sweet music (all more wild and shrill
For intense fear) that charm'd him as he lay—
Meanwhile the lover nerves his desperate will,
Held some short throbs by natural dismay,
Then down, down the serpent-track begins his darksome way.

XXV.

Now dimly seen—now toiling out of sight,
Eclipsed and cover'd by the envious wall;
Now fair and spangled in the sudden light,
And clinging with wide arms for fear of fall;
Now dark and shelter'd by a kindly pall
Of dusky shadow from his wakeful foe;
Slowly he winds adown—dimly and small,
Watch'd by the gentle Swan that sings below,
Her hope increasing, still, the larger he doth grow.

XXVI.

But nine times nine the serpent folds embrace
The marble walls about—which he must tread
Before his anxious foot may touch the base:
Long is the dreary path, and must be sped!
But Love, that holds the mastery of dread,
Braces his spirit, and with constant toil
He wins his way, and now, with arms outspread,
Impatient plunges from the last long coil:
So may all gentle Love ungentle Malice foil.

XXVII.

The song is hush'd, the charm is all complete,
And two fair Swans are swimming on the lake:
But scarce their tender bills have time to meet,
When fiercely drops adown that cruel snake—
His steely scales a fearful rustling make,
Like autumn leaves that tremble and foretell
The sable storm;—the plumy lovers quake—
And feel the troubled waters pant and swell,
Heaved by the giant bulk of their pursuer fell.

XXVIII.

His jaws, wide yawning like the gates of Death,
His horrible pursuit—his red eyes glare
The waters into blood—his eager breath
Grows hot upon their plumes: now, minstrel fair!
She drops her ring into the waves, and there
It widens all around, a fairy ring
Wrought of the silver light—the fearful pair
Swim in the very midst, and pant and cling
The closer for their fears, and tremble wing to wing.

XXIX.

Bending their course over the pale grey lake,
Against the pallid East, wherein light play'd
In tender flushes, still the baffled snake
Circled them round continually, and bay'd
Hoarsely and loud, forbidden to invade
The sanctuary ring—his sable mail
Roll'd darkly through the flood, and writhed and made
A shining track over the waters pale,
Lash'd into boiling foam by his enormous tail.

XXX.

And so they sail'd into the distance dim,
Into the very distance—small and white,
Like snowy blossoms of the spring that swim
Over the brooklets—follow'd by the spite
Of that huge Serpent, that with wild affright
Worried them on their course, and sore annoy
Till on the grassy marge I saw them light,
And change, anon, a gentle girl and boy,
Lock'd in embrace of sweet unutterable joy!

XXXI.

Then came the Morn, and with her pearly showers
Wept on them, like a mother, in whose eyes
Tears are no grief; and from his rosy bowers
The Oriental sun began to rise,
Chasing the darksome shadows from the skies;
Wherewith that sable Serpent far away
Fled, like a part of night—delicious sighs
From waking blossoms purified the day,
And little birds were sweetly singing from each spray.

ODE.

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF CLAPHAM ACADEMY.*

Ah me! those old familiar bounds!
That classic house, those classic grounds
  My pensive thought recalls!
What tender urchins now confine,
What little captives now repine,
  Within yon irksome walls!

Ay, that 's the very house! I know
Its ugly windows, ten a-row!
  Its chimneys in the rear:
And there 's the iron rod so high,
That drew the thunder from the sky
  And turn'd our table-beer!

There I was birch'd! there I was bred!
There like a little Adam fed
  From Learning's woeful tree!
The weary tasks I used to con!—
The hopeless leaves I wept upon!—
  Most fruitless leaves to me!—

* No connexion with any other Ode.

The summon'd class!—the awful bow!—
I wonder who is master now
  And wholesome anguish sheds!
How many ushers now employs,
How many maids to see the boys
  Have nothing in their heads!

And Mrs. S * * * ?—Doth she abet
(Like Pallas in the parlor) yet
  Some favor'd two or three,—
The little Crichtons of the hour,
Her muffin-medals that devour,
  And swill her prize——bohea?

Ay, there 's the play-ground! there 's the lime,
Beneath whose shade in summer's prime
  So wildly I have read!—
Who sits there *now*, and skims the cream
Of young Romance, and weaves a dream
  Of Love and Cottage-bread?

Who struts the Randall of the walk?
Who models tiny heads in chalk?
  Who scoops the light canoe?
What early genius buds apace?
Where 's Poynter? Harris? Bowers? Chase?
  Hal Baylis? blithe Carew?

Alack! they 're gone—a thousand ways!
And some are serving in "the Greys,"
  And some have perished young!—
Jack Harris weds his second wife;
Hal Baylis drives the *wane* of life:
  And blithe Carew—is hung!

Grave Bowers teaches A B C
To savages at Owhyee;
  Poor Chase is with the worms!—
All, all are gone—the olden breed!—
New crops of mushroom boys succeed,
  "And push us from our *forms!*"

Lo! where they scramble forth, and shout,
And leap, and skip, and mob about,
  At play where we have play'd!—
Some hop, some run (some fall), some twine
Their crony arms; some in the shine,
  And some are in the shade!

Lo there what mix'd conditions run
The orphan lad; the widow's son;
  And Fortune's favor'd care—
The wealthy born, for whom she hath
Mac-Adamised the future path—
  The Nabob's pamper'd heir!

Some brightly starr'd—some evil born,—
For honor some, and some for scorn,—
  For fair or foul renown!
Good, bad, indiff'rent—none may lack!
Look, here 's a White, and there 's a Black!
  And there's a Creole brown!

Some laugh and sing, some mope and weep,
And wish *their* frugal sires would keep
  Their only sons at home;—
Some tease the future tense, and plan
The full-grown doings of the man,
  And pant for years to come!

A foolish wish! There 's one at hoop;
And four at *fives!* and five who stoop
  The marble taw to speed!
And one that curvets in and out,
Reining his fellow Cob about,—
  Would I were in his *steed!*

Yet he would gladly halt and drop
That boyish harness off, to swop
  With this world's heavy van—
To toil, to tug. O little fool!
While thou canst be a horse at school
  To wish to be a man!

Perchance thou deem'st it were a thing
To wear a crown,—to be a king!
  And sleep on regal down!
Alas! thou know'st not kingly cares;
Far happier is thy head that wears
  That hat without a crown!

And dost thou think that years acquire
New added joys? Dost think thy sire
  More happy than his son?
That manhood's mirth?—Oh, go thy ways
To Drury-lane, when —— *plays,*
  And see how *forced* our fun!

Thy taws are brave!—thy tops are rare!—
Our tops are spun with coils of care
  Our *dumps* are no delight!—
The Elgin marbles are but tame,
And 'tis at best a sorry game
  To fly the Muse's kite!

Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,
Our topmost joys fall dull and dead
  Like balls with no rebound!
And often with a faded eye
We look behind, and send a sigh
  Towards that merry ground!

Then be contented. Thou hast got
The most of heaven in thy young lot:
  There 's sky-blue in thy cup!
Thou'lt find thy Manhood all too fast—
Soon come, soon gone! and Age at last
  A sorry *breaking up!*

THE END.

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XI. & XII.

THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS:

Or, Romance and Realities of Eastern Travel. By Eliot B. G. Warburton, Esq. 2 vols., beautifully printed. Price 50 cents each.

"Eliot Warburton, who is known to be the author of those brilliantly sparkling papers, the 'Episodes of Eastern Travel,' which lit up our last November. His book ('The Crescent and the Cross') must, and will be capital."—*Vide* "*Eōthen*," page 179.

"This is an account of a tour in the Levant, including Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Constantinople, and Greece. The Author calls his work 'Romance and Realities of Eastern Travel;' and, to say the truth, the Romance is so well imagined, and the Reality so well told, that we can hardly affect to distinguish the one from the other. The book is vastly superior to the common run of narratives, and is, indeed, remarkable for the coloring power, and the play of fancy with which its descriptions are enlivened. The writing is of a kind that indicates abilities likely to command success in the higher departments of literature. Almost every page teems with good feeling; and although that 'catholic-heartedness,' for which the Author takes credit, permits him to view Mahometan doctrines and usages with a little too much of indifferentism, yet, arriving in Palestine, he willingly becomes the good pilgrim, and at once gives in his adherence to the 'religion of the place' with all the zeal of a pious Christian The book, independently of its value as an original narrative, comprises much useful and interesting information."—*Quarterly Review.*

"Nothing but the already overdone topics prevented Mr. Warburton's Eastern sketches from rivalling *Eōthen* in variety: in the mixture of story with anecdote, information and impression, it perhaps surpasses it. Innumerable passages of force, vivacity, or humor, are to be found in the volumes."—*Spectator.*

"This delightful work is, from first to last, a splendid panorama of Eastern Scenery, in the full blaze of its magnificence. The crowning merit of the book is, that it is evidently the production of a gentleman, and a man of the world, who has lived in the best society, and been an attentive observer of the scenes and characters which have passed before him during his restless and joyous existence. To a keen sense of the ludicrous, he joins a power of sketching and grouping which are happily demonstrated." —*Morning Post.*

"Mr. Warburton has fulfilled the promise of his title-page. The 'Realities' of 'Eastern Travel' are described with a vividness which invests them with deep and abiding interest; while the 'Romantic' adventures which the enterprising tourist met with in his course are narrated with a spirit which shows how much he enjoyed these reliefs from the *ennui* of every-day life."—*Globe.*

"The Author has been careful to combine with his own observation such information as he could glean from other sources; and his volumes contain a compilation of much that is useful, with original remarks of his own on

Oriental life and manners. He possesses poetic feeling, which associates easily with scenery and manners"—*Athenæum.*

"Mr. Warburton sees with the strong clear vision with which Heaven has endowed him, but with this there are always blended recollections of the past, and something—though dashed in unconsciously—of poetic feeling. He brings to his work of observation an accomplished mind, and well-trained and healthful faculties. We are proud to claim him as a countryman, and are content that his book shall go all the world over, that other countries may derive a just impression of our national character."—*Britannia.*

"Mr. Warburton's book is very lively, and is most agreeably written."—*Examiner.*

"A lively description of impressions made upon a cultivated mind, during a rapid journey over countries that never cease to interest. The writer carried with him the intelligence and manners of a gentleman—the first a key to the acquisition of knowledge, and the last a means of obtaining access to the best sources of information."—*Literary Gazette.*

"We know no volumes furnishing purer entertainment, or better calculated to raise up vast ideas of past glories, and the present aspects of the people and lands of the most attractive region of the world."—*Court Journal*

"Of recent books of Eastern Travel, Mr. Warburton's is by far the best. He writes like a poet and an artist, and there is a general feeling of *bonhomie* in everything he says, that makes his work truly delightful."—*Weekly Chronicle.*

"This is one of the most interesting and admirable publications of the day. The accomplished tourist presents us with graphic and life-like descriptions of the scenes and personages he has witnessed. His narrative is written in the most elegant and graphic style, and his reflections evince not only taste and genius, but well-informed judgment."—*Chester Courant.*

"We could not recommend a better book as a travelling companion than Mr. Warburton's. It is by far the most picturesque production of its class that we have for a long time seen. Admirably written as is the work, and eminently graphic as are its descriptions, it possesses a yet more exalted merit in the biblical and philosophical illustrations of the writer."—*United Service Magazine.*

"Mr. Warburton possesses rapidity and brilliancy of thought, and felicity of imagery. His natural and honest pleasantry is ever ready to give way to the gush of genuine emotion, or the burst of unfeigned piety. But he has qualities even rarer yet—a manliness of thought and expression, a firm adherence to whatever is high-souled and honorable, without one particle of clap-trap sentiment. Let his theme be a great one, and for it alone has he ears and eyes; and the higher and more poetic the subject, the more elegant and spirit-stirring are his descriptions."—*Dublin University Magazine*

XIII.

HAZLITT'S AGE OF ELIZABETH.

Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. By William Hazlitt. Price 50 cents.

"The present century has produced many men of poetical genius, and some of analytical acumen; but I doubt whether it has produced any one who has given to the world such signal proofs of the union of the two, as the late WILLIAM HAZLITT. If I were asked his peculiar and predominating distinction, I should say that, above all things, he was a CRITIC His taste was not the creature of schools and canons, it was begotten of Enthusiasm by Thought."—*Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.*

"In all that Hazlitt has written on old English authors, he is seldom merely critical. In the laboratory of his intellect, analysis was turned to the sweet uses of alchemy. While he discourses of characters he has known the longest, he sheds over them the light of his own boyhood, and makes us partakers of the realizing power by which they become creatures of flesh and blood, with whom we may eat, drink, and be merry." -*Serjeant Talfourd.*

"There is no feature in the retrospect of the last few years, more important and more delightful than the steady advance of an improved taste in literature: and both as a cause and as a consequence of this, the works of William Hazlitt, which heretofore have been duly appreciated only by the few, are now having ample justice done them by the many. With reference to the present work, the Edinburgh Review eloquently observes, 'Mr. Hazlitt possesses one noble quality at least for the office which he has chosen, in the intense admiration and love which he feels for the great authors on whose excellencies he chiefly dwells. His relish for their beauties is so keen, that while he describes them, the pleasures which they impart become almost palpable to the sense, and we seem, scarcely in a figure, to feast and banquet on their 'nectared sweets.' He introduces us almost corporally into the divine presence of the great of old time—enables us to near the living oracles of wisdom drop from their lips—and makes us partakers, not only of those joys which they diffused, but of those which they felt in the inmost recesses of their souls. He draws aside the veil of time with a hand tremulous with mingled delight and reverence; and descants with kindling enthusiasm, on all the delacacies of that picture of genius which he discloses. His intense admiration of intellectual beauty seems always to sharpen his critical faculties. He perceives it, by a kind of intuitive power, how deeply soever it may be buried in rubbish; and separates it in a moment from all that would encumber or deface it. At the same time, he exhibits to us those hidden sources of beauty, not like an anatomist, but like a lover. He does not coolly dissect the form to show the springs whence the blood flows all eloquent, and the divine expression is kindled; but makes us feel in the sparkling or softened eye, the wreathed smile, and the tender bloom. In a word, he at once analyzes and describes—so that our enjoyments of loveliness are not chilled, but brightened by our acquaintance with their inward sources. The knowledge communicated in his lectures breaks no sweet enchantment, nor chills one feeling of youthful joy.'"—*Preface to the London Edition.*

XIV. & XX.

LEIGH HUNT'S INDICATOR.

The Indicator: a Miscellany for the Fields and the Fireside. By Leigh Hunt. In Two Parts. First American Edition. Price 50 cents each.

"The reader may get a very good idea of Leigh Hunt's conversation, from a very agreeable paper he has lately published, called the *Indicator*, than which, nothing can be more happily conceived or executed."—*Hazlitt's Essay "on the Conversation of Authors."*

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"These essays of Leigh Hunt would win their way to every man's heart (if they had no other merit) by their kindliness of temper. We only know this writer, as we know some few pleasant people, just enough to wish to know them better—just enough to envy these who can spend more time in their society. He has claims enough upon any man's attention who has time to bestow upon the amenities of literature."—*Providence Journal.*

"This is a delightful volume form. It is a choice *melange* of the best pieces of Leigh Hunt, well known to all the readers of this popular author."—*New Haven Courier.*

"This is a series of papers of a very elegant and amusing character. To bestow praise on the writings of Leigh Hunt, would be like wasting plaudits on the productions of Shakspeare or Byron—a work of supererogation—in which the laborer would most effectually write himself down an ass. We therefore content ourselves merely with saying that the work before us contains many, very many, of the best specimens which have ever come from the graceful pen of the author, and that it is, therefore, not only worthy of a place in the 'Library of Choice Reading,' but should be in the possession of every lover of good reading."—*Savannah Republican.*

"The production of a highly inventive and accomplished mind. It contains a little of almost everything that is droll, or striking, or beautiful. It is not a work to be devoured at once, but to be taken up every now and then, when one may have occasion to lounge a little in the green pastures of wit and brilliancy."—*Albany Argus.*

"Leigh Hunt's Indicator and Companion is a treasure-house of poetical prose, of dainty reading, luxurious imaginings, 'such thoughts as youthful poets fancy when they dream.' There are passages of pure eloquence, others high, airy, and sketchy."—*Morning News.*

"This work is marked by very considerable variety. There are portions of it that will make the gravest laugh, and other portions that will bring tears in the eyes of the most jovial; while there is that kind of charm belonging to the whole, that genius in its mysterious and lofty workings, never fails to impart. We have been particularly interested in the brief article entitled '*Memories of the Metropolis*,' which wakes up many of the old literary and patriotic associations of London. The article on the death of little children, touches a chord that vibrates with inexpressible tenderness. It is on the whole a highly agreeable production."—*Albany Citizen.*

"The *Indicator* contains many pleasant sketchy articles."—*Protestant Churchman.*

"This is a delightful little volume. Some of the essays are as pleasing as anything of the kind we have ever read. Those on Thieves, on Spring and Daisies, and on May-day, The Old Gentleman, Steamer on Shore, and that on the Realities of Imagination may be named as admirable. With less depth than Hazlitt, and less pathos than Lamb, Hunt is more sprightly than the former, and less overstrained than the latter, and his writings, like theirs, are eminently suggestive.—Then this volume in addition to its original merits possesses this, that it is, what its name implies, an *Indicator* of many of the sweetest passages of English poetry. It is indeed a work for all lovers of poetry, whether in the form of prose or verse; and we regard it as a most favorable sign of the literary times that the enterprising publishers of this new series find it for their interest to publish the writings of those 'Cockney' classics, Hazlitt, Hunt, &c., who were a few years since almost lost sight of through the influence of a narrow and false criticism."—*Cincinnati Gazette.*

"This is a very excellent work. It comprises some of the most beautiful and instructive essays in the language, and cannot fail to be well received, by all who have regard for the choicest and best reading of the day. We are heartily glad to see the successive issues of this Library continued with so much promptness as well as taste. In point of selection as well as style of publication it is one of the best literary enterprises of the day. We are glad to believe that it is one of the most successful."—*Courier.*

"Agreeableness expresses the character of these essays, perhaps, as well as any word that we can at the moment employ. Without exhibiting the habit of profound observation, or acute and comprehensive criticism, which distinguished some of the illustrious wits with whom Hunt has had the good fortune to be associated, they yet have attractions for any man who

has time and taste for the brief effusions of literature and fancy, table talk and light reading. Things of this sort, the delicacies and trifles of literature, the pleasing amusements of general wit, sometimes insinuate a taste for higher studies; they will at least steal moments from the busy round of dissipation and trade, and beguile many a tedious hour of its *ennui*. Blessings then, we say, on Leigh Hunt and the Poets.—*Newark Advertiser.*

"Here we have another and perhaps the most charming of Hunt's volumes. His varied accomplishments, his lively sense of individuality in character, his delicate perception as a critic, his power of apt and familiar illustration sparkle in little points of light from every page of the book."—*Tribune.*

"This volume contains several papers which are well worth preserving—which have in them the elements of life—and which will leave a definite and perhaps a permanent impression upon every one who reads them."—*Broadway Journal.*

"We are pleased to see more of this favorite writer's productions brought before the public in this form. His writings breathe such an elevated sympathy with nature, and faith in whatever is best in humanity, that we hope this, and the writings which have already been republished here, may gain for him as many warm admirers as they have done in his own land. Every chapter of the book is composed of something rare, original, and humorous, to keep up the idea suggested by the title."—*Hunt's Magazine.*

XV.

ZSCHOKKE'S TALES.

Tales from the German of Heinrich Zschokke. In Two Parts. Part I By Parke Godwin. Price 50 cents.

CONTENTS OF PART I.—Fool of the XIX. Century; Harmonius; Jack Steam; Floretta, or the First Love of Henry IV.; Adventures of a New Year's Eve.

"All the fictions of this author are finely written, and develope vivacious and diversified portraitures of human character The personages who circulate through the elegant and amusing pages of Zschokke's Novels, are, one and all, faithful transcripts from nature, and form a garland of diverting characters."—*Thimm's Liter. of Germany.*

"Most of Zschokke's Tales exhibit talent, grace, and facility of style; and are particularly distinguished for their good moral tendency."—*Ency. Britan*

"This is a most capital work, consisting of various tales of humor, sentiment, and wisdom. . . But we must leave the book reluctantly; accrediting Mr. Godwin for good editorial service and an excellent collection." *Broadway Journal.*

"We know of no German writer in the same walk of art whose works better deserve translation into our language than the works of Zschokke; and nothing in the literary way has lately pleased us more than this attempt to give us a complete edition of one of our favorite authors, destined, we think, to become a general favorite, as soon as known."—*Democratic Review.*

"This rare book will be thrice welcome to the lovers of elegant literature. The tales embrace historical, satirical, humorous and moral subjects, and take rank among the very best specimens of this style of writing."—*Rover.*

"These tales are written in a pleasing style, pregnant with much humor, and have an undercurrent of thorough, deep, German earnestness, with here and there a philosophic reflection, partaking of the spirit of Kant, whose philosophy he adopted. Zschokke's 'Hours of Meditation' have made him chiefly known to the English reader as a writer; and these tales, produced as occasion has suggested, appear to be the result of his hours of recreation. To all admirers of the German style and literature, they cannot fail to prove a welcome publication. The translator has happily caught the spirit of the author, and the work is thus given to us in free readable English, by one who is evidently a finished German scholar."—*Hunt's Mag.*

"This is a production from the pen of a German of great literary attainments—a singularly eccentric writer, who wields the pen apparently more for his own amusement than for either the profits or glories of authorship. In the number before us are the following amusing and interesting articles: 'The Fool of the 19th Century,' 'Jack Steam,' 'Floretta,' and the 'Adventures of a New Year's Eve.' They are all well written papers, from the pen of different translators, but all bearing the impress of the same brain, all characterized by the same peculiarities which mark the intellect of Zschokke himself. They are wild, eccentric, thrilling, and even dull at times; yet, with all, they are most interesting and readable papers."—*Savannah Republican.*

XVI. & XIX.

HOOD'S PROSE AND VERSE.

Prose and Verse. By Thomas Hood. First American Edition, beautifully printed, in two parts, each 38 cents.

"More tender, more graceful, or more beautifully wrought lyrics, are scarcely to be found in the language. They 'smack of the old poets;' they have all the truth and nature for which the great Bards are preëminent."—*S. C. Hall.—Book of Gems.*

"Hood was 'a true poet and true man, and his better works will live so long as human sympathy is felt for human suffering and wrong.' Reader, do buy these well-printed fruits of his genius; they will do you good."—*Newark Advertiser.*

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"If ever a book was destined to become popular, here it is. These volumes should be received with a respectful pleasure as a memento of a great heart—as a monument, as it were, of departed genius."—*Rover.*

"How valuable this offering is, of so much of 'Hood's own,' his myriad admirers, and all who have human sympathies, will appreciate. Whoever has need of food for mirth and sadness, may here find satisfaction, where the true and grotesque, the beautiful and deformed, are so strikingly mingled. Whether he writes earnestly, as in his Literary Reminiscences, or his deeply expressive poems and songs; or mirthfully, as in the legend of 'Miss Killmansegg and her Precious Leg,' or in still another vein upon the other subjects of the Collection, we recognize unmistakeably his spirit. We can only here express the hope that the fragments which he has left behind him (his all to give, and the fault of the world that they were not greater), may be collected; and, with what additions the recollections of his friends can afford, may be given to the public."—*Hunt's Magazine.*

"This collection is not designed to comprise *all* the writings of this popular author, but it is a selection from his more serious productions, both in prose and verse, few of which are generally known in this country, where his comic works have established for him a reputation, which recognizes his cleverness, but does not do justice to his powers, and the versatility of his genius. Few writers have been able to touch the heart like Thomas Hood, and the day is not far off when his works will enjoy an undisputed position among the English classics.—*Anglo American.*

"The articles 'Boz in America,' 'Copy right and copy wrong,' 'Domestic mesmerism, &c. &c., can hardly be read with indifference by any body. The book contains also some exquisite poetry, particularly the 'Elm Tree,' which could not have been produced except by a genius under powerful inspiration."—*Albany Argus.*

"Hood was not a joker merely. His fun bears no proportion to what was serious, thoughtful and elevated in his writings. He was a thinker and a diviner. He could compass the spells of poesy, and was a frequent wanderer into fairy-land. He dealt successfully in the pathetic, and sometimes happened upon the tragic with rare success and beauty. The collection before us is meant to comprise selections from his writings in those departments in which he is less generally known to the public;—and will, for this reason, while it places the author in a really better light than before, possess much of the charm of freshness, in the eye of the reader. The selections are made with taste and judgment, and the volume is a highly interesting one."—*Southern Patriot.*

"We would call particular attention to this excellent work."—*Providence Journal.*

"A selection of the writings of this inimitable author, humorist and moralist, is well timed. The more Hood is known the better he will be appreciated; his wit is as keen as his pathos is inimitable. The 'Bridge of Sighs' and the 'Song of the Shirt' will compare with anything in our language for their melancholy interest and intensity of truthful portraiture."—*North American.*

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XVII.

CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPEARE.

Characters of Shakspeare. By WILLIAM HAZLITT. 1 volume, beautifully printed. Price 50 cents.

"An admirable book is this, full of simple, earnest, profound criticism, with an excellent tone of feeling. The remarks on each play are not so long as to be tiresome, but are full of thought and beauty. There is a true and natural depth in the criticisms, without any straining after profoundness and great philosophy, which disfigures some of the critics on Shakspeare. It is a volume full of instruction and good taste."—*New York Evangelist.*

"One of the best works of Hazlitt, and, of course, full of thought and interest. Hazlitt was one of the earliest of those critics who seem to be fully alive to the real greatness of Shakspeare, and has furnished a mass of fine remark for the use of subsequent Shakspearian editors and lecturers."—*Evening Post.*

"The criticism of Hazlitt is as familiar as are the works of the poets, dramatists and painters, on which it is exercised. It is remarkably entertaining and instructive,—pointing out the peculiar merits, and directing attention to the minor as well as to the more prominent beauties of the author, and illustrative of all that is obscure, whether so rendered by the progress and improvements made in our language, or by any felicity of expression on the part of the writer."—*Journal of Commerce.*

"It would be a shocking incongruity for any other than a most discriminating and gifted mind to undertake the task of commenting upon the characters of Shakspeare; but that William Hazlitt was abundantly adequate to it, is manifest from the work which he has produced. He makes every character that passes under his view stand forth as in the broad light of the sun He brings before the eye of the ordinary reader many hidden beauties,

of the existence of which, often as he may have read Shakspeare, he had never dreamed. In short, he shows a perfect familiarity with this Prince among dramatists, and one scarcely knows which most to admire, the wonderful power of Shakspeare's characters, or the magic of the pen by which they are brought before us."—*American Citizen.*

"Originality is the distinguishing feature of all Hazlitt's productions. His dramatic criticisms are much and deservedly admired; he seems imbued thoroughly with the spirit of Shakspeare."—*Asiatic Journal.*

"The present volume is a splendid gem which no reader of Shakspeare should lack; the twaddle of the one hundred and one commentators all vanishes before the sunshine Hazlitt sheds on Nature's best expositor."—*Sunday Times.*

"This is a very pleasing book, and we do not hesitate to say a book of considerable originality and genius. What we chiefly look for in such a book is a fine sense of the beauties of the author, and an eloquent exposition of them,—and all this and more may be found in the volume before us."—*Edinburgh Review.*

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"What can we possibly say in commendation of a book of the above title —by *Hazlitt.* To criticize or find fault with it, even were it in our power to do so, would be like putting our own opinion and judgment against that of all the world, and to praise it would be repeating what everybody has done before us. We dislike Hazlitt's peevishness, fault-finding and discontentedness, which are displayed in many of his books; but in his works upon Shakspeare, his 'Age of Elizabeth,' the work before us, and others, we can only find matter for admiration—none for censure."—*Saturday Emporium.*

XVIII.

THE CROCK OF GOLD.

The Crock of Gold. A Rural Novel. By Martin Farquhar Tupper, Author of "Proverbial Philosophy," &c. 1 vol., beautifully printed. Price 38 cents.

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"This book, like others from the same hand, is chiefly remarkable for the purity of moral feeling it evinces. There are, however, passages and traits of considerable power in the description of the struggles in Roger Acton's mind when tempted by the greed of Gold, and in the Murder Scene. The Twelfth Chapter we give as one of the best painted interviews between humble lovers, extant, and because it well bears being detached from the rest of the book, besides giving a favorable specimen of it."—*Tribune.*

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"This rural story may be emphatically described as the opposite of a fashionable novel. An admirable moral is kept in view always, and there is a religious feeling to be noticed as communicating solemnity to the sentiment, and not unfrequently coloring the style, and giving a scriptural turn to simple expressions. On the whole 'The Crock of Gold' is a book to do the reader good."—*London Examiner.*

"I predict that Mr. Tupper will yet be one of the best known and most loved authors whose books have crossed the waters to us."—*N. P. Willis' Letter from London.*

XXI.

WILSON'S BURNS.

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"This glorious work needs no commendation."—*Tribune.*

"The Genius and Character of Burns, by Professor Wilson, is, as might be anticipated, a most delightful, touching, and eloquent work. For a just, vivid and truthful conception of the power, genius and character of the Peasant Poet, and a discriminating criticism of his immortal productions, no one is more fitted than Christopher North. This is a memorial to Burns which no other hand could so appropriately have erected; it is instinct with appreciation of the peculiar merits and charms of his poetry, and overruns with sympathy for the man, in the troubles and cares and melancholy which darkened the close of his life."—*Protestant Churchman.*

"Professor Wilson is capable of doing full justice to the genius of Burns; and he gives us in this pleasant volume, a bird's eye view, as one may say, of the man and his works, which will let us more fully into the tone and spirit of both the one and the other, than perhaps anything which has yet been attempted on the subject. Everybody knows Wilson's style—it is spirited, graphic and genial. This picture of Burns possesses the better of these characteristics, with less than usual of the others. The errors of some biographers, with the misrepresentations of others, are amusingly shown up. The character of Burns is nobly vindicated from certain slanderous imputations, and the full exposition of the miserably mean treatment that the Poet of Scotland received at the hands of his countrymen, ought to make the whole nation blush, if such-like great bodies had souls. Burns' extreme destitution, which has been charitably ascribed to his excesses, is easily accounted for when we see what remuneration was thought sufficient for his services, and the return made for the splendid outpourings of his genius by those who ought to have placed him at once and for ever above want. But it is impossible, in an article of moderate length, to give a just idea of the book. It should belong to every library, as elucidating, and most agreeably, a subject of enduring interest."—*New York Mirror.*

"Wilson's Genius and Character of Burns is a masterly effort, and the best view ever put forth, of the Master-Bard of Scotland. Poets should thus criticise poetry. Parnassus might then hold a critical court as well as continue to be 'The Muses' Hill,' and critics breathing the pure air of the place might judge more generously than they can now-a-days, pent up in a close room or office, of a broiling hot day, in a close and populous city."—*Democratic Review.*

"This book was written by a man who had the genius to comprehend and appreciate the peculiar powers of the individual who is the subject of it. Burns was, in his way, certainly one of the wonders of the world; and perhaps it is not too much to say that his is the very brightest name that history records in the department in which he was most at home—and