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**MELANIE,**

**AND**

**Other Poems.**



*New Work by the same Author.*  
**INKLINGS OF ADVENTURE.**

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FENCILLINGS BY THE WAY."

THIRD EDITION.

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Yours very Truly  
M. P. Willis.

# MELANIE

AND

Other Poems.

*Edmond  
Parker*  
BY N. PARKER WILLIS.

"Pray pardon me;  
For I am like a boy that hath found money,  
Afraid I dream still."

WRITER.

NEW YORK:  
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, ANN STREET,

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TO MIND  
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TO  
THE REV. LOUIS DWIGHT,

**This Volume**

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS KINSMAN,

THE AUTHOR.

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## MELANIE.

## I.

I stood on yonder rocky brow,\*  
And marvell'd at the Sybil's fane,  
When I was not what I am now.  
My life was then untouch'd of pain;  
And, as the breeze that stirr'd my hair,  
My spirit freshened in the sky,  
And all things that were true and fair  
Lay closely to my loving eye,  
With nothing shadowy between—  
I was a boy of seventeen.  
Yon wondrous temple crests the rock,  
As light upon its giddy base,

\* The story is told during a walk around the Cascatelles of Tivoli.

As stirless with the torrent's shock,  
As pure in its proportioned grace,  
And seems a thing of air, as then,  
Afloat above this fairy gien ;  
But though mine eye will kindle still  
In locking on the shapes of art,  
The link is lost that sent the thrill,  
Like lightning, instant to my heart.  
And thus may break before we die,  
Th' electric chain 'twixt soul and eye !

Ten years—like yon bright valley, sown !  
Alternately with weeds and flowers—  
Had swiftly, if not gaily, flown,  
And still I lov'd the rosy Hours ;  
And if there lurk'd within my breast  
Some nerve that had been overstrung  
And quiver'd in my hours of rest,  
Like bells by their own echo rung,  
I was with Hope a masquer yet,  
And well could hide the look of sadness  
And, if my heart would not forget,  
I knew, at least, the trick of gladness,

And when another sang the strain,  
I mingled in the old refrain.

'Twere idle to remember now,  
Had I the heart, my thwarted schemes.

I bear beneath this alter'd brow  
The ashes of a thousand dreams—  
Some wrought of wild Ambition's fingers,  
Some colored of Love's pencil well—

But none of which a shadow lingers,  
And none whose story I could tell.

Enough, that when I climbed again  
To Tivoli's romantic steep,

Life had no joy, and scarce a pain,  
Whose wells I had not tasted deep ;

And from my lips the thirst had pass'd

For every fount save one—the sweetest—and the last.

The last—the last ! My friends were dead,

Or false ; my mother in her grave ;

Above my father's honor'd head

The sea had lock'd its hiding wave ;

Ambition had but foil'd my grasp,

And love had perish'd in my clasp ;

And still, I say, I did not slack  
My love of life, and hope of pleasure,  
But gather'd my affections back ;  
And, as the miser hugs his treasure  
When plague and ruin bid him flee,  
I closer clung to mine—my lov'd, lost Melanie!

The last of the De Brevern race,  
My sister claimed no kinsman's care ;  
And, looking from each other's face,  
The eye stole upward unaware—  
For there was nought whereon to lean  
Each other's heart and heaven between—  
Yet that was world enough for me,  
And, for a brief but blessed while,  
There seemed no care for Melanie  
If she could see her brother smile ;  
But life with her was at the flow,  
And every wave went sparkling higher,  
While mine was ebbing, fast and low,  
From the same shore of vain desire,  
And knew I, with prophetic heart,  
That we were wearing aye insensibly apart.

## II.

We came to Italy. I felt  
     A yearning for its sunny sky;  
 My very spirit seem'd to melt  
     As swept its first warm breezes by.  
 From lip and cheek a chilling mist,  
     From life and soul a frozen rime,  
 By every breath seem'd softly kiss'd—  
     God's blessing on its radiant clime!  
 It was an endless joy to me  
     To see my sister's new delight;  
 From Venice in its golden sea  
     To Poestum in its purple light,  
 By sweet Val d'Arno's tinted hills,  
     In Vallombrosa's convent gloom,  
 Mid Terni's vale of singing rills,  
     By deathless lairs in solemn Rome,  
 In gay Palermo's "Golden Shell,"  
     At Arethusa's hidden well—  
 We loiter'd like th' impassion'd sun  
 That slept so lovingly on all,  
 And made a home of every one—

Ruin, and fane, and waterfall—  
And crown'd the dying day with glory  
If we had seen, since morn, but one old haunt of story.

We came with Spring to Tivoli.  
My sister lov'd its laughing air  
And merry waters, though, for me,  
My heart was in another key,  
And sometimes I could scarcely bear  
The mirth of their eternal play,  
And, like a child that longs for home  
When weary of its holiday,  
I sighed for melancholy Rome.  
Perhaps—the fancy haunts me still—  
'Twas but a boding sense of ill.

It was a morn, of such a day  
As might have dawn'd on Eden first,  
Early in the Italian May.  
Vine-leaf and flower had newly burst,  
And on the burthen of the air  
The breath of buds came faint and rare ;  
And far in the transparent sky

The small, earth-keeping birds were seen  
Soaring deliriously high ;  
And through the clefts of newer green  
Yon waters dash'd their living pearls ;  
And with a gayer smile and bow  
Troop'd on the merry village girls ;  
And from the Contadino's brow  
The low-slouch'd hat was backward thrown,  
With air that scarcely seem'd his own ;  
And Melanie, with lips apart,  
And clasp'd hands upon my arm,  
Flung open her impassion'd heart,  
And bless'd life's mere and breathing charm,  
And sang old songs, and gather'd flowers,  
And passionately bless'd once more life's  
thrilling hours.

In happiness and idleness  
We wandered down yon sunny vale—  
Oh mocking eyes !—a golden tress  
Floats back upon this summer gale !  
A foot is tripping on the grass !  
A laugh rings merry in mine ear !



I see a bounding shadow pass!—

O God! my sister *once* was here!

Come with me, friend!—We rested yon!

There grew a flower she pluck'd and wore!

She sat upon this mossy stone!—

That broken fountain running o'er  
With the same ring, like silver bells.

She listen'd to its babbling flow,  
And said, "Perhaps the gossip tells

Some fountain-nymph's love-story now!"  
And as her laugh rang clear and wild,  
A youth—a painter—passed and smiled.

He gave the greeting of the morn

With voice that lingered in mine ear.

I knew him sad and gentle born

By those two words so calm and clear.  
His frame was slight, his forehead high

And swept by threads of raven hair,  
The fire of thought was in his eye,

And he was pale and marble fair,  
And Grecian chisel never caught  
The soul in those slight features wrought.

I watch'd his graceful step of pride,  
Till hidden by yon leaning tree,  
And lov'd him ere the echo died ;  
And so, alas ! did Melanie !

We sat and watch'd the fount awhile  
In silence, but our thoughts were one ;  
And then arose, and with a smile  
Of sympathy, we saunter'd on ;  
And she by sudden fits was gay,  
And then her laughter died away,  
And in this changefulness of mood,  
Forgotten now those May-day spells,  
We turn'd where Varro's villa stood  
And gazing on the Cascatelles,  
(Whose hurrying waters wild and white  
Seem madden'd as they burst to light.)  
I chanced to turn my eyes away,  
And lo ! upon a bank alone,  
The youthful painter, sleeping, lay !  
His pencils on the grass were thrown,  
And by his side a sketch was flung,  
And near him as I lightly crept,

To see the picture as he slept,  
Upon his feet he lightly sprung ;  
And gazing with a wild surprise  
Upon the face of Melanie,  
He said—and dropp'd his earnest eyes—  
“Forgive me ! but I dream'd of thee !”  
His sketch, the while, was in my hand,  
And, for the lines I look'd to trace—  
A torrent by a palace spann'd,  
Half-classic and half fairy-land—  
I only found—my sister's face !

## III.

Our life was changed. Another love  
In its lone woof began to twine ;  
But ah ! the golden thread was wove  
Between my sister's heart and mine !  
She who had liv'd for me before—  
She who had smiled for me alone—  
Would live and smile for me no more !  
The echo to my heart was gone !  
It seemed to me the very skies  
Had shone through those averted eyes ;

The air had breath'd of balm—the flower  
Of radiant beauty seemed to be—

But as *she* lov'd them, hour by hour,  
And murmur'd of that love to *me*!

Oh, though it be so heavenly high

The selfishness of earth above,  
That, of the watchers in the sky,

He sleeps who guards a brother's love—  
Though to a sister's present weal

The deep devotion far transcends  
The utmost that the soul can feel

For even its own higher ends—  
Though next to God, and more than heaven  
For his own sake, he loves her, even—

'Tis difficult to see another,  
A passing stranger of a day

Who never hath been friend or brother,  
Pluck with a look her heart away—

To see the fair, unsullied brow,  
Ne'er kiss'd before without a prayer,

Upon a stranger's bosom now,  
Who for the boon took little care—

Who is enrich'd, he knows not why—

Who suddenly hath found a treasure  
Golconda were too poor to buy,  
And he, perhaps, too cold to measure—  
(Albeit, in her forgetful dream,  
Th' unconscious idol happier seem,)  
'Tis difficult at once to crush  
The rebel mourner in the breast,  
To press the heart to earth and hush  
Its bitter jealousy to rest—  
And difficult—the eye gets dim,  
The lip wants power—to smile on him!

I thank sweet Mary Mother now,  
Who gave me strength those pangs to hide,  
And touch'd mine eyes and lit my brow  
With sunshine that my heart belied.  
I never spoke of wealth or race  
To one who ask'd so much from me—  
I looked but in my sister's face,  
And mus'd if she would happier be;  
And hour by hour, and day by day,  
I lov'd the gentle painter more,  
And in the same soft measure wore

My selfish jealousy away ;

And I began to watch his mood,  
 And feel with her love's trembling care,  
 And bade God bless him as he woo'd  
 That loving girl so fond and fair,  
 And on my mind would sometimes press  
 A fear that she might love him less.

But Melanie—I little dream'd

What spells the stirring heart may move—  
 Pygmalion's statue never seem'd  
 More changed with life, than she with love.  
 The pearl tint of the early dawn  
 Flush'd into day-spring's rosy hue—  
 The meek, moss-folded bud of morn  
 Flung open to the light and dew—  
 The first and half-seen star of even  
 Wax'd clear amid the deepening heaven—  
 Similitudes perchance may be,  
 But these are changes oftener seen,  
 And do not image half to me  
 My sister's change of face and mien.

'Twas written in her very air  
That Love had passed and enter'd there.

## IV.

A calm and lovely paradise  
Is Italy, for minds at ease.  
The sadness of its sunny skies  
Weighs not upon the lives of these.  
The ruin'd aisle, the crumbling fane,  
The broken column, vast and prone,  
It may be joy—it may be pain—  
Amid such wrecks to walk alone !  
The saddest man will sadder be,  
The gentlest lover gentler there,  
As if, whate'er the spirit's key,  
It strengthened in that solemn air.

The heart soon grows to mournful things,  
And Italy has not a breeze  
But comes on melancholy wings ;  
And even her majestic trees  
Stand ghost-like in the Cæsar's home,  
As if their conscious roots were set

In the old graves of giant Rome,  
And drew their sap all kingly yet !  
And every stone your feet beneath  
Is broken from some mighty thought,  
And sculptures in the dust still breathe  
The fire with which their lines were wrought,  
And sunder'd arch, and plunder'd tomb  
Still thunder back the echo, "Rome!"

Yet gaily o'er Egeria's fount  
The ivy flings its emerald veil,  
And flowers grow fair on Numa's mount,  
And light-sprung arches span the dale,  
And soft, from Caracalla's Baths,  
The herdsman's song comes down the breeze  
While climb his goats the giddy paths  
To grass-grown architrave and frieze ;  
And gracefully Albano's bill  
Curves into the horizon's line,  
And sweetly sings that classic rill,  
And fairly stands that nameless shrine,  
And here, oh, many a sultry noon  
And starry eve, that happy June,



Came Angelo and Melanie,  
And earth for us was all in tune—  
For while Love talk'd with them, Hope walked apart  
with me !

## V.

I shrink from the embittered close  
Of my own melancholy tale. .  
'Tis long since I have waked my woes—  
And nerve and voice together fail !  
The throb beats faster at my brow,  
My brain feels warm with starting tears,  
And I shall weep—but heed not thou !  
'Twill soothe awhile the ache of years.  
The heart transfix'd—worn out with grief—  
Will turn the arrow for relief.  
The painter was a child of shame !  
It stirr'd my pride to know it first,  
For I had question'd but his name,  
And thought, alas ! I knew the worst,  
Believing him unknown and poor.  
His blood, indeed, was not obscure ;  
A high-born Conti was his mother,

But, though he knew one parent's face,  
He never had beheld the other,  
Nor knew his country or his race.

The Roman hid his daughter's shame  
Within St. Mona's convent wall,  
And gave the boy a painter's name—  
And little else to live withal !

And, with a noble's high desires  
For ever mounting in his heart,  
The boy consum'd with hidden fires,  
But wrought in silence at his art ;  
And sometimes at St. Mona's shrine,  
Worn thin with penance harsh and long,  
He saw his mother's form divine,  
And lov'd her for their mutual wrong.  
I said my pride was stirr'd—but no !

The voice that told its bitter tale  
Was touch'd so mournfully with wo,  
And, as he ceas'd, all deathly pale,  
He loos'd the hand of Melanie,  
And gaz'd so gaspingly on me—  
The demon in my bosom died !

“Not thine,” I said, “another’s guilt ;  
I break no hearts for silly pride ;  
So, kiss yon weeper if thou wilt !”

## VI.

St. Mona’s morning mass was done.  
The shrine-lamps struggled with the day ;  
And rising slowly, one by one,  
Stole the last worshippers away.  
The organist played out the hymn,  
The incense, to St. Mary swung,  
Had mounted to the cherubim,  
Or to the pillars thinly clung ;  
And boyish chorister replaced  
The missal that was read no more,  
And clos’d, with half irreverent haste,  
Confessional and chancel door ;  
And as, through aisle and oriel pane,  
The sun wore round his slanting beam,  
The dying martyr stirr’d again,  
And warriors battled in its gleam ;  
And costly tomb and sculptur’d knight  
Show’d warm and wondrous in the light.

I have not said that Melanie  
Was radiantly fair—  
This earth again may never see  
A loveliness so rare !  
She glided up St. Mona's aisle  
That morning as a bride,  
And, full as was my heart the while,  
I bless'd her in my pride !  
The fountain may not fail the less  
Whose sands are golden ore,  
And a sister for her loveliness,  
May not be lov'd the more ;  
But as, the fount's full heart beneath,  
Those golden sparkles shine,  
My sister's beauty seem'd to breathe  
Its brightness over mine !

St. Mona has a chapel dim  
Within the altar's fretted pale,  
Where faintly comes the swelling hymn,  
And dies, half lost, the anthem's wail.  
And here, in twilight meet for prayer,  
A single lamp hangs o'er the shrine,

And Raphael's Mary, soft and fair,  
 Looks down with sweetness half divine,  
 And here St. Mona's nuns alway  
 Through latic'd bars are seen to pray.

Avé and sacrament were o'er,  
 And Angelo and Melanie  
 Still knelt the holy shrine before ;  
 But prayer, that morn was not for me !  
 My heart was lock'd ! The lip might stir,  
 The frame might agonize—and yet,  
 Oh God ! I could not pray for *her* !  
 A seal upon my soul was set—  
 My brow was hot—my brain opprest—  
 And fiends seem'd muttering round, “ Your bridal is  
 unblest ! ”

With forehead to the lattice laid,  
 And thin, white fingers straining through,  
 A nun the while had softly pray'd.  
 Oh, ev'n in prayer that voice I knew !  
 Each faltering word—each mournful tone—  
 Each pleading cadence, half-suppress'd—

Such music had its like alone

On lips that stole it at her breast !

And ere the orison was done

I lov'd the mother as the son !

And now, the marriage vows to hear,

The nun unveil'd her brow—

When, sudden, to my startled ear,

There crept a whisper, hoarse like fear,

*“ De Brevern ! is it thou ! ”*

The priest let fall the golden ring,

The bridegroom stood aghast,

While, like some weird and frantic thing,

The nun was muttering fast ;

And as, in dread, I nearer drew,

She thrust her arms the lattice through,

And held me to her straining view—

But suddenly begun

To steal upon her brain a light

That stagger'd soul, and sense, and sight,

And, with a mouth all ashy white,

She shriek'd, *“ It is his son !*

*The bridegroom is thy blood—thy brother !*

*Rodolph de Brevern wrong'd his mother !*"

And, as that doom of love was heard,  
My sister sunk—and died—without a sign or word !

• • •

I shed no tear for her. She died  
With her last sunshine in her eyes.  
Earth held for her no joy beside  
The hope just shatter'd—and she lies  
In a green nook of yonder dell ;  
And near her, in a newer bed,  
Her lover—brother—sleeps as well !  
Peace to the broken-hearted dead !

## LORD IVON AND HIS DAUGHTER.

---

“ Dost thou despise  
 A love like *this* ! A lady should not scorn  
 One soul that loves her, howe'er lowly it be.”

BARRY CORNWALL.

---

LORD IVON.

How beautiful it is ! Come here, my daughter !  
 Is't not a face of most bewildering brightness ?

ISIDORE.

The features are all fair, sir, but so cold—  
 I could not love such beauty !



LORD IVON.

Yet, ev'n so

Look'd thy lost mother, Isidore ! Her brow  
Lofty like this—her lips thus delicate,  
Yet icy cold in their slight vermeil threads—  
Her neck thus queenly, and the sweeping curve  
Thus matchless, from the small and "pearl  
    round ear"  
To the o'er-polished shoulder. Never swan  
Dreamed on the water with a grace so calm !

ISIDORE.

And was she proud, sir ?

LORD IVON.

Or I had not loved her.

ISIDORE.

Then runs my lesson wrong. I ever read  
Pride was unlovely.

LORD IVON.

Dost thou prate already  
Of books, my little one ? Nay, then, 'tis time

That a sad tale were told thee. Is thy bird  
Fed for the day? Canst thou forget the rein  
Of thy beloved Arabian for an hour,  
And, the first time in all thy sunny life,  
Take sadness to thy heart? Wilt listen, sweet?

ISIDORE.

Hang I not ever on thy lips, dear father?

LORD IVON.

As thou didst enter, I was musing here  
Upon this picture. 'Tis the face of one  
I never knew; but, for its glorious pride,  
I bought it of the painter. There has hung  
Ever the cunning curse upon my soul  
To love this look in woman. Not the flower  
Of all Arcadia, in the Age of Gold,  
*Look'd* she a shepherdess, would be to me  
More than the birds are. As th' astrologer  
Worships the half-seen star that in its sphere  
Dreams not of him, and tramples on the lily  
That flings, unask'd, its fragrance in his way,

Yet both (as are the high-born and the low)  
Wrought of the same fine Hand—so, daringly,  
Flew my boy-hopes beyond me. You are here  
In a brave palace, Isidore! The gem  
That sparkles in your hair imprisons light  
Drunk in the flaming Orient; and gold  
Waits on the bidding of those girlish lips  
In measure that Aladdin never knew  
Yet was I—lowly born!

ISIDORE.

Lord Ivon!

LORD IVON.

Ay,

You wonder; but I tell you that the Lord  
Of this tall palace was a peasant's child!  
And, looking sometimes on his fair domain,  
Thy sire bethinks him of a sickly boy,  
Nursed by his mother on a mountain side,  
His only wealth a book of poetry,  
With which he daily crept into the sun,  
To cheat sharp pains with the bewildering dream  
Of beauty he had only read of there.

ISIDORE.

Have you the volume still, sir?

LORD IVON.

'Twas the gift  
Of a poor scholar wandering in the hills,  
Who pitied my sick idleness. I fed  
My inmost soul upon the witching rhyme—  
A silly tale of a low minstrel boy,  
Who broke his heart in singing at a bridal.

ISIDORE.

Loved he the lady, sir?

LORD IVON.

So ran the tale.  
How well I do remember it!

ISIDORE.

Alas!

Poor youth!

LORD IVON.

I never thought to *pity* him.

The bride was a duke's sister ; and I mused  
Upon the wonder of his daring love,  
Till my heart changed within me. I became  
Restless and sad ; and in my sleep I saw  
Beautiful dames all scornfully go by ;  
And one o'er-weary morn I crept away  
Into the glen, and, flung upon a rock,  
Over a torrent whose swift, giddy waters  
Fill'd me with energy, I swore my soul  
To better that false vision, if there were  
Manhood or fire within my wretched frame.  
I turn'd me homeward with the sunset hour,  
Changed—for the thought had conquer'd ev'n  
disease ;  
And my poor mother check'd her busy wheel,  
To wonder at the step with which I came.

Oh, heavens ! that soft and dewy April eve,  
When, in a minstrel's garb, but with a heart  
As lofty as the marble shafts upreared  
Beneath the stately portico, I stood  
At this same palace door !

ISIDORE.

Our own! and you  
A minstrel boy!

LORD IVON.

Yes—I had wandered far  
Since I shook of my sickness in the hills,  
And, with some cunning on the lute, had learn'd  
A subtler lesson than humility  
In the quick school of want. A menial stood  
By the Egyptian sphinx; and when I came  
And pray'd to sing beneath the balcony  
A song of love for a fair lady's ear,  
He insolently bade me to begone.  
Listening not, I swept my fingers o'er  
The strings in prelude, when the base-born slave  
Struck me!

ISIDORE.

Impossible!

LORD IVON.

I dash'd my lute

3\*

Into his face, and o'er the threshold flew ;  
 And, threading rapidly the lofty rooms,  
 Sought vainly for his master. Suddenly  
 A wing rushed o'er me, and a radiant girl,  
 Young as myself, but fairer than the dream  
 Of my most wild imagining, sprang forth,  
 Chasing a dove, that, 'wilder'd with pursuit,  
 Dropt breathless on my bosom.

ISIDORE.

Nay, dear father !

Was't so indeed ?

L O R D I V O N.

I thank'd my blessed star !

And, as the fair, transcendent creature stood  
 Silent with wonder, I resign'd the bird  
 To her white hands : and, with a rapid thought,  
 And lips already eloquent of love,  
 Turn'd the strange chance to a similitude  
 • Of my own story. Her slight, haughty lip  
 Curl'd at the warm recital of my wrong,  
 And on the ivory oval of her cheek  
 The rose flush'd outward with a deeper red ;

And from that hour the minstrel was at home,  
And horse and hound were his, and none might  
cross

The minion of the noble Lady Clare.  
Art weary of my tale?

ISIDORE.

Dear father!

LORD IVON.

Well!

A summer, and a winter, and a spring,  
Went over me like brief and noteless hours.  
Forever at the side of one who grew  
With every morn more beautiful; the slave,  
Willing and quick, of every idle whim;  
Singing for no one's bidding but her own,  
And then a song from my own passionate heart,  
Sung with a lip of fire, but ever named  
As an old rhyme that I had chanced to hear;  
Riding beside her, sleeping at her door,  
Doing her maddest bidding at the risk  
Of life—what marvel if at last I grew  
Presumptuous?



A messenger one morn  
Spurr'd through the gate—"A revel at the court!  
And many minstrels, come from many lands,  
Will try their harps in presence of the king;  
And 'tis the royal pleasure that my lord  
Come with the young and lovely Lady Clare,  
Rob'd as the queen of Faery, who shall crown  
The victor with his bays."

Pass over all  
To that bewildering day. She sat enthroned  
Amid the court; and never twilight star  
Sprang with such sweet surprise upon the eye  
As she with her rare beauty on the gaze  
Of the gay multitude. The minstrels changed  
Their studied songs, and chose her for a theme;  
And ever at the pause all eyes upturn'd  
And fed upon her loveliness.

The last  
Long lay was ended, and the silent crowd  
Waited the king's award—when suddenly  
The sharp strings of a lyre were swept without,

And a clear voice claim'd hearing for a bard  
Belated on his journey. Mask'd, and clad  
In a long stole, the herald led me in,  
A thousand eyes were on me : but I saw  
The new-throned queen, in her high place, alone ;  
And, kneeling at her feet, I pressed my brow  
Upon her footstool, fill the images  
Of my past hours rush'd thick upon my brain ;  
Then, rising hastily, I struck my lyre ;  
And, in a story woven of my own,  
I so did paint her in her loveliness—  
Pouring my heart all out upon the lines  
I knew too faithfully, and lavishing  
The hoarded fire of a whole age of love  
Upon each passionate word, that, as I sunk  
Exhausted at the close, the ravish'd crowd  
Flung gold and flowers on my still quivering  
lyre ;  
And the moved monarch in his gladness swore  
There was no boon beneath his kingiy crown  
Too high for such a minstrel !

Did my star

Speak in my fainting ear? Heard I the king?  
Or did the audible pulses of my heart  
Seem to me so articulate? I rose,  
And tore my mask away; and, as the stole  
Dropped from my shoulders, I glanced hurriedly  
A look upon the face of Lady Clare.  
It was enough! I saw that she was changed—  
That a brief hour had chilled the open child  
To calculating woman—that she read  
With cold displeasure my o'er-daring thought;  
And on that brow, to me as legible  
As stars to the rapt Arab, I could trace  
The scorn that waited on me! Sick of life,  
Yet, even then, with a half-rallied hope  
Prompting my faltering tongue, I blindly knelt,  
And claimed the king's fair promise—

ISIDORE.

For the hand  
Of Lady Clare?

L O R D I V O N.

No, sweet one—for a sword.

ISIDORE.

You surely spoke to her ?

LORD IVON.

I saw her face

No more for years. I went unto the wars ;  
And when again I sought that palace door,  
A glory heralded the minstrel boy  
That monarchs might have envied.

ISIDORE.

Was she there ?

LORD IVON.

Yes—and, O God ! how beautiful ! The last,  
The ripest seal of loveliness, was set  
Upon her form ; and the all-glorious pride  
That I had worshipped on her girlish lip,  
When her scared dove fled to me, was matured  
Into a queenly grace ; and nobleness  
Was bound like a tiara to her brow,  
And every motion breathed of it. There lived  
Nothing on earth so ravishingly fair.

ISIDORE.

And you still lov'd her ?

LORD IVON.

I had peril'd life  
In every shape—had battled on the sea,  
And burnt upon the desert, and outgone  
Spirits most mad for glory, with this one  
O'ermastering hope upon me. Honor, fame,  
Gold, even, were as dust beneath my feet ;  
And war was my disgust, though I had sought  
Its horrors like a bloodhound—for her praise.  
My life was drunk up with the love of her.

ISIDORE.

And *now* she scorn'd you not ?

LORD IVON.

Worse, Isidore !  
She pitied me ! I did not need a voice  
To tell my love. She knew her sometime  
minion—  
And felt that she should never be adored

With such idolatry as his, and sighed  
That hearts so true beat not in palaces—  
But I was poor, with all my bright renown,  
And lowly born ; and she—the Lady Clare !

ISIDORE.

She could not tell you this ?

LORD IVON.

She broke my heart  
As kindly as the fisher hooks the worm—  
Pitying me the while !

ISIDORE.

And you—

LORD IVON.

Lived on !  
But the remembrance irks me, and my throat  
Chokes with the utterance !

ISIDORE.

Dear father !

LORD IVON.

Nay—

Thanks to sweet Mary Mother, it is past:  
And in this world I shall have no more need  
To speak of it.

ISIDORE.

But there were brighter days  
In store. My mother and this palace—

LORD IVON.

You outrun  
My tale, dear Isidore! But 'tis as well.  
I would not linger on it.

Twenty years  
From this heart-broken hour, I stood again  
An old man and a stranger, at the door  
Of this same palaco. I had been a slave  
For gold that time. My star had wrought with me!  
And I was richer than the wizard king  
Throned in the mines of Ind. I could not look  
On my innumerable gems, the glare

Pained so my sun-struck eyes. My gold was  
countless.

ISIDORE.

And Lady Clare ?

LORD IVON.

I met upon the threshold  
Her very self—all youth, all loveliness—  
So like the fresh-kept picture in my brain,  
That for a moment I forgot all else,  
And stagger'd back and wept. She passed me by  
With a cold look—

ISIDORE.

Oh! not the Lady Clare!

LORD IVON.

Her daughter yet herself! But what a change  
Waited me here! My thin and grizzled locks  
Were fairer now than the young minstrel's curls;  
My sun-burnt visage and contracted eye  
Than the gay soldier in his gallant mien;



My words were wit, my looks interpreted,  
And Lady Clare—I tell you, Lady Clare  
Leaned fondly—fondly! on my wasted arm.  
O God! how changed my nature with all this!  
I, that had been all love and tenderness,—  
The truest and most gentle heart, till now  
That ever beat—grew suddenly a devil!  
I bought me lands, and titles, and received  
Men's homage with a smooth hypocrisy;  
And—you will scarce believe me, Isidore—  
I suffered them to wile their peerless daughter,  
The image and the pride of Lady Clare,  
To wed me!

ISIDORE.

Sir! you did not!

LORD IVON.

Ay! I saw  
Th' indignant anger when her mother first  
Broke the repulsive wish, and the degrees  
Of shuddering reluctance as her mind  
Admitted the intoxicating tales

Of wealth unlimited. And when she look'd  
On my age-stricken features, and my form,  
Wasted before its time, and turned away  
To hide from me her tears, her very mother  
Whispered the cursed comfort in her ear  
That made her what she is!

ISIDORE.

You could not wed her,  
Knowing all this!

LORD IVON.

I felt that I had lost  
My life else. I had wrung, for forty years,  
My frame to its last withers; I had flung  
My boyhood's fire away—the energy  
Of a most sinless youth—the toil, and fret,  
And agony of manhood. I had dared,  
Fought, suffered, slaved—and never for an hour  
Forgot or swerved from my resolve; and now—  
With the delirious draught upon my lips—  
Dash down the cup!

4\*

ISIDORE.

Yet *she* had never wronged you !

L O R D I V O N.

Thou'rt pleading for thy mother, my sweet child !  
And angels hear thee. But if she was wrong'd,  
The sin be on the pride that sells its blood  
Coldly and only for this damning gold.  
Had I not offered youth first ? Came I not  
With my hands brimm'd with glory to buy love—  
And was I not denied ?

ISIDORE.

Yet, dearest father,  
They forced her not to wed ?

L O R D I V O N.

I called her back  
Myself from the church threshold, and, before  
Her mother and her kinsmen, bade her swear  
It was her own free choice to marry me.  
I showed her my shrunk hand, and bade her think  
If that was like a bridegroom, and beware

Of perjuring her chaste and spotless soul,  
If now she loved me not.

ISIDORE.

What said she, sir?

LORD IVON.

Oh! they had made her even as themselves;  
And her young heart was colder than the slab  
Unsun'd beneath Pentelicus. She pressed  
My withered fingers in her dewy clasp,  
And smiled up in my face, and chid "my lord"  
For his wild fancies, and led on I

ISIDORE.

And no

Misgiving at the altar?

LORD IVON.

None! She swore  
To love and cherish me till death should part us,  
With a voice as clear as mine.

ISIDORE.

And kept it, father!

In mercy tell me so!

L O R D I V O N.

*She lives, my daughter!*

•           •           •           •           •

Long ere my babe was born, my pride had ebb'd,  
And let my heart down to its better founts  
Of tenderness. I had no friends—not one!  
My love gush'd to my wife. I rack'd my brain  
To find her a new pleasure every hour—  
Yet not with me—I fear'd to haunt her eye!  
Only at night, when she was slumbering  
In all her beauty, I would put away  
The curtains till the pale night-lamp shone on her,  
And watch her through my tears.

One night her lips  
Parted as I gazed on them, and the name  
Of a young noble, who had been my guest,  
Stole forth in broken murmurs. I let fall

The curtains silently, and left her there  
To slumber and dream on ; and gliding forth  
Upon the terrace, knelt to my pale star,  
And swore, that if it pleased the God of light  
To let me look upon the unborn child  
Lying beneath her heart, I would but press  
One kiss upon its lips, and take away  
The life that was a blight upon her years.

ISIDORE.

I was that child !

LORD IVON.

Yes—and I heard the cry  
Of thy small “ piping mouth ” as ’twere a call  
From my remembering star. I waited only  
Thy mother’s strength to bear the common shock  
Of death within the doors. She rose at last,  
And, oh ! so sweetly pale ! And thou, my child  
My heart misgave me as I looked upon thee ;  
But he was ever at her side whose name  
She murmur’d in her sleep ; and, lingering on  
To drink a little of thy sweetness more

Before I died, I watched their stolen love  
 As she had been my daughter, with a pure,  
 Passionless joy that I should leave her soon  
 To love him as she would. I know not how  
 To tell thee more. \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* Come, sweet! she is not worthy  
 Of tears like thine and mine. \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* She fled and left me  
 The very night! The poison was prepared—  
 And she had been a widow with the morn  
 Rich as Golconda. As the midnight chimed,  
 My star rose. Gazing on its mounting orb,  
 I raised the chalice—but a weakness came  
 Over my heart; and, taking up the lamp,  
 I glided to her chamber, and remov'd  
 The curtains for a last, a parting look  
 Upon my child. \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* Had she but taken thee,  
 I could have felt she had a mother's heart,  
 And drain'd the chalice still. I could not leave  
 My babe alone in such a heartless world!

ISIDORE.

Thank God! Thank God!

## BIRTH-DAY VERSES.

"The heart that we have lain near before our birth is the only one that cannot forget that it hath loved us."

PHILIP SLINGSBY.

---

My birthday!—Oh beloved mother!  
 My heart is with thee o'er the seas.  
 I did not think to count another  
 Before I wept upon thy knees—  
 Before this scroll of absent years  
 Was blotted with thy streaming tears.

My own I do not care to check.  
 I weep—albeit here alone—



As if I hung upon thy neck,  
As if thy lips were on my own,  
As if this full, sad heart of mine,  
Were beating closely upon thine.

Four weary years! How looks she now?  
What light is in those tender eyes?  
What trace of time has touch'd the brow  
Whose look is borrow'd of the skies  
That listen to her nightly prayer?  
How is she changed since *he* was there  
Who sleeps upon her heart alway—  
Whose name upon her lips is worn—  
For whom the night seems made to pray—  
For whom she wakes to pray at morn—  
Whose sight is dim, whose heart-strings stir,  
Who weeps these tears—to think of *her*!

I know not if my mother's eyes  
Would find me chang'd in slighter things ;  
I've wandered beneath many skies,  
And tasted of some bitter springs ;  
And many leaves, once fair and gay,

From youth's full flower have dropp'd away—  
 But, as these looser leaves depart,  
     The lessen'd flower gets near the core,  
 And, when deserted quite, the heart  
     Takes closer what was dear of yore—  
 And yearns to those who lov'd it first—  
 The sunshine and the dew by which its bud was nurst.

Dear mother! dost thou love me yet?  
 Am I remember'd in my home?  
 When those I love for joy are met,  
 Does some one wish that I would come?  
 Thou *dost*—I *am* belov'd of these!  
 But, as the schoolboy numbers o'er  
 Night after night the Pleiades  
 And finds the stars he found before,  
 As turns the maiden oft her token,  
 As counts the miser aye his gold—  
 So, till life's silver chord is broken,  
 Would I of thy fond love be told.  
 My heart is full, mine eyes are wet—  
 Dear mother! dost thou love thy long-lost wanderer  
 yet?

Oh! when the hour to meet again  
    Creeps on, and, speeding o'er the sea,  
My heart takes up its lengthen'd chain,  
    And, link by link, draws nearer thee—  
When land is hailed, and, from the shore,  
    Comes off the blessed breath of home,  
With fragrance from my mother's door  
Of flowers forgotten when I come—  
When port is gain'd, and, slowly now,  
    The old familiar paths are past,  
And, entering, unconscious how,  
    I gaze upon thy face at last,  
And run to thee, all faint and weak,  
And feel thy tears upon my cheek—  
    Oh! if my heart break not with joy,  
The light of heaven will fairer seem;  
    And I shall grow once more a boy:  
And, mother!—'twill be like a dream  
    That we were parted thus for years—  
And once that we have dried our tears,  
    How will the days seem long and bright—  
To meet thee always with the morn,  
    And hear thy blessing every night—

Thy "dearest," thy "first-born!"—  
And be no more as now in a strange land, forlorn!

*London, January 20th, 1835.*

FLORENCE GRAY.

---

I WAS in Greece. It was the hour of noon  
And the Egean wind had dropp'd asleep  
Upon Hymettus, and the thymy isles  
Of Salamis and Egina lay hung  
Like clouds upon the bright and breathless sea.  
I had climb'd up the Acropolis at morn,  
And hours had fled as time will in a dream  
Amidst its deathless ruins—for the air  
Is full of spirits in these mighty fanes,  
And they walk with you! As it sultrier grew,  
I laid me down within a shadow deep  
Of a tall column of the Parthenon,  
And, in an absent idleness of thought,  
I scrawl'd upon the smooth and marble base.

Tell me, O memory, what wrote I there?  
*The name of a sweet child I knew at Rome!*

I was in Asia. 'Twas a peerless night  
Upon the plains of Sardis, and the moon,  
Touching my eyelids through the wind-stirr'd tent,  
Had witch'd me from my slumber. I arose  
And silently stole forth, and by the brink  
Of "golden Pactolus," where bathe his waters  
The bases of Cybele's columns fair,  
I paced away the hours. In wakeful mood  
I mused upon the storied past awhile,  
Watching the moon that with the same mild eye  
Had looked upon the mighty Lydian kings  
Sleeping around me—Cræsus, who had heap'd  
Within that mouldering portico his gold,  
And Gyges, buried with his viewless ring  
Beneath yon swelling tumulus—and then  
I loitered up the valley to a small  
And humbler ruin, where the undefiled\*

\* "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."—Revelation iii. 4.

Of the Apocalypse their garments kept  
Spotless; and crossing with a conscious awe  
The broken threshold, to my spirit's eye  
It seem'd as if, amid the moonlight, stood  
"The angel of the church of Sardis" still!  
And I again pass'd onward, and as dawn  
Paled the bright morning star, I laid me down  
Weary and sad beside the river's brink,  
And 'twixt the moonlight and the rose morn,  
Wrote with my finger in the "golden sands."  
Tell me, O memory, what wrote I there?  
*The name of the sweet child I knew at Rome!*

The dust is old upon my "sandal-shoon,"  
And still I am a pilgrim; I have roved  
From wild America to spicy Ind,  
And worshipp'd at innumerable shrines  
Of beauty; and the painter's art, to me,  
And sculpture, speak as with a living tongue,  
And of dead kingdoms I recal the soul,  
Sitting amid their ruins. I have stored  
My memory with thoughts that can allay  
Fever and sadness, and when life gets dim,

And I am overladen in my years,  
Minister to me. But when wearily  
The mind gives over toiling, and with eyes  
Open but seeing not, and senses all  
Lying awake within their chambers dim,  
Thought settles like a fountain, still and clear—  
Far in its sleeping depths, as 'twere a gem,  
Tell me, O memory, what shines so fair?  
*The face of the sweet child I knew at Rome!*



TO -----  

---

“The desire of the moth for the star—  
Of the night for the morrow—  
The devotion to something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow,”

SHELLEY.

“L'alma, quel che non ha, sogna e figura.”

METASTASIO.  

---

As, gazing on the Pleiades,  
We count each fair and starry one,  
Yet wander from the light of these  
To muse upon the Pleiad gone—  
As, bending o'er fresh gathered flowers,  
The rose's most enchanting hue  
Reminds us but of other hours  
Whose roses were all lovely too—  
So, dearest, when I rove among  
The bright ones of this foreign sky,

And mark the smile, and list the song,  
And watch the dancers gliding by,  
The fairer still they seem to be,  
The more it stirs a thought of thee !

The sad, sweet bells of twilight chime,  
Of many hearts may touch but one,  
And so this seeming careless rhyme  
Will whisper to thy heart alone.  
I give it to the winds ! The bird,  
Let loose, to his far nest will flee,  
And love, though breathed but on a word,  
Will find thee, over land and sea.  
Though clouds across the sky have driven,  
We trust the star at last will shine,  
And like the very light of heaven  
I trust thy love. *Trust thou in mine !*

## TO —

---

“ Oh, by that little word  
How many thoughts are stirr'd!—  
The last, the last, the last!”

---

THE star may but a meteor be,  
That breaks upon the stormy night ;  
And I may err, believing thee  
A spark of heaven's own changeless light !  
But if on earth beams aught so fair,  
It seems, of all the lights that shine,  
Serenest in its truth, 'tis there,  
Burning in those soft eyes of thine.  
Yet long-watch'd stars from heaven have rush'd,  
And long-lov'd friends have dropp'd away,  
And mine—my very heart have crush'd !  
And I have hop'd this many a day,  
It liv'd no more for love or pain !  
But thou hast stirr'd its depths again,

And to its dull, out-wearied ear,  
Thy voice of melody has crept,  
In tones it cannot choose but hear ;  
And now I feel it only slept,  
And know, at ev'n thy lightest smile,  
It gathered fire and strength the while.

Fail me not thou ! This feeling past,  
My heart would never rouse again.  
Thou art the brightest—but the last !  
And if *this* trust, *this* love is vain—  
If thou, all peerless as thou art,  
Be not less fair than true of heart—  
My loves are o'er ! The sun will shine  
Upon no grave so hush'd as this dark breast of mine.

## THE CONFESSIONAL.

---

“When thou hast met with careless hearts and cold,  
 Hearts that young love may touch, but never hold  
 Not changeless, as the loved and left of old—  
     Remember me—remember me—  
 I passionately pray of thee!”

LADY E. S. WORTLEY.

---

I THOUGHT of thee—I thought of thee,  
 On ocean many a weary night—  
 When heaved the long and sullen sea,  
     With only waves and stars in sight.  
 We stole along by isles of balm,  
     We furl'd before the coming gale,  
 We slept amid the breathless calm,  
     We flew beneath the straining sail—  
 But thou wert lost for years to me,  
 And, day and night I thought of thee!  
 I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
     In France—amid the gay saloon,

Where eyes as dark as eyes may be  
Are many as the leaves in June—  
Where life is love, and ev'n the air  
Is pregnant with impassion'd thought,  
And song and dance and music are  
With one warm meaning only fraught—  
My half-snar'd heart broke lightly free,  
And with a blush I thought of thee!

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Florence,—where the fiery hearts  
Of Italy are breathed away  
In wonders of the deathless arts;  
Where strays the Contadina down  
Val d' Arno with song of old;  
Where clime and women seldom frown,  
And life runs over sands of gold;  
I stray'd to lone Fiesolé  
On many an eve, and thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Rome,—when on the Palatine  
Night left the Cæsar's palace free

To Time's forgetful foot and mine ;  
Or, on the Coliseum's wall,  
When moonlight touch'd the ivied stone,  
Reclining, with a thought of all  
That o'er this scene has come and gone—  
The shades of Rome would start and flee  
Unconsciously—I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Vallombrosa's holy shade,  
Where nobles born the friars be,  
By life's rude changes humbler made.  
Here Milton fram'd his Paradise ;  
I slept within his very cell ;  
And, as I clos'd my weary eyes,  
I thought the cowl would fit me well—  
The cloisters breath'd, it seemed to me,  
Of heart's-ease—but I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Venice,—on a night in June ;  
When through the city of the sea,  
Like dust of silver slept the moon.

Slow turn'd his oar the gondolier,  
And, as the black barks glided by,  
The water to my leaning ear  
Bore back the lover's passing sigh—  
It was no place alone to be—  
I thought of thee—I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In the Ionian Isles—when straying  
With wise Ulysses by the sea—  
Old Homer's songs around me playing ;  
Or, watching the bewitched caique,  
That o'er the star-lit waters flew,  
I listened to the helmsman Greek,  
Who sung the song that Sappho knew—  
The poet's spell, the bark, the sea,  
All vanished—as I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Greece—when rose the Parthenon  
Majestic o'er the Egean sea,  
And heroes with it, one by one ;  
When, in the grove of Academe,



Where Lais and Leontium stray'd  
Discussing Plato's mystic theme,  
I lay at noontide in the shade—  
The Egean wind, the whispering tree,  
Had voices—and I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Asia—on the Dardanelles;  
Where swiftly as the waters flee,  
Each wave some sweet old story tells;  
And, seated by the marble tank  
Which sleeps by Ilium's ruins old,  
(The fount where peerless Helen drank,  
And Venus lav'd her locks of gold,\*)  
I thrill'd such classic haunts to see,  
Yet even here—I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
Where glide the Bosphor's lovely waters,  
All palace-lined from sea to sea;

\* In the Scamander,—before contending for the prize of beauty on Mount Ida. Its head waters fill a beautiful tank near the walls of Troy.

And ever on its shores the daughters  
Of the delicious East are seen,  
    Printing the brink with slipper'd feet,  
And oh, the snowy folds between,  
    What eyes of heaven your glances meet!  
Paris of light no fairer be—  
Yet—in Stamboul—I thought of thee.

I've thought of thee—I've thought of thee,  
    Through change that teaches to forget;  
Thy face looks up from every sea,  
    In every star thine eyes are set,  
Though roving beneath Orient skies,  
    Whose golden beauty breathes of rest,  
I envy every bird that flies  
    Into the far and clouded West:  
I think of thee—I think of thee!  
Oh, dearest! hast thou thought of me?

LINES ON LEAVING EUROPE.

---

BRIGHT flag at yonder tapering mast!  
Fling out your field of azure blue;  
Let star and stripe be westward cast,  
And point as Freedom's eagle flew!  
Strain home! oh lithe and quivering spars!  
Point home, my country's flag of stars!

The wind blows fair! the vessel feels  
The pressure of the rising breeze,  
And, swiftest of a thousand keels,  
She leaps to the careering seas!  
Oh, fair, fair cloud of snowy sail,  
In whose white breast I seem to lie,  
How oft, when blew this eastern gale,  
I've seen your semblance in the sky,

And long'd, with breaking heart to flee ;  
On such white pinions o'er the sea !

Adieu, oh lands of fame and eld !

I turn to watch our foamy track,  
And thoughts with which I first beheld  
Yon clouded line, come hurrying back ;  
My lips are dry with vague desire,—  
My cheek once more is hot with joy—  
My pulse, my brain, my soul on fire !—  
Oh, what has changed that traveller-boy !  
As leaves the ship this dying foam,  
His visions fade behind—his weary heart speeds home !

Adieu, oh soft and southern shore,

Where dwelt the stars long miss'd in heaven !—  
Those forms of beauty seen no more,  
Yet once to Art's rapt vision given !  
Oh, still th' enamored sun delays,  
And pries through fount and crumbling fane,  
To win to his adoring gaze  
Those children of the sky again !  
Irradiate beauty, such as never

That light on other earth hath shone,  
 Hath made this land her home forever ;  
     And could I live for this alone—  
 Were not my birthright brighter far  
 Than such voluptuous slave's can be—  
 Held not the West one glorious star  
     New-born and blazing for the free—  
 Soar'd not to heaven our eagle yet—  
 Rome, with her Helot sons, should teach me to forget!

Adieu, oh fatherland! I see  
     Your white cliffs on th' horizon's rim,  
 And though to freer skies I flee,  
     My heart swells, and my eyes are dim!  
 As knows the dove the task you give her,  
     When loosed upon a foreign shore—  
 As spreads the rain-drop in the river  
     In which it may have flowed before—  
 To England, over vale and mountain,  
     My fancy flew from climes more fair—  
 My blood, that knew its parent fountain,  
     Ran warm and fast in England's air.

My mother ! in thy prayer to-night

There come new words and warmer tears !

On long, long darkness breaks the light—

Comes home the loved, the lost for years !

Sleep safe, oh wave-worn mariner !

Fear not, to-night, or storm or sea !

The ear of heaven bends low to *her* !

He comes to shore who sails with me !

The wind-tost spider needs no token

How stands the tree when lightnings blaze—

And by a thread from heaven unbroken,

I know my mother lives and prays !

Dear mother ! when our lips can speak—

When first our tears will let us see—

When I can gaze upon thy cheek,

And thou, with thy dear eyes, on me—

'Twill be a pastime little sad

To trace what weight time's heavy fingers

Upon each other's forms have had—

For all may flee, so feeling lingers !

But there's a change, beloved mother !

To stir far deeper thoughts of thine ;

I come—but with me comes another  
To share the heart once only mine!  
Thou, on whose thoughts, when sad and lonely,  
*One* star arose in memory's heaven—  
Thou, who hast watch'd *one* treasure only—  
Watered *one* flower with tears at even—  
Room in thy heart! The hearth she left  
Is darken'd to lend light to ours!  
There are bright flowers of care bereft,  
And hearts that languish more than flowers—  
She was their light—their very air—  
Room, mother! in thy heart!—place for her in thy  
prayer!

*English Channel, May, 1836.*

THE DYING ALCHEMIST.

---

THE night wind with a desolate moan swept by,  
And the old shutters of the turret swung  
Screaming upon their hinges, and the moon,  
As the torn edges of the clouds flew past,  
Struggled aslant the stained and broken panes  
So dimly, that the watchful eye of death  
Scarcely was conscious when it went and came.

• • • • •

The fire beneath his crucible was low ;  
Yet still it burned, and ever as his thoughts  
Grew insupportable, he raised himself  
Upon his wasted arm, and stirred the coals  
With difficult energy, and when the rod  
Fell from his nerveless fingers, and his eye  
Felt faint within its socket, he shrunk back



Upon his pallet, and with unclosed lips  
Muttered a curse on death! The silent room  
From its dim corners mockingly gave back  
His rattling breath; the humming in the fire  
Had the distinctness of a knell, and when  
Duly the antique horologe beat one,  
He drew a phial from beneath his head,  
And drank. And instantly his lips compressed,  
And with a shudder in his skeleton frame,  
He rose with supernatural strength, and sat  
Upright, and communed with himself:—

I did not think to die  
Till I had finished what I had to do;  
I thought to pierce th' eternal secret through  
With this my mortal eye;  
I felt—Oh God! it seemeth even now  
This cannot be the death-dew on my brow.

And yet it is—I feel  
Of this dull sickness at my heart afraid;  
And in my eyes the death-sparks flash and fade;  
And something seems to steal

Over my bosom like a frozen hand,  
Binding its pulses with an icy band.

And this is death! But why  
Feel I this wild recoil? It cannot be  
Th' immortal spirit shuddereth to be free!

Would it not leap to fly,  
Like a chain'd eaglet at its parent's call?  
I fear—I fear that this poor life is all!

Yet thus to pass away!—  
To live but for a hope that mocks at last—  
To agonize, to strive, to watch, to fast,  
To waste the light of day,  
Night's better beauty, feeling, fancy, thought,  
All that we have and are—for this—for nought!

Grant me another year,  
God of my spirit!—but a day—to win  
Something to satisfy this thirst within!

I would *know* something here!  
Break for me but one seal that is unbroken!  
Speak for me but one word that is unspoken!

Vain—vain!—my brain is turning  
 With a swift dizziness, and my heart grows sick,  
 And these hot temple-throbs come fast and thick,  
 And I am freezing—burning—  
 Dying! Oh God! if I might only live!  
 My phial—Ha! it thrills me—I revive.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ay—were not man to die  
 He were too glorious for this narrow sphere!  
 Had he but time to brood on knowledge here—  
 Could he but train his eye—  
 Might he but wait the mystic word and hour—  
 Only his Maker would transcend his power!

Earth has no mineral strange—  
 Th' illimitable air no hidden wings—  
 Water no quality in its covert springs,  
 And fire no power to change—  
 Seasons no mystery, and stars no spell,  
 Which the unwasting soul might not compel.

Oh, but for time to track  
 The upper stars into the pathless sky—

To see th' invisible spirits, eye to eye—

To hurl the lightning back—

To tread unhurt the sea's dim-lighted halls—

To chase Day's chariot to the horizon-walls—

And more, much more—for now

The life-sealed fountains of my nature move—

To nurse and purify this human love—

To clear the god-like brow

Of weakness and mistrust, and bow it down

Worthy and beautiful, to the much-loved one—

This were indeed to feel

The soul-thirst slaken at the living stream—

To live—Oh God! that life is but a dream!

And death—Aha! I reel—

Dim—dim—I faint—darkness comes o'er my eye—

Cover me! save me!—God of heaven! I die!

'Twas morning, and the old man lay alone.

No friend had closed his eyelids, and his lips,

Open and ashy pale, th' expression wore

Of his death-struggle. His long silvery hair

Lay on his hollow temples thin and wild,  
His frame was wasted, and his features wan  
And haggard as with want, and in his palm  
His nails were driven deep, as if the throe  
Of the last agony had wrung him sore.

The storm was raging still. The shutters swung  
Screaming as harshly in the fitful wind,  
And all without went on—as aye it will,  
Sunshine or tempest, reckless that a heart  
Is breaking, or has broken in its change.

The fire beneath the crucible was out ;  
The vessels of his mystic art lay round,  
Useless and cold as the ambitious hand  
That fashioned them, and the small silver rod,  
Familiar to his touch for threescore years,  
Lay on th' alembic's rim, as if it still  
Might vex the elements at its master's will.

And thus had passed from its unequal frame  
A soul of fire—a sun-bent eagle stricken  
From his high soaring down—an instrument

Broken with its own compass. Oh how poor  
Seems the rich gift of genius, when it lies,  
Like the adventurous bird that hath out-flown  
His strength upon the sea, ambition-wrecked—  
A thing the thrush might pity, as she sits  
Brooding in quiet on her lowly nest.

THE LEPER.  

---

“Room for the leper! Room!” And, as he came,  
The cry passed on—“Room for the leper! Room!”  
Sunrise was slanting on the city gates  
Rosy and beautiful, and from the hills  
The early risen poor were coming in  
Duly and cheerfully to their toil, and up  
Rose the sharp hammer’s clink, and the far hum  
Of moving wheels and multitudes astir,  
And all that in a city murmur swells,  
Unheard but by the watcher’s weary ear,  
Aching with night’s dull silence, or the sick  
Hailing the welcome light, and sounds that chase  
The death-like images of the dark away.

“Room for the leper!” And aside they stood—  
Matron, and child, and pitiless manhood—all  
Who met him on his way—and let him pass.  
And onward through the open gate he came,  
A leper with the ashes on his brow,  
Sackcloth about his loins, and on his lip  
A covering, stepping painfully and slow,  
And with a difficult utterance, like one  
Whose heart is with an iron nerve put down,  
Crying “Unclean! Unclean!”

’Twas now the first  
Of the Judean Autumn, and the leaves  
Whose shadows lay so still upon his path,  
Had put their beauty forth beneath the eye  
Of Judah’s loftiest noble. He was young,  
And eminently beautiful, and life  
Mantled in eloquent fulness on his lip,  
And sparkled in his glance, and in his mien  
There was a gracious pride that every eye  
Followed with benisons—and this was he!  
With the soft airs of Summer there had come  
A torpor on his frame, which not the speed



Of his best barb, nor music, nor the blast  
Of the bold huntsman's horn, nor aught that stirs  
The spirit to its bent, might drive away.  
The blood beat not as wont within his veins ;  
Dimness crept o'er his eye ; a drowsy sloth  
Fetter'd his limbs like palsy, and his mien  
With all its loftiness, seemed struck with eld.  
Even his voice was changed—a languid moan  
Taking the place of the clear, silver key ;  
And brain and sense grew faint, as if the light,  
And very air, were steeped in sluggishness.  
He strove with it awhile, as manhood will,  
Ever too proud for weakness, till the rein  
Slackened within his grasp, and in its poise  
The arrowy jereed like an aspen shook.  
Day after day, he lay, as if in sleep.  
His skin grew dry and bloodless, and white scales  
Circled with livid purple, covered him.  
And then his nails grew black, and fell away  
From the dull flesh about them, and the hues  
Deepened beneath the hard unmoistened scales,  
And from their edges grew the rank white hair,  
—And Helon was a leper !

Day was breaking

When at the altar of the temple stood  
The holy priest of God. The incense lamp  
Burned with a struggling light, and a low chaunt  
Swelled through the hollow arches of the roof  
Like an articulate wail, and there, alone,  
Wasted to ghastly thinness, Helon knelt.  
The echoes of the melancholy strain  
Died in the distant aisles, and he rose up,  
Struggling with weakness, and bowed down his head  
Unto the sprinkled ashes, and put off  
His costly raiment for the leper's garb,  
And with the sackcloth round him, and his lip  
Hid in a loathsome covering, stood still  
Waiting to hear his doom :—

Depart! depart, O child  
Of Israel, from the temple of thy God!  
For He has smote thee with his chastening rod,  
And to the desert-wild,  
From all thou lov'st away thy feet must flee,  
That from thy plague His people may be free.

Depart ! and come not near  
The busy mart, the crowded city, more ;  
Nor set thy foot a human threshold o'er ;  
    And stay thou not to hear  
Voices that call thee in the way ; and fly  
From all who in the wilderness pass by.

Wet not thy burning lip  
In streams that to a human dwelling glide ;  
Nor rest thee where the covert fountains hide ;  
    Nor kneel thee down to dip  
The water where the pilgrim bends to drink,  
    By desert well or river's grassy brink.

And pass thou not between  
The weary traveller and the cooling breeze ;  
And lie not down to sleep beneath the trees  
    Where human tracks are seen ;  
Nor milk the goat that browseth on the plain,  
Nor pluck the standing corn, or yellow grain.

And now depart ! and when  
Thine heart is heavy, and thine eyes are dim,

Lift up thy prayer beseechingly to Him  
 Who, from the tribes of men,  
 Selected thee to feel his chastening rod.  
 Depart! O leper! and forget not God!

And he went forth—alone! not one of all  
 The many whom he loved, nor she whose name  
 (Was woven in the fibres of the heart)  
 Breaking within him now, to come and speak  
 Comfort unto him. Yea—he went his way,  
 Sick, and heart-broken, and alone—to die!  
 For God had cursed the leper!

It was noon,  
 And Helon knelt beside a stagnant pool  
 In the lone wilderness, and bathed his brow,  
 Hot with the burning leprosy, and touched  
 The loathsome water to his fevered lips,  
 Praying that he might be so blest—to die!  
 Footsteps approached, and with no strength to flee,  
 He drew the covering closer on his lip,  
 Crying “Unclean! unclean!” and in the folds  
 Of the coarse sackcloth shrouding up his face,

He fell upon the earth till they should pass.  
 Nearer the stranger came, and bending o'er  
 The leper's prostrate form, pronounced his name.  
 "Helon!"—the voice was like the master-tone  
 Of a rich instrument—most strangely sweet;  
 And the dull pulses of disease awoke,  
 And for a moment beat beneath the hot  
 And leprous scales with a restoring thrill.  
 "Helon! arise!" and he forgot his curse,  
 And rose and stood before him.

Love and awe

Mingled in the regard of Helon's eye  
 As he beheld the stranger. He was not  
 In costly raiment clad, nor on his brow  
 The symbol of a princely lineage wore;  
 No followers at his back, nor in his hand  
 Buckler, or sword, or spear—yet in his mien  
 Command sat throned serene, and if he smiled,  
 A kingly condescension graced his lips,  
 The lion would have crouched to, in his lair.  
 His garb was simple, and his sandals worn;  
 His stature modelled with a perfect grace;

} His countenance the impress of a God  
} Touched with the open innocence of a child;  
His eye was blue and calm, as is the sky  
In the serenest noon; his hair unshorn  
Fell to his shoulders; and his curling beard  
The fulness of perfected manhood bore.  
He looked on Helon earnestly awhile,  
As if his heart was moved, and, stooping down,  
He took a little water in his hand  
And laid it on his brow, and said, "Be clean!"  
And lo! the scales fell from him, and his blood  
Coursed with delicious coolness through his veins,  
And his dry palms grew moist, and on his brow  
The dewy softness of an infant's stole.  
His leprosy was cleansed, and he fell down  
Prostrate at Jesus' feet and worshiped him.

PARRHASIUS.

---

“Parrhasius, a painter of Athens, amongst those Olynthian captives Philip of Macedon brought home to sell, bought one very old man; and when he had him at his house, put him to death with extreme torture and torment, the better, by his example, to express the pains and passions of his Prometheus, whom he was then about to paint.”

BURTON'S ANAT. OF MEL.

---

THERE stood an unsold captive in the mart,  
 A gray-haired and majestic old man,  
 Chained to a pillar. It was almost night,  
 And the last seller from his place had gone,  
 And not a sound was heard but of a dog  
 Crunching beneath the stall a refuse bone,  
 Or the dull echo from the pavement rung,  
 As the faint captive changed his weary feet.

He had stood there since morning, and borne  
From every eye in Athens the cold gaze  
Of curious scorn. The Jew had taunted him  
For an Olynthian slave. The buyer came  
And roughly struck his palm upon his breast,  
And touched his unhealed wounds, and with a sneer  
Passed on, and when, with weariness o'erspent,  
He bowed his head in a forgetful sleep,  
Th' inhuman soldier smote him, and with threats  
Of torture to his children summoned back  
The ebbing blood into his pallid face.

'Twas evening, and the half descended sun  
Tipped with a golden fire the many domes  
Of Athens, and a yellow atmosphere  
Lay rich and dusky in the shaded street  
Through which the captive gazed. He had borne up  
With a stout heart that long and weary day,  
Haughtily patient of his many wrongs,  
But now he was alone, and from his nerves  
The needless strength departed, and he leaned  
Prone on his massy chain, and let his thoughts  
Throng on him as they would. Unmarked of him,



Parrhasius at the nearest pillar stood,  
Gazing upon his grief. Th' Athenian's cheek  
Flush'd as he measured with a painter's eye  
The moving picture. The abandon'd limbs,  
Stained with the oozing blood, were laced with veins  
Swollen to purple fulness ; the gray hair,  
Thin and disordered, hung about his eyes,  
And as a thought of wilder bitterness  
Rose in his memory, his lips grew white,  
And the fast workings of his bloodless face  
Told what a tooth of fire was at his heart.

\* \* \* \*

The golden light into the painter's room  
Streamed richly, and the hidden colors stole  
From the dark pictures radiantly forth,  
And in the soft and dewy atmosphere  
Like forms and landscapes magical they lay.  
The walls were hung with armor, and about  
In the dim corners stood the sculptured forms  
Of Cytheris, and Dian, and stern Jove,  
And from the casement soberly away  
Fell the grotesque long shadows, full and true,  
And, like a veil of filmy mellowness,  
The lint-specks floated in the twilight air.

Parrhasius stood, gazing forgetfully  
Upon his canvas. There Prometheus lay,  
Chained to the cold rocks of Mount Caucasus,  
The vulture at his vitals, and the links  
Of the lame Lemnian festering in his flesh,  
And as the painter's mind felt through the dim,  
Rapt mystery, and plucked the shadows forth  
With its far-reaching fancy, and with form  
And color clad them, his fine, earnest eye,  
Flashed with a passionate fire, and the quick curl  
Of his thin nostril, and his quivering lip  
Were like the winged God's, breathing from his flight.

“Bring me the captive now!  
My hands feels skilful, and the shadows lift  
From my waked spirit airily and swift,  
And I could paint the bow  
Upon the bended heavens—around me play  
Colors of such divinity to-day.

Ha! bind him on his back!  
Look! as Prometheus in my picture here!  
Quick—or he faints!—stand with the cordial near!

Now—bend him to the rack !  
 Press down the poison'd links into his flesh !  
 And tear agape that healing wound afresh !

So—let him writhe ! How long  
 Will he live thus ? Quick, my good pencil, now !  
 What a fine agony works upon his brow !

Ha ! gray-haired, and so strong !  
 How fearfully he stifles that short moan !  
 ( Gods ! if I could but paint a dying groan ! )

'Pity' thee ! So I do !  
 I pity the dumb victim at the altar—  
 But does the rob'd priest for his *pity* falter ?  
 I'd rack thee though I knew  
 A thousand lives were perishing in thine—  
 What were ten thousand to a fame like mine ?

"Hereafter !" Ay—*hereafter* !  
 A whip to keep a coward to his track !  
 What gave death ever from his kingdom back  
 To check the sceptic's laughter ?  
 Come from the grave to-morrow with that story  
 And I may take some softer path to glory.

No, no, old man ! we die  
 Ev'n as the flowers, and we shall breathe away  
 Our life upon the chance wind, ev'n as they !  
     Strain well thy fainting eye—  
 For when that bloodshot quivering is o'er,  
 The light of heaven will never reach thee more.

Yet there's a deathless *name* !  
 A spirit that the smothering vault shall spurn,  
 And like a steadfast planet mount and burn—  
     And though its crown of flame  
 Consumed my brain to ashes as it shone,  
 By all the fiery stars ! I'd bind it on !

Ay—though it bid me rifle  
 My heart's last fount for its insatiate thirst—  
 Though every life-strung nerve be maddoned first—  
     Though it should bid me stifle  
 The yearning in my throat for my sweet child,  
 And taunt its mother till my brain went wild—

All—I would do it all—  
 Sooner than die, like a dull worm, to rot—

Thrust foully into the earth to be forgot!

Oh Heavens—but I appal

Your heart, old man! forgive——ha! on your lives

Let him not faint!—rack him till he revives!

Vain—vain—give o'er! His eye

Glazes apace. He does not feel you now—

Stand back! I'll paint the death-dew on his brow!

Gods! if he do not die

But for *one* moment—one—till I eclipse

Conception with the scorn of those calm lips!

Shivering! Hark! he mutters

Brokenly now—that was a difficult breath—

Another? Wilt thou never come, oh, Death!

Look! how his temple flutters!

Is his heart still? Aha! lift up his head!

He shudders—gasps—Jove help him!—so—he's dead.”

\* \* \* \* \*

How like a mounting devil in the heart

Rules the unreined ambition! Let it once

But play the monarch, and its haughty brow

Glows with a beauty that bewilders thought

And unthrones peace for ever. (Putting on  
The very pomp of Lucifer, it turns  
The heart to ashes, and with not a spring  
Left in the bosom for the spirit's lip,  
We look upon our splendor and forget  
The thirst of which we perish! Yet hath life  
Many a falser idol. There are hopes  
Promising well, and love-touch'd dreams for some,  
And passions, many a wild one, and fair schemes  
For gold and pleasure—yet will only this  
Balk not the soul—Ambition only gives  
Even of bitterness a beaker *full!*  
Friendship is but a slow-awaking dream,  
Troubled at best—Love is a lamp unseen,  
Burning to waste, or, if its light is found,  
Nursed for an idle hour, then idly broken—  
Gain is a grovelling care, and Folly tires,  
And Quiet is a hunger never fed—  
And from Love's very bosom, and from Gain,  
Or Folly, or a Friend, or from Repose,  
From all but keen Ambition, will the soul  
Snatch the first moment of forgetfulness  
To wander like a restless child away.

Oh, if there were not better hopes than these—  
Were there no palm beyond a feverish fame—  
If the proud wealth flung back upon the heart  
Must canker in its coffers—if the links  
Falsehood hath broken will unite no more—  
If the deep-yearning love that hath not found  
Its like in the cold world, must waste in tears—  
If truth, and fervor, and devotedness,  
Finding no worthy altar, must return  
And die of their own fulness—if beyond  
The grave there is no Heaven in whose wide air  
The spirit may find room, and in the love  
Of whose bright habitants the lavish heart  
May spend itself—*what thrice-mocked fools are we!*

+

THE WIFE'S APPEAL.

---

“Love borrows greatly from opinion. Pride above all things strengthens affection.”

E. L. BULWER.

---

He sat and read. A book with silver clasps,  
 All gorgeous with illuminated lines  
 Of gold and crimson, lay upon a frame  
 Before him. 'Twas a volume of old time ;  
 And in it were fine mysteries of the stars  
 Solved with a cunning wisdom, and strange thoughts,  
 Half prophecy, half poetry, and dreams  
 Clearer than truth, and speculations wild  
 That touched the secrets of your very soul,  
 They were so based on Nature. With a face  
 Glowing with thought, he pored upon the book.  
 The cushions of an Indian loom lay soft  
 Beneath his limbs, and, as he turned the page,

+ One of the most beautiful pieces of literature ever written



The sunlight, streaming through the curtain's fold,  
Fell with a rose-tint on his jewell'd hand,  
And the rich woods of the quaint furniture  
Lay deepening their veined colours in the sun,  
And the stained marbles on the pedestals  
Stood like a silent company. Voltaire,  
With an infernal sneer upon his lips,  
And Socrates, with godlike human love  
Stamped on his countenance, and orators  
Of times gone by that made them, and old bards,  
And Medicean Venus, half divine.  
Around the room were shelves of dainty lore,  
And rich old pictures hung upon the walls  
Where the slant light fell on them; and wrought gems,  
Medallions, rare mosaics, and antiques  
From Herculaneum, the niches filled.  
And on a table of enamel, wrought  
With a lost art in Italy, there lay  
Prints of fair women, and engravings rare,  
And a new poem, and a costly toy,  
And in their midst a massive lamp of bronze  
Burning sweet spices constantly. Asleep  
Upon the carpet couched a graceful hound,

Of a rare breed, and, as his master gave  
A murmur of delight at some sweet line,  
He raised his slender head, and kept his eye  
Upon him till the pleasant smile had passed  
From his mild lips, and then he slept again.  
The light beyond the crimson folds grew dusk,  
And the clear letters of the pleasant book  
Mingled and blurred, and the lithe hound rose up,  
And, with his earnest eye upon the door,  
Listened attentively. It came as wont—  
The fall of a light foot upon the stair—  
And the fond animal sprang out to meet  
His mistress, and caress the unglomed hand,  
He seemed to know was beautiful. She stooped  
Gracefully down and touched his silken ears  
As she passed in—then, with a tenderness,  
Half playful and half serious, she knelt  
Upon the ottoman and pressed her lips  
Upon her husband's forehead.

\* \* \* \* \*

She rose and put the curtain-folds aside  
From the high window, and looked out upon  
The shining stars in silence. "Look they not

Like Paradise to thine eye?" he said—  
But, as he spoke, a tear fell through the light,  
And starting from his seat he folded her  
Close to his heart, and, with unsteady voice,  
Asked if she was not happy. A faint smile  
Broke through her tears; and pushing off the hair  
From his fine forehead, she held back his head  
With her white hand, and, gazing on his face,  
Gave to her heart free utterance:—

Happy?—yes, dearest!—blest  
Beyond the limit of my wildest dream—  
Too bright, indeed, my blessings ever seem;  
There lives not in my breast,  
One of Hope's promises by Love unkept,  
And yet—forgive me, Ernest—I have wept.

How shall I speak of sadness,  
And seem not thankless to my God and thee?  
How can the lightest wish but seem to be  
The very whim of madness?  
Yet, oh, there is a boon thy love beside—  
And I will ask it of thee—in my pride!

List, while my boldness lingers !

If thou hadst won yon twinkling star to hear thee—  
If thou couldst bid the rainbow's curve bend near  
thee—

If thou couldst charm thy fingers  
To weave for thee the Sunset's tent of gold—  
Wouldst in thine own heart treasure it untold ?

If thou hadst Ariel's gift,  
To course the veined metals of the earth—  
If thou couldst wind a fountain to its birth—  
If thou couldst know the drift  
Of the lost cloud that sailed into the sky—  
Wouldst keep it for thine own unanswered eye ?

It is thy life and mine !—  
Thou in thyself, and I in thee, misprison  
Gifts like a circle of bright stars unrisen—  
For thou whose mind should shine  
Eminent as a planet's light, art here—  
Moved with the starting of a woman's tear !

I have told o'er thy powers  
In secret, as a miser tells his gold ;

I know thy spirit calm, and true, and bold :  
I've watched thy lightest hours,  
And seen thee, in the wildest flush of youth  
Touched with the instinct ravishment of truth.

Thou hast the secret strange  
To read that hidden book, the human heart ;  
Thou hast the ready writer's practised art ;  
Thou hast the thought to range  
The broadest circles Intellect hath ran—  
And thou art God's best work—an honest man !

And yet thou slumberest here  
Like a caged bird that never knew its pinions,  
And others track in glory the dominions  
Where thou hast not thy peer—  
Setting their weaker eyes unto the sun,  
And plucking honor that thou shouldst have won.

Oh, if thou lov'dst me ever,  
Ernest, my husband ! If th' idolatry  
That lets go heaven to fling its all on thee—  
If to dismiss thee never

In dream or prayer, have given me aught to claim—  
Heed me—oh, heed me ! and awake to Fame !

Her lips

Closed with an earnest sweetness, and she sat  
Gazing into his eyes as if her look  
Searched their dark orbs for answer. The warm blood  
Into his temples mounted, and across  
His countenance the flush of passionate thoughts  
Passed with irresolute quickness. He rose up  
And paced the dim room rapidly awhile,  
Calming his troubled mind, and then he came  
And laid his hand upon her orbéd brow,  
And in a voice of heavenly tenderness  
Answered her :—

Before I knew thee, Mary,  
Ambition was my angel. I did hear  
For ever its witch'd voices in mine ear ;  
My days were visionary,  
My nights were like the slumbers of the mad,  
And every dream swept o'er me glory-clad.

I read the burning letters  
 Of warlike pomp, on History's page, alone ;  
 I counted nothing the struck widow's moan ;  
     I heard no clank of fetters ;  
 I only felt the trumpet's stirring blast,  
 And lean-eyed Famine stalked unchallenged past !

I heard with veins of lightning,  
 The utterance of the Statesman's word of power—  
 Binding and loosing nations in an hour—

    But while my eye was brightening,  
 A masked detraction breathed upon his fame,  
 And a curst serpent slimed his written name.

The Poet rapt mine ears  
 With the transporting music that he sung.  
 With fibres from his life his lyre he strung,  
     And bathed the world in tears—  
 And then he turned away to muse apart,  
 And scorn stole after him and broke his heart !

Yet here and there I saw  
 One who did set the world at calm defiance,

And press right onward with a bold reliance ;  
And he did seem to awe  
The very shadows pressing on his breast,  
And, with a strong heart, held himself at rest.

And then I looked again,  
And he had shut the door upon the crowd,  
And on his face he lay and groaned aloud—  
Wrestling with hidden pain ;  
And in her chamber sat his wife in tears,  
And his sweet babes grew sad with whispered fears.

And so I turn'd sick-hearted  
From the bright cup away, and, in my sadness,  
Searched mine own bosom for some spring of glad-  
ness ;

And lo ! a fountain started  
Whose waters ev'n in death flow calm and fast,  
And my wild fever-thirst was slaked at last.

And then I met thee, Mary,  
And felt how love may into fulness pour,  
Like light into a fountain running o'er :



And I did hope to vary  
 My life but with surprises sweet as this—  
 A dream, but for thy waking filled with bliss.

Yet now I feel my spirit  
 Bitterly stirred, and—nay, lift up thy brow!  
 It is thine own voice echoing to thee now,  
 And thou didst pray to hear it—  
 I must unto my work and my stern hours!  
 Take from my room thy harp, and books and flowers!

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \* A year—

And in his room again he sat alone.  
 His frame had lost its fulness in that time ;  
 His manly features had grown sharp and thin,  
 And from his lips the constant smile had faded.  
 Wild fires had burned the languor from his eye :  
 The lids looked fevered, and the brow was bent  
 With an habitual frown. He was much changed.  
 His chin was resting on his clenched hand,  
 And with his foot he beat upon the floor  
 Unconsciously the time of a sad tune.  
 Thoughts of the past preyed on him bitterly.

He had won power and held it. He had walked  
Steadily upward in the eye of Fame,  
And kept his truth unsullied—but his home  
Had been invaded by envenomed tongues ;  
His wife—his spotless wife—had been assailed  
By slander, and his child had grown afraid  
To come to him—his manner was so stern.  
He could not speak beside his own hearth freely.  
His friends were half estranged, (and vulgar men  
{ Presumed upon their services and grew  
{ Familiar with him.) He'd small time to sleep,  
{ And none to pray ; and, with his heart in fetters,  
{ He bore deep insults silently, and bowed  
{ Respectfully to men who knew he loathed them !  
{ And when his heart was eloquent with truth,  
{ And love of country and honest zeal  
{ Burned for expression, he could find no words  
They would not misinterpret with their lies.  
What were his many honors to him now ?  
The good half doubted, falsehood was so strong—  
His home was hateful with its cautious fears—  
His wife lay trembling on his very breast  
Frighted with calumny !—And this is FAME.

THE SCHOLAR OF THEBET BEN KHORAT.\*

---

"Influentia cœli morbum hunc movet, interdum omnibus aliis amotis."

MELANCTHON DE ANIMA, CAP. DE HUMORIBUS.

---

NIGHT in Arabia. An hour ago,  
 Pale Dian had descended from the sky,  
 Flinging her cestus out upon the sea,  
 And at their watches now the solemn stars  
 Stood vigilant and lone ; and, dead asleep,  
 With not a shadow moving on its breast,  
 The breathing earth lay in its silver dew,

\* A famous Arabian astrologer, who is said to have spent forty years in discovering the motion of the eighth sphere. He had a scholar, a young Bedouin Arab, who, with a singular passion for knowledge, abandoned his wandering tribe, and, applying himself too closely to astrology, lost his reason and died.

And, trembling on their myriad viewless wings,  
 Th' imprisoned odors left the flowers to dream  
 And stole away upon the yielding air.  
 Ben Khorat's tower stands shadowy and tall  
 In Mecca's loneliest street; and ever there,  
 When night is at the deepest, burns his lamp  
 As constant as the Cynosure, and forth  
 From his looped window stretch the brazen tubes,  
 Pointing forever at the central star  
 Of that dim nebula just lifting now  
 Over Mount Arafat. The sky to-night  
 Is of a clearer blackness than is wont,  
 And far within its depths the colored stars\*

\* "Even to the naked eye, the stars appear of palpably different colors; but when viewed with a prismatic glass, they may be very accurately classed into the red, the yellow, the brilliant white, the dull white and the anomalous. This is true also of the planets, which shine by reflected light, and of course the difference of color must be supposed to arise from their different powers to absorb and reflect the rays of the sun. The original composition of the stars, and the different dispersive powers of their different atmospheres, may be supposed to account also for this phenomenon."

Sparkle like gems—capricious Antares\*  
 Flushing and paling in the Southern arch,  
 And azure Lyra, (like a woman's eye,  
 Burning with soft blue lustre,) and away  
 Over the desert the bright Polar-star,  
 White as a flashing icicle, and here,  
 Hung like a lamp above th' Arabian sea,  
 Mars with his dusky glow, and, fairer yet,  
 Mild Sirius, † tinct with dewy violet,  
 Set like a flower upon the breast of Eve ;  
 And in the zenith the sweet Pleiades, ‡  
 (Alas—that ev'n a star may pass from heaven  
 And not be miss'd!)—the linkèd Pleiades  
 Undimmed are there, though from the sister band  
 The fairest has gone down, and, South away,  
 Hirundo! with its little company,

\* This star exhibits a peculiar quality—a rapid and beautiful change in the color of its light; every alternate twinkling being of an intense reddish crimson color, and the answering one of a brilliant white.

† When seen with a prismatic glass, Sirius shows a large brush of exceedingly beautiful violet rays.

‡ The Pleiades are vertical in Arabia.

|| An Arabic constellation placed instead of the *Piscis Australis*, because the swallow arrives in Arabia about the time of the heliacal rising of the Fishes.

And white-browed Vesta, lamping on her path  
Lonely and planet-calm, and, all through heaven,  
Articulate almost, they troop to night,  
Like unrob'd angels in a prophet's trance.

Ben Khorat knelt before his telescope,\*  
Gazing with earnest stillness on the stars.  
The gray hairs, struggling from his turban folds,  
Played with the entering wind upon his cheeks,  
And on his breast his venerable beard  
With supernatural whiteness loosely fell.  
The black flesh swelled about his sandal thongs,  
Tight with his painful posture, and his lean  
And withered fingers to his knees were clenched,  
And the thin lashes of his straining eye  
Lay with unwinking closeness to the lens,  
Stiffened with tense up-turning. Hour by hour,  
Till the stars melted in the flush of morn,  
The old astrologer knelt moveless there,  
Ravished past pain with the bewildering spheres,

\* An anachronism, the author is aware. The Telescope was not invented for a century or two after the time of Ben Khorat.

And, hour by hour, with the same patient thought,  
Pored his pale scholar on the characters  
Of Chaldee writ, or, as his gaze grew dim  
With weariness, the dark-eyed Arab laid  
His head upon the window and looked forth  
Upon the heavens awhile, until the dews  
And the soft beauty of the silent night  
Cooled his flushed eyelids, and then patiently  
He turned unto his constant task again.

The sparry glinting of the Morning Star  
Shot through the leaves of a majestic palm  
Fringing Mount Arafat, and, as it caught  
The eye of the rapt scholar, he arose  
And clasped the volume with an eager haste,  
And as the glorious planet mounted on,  
Melting her way into the upper sky,  
He breathlessly gazed on her :—

“ Star of the silver ray !  
Bright as a god, but punctual as a slave—  
What spirit the eternal canon gave  
That bends thee to thy way ?

What is the soul that on thine arrowy light  
Is walking earth and heaven in pride to-night ?

We know when thou wilt soar  
Over the mount—thy change, and place, and  
time—  
'Tis written in the Chaldee's mystic rhyme  
As 'twere a priceless lore !  
I knew as much in my Bédouin garb—  
Coursing the desert on my flying barb !

How oft amid the tents  
Upon Sahara's sands I've walked alone,  
Waiting all night for thee, resplendent one !  
With what magnificence,  
In the last watches, to my thirsting eye,  
Thy passionate beauty flushed into the sky !

Oh, God ! how flew my soul  
Out to thy glory—upward on thy ray—  
Panting as thou ascendedst on thy way,  
As if thine own control—  
This searchless spirit that I cannot find—  
Had set its radiant law upon my mind !



More than all stars in heaven  
 I felt thee in my heart! my love became  
 A frenzy, and consumed me with its flame.  
 Ay, in the desert even—  
 My dark-eyed Abra coursing at my side—  
 The star, not Abra, was my spirit's bride!

My Abra is no more!  
 My 'desert-bird' is in a stranger's stall—  
 My tribe, my tent—I sacrificed them all  
 For this heart-wasting lore!—  
 Yet than all these the thought is sweeter far—  
*Thou wert ascendant at my birth, bright star!*

The Chaldee calls me *thine*—  
 And in this breast, that I must rend to be  
 A spirit upon wings of light like thee,  
 I feel that *thou art mine!*  
 Oh, God! that these dull fetters would give way  
 And let me forth to track thy silver ray!"

•        •        •        Ben Kborat rose  
 And silently looked forth upon the East.

The dawn was stealing up into the sky  
On its gray feet, the stars grew dim apace,  
And faded, till the Morning Star alone,  
Soft as a molten diamond's liquid fire,  
Burned in the heavens. The morn grew freshlier—  
The upper clouds were faintly touched with gold,  
The fan-palms rustled in the early air,  
Daylight spread cool and broadly to the hills,  
And still the star was visible, and still  
The young Bedouin with a straining eye  
Drank its departing light into his soul.  
It faded—melted—and the fiery rim  
Of the clear sun came up, and painfully  
The passionate scholar pressed upon his eyes  
His dusky fingers, and with limbs as weak  
As a sick child's, turned fainting to his couch,  
And slept.        \*        \*        \*

## II.

\*        \*        It was the morning watch once more.  
The clouds were drifting rapidly above,  
And dim and fast the glimmering stars flew through,  
And as the fitful gust soughed mournfully,

The shutters shook, and on the sloping roof  
Plashed heavily large single drops of rain,  
And all was still again. Ben Khorat sat  
By the dim lamp, and, while his scholar slept,  
Pored on the Chaldee wisdom. At his feet,  
Stretched on a pallet, lay the Arab boy,  
Muttering fast in his unquiet sleep,  
And working his dark fingers in his palms  
Convulsively. His sallow lips were pale,  
And, as they moved, his teeth showed ghastly through,  
White as a charnel bone, and closely drawn  
Upon his sunken eyes, as if to press  
Some frightful image from the bloodshot balls.  
His lids a moment quivered, and again  
Relaxed, half open, in a calmer sleep.

Ben Khorat gazed upon the dropping sands  
Of the departing hour. The last white grain  
Fell through, and with the tremulous hand of age  
The old astrologer reversed the glass ;  
And, as the voiceless monitor went on,  
Wasting and wasting with the precious hour,  
He looked upon it with a moving lip,

And, starting, turned his gaze upon the heavens.  
Cursing the clouds impatiently.

“’Tis time !”

Muttered the dying scholar, and he dashed  
The tangled hair from his black eyes away,  
And, seizing on Ben Khorat’s mantle-folds,  
He struggled to his feet, and falling prone  
Upon the window-ledge, gazed steadfastly  
Into the East :—

“ There is a cloud between—

She sits this instant on the mountain’s brow,  
And that dusk veil hides all her glory now—

Yet floats she as serene

Into the heavens !—Oh, God ! that even so  
I could o’ermount my spirit-cloud, and go !

The cloud begins to drift !

Aha ! Fling open ! ’tis the star—the sky !

Touch me, immortal mother ! and I fly !

Wider ! thou cloudy rift !

Let through !—such glory should have radiant room !

Let through !—a star-child on its light goes home !

Speak to me, brethren bright !  
Ye who are floating in these living beams !  
Ye who have come to me in starry dreams !  
Ye who have winged the light  
Of our bright mother with its thoughts of flame—  
—(I *knew* it passed through spirits as it came)—

Tell me ! what power have ye ?  
What are the heights ye reach upon your wings ?  
What know ye of the myriad wondrous things  
I perish but to see ?  
Are ye thought-rapid ?—Can ye fly as far—  
As instant as a thought, from star to star ?

Where has the Pleiad gone ?  
Where have all missing stars\* found light and  
home ?

\* 'Missing stars' are often spoken of in the old books of astronomy. Hipparchus mentions one that appeared and vanished very suddenly; and in the beginning of the sixteenth century Kepler discovered a new star near the heel of the right foot of Serpentarius. "so bright and sparkling that it exceeded any thing he had ever seen before." He "took notice that it was every moment changing into some of the colors of the rainbow,

Who bids the Stella Mira\* go and come ?

Why sits the Pole-star lone ?

And why, like banded sisters, through the air

Go in bright troops the constellations fair ?

Ben Khorat ! dost thou mark ?

The star ! the star ! By heavens, the cloud drifts  
o'er !

Gone—and I live ! nay—will my heart beat more ?

Look ! master ! 'tis all dark !

Not a clear speck in heaven !—my eye-balls smother !

Break through the clouds once more ! oh, starry  
mother !

I will lie down ! Yet, stay,

The rain beats out the odour from the gums,

And strangely soft to-night the spice-wind comes !

I am a child always

except when it was near the horizon, when it was generally white." It disappeared the following year, and has not been seen since.

\* A wonderful star in the neck of the Whale, discovered by Fabricius in the fifteenth century. It appears and disappears seven times in six years, and continues in the greatest lustre for fifteen days together.

When it is on my forehead! Abra sweet!  
 Would I were in the desert at thy feet!

My barb! my glorious steed!  
 Methinks my soul would mount upon its track  
 More fleetly, could I die upon thy back!  
 How would thy thrilling speed  
 Quicken my pulse!—Oh, Allah! I get wild!  
 Would that I were once more a desert-child!

Nay—nay—I had forgot!  
 My mother! my star mother!—Ha! my breath  
 Stifles!—more air!—Ben Khorat! this is—death!  
 Touch me!—I feel you not!  
 Dying!—Farewell! good master!—room! more room!  
 Abra! I loved thee! star—bright star! I—come!"

How idly of the human heart we speak,  
 Giving it gods of clay! How worse than vain  
 Is the school homily, that Eden's fruit  
 Cannot be plucked too freely from "the tree  
 Of good and evil." Wisdom sits alone,  
 Topmost in heaven;—she is its light—its God!

And in the heart of man she sits as high—  
Though grovelling eyes forget her oftentimes,  
Seeing but this world's idols. The pure mind  
Sees her for ever : and in youth we come  
Filled with her sainted ravishment, and kneel,  
Worshipping God through her sweet altar-fires,  
And then is knowledge "good." We come too oft—  
The heart grows proud with fulness, and we soon  
Look with licentious freedom on the maid  
Throned in celestial beauty. There she sits,  
Robed in her soft and seraph loveliness,  
Instructing and forgiving, and we gaze  
Until desire grows wild, and, with our hands  
Upon her very garments, are struck down,  
Blasted with a consuming fire from heaven !  
Yet, oh ! how full of music from her lips  
Breathe the calm tones of wisdom ! Human praise  
Is sweet till envy mars it, and the touch  
Of new-won gold stirs up the pulses well,  
And woman's love, if in a beggar's lamp  
'T would burn, might light us cheerly through the world ;  
But Knowledge hath a far more 'wilderer tongue,  
And she will stoop and lead you to the stars,



And witch you with her mysteries, till gold  
Is a forgotten dross, and power and fame  
Toys of an hour, and woman's careless love,  
Light as the breath that breaks it. He who binds  
His soul to knowledge steals the key of heaven—  
But 'tis a bitter mockery that the fruit  
May hang within his reach, and when, with thirst  
Wrought to a maddening frenzy, he would taste—  
It burns his lips to ashes!

CHRIST'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

---

HE sat upon the ass's colt and rode  
Toward Jerusalem. Beside him walked  
Closely and silently the faithful twelve,  
And on before him went a multitude  
Shouting Hosannas, and with eager hands  
Strewing their garments thickly in his way.  
Th' unbroken foal beneath him gently stepp'd,  
Tame as its patient dam ; and as the song  
Of "welcome to the Son of David" burst  
Forth from a thousand children, and the leaves  
Of the wav'd branches touch'd its silken ears,  
It turned its wild eye for a moment back,  
And then, subdued by an invisible hand,  
Meekly trode onward with its slender feet.

The dew's last sparkle from the grass had gone

As he rode up Mount Olivet. The woods  
Threw their cool shadows freshly to the west,  
And the light foal, with quick and toiling step  
And head bent low, kept its unslacken'd way  
Till its soft mane was lifted by the wind  
Sent o'er the mount from Jordan. As he reach'd  
The summit's breezy pitch, the Saviour rais'd  
His calm blue eye—there stood Jerusalem !  
Eagerly he bent forward, and beneath  
His mantle's passive folds, a bolder line  
Than the wont slightness of his perfect limbs  
Betray'd the swelling fulness of his heart.  
There stood Jerusalem ! How fair she look'd—  
The silver sun on all her palaces,  
And her fair daughters mid the golden spires  
Tending their terrace flowers, and Kedron's stream  
Lacing the meadows with its silver band,  
And wreathing its mist-mantle on the sky  
With the morn's exhalations. There she stood—  
Jerusalem—the city of his love,  
Chosen from all the earth ; Jerusalem—  
That knew him not—and had rejected him ;  
Jerusalem—for whom he came to die !

The shouts redoubled from a thousand lips  
 At the fair sight, the children leap'd and sang  
 Louder Hosannas ; the clear air was filled  
 With odor from the trampled olive leaves—  
 —But “ Jesus wept.” The lov'd disciple saw  
 His Master's tears, and closer to his side  
 He came with yearning looks, and on his neck  
 The Saviour leant with heavenly tenderness,  
 And mourn'd—“ How oft, Jerusalem ! would I  
 Have gather'd you, as gathereth a hen  
 Her brood beneath her wings—but ye would not !”

He thought not of the death that he should die—  
 He thought not of the thorns he knew must pierce  
 His forehead—of the buffet on the cheek—  
 The scourge, the mocking homage, the foul scorn!—

Gethsemane stood out beneath his eye  
 Clear in the morning sun, and there, he knew,  
 While they who “ could not watch with him one  
                   hour”  
 Were sleeping, he should sweat great drops of blood,  
 Praying the “ cup might pass.” And Golgotha

Stood bare and desert by the city wall,  
 And in its midst, to his prophetic eye,  
 Rose the rough cross, and its keen agonies  
 Were number'd all—the nails were in his feet—  
 Th' insulting sponge was pressing on his lips—  
 The blood and water gushing from his side—  
 The dizzy faintness swimming in his brain—  
 And, while his own disciples fled in fear,  
 A world's death-agonies all mix'd in his !  
 Ay !—he forgot all this. He only saw  
 Jerusalem,—the chos'n—the lov'd—the lost !  
 He only felt that for her sake his life  
 Was vainly giv'n, and in his pitying love,  
 The sufferings that would clothe the Heavens in  
                   black,  
 Were quite forgotten.

                                  Was there ever love,  
 In earth or heaven equal unto this ?

## THE HEALING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.\*

FRESHLY the cool breath of the coming eve  
 Stole through the lattice, and the dying girl  
 Felt it upon her forehead. She had lain  
 Since the hot noontide in a breathless trance,  
 Her thin pale fingers clasp'd within the hand  
 Of the heart-broken Ruler, and her breast,  
 Like the dead marble, white and motionless.  
 The shadow of a leaf lay on her lips,  
 And as it stirr'd with the awakening wind,  
 The dark lids lifted from her languid eyes,  
 And her slight fingers mov'd, and heavily  
 She turn'd upon her pillow. He was there—  
 The same lov'd, tireless watcher, and she look'd  
 Into his face until her sight grew dim

\* Luke viii. 54, 55.



In its rich cadences unearthly sweet,  
Seemed like some just-born harmony in the air,  
Wak'd by the power of wisdom. On a rock,  
With the broad moonlight falling on his brow,  
He stood and taught the people. At his feet  
Lay his small scrip, and pilgrim's scallop-shell,  
And staff for they had waited by the sea  
Till he came o'er from Gadarene, and pray'd  
For his wont teachings as he came to land.  
His hair was parted meekly on his brow,  
And the long curls from off his shoulders fell  
As he leaned forward earnestly, and still  
The same calm cadence, passionless and deep,  
And in his looks the same mild majesty,  
And in his mien the sadness mix'd with power,  
Fill'd them with love and wonder. Suddenly,  
As on his words entrancedly they hung,  
The crowd divided, and among them stood  
**JAIRUS THE RULER.** With his flowing robe  
Gather'd in haste about his loins, he came,  
And fix'd his eyes on Jesus. Closer drew  
The twelve disciples to their Master's side,  
And silently the people shrunk away,



And left the haughty Ruler in the midst  
Alone. A moment longer on the face  
Of the meek Nazarene he kept his gaze,  
And as the twelve look'd on him, by the light  
Of the clear moon they saw a glistening tear  
Steal to his silver beard, and drawing nigh  
Unto the Saviour's feet, he took the hem  
Of his coarse mantle, and with trembling hands  
Press'd it upon his lips, and murmur'd low,  
" *Master ! my daughter !*"—

. . . . . The same silvery light,  
That shone upon the lone rock by the sea,  
Slept on the Ruler's lofty capitals  
As at the door he stood, and welcom'd in  
Jesus and his disciples. All was still.  
The echoing vestibule gave back the slide  
Of their loose sandals, and the arrowy beam  
Of moonlight slanting to the marble floor  
Lay like a spell of silence in the rooms  
As Jairus led them on. With hushing steps  
He trod the winding stair, but ere he touch'd  
The latchet, from within a whisper came,

“ *Trouble the Master not—for she is dead!*”  
And his faint hand fell nerveless at his side,  
And his steps falter’d, and his broken voice  
Chok’d in its utterance ;—But a gentle hand  
Was laid upon his arm, and in his ear  
The Saviour’s voice sank thrillingly and low,  
“ *She is not dead—but sleepeth.*”

They pass’d in.

The spice-lamps in the alabaster urns  
Burn’d dimly, and the white and fragrant smoke  
Curl’d indolently on the chamber walls.  
The silken curtains slumbered in their folds—  
Not ev’n a tassel stirring in the air—  
And as the Saviour stood beside the bed,  
And pray’d inaudibly, the Ruler heard  
The quickening division of his breath  
As he grew earnest inwardly. There came  
A gradual brightness o’er his calm sad face,  
And drawing nearer to the bed, he mov’d  
The silken curtains silently apart  
And look’d upon the maiden.

## Like a form

Of matchless sculpture in her sleep she lay—  
The linen vesture folded on her breast,  
And over it her white transparent hands,  
The blood still rosy in their tapering nails.  
A line of pearl ran through her parted lips,  
And in her nostrils, spiritually thin,  
The breathing curve was mockingly like life,  
And round beneath the faintly tinted skin  
Ran the light branches of the azure veins—  
And on her cheek the jet lash overlay  
Matching the arches pencill'd on her brow:  
Her hair had been unbound, and falling loose  
Upon her pillow, hid her small round ears  
In curls of glossy blackness, and about  
Her polished neck, scarce touching it, they hung  
Like airy shadows floating as they slept.  
'Twas heavenly beautiful. The Saviour rais'd  
Her hand from off her bosom, and spread out  
The snowy fingers in his palm, and said  
“*Maiden! Arise!*”—and suddenly a flush  
Shot o'er her forehead, and along her lips  
And through her cheek the rallied color ran,

And the still outline of her graceful form  
Stirr'd in the linen vesture, and she clasp'd  
The Saviour's hand, and fixing her dark eyes  
Full on his beaming countenance—AROSE!

THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

---

Wo for my vine clad home !  
That it should ever be so dark to me,  
With its bright threshold, and its whispering tree !  
That I should ever come,  
Fearing the lonely echo of a tread  
Beneath the roof-tree of my glorious dead !

Lead on my orphan boy !  
Thy home is not so desolate to thee—  
And the low shiver in the linden tree  
May bring to thee a joy ;  
But, oh, how dark is the bright home before thee,  
To her who with a joyous spirit bore thee !

Lead on! for thou art now  
My sole remaining helper. God hath spoken,  
And the strong heart I lean'd upon is broken ;  
And I have seen his brow,  
The forehead of my upright one, and just,  
Tro'd by the hoof of battle to the dust.

He will not meet thee there  
Who blest thee at the eventide, my son!  
And when the shadows of the night steal on,  
He will not call to prayer.  
The lips that melted, giving thee to God,  
Are in the icy keeping of the sod!

Ay, my own boy! thy sire  
Is with the sleepers of the valley cast,  
And the proud glory of my life hath past  
With his high glance of fire.  
Wo that the linden and the vine should bloom,  
And a just man be gather'd to the tomb!

Why—bear them proudly, boy!  
It is the sword he girded to his thigh—

It is the helm he wore in victory—

    And shall we have no joy ?

For thy green vales, oh Switzerland, he died !—

I will forget my sorrow in my pride !

EXTRACT FROM A POEM DELIVERED AT THE DE-  
PARTURE OF THE SENIOR CLASS OF  
YALE COLLEGE, IN 1826.

• • • • •

WE shall go forth together. There will come  
Alike the day of trial unto all,  
And the rude world will buffet us alike.  
Temptation hath a music for all ears ;  
And mad ambition trumpeteth to all ;  
And the ungovernable thought within  
Will be in every bosom eloquent ;—

{ But, when the silence and the calm come on,  
And the high seal of character is set,  
We shall not all be similar. The scale  
Of being is a graduated thing ;  
And deeper than the vanities of power,  
Or the vain pomp of glory, there is writ



Gradation, in its hidden characters.

The pathway to the grave may be the same,  
And the proud man shall tread it, and the low,  
With his bowed head, shall bear him company.  
Decay will make no difference, and death,  
With his cold hand, shall make no difference ;  
And there will be no precedence of power,  
In waking at the coming trump of God ;  
{ But in the temper of the invisible mind,  
{ The godlike and undying intellect,  
{ There are distinctions that will live in heaven,  
{ When time is a forgotten circumstance !  
{ The elevated brow of kings will lose  
{ The impress of regalia, and the slave  
{ Will wear his immortality as free,  
{ Beside the crystal waters ; but the depth  
{ Of glory in the attributes of God,  
{ Will measure the capacities of mind ;  
{ And as the angels differ, will the ken  
{ Of gifted spirits glorify him more.  
{ It is life's mystery. ( The soul of man  
{ Createth its own destiny of power ; )  
{ And, as the trial is intenser here,

His being hath a nobler strength in heaven.

What is its earthly victory? Press on!  
 For it hath tempted angels. Yet press on!  
 For it shall make you mighty among men;  
 And from the cyrie of your eagle thought,  
 Ye shall look down on monarchs. O press on!  
 For the high ones and powerful shall come  
 To do you reverence: and the beautiful  
 Will know the purer language of your brow,  
 And read it like a talisman of love!  
 Press on! for it is godlike to unloose  
 The spirit, and forget yourself in thought;  
 Bending a pinion for the deeper sky,  
 And, in the very fetters of your flesh,  
 Mating with the pure essences of heaven!  
 Press on!—'for in the grave there is no work,  
 And no device.'—Press on! while yet ye may!

So lives the soul of man. 'It is the thirst  
 Of his immortal nature; and he rends  
 The rock for secret fountains, and pursues  
 The path of the illimitable wind

For mysteries—and this is human pride !  
There is a gentler element, and man  
May breathe it with a calm, unruffled soul,  
And drink its living waters till his heart  
Is pure—and this is human happiness !  
Its secret and its evidence are writ  
In the broad book of nature. 'Tis to have  
Attentive and believing faculties ;  
To go abroad rejoicing in the joy  
Of beautiful and well created things ;  
To love the voice of waters, and the sheen  
Of silver fountains leaping to the sea ;  
To thrill with the rich melody of birds,  
Living their life of music ; to be glad  
In the gay sunshine, reverent in the storm ;  
To see a beauty in the stirring leaf,  
And find calm thoughts beneath the whispering tree ;  
To see, and hear, and breathe the evidence  
Of God's deep wisdom in the natural world !  
It is to linger on 'the magic face  
Of human beauty,' and from light and shade  
Alike to draw a lesson ; 'tis to love  
The cadences of voices that are tuned

By majesty and purity of thought;  
To gaze on woman's beauty, as a star  
Whose purity and distance make it fair;  
And in the gush of music to be still,  
And feel that it has purified the heart!  
{ It is to love all virtue for itself,  
All nature for its breathing evidence;  
And, when the eye hath seen, and when the ear  
Hath drunk the beautiful harmony of the world,  
{ It is to humble the imperfect mind,  
{ And lean the broken spirit upon God!

Thus would I, at this parting hour, be true  
To the great moral of a passing world.  
Thus would I—like a just departing child,  
Who lingers on the threshold of his home—  
Remember the best lesson of the lips  
Whose accents shall be with us now, no more!  
It is the gift of sorrow to be pure:  
And I would press the lesson; that, when life  
Hath half become a weariness, and hope  
Thirsts for serener waters, go abroad  
Upon the paths of nature, and, when all

Its voices whisper, and its silent things  
Are breathing the deep beauty of the world,  
Kneel at its simple altar, and the God  
Who hath the living waters shall be there !

TO A CITY PIGEON.  

---

Stoop to my window, thou beautiful dove !  
Thy daily visits have touch'd my love,  
I watch thy coming, and list the note  
That stirs so low in thy mellow throat,  
    And my joy is high  
To catch the glance of thy gentle eye.

Why dost thou sit on the heated eves,  
And forsake the wood with its freshen'd leaves ?  
Why dost thou haunt the sultry street,  
When the paths of the forest are cool and sweet ?  
    How canst thou bear  
This noise of people---this sultry air ?

Thou alone of the feather'd race  
Dost look unscared on the human face ;  
Thou alone, with a wing to flee,  
Dost love with man in his haunts to be ;  
    And " the gentle dove"  
Has become a name for trust and love.

A holy gift is thine, sweet bird !  
Thou'rt nam'd with childhood's earliest word !  
Thou'rt link'd with all that is fresh and wild  
In the prison'd thoughts of the city child,  
    And thy glossy wings  
Are its brightest image of moving things.

It is no light chance. Thou art set apart,  
Wisely by Him who has tam'd thy heart,  
To stir the love for the bright and fair  
That else were seal'd in this crowded air ;  
    I sometimes dream  
Angelic rays from thy pinions stream.

Come then, ever, when daylight leaves  
The page I read, to my humble eaves,

And wash thy breast in the hollow spout,  
And murmur thy low sweet music out !

I hear and see

Lessons of Heaven, sweet bird, in thee !

## TO JULIA GRISI,

AFTER HEARING HER IN ANNA BOLENA.

---

When the rose is brightest,  
Its bloom will soonest fly ;

When burns the meteor lightest,  
'Twill vanish from the sky !

If Death but wait until Delight

O'errun the heart like wine,  
And break the cup when brimming quite—  
I die—for thou hast pour'd, to-night,  
The last drop into mine.



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

---

It was a green spot in the wilderness,  
Touch'd by the river Jordan. The dark pine  
Never had dropp'd its tassels on the moss  
Tufting the leaning bank, nor on the grass  
Of the broad circle stretching evenly  
To the straight larches, had a heavier foot  
Than the wild heron's trodden. Softly in  
Through a long aisle of willows, dim and cool,  
Stole the clear waters with their muffled feet,  
And lushing as they spread into the light,  
Circled the edges of the pebbled tank  
Slowly, then rippled through the woods away.

Hither had come th' Apostle of the wild,

Winding the river's course. 'Twas near the flush  
 Of eve, and, with a multitude around,  
 Who from the cities had come out to hear,  
 He stood breast high amid the running stream,  
 Baptizing as the Spirit gave him power.  
 His simple raiment was of camel's hair,  
 A leathern girdle close about his loins,  
 His beard unshorn, and for his daily meat  
 The locust and wild honey of the wood—  
 But like the face of Moses on the mount  
 Shone his rapt countenance, and in his eye  
 Burned the mild fire of love, as he spoke  
 The ear lean'd to him, and persuasion swift  
 To the chain'd spirit of the listener stole.

Silent upon the green and sloping bank  
 The people sat, and while the leaves were shook  
 With the birds dropping early to their nests,  
 And the grey eve came on, within their hearts  
 They mus'd if he were Christ. The rippling stream  
 Still turned its silver courses from his breast  
 As he divined their thought. "I but baptize,"  
 He said "with water; but there cometh One

The latchet of whose shoes I may not dare  
Ev'n to unloose. He will baptize with fire  
And with the Holy Ghost." And lo! while yet  
The words were on his lips, he rais'd his eyes  
And on the bank stood Jesus. He had laid  
His raiment off, and with his loins alone  
Girt with a mantle, and his perfect limbs,  
In their angelic slightness, meek and bare,  
He waited to go in. But John forbade,  
And hurried to his feet and stay'd him there,  
And said, "Nay, Master! I have need of *thine*,  
Not thou of *mine*!" And Jesus, with a smile  
Of heavenly sadness, met his earnest looks,  
And answered, "Suffer it to be so now;  
For thus it doth become me to fulfil  
All righteousness." And, leaning to the stream,  
He took around him the Apostle's arm  
And drew him gently to the midst.

The wood  
Was thick with the dim twilight as they came  
Up from the water. With his clasped hands  
Laid on his breast th' Apostle silently

Followed his Master's steps—when lo! a light,  
Bright as the tenfold glory of the sun,  
Yet lambent as the softly burning stars,  
Enveloped them, and from the heavens away  
Parted the dim blue ether like a veil ;  
And as a voice, fearful exceedingly,  
Broke from the midst, " THIS IS MY MUCH LOV'D SON  
IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED," a snow-white dove,  
Floating upon its wings, descended thro',  
And shedding a swift music from its plumes,  
Circled, and flutter'd to the Saviour's breast.

## ON A PICTURE OF A BEAUTIFUL BOY.

---

“Thou who yet dost keep  
 Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,  
 That, deaf and silent, readst the eternal deep,  
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind.”

WORDSWORTH.

---

A BOY ! yet in his eye you trace  
 The watchfulness of riper years,  
 And tales are in that serious face  
 Of feelings early steep'd in tears ;  
 And in that tranquil gaze  
 There lingers many a thought unsaid,  
 Shadows of other days,  
 Whose hours with shapes of beauty came and fled.

And sometimes it is even so !  
     The spirit ripens in the germ ;  
 The new-seal'd fountains overflow,  
     The bright wings tremble in the worm.  
 The soul detects some passing token,  
     Some emblem of a brighter world,  
 And, with its shell of clay unbroken,  
     Its shining pinions are unfurl'd,  
     And, like a blessed dream,  
 Phantoms, apparell'd from the sky,  
     Athwart its vision gleam  
 As if the light of Heaven had touched its gifted  
     eye.

'Tis strange how childhood's simple words  
     Interpret Nature's mystic book—  
 How it will listen to the birds,  
     Or ponder on the running brook,  
     As if its spirit fed.  
 And strange that we remember not,  
 Who fill its eye, and weave its lot,  
     How lightly it were led  
 Back to the home which it has scarce forgot.  
     13\*

## ON THE PICTURE OF A "CHILD TIRED OF PLAY."

---

**T**ired of play ! Tired of play !  
**W**hat hast thou done this livelong day ?  
**T**he birds are silent, and so is the bee ;  
**T**he sun is creeping up steeple and tree ;  
**T**he doves have flown to the sheltering eaves,  
**A**nd the nests are dark with the drooping leaves,  
**T**wilight gathers, and day is done—  
**H**ow hast thou spent it—restless one !

**P**laying ? But what hast thou done beside  
**T**o tell thy mother at even tide ?  
**W**hat promise of morn is left unbroken ?

{ What kind word to thy playmate spoken ?  
 { Whom hast thou pitied, and whom forgiven ?  
 { How with thy faults has duty striven ?  
 What hast thou learned by field and hill,  
 By greenwood path, and by singing rill ?

There will come an eve to a longer day,  
 That will find thee tired—but not of play !  
 And thou wilt lean, as thou leanest now,  
 With drooping limbs and an aching brow,  
 And wish the shadows would faster creep,  
 And long to go to thy quiet sleep.

Well were it then if thine aching brow  
 Were as free from sin and shame as now !

{ Well for thee, if thy lip could tell  
 A tale like this, of a day spent well.  
 If thine open hand hath reliev'd distress  
 { If thy pity hath sprung to wretchedness—  
 If thou hast forgiven the sore offence,  
 { And humbled thy heart with penitence—  
 If Nature's voices have spoken to thee  
 With their holy meanings eloquently—  
 If every creature hath won thy love,



From the creeping worm to the brooding dove,  
If never a sad, low-spoken word  
Hath plead with thy human heart unheard—  
Then, when the night steals on as now,  
It will bring relief to thine aching brow,  
And, with joy and peace at the thought of rest,  
Thou wilt sink to sleep on thy mother's breast.

TO A FACE BELOVED.  

---

The music of the waken'd lyre  
Dies not upon the quivering strings,  
Nor burns alone the minstrel's fire  
Upon the lip that trembling sings ;  
Nor shines the moon in heaven unseen,  
Nor shuts the flower its fragrant cells,  
Nor sleeps the fountain's wealth, I ween,  
For ever in its sparry wells—  
The spells of the enchanter lie  
Not on his own lone heart—his own rapt ear and eye.

I look upon a face as fair  
As ever made a lip of heaven

Falter amid its music-prayer !

The first-lit star of summer even

Springs not so softly on the eye,

Nor grows, with watching half so bright,

Nor mid its sisters of the sky,

So seems of heaven the dearest light—

Men murmur where that face is seen,

My youth's angelic dream was of that look and mien.

Yet though we deem the stars are blest,

And envy, in our grief, the flower

That bears but sweetness in its breast,

And feared th' enchanter for his power,

And love the minstrel for his spell,

He winds out of his lyre so well—

The stars are almoners of light,

The lyrist of melodious air,

The fountain of its waters bright

And every thing most sweet and fair

Of that by which it charms the ear,

The eye of him that passes near—

A lamp is lit in woman's eye

That souls, else lost on earth, remember angels by.

IDLENESS.

---

"Idleness is sweet and sacred."

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

"When you have found a day to be idle, be idle for a day.

"When you have met with three cups to drink, drink your  
three cups."

CHINESE POET.

---

THE rain is playing its soft pleasant tune  
Fitfully on the skylight, and the shade  
Of the fast-flying clouds across my book  
Passes with delicate change. My merry fire  
Sings cheerfully to itself; my musing cat  
Purrs as she wakes from her unquiet sleep,  
And looks into my face as if she felt

Like me the gentle influence of the rain.  
Here have I sat since morn, reading sometimes,  
And sometimes listening to the faster fall  
Of the large drops, or rising with the stir  
Of an unbidden thought, have walked awhile  
With the slow steps of indolence, my room,  
And then sat down composedly again  
To my quaint book of olden poetry.  
It is a kind of idleness, I know ;  
And I am said to be an idle man—  
And it is very true. I love to go  
Out in the pleasant sun, and let my eye  
Rest on the human faces that pass by,  
Each with its gay or busy interest :  
And then I muse upon their lot, and read  
Many a lesson in their changeful cast,  
And so grow kind of heart, as if the sight  
Of human beings were humanity.  
And I am better after it, and go  
More gratefully to my rest, and feel a love  
Stirring my heart to every living thing,  
And my low prayer has more humility,  
And I sink lightlier to my dreams—and this,

'Tis very true, is only idleness ! .  
I love to go and mingle with the young  
In the gay festal room—when every heart  
Is beating faster than the merry tune,  
And their blue eyes are restless, and their lips  
Parted with eager joy, and their round cheeks  
Flushed with the beautiful motion of the dance.  
And I can look upon such things, and go  
Back to my solitude, and dream bright dreams  
For their fast coming years, and speak of them  
Earnestly in my prayer, till I am glad  
With a benevolent joy—and this, I know,  
To the world's eye is only idleness !

And when the clouds pass suddenly away,  
And the blue sky is like a newer world,  
And the sweet growing things—forest and flower,  
Humble and beautiful alike—are all  
Breathing up odors to the very heaven—  
Or when the frost has yielded to the sun  
In the rich autumn, and the filmy mist  
Lies like a silver lining on the sky,

And the clear air exhilarates, and life  
Simply, is luxury—and when the hush  
Of twilight, like a gentle sleep, steals on,  
And the birds settle to their nests, and stars  
Spring in the upper sky, and there is not  
A sound that is not low and musical—  
At all these pleasant seasons I go out  
With my first impulse guiding me, and take  
Woodpath or stream, or slope by hill or vale,  
And in my recklessness of heart, stray on,  
Glad with the birds, and silent with the leaves,  
And happy with the fair and blessed world—  
And this, 'tis true, is only idleness!

And I should love to go up to the sky,  
And course the heavens, like stars, and float away  
Upon the gliding clouds that have no stay  
In their swift journey—and 'twould be a joy  
To walk the chambers of the deep, and tread  
The pearls of its untrodden floor, and know  
The tribes of the unfathomable depths—  
Dwellers beneath the pressure of a sea!

And I should love to issue with the wind  
On a strong errand, and o'ersweep the earth  
With its broad continents and islands green,  
Like to the passing of a spirit on!—  
And this, 'tis true, were only idleness!



THE BURIAL OF ARNOLD.

---

YE'VE gathered to your place of prayer  
With slow and measured tread :  
Your ranks are full, your mates all there—  
But the soul of one has fled.  
He was the proudest in his strength,  
The manliest of ye all ;  
Why lies he at that fearful length,  
And ye around his pall ?

Ye reckon it in days, since he  
Strode up that foot-worn aisle,  
With his dark eye flashing gloriously,

And his lip wreathed with a smile.  
O, had it been but told you, then,  
To mark whose lamp was dim,  
From out you rank of fresh-lipped men,  
Would ye have singled him ?

Whose was the sinewy arm, that flung  
Defiance to the ring ?  
Whose laugh of victory loudest rung—  
Yet not for glorying ?  
Whose heart, in generous deed and thought,  
No rivalry might brook,  
And yet distinction claiming not ?  
There lies he—go and look !

On now—his requiem is done,  
The last deep prayer is said—  
On to his burial, comrades—on,  
With the noblest of the dead !  
Slow—for it presses heavily—  
It is a man ye bear !  
Slow, for our thoughts dwell wearily  
On the noble sleeper there.

Tread lightly, comrades!—we have laid  
His dark locks on his brow—

( Like life—save deeper light and shade : )

We'll not disturb them now.

Tread lightly—for 'tis beautiful,  
That blue-veined eye-lid's sleep,  
Hiding the eye death left so dull—  
Its slumber we will keep.

Rest now!—his journeying is done—  
Your feet are on his sod—  
Death's chain is on your champion—  
He waiteth here his God

( Ay—turn and weep—'tis manliness

: To be heart-broken here—

For the grave of earth's best nobleness  
Is watered by the tear.

## SPRING.

---

"L'onda del mar divisa  
 Bagna la valle e l'monte,  
 Va passeggiara  
 In fiume,  
 Va prigionera  
 In fonte,  
 Mormora sempre e geme  
 Fin che non torna al mar."

METASTASIO.

---

**THE** Spring is here—the delicate-footed May,  
 With its slight fingers full of leaves and flowers  
 And with it comes a thirst to be away,  
 Wasting in wood-paths its voluptuous hours—  
 A feeling that is like a sense of wings,  
 Restless to soar above these perishing things.

We pass out from the city's feverish hum,  
To find refreshment in the silent woods ;  
And nature, that is beautiful and dumb,  
Like a cool sleep upon the pulses broods—  
Yet, even there, a restless thought will steal  
To teach the indolent heart it still must *feel*.

Strange, that the audible stillness of the noon,  
The waters tripping with their silver feet,  
The turning to the light leaves in June,  
And the light whisper as their edges meet—  
Strange—that they fill not, with their tranquil tone,  
The spirit, walking in their midst alone.

There's no contentment in a world like this,  
Save in forgetting the immortal dream ;  
We may not gaze upon the stars of bliss,  
That through the cloud-rifts radiantly stream ;  
Bird-like, the prisoned soul *will* lift its eye  
And pine till it is hooded from the sky.

## THE TORN HAT,

(A PICTURE BY SELLY.)

---

. . . . . "A leaf  
 Fresh flung upon a river, that will dance  
 Upon the wave that stealeth out its life,  
 Then sink of its own heaviness."

PHILIP SLINGSBY.

---

THERE'S something in a noble boy,  
 A brave, free-hearted, careless one,  
 With his unchecked, unbidden joy,  
 His dread of books and love of fun,  
 And in his clear and ready smile,  
 Unshaded by a thought of guile,

And unrepressed by sadness—  
Which brings me to my childhood back,  
As if I trod its very track,  
And felt its very gladness.  
And yet it is not in his play,  
When every trace of thought is lost,  
And not when you would call him gay,  
That his bright presence thrills me most.  
His shout may ring upon the hill,  
His voice be echoed in the hall,  
His merry laugh like music trill,  
And I in sadness hear it all—  
For, like the wrinkles on my brow,  
I scarcely notice such things now—  
But when, amid the earnest game,  
He stops, as if he music heard,  
And, heedless of his shouted name  
As of the carol of a bird,  
Stands gazing on the empty air  
As if some dream were passing there—  
'Tis then that on his face I look,  
His beautiful but thoughtful face,  
And, like a long-forgotten book,

Its sweet, familiar meanings trace  
{ Remembering a thousand things  
{ Which passed me on those golden wings,  
Which time has fettered now—  
    Things that came o'er me with a thrill,  
    And left me silent, sad, and still,  
And threw upon my brow  
    A holier and a gentler cast,  
    That was too innocent to last.

'Tis strange how thought upon a child  
    Will, like a presence, sometimes press,  
And when his pulse is beating wild,  
    And life itself is in excess—  
When foot and hand, and ear and eye,  
Are all with ardor straining high—  
    How in his heart will spring  
A feeling whose mysterious thrall  
Is stronger, sweeter far than all;  
    And on its silent wing,  
How with the clouds he'll float away,  
As wandering and as lost as they !



APRIL.

---

" A violet by a mossy stone,  
Half hidden from the eye,  
Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky."

WORDSWORTH.

---

I HAVE found violets. April hath come on,  
And the cool winds feel softer, and the rain  
Falls in the beaded drops of summer time.  
You may hear birds at morning, and at eve  
The tame dove lingers till the twilight falls,  
Cooing upon the eaves, and drawing in  
His beautiful bright neck, and, from the hills,  
A murmur like the hoarseness of the sea

Tells the release of waters, and the earth  
Sends up a pleasant smell, and the dry leaves  
Are lifted by the grass—and so I know  
That Nature, with her delicate ear, hath heard  
The dropping of the velvet foot of Spring.  
Take of my violets ! I found them where  
The liquid South stole o'er them, on a bank  
That leaned to running water. There's to me  
A daintiness about these early flowers  
That touches me like poetry. They blow  
With such a simple loveliness among  
The common herbs of pasture, (and breathe out  
{ Their lives so unobtrusively, like hearts  
Whose beatings are too gentle for the world. }

I love to go in the capricious days  
Of April and hunt violets ; when the rain  
Is in the blue cups trembling, and they nod  
So gracefully to the kisses of the wind.  
It may be deem'd too idle, but the young  
Read nature like the manuscript of heaven,  
And call the flowers its poetry. Go out !  
Ye spirits of habitual unrest,  
And read it when the " fever of the world"

Hath made your hearts impatient, and, if life  
Hath yet one spring unpoisoned, it will be  
Like a beguiling music to its flow,  
And you will no more wonder that I love  
To hunt for violets in the April time.

## THE BELFRY PIGEON.

---

" Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow  
Of people, and my heart of one sad thought."

SHELLEY.

---

On the cross beam under the Old South bell  
The nest of a pigeon is builded well.  
In summer and winter that bird is there,  
Out and in with the morning air :  
I love to see him track the street,  
With his wary eye and active feet ;  
And I often watch him as he springs,  
Circling the steeple with easy wings,  
Till across the dial his shade has passed,  
And the belfry edge is gained at last.

'Tis a bird I love, with its brooding note,  
And the trembling throb in its mottled throat ;  
There's a human look in its swelling breast,  
And the gentle curve of its lowly crest ;  
And I often stop with the fear I feel—  
He runs so close to the rapid wheel.

Whatever is rung on that noisy bell—  
Chime of the hour or funeral knell—  
The dove in the belfry must hear it well.  
When the tongue swings out to the midnight moon—  
When the sexton cheerly rings for noon—  
When the clock strikes clear at morning light—  
When the child is waked with " nine at night"—  
When the chimes play soft in the Sabbath air,  
Filling the spirit with tones of prayer—  
Whatever tale in the bell is heard,  
He broods on his folded feet unstirred,  
Or rising half in his rounded nest,  
He takes the time to smooth his breast,  
Then drops again with filmed eyes,  
And sleeps as the last vibration dies.

Sweet bird! I would that I could be  
A hermit in the crowd like thee!  
With wings to fly to wood and glen,  
Thy lot, like mine, is cast with men;  
And daily, with unwilling feet,  
I tread, like thee, the crowded street;  
But, unlike me, when day is o'er,  
Thou canst dismiss the world and soar,  
Or, at a half felt wish for rest,  
Canst smooth thy feathers on thy breast,  
And drop forgetful, to thy nest.

I would that in such wings of gold  
I could my weary heart upfold;  
I would I could look down unmoved,  
(Unloving as I am unloved,)  
And while the world throngs on beneath,  
Smooth down my cares and calmly breathe;  
And never sad with others' sadness,  
And never glad with others' gladness,  
Listen, unstirred, to knell or chime,  
And, lapt in quiet, bide my time.

TO LAURA W—, TWO YEARS OF AGE.

---

BRIGHT be the skies that cover thee,  
Child of the sunny brow—  
Bright as the dream flung over thee—  
By all that meets thee now.  
Thy heart is beating joyously,  
Thy voice is like a bird's—  
And sweetly breaks the melody  
Of thy imperfect words.  
I know no fount that gushes out  
As gladly as thy tiny shout.

I would that thou might'st ever be  
As beautiful as now,—

That time might ever leave as free  
Thy yet unwritten brow :  
I would life were "all poetry"  
To gentle measure set,  
That nought but chasten'd melody  
Might stain thy eye of jet—  
Nor one discordant note be spoken,  
Till God the cunning harp hath broken.

I would—but deeper things than these  
With woman's lot are wove :  
Wrought of intenser sympathies,  
And nerv'd by purest love—  
By the strong spirit's discipline,  
By the fierce wrong forgiven,  
By all that wrings the heart of sin,  
Is woman won to Heaven.  
"Her lot is on thee," lovely child—  
God keep thy spirit undefiled!

I fear thy gentle loveliness,  
Thy witching tone and air,  
Thine eye's beseeching earnestness



May be to thee a snare.

The silver stars may purely shine,

The water's taintless flow—

But they who kneel at woman's shrine,

Breathe on it as they bow—

Ye may fling back the gift again,

But the crushed flower will leave a stain.

What shall preserve thee, beautiful child?

Keep thee as thou art now?

Bring thee, a spirit undefiled,

At God's pure throne to bow?

The world is but a broken reed,

And life grows early dim—

Who shall be near thee in thy need,

To lead thee up—to Him?

He, who himself was "undefiled?"

With him, we trust thee, beautiful child!

ON A PICTURE OF A GIRL LEADING HER BLIND  
MOTHER THROUGH THE WOOD.

---

THE green leaves as we pass  
Lay their light fingers on thee unaware,  
And by thy side the hazel's cluster fair,  
And the low forest-grass  
Grows green and silken where the wood-paths wind—  
Alas! for thee, sweet mother! thou art blind!

And nature is all bright;  
And the faint gray and crimson of the dawn,  
Like folded curtains from the day are drawn;  
And evening's purple-light  
Quivers in tremulous softness on the sky—  
Alas! sweet mother! for thy clouded eye!

The moon's new silver shell  
Trembles above thee, and the stars float up,  
In the blue air, and the rich tulip's cup  
Is pencill'd passing well,  
And the swift birds on glorious pinions flee—  
Alas! sweet mother! that thou canst not see!

And the kind looks of friends  
Peruse the sad expression in thy face,  
And the child stops amid his bounding race,  
And the tall stripling bends  
Low to thine ear with duty unforget—  
Alas! sweet mother! that thou seest them not!

But thou canst *hear!* and love  
May richly on a human tone be pour'd,  
And the least cadence of a whisper'd word  
A daughter's love may prove—  
And while I speak thou knowst if I smile,  
Albeit thou canst not see my face the while!

Yes, thou canst hear! and He  
Who on thy sightless eye its darkness hung,

To the attentive ear, like harps, hath strung

Heaven and earth and sea!

And 'tis a lesson in our hearts to know—

*With but one sense the soul may overflow.*

TO A STOLEN RING.  

---

OH for thy history now! Hadst thou a tongue  
To whisper of thy secrets, I could lay  
Upon thy jewell'd tracery mine ear  
And dream myself in heaven. Thou hast been worn  
In that fair creature's pride, and thou hast felt  
The bounding of the haughtiest blood that e'er  
Sprang from the heart of woman; and thy gold  
Has lain upon her forehead in the hour  
Of sadness, when the weary thoughts came fast  
And life was but a bitterness with all  
Its vividness and beauty. She has gazed  
In her fair girlhood on thy snowy pearls,  
And mused away the hours, and she has bent  
On thee the downcast radiance of her eye

When a deep tone was eloquent in her ear,  
And thou hast lain upon her cheek, and prest  
Back on her heart its beatings, and put by  
From her vein'd temples the luxuriant curls,  
And in her peaceful sleep, when she has lain  
In her unconscious beauty, and the dreams  
Of her high heart came goldenly and soft,  
Thou hast been there unhidden, and hast felt  
The swelling of the clear transparent veins  
As the rich blood rush'd through them, warm and fast.

I am impatient as I gaze on thee,  
Thou inarticulate jewel! Thou hast heard  
With thy dull ear such music!—the low tone  
Of a young sister's tenderness, when night  
Hath folded them together like one flower—  
The sudden snatch of a remember'd song  
Warbled capriciously—the careless word  
Lightly betraying the inaudible thought  
Working within the heart, and more than all,  
Thou hast been lifted when the fervent prayer  
For a lov'd mother, or the sleeping one

Lying beside her, trembled on her lip,  
And the warm tear that from her eye stole out  
As the soft lash fell over it, has lain,  
Amid thy shining jewels like a star.

TO MY MOTHER FROM THE APPENINES.

---

"Mother! dear mother! the feelings nurst  
 As I hung at thy bosom, *clung round thee first.*  
 'Twas the earliest link in love's warm chain—  
 'Tis the only one that will long remain;  
 And as year by year, and day by day,  
 Some friend still trusted drops away,  
 Mother! dear mother! *oh dost thou see*  
*How the shorten'd chain brings me nearer thee!*

PHILIP SLINGSBY.

---

'Tis midnight the lone mountains on—  
 The East is fleck'd with cloudy bars,  
 And, gliding through them one by one,  
 The moon walks up-her path of stars—  
 The light upon her placid brow  
 Borrowed of fountains unseen now.



And happiness is mine to-night,  
Thus springing from an unseen fount,  
And breast and brain are warm with light,  
With midnight round me on the mount—  
Its rays, like thine, fair Dian, flow  
From far that Western star below.

Dear mother! in thy love I live;  
The life thou gav'st flows yet from thee—  
And, sun-like, thou hast power to give  
Life to the earth, air, sea, for me!  
Though wandering, as this moon above,  
I'm dark without thy constant love.

## TO ERMENGARDE.

I know not if the sunshine waste—

The world is dark since thou art gone!

The hours are, oh! so leaden-paced!

The birds sing, and the stars float on,

But sing not well, and look not fair—

A weight is in the summer air,

And sadness in the sight of flowers,

And if I go where others smile,

Their love but makes me think of ours,

And heaven gets my heart the while.

Like one upon a desert isle,

I languish of the weary hours;

I never thought a life could be

So flung upon one hope, as mine, dear love, on thee!

I sit and watch the summer sky,  
    There comes a cloud through heaven alone,  
A thousand stars are shining nigh—  
    It feels no light, but darkles on!  
Yet now it nears the lovelier moon,  
    And, flushing through its fringe of snow,  
There steals a rosier die, and soon  
    Its bosom is one fiery glow!  
The queen of life within it lies!  
    Yet mark how lovers meet to part!  
The cloud already onward flies,  
    And shadows sink into its heart,  
And (dost thou see them where thou art?)  
    Fade fast, fade all those glorious dyes!  
Its light, like mine, is seen no more,  
And, like my own, its heart seems darker than before!

Where press this hour those fairy feet,  
    Where look this hour those eyes of blue!  
What music in thine ear is sweet!  
    What odor breathes thy lattice through!  
What word is on thy lip? What tone—  
    What look—replying to thine own?

Thy steps along the Danube stray—

Alas it seeks an orient sea!

Thou would'st not seem so far away

Flow'd but its waters back to me?

I bless the slowly coming moon

Because its eye look'd late in thine!

I envy the west wind of June

Whose wings will bear it up the Rhine;

The flower I press upon my brow

Were sweeter if its like perfum'd thy chamber now!

## THE SHUNAMITE.\*

It was a sultry day of summer time,  
 The sun pour'd down upon the ripen'd grain  
 With quivering heat, and the suspended leaves  
 Hung motionless. The cattle on the hills  
 Stood still, (and the divided flock were all  
 { Laying their nostrils to the cooling roots, }  
 And the sky look'd like silver, (and it seem'd  
 { As if the air had fainted, } and the pulse  
 Of nature had run down, and ceas'd to beat.

"Haste thee, my child!" the Syrian mother said,  
 "Thy father is athirst"—and from the depths  
 Of the cool well under the leaning tree,

2 Kings iv. 18—37.

She drew refreshing water, and with thoughts  
Of God's sweet goodness stirring at her heart,  
She bless'd her beautiful boy, and to his way  
Committed him. And he went lightly on,  
With his soft hands press'd closely to the cool  
Stone vessel, and his little naked feet  
Lifted with watchful care, and o'er the hills,  
And through the light green hollows, where the lambs  
Go for the tender grass, he kept his way,  
Wiling its distance with his simple thoughts,  
Till, in the wilderness of sheaves, with brows  
Throbbing with heat, he set his burthen down.

Childhood is restless ever, and the boy  
Stay'd not within the shadow of the tree,  
But with a joyous industry went forth  
Into the reapers' places, and bound up  
His tiny sheaves, and plaited cunningly  
The pliant withs out of the shining straw,  
Cheering their labor on, till they forgot  
The very weariness of their stooping toil  
In the beguiling of his earnest mirth.  
Presently he was silent, and his eye

Closed as with dizzy pain, and with his hand  
Press'd hard upon his forehead, and his breast  
Heaving with the suppression of a cry,  
He utter'd a faint murmur, and fell back  
Upon the loosen'd sheaf, insensible.

They bore him to his mother, and he lay  
Upon her knees till noon—and then he died !  
She had watch'd every breath, and kept her hand  
Soft on his forehead, and gaz'd in upon  
The dreamy languor of his listless eye,  
And she had laid back all his sunny curls  
And kiss'd his delicate lip, and lifted him  
Into her bosom, till her heart grew strong—  
His beauty was so unlike death ! She leaned  
Over him now, that she might catch the low  
Sweet music of his breath, that she had learn'd  
To love when he was slumbering at her side  
In his unconscious infancy—

—“ So still !

'Tis a soft sleep ! How beautiful he lies,  
With his fair forehead, and the rosy veins  
Playing so freshly in his sunny cheek !

How could they say that he would die! Oh God!  
 I could not lose him! I have treasured all  
 His childhood in my heart, and even now,  
 As he has slept, my memory has been there,  
 Counting like treasure all his winning ways—  
 His unforgotten sweetness:—

—“ Yet so still!—

How like this breathless slumber is to death!  
 I could believe that in that bosom now  
 There were no pulse—it beats so languidly!  
 I cannot see it stir; but his red lip!  
 Death would not be so very beautiful!  
 And that half smile—would death have left *that* there?  
 —And should I not have felt that he would die?  
 And have I not wept over him?—and prayed  
 Morning and night for him?—and *could* he die?  
 —No—God will keep him! He will be my pride  
 Many long years to come, and this fair hair  
 Will darken like his father's, and his eye  
 Be of a deeper blue when he is grown;  
 And he will be so tall, and I shall look  
 With such a pride upon him!—*He* to die!”  
 And the fond mother lifted his soft curls,



And smiled, as if 'twere mockery to think  
That such fair things could perish—

—Suddenly

Her hand shrunk from him, and the color fled  
From her fix'd lip, and her supporting knees  
Were shook beneath her child. Her hand had touch'd  
His forehead, as she dallied with his hair—  
And it was cold—like clay! Slow, very slow,  
Came the misgiving that her child was dead.  
She sat a moment, and her eyes were clos'd  
In a dumb prayer for strength, and then she took  
His little hand and press'd it earnestly—  
And put her lip to his—and look'd again  
Fearfully on him—and then, bending low,  
She whisper'd in his ear, “ My son!—My son !”  
And as the echo died, and not a sound  
Broke on the stillness, and he lay there still  
Motionless on her knee—the truth *would* come!  
And with a sharp, quick cry, as if her heart  
Were crush'd, she lifted him and held him close  
Into her bosom—with a mother's thought—  
As if death had no power to touch him there!

\* \* \* \* \*

The man of God came forth, and led the child  
Unto his mother, and went on his way.  
And he was there—her beautiful—her own—  
Living and smiling on her—with his arms  
Folded about her neck, and his warm breath  
Breathing upon her lips, and in her ear  
The music of his gentle voice once more !

---

ABSALOM.

---

THE waters slept. Night's silvery veil hung low  
On Jordan's bosom, and the eddies curled  
Their glassy rings beneath it, like the still,  
Unbroken beating of the sleeper's pulse.  
The reeds bent down the stream; the willow leaves,  
With a soft cheek upon the lulling tide,  
Forgot the lifting winds; and the long stems,  
Whose flowers the water, like a gentle nurse,  
Bears on its bosom, quietly gave way,  
And leaned, in graceful attitudes, to rest.  
How strikingly the course of nature tells,  
By its light heed of human suffering,  
That it was fashioned for a happier world!

King David's limbs were weary. He had fled  
From far Jerusalem ; and now he stood,  
With his faint people, for a little rest  
Upon the shore of Jordan. The light wind  
Of morn was stirring, and he bared his brow  
To its refreshing breath ; for he had worn  
The mourner's covering, and he had not felt  
That he could see his people until now.  
They gather'd round him on the fresh green bank,  
And spoke their kindly words ; and, as the sun  
Rose up in heaven, he knelt among them there,  
And bowed his head upon his hands to pray.  
Oh ! when the heart is full—when bitter thoughts  
Come crowding thickly up for utterance,  
And the poor common words of courtesy  
Are such a very mockery—how much  
The bursting heart may pour itself in prayer !  
He pray'd for Israel—and his voice went up  
Strongly and fervently. He pray'd for those  
Whose love had been his shield—and his deep tones  
Grew tremulous. But, oh ! for Absalom—  
For his estranged, misguided Absalom—  
The proud, bright being, who had burst away

In all his princely beauty, to defy  
The heart that cherished him—for him he poured,  
In agony that would not be controlled,  
Strong supplication, and forgave him there,  
Before his God, for his deep sinfulness.



The pall was settled. He who slept beneath  
Was straightened for the grave; and, as the folds  
Sunk to the still proportions, they betrayed  
The matchless symmetry of Absalom.  
His hair was yet unshorn, and silken curls  
Were floating round the tassels as they swayed  
To the admitted air, as glossy now  
As when, in hours of gentle dalliance, bathing  
The snowy fingers of Judea's daughters.  
His helm was at his feet: his banner, soiled  
With trailing through Jerusalem, was laid,  
Reversed, beside him: and the jewelled hilt,  
Whose diamonds lit the passage of his blade,  
Rested, like mockery, on his covered brow.  
The soldiers of the king trod to and fro,  
Clad in the garb of battle; and their chief,  
The mighty Joab, stood beside the bier,

And gazed upon the dark pall steadfastly,  
As if he feared the slumberer might stir.  
A slow step startled him. He grasped his blade  
As if a trumpet rang; but the bent form  
Of David entered, and he gave command,  
In a low tone, to his few followers,  
And left him with his dead. The king stood still  
Till the last echo died: then, throwing off  
The sackcloth from his brow, and laying back  
The pall from the still features of his child,  
He bowed his head upon him, and broke forth  
In the resistless eloquence of woe:

“ Alas! my noble boy! that thou should'st die!  
Thou, who wert made so beautifully fair!  
That death should settle in thy glorious eye,  
And leave his stillness in this clustering hair!  
How could he mark thee for the silent tomb,  
My proud boy, Absalom!

“ Cold is thy brow, my son! and I am chill,  
As to my bosom I have tried to press thee!  
How was I wont to feel my pulses thrill,

Like a rich harp-string, yearning to caress thee,  
And hear thy sweet "*my father!*" from these dumb  
And cold lips, Absalom!

"The grave hath won thee. I shall hear the gush  
Of music, and the voices of the young;  
And life will pass me in the mantling blush,  
And the dark tresses to the soft winds flung;—  
But thou no more, with thy sweet voice, shalt come  
To meet me, Absalom!

"And oh! when I am stricken, and my heart,  
Like a bruised reed, is waiting to be broken,  
How will its love for thee, as I depart,  
Yearn for thine ear to drink its last deep token!  
It were so sweet, amid death's gathering gloom,  
To see thee, Absalom!

"And now, farewell! 'Tis hard to give thee up,  
With death so like a gentle slumber on thee;—  
And thy dark sin!—Oh! I could drink the cup,  
If from this wo its bitterness had won thee.

May God have called thee, like a wanderer, home,  
My erring Absalom !”

He covered up his face, and bowed himself  
A moment on his child : then, giving him  
A look of melting tenderness, he clasped  
His hands convulsively, as if in prayer ;  
And, as a strength were given him of God,  
He rose up calmly, and composed the pall  
Firmly and decently, and left him there,  
As if his rest had been a breathing sleep.



HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

---

THE morning broke. Light stole upon the clouds  
With a strange beauty. Earth received again  
Its garment of a thousand dyes ; and leaves,  
And delicate blossoms, and the painted flowers,  
And every thing that bendeth to the dew,  
And stirreth with the daylight, lifted up  
Its beauty to the breath of that sweet morn.

{ All things are dark to sorrow ; } and the light  
And loveliness, and fragrant air were sad  
To the dejected Hagar. The moist earth  
Was pouring odours from its spicy pores,  
And the young birds were singing as if life

Were a new thing to them ; but oh ! it came  
 Upon her heart like discord, and she felt  
 How cruelly it tries a broken heart,  
 To see a mirth in any thing it loves.  
 She stood at Abraham's tent. Her lips were pressed,  
 Till the blood started ; and the wandering veins  
 Of her transparent forehead were swelled out,  
 As if her pride would burst them. Her dark eye  
 Was clear and tearless, and the light of heaven,  
 Which made its language legible, shot back,  
 From her long lashes, as it had been flame.  
 Her noble boy stood by her, with his hand  
 Clasped in her own, and his round, delicate feet,  
 Scarce trained to balance on the tented floor,  
 Sandaled for journeying. He had looked up  
 Into his mother's face until he caught  
 The spirit there, and his young heart was swelling  
 Beneath his dimpled bosom, and his form  
 Straightened up proudly in his tiny wrath,  
 As if his light proportions would have swelled,  
 Had they but matched his spirit, to the man.

Why bends the patriarch as he cometh now  
 Upon his staff so wearily ? His beard

Is low upon his breast, and on his high brow,  
So written with the converse of his God,  
Beareth the swollen vein of agony.

His lip is quivering, and his wonted step  
Of vigor is not there ; and, though the morn  
Is passing fair and beautiful, he breathes  
Its freshness as it were a pestilence.

Oh ! man may bear with suffering : his heart  
Is a strong thing, and godlike in the grasp  
Of pain that wrings mortality ; but tear  
One chord affection clings to, part one tie  
That binds him to a woman's delicate love,  
And his great spirit yieldeth like a reed.

He gave to her the water and the bread,  
But spoke no word, and trusted not himself  
To look upon her face, but laid his hand  
In silent blessing on the fair-haired boy,  
And left her to her lot of loneliness.

Should Hagar weep ? May slighted woman turn,  
And, as a vine the oak hath shaken off,  
Bend lightly to her leaning trust again ?

O no! by all her loveliness—by all  
 That makes life poetry and beauty, no!  
 Make her a slave; steal from her rosy cheek  
 By needless jealousies; let the last star  
 Leave her a watcher by your couch of pain;  
 Wrong her by petulance, suspicion, all  
 That makes her cup a bitterness—(yet give  
 One evidence of love, and earth has not  
 An emblem of devotedness like hers.)  
 But oh! estrange her once—it boots not how—  
 By wrong or silence, any thing that tells  
 A change has come upon your tenderness,—  
 And there is not a high thing out of heaven  
 Her pride o'ermastereth not.

She went her way with a strong step and slow;  
 Her pressed lip arched, and her clear eye undimmed,  
 As it had been a diamond, and her form  
 Borne proudly up, as if her heart breathed through.  
 Her child kept on in silence, though she pressed  
 His hand till it was pained: for he had caught,  
 As I have said, her spirit, and the seed  
 Of a stern nation had been breathed upon.

The morning past, and Asia's sun rode up  
In the clear heaven, (and every beam was heat.)  
The cattle of the hills were in the shade,  
And the bright plumage of the Orient lay  
On beating bosoms in her spicy trees.  
It was an hour of rest; but Hagar found  
No shelter in the wilderness, and on  
She kept her weary way, until the boy  
Hung down his head, and opened his parched lips  
For water; but she could not give it him.  
She laid him down beneath the sultry sky,—  
For it was better than the close, hot breath  
Of the thick pines,—and tried to comfort him;  
But he was sore athirst, and his blue eyes,  
Were dim and bloodshot, and he could not know  
Why God denied him water in the wild.  
She sat a little longer, and he grew  
Ghastly and faint, as if he would have died.  
It was too much for her. She lifted him,  
And bore him farther on, and laid his head  
Beneath the shadow of a desert shrub;  
And, shrouding up her face, she went away,  
And sat to watch, where he could see her not,

Till he should die; and, watching him, she mourned:—

“ God stay thee in thine agony, my boy !  
 I cannot see thee die ; I cannot brook  
     Upon thy brow to look,  
 And see death settle on my cradle joy.  
 How have I drunk the light of thy blue eye !  
     And could I see thee die ?

“ I did not dream of this when thou wast straying,  
 Like an unbound gazelle, among the flowers ;  
     Or wearing rosy hours,  
 By the rich gush of water-sources playing,  
 Then sinking weary to thy smiling sleep,  
     So beautiful and deep.

“ Oh no ! and when I watched by thee the while,  
 And saw thy bright lip curling in thy dream,  
     And thought of the dark stream  
 In my own land of Egypt, the far Nile,  
 How prayed I that my father’s land might be  
     An heritage for thee !

“ And now the grave for its cold breast hath won thee,  
And thy white, delicate limbs the earth will press ;  
    And oh ! my last caress  
Must feel thee cold, for a chill hand is on thee.  
How can I leave my boy, so pillowed there  
    Upon his clustering hair ! ”

She stood beside the well her God had given  
To gush in that deep wilderness, and bathed  
The forehead of her child (until he laughed  
In his reviving happiness,) and lisp'd  
His infant thought of gladness at the sight  
Of the cool plashing of his mother's hand.

## THE WIDOW OF NAIN.\*

THE Roman sentinel stood helmed and tall  
Beside the gate of Nain. The busy tread  
Of comers to the city mart was done,  
For it was almost noon, and a dead heat  
Quiver'd upon the fine and sleeping dust,  
And the cold snake crept panting from the wall,  
And bask'd his scaly circles in the sun.  
Upon his spear the soldier lean'd, and kept  
His idle watch, and, as his drowsy dream  
Was broken by the solitary foot  
Of some poor mendicant, he rais'd his head  
To curse him for a tributary Jew,  
And slumberously dozed on.

\* Luke, chap. vii.



'Twas now high noon.

The dull, low murmur of a funeral  
Went through the city—the sad sound of feet  
Unmix'd with voices—and the sentinel  
Shook off his slumber, and gazed earnestly  
Up the wide street along whose pavéd way  
The silent throng crept slowly. They came on,  
Bearing a body heavily on its bier,  
And by the crowd that in the burning sun  
Walk'd with forgetful sadness, 'twas of one  
Mourn'd with uncommon sorrow. The broad gate  
Swung on its hinges, and the Roman bent  
His spear-point downwards as the bearers past  
Bending beneath their burthen. There was one—  
Only one mourner. Close behind the bier  
Crumpling the pall up in her wither'd hands,  
Follow'd an aged woman. Her short steps  
Falter'd with weakness, and a broken moan  
Fell from her lips, thicken'd convulsively  
As her heart bled afresh. The pitying crowd  
Follow'd apart, but no one spoke to her.  
She had no kinsmen. She had lived alone—  
A widow with one son. He was her all—

The only tie she had in the wide world—  
And he was dead. They could not comfort her.

Jesus drew near to Nain as from the gate  
The funeral came forth. His lips were pale  
With the noon's sultry heat. The beaded sweat  
Stood thickly on his brow, and on the worn  
And simple lachets of his sandals lay  
Thick the white dust of travel. He had come  
Since sunrise from Capernaum, staying not  
To wet his lips by green Bethsaida's pool,  
Nor wash his feet in Kishon's silver springs,  
Nor turn him southward upon Tabor's side  
To catch Gilboa's light and spicy breeze.  
Genesareth stood cool upon the East,  
Fast by the sea of Galilee, and there  
The weary traveller might bide till eve,  
And on the alders of Bethulia's plains  
The grapes of Palestine hung ripe and wild,  
Yet turn'd he not aside, but gazing on  
From every swelling mount, he saw afar  
Amid the hills the humble spires of Nain,  
The place of his next errand, and the path

Touch'd not Bethulia, and a league away  
Upon the East lay pleasant Galilee.

Forth from the city-gate the pitying crowd  
Follow'd the stricken mourner. They came near  
The place of burial, and, with straining hands,  
Closer upon her breast she clasp'd the pall,  
And with a gasping sob, quick as a child's,  
And an inquiring wildness flashing through  
The thin, gray lashes of her fever'd eyes,  
She came where Jesus stood beside the way.  
He look'd upon her, and his heart was moved.  
"Weep not!" he said, and, as they stay'd the bier,  
And at his bidding laid it at his feet,  
He gently drew the pall from out her grasp  
And laid it back in silence from the dead.  
With troubled wonder the mute throng drew near,  
And gaz'd on his calm looks. A minute's space  
He stood and pray'd. Then taking the cold hand  
He said, "Arise!" And instantly the breast  
Heav'd in its cerements, and a sudden flush  
Ran through the lines of the divided lips,

And, with a murmur of his mother's name,  
He trembled and sat upright in his shroud.  
And, while the mourner hung upon his neck,  
Jesus went calmly on his way to Nain.

## DAWN.

---

"That line I learned not in the old sad song."

CHARLES LAMB.

---

THROW up the window! 'Tis a morn for life  
 In its most subtle luxury. The air  
 Is like a breathing from a rarer world ;  
 And the south wind is like a gentle friend,  
 Parting the hair so softly on my brow.  
 It has come over gardens, and the flowers  
 That kissed it are betrayed ; for as it parts,  
 With its invisible fingers, my loose hair,  
 I know it has been trifling with the rose,  
 And stooping to the violet. There is joy  
 For all God's creatures in it. The wet leaves

Are stirring at its touch, and birds are singing  
As if to breathe were music, and the grass  
Sends up its modest odor with the dew,  
Like the small tribute of humility.

I had awoke from an unpleasant dream,  
And light was welcome to me. I looked out  
To feel the common air, and when the breath  
Of the delicious morning met my brow  
Cooling its fever, and the pleasant sun  
Shone on familiar objects, it was like  
The feeling of the captive who comes forth  
From darkness to the cheerful light of day.  
Oh! could we wake from sorrow; were it all  
A troubled dream like this, to cast aside  
Like an untimely garment with the morn;  
Could the long fever of the heart be cooled  
By a sweet breath from nature; or the gloom  
Of a bereaved affection pass away  
With looking on the lively tint of flowers—  
How lightly were the spirit reconciled,  
To make this beautiful, bright world its home!

## SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

(A PICTURE.)  

---

I LOVE to look on a scene like this,  
Of wild and careless play,  
And persuade myself that I am not old,  
And my locks are not yet gray ;  
For it stirs the blood in an old man's heart,  
And makes his pulses fly,  
To catch the thrill of a happy voice,  
And the light of a pleasant eye.

I have walked the world for fourscore years ;  
And they say that I am old,  
And my heart is ripe for the reaper, Death,  
And my years are well nigh told.

It is very true ; it is very true ;  
I'm old, and " I 'hide my time :"  
But my heart will leap at a scene like this  
And I half renew my prime.

Play on, play on ; I am with you there,  
In the midst of your merry ring ;  
I can feel the thrill of the daring jump,  
And rush of the breathless swing,  
I hide with you in the fragrant hay,  
And I whoop the smothered call,  
And my feet slip up on the seedy floor,  
And I care not for the fall.

I am willing to die when my time shall come,  
And I shall be glad to go ;  
For the world at best is a weary place,  
And my pulse is getting low ;  
But the grave is dark, and the heart will fail  
In treading its gloomy way ;  
And it wiles my heart from its dreariness,  
To see the young so gay.



A CHILD'S FIRST IMPRESSION OF A STAR.

---

SHE had been told that God made all the stars  
That twinkled up in heaven, and now she stood  
Watching the coming of the twilight on,  
As if it were a new and perfect world,  
And this were its first eve. She stood alone  
By the low window, with the silken lash  
Of her soft eye upraised, and her sweet mouth  
Half parted with the new and strange delight  
Of beauty that she could not comprehend,  
And had not seen before. The purple folds  
Of the low sunset clouds, and the blue sky  
That looked so still and delicate above,  
Filled her young heart with gladness, and the eve  
Stole on with its deep shadows, and she still

Stood looking at the west with that half-smile,  
As if a pleasant thought were at her heart.  
Presently, in the edge of the last tint  
Of sunset, where the blue was melted in  
To the faint golden mellowness, a star  
Stood suddenly. A laugh of wild delight  
Burst from her lips, and putting up her hands,  
Her simple thought broke forth expressively—  
“Father, dear father, God has made a star!”

MAY.

---

On the merry May has pleasant hours,  
And dreamily they glide,  
As if they floated like the leaves  
Upon a silver tide.

The trees are full of crimson buds,  
And the woods are full of birds,  
And the waters flow to music  
Like a tune with pleasant words.

The verdure of the meadow-land  
Is creeping to the hills,  
The sweet, blue-bosom'd violets  
Are blooming by the rills ;

The lilac has a load of balm  
For every wind that stirs,  
And the larch stands green and beautiful  
Amid the sombre firs.

There's perfume upon every wind—  
Music in every tree—  
Dews for the moisture-loving flowers—  
Sweets for the sucking bee ;  
The sick come forth for the healing breeze,  
The young are gathering flowers ;  
And life is a tale of poetry,  
That is told by golden hours.

If 'tis not true philosophy,  
That the spirit when set free  
Still lingers about its olden home,  
In the flower and the tree,  
It is very strange that our pulses thrill  
At the tint of a voiceless thing,  
And our hearts yearn so with tenderness  
In the beautiful time of Spring.

ON WITNESSING A BAPTISM.

---

SHE stood up in the meekness of a heart  
Resting on God, and held her fair young child  
Upon her bosom, with its gentle eyes  
Folded in sleep, as if its soul had gone  
To whisper the baptismal vow in heaven.  
The prayer went up devoutly, and the lips  
Of the good man glowed fervently with faith  
That it would be, even as he had pray'd,  
And the sweet child be gather'd to the fold  
Of Jesus. As the holy words went on  
Her lips mov'd silently, and tears, fast tears,  
Stole from beneath her lashes, and upon  
The forehead of the beautiful child lay soft  
With the baptismal water. Then I thought

That, to the eye of God, that mother's tears  
Would be a deeper covenant, which sin  
And the temptations of the world, and death,  
Would leave unbroken, and that she would know  
In the clear light of heaven, how very strong  
The prayer which press'd them from her heart had  
    been  
In leading its young spirit up to God.

THE ANNOYER.

---

“Common as light is love,  
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.”

SHELLEY.

---

Love knoweth every form of air,  
And every shape of earth,  
And comes, unbidden, everywhere,  
Like thought's mysterious birth.  
The moonlit sea and the sunset sky  
Are written with Love's words,  
And you hear his voice unceasingly,  
Like song in the time of birds.

He peeps into the warrior's heart

From the tip of a stooping plume,  
And the serried spears, and the many men  
    May not deny him room.  
He'll come to his tent in the weary night,  
    And be busy in his dream ;  
And he'll float to his eye in morning light  
    Like a fay on a silver beam.

He hears the sound of the hunter's gun,  
    And rides on the echo back,  
And sighs in his ear, like a stirring leaf,  
    And flits in his woodland track.  
The shade of the wood, and the sheen of the river  
    The cloud, and the open sky—  
He will haunt them all with his subtle quiver,  
    Like the light of your very eye.

The fisher hangs over the leaning boat,  
    And ponders the silver sea,  
For Love is under the surface hid,  
    And a spell of thought has he,  
He heaves the wave like a bosom sweet,  
And speaks in the ripple low,



Till the bait is gone from the crafty line,  
And the hook hangs bare below.

He blurs the print of the scholar's book,  
And intrudes in the maiden's prayer,  
And profanes the cell of the holy man,  
In the shape of a lady fair.

In the darkest night, and the bright daylight,  
In earth, and sea, and sky,  
In every home of human thought,  
Will love be lurking nigh.

## ROARING BROOK.

(A PASSAGE OF SCENERY IN CONNECTICUT.)

---

It was a mountain stream that with the leap  
Of its impatient waters had worn out  
A channel in the rock, and wash'd away  
The earth that had upheld the tall old trees,  
Till it was darken'd with the shadowy arch  
Of the o'er-leaning branches. Here and there  
It loiter'd in a broad and limpid pool  
That circled round demurely, and anon  
Sprung violently over where the rock  
Fell suddenly, and bore its bubbles on,  
Till they were broken by the hanging moss,  
As anger with a gentle word grows calm.  
In spring-time, when the snows were coming down,

And in the flooding of the Autumn rains,  
No foot might enter there—but in the hot  
And thirsty summer, when the fountains slept,  
You could go up its channel in the shade,  
To the far sources, with a brow as cool  
As in the grotto of the anchorite.  
Here when an idle student have I come,  
And in a hollow of the rock lain down  
And mus'd until the eventide, or read  
Some fine old poet till my nook became  
A haunt of faery, or the busy flow  
Of water to my spell-bewilder'd ear  
Seem'd like the din of some gay tournament.  
Pleasant have been such hours, and tho' the wise  
Have said that I was indolent, and they  
Who taught me have reprov'd me that I play'd  
The truant in the leafy month of June,  
I deem it true philosophy in him  
Whose path is in the rude and busy world,  
To loiter with these wayside comforters.

## LINES ON THE NEW YEAR.

JANUARY 1, 1825.  

---

FLEETLY hath past the year. The seasons came  
Duly as they are wont—the gentle Spring,  
And the delicious Summer, and the cool,  
Rich Autumn, with the nodding of the grain,  
And Winter, like an old and hoary man,  
Frosty and stiff—and so are chronicled—  
We have found beauty in the new green leaf,  
And in the first blown violets ; we have drunk  
Cool water from the rock, and in the shade  
Sunk to the noon-tide slumber ;—we have eat  
The mellow fruitage of the bending tree,  
And girded to our pleasant wanderings  
When the cool wind came freshly from the hills ;

And when the tinting of the Autumn leaves  
Had faded from its glory, we have sat  
By the good fires of Winter, and rejoiced  
Over the fulness of the gathered sheaf.  
"God hath been good to us!" 'Tis He whose hand  
Moulded the sunny hills, and hollowed out  
The shelter of the valleys, and doth keep  
The fountains in their secret places cool ;  
And it is He who leadeth up the sun  
And ordereth the starry influences,  
And tempereth the keenness of the frost—  
And therefore, in the plenty of the feast,  
And in the lifting of the cup, let HIM  
Have praises for the well completed year.

## LINES ON THE NEW YEAR.

JANUARY 1, 1826.

---

WINTER is come again. The sweet south-west  
Is a forgotten wind, and the strong earth  
Has laid aside its mantle to be bound  
By the frost fetter. There is not a sound,  
Save of the skaiter's heel, and there is laid  
An icy finger on the lip of streams,  
And the clear icicle hangs cold and still,  
And the snow-fall is noiseless as a thought,  
Spring has a rushing sound, and Summer sends  
Many sweet voices with its odors out,  
And Autumn rustleth its decaying robe  
With a complaining whisper. Winter's dumb!  
God made his ministry a silent one,

And he has given him a foot of steel  
And an unlovely aspect, and a breath  
Sharp to the senses—and we know that He  
Tempereth well, and hath a meaning hid  
Under the shadow of his hand. Look up!  
And it shall be interpreted. Your home  
Hath a temptation now. There is no voice  
Of waters with beguiling for your ear,  
And the cool forest and the meadows green  
Witch not your feet away; and in the dells  
There are no violets, and upon the hills  
There are no sunny places to lie down.  
You must go in, and by your cheerful fire  
Wait for the offices of love, and hear  
Accents of human tenderness, and feast  
Your eye upon the beauty of the young.  
It is a season for the quiet thought,  
And the still reckoning with thyself. The year  
Gives back the spirits of its dead, and time  
Whispers the history of its vanished hours;  
And the heart, calling its affections up,  
Counteth its wasted treasure. Life stands still

And settles like a fountain, and the eye  
Sees clearly through its depths, and noteth all  
That stirred its troubled waters. It is well  
That Winter with the dying year should come!



ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG GIRL.

---

'Tis difficult to feel that she is dead.  
Her presence, like the shadow of a wing  
That is just lessening in the upper sky,  
Lingers upon us. We can hear her voice,  
And for her step we listen, and the eye  
Looks for her wonted coming with a strange,  
Forgetful earnestness. We cannot feel  
That she will no more come—that from her cheek  
The delicate flush has faded, and the light  
Dead in her soft dark eye, and on her lip,  
That was so exquisitely pure, the dew  
Of the damp grave has fallen! Who, so lov'd,  
Is left among the living? Who hath walk'd  
The world with such a winning loveliness,

And on its bright brief journey, gather'd up  
Such treasures of affection ? She was lov'd  
Only as idols are. She was the pride  
Of her familiar sphere—the daily joy  
Of all who on her gracefulness might gaze,  
And in the light and music of her way,  
Have a companion's portion. Who could feel  
While looking upon beauty such as hers,  
That it would ever perish ! It is like  
The melting of a star into the sky  
While you are gazing on it, or a dream  
In its most ravishing sweetness rudely broken.

## ANDRE'S REQUEST TO WASHINGTON.

---

It is not the fear of death  
 That damps my brow  
 It is not for another breath  
 I ask thee now ;  
 I can die with a lip unstirr'd  
 And a quiet heart—  
 Let but this prayer be heard  
 Ere I depart.

I can give up my mother's look—  
 My sister's kiss ;  
 I can think of love—yet brook  
 A death like this !  
 I can give up the young fame

I burn'd to win—  
All—but the spotless name  
I glory in.

Thine is the power to give,  
Thine to deny,  
Joy for the hour I live—  
Calmness to die.  
By all the brave should cherish,  
By my dying breath,  
I ask that I may perish  
By a soldier's death!

SONNET—WINTER.

---

THE frozen ground looks gray. 'Twill shut the snow  
Out from its bosom, and the flakes will fall  
Softly, and lie upon it. The hushed flow  
Of the ice-covered waters, and the call  
Of the cold driver to his oxen slow,  
And the complaining of the gust, are all  
That I can hear of music—would that I  
With the green summer like a leaf might die!  
So will a man grow gray, and on his head  
The snow of years lie visibly, and so  
Will come a frost when his green years have fled  
And his chilled pulses sluggishly will flow,  
And his deep voice be shaken—would that I  
In the green summer of my youth might die!

## SONNET.

STORM had been on the hills. The day had worn

As if a sleep upon the hours had crept;

And the dark clouds that gather'd at the morn

In dull, impenetrable masses slept,

And the wet leaves hung droopingly, and all

Was like the mournful aspect of a pall.

Suddenly on the horizon's edge a blue

And delicate line, as of a pencil, lay,

And as it wider and intenser grew,

The darkness removed silently away,

And, with the splendor of a God, broke through

The perfect glory of departing day—

So, when his stormy pilgrimage is o'er,

Will light upon the dying Christian pour.

SONNET.

---

BEAUTIFUL robin! with thy feathers red  
Contrasting sweetly with the soft green tree,  
Making thy little flights as thou art led  
By things that tempt a simple one like thee—  
I would that thou couldst warble me to tears  
As lightly as the birds of other years!  
Idly to lie beneath an April sun,  
Pressing the perfume from the tender grass;  
To watch a joyous rivulet leap on  
With the clear tinkle of a music glass,  
And as I saw the early robin pass,  
To hear him thro' his little compass run—  
Hath been a joy that I shall no more know  
Before I to my better portion go.

THE TABLE OF EMERALD.

---

"Deep, it is said, under yonder pyramid, has for ages lain concealed the Table of Emerald, on which the thrice-great Hermes engraved before the flood the secret of alchemy that gives gold at will."

MOORE'S EPICUREAN.

---

THAT Emerald vast of the Pyramid—  
 Were I where it is laid,  
 I would ask no king for his weary crown,  
 As its mystic words were said.  
 The pomp of wealth, the show of power,  
 In vain for me would shine,  
 And nought that brings the mind a care,  
 Would win bright gold of mine.



Would I feast all day—revel all night—

Laugh with a secret sadness ?

Would I sleep away the breezy morn,

And wake to the goblet's madness ?

Would I spend no time and no golden ore

For the wisdom that sages know ?

Would I run to waste with a human mind

To its holy trust untrue ?

Oh! knew I the depth of that emerald spell,

And had I the gold it brings,

I would never load with a mocking joy

My spirit's mounting wings.

I would bind no wreath to my brow to day

That would leave a stain to-morrow,

Nor drink a draught of joy to-night,

That would change with morn to sorrow.

But, oh, I would burst this chain of care,

And be spirit and fancy-free ;

My mind should range where it longs to go

And the limitless wind outflee.

I would place my foot on my heaps of ore

To mount to Wisdom's throne,  
 And buy, with the wealth of an Indian mine,  
 To be left, of care, alone!

Ambition! my lip would laugh to scorn  
 Thy robe and thy gleaming sword!  
 I would follow sooner a woman's eye,  
 Or a child's imperfect word;  
 But come with the glory of human thought,  
 And the light of the scholar's brow,  
 And my heart shall be taught forgetfulness,  
 And alone at thine altar bow.

There was one mild eye—there was one deep tone—  
 They were dear to this heart of mine!  
 Dearer to me was that mild blue eye  
 Than the lamp on wisdom's shrine.  
 My soul brought up from its deepest cell  
 The sum of its earthly love;  
 But it could not buy her wing from Heaven,  
 And she flew to her rest above.

That first deep love I have taken back

In my rayless breast to hide ;  
With the tear it brought for a burning seal  
    'Twill there forever bide.  
I may stretch on now to another goal,  
    I may feed my thoughts of flame—  
The tie is broken that kept me back,  
    And my mind speeds on—for fame !

But, alas ! I am dreaming as if I knew  
    The spell of the tablet green !  
I forget how like to a broken reed  
    Is the hope on which I lean.  
There is nothing true of my idle dream  
    But the wreck of my early love,  
And my mind is coin'd for my daily bread,  
    And how can it soar above ?

THE END.

Ann Street, June, 1837.

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