

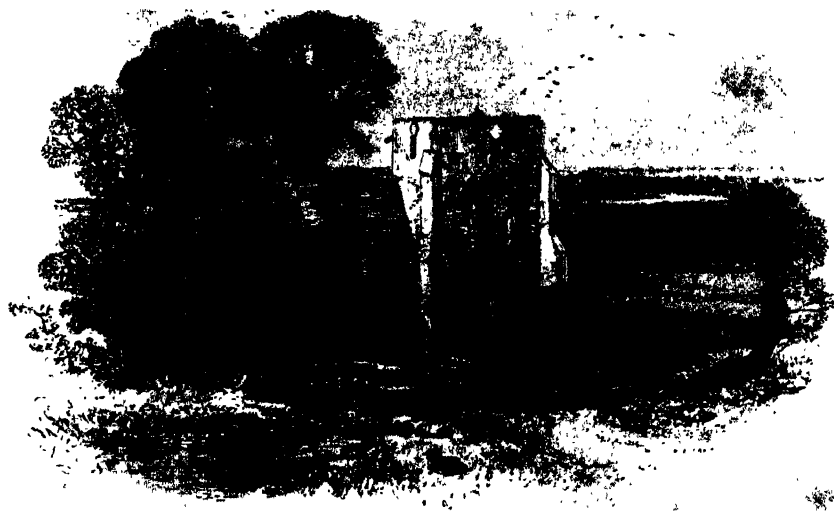
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SUNDAY MORNING.

SABBATH BELLS

Chimed by the Poets.



"Sundays observe; think, when the Bells do chime
"His angels' music,"

George Herbert.

ILLUSTRATED BY BIRKET FOSTER.

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SABBATH SONNET,

COMPOSED BY MRS. HEMANS, A FEW DAYS BEFORE HER DEATH,
AND DICTATED TO HER BROTHER.



OW many blessed groups this hour are bending,
Thro' England's primrose meadow paths, their way
Towards spire and tower, 'midst shadowy elms
ascending,

Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallow'd day!
The halls, from old heroic ages grey,
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard blooms the soft winds play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream. I may not tread
With them those pathways—to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound; yet, O my God! I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath peace hath fill'd
My chasten'd heart, and all its throbbings still'd
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness!

The thanks of the Editor are due to Mr. John Taylor, the present proprietor of the copyright of "Clare's Poems," who has kindly allowed several extracts to be included in this volume; and to Messrs. Rivington, who possess the right to Bishop Mant's Poetical Works, for the same permission; to Mr. Birket Foster, for the beautiful drawings with which the work is illustrated; and to Mr. Edmund Evans, for the great care he has taken in engraving them on wood and printing them in colours, and for the excellence of the typography.

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THE SABBATH.



OW still the morning of the hallow'd day!
Mute is the voice of rural labour, hush'd
The plough-boy's whistle, and the milk-maid's song.
The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath

Of tedded grass, mingled with fading flowers,
That yester-morn bloom'd waving in the breeze.
Sounds the most faint attract the ear,—the hum
Of early bee, the trickling of the dew,
The distant bleating midway up the hill.
Calmness sits throned on yon unmoving cloud.
To him who wanders o'er the upland leas,
The blackbird's note comes mellow from the dale,
And sweeter from the sky the gladsome lark
Warbles his heaven-tuned song; the lulling brook
Murmurs more gently down the deep-worn glen;
While from yon lowly roof, whose curling smoke
O'ermounts the mist, is heard, at intervals,
The voice of psalms—the simple song of praise.

With dove-like wings, Peace o'er yon village broods:
The dizzying mill-wheel rests; the anvil's din
Hath ceased; all, all around is quietness.
Less fearful on this day, the limping hare
Stops, and looks back, and stops, and looks on man,
Her deadliest foe. The toil-worn horse, set free,
Unheedful of the pasture, roams at large;
And, as his stiff unwieldy bulk he rolls,
His iron-arm'd hoofs gleam in the morning ray.

But chiefly man the day of rest enjoys.
Hail, SABBATH! thee I hail, the poor man's day.
On other days, the man of toil is doom'd
To get his joyless bread, lonely; the ground
Both seat and board; screen'd from the winter's cold
And summer's heat, by neighbouring hedge or tree;

But on this day, embosom'd in his home,
He shares the frugal meal with those he loves ;
With those he loves he shares the heart-felt joy
Of giving thanks to God,—not thanks of form,
A word and a grimace, but reverently,
With cover'd face and upward earnest eye:

Hail, SABBATH ! thee I hail, the poor man's day :
The pale mechanic now has leave to breathe
The morning air, pure from the city's smoke ;
While, wandering slowly up the river side,
He meditates on HIM, whose power he marks
In each green tree that proudly spreads the bough,
As in the tiny dew-bent flowers that bloom
Around its roots ; and while he thus surveys,
With elevated joy, each rural charm,
He hopes, yet fears presumption in the hope,
That Heaven may be one SABBATH without end.

But now his steps a welcome sound recalls :
Solemn the knell, from yonder ancient pile,
Fills all the air, inspiring joyful awe :
Slowly the throng moves o'er the tomb-paved ground :
The aged man, the bowed down, the blind
Led by the thoughtless boy, and he who breathes
With pain, and eyes the new-made grave well-pleased ;
These, mingled with the young, the gay, approach
The house of God ; these, spite of all their ills,
A glow of gladness feel ; with silent praise
They enter in.

SUNDAY.



H day most calm, most bright,
 The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
 The indorsement of supreme delight,
 Writ by a Friend, and with His blood ;
 The couch of time ; care's balm and bay ;
 The week were dark, but for thy light :
 Thy torch doth show the way.

The other days and thou
 Make up one man ; whose face thou art,
 Knocking at Heaven with thy brow :
 The working-days are the back part ;
 The burden of the week lies there,
 Making the whole to stoop and bow,
 Till thy release appear.

Man had straight forward gone
 To endless death ; but thou dost pull
 And turn us round to look on One,
 Whom, if we were not very dull,
 We could not choose but look on still ;
 Since there is no place so alone,
 The which He doth not fill.

Sundays the pillars are,
On which Heaven's palace arched lies :
The other days fill up the spare
And hollow room with vanities.
They are the fruitful beds and borders
In God's rich garden : that is bare
Which parts their ranks and orders.

The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal glorious King.
On Sunday Heaven's gate stands ope ;
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope !

This day my Saviour rose,
And did enclose this light for His :
That, as each beast his manger knows,
Man might not of his fodder miss.
Christ hath took in this piece of ground,
And made a garden there for those
Who want herbs for their wound.

The rest of our creation
Our great Redeemer did remove
With the same shake, which at His passion,
Did the earth and all things with it move.
As Samson bore the doors away,
Christ's hands, though nail'd, wrought our salvation,
And did unhinge that day.

SABBATH MORNING.

The brightness of that day
We sullied by our foul offence :
Wherefore that robe we cast away,
Having a new at His expense :
Whose drops of blood paid the full price,
That was required to make us gay,
And fit for Paradise.

Thou art a day of mirth :
And where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth :
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
Fly hand in hand to Heaven !

GEORGE HERBERT.

SABBATH MORNING.



OW beautiful the Sunday morn, amid
The quietude of Nature ! Spreading trees
And the simplicity of rural life
Best harmonize with its divine intent ;
And more than pompous cities, or the throngs
That flow unceasing through their crowded streets,

Welcome its silent spirit. Here, and there,
A rustic household, toward the village church
Wind through green lanes, where still the dewy grass
Reserves its diamonds for them. Happy sire,
And peaceful grandsire, with his hoary hair,



And joyous children, their fresh, ruddy brows
Composed to serious thought, and even the babe
In its young innocence, a wondering guest,
Wend forth, in blessed company, to pay
Their vows to Him, who heeds "the pure in heart."

SIGOURNEY.

A SPRING SABBATH WALK



H! how I love, with melted soul, to leave
 The house of prayer, and wander in the fields
 Alone! What though the opening spring be chill!
 Although the lark, check'd in his airy path,
 Eke out his song, perch'd on the fallow clod
 That still o'ertops the blade! Although no branch
 Have spread its foliage, save the willow wand,
 That dips its pale leaves in the swollen stream!
 What though the clouds oft lower! Their threats but end
 In sunny showers, that scarcely fill the folds
 Of moss-couch'd violet, or interrupt
 The merle's dulcet pipe,—melodious bird!
 He, hid behind the milk-white sloe-thorn spray,
 (Whose carly flowers anticipate the leaf,)
 Welcomes the time of buds, the infant year.

Sweet is the sunny nook, to which my steps
 Have brought me, hardly conscious where I roam'd,
 Unheeding where,—so lovely, all around,
 The works of GOD, array'd in vernal smile.

Oft at this season, musing, I prolong
 My devious range, till, sunk from view, the sun

Emblaze, with upward-slanting ray, the breast
 And wing unquivering of the wheeling lark,
 Descending, vocal, from her latest flight ;
 While, disregardful of yon lonely star,—
 The harbinger of chill night's glittering host,—
 Sweet Redbreast, Scotia's Philomela, chaunts,
 In desultory strains, his evening hymn. —

GRAHAME.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.



T is the Sabbath bell, which calls to prayer,
 Even to the House of God, the hallow'd dome,
 Where He who claims it bids His people come,
 To bow before His throne, and serve Him there
 With prayers, and thanks, and praises. Some there are
 Who hold it meet to linger now at home,
 And some o'er fields and the wide hills to roam,
 And worship in the temple of the air!
 For me, not heedless of the lone address,
 Nor slack to greet my Maker on the height,
 By wood, or living stream ; yet not the less
 Seek I His presence in each social rite
 Of His own temple : *that* He deigns to bless,
There still He dwells, and *there* is His delight.

BP. MANT.

ENGLISH CHURCHES.



OW beautiful they stand,
 Those ancient altars of our native land!
 Amid the pasture fields and dark green woods,
 Amid the mountain's cloudy solitudes;
 By rivers broad that rush into the sea;
 By little brooks that, with a lapsing sound,
 Like playful children, run by copse and lea!
 Each in its little plot of holy ground,
 How beautiful they stand,
 Those old grey churches of our native land!

Our lives are all turmoil;
 Our souls are in a weary strife and toil,
 Grasping and straining—tasking nerve and brain,
 Both day and night, for gain!
 We have grown worldly—have made gold our god—
 Have turn'd our hearts away from lowly things;
 We seek not now the wild flower on the sod;
 We seek not snowy-folded angels' wings
 Amid the summer skies—
 For visions come not to polluted eyes!

Yet, blessed quiet fanes!
 Still piety, still poetry remains,

And shall remain, whilst ever on the air
 One chapel-bell calls high and low to prayer,—
 Whilst ever green and sunny churchyards keep
 The dust of our beloved, and tears are shed
 From founts which in the human heart lie deep!
 Something in these aspiring days we need,
 To keep our spirits lowly,
 To set within our hearts sweet thoughts and holy!

And 'tis for this they stand,
 The old grey churches of our native land!
 And even in the gold-corrupted mart,
 In the great city's heart,
 They stand; and chantry dim, and organ sound,
 And stated services of prayer and praise,
 Like to the righteous ten which were not found
 For the polluted city, shall upraise
 Meek faith and love sincere—
 Better in time of need than shield and spear!

L. E. LANDON.

* * * * *



IS sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet
 To hear the Sabbath-bell;
 'Tis sweet to hear them both at once,
 Deep in a woody dell.

COLERIDGE.

A CHURCHYARD SCENE.



OW sweet and solemn, all alone,
 With reverent step, from stone to stone,
 In a small village churchyard lying,
 O'er intervening flowers to move—
 And, as we read the names unknown,
 Of young and old, to judgment gone,
 And hear, in the calm air above,
 Time onward softly flying,
 To meditate, in Christian love,
 Upon the dead and dying!
 Across the silence seem to go
 With dream-like motion, wavery, slow,
 And shrouded in their folds of snow,
 The friends we loved long, long ago!
 Gliding across the sad retreat,
 How beautiful their phantom feet!
 What tenderness is in their eyes,
 Turn'd where the poor survivor lies,
 'Mid monitory sanctities!
 What years of vanish'd joy are fann'd
 From one uplifting of that hand
 In its white stillness! When the shade
 Doth glimmeringly in sunshine fade
 From our embrace, how dim appears
 This world's life, through a mist of tears!
 Vain hopes! Wild sorrows! Needless fears!



Such is the scene around me now :
A little churchyard, on the brow
Of a green pastoral hill :
Its sylvan village sleeps below,
And faintly, here, is heard the flow
Of Woodburn's summer rill ;
A place where all things mournful meet,
And yet, the sweetest of the sweet !—
The stillest of the still !
With what a pensive beauty fall,
Across the mossy, mouldering wall,

That rose-tree's cluster'd arches ! See,
The robin-redbreast, warily,
Bright through the blossoms, leaves his nest :
Sweet ingrate ! through the winter blest
At the fire-sides of men—but shy
Through all the sunny, summer hours—
He hides himself among the flowers
In his own wild festivity.
What lulling sound, and shadow cool,
Hangs half the darken'd churchyard o'er,
From thy green depth, so beautiful,
Thou gorgeous sycamore !
Oft hath the lonely wine and bread
Been bless'd beneath thy murmuring tent,
Where many a bright and hoary head
Bow'd at the awful sacrament.
Now all beneath the turf are laid,
On which they sat, and sang, and pray'd.
Alone that consecrated tree
Ascends the tapering spire, that seems
To lift the soul up silently
To Heaven with all its dreams !—
While in the belfry, deep and low,
From his heaved bosom's purple gleams
The dove's continuous murmurs flow,
A dirge-like song, half bliss, half woe,—
The voice so lonely seems !

JOHN WILSON.

A SUMMER SABBATH WALK. -



DELIGHTFUL is this loneliness; it calms
 My heart; pleasant the cool beneath these elms,
 That throw across the stream a moveless shade.
 Here Nature in her mid-noon whisper speaks:

How peaceful every sound!—the ring-dove's plaint,
 Moan'd from the twilight centre of the grove,
 While every other woodland lay is mute,
 Save when the wren flits from her down-coved nest,
 And from the root-sprig trills her ditty clear,—
 The grasshopper's oft-pausing chirp,—the buzz,
 Angrily shrill, of moss-entangled bee,
 That, soon as loosed, booms with full twang away,—
 The sudden rushing of the minnow shoal,
 Scared from the shallows by my passing tread.

Grateful the breeze
 That fans my throbbing temples! smiles the plain
 Spread wide below: how sweet the placid view!
 But oh! more sweet the thought, heart-soothing thought,
 That thousands, and ten thousands of the sons
 Of toil, partake this day the common joy
 Of rest, of peace, of viewing hill and dale,
 Of breathing in the silence of the woods,

And blessing Him, who gave the Sabbath day.
Yes, my heart flutters with a freer throb,
To think that now the townsman wanders forth
Among the fields and meadows, to enjoy
The coolness of the day's decline ; to see
His children sport around, and simply pull
The flower and weed promiscuous, as a boon,
Which proudly in his breast they smiling fix.

GRAHAME.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.



MORNING and evening brings
Its holy office ; and the Sabbath-bell,
That over wood and wild and mountain dell
Wanders so far, chasing all thoughts unholy,
With sounds most musical, most melancholy,
Not on his ear is lost.—Then he pursues
The pathway leading through the aged yews,
Nor unattended, and when all are there,
Pours out his spirit in the House of Prayer.

ROGERS.

THE SABBATH.



T' spell has o'er the populous city past!
The wonted current of its life is stay'd:
Its sports, its gainful schemes, are earthward cast,
As though their vileness were at once display'd;
The roar of trade has ceased, and on the air
Come holy songs and solemn sounds of prayer.

Far spreads the charm! from every hamlet spire
A note of rest and heavenward thought is peal'd:
By his calm hearth reclines the peasant sire;
The toil-worn steed basks in the breezy field.
Within, without, through farm and cottage blest,
'Tis one bright day of gladness and of rest.

Down from the mountain dwellings, while the dew
Shines on the heath-bells, and the fern is bending
In the fresh breeze, in festive garbs I view
Childhood and age and buoyant youth descending.
God! who has piled Thy wonders round their home,
'Tis in their love they to Thy temple come.

A stately ship speeds o'er the mighty main—
Oh, many a league from our own happy land :
Yet from its heart ascends the choral strain ;
For there its little isolated band,
Amid the ocean desert's awful roar,
Praise Him whose love links shore to distant shore.

O'er palmy woods where summer radiance falls,
In the glad islands of the Indian main,
What thronging crowds the missionary calls
To raise to Heaven the Christian's glorious strain.
Lo ! where, engirt by children of the sun,
Stands the white man, and counts his victories won.

In the fierce deserts of a distant zone,
'Mid savage nations terrible and stern,
A lonely atom, sever'd from his own,
The traveller wends, death or renown to earn.
Parch'd, fasting, wearied, verging to despair,
He kneels, he prays—hope kindles in his prayer.

O'er the wide world, blest day, thine influence flies ;
Rest o'er the sufferer spreads her balmy wings ;
Love wakes, joy dawns, praise fills the listening skies ;
Th' expanding heart from earth's enchantment springs :
Heaven for one day withdraws its ancient ban,
Unbars its gates, and dwells once more with man.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

SUNDAY WALKS.



OW fond the rustic's ear at leisure dwells
On the soft soundings of his village bells,
As on a Sunday morning at his ease
He takes his rambles, just as fancies please,
Down narrow balks that intersect the fields,
Hid in profusion that its produce yields :
Long twining peas, in faintly misted greens ;
And wing'd-leaf multitudes of crowding beans ;
And flighty oatlands of a lighter hue ;
And speary barley bowing down with dew ;
And browning wheat-ear, on its taper stalk,
With gentle breezes bending o'er the balk,
Greeting the parting hand that brushes near
With patting welcomes of a plenteous year.
Or narrow lanes, where cool and gloomy sweet
Hedges above head in an arbour meet,
Meandering down, and resting for a while
Upon a moss-clad molehill or a stile ;
While every scene that on his leisure crowds,
Wind-waving valleys and light passing clouds,
In brighter colours seems to meet the eye,
Than in the bustle of the days gone by.
A peaceful solitude around him creeps,
And Nature seemly o'er her quiet sleeps ;

No noise is heard, save sutherings through the trees
Of brisk wind gushes, or a trembling breeze ;
And song of linnets in the hedge-row thorn,
Twittering their welcomes to the day's return ;
And hum of bees, where labour's doom'd to stray
In ceaseless bustle on his weary way ;
And low of distant cattle here and there,
Seeking the stream, or dropping down to lair ;
And bleat of sheep, and horses' playful neigh,
From rustics' whips, and plough, and waggon free,
Baiting in careless freedom o'er the leas,
Or turn'd to knap each other at their ease.
While 'neath the bank on which he rests his head
The brook mourns dripping o'er its pebbly bed,
And whimpers soothingly a calm serene
O'er the lull'd comforts of a Sunday scene,
He ponders round, and muses with a smile
On thriving produce of his earlier toil ;
What once were kernels from his hopper sown,
Now browning wheat-ears and oat-bunches grown,
And pea-pods swell'd, by blossoms long forsook,
And nearly ready for the scythe and hook :
He pores with wonder on the mighty change
Which suns and showers perform, and thinks it strange ;
And though no philosophic reasoning draws,
His musing marvels home to Nature's Cause ;
A simple feeling in him turns his eye
To where the thin clouds smoke along the sky ;
And there his soul consents the Power must reign
Who rules the year, and shoots the spindling grain,

Lights up the sun, and sprinkles rain below—
The Fount of Nature, whence all causes flow.



Thus much the feeling of his bosom warms,
Nor seeks he farther than his soul informs.

A six-days' prisoner, life's support to earn
From dusty cobwebs and the murky barn,
The weary thresher meets the rest that's given,
And thankful soothes him in the boon of Heaven;
But happier still in Sabbath walks he feels,
With love's sweet pledges poddling at his heels,
That oft divert him with their childish glee,
In fruitless chases after bird and bee;
And, eager gathering every flower they pass
Of yellow lamb-toe and the totter-grass,
Oft whimper round him disappointment's sigh
At sight of blossom that's in bloom too high,
And twitch his sleeve with all their coaxing powers,
To urge his hand to reach the tempting flowers:
Then as he climbs, their eager hopes to crown,
On gate or stile to pull the blossoms down
Of pale hedge-roses straggling wild and tall,
And scrambling woodbines that outgrow them all,
He turns to days when he himself would tease
His tender father for such joys as these,
And smiles with rapture, as he plucks the flowers,
To meet the feelings of those lovely hours,
And blesses Sunday's rest, whose peace at will
Retains a portion of those pleasures still.

But when the duty of the day's expired,
And priest and parish offer what's required,
When godly farmer shuts his book again
To talk of profits from advancing grain,
Short memory keeping what the parson said,
Prayers 'neath his arm, and business in his head;

And, dread of boys, the clerk is left to close
The creaking church-door on its week's repose ;
Then leave me Sunday's remnant to employ
In seeking sweets of solitary joy,
And lessons learning from a simple tongue,
Where Nature preaches in a cricket's song ;
Where every tiny thing that flies and creeps,
Some feeble language owns, its prayer to raise ;
Where all that lives, by noise or silence, keeps
A homely Sabbath in its Maker's praise.

There, free from labour, let my musings stray,
Where footpaths ramble from the public way
In quiet loneliness o'er many a scene,
Through grassy close, or grounds of blossom'd bean ;
Oft-winding balks, where groves of willow spread
Their welcome waving shadows over-head,
And thorns beneath in woodbines often drest,
Inviting strongly in their peace to rest ;
Or wildly left to follow choice at will
O'er many a trackless vale and pathless hill,
Or, Nature's wilderness, o'er heaths of goss,
Each footstep sinking ankle-deep in moss ;
By pleasing interruptions often tied,
A hedge to clamber, or a brook to stride ;
Where no approaching feet or noises rude
Molest the quiet of one's solitude,
Save birds, their song broke by a false alarm,
Through branches fluttering from their fancied harm ;
And cows and sheep with startled low and bleat,
Disturb'd from lair by one's unwelcome feet,—

The all that's met in Sunday's slumbering ease,
That adds to, more than checks, the power to please.
And sweet it is to creep one's blinded way
Where woodland boughs shut out the smiles of day,
Where, hemm'd in glooms that scarce give leave to spy
A passing cloud or patch of purple sky,
We track, half hidden from the world besides,
Sweet hermit-nature that in woodlands hides ;
Where nameless flowers that never meet the sun,
Like bashful modesty, the sight to shun,
Bud in their snug retreat, and bloom, and die,
Without one notice of a passing eye ;
There, while I drop me in the woody waste,
'Neath arbours Nature fashions to her taste,
Entwining oak-trees with the ivy's gloom,
And woodbines propping over boughs to bloom,
And scallop'd briony mingling round her bowers,
Whose fine bright leaves make up the want of flowers,—
With Nature's minstrels of the woods let me,
Thou Lord of Sabbaths, add a song to Thee,
An humble offering for the holy day
Which Thou most wise and graciously hast given,
As leisure dropt in labour's rugged way,
To claim a passport with the rest to Heaven.

CLARE.

THE SABBATH.



RESH glides the brook and blows the gale,
 Yet yonder halts the quiet mill;
 The whirring wheel, the rushing sail,
 How motionless and still!

Six days of toil, poor child of Cain,
 Thy strength the slave of Want may be;
 The seventh, thy limbs escape the chain—
 A God hath made thee free!

Ah! tender was the law that gave
 This holy respite to the breast,
 To breathe the gale, to watch the wave,
 And know—the wheel may rest!

But where the waves the gentlest glide,
 What image charms to lift thine eyes?
 The spire reflected on the tide
 Invites thee to the skies.

To teach the soul its nobler worth,
 This rest from mortal toils is given;
 Go, snatch the brief reprieve from earth,
 And pass—a guest to heaven.

They tell thee, in their dreaming school,
Of power from old dominion hurl'd,
When rich and poor, with juster rule,
Shall share the alter'd world.

Alas! since Time itself began,
That fable hath but fool'd the hour;
Each age that ripens power in man,
But subjects man to power.

Yet every day in seven, at least,
One bright republic shall be known;—
Man's world awhile hath surely ceased,
When God proclaims his own!

Six days may Rank divide the poor,
O Dives, from thy banquet-hall,—
The seventh, the Father opes the door,
And holds His feast for all!

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.



THE SABBATH.



DEAR is the hallow'd morn to me,
 When village bells awake the day,
 And, by their sacred minstrelsy,
 Call me from earthly cares away.

And dear to me the winged hour,
 Spent in thy hallow'd courts, O Lord,—
 To feel devotion's soothing power,
 And catch the manna of thy Word.

And dear to me the loud Amen
 Which echoes through the blest abode,
 Which swells, and sinks, and swells again,
 Dies on the walls, but lives to God.

And dear the simple melody,
Sung with the pomp of rustic art,
That holy, heavenly harmony,
The music of a thankful heart.

In secret I have often pray'd,
And still the anxious tear would fall ;
But, on the sacred altar laid,
The fire descends and dries them all.

Oft when the world, with iron hands,
Has bound me in its six days' chain,
This burst them, like the strong man's bands,
And let my spirit loose again.

Then, dear to me the Sabbath morn,
The village bells, the shepherd's voice ;
These oft have found my heart forlorn,
And always bid that heart rejoice.

Go, man of pleasure, strike the lyre,
Of Sabbaths broken sing the charms ;
Ours are the prophet's car of fire,
Which bears us to a Father's arms.

CUNNINGHAM.

THE CHURCHYARD.



HE thought of early death was in my heart,
Of the cold grave, and "dumb forgetfulness;"
And with a weight like lead,
And overwhelming dread,
Mysteriously my spirit did oppress.

And forth I roam'd in that distressful mood,
Abroad into the sultry, sunless day;
All hung with one huge cloud,
That, like a sable shroud,
On Nature's deep sepulchral stillness lay.

Black fell the shadows of the churchyard elms,
(Instinctively my feet had wander'd there,)
And through that awful gloom,
Headstone and altar tomb
Among the dark heaps gleam'd with ghastlier glare.

Death, death was in my heart, as there I stood;
Mine eyes fast fixed on a grass-grown mound,
As though they would descry
The loathsome mystery
Consummating beneath that charnel ground.

Death, death was in my heart.—Methought I felt
A heavy hand that press'd me down below—
And some resistless power
Made me, in that dark hour,
Half long to *be*, where I abhorr'd to *go*.

Then suddenly—albeit no breeze was felt—
Through the tall tree-tops ran a shivering sound—
Forth from the western heaven
Flash'd out a flaming levin,
And one long thunder-peal roll'd echoing round.

One long, long echoing peal, and all was peace—
Cool rain-drops gemm'd the herbage—large and few ;
And that dull vault of lead
Disparting overhead,
Down beam'd an eye of soft celestial blue.

And up towards the heavenly portal sprang
A skylark, scattering off the feathery rain ;
Up, from my very feet—
And oh ! how clear and sweet
Rang through the fields of air his mountain strain !

“ Blithe, blessed creature ! take me there with thee ! ”
I cried in spirit—passionately cried—
But higher still, and higher,
Rang out that living lyre,
As if the bird disdain'd me in its pride.

And I was left below—but now no more
 Plunged in the doleful realms of death and night;
 Up with the skylark's lay
 My soul had wing'd its way,
 To the supernal Source of life and light.

MISS BOWLES.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.



DEAR is the ancient village church, which rears,
 By the lone yew, on lime or elm-girt mound,
 Its modest fabric: dear, 'mid pleasant sound
 Of bells, the grey embattled tower, that wears,
 Of changeful hue, the marks of by-gone years;
 Buttress, and porch, and arch with mazy round
 Of curious fret or shapes fantastic crown'd;
 Tall pinnacles, and mingled window-tiers,
 Norman, or misnamed Gothic. Fairer spot
 Thou givest not, England, to the tasteful eye,
 Nor to the heart more soothing. Blest their lot,
 Knew they their bliss, who own their dwelling nigh
 Such resting-place; there, by the world forgot,
 In life to worship, and, when dead, to lie!

BP. MANT.



HEY pursue the pebbly walk

That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng,
Hand-coupled urchins in restrained talk,
And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,

And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,
And gold-bedizen'd beadle flames along,
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene ;

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

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near
The fair white temple, to the timely call
Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—

Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl,
Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
Of the low porch, and Heaven has won them all.

Hood.

THE CHURCH BELLS.

WHAT varying sounds from yon grey pinnacles
 Sweep o'er the ear, and claim the heart's reply !
 Now the blithe peal of home festivity,
 Natal or nuptial, in full concert swells :
 Now the brisk chime, or voice of alter'd bells,
 Speaks the due hour of social worship nigh :
 And now the last stage of mortality



The deep dull toll with lingering warning tells.
 How much of human life those sounds comprise,—
 Birth, wedded love, God's service, and the tomb !
 Heard not in vain, if thence kind feelings rise,
 Such as befit our being, free from gloom
 Monastic,—prayer that communes with the skies,
 And musings mindful of the final doom.

BP. MANT.

AN AUTUMN SABBATH WALK.



HEN homeward bands their several ways disperse,
I love to linger in the narrow field
Of rest ; to wander round from tomb to tomb,
And think of some who silent sleep below.
Sad sighs the wind, that from those ancient elms
Shakes showers of leaves upon the wither'd grass :
The sere and yellow wreaths, with eddying sweep,
Fill up the furrows 'tween the hillock'd graves.
But list that moan ! 'tis the poor blind man's dog,
His guide for many a day, now come to mourn
The master and the friend—conjunction rare !
A man he was indeed of gentle soul,
Though bred to brave the deep : the lightning's flash
Had dimm'd, not closed, his mild but sightless eyes.
He was a welcome guest through all his range,
(It was not wide :) no dog would bay at him :
Children would run to meet him on his way,
And lead him to a sunny seat, and climb
His knee, and wonder at his oft-told tales.
Then would he teach the elfins how to plait
The rushy cap and crown, or sedgy ship ;
And I have seen him lay his tremulous hand
Upon their heads, while silent moved his lips.
Peace to thy spirit ! that now looks on me,
Perhaps with greater pity than I felt,
To see thee wandering darkling on thy way.

GRAHAME.

SABBATH DAYS.

MODERNIZED FROM "SON-DAYES," IN VAUGHAN'S "SILEX
SCINTILLANS."



YPES of eternal rest—fair buds of bliss,
In heavenly flowers unfolding week by week—
The next world's gladness imaged forth in this—
Days of whose worth the Christian's heart can speak!

Eternity in time—the steps by which
We climb to future ages—lamps that light
Man through his darker days, and thought enrich,
Yielding redemption for the week's dull flight.

Wakeners of prayer in man—his resting bowers
As on he journeys in the narrow way,
Where, Eden-like, Jehovah's walking hours
Are waited for, as in the cool of day.

Days fix'd by God for intercourse with dust,
To raise our thoughts and purify our powers—
Periods appointed to renew our trust—
A gleam of glory after six days' showers!

A milky way, mark'd out through skies else drear
By radiant suns, that warm as well as shine—
A clue, which he who follows knows no fear,
Though briars and thorns around his pathway twine.

Foretastes of heaven on earth—pledges of joy
 Surpassing fancy's flights and fiction's story —
 The preludes of a feast that cannot cloy,
 And the bright out-courts of immortal glory !

BARTON.

* * * * *



OW soft the music of those village bells,
 Falling at intervals upon the ear
 In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
 Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
 Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on !
 With easy force it opens all the cells
 Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard
 A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
 Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
 That in a few short moments I retrace
 (As in a map the voyager his course)
 The windings of my way through many years.

COWPER.

THE BELL.



LOVE the bell that calls the poor to pray,
 Chiming from village church its cheerful sound,
 When the sun smiles on labour's holy-day,
 And all the rustic train are gather'd round,
 Each deftly dizen'd in his Sunday's best,
 And pleased to hail the day of piety and rest.

And when, dim shadowing o'er the face of day,
 The mantling mists of eventide rise slow,
 As through the forest gloom I wend my way,
 The minster curfew's sullen voice I know,
 And pause, and love its solemn toll to hear,
 As, made by distance soft, it dies upon the ear.

Nor with an idle nor unwilling ear
 Do I receive the early passing bell;
 For, sick at heart with many a secret care,
 When I lie listening to the dead man's knell,
 I think that in the grave all sorrows cease,
 And would full fain recline my head and be at peace.

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SOUTHEY.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.



ONE be the rude and artless pile,
 The ivy-mantled turret grey,
 Within whose old unsculptured aisle
 The toil-worn peasant kneels to pray ;
 The whiten'd wall, the latticed pane,
 The rustic porch, the oaken door ;
 Above, the rafters huge and plain,
 Beneath, the footstep-graven floor.

Not here, where few could pomp admire,
 The sons of wealth their pomp display ;
 They throng not here in gay attire,
 Who come to gaze, and not to pray :
 No high-tuned choral peals surprise,
 Enchanting fashion's languid train,
 With arts ingenious to disguise
 The bard of Sion's raptured strain.

But here, where lowly hearts are bow'd,
 By toil and sorrows gentler made,
 Nor earth-born schemes, nor visions proud,
 The unambitious breast invade :
 More nearly is His presence felt,
 For whom the Heaven of Heaven expands
 Its arch in vain, who never dwelt
 In temples built by human hands.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.


By viewless Spirit of the air
The soul's mysterious depths are stirr'd ;
More fervent soars the heavenward prayer,
More deeply sinks the engrafted word :



Oh ! could my heart, in darker hour,
That calm and reverent mood recall,
How weak were then temptation's power,
How frail the world's unhallow'd thrall !

ANON.

THE DAY OF REST.

ETURN, thou wish'd and welcome guest,
Thou day of holiness and rest ;
The best, the dearest of the seven,
Emblem and harbinger of Heaven ;
Though not the Bridegroom, at His voice,
Friend of the Bridegroom, still rejoice.
Day, doubly sanctified and bless'd,
Thee the Creator crown'd with rest ;
From all His works, from all His woes,
On thee the Saviour found repose.
Thou dost, with mystic voice, rehearse
The birth-day of a universe :
Prophet, historian, both, in scope
Thou speak'st to memory and to hope.

Amidst the earthliness of life,
Vexation, vanity, and strife,
Sabbath ! how sweet thy holy calm
Comes o'er the soul, like healing balm ;
Comes, like the dew to fainting flowers.
Renewing her enfeebled powers.
Thine hours, how soothingly they glide,
Thy morn, thy noon, thine eventide !

All meet as brethren, mix as friends ;
Nature her general groan suspends ;
No cares the sin-born labourers tire ;
E'en the poor brutes thou bidd'st respire :
'Tis almost as, restored awhile,
Earth had resumed her Eden smile.
I love thy call of earthly bells,
As on my waking ear it swells ;
I love to see thy pious train
Seeking in groups the solemn fane :
But most I love to mingle there
In sympathy of praise and prayer,
And listen to that living Word,
Which breathes the spirit of the Lord :
Or, at the mystic table placed,
Those eloquent mementoes taste,
Of Thee, thou suffering Lamb Divine,
Thy soul-refreshing bread and wine ;
Sweet viands, given us to assuage
The faintness of the pilgrimage.

Sever'd from Salem, while unstrung
His harp on Pagan willows hung,
What wonder if the Psalmist pined,
As for her brooks the hunted hind !—
The temple's humblest place should win
Gladlier than all the pomp of sin ;—
Envied th' unconscious birds that sung
Around those altars o'er their young ;
And deem'd one heavenly Sabbath worth
More than a thousand days of earth !

Well might his harp and heart rejoice
To hear, once more, that festal voice,—
“Come, brethren, come with glad accord,
Haste to the dwelling of the Lord.”

But if on earth so calm, so blest,
The house of prayer, the day of rest;
If to the spirit, when it faints,
So sweet th’ assembly of the saints;—
There let us pitch our tents (we say),
For, Lord, with Thee ’tis good to stay!
Yet from the mount we soon descend,
Too soon our earthly Sabbaths end;
Cares of a work-day will return,
And faint our hearts, and fitful, burn:
Oh! think, my soul, beyond compare,
Think what a Sabbath must be there,
Where all is holy bliss, that knows
Nor imperfection, nor a close;
Where that innumerable throng
Of saints and angels mingle song;
Where, wrought with hands, no temples rise,
For God Himself their place supplies;
Nor priests are needed in th’ abode
Where the whole hosts are priests to God.
Think what a Sabbath *there* shall be,—
The Sabbath of Eternity!

GRINFIELD.

THE HOUR OF PRAYER.



I, amidst the flowers at play,
While the red light fades away;
Mother, with thine earnest eye
Ever following silently;

Father, by the breeze of eve
Call'd thy harvest work to leave,—
Pray: ere yet the dark hours be,
Lift the heart and bend the knee!

Traveller, in the stranger's land,
Far from thine own household band;
Mourner, haunted by the tone
Of a voice from this world gone;
Captive, in whose narrow cell
Sunshine hath not leave to dwell;
Sailor, on the darkening sea—
Lift the heart and bend the knee!

Warrior, that from battle won
Breathest now at set of sun;
Woman, o'er the lowly slain
Weeping on his burial-plain;
Ye that triumph, ye that sigh,
Kindred by one holy tie,
Heaven's first star alike ye see—
Lift the heart and bend the knee!

HEMANS.

THE SUNDAY MORNING'S WALK.



WAS morning when I walk'd abroad, the day which God
hath blest,

When on the world its Maker calls to keep His holy rest :

The spirit of the time I felt ; and Nature seem'd to say,

It was the day of God's delight, His works' thanksgiving day.

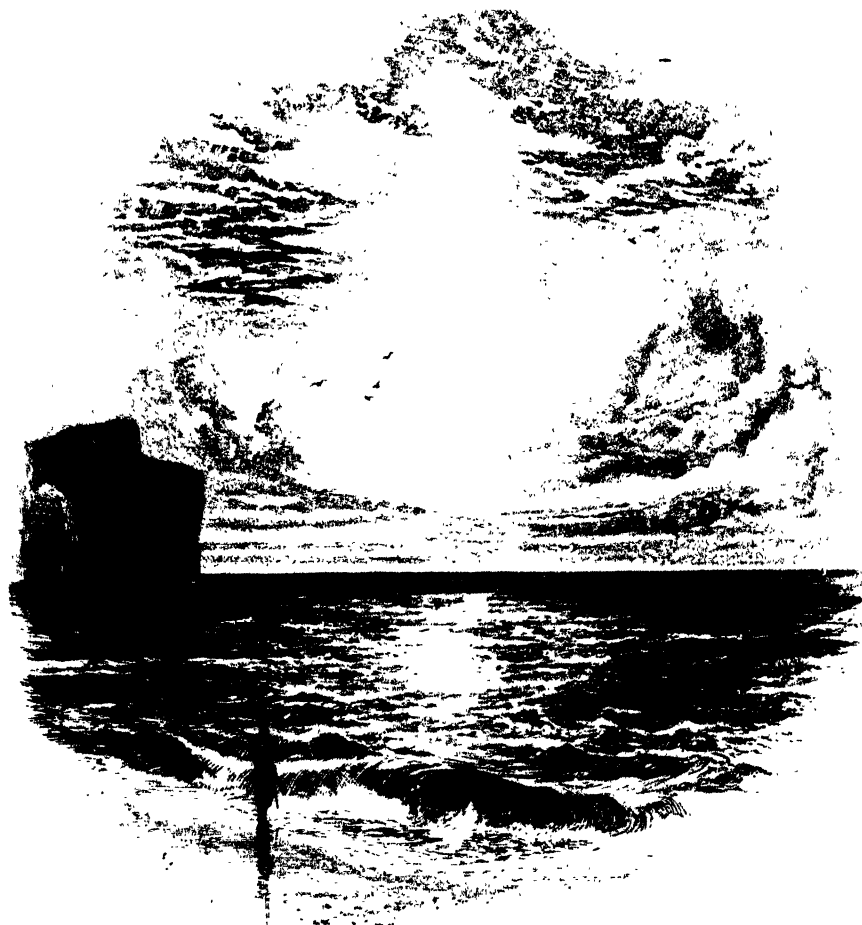
My pathway thro' the garden led : the bees, in Nature's prime,
Lurk'd in the apple's clustering bloom, and suck'd the scented thyme :
And as, with humming sound, to cull their morning meal they flew,
The hum appear'd a morning hymn to God their Maker due.

My pathway led along the coombe, the woodland, and the hill ;
And every bird of every wing was singing sweet and shrill :
The throstle caroll'd in the bush, the skylark from the air ;
They seem'd as if they all would fain their Maker's love declare.

My path along the hedge-row lay, the tangled copse among :
The violet spread its snow-white breast, its head the harebell hung :
Their hues so fair, their soft array, their fresh and fragrant smell,
All seem'd, without the aid of speech, the Maker's praise to tell.

My pathway lay along the meads, with babbling runnels fed,
Where bleating flocks and lowing herds were o'er the pasture spread :
And bleating flock and lowing herd, which cropp'd the verdant food,
With babbling runnels seem'd to join, and speak their Maker good.

Along the strand my pathway led, the salt sea-shore beside,
Where from his throne the sun look'd down, and lit the golden tide :



And as the billows danced and shone beneath his sparkling rays,
They seem'd to clap their hands for joy, and shout the Maker's praise.

My path led onward to the church : what things were present there ?
Sounds of exceeding great delight ? a scene surpassing fair ?
There those who bore a living soul, with reason's stamp imprest,
And tongues to speak articulate the yearnings of the breast ;

Alas ! to their salvation's Rock though call'd to shout and sing,
And with the voice of triumph praise the Everlasting King,
Back from the heart-enlivening strain with listless silence hung,
As if a door confined their lips, and chains withheld their tongue.

Not thus the Church would fain, of old, the pealing anthem swell,
One feeble voice upraised, the mute assembly's joy to tell ;
But rich and poor, the young and old, the peasant and the sage,
Of every quality combined, each sex, and every age,

Their psalms and hymns and holy songs like mighty thunders roll'd,
While rapture, which the spirit felt, the tongue spontaneous told ;
Pour'd forth the song of thanksgiving till all the temple rang,
And like the voice of many floods their Hallelujahs sang.

Such sounds the sons of God pour forth, one spirit and one voice,
Where round the throne the Cherubim and Seraphim rejoice :
Ten thousand times ten thousand there awake the sacred song,
And thousand thousands numberless the Hosannas loud prolong.

And shall such sounds in Heaven be heard from God's celestial train,
No voice exempt, no tongue but joins the gratulating strain :
And do not sounds like these, the sounds of holy, heartfelt mirth,
The candidates for heavenly joys befit, the sons of earth ?

Oh! are there those who, when the name of God their voice requires,
To sing His glory in the words which God himself inspires,
With cold indifference sit them down, nor deign the voice to raise,
Nor move the tongue, nor ope the lip, to sing their Maker's praise :

Tho' prompt the livelong hour to wake notes of the tuneful art,
Which win the crowd's enamour'd ear, but speak not to the heart ;
To trill the light, the meaningless, perchance the guilty strain,
The libertine's seductive lay, the sceptic's rhyme profane ?

Shame, shame on such ! a wiser way and worthier may they learn,
Not from the seraph hosts alone, who round God's altar burn,
But from the meaner things of God, which never cease to show
His love, as best they may, by whom they live, and move, and grow.

The herd, the flock, the warbled song of birds, the humming bee,
The scented flower, the running brook, the bright and billowy sea,
In feeling's ear their powers of praise employ, as best they can,
And all the sullenness reprove of dull, unthankful man.

Lord, grant me grace, the powers Thou givest, how weak so'er they be,
Well pleased to proffer, as most due, in celebrating Thee !
'Tis Thou hast form'd the thinking soul, and Thou the speaking voice :
In what, if not in Thee, O Lord, should soul and speech rejoice ?

Thy works all praise Thee ! noblest work of Thine, bid man arise,
And in the general chorus join, of earth, and sea, and skies !
Rude tho' it be, the artless psalm with Thee acceptance finds,
Pour'd forth from good and honest hearts, from meek and willing minds.

“Lord God Almighty, King of saints,” who only canst of right
 The blessing and the honour claim, the glory and the might;
 Tho’ none can praise Thee worthily, yet who shall stint Thy praise?
 For “great and marvellous Thy works, and just and true Thy ways!”

BP. MANT.

THE SUNDAY EVENING'S WALK.



HE day had waned: the holy day, for man's repose
 design'd,
His day, who made the world; and *His*, who ransom'd
 lost mankind.

My feet, for so my Saviour wont, had duly been to pay
 Meet homage in the house of Him, who sanctified the day.

There with His Church in prayer and praise my lips were fain to join,
 And from His priest my ears were fain to list to truth divine:
 To cherish feelings with the day of holy rest allied,
 Like Isaac, to the field I went to muse at eventide.

Beneath my feet the wild flower lay: I mark'd its lovely hue,
 Its fragrance sweet, its texture fine; and ponder'd how it grew:
 I ponder'd how from earth's green lap, at Nature's birth, it came,
 And flourish'd still from age to age, another and the same:

I scann'd the providential care, the goodness, and the power,
Which with surpassing beauty clothed the perishable flower ;
And thought, if creatures of a day could thus engage His care,
Much more should they of living soul His watchful bounty share.

The little birds beneath the leaves were nestling for repose,
And ever and anon a peal of harmony arose :
The song was hush'd, but still was heard a twittering here and there ;
It seem'd to be the parting note of thanksgiving and prayer :

It seem'd to willing ears to say, " By us, O man, be taught
To trust in Him who feedeth us, O thou of little thought !
To praise Him, from the fowler's snare who guardeth thee by day ;
And from the night's approaching storm His sheltering covert pray."

The swallow skimm'd across my path ; for now the year's sweet prime
Had warn'd her o'er the vernal seas to seek a genial clime ;
Secure the summer months to pass, till hence again she fly,
A home from wintry blasts to find beneath a warmer sky.

And, thought I, shall these birds observe the seasons far abroad,
And shall not God's own people know the judgment of their God ?
Oh ! for the swallow's wing, and skill, by Power Divine imprest,
Far from the stormy wind to flee, and seek th' appointed rest !

The sheep at random lay reposed, or wander'd o'er the mead :
But hark ! the shepherd's folding voice ; and see ! their willing speed.
The cows with homeward footsteps still are moving o'er the field,
To stall them at their master's crib, their gather'd wealth to yield.

And shall the very beasts, I thought, their earthly owner know,
Safe in his homestead shelter seek, and as he wills them, go ?
And shall the sought, the call'd of God, from His commandment stray,
Nor in their Master's home repose, nor at His call obey ?

The sun was sinking in the west : I mark'd his radiance throw
O'er all the earth, the sea, the sky, a smiling farewell glow ;
And as he sank, the clouds, array'd with purple gleams and gold,
The track of his departing light, his course of glory told.

And, O thou glorious sun ! I said, with richer rays than thine
Did He, with healing on His wings, the Sun of goodness, shine ;
And o'er the world a lovelier flood of parting splendour pour,
That we His glory's track might note, His light far off adore.

The sun was set. I mark'd the stars, as gleaming, one by one,
Bright thro' the twilight's deepening shade the gems of evening shone :
Till rising o'er the eastern hills the full-orb'd moon was seen,
And in her brightness walking forth along the blue serene.

And oh ! while these fair works of Thine possess my raptured thought,
The moon which Thy right hand hath form'd, the stars Thy fingers
wrought ;

Lord, what is man, I said, that Thou a glance on him shouldst throw ;
Or son of man, that Thou from heaven shouldst visit him below ?

On him the solitude of night and stillness soon shall creep,
As o'er this fading face of things, and mantle him in sleep :
But Thou hast said, we shall not sleep in everlasting night,
But in the twinkling of an eye shall wake again to light.

Thus gazing on the works of God, the Word of God my guide,
Like Isaac to the field I go, and muse at eventide :
And thus from every sound and sight, in earth or circling air,
Fit theme for solemn thought I find, and read a sermon there.

Thence home return'd, I lay me down in peace, and seek my rest,
Safe in His arm, and in the trust of His protection blest :
But ere I sleep, with trembling hope my night's oblation make,
Thus, in His Prophet's strain of old, and for my Saviour's sake.



“To Thee, great God, most merciful, my spirit I commend :
Thy favour can Thy servant's bed, as with a shield, defend.
Thou canst sustain and raise me up in life, if such Thy will :
And Thou, if death be Thy decree, canst raise and save me still.

“Grant that each evening in its course this wayward heart may find
Still more observant of Thy laws, and to Thy will resign'd ;
And when the last dread evening comes, do Thou my soul convey,
With Thee among Thy saints to dwell, in never-ending day !”

BP. MANT.

PRAYER.



the morning's busy ray
Call you to your work away :
Ere the silent evening close
Your wearied eyes in sweet repose :
To lift your heart and voice in prayer
Be your *first* and *latest* care.

He, to whom the prayer is due,
From heaven His throne shall smile on you ;
Angels sent by Him shall tend,
Your daily labour to befriend,
And their nightly vigils keep,
To guard you in the hour of sleep.

When through the peaceful parish swells
The music of the Sabbath bells,
Duly tread the sacred road
Which leads you to the house of God ;
The blessing of the Lamb is there,
And " God is in the midst of her."

And oh ! where'er your days be pass'd.
And oh ! howe'er your lot be cast,
Still think on Him whose ear surveys,
Whose hand is over all your ways.

Abroad, at home, in weal, in woe,
That service which to Heaven you owe.
That bounden service duly pay,
And God shall be your strength alway.

He only to the heart can give
Peace and true pleasure while you live;
He only, when you yield your breath,
Can guide you through the vale of death.

He can, He will, from out the dust
Raise the blest spirits of the just;
Heal every wound, hush every fear,
From every eye wipe every tear;
And place them where distress is o'er.
And pleasures dwell for evermore.

BE. MANT.

A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE.



HIS is the place. Stand still, my steed,
Let me review the scene,
And summon from the shadowy Past
The forms that once have been.

The Past and Present here unite
Beneath Time's flowing tide,
Like footprints hidden by a brook,
But seen on either side.

Here runs the highway to the town;
There the green lane descends,
Through which I walk'd to church with thee,
O gentlest of my friends!

The shadow of the linden-trees
Lay moving on the grass;
Between them and the moving boughs.
A shadow, thou didst pass.

Thy dress was like the lilies,
And thy heart as pure as they;
One of God's holy messengers
Did walk with me that day.

I saw the branches of the trees
Bend down thy touch to meet,
The clover-blossoms in the grass
Rise up to kiss thy feet.

“Sleep, sleep to-day, tormenting cares,
Of earth and folly born!”
Solemnly sang the village choir
On that sweet Sabbath morn.

Through the closed blinds the golden sun
Pour'd in a dusty beam,
Like the celestial ladder seen
By Jacob in his dream.

And ever and anon the wind,
Sweet-scented with the hay,
Turn'd o'er the hymn-book's fluttering leaves,
That on the window lay.

Long was the good man's sermon,
Yet it seem'd not so to me;
For he spake of Ruth the beautiful,
And still I thought of thee.

Long was the prayer he utter'd,
Yet it seem'd not so to me;
For in my heart I pray'd with him,
And still I thought of thee.

But now, alas! the place seems changed ;
Thou art no longer here :
Part of the sunshine of the scene
With thee did disappear.

Though thoughts, deep-rooted in my heart,
Like pine-trees dark and high,
Subdue the light of noon, and breathe
A low and ceaseless sigh ;

This memory brightens o'er the past.
As when the sun, conceal'd
Behind some cloud that near us hangs,
Shines on a distant field.

LONGFELLOW.

THE SABBATH BELL.



THE Sabbath bell! the Sabbath bell!
To toil-worn men a soothing sound ;
Now labour rests beneath its spell,
And holy stillness reigns around :
The ploughman's team, the thresher's flail,
The woodman's axe, their clamours cease,
And only Nature's notes prevail,
To humble bosoms echoing peace.

The Sabbath bell! the Sabbath bell!

How sweet on ears devout it falls,
While its sweet chime, with varying swell,
The rich and poor to worship calls.
Hark! hark! again, with sharper peals,
It chides the laggard's fond delay;
Now through the vale it softly steals,
To cheer the timely on their way.

The Sabbath bell! the Sabbath bell!

What soul-awakening sounds we hear!
Its blessed invitations tell
Of welcome to the house of prayer.
"Come, sinner, come!" it seems to cry;
"Oh! never doubt thy Maker's love;
Christ has thy ransom paid, then why
Delay His clemency to prove?"

The Sabbath bell! the Sabbath bell!

Oft have we heard its warning chime;
And yet we love the world too well,
Nor feel our waywardness a crime.
Yet still thy calls, sweet bell, repeat,
Till, ended all our mortal strife,
In hand-built shrines no more we meet,
But worship in the realms of life.

The Sabbath bell! the Sabbath bell!

Its friendly summons peals no more;

The thronging crowds pour in with zeal,
 The Great Jehovah to adore.
 Hence, fancy wild! hence, earth-born care!
 With awe let hallow'd courts be trod;
 Wake all the soul to love and prayer,
 And reverence the present God!

ANON.

SUNDAY.



THOU blessed day! I will not call thee last,
 Nor Sabbath,—last nor first of all the seven,
 But a calm slip of intervening heaven,
 Between th' uncertain future and the past;
 As in a stormy night, amid the blast,
 Comes ever and anon a truce on high,
 And a calm lake of pure and starry sky
 Peers through the mountainous depths of clouds amass'd.
 Sweet day of prayer! e'en they whose scrupulous dread
 Will call no other day as others do,
 Might call thee Sunday without fear or blame;
 For thy bright morn deliver'd from the dead
 Our Sun of Life, and will for aye renew
 To faithful souls the import of thy name.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

SUNDAY.



HE Sabbath day, of every day the best,
The poor man's happiness, a poor man sings ;
When labour has no claim to break his rest,
And the light hours fly swift on easy wings.

What happiness this holy morning brings !
How soft its pleasures on his senses steal ;
How sweet the village-bells' first warning rings ;
And oh ! how comfortable does he feel,
When with his family at ease he takes his early meal !

The careful wife displays her frugal hoard,
And both partake in comfort, though they 're poor ;
While love's sweet offsprings crowd the lowly board,
Their little likenesses in miniature.
Though through the week he labour does endure,
And weary limbs oft cause him to complain,
This welcome morning always brings a cure ;
It teems with joys his soul to entertain,
And doubly sweet appears the pleasure after pain.

Ah ! who can tell the bliss, from labour freed,
His leisure meeteth on a Sunday morn,
Fix'd in a chair, some godly book to read,
Or wandering round to view the crops of corn,
In best clothes fitted out, and beard new shorn ;
Dropping adown in some warm shelter'd dell,
With six days' labour weak and weary worn ;
List'ning around each distant chiming bell,
That on the soft'ning breeze melodiously doth swell.

And oft he takes his family abroad
In short excursions o'er the field and plain,
Marking each little object on his road,
An insect, sprig of grass, and ear of grain ;
Endeavouring thus most simply to maintain
That the same Power that bids the mite to crawl,
That browns the wheat-lands in their summer-stain,
That Power which form'd the simple flower withal,
Form'd all that lives and grows upon this earthly ball.

Hail, sacred Sabbath ! hail, thou poor man's joy !
Thou oft hast been a comfort to my care,
When, faint and weary with the week's employ,
I met thy presence in my corner-chair,
Musing and bearing up with troubles there ;
Thrice hail, thou heavenly boon ! by God's decree
At first creation plann'd, that all might share,
Both man and beast, some hours from labour free,
To offer thanks to Him whose mercy sent us thee.

This day the field a sweeter clothing wears,
A Sunday scene looks brighter to the eye ;
And hast'ning on to Monday morning's cares,
With double speed the wing'd hour gallops by.



How swift the sun streaks down the western sky,
Scarcely perceived till it begins to wane,
When plough-boys mark his setting with a sigh,
Dreading the morn's approaching hours with pain,
When capon's restless calls awake to toil again.

As the day closes on its peace and rest,
 The godly man sits down, and takes "the Book,"
 To close it in a manner deem'd the best ;
 And for a suiting chapter doth he look,
 That may for comfort and a guide be took :
 He reads of patient Job, his trials' thrall,
 How men are troubled when by God forsook,
 And prays with David to bear up with all ;—
 When sleep shuts up the scene, soft as the night-dews fall.

CLARE

THE VOICE OF PRAYER.



HEAR it in the summer wind,
 I feel it in the lightning's gleam :
 A tongue in every leaf I find,
 A voice in every running stream.
 It speaks in the enamell'd flower,
 With grateful incense borne on high ;
 It echoes in the dripping shower,
 And breathes in midnight's breathless sky.
 Through all her scenes of foul and fair,
 Nature presents a fervent prayer ;
 In all her myriad shapes of love,
 Nature transmits a prayer above.

Day unto day, and night to night,
The eloquent appeal convey;
Flasheth the cheerful orb of light,
To bid creation bend and pray:
The shadowy clouds of darkness steal
Along the horizon's azure cope,
Bidding distracted nations kneel
To Him, the Lord of quenchless hope;
To Him, who died that hope might live,
And lived, eternal life to give;
Who bore the pangs of death, to save
The dead from an eternal grave.

Oh! thread yon tangled coppice now,
Where the sweetbriar and woodbine strive;
Where music drops from every bough,
Like honey from the forest hive;
Where warbling birds, and humming bees,
And wild-flowers round a gushing spring,
And blossoms sprinkled o'er the trees,
And gorgeous insects on the wing,
Unite to load the gladden'd air
With melody of grateful prayer;
Unite their Maker's name to bless
In that brief span of happiness!

And can it be, that man alone
Forbids the tide of prayer to flow,
For whom his God forsook a throne,
To weep, to bleed—a Man of woe?

Ah! 'tis *alone* th' immortal soul,
 An endless bliss ordain'd to win,
 The Heaven of Heavens its destined goal,
 That thus is sunk in shameless sin!
 Scantly permitting to intrude
 The faintest gleam of gratitude;
 And but in hours of dire despair
 Responding to the voice of prayer!

ANON.

THE LORD'S DAY.



AIL to the day, which He, who made the heaven,
 Earth, and their armies, sanctified and blest,
 Perpetual memory of the Maker's rest!
 Hail to the day, when He, by whom was given
 New life to man, the tomb asunder riven,
 Arose! That day His Church hath still confest
 At once Creation's and Redemption's feast,
 Sign of a world call'd forth, a world forgiven.
 Welcome that day, the day of holy peace,
 The Lord's own day! to man's Creator owed,
 And man's Redeemer; for the soul's increase
 In sanctity, and sweet repose bestow'd;
 Type of the rest when sin and care shall cease.
 The rest remaining for the loved of God!

BP. MANT.

THERE IS A TONGUE IN EVERY -LEAF.



HERE is a tongue in every leaf!

A voice in every rill!

A voice that speaketh everywhere,

In flood and fire, through earth and air;

A tongue that's never still!

'Tis the Great Spirit, wide diffused

Through everything we see,

That with our spirits communeth

Of things mysterious—Life and Death,

Time and Eternity.

I see Him in the blazing sun,

And in the thunder-cloud;

I hear Him in the mighty roar

That rusheth through the forests hoar,

When winds are raging loud.

I feel Him in the silent dews,

By grateful earth betray'd;

I feel Him in the gentle showers,

The soft south wind, the breath of flowers,

The sunshine, and the shade.

I see Him, hear Him, everywhere,
 In all things—darkness, light;
 Silence, and sound; but most of all,
 When slumber's dusky curtains fall,
 I' the silent hour of night.

ANON.

A SUNDAY THOUGHT.



OW calm the quiet, sweet the rest,
 That breathes at such a time!
 How dear to every pious breast
 The church bells' soothing chime!

A day of prayer, of holy thought,
 And blessed peace it is;
 And, did we keep it as we ought,
 A day of sacred bliss.

How welcome then of all the seven
 This day would be allow'd;
 A foretaste of the joys of Heaven,
 A passport to our God.

ANON.

A DOMESTIC SCENE.



'Tis early day—and sunlight stream'd
 Soft through a quiet room,
 That hush'd, but not forsaken seem'd—
 Still, but with nought of gloom ;
 For then, secure in happy age,
 Whose hope is from above,
 A father communed with the page
 Of Heaven's recorded love.

Pure fell the beam and meekly bright,
 On his grey holy hair,
 And touch'd the book with tenderest light,
 As if its shrine were there ;
 But oh ! that patriarch's aspect shone
 With something lovelier far—
 A radiance, all the Spirit's own,
 Caught not from sun or star.

Some word of life e'en then had met
 His calm benignant eye ;
 Some ancient promise, breathing yet
 Of immortality :

Some heart's deep language, when the glow
 Of quenchless faith survives,
 For every feature said—"I know
 That my Redeemer lives."

And silent stood his children by,
 Hushing their very breath,
 Before the solemn sanctity
 Of thought, o'er-sweeping death;
 Silent—yet did not each young breast
 With love and reverence melt?
 Oh! blest be those fair girls—and blest
 That home where God is felt.

HEMANS.

THE SABBATH BELLS.



HE cheerful Sabbath bells, wherever heard,
 Strike pleasant on the sense, most like the voice
 Of one who, from the far-off hills, proclaims
 Tidings of good to Zion: chiefly when
 Their piercing tones fall sudden on the ear
 Of the contemplant solitary man,
 Whom thoughts abstruse or high have chanced to lure
 Forth from the walks of men, revolving oft,

And oft again, hard matter, which eludes
And baffles his pursuit,—thought-sick and tired
Of controversy, where no end appears,
No clue to his research, the lonely man
Half wishes for society again.



Him, thus engaged, the Sabbath bells salute,
Sudden! his heart awakes, his ears drink in
The cheering music; his relenting soul
Yearns after all the joys of social life,
And softens with the love of human kind.

CHARLES LAMB.

THE SABBATH ON THE SEAS.



IS sweet to hear the Sabbath bells
 Ring out on woodlands, floods, and fells;
 Now clear and jubilant, anon
 Mellow'd and mournful, they chime on.
 And sweet from church or chapel, rear'd
 'Midst glens, to rural hearts endear'd,
 Oh! sweetly, on the morning air,
 Sounds the meek hymn ascending there,
 When rural voices join to raise
 An anthem to their Maker's praise!

And solemn and majestic floats
 The organ-chant in rolling notes,
 Pour'd richly down the pillar'd aisle
 Of some time-hallow'd gothic pile.
 When mingle then, in prayer and song,
 A city's thousand voices strong;
 Oh! who unmoved can listen then
 To the responsive deep Amen?
 The soft refulgent light that streams
 Through windows mapp'd with holiest themes;
 The blazonry of cherub wings,
 Proclaim Thy temple, King of kings!
 And marbled tablets, sculptured round,
 Mark where the dead have refuge found.

Such are the Sabbath-notes that rise
 From earth's vast altar to the skies ;
 And have the ocean-waves no voice
 To bid the sacred hours rejoice ?
 Have they, who on the dangerous deep
 For life an anxious vigil keep,
 No tribute for th' Almighty One,
 Who rules them from His viewless throne ?
 Hark ! o'er the wide and bellowing main
 Soft music comes, a choral strain ;
 And, kneeling on the barrier frail,
 (How vain their strength if that should fail !)

That lifts them from the yawning sea,
 Bold rugged men are group'd in prayer,
 In child-like pure simplicity,
 And, lo ! their God is with them there.

GODWIN.

THE SABBATH EVE.



Is there a time when moments flow
 More lovelily than all beside,
 It is, of all the times below,
 A Sabbath eve in summer-tide.

Oh! then the setting sun smiles fair,
And all below and all above,
The different forms of Nature, wear
One universal garb of love.

And then the peace that Jesus beams,
The life of grace, the death of sin,
With Nature's placid woods and streams,
Is peace without, and peace within.


Delightful scene!—a world at rest,
A God all love—no grief, no fear;
A heavenly hope, a peaceful breast,
A smile unsullied by a tear.

If Heaven be ever felt below,
A scene so heavenly sure as this
May cause a heart on earth to know
Some foretaste of celestial bliss.

Delightful hour!—how soon will night
Spread her dark mantle o'er thy reign,
And morrow's quick returning light
Must call us to the world again.

Yet will there dawn at last a day,
A sun that never sets shall rise;
Night will not veil a ceaseless ray:
The heavenly Sabbath never dies!

THE SAILOR'S EVENING PRAYER.

ONG the sun hath gone to rest,
 Dimm'd is now the deepening west
 And the sky hath lost the hue
 That the rich clouds o'er it throw :

Lonely on the pale-blue sky
 Gleam faint streaks of crimson dye ;
 Gloriously the evening star
 Looks upon us from afar :
 Aid us, o'er the changeful deep,
 God of Power ;
 Bless the sailor's ocean-sleep
 At midnight's hour.

On the stilly twilight air
 We would breathe our solemn prayer. --
 " Bless the dear ones of our home,
 Guide us through the wild wave's foam,
 To the light of those dear eyes,
 Where our heart's best treasure lies ;
 To the love in *one* fond breast,
 That unchanging home of rest !
 Hear her, when at eventide
 She kneels to pray,
 That God would bless, defend, and guide,
 Those far away ! "

Now the moon hath touch'd the sea,
 And the waves, all tremblingly,
 Throw towards heaven their silvery spray,
 Happy in the gladdening ray :
 Thus, Redeemer, let Thy love
 Shine upon us from above ;
 Touch'd by Thee, our hearts will rise
 Grateful towards the glowing skies ;
 Guard us, shield us, mighty Lord !
 Thou dost not sleep ;
 Still the tempest with Thy word,—
 Rule the deep !

ANON.

THE FIRST SABBATH.



LX days the heavenly host, in circle vast,
 Like that untouching cincture which enzones
 The globe of Saturn, compass'd wide this orb,
 And with the forming mass floated along,
 In rapid course, through yet untravell'd space,
 Beholding God's stupendous power,—a world
 Bursting from chaos at th' Omnific will,
 And perfect ere the sixth day's evening star
 On Paradise arose. Blessed that eve !
 The Sabbath's harbinger, when, all complete,

In freshest beauty from Jehovah's hand,
Creation bloom'd; when Eden's twilight face
Smiled like a sleeping babe: the voice divine
A holy calm breathed o'er the goodly work:
Mildly the sun, upon the loftiest trees,
Shed mellowly a sloping beam. Peace reign'd,
And love, and gratitude; the human pair
Their orisons pour'd forth; love, concord, reign'd.
The falcon, perch'd upon the blooming bough
With Philomela, listen'd to her lay;
Among the antler'd herd the tiger couch'd
Harmless; the lion's mane no terror spread
Among the careless ruminating flock.
Silence was o'er the deep; the noiseless surge,—
The last subsiding wave of that dread tumult
Which raged, when Ocean, at the mute command,
Rush'd furiously into his new-cleft bed,—
Was gently rippling on the pebbled shore;
While, on the swell, the sea-bird with her head
Wing-veil'd, slept tranquilly. The host of heaven,
Entranced in new delight, speechless adored;
Nor stopp'd their fleet career, nor changed their form
Encircular, till on that hemisphere,—
In which the blissful garden sweet exhaled
Its incense, odorous clouds,—the Sabbath dawn
Arose; then wide the flying circle oped,
And soar'd, in semblance of a mighty rainbow.
Silent ascend the choirs of Seraphim;
No harp resounds, mute is each voice; the burst
Of joy and praise reluctant they repress,—

For love and concord all things so attuned
To harmony, that Earth must have received
The grand vibration, and to the centre shook :
But soon as to the starry altitudes
They reach'd, then what a storm of sound, tremendous,
Swell'd through the realms of space ! The morning stars
Together sang, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy ! Loud was the peal ; so loud
As would have quite o'erwhelmed human sense ;
But to the earth it came a gentle strain,
Like softest fall breathed from Æolian lute,
When 'mid the chords the evening gale expires.
Day of the Lord ! creation's hallow'd close !
Day of the Lord ! (prophetical they sang,)
Benignant mitigation of that doom,
Which must, ere long, consign the fallen race,
Dwellers in yonder star, to toil and woe !

GRAHAME.



A WINTER SABBATH WALK.



OW dazzling white the snowy scene! deep, deep,
The stillness of the winter Sabbath day,—
Not even a foot-fall heard. Smooth are the fields,
Each hollow pathway level with the plain:

Hid are the bushes, save that, here and there,
Are seen the topmost shoots of briar or broom.
High-ridged, the whirled drift has almost reach'd
The powder'd key-stone of the churchyard porch.
Mute hangs the hooded bell ; the tombs lie buried ;
No step approaches to the house of prayer.

The flickering fall is o'er ; the clouds disperse,
And show the sun, hung o'er the welkin's verge,
Shooting a bright but ineffectual beam
On all the sparkling waste. Now is the time
To visit Nature in her grand attire ;
Though perilous the mountainous ascent,
A noble recompense the danger brings.
How beautiful the plain stretch'd far below !
Unvaried though it be, save by yon stream
With azure windings, or the leafless wood.
But what the beauty of the plain, compared
To that sublimity which reigns enthroned,
Holding joint rule with solitude divine,
Among yon rocky fells, that bid defiance
To steps the most adventurously bold !
There silence dwells profound ; or if the cry
Of high-poised eagle break at times the calm,
The mantled echoes no response return.

But let me now explore the deep-sunk dell.
No footprint, save the covey's or the flock's,
Is seen along the rill, where marshy springs
Still rear the grassy blade of vivid green.

Beware, ye shepherds, of these treacherous haunts,
Nor linger there too long : the wintry day
Soon closes ; and full oft a heavier fall,
Heap'd by the blast, fills up the shelter'd glen,
While, gurgling deep below, the buried rill
Mines for itself a snow-coved way. Oh ! then,
Your helpless charge drive from the tempting spot,
And keep them on the bleak hill's stormy side,
Where night-winds sweep the gathering drift away :—
So the Great Shepherd leads the heavenly flock
From faithless pleasures, full into the storms
Of life, where long they bear the bitter blast,
Until at length the vernal sun looks forth,
Bedimm'd with showers : then to the pastures green
He brings them, where the quiet waters glide,
The streams of life, the Siloah of the soul.

GRAHAM.

* * * * *



HE night was Winter in his roughest mood ;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon,
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale ;
And through the trees I view th' embattled tower,
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought :
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd ;
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes

From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,
 That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
 Charms more than silence.

COWPER.

EARLY RISING AND PRAYER.



IN first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
 To do the like ; our bodies but forerun
 The spirit's duty ; true hearts spread and heave
 Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun :
 Give Him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep
 Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

Yet never sleep the sun up ; prayer should
 Dawn with the day : these are set awful hours
 'Twixt Heaven and us ; the manna was not good
 After sun-rising ; for day sullies flowers :
 Rise to prevent the sun ; sleep doth sins glut,
 And Heaven's gates open when the world is shut.

Walk with thy fellow-creatures ; note the hush
 And whisperings amongst them. Not a spring
 Or leaf but hath his morning hymn ; each bush
 And oak doth know I AM !—Canst thou not sing ?
 Oh ! leave thy cares and follies ! go **this way**,
 And thou art sure to prosper all the day.

Serve God before the world ; let Him not go
Until thou hast a blessing ; then resign
The whole unto Him, and remember who
Prevail'd by wrestling ere the sun did shine :
Pour oil upon the stones, seek sin forgiven,
Then journey on, and have an eye to Heaven.

Mornings are mysteries : the first world's youth,
Man's resurrection, and the future's bud,
Shroud in their births ; the crown of life, light, truth,
Is styled their star ; the stone and hidden food :
Three blessings wait upon them, one of which
Should move —they make us holy, happy, rich.

When the world's up, and every swarm abroad,
Keep well thy temper, mix not with each clay ;
Despatch necessities ; life hath a load
Which must be carried on, and safely may :
Yet keep those cares without thee ; let the heart
Be God's alone, and choose the better part.

VAUGHAN.

THE SABBATH.



T is not only in the sacred fane
 That homage should be paid to the Most High :
 There is a temple, one not made with hands,—
 The vaulted firmament : far in the woods,

Almost beyond the sound of city chime,
 At intervals heard through the breczeless air ;
 When not the limberest leaf is seen to move,
 Save where the linnet lights upon the spray ;
 When not a floweret bends its little stalk,
 Save where the bee alights upon the bloom ;—
 There, rapt in gratitude, in joy, and love,
 The man of God will pass the Sabbath noon ;
 Silence his praise : his disembodied thoughts,
 Loosed from the load of words, will high ascend
 Beyond the empyrean.—

Nor yet less pleasing at the heavenly throne,
 The Sabbath service of the shepherd boy.
 In some lone glen, where every sound is lull'd
 To slumber, save the tinkling of the rill,
 Or bleat of lamb, or hovering falcon's cry,
 Stretch'd on the sward, he reads of Jesse's son ;
 Or sheds a tear o'er him to Egypt sold,
 And wonders why he weeps : the volume closed,
 With thyme-sprig laid between the leaves, he sings
 The sacred lays, his weekly lesson, conn'd

With meikle care beneath the lowly roof
 Where humble lore is learnt, where humble worth
 Pines unrewarded by a thankless state.
 Thus reading, hymning, all alone, unseen,
 The shepherd boy the Sabbath holy keeps,
 Till on the heights he marks the straggling bands
 Returning homeward from the house of prayer.
 In peace they home resort. O blissful days!
 When all men worship God as conscience wills.

GRAHAME.

THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.



T was a lovely morning ;—all was calm,
 As if creation, thankful for repose,
 In renovated beauty, breathing balm
 And blessedness around, from slumber rose,
 Joyful once more to see the east unclose
 Its gates of glory :—yet subdued and mild,
 Like the soft smile of patience amid woes,
 By hope and resignation reconciled,
 That morning's beauty shone, that landscape's charm beguiled.
 The heavens were mark'd by many a filmy streak,
 Even in the orient ; and the sun shone through
 Those lines, as Hope upon a mourner's cheek
 Sheds, meekly chasten'd, her delightful hue.

From groves and meadows, all inpearl'd with dew,
Rose silvery mists,—no eddy wind swept by,—



The cottage chimneys, half conceal'd from view
By their embowering foliage, sent on high
Their pallid wreaths of smoke unruffled to the sky.

And every gentle sound which broke the hush
Of morning's still serenity was sweet :
The skylark over head ; the speckled thrush,
Who now had taken with delight his seat
Upon the slender larch, the day to greet ;
The starling chattering to her callow young ;
And that monotonous lay, which seems to fleet
Like echo through the air, the cuckoo's song,
Was heard at times, far off, the leafy woods among.

Surrounded by such sights and sounds, I stood,
Delighted auditor, spectator here ;
And gave full scope, in meditative mood,
To thoughts excited by a scene so fair ;
Feeling renewedly how matchless are
The power and goodness of that Great Supreme,
Who form'd and fashion'd all things to declare,
Even to those who lightly of Him deem,
The beauty and the love of His creative scheme.

BARTON.

THE COVENANTERS' SABBATH.



WAS Sabbath morn, a lovelier never rose,
And Nature seem'd in holy, calm repose ;
No cloud was seen along the azure sky,
And the pure streamlet glided softly by ;
From tree to tree the warbling minstrels sung,
And heaven's bright arch with Nature's praises rung ;
Though all was still, yet persecution's rage,
With awful fury, scourged a bleeding age :
Then Scotland groan'd beneath a tyrant's yoke,
Till her proud spirit seem'd for ever broke ;
Her sons were hunted from th' abodes of men,
To savage wilds, or some sequester'd glen :
Justice stood mute, for demons gave the law,
And many a bloody scene her mountains saw.

What though this morning rose so calmly bright,
The eye which saw it trembled at its light.
On Loudon's braes the bird might find a nest ;
On Pentland's hills the wounded deer might rest ;
But terror there her gloomy watch did keep,
Like the death storm which overhangs the deep ;
And homeless man from place to place was driven,
Bereft of hope, and every stay but Heaven.

No gladsome bell announced the Sabbath day,
The solemn temples moulder'd with decay ;
God's people met, amidst the lonely wild,
Like wretched outcasts from a world exiled ;
In a lone cave, the eagle's drear abode,
They met to worship and to praise their God ;
The fretted rocks around their temple hung,
And echoed back the praises as they sung ;
Though half suppress the thrilling accents rise
To God, who hears and answers in the skies.
The preacher rose, and every voice grew still,
Save echoing breezes round the lonely hill ;
With solemn awe he opes the blessed Book,
Earnest in voice, and heavenly in his look ;
While from his lips the soothing accents flow,
To cheer his flock, and mitigate their woe ;
For who could tell how soon the sentinel's breath
Might give the signal of approaching death ?
For every moment seem'd to them the last,
And days to come, more gloomy than the past.

Within that place, the sacramental board
Was spread in memory of their risen Lord,
While the deep thunder rent the thickening cloud,
And lightning flash'd along the mournful crowd ;
And when with lowly hands the bread was broke,
The sheeted flame fell on the living rock,
Illumed the table with its symbols spread,
As if Heaven's brightness rested on their head.
With placid looks they saw the darkening cloud,
Which hid Jehovah in his awful shroud ;

And when the voice fell deafening on the ear,
No murmuring word proclaims them men of fear,
But calm and sweet the heaven-tuned "Martyrs" rose,
Like zephyrs sighing at the tempest's close.

Near to this place, where mountain torrents flow
Through broken rocks, to calmer scenes below,
How oft was heard the tender infant's sigh,
Its name pronounced 'midst breezes passing by ;
While, all unconscious of the holy rite,
It smiled amidst the dangers of the night.

In caves and glens their Sabbath hours were spent,
Till the pale moon illumed the firmament ;
And there they wander'd at the dead of night,
When the dim stars withheld their glimmering light ;
And, oh ! how oft their wild retreat's been found
By those who sought them like the blood-train'd hound,
And made that place, their oft frequented cave,
The holy martyrs' solitary grave ;
Where nought but winds their dreary death-knell rung,
And the scared bird their mournful requiem sung !
Yet Heaven wept, and bade their spirits rise
On angel wings, from sorrow to the skies ;
While all they suffer'd shall be ne'er forgot,
Their grave be hallow'd, and their dying spot ;
For they to Scotland gave her church, her laws,
And fell like patriots in their country's cause.

Peace to their memory ! let no impious breath
Soil their fair fame, or triumph o'er their death ;

Let Scotia's grateful sons their tear-drops shed,
 Where low they lie in honour's gory bed ;
 Rich with the spoils their glorious deeds had won,
 And purchased freedom to a land undone ;
 A land which owes its glory and its worth
 To those whom tyrants banish'd from the earth.

WEIR.

A SABBATH MEDITATION.



WITH silent awe I hail the sacred morn,
 That slowly wakes while all the fields are still
 A soothing calm on every breeze is borne,
 A graver murmur gurgles from the rill,
 And echo answers softer from the hill,
 And softer sings the linnet from the thorn ;
 The skylark warbles in a tone less shrill.
 Hail, light serene ! hail, sacred Sabbath morn !
 The rooks float silently, in airy drove ;
 The sun a placid yellow lustre throws ;
 The gales, that lately sigh'd along the grove,
 Have hush'd their downy wings in dead repose ;
 The hovering rack of clouds forgets to move :—
 So smiled the day when the first morn arose.

LEYDEN.

SABBATH EVENING.



NOTHER day has pass'd along,
And we are nearer to the tomb!
Nearer to join the heavenly song,
Or hear the last eternal doom.

These moments of departing day,
When thought is calm, and labours cease,
Are surely solemn times to pray,
To ask for pardon and for peace.

Thou God of mercy, swift to hear,
More swift than man to tell his need;
Be Thou to us this evening near,
And to Thy fount our spirits lead.

Teach us to pray,—and, having taught,
Grant us the blessings that we crave;
Without Thy teaching—prayer is nought,
But with it—powerful to save!

Sweet is the light of Sabbath eve,
And soft the sunbeam lingering there;
Those sacred hours this low earth leave,
Wafted on wings of praise and prayer.

This time, how lovely and how still!

Peace shines, and smiles on all below ;
The plain, the stream, the wood, the hill,
All fair with evening's setting glow!

Season of rest! the tranquil soul

Feels thy sweet calm, and melts in love :
And while these sacred moments roll,
Faith sees a smiling heaven above.

How short the time! how soon the sun

Sets, and dark night resumes her reign!
And soon the hours of rest are done,
Then morrow brings the world again.

Yet will our journey not be long,

Our pilgrimage will soon be trod ;
And we shall join the ceaseless song,
The endless Sabbath of our God.

EDMESTON.



SABBATH WALKS.



UPON the Sabbath, sweet it is to walk

'Neath wood-side shelter of oak's spreading tree,
Or by a hedge-row track, or padded balk ;
Or stretch 'neath willows on the meadow lea,

List'ning, delighted, hum of passing bee,
 And curious pausing on the blossom's head ;
 And mark the spider at his labour free,
 Spinning from bent to bent his silken thread ;
 And lab'ring ants, by careful Nature led
 To make the most of summer's plenteous stay ;
 And lady-cow, beneath its leafy shed,
 Call'd, when I mix'd with children, " clock-a-clay,"
 Pruning its red wings on its pleasing bed,
 Glad, like myself, to shun the heat of day.

CLARE.



NOW sweet the tuneful bells' responsive peal !
 As when, at opening morn, the fragrant breeze
 Breathes on the trembling sense of wan disease,
 So piercing to my heart their force I feel !
 And hark ! with lessening cadence now they fall,
 And now, along the white and level tide,
 They fling their melancholy music wide ;
 Bidding me many a tender thought recall,
 Of summer days, and those delightful years,
 When by my native streams, in life's fair prime,
 The mournful magic of their mingling chime
 First waked my wondering childhood into tears !
 But seeming now, when all those days are o'er,
 The sounds of joy once heard, and heard no more.

BOWLES.



Of all the murderous trades by mortals plied,
 'Tis War alone that never violates
 The hallow'd day by simulate respect,—
 By hypocritic rest: no, no, the work proceeds.

From sacred pinnacles are hung the flags,
 That give the sign to slip the leash from slaughter.
 The bells, whose knell a holy calmness pour'd
 Into the good man's breast,—whose sound solaced
 The sick, the poor, the old—perversion dire—
 Pealing with sulphurous tongue, speak death-fraught words:
 From morn to eve Destruction revels frenzied,
 Till, at the hour when peaceful vesper-chimes
 Were wont to soothe the ear, the trumpet sounds
 Pursuit and flight altern, and for the song
 Of larks, descending to their grass-bower'd homes,
 The croak of flesh-gorged ravens, as they slake
 Their thirst in hoof-prints fill'd with gore, disturbs
 The stupor of the dying man; while Death
 Triumphantlly sails down th' ensanguined stream,
 On corses throned, and crown'd with shiver'd boughs,
 That erst hung imaged in the crystal tide.

SUNDAYS.



RIGHT shadows of true rest! some shoots of bliss!
 Heaven once a week;
 The next world's gladness prepossess'd in this;
 A day to seek
 Eternity in time; the steps by which
 We climb above all ages; lamps that light
 Man through his heap of dark days; and the rich
 And full redemption of the whole week's flight:
 The pulleys unto headlong man; time's bower;
 The narrow way;
 Transplanted Paradise; God's walking hour;
 The cool o' the day;
 The creature's jubilee; God's parle with dust;
 Heaven here; man on those hills of myrrh. of flowers;
 Angels descending; the returns of trust;
 A gleam of glory after six days' showers;
 The Church's love-feasts; time's prerogative
 And interest
 Deducted from the whole; the combs and hive,
 And home of rest;
 The milky way chalk'd out with suns; a clue
 That guides through erring hours, and in full story;
 A taste of heaven on earth; the pledge and cue
 Of a full feast, and the out-courts of glory.

VAUGHAN.

THE SABBATH.



ORD of the Sabbath and its light!

I hail Thy hallow'd day of rest;
It is my weary soul's delight,
The solace of my care-worn breast.

Its dewy morn—its glowing noon—

Its tranquil eve—its solemn night—
Pass sweetly; but they pass too soon,
And leave me sadden'd at their flight.

Yet, sweetly as they glide along,

And hallow'd though the calm they yield;
Transporting though their rapturous song,
And heavenly visions seem reveal'd:

My soul is desolate and drear,

My silent harp untuned remains,
Unless, my Saviour, Thou art near,
To heal my wounds and soothe my pains.

Oh! ever, ever let me hail

Thy presence with Thy day of rest!
Then will Thy servant never fail
To deem Thy Sabbaths doubly blest.

AN EVENING HYMN.



OW many days, with mute adieu,
Have gone down yon untrodden sky
And still it looks as clear and blue
As when it first was hung on high.
The rolling sun, the frowning cloud,
That drew the lightning in its rear,
The thunder, tramping deep and loud,
Have left no footmark there.

The village bells, with silver chime,
Come soften'd by the distant shore ;
Though I have heard them many a time,
They never rung so sweet before.
A silence rests upon the hill,
A listening awe pervades the air :
The very flowers are shut, and still,
And bow'd as if in prayer.

And in this hush'd and breathless close,
O'er earth, and air, and sky, and sea,
That still low voice in silence goes,
Which speaks alone, great God ! of Thee.

The whispering leaves, the far-off brook,
The linnet's warble, fainter grown,
The hive-bound bee, the lonely rook,—
All these their Maker own.

Now shine the starry hosts of light,
Gazing on earth with golden eyes ;
Bright guardians of the blue-brow'd night !
What are ye in your native skies ?
I know not ! neither can I know.
Nor on what leader ye attend,
Nor whence ye came, nor whither go,
Nor what your aim or end.

I know they must be holy things,
That from a roof so sacred shine,
Where sounds the beat of angel-wings,
And footsteps echo all Divine.
Their mysteries I never sought,
Nor hearken'd to what Science tells ;
For oh ! in childhood I was taught
That God amidst them dwells.

The darkening woods, the fading trees,
The grasshopper's last feeble sound,
The flowers just waken'd by the breeze,—
All leave the stillness more profound.
The twilight takes a deeper shade,
The dusky pathways blacker grow.
And silence reigns in glen and glade, —
All, all is mute below.

And other eves, as sweet as this,
Will close upon as calm a day,
And, sinking down the deep abyss,
Will, like the last, be swept away ;
Until Eternity is gain'd,
That boundless sea without a shore,
That without Time for ever reign'd,
And will when Time 's no more.

Now Nature sinks in soft repose,
A living semblance of the grave ;
The dew steals noiseless on the rose,
The boughs have almost ceased to wave ;
The silent sky, the sleeping earth,
Tree, mountain, stream, the humble sod,
All tell from whom they had their birth,
And cry, " Behold a God ! "

THOMAS MILLER.

THE TIME FOR PRAYER.



HI ! is the time for prayer? --

With the first beams that light the morning sky,
Ere for the toils of day thou dost prepare,

Lift up thy thoughts on high ;

Commend thy loved ones to His watchful care : --

Morn is the time for prayer !

And in the noontide hour,

If worn by toil, or by sad cares opprest,

Then unto God thy spirit's sorrow pour,

And He will give thee rest ;

Thy voice shall reach Him through the fields of air : --

Noon is the time for prayer !

When the bright sun hath set,--

Whilst yet eve's glowing colours deck the skies ;--

When with the loved, at home, again thou 'st met,

Then let thy prayers arise

For those who in thy joys and sorrows share :--

Eve is the time for prayer !

And when the stars come forth,--

When to the trusting heart sweet hopes are given,

And the deep stillness of the hour gives birth

To pure bright dreams of heaven,--

Kneel to thy God,—ask strength life's ills to bear:—
Night is the time for prayer!

When is the time for prayer?—
In every hour, while life is spared to thee—
In crowds or solitude, in joy or care—
Thy thoughts should heavenward flee.
At home—at morn and eve—with loved ones there,
Bend thou the knee in prayer!

ANON.

SOCIAL WORSHIP.



HERE is a joy, which angels well may prize:—
To see, and hear, and aid God's worship, when
Unnumber'd tongues, a host of Christian men,
Youths, matrons, maidens, join. Their sounds arise
"Like many waters;" now glad symphonies
Of thanks and glory to our God; and then,
Seal of the social prayer, the loud Amen,
Faith's common pledge, contrition's mingled cries.
Thus, when the Church of Christ was hale and young,
She call'd on God, one spirit and one voice;
Thus, from corruption cleansed, with health new strung,
Her sons she nurtured. Oh! be theirs, by choice,
What duty bids, to worship, heart and tongue;
At once to pray, at once in God rejoice!

BP. MANT.

THE CURFEW BELL.

I.



SOLEMNLY, mournfully,
Dealing its dole,
The curfew bell
Is beginning to toll :

Cover the embers,
And put out the light ;
Toil comes with the morning,
And rest with the night.

Dark grow the windows,
And quench'd is the fire ;
Sound fades into silence,—
All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,
No sound in the hall ;
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all !

The book is completed,
And closed, like the day ;
And the hand that has written it
Lays it away.

Dim grow its fancies ;
Forgotten they lie ;
Like coals in the ashes,
They darken and die.

Song sinks into silence,
The story is told,
The windows are darken'd,
The hearth-stone is cold.

Darker and darker
The black shadows fall ;
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all.

LONGFELLOW.

FINIS.

