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**Golden Treasury Series**

SELECTED POEMS

OF

MATTHEW ARNOLD



SELECTED POEMS  
OF  
MATTHEW ARNOLD



London  
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1898

*Printed by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, June and October 1878*

*Reprinted 1880, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887*

*May and September 1888, 1889, 1890, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1898*

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## EARLY POEMS



## SONNETS.

### QUIET WORK.

ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,  
One lesson which in every wind is blown,  
One lesson of two duties kept at one  
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity !  
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows  
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,  
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry !

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,  
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,  
Still do thy quiet ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting ;  
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil ;  
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

## EARLY POEMS.

### TO A FRIEND.

WHO prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my  
mind?—

He much, the old man, who, clearest-soul'd of men,  
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,<sup>1</sup>  
And Tmolus hill, and Smyrna bay, though blind.

Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,  
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis  
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son  
Clear'd Rome of what most shamed him. But be his

My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,  
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,  
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild ;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole ;  
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,  
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

## SHAKESPEARE.

**O**THERS abide our question. Thou art free.  
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,  
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,  
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his stedfast footsteps in the sea,  
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,  
Spare but the cloudy border of his base  
To the foil'd searching of mortality ;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,  
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure.  
Didst tread on earth unguess'd at.—Better so !

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,  
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,  
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.



## TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848.

GOD knows it, I am with you. If to prize  
Those virtues, prized and practised by too few,  
But prized, but loved, but eminent in you,  
Man's fundamental life ; if to despise

The barren optimistic sophistries  
Of comfortable moles, whom what they do  
Teaches the limit of the just and true  
(And for such doing they require not eyes) ;

If sadness at the long heart-wasting show  
Wherein earth's great ones are disquieted ;  
If thoughts, not idle, while before me flow

The armies of the homeless and unfed—  
If these are yours, if this is what you are,  
Then am I yours, and what you feel, I share

## CONTINUED.

YET, when I muse on what life is, I seem  
Rather to patience prompted, than that proud  
Prospect of hope which France proclaims so loud—  
France, famed in all great arts, in none supreme ;

Seeing this vale, this earth, whereon we dream,  
Is on all sides o'ershadow'd by the high  
Uno'erleap'd Mountains of Necessity,  
Sparing us narrower margin than we deem.

Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,  
When, bursting through the network superposed  
By selfish occupation—plot and plan,

Lust, avarice, envy—liberated man,  
All difference with his fellow-mortal closed,  
Shall be left standing face to face with God.

## A QUESTION.

TO FAUSTA.

J OY comes and goes, hope ebbs and flows  
Like the wave ;  
Change doth unknit the tranquil strength of men  
Love lends life a little grace,  
A few sad smiles ; and then  
Both are laid in one cold place,  
In the grave.

Dreams dawn and fly, friends smile and die  
Like spring flowers ;  
Our vaunted life is one long funeral.  
Men dig graves with bitter tears  
For their dead hopes ; and all,  
Mazed with doubts and sick with fears,  
Count the hours.

We count the hours ! These dreams of ours  
False and hollow  
Do we go hence and find they are not dead ?  
Joys we dimly apprehend,  
Faces that smiled and fled,  
Hopes born here, and born to end,  
Shall we follow ?

## REQUIESCAT.

**S**TREW on her roses, roses,  
And never a spray of yew !  
In quiet she reposes ;  
Ah ! would that I did too.

Her mirth the world required ;  
She bathed it in smiles of glee.  
But her heart was tired, tired,  
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,  
In mazes of heat and sound ;  
But for peace her soul was yearning  
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,  
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath ;  
To-night it doth inherit  
The vasty hall of death.

## YOUTH AND CALM.

'TIS death ! and peace, indeed, is here,  
And ease from shame, and rest from fear;  
There's nothing can disarm now  
The smoothness of that limpid brow.  
But is a calm like this, in truth,  
The crowning end of life and youth,  
And when this boon rewards the dead.  
Are all debts paid, has all been said ?  
And is the heart of youth so light,  
Its step so firm, its eye so bright,  
Because on its hot brow there blows  
A wind of promise and repose  
From the far grave, to which it goes ;  
Because it has the hope to come,  
One day, to harbour in the tomb ?  
Ah no, the bliss youth dreams is one  
For daylight, for the cheerful sun,  
For feeling nerves and living breath—  
Youth dreams a bliss on this side death  
It dreams a rest, if not more deep,  
More grateful than this marble sleep ;

## YOUTH AND CALM.

It hears a voice within it tell :

*Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well.*

'Tis all perhaps which man acquires,

But 'tis not what our youth desires.

## A MEMORY-PICTURE.

L AUGH, my friends, and without blame  
Lightly quit what lightly came ;  
Rich to-morrow as to-day,  
Spend as madly as you may !  
I, with little land to stir,  
Am the exacter labourer.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Once I said : " A face is gone  
If too hotly mused upon ;  
And our best impressions are  
Those that do themselves repair."  
Many a face I so let flee,  
Ah ! is faded utterly.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Marguerite says : " As last year went,  
So the coming year 'll be spent ;  
Some day next year, I shall be,  
Entering heedless, kiss'd by thee."

Ah, I hope !—yet, once away,  
What may chain us, who can say ?  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint that lilac kerchief, bound  
Her soft face, her hair around ;  
Tied under the archest chin  
Mockery ever ambush'd in.  
Let the fluttering fringes streak  
All her pale, sweet-rounded cheek.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint that figure's pliant grace  
As she tow'rd me lean'd her face,  
Half refused and half resign'd,  
Murmuring : " Art thou still unkind ?"  
Many a broken promise then  
Was new made—to break again.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint those eyes, so blue, so kind,  
Eager tell-tales of her mind ;  
Paint, with their impetuous stress  
Of enquiring tenderness,



Those frank eyes, where deep I see  
An angelic gravity.

Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

What, my friends, these feeble lines  
Show, you say, my love declines ?  
To paint ill as I have done,  
Proves forgetfulness begun ?  
Time's gay minions, pleased you see,  
Time, your master, governs me ;  
Pleased, you mock the fruitless cry :  
" Quick, thy tablets, Memory ! "

Ah, too true ! Time's current strong  
Leaves us true to nothing long.  
Yet, if little stays with man,  
Ah, retain we all we can !  
If the clear impression dies,  
Ah, the pale remembrance prize !  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

## YOUTH'S AGITATIONS.

WHEN I shall be divorced, some ten years  
hence,

From this poor present self which I am now ;  
When youth has done its tedious vain expence  
Of passions that for ever ebb and flow ;

Shall I not joy youth's heats are left behind,  
And breathe more happy in an even clime ?—  
Ah no, for then I shall begin to find  
A thousand virtues in this hated time !

Then I shall wish its agitations back,  
And all its thwarting currents of desire ;  
Then I shall praise the heat which then I lack  
And call this hurrying fever, generous fire ;

And sigh that one thing only has been lent  
To youth and age in common—discontent.

## THE WORLD'S TRIUMPHS.

SO far as I conceive the world's rebuke  
To him address'd who would recast her new,  
Not from herself her fame of strength she took,  
But from their weakness who would work her rue.

"Behold," she cries, "so many rages lull'd,  
So many fiery spirits quite cool'd down ;  
Look how so many valours, long undull'd,  
After short commerce with me fear my frown !

Thou too, when thou against my crimes wouldst cry  
Let thy foreboded homage check thy tongue !" —  
The world speaks well ; yet might her foe reply :  
"Are wills so weak?—then let not mine wait long !

Hast thou so rare a poison?—let me be  
Keener to slay thee, lest thou poison me !"

STAGIRIUS.<sup>2</sup>

THOU, who dost dwell alone—  
Thou, who dost know thine own—  
Thou, to whom all are known  
From the cradle to the grave—

Save, oh ! save.

From the world's temptations,

From tribulations,

From that fierce anguish

Wherein we languish,

From that torpor deep

Wherein we lie asleep,

Heavy as death, cold as the grave,

Save, oh ! save.

When the soul, growing clearer,

Sees God no nearer ;

When the soul, mounting higher,

To God comes no nigher ;

But the arch-fiend Pride

Mounts at her side,

Foiling her high emprise,

Sealing her eagle eyes,

And, when she fain would **soar**,  
Makes idols to adore,  
Changing the pure emotion  
Of her high devotion,  
To a skin-deep sense  
Of her own eloquence ;  
**Strong to deceive, strong to enslave**  
Save, oh ! save.

From the ingrain'd fashion  
Of this earthly nature  
That mars thy creature ;  
From grief that is but passion,  
From mirth that is but feigning,  
From tears that bring no healing,  
From wild and weak complaining,  
Thine old strength revealing,  
Save, oh ! save.

From doubt, where all is double ;  
Where wise men are not strong,  
Where comfort turns to trouble,  
Where just men suffer wrong ;  
Where sorrow treads on joy,  
Where sweet things soonest cloy,  
Where faiths are built on dust,  
Where love is half mistrust,  
**Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea**  
Oh ! set us free.

O let the false dream fly  
Where our sick souls do lie  
Tossing continually !  
O where thy voice doth come  
Let all doubts be dumb,  
Let all words be mild,  
All strifes be reconciled,  
All pains beguiled !  
Light bring no blindness,  
Love no unkindness,  
Knowledge no ruin,  
Fear no undoing !  
From the cradle to the grave,  
Save, oh ! save.

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE  
SEA-SHORE,

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN.

WHO taught this pleading to unpractised eyes?  
Who hid such import in an infant's gloom?  
Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise?  
Who mass'd, round that slight brow these cloud  
of doom?

Lo ! sails that gleam a moment and are gone ;  
The swinging waters, and the cluster'd pier.  
Not idly Earth and Ocean labour on,  
Nor idly do these sea-birds hover near.

But thou, whom superfluity of joy  
Wafts not from thine own thoughts, nor longings  
vain,  
Nor weariness, the full-fed soul's annoy—  
Remaining in thy hunger and thy pain ;

Thou, drugging pain by patience ; half averse  
From thine own mother's breast, that knows not  
    thee ;  
With eyes which sought thine eyes thou didst converse,  
And that soul-searching vision fell on me.

Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known :  
Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth.  
Thy sorrow and thy calmness are thine own :  
Glooms that enhance and glorify this earth.

What mood wears like complexion to thy woe ?  
His, who in mountain glens, at noon of day,  
Sits rapt, and hears the battle break below ?  
—Ah ! thine was not the shelter, but the fray.

Some exile's, mindful how the past was glad ?  
Some angel's, in an alien planet born ?  
—No exile's dream was ever half so sad,  
Nor any angel's sorrow so forlorn.

Is the calm thine of stoic souls, who weigh  
Life well, and find it wanting, nor deplore ;  
But in disdainful silence turn away,  
Stand mute, self-centred, stern, and dream no more :



Or do I wait, to hear some grey-hair'd king  
Unravel all his many-colour'd lore ;  
Whose mind hath known all arts of governing,  
Mused much, loved life a little, loathed it more ?

Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,  
Which years, and curious thought, and suffering  
give.

—Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope,  
Foreseen thy harvest,—yet proceed'st to live.

O meek anticipant of that sure pain  
Whose sureness grey-hair'd scholars hardly learn !  
What wonder shall time breed, to swell thy strain ?  
What heavens, what earth, what suns shalt thou  
discern ?

Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star,  
Match that funereal aspect with her pall,  
I think, thou wilt have fathom'd life too far,  
Have known too much—or else forgotten all.

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil  
Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps ;  
Hath sown with cloudless passages the tale  
Of grief, and eased us with a thousand sleeps.

Ah ! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,  
Not daily labour's dull, Lethæan spring,  
Oblivion in lost angels can infuse  
Of the soil'd glory, and the trailing wing ;

And though thou glean, what strenuous gleaners  
may,  
In the throng'd fields where winning comes by  
strife ;  
And though the just sun gild, as mortals pray,  
Some reaches of thy storm-vest stream of life ;

Though that blank sunshine blind thee ; though the  
cloud  
That sever'd the world's march and thine, be gone ;  
Though ease dulls grace, and Wisdom be too proud  
To halve a lodging that was all her own—

Once, ere the day decline, thou shalt discern,  
Oh once, ere night, in thy success, thy chain !  
Ere the long evening close, thou shalt return,  
And wear this majesty of grief again.



## NARRATIVE POEMS.



SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.<sup>9</sup>*An Episode.*

AND the first grey of morning fill'd the east,  
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.  
But all the Tartar camp along the stream  
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep.  
Sohrab alone, he slept not ; all night long  
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed ;  
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,  
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,  
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,  
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,  
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which  
stood  
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand  
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow  
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere ;  
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low  
strand,  
And to a hillock came, a little back

From the stream's brink—the spot where first a  
boat,

Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.  
The men of former times had crown'd the top  
With a clay fort ; but that was fall'n, and now  
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,  
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.  
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood  
Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,  
And found the old man sleeping on his bed  
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.  
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step  
Was dull'd ; for he slept light, an old man's sleep ;  
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said :—

“ Who art thou ? for it is not yet clear dawn.  
Speak ! is there news, or any night alarm ? ”

But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said :—  
“ Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa ! it is I.  
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe  
Sleep ; but I sleep not ; all night long I lie  
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.  
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek  
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,  
In Samarcand, before the army march'd ;  
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.  
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first  
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,

I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,  
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.  
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on  
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,  
And beat the Persians back on every field,  
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—  
Rustum, my father ; who I hoped should greet,  
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field.  
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.  
So I long hoped, but him I never find.  
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.  
Let the two armies rest to-day ; but I  
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords  
To meet me, man to man ; if I prevail,  
Rustum will surely hear it ; if I fall—  
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.  
Dim is the rumour of a common fight,  
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk ;  
But of a single combat fame speaks clear.”

He spoke ; and Peran-Wisa took the hand  
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said :—

“ O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine !  
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,  
And share the battle's common chance with us  
Who love thee, but must press for ever first  
In single fight incurring single risk,  
To find a father thou hast never seen ?



That were far best, my son, to stay with us  
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,  
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.  
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,  
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight !  
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,  
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son !  
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.  
For now it is not as when I was young,  
When Rustum was in front of every fray :  
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,  
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.  
Whether that his own mighty strength at last  
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age ;  
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.  
There go !—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart fore-  
bodes

Danger or death awaits thee on this field.  
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost  
To us ; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace  
To seek thy father, not seek single fights  
In vain ;—but who can keep the lion's cub  
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son ?  
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires.”

So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left  
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay ;  
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat

He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,  
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took  
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword ;  
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,  
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul :  
And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd  
His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog  
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.  
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed  
Into the open plain ; so Haman bade—  
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled  
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.  
From their black tents, long files of horse, they  
stream'd ;

As when some grey November morn the files,  
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes  
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes  
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,  
Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound  
For the warm Persian sea-board—so they stream'd.  
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,  
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long  
spears ;

Large men, large steeds ; who from Bokhara come  
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.  
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south

The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,  
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands ;  
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink  
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.  
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came  
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd ;  
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks  
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards  
And close-set skull-caps ; and those wilder hordes  
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,  
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray  
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,  
Who came on shaggy ponies from Pamere ;  
These all filed out from camp into the plain.  
And on the other side the Persians form'd ;—  
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,  
The Ilyats of Khorassan ; and behind,  
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,  
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.  
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,  
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,  
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.  
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw  
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,  
He took his spear, and to the front he came,  
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they  
stood.

And the old Tartar came upon the sand  
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said :—

“Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear !  
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.  
But choose a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.”

As, in the country, on a morn in June,  
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,  
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—  
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,  
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran  
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,  
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,  
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow  
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass  
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,  
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves  
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—  
In single file they move, and stop their breath,  
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging  
snows—

So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up  
To counsel ; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,  
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host  
Second, and was the uncle of the King ;

These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz  
said :—

“ Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up  
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
But Rustum came last night ; aloof he sits  
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.  
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear  
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name ;  
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.  
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.”

So spake he ; and Ferood stood forth and  
cried :—

“ Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said !  
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.”

He spake ; and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode  
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.  
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,  
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and  
reach'd,

Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.  
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,  
Just pitch'd ; the high pavilion in the midst  
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.  
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found  
Rustum ; his morning meal was done, but still  
The table stood before him, charged with food—

A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,  
And dark green melons ; and there Rustum sate  
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,  
And play'd with it ; but Gudurz came and stood  
Before him ; and he look'd, and saw him stand,  
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,  
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said :—

“ Welcome ! these eyes could see no better sight.  
What news ? but sit down first, and eat and drink.”

But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said :—  
“ Not now ! a time will come to eat and drink,  
But not to-day ; to-day has other needs.  
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze ;  
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought  
To pick a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his  
name—

Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.  
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's !  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart ;  
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,  
Or else too weak ; and all eyes turn to thee.  
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose !”

He spoke ; but Rustum answer'd with a smile :—  
“ Go to ! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I  
Am older ; if the young are weak, the King  
Errs strangely ; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,

Himself is young, and honours younger men,  
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.  
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—  
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.  
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?  
For would that I myself had such a son,  
And not that one slight helpless girl I have—  
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,  
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,  
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,  
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,  
And he has none to guard his weak old age.  
There would I go, and hang my armour up,  
And with my great name fence that weak old man,  
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,  
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,  
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,  
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no  
more."

He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:—  
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,  
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks  
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,  
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:  
*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,  
And shuns to peril it with younger men.*"

And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:—

“O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?  
Thou knowest better words than this to say.  
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,  
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?  
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?  
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?  
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!  
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;  
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd  
In single fight with any mortal man.”

He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and  
ran

Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy--  
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.  
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd  
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,  
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose  
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,  
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,  
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume  
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.  
So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,  
Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel--  
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the  
earth,  
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once  
Did in Bokhara by the river find



A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,  
And rear'd him ; a bright bay, with lofty crest,  
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green  
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd  
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.  
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd  
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.  
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts  
Hail'd ; but the Tartars knew not who he was.  
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes  
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,  
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,  
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,  
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,  
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—  
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.

And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,  
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.  
And as afield the reapers cut a swath  
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,  
And on each side are squares of standing corn,  
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare—  
So on each side were squares of men, with spears  
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.  
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast  
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw  
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,  
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge  
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—  
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,  
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-  
panes—

And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts  
Of that poor drudge may be ; so Rustum eyed  
The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar  
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth  
All the most valiant chiefs ; long he perused  
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.  
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd ;  
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and  
straight,

Which in a queen's secluded garden throws  
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,  
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—  
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.  
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul  
As he beheld him coming ; and he stood,  
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said :—

“ O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,  
And warm, and pleasant ; but the grave is cold !  
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.  
Behold me ! I am vast, and clad in iron,  
And tried : and I have stood on many a field

Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—  
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.  
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?  
Be govern'd ! quit the Tartar host, and come  
To Iran, and be as my son to me,  
And fight beneath my banner till I die !  
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."

So he spake, mildly ; Sohrab heard his voice,  
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw  
His giant figure planted on the sand,  
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief  
Hath builded on the waste in former years  
Against the robbers ; and he saw that head,  
Streak'd with its first grey hairs ;—hope filled his  
soul,

And he ran forward and embraced his knees,  
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said :—

" Oh, by thy father's head ! by thine own soul !  
Art thou not Rustum ? speak ! art thou not he ? "

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,  
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul :—

" Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean  
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.  
For if I now confess this thing he asks,  
And hide it not, but say : *Rustum is here !*  
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,  
But he will find some pretext not to fight,

And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,  
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.  
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,  
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry :  
' I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd  
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords .  
To cope with me in single fight ; but they  
Shrank, only Rustum dared ; then he and I  
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'  
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud ;  
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."

And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud :—  
" Rise ! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus  
Of Rustum ? I am here, whom thou hast call'd  
By challenge forth ; make good thy vaunt, or yield !  
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight ?  
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee !  
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand  
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,  
There would be then no talk of fighting more.  
But being what I am, I tell thee this—  
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul :  
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,  
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds  
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,  
Oxus in summer wash them all away."

He spoke ; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet :—

"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so !  
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.  
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand  
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.  
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.  
Begin ! thou art more vast, more dread than I,  
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—  
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.  
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure  
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.  
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,  
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,  
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.  
And whether it will heave us up to land,  
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,  
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,  
We know not, and no search will make us know ;  
Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd  
His spear ; down from the shoulder, down it came  
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,  
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,  
Drops like a plummet ; Sohrab saw it come,  
And sprang aside, quick as a flash ; the spear  
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,  
Which it sent flying wide ;—then Sohrab threw  
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield ; sharp rang

The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.  
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he  
Could wield ; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,  
Still rough—like those which men in treeless plains  
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,  
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up  
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time  
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,  
And strewn the channels with torn boughs—so  
huge

The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck  
One stroke ; but again Sohrab sprang aside,  
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came  
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's  
hand.

And Rustum followed his own blow, and fell  
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the  
sand ;

And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,  
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay  
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand ;  
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,  
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said :—

“Thou strik'st too hard ! that club of thine will  
float

Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.

But rise, and be not wroth ! not wroth am I ;

No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.  
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum ; be it so !  
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul ?  
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too—  
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,  
And heard their hollow roar of dying men ;  
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.  
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the  
heart ?

O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven !  
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,  
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,  
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,  
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.  
'There are enough foes in the Persian host,  
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang ;  
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou  
Mayst fight ; fight *them*, when they confront thy  
spear !

But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me !”

He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had  
risen,

And stood erect, trembling with rage ; his club  
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,  
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand  
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star  
The baleful sign of fevers ; dust had soil'd

His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.  
His breast heaved, his lips foam'd, and twice his  
voice  
Was choked with rage ; at last these words broke  
way :—

“ Girl ! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands !  
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words !  
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more !  
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now  
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to  
dance ;

But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance  
Of battle, and with me, who make no play  
Of war ; I fight it out, and hand to hand.  
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine !  
Remember all thy valour ; try thy feints  
And cunning ! all the pity I had is gone ;  
Because thou hast shamed me before both the  
hosts

With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles.”

He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,  
And fiercely drew his sword ; at once they rush'd  
Together, as two eagles on one prey  
Come rushing down together from the clouds,  
One from the east, one from the west ; their shields  
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din  
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters



Make often in the forest's heart at morn,  
Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows  
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.  
And you would say that sun and stars took part  
In that unnatural conflict ; for a cloud  
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun  
Over the fighters' heads ; and a wind rose  
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,  
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.  
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone  
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand  
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,  
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.  
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes  
And labouring breath ; first Rustum struck the  
shield  
Which Sohrab held stiff out ; the steel-spiked spear  
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,  
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.  
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,  
Nor clove its steel quite through ; but all the crest  
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,  
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust ;  
And Rustum bow'd his head ; but then the gloom  
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,  
And lightnings rent the cloud ; and Ruksh, the  
horse,

Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry —  
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar  
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day  
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,  
And comes at night to die upon the sand—  
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,  
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.  
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,  
And struck again ; and again Rustum bow'd  
His head ; but this time all the blade, like glass,  
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,  
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.  
Then Rustum raised his head ; his dreadful eyes  
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,  
And shouted : *Rustum !*—Sohrab heard that shout,  
And shrank amazed ; back he recoil'd one step,  
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form,  
And then he stood bewilder'd, and he dropp'd  
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side  
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground  
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,  
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all  
The cloud ; and the two armies saw the pair ;—  
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,  
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began : —  
“Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill

A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,  
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.  
Or else that the great Rustum would come down  
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move  
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.  
And then that all the Tartar host would praise  
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,  
To glad thy father in his weak old age.  
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man !  
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be  
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied :—  
"Unknown thou art ; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain  
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man !  
No ! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.  
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,  
And I were that which till to-day I was,  
They should be lying here, I standing there.  
But that belovéd name unnerved my arm—  
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,  
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield  
Fall ; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.  
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.  
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear :  
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death !  
My father, whom I seek through all the world,  
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee !"

As when some hunter in the spring hath found  
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,  
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,  
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,  
And follow'd her to find her where she fell  
Far off ;—anon her mate comes winging back  
From hunting, and a great way off describes  
His huddling young left sole ; at that, he checks  
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps  
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams  
Chiding his mate back to her nest ; but she  
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,  
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,  
A heap of fluttering feathers—never more  
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it ;  
Never the black and dripping precipices  
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by—  
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss.  
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood  
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

And with a cold, incredulous voice, he said :—  
“ What prate is this of fathers and revenge ?  
The mighty Rustum never had a son.”

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied :—  
“ Ah yes, he had ! and that lost son am I.  
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,  
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long.

Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here ;  
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap  
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.  
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son !  
What will that grief, what will that vengeance  
be ?

Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen !  
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,  
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells  
With that old king, her father, who grows grey  
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.  
Her most I pity, who no more will see  
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,  
With spoils and honour, when the war is done ;  
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,  
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear ;  
And then will that defenceless woman learn  
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,  
But that in battle with a nameless foe,  
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."

He spoke ; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,  
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.  
He spoke ; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.  
Nor did he yet believe it was his son  
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he  
knew ;  
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,

Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,  
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—  
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear  
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.  
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,  
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son ;  
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.  
So deem'd he ; yet he listen'd, plunged in thought ;  
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide  
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore  
At the full moon ; tears gather'd in his eyes ;  
For he remember'd his own early youth  
And all its bounding rapture ; as, at dawn,  
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries  
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,  
Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw  
His youth ; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom ;  
And that old king, her father, who loved well  
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child  
With joy ; and all the pleasant life they led,  
They three, in that long distant summer-time—  
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt  
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills  
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,  
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,  
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,  
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe

Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,  
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,  
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,  
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,  
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.  
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said :—

“ O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son  
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have  
loved !

Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men  
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum’s son.  
For Rustum had no son ; one child he had—  
But one—a girl ; who with her mother now  
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—  
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.”

But Sohrab answer’d him in wrath ; for now  
The anguish of the deep-fix’d spear grew fierce,  
And he desired to draw forth the steel,  
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—  
But first he would convince his stubborn foe ;  
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said :—

“ Man, who art thou who dost deny my words ?  
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,  
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.  
I tell thee, prick’d upon this arm I bear  
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,  
That she might prick it on the babe she bore.

He spoke ; and all the blood left Rustum's  
cheeks,

And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand  
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,  
That the hard iron corselet clank'd aloud ;  
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,  
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said :—

“ Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie !  
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son.”

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed  
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,  
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points  
Prick'd ; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,  
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,  
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,  
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp  
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—  
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd  
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.  
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,  
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,  
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks ;  
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and  
loved—

Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.  
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,  
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,



And then he touch'd it with his hand and said :—

“How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign  
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?”

He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and  
stood

Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry :

*O boy—thy father!*—and his voice choked there.

And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,

And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.

But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast

His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,

And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,

Trying to call him back to life; and life

Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,

And they stood wide with horror; and he seized

In both his hands the dust which lay around,

And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,—

His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms :

And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,

And his sobs choked him; and he clutch'd his

sword,

To draw it, and for ever let life out.

But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,

And with a soothing voice he spake, and said :—

“Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day

The doom which at my birth was written down

In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious  
hand.

Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,  
When first I saw thee ; and thy heart spoke too,  
I know it ! but fate trod those promptings down  
Under its iron heel ; fate, fate engaged  
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.  
But let us speak no more of this ! I find  
My father ; let me feel that I have found !  
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take  
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,  
And wash them with thy tears, and say : *My son !*  
Quick ! quick ! for number'd are my sands of life,  
And swift ; for like the lightning to this field  
I came, and like the wind I go away—  
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind ;  
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."

So said he, and his voice released the heart  
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth ; he cast  
His arm's round his son's neck, and wept aloud,  
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,  
When they saw Rustum's grief ; and Ruksh, the  
horse,

With his head bowing to the ground and mane  
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe  
First to the one then to the other moved  
His head, as if enquiring what their grief  
Might mean ; and from his dark, compassionate  
eyes,

The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.

But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said :—

“Ruksh, now thou grievest ; but, O Ruksh, thy feet

Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,  
Or ere they brought thy master to this field !”

But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said :—

“Is this, then, Ruksh ? How often, in past days,  
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,  
My terrible father's terrible horse ! and said,  
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.  
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane !  
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I ;  
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,  
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.  
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,  
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake  
Of Zirrah ; and the aged Zal himself  
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,  
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,  
And said : ‘ *O Ruksh ! bear Rustum well !* ’—but I  
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,  
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,  
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream  
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen  
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,

Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,  
And the black Toorkmun tents ; and only drunk  
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,  
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,  
The northern Sir ; and this great Oxus stream,  
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd :—  
" Oh, that its waves were flowing over me !  
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt  
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head !"

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied :  
" Desire not that, my father ! thou must live.  
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,  
As some are born to be obscured, and die.  
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,  
And reap a second glory in thine age ;  
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.  
But come ! thou seest this great host of men  
Which follow me ; I pray thee, slay not these !  
Let me entreat for them ; what have they done ?  
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,  
But carry me with thee to Seistan,  
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,  
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.  
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,

And heap a stately mound above my bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.  
That so the passing horseman on the waste  
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry :  
*Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,*  
*Whom his great father did in ignorance kill !*  
And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied :  
" Fear not ! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,  
So shall it be ; for I will burn my tents,  
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me.  
And carry thee away to Seistan,  
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,  
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.  
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,  
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,  
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.  
And I will spare thy host ; yea, let them go !  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace !  
What should I do with slaying any more ?  
For would that all whom I have ever slain  
Might be once more alive—my bitterest foes,  
And they who were call'd champions in their time,  
And through whose death I won that fame I have—  
And I were nothing but a common man,  
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown.

So thou mightest live too, my son, my son !  
Or rather would that I, even I myself,  
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,  
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,  
Not thou of mine ! and I might die, not thou ;  
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan ;  
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine ;  
And say : *O son, I weep thee not too sore,  
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end !*  
But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
And full of blood and battles is my age,  
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied :—  
" A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man !  
But thou shalt yet have peace ; only not now,  
Not yet ! but thou shalt have it on that day,  
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,  
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,  
Returning home over the salt blue sea,  
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said :  
" Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea !  
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke ; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took  
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased  
His wound's imperious anguish ; but the blood  
Came welling from the open gash, and life

Flow'd with the stream ;—all down his cold white  
side

The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,  
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets  
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,  
By children whom their nurses call with haste  
Indoors from the sun's eye ; his head droop'd low,  
His limbs grew slack ; motionless, white, he lay—  
White, with eyes closed ; only when heavy gasps,  
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,  
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,  
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face ;  
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs  
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,  
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,  
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead ;  
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak  
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.  
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd  
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear  
His house, now mid their broken flights of steps  
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—  
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste,  
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,  
And darken'd all ; and a cold fog, with night.

Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,  
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires  
Began to twinkle through the fog ; for now  
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal ;  
The Persians took it on the open sands  
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge ;  
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,  
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,  
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,  
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasman waste,  
Under the solitary moon ;—he flow'd  
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,  
Brimming, and bright, and large ; then sands begin  
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,  
And split his currents ; that for many a league  
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along  
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—  
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had  
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,  
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last  
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide  
His luminous home of waters opens, bright  
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars  
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.



## TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.

## I.

*Tristram.**Tristram.*

IS she not come? The messenger was sure.  
 Prop me upon the pillows once again—  
 Raise me, my page! this cannot long endure.  
 —Christ, what a night! how the sleet whips the  
     pane!  
 What lights will those out to the northward be?

*The Page.*

The lanterns of the fishing-boats at sea.

*Tristram.*

Soft—who is that, stands by the dying fire?

*The Page.*

Iseult.

*Tristram.*

Ah! not the Iseult I desire.

\* \* \* \*

What Knight is this so weak and pale.

Though the locks are yet brown on his noble head,  
Propt on pillows in his bed,  
Gazing seaward for the light  
Of some ship that fights the gale  
On this wild December night?  
Over the sick man's feet is spread  
A dark green forest-dress ;  
A gold harp leans against the bed,  
Ruddy in the fire's light.  
I know him by his harp of gold,  
Famous in Arthur's court of old ;  
I know him by his forest-dress—  
The peerless hunter, harper, knight.  
Tristram of Lyonesse.

What Lady is this, whose silk attire  
Gleams so rich in the light of the fire?  
The ringlets on her shoulders lying  
In their flitting lustre vying  
With the clasp of burnish'd gold  
Which her heavy robe doth hold.  
Her looks are sweet, her fingers slight  
As the driven snow are white ;  
But her cheeks are sunk and pale.  
Is it that the bleak sea-gale  
Beating from the Atlantic sea  
On this coast of Brittany,  
Nips too keenly the sweet flower?

Is it that a deep fatigue  
Hath come on her, a chilly fear  
Passing all her youthful hour  
Spinning with her maidens here,  
Listlessly through the window-bars  
Gazing seawards many a league  
From her lonely shore-built tower,  
While the knights are at the wars?  
Or, perhaps, has her young heart  
Felt already some deeper smart  
Of those that in secret the heart-strings rive,  
Leaving her sunk and pale, though fair?  
Who is this snowdrop by the sea?—  
I know her by her mildness rare,  
Her snow-white hands, her golden hair;  
I know her by her rich silk dress,  
And her fragile loveliness—  
The sweetest Christian soul alive,  
Iseult of Brittany.

Iseult of Brittany?—but where  
Is that other Iseult fair,  
That proud, first Iseult, Cornwall's queen?  
She, whom Tristram's ship of yore  
From Ireland to Cornwall bore,  
To Tyntagel, to the side  
Of King Marc, to be his bride?  
She who, as they voyaged, quaff'd

With Tristram that spiced magic draught,  
Which since then for ever rolls  
Through their blood, and binds their souls,  
Working love, but working teen?—  
There were two Iseults who did sway  
Each her hour of Tristram's day ;  
But one possess'd his waning time,  
The other his resplendent prime.  
Behold her here, the patient flower,  
Who possess'd his darker hour !  
Iseult of the Snow-White Hand  
Watches pale by Tristram's bed.  
She is here who had his gloom,  
Where art thou who hadst his bloom ?  
One such kiss as those of yore  
Might thy dying knight restore !  
Does the love-draught work no more ?  
Art thou cold, or false, or dead,  
Iseult of Ireland ?

\* \* \* \*

Loud howls the wind, sharp patters the rain,  
And the knight sinks back on his pillows again.  
He is weak with fever and pain,  
And his spirit is not clear ;  
Hark ! he mutters in his sleep,  
As he wanders far from here,  
Changes place and time of year,

And his closéd eye doth sweep  
O'er some fair unwintry sea,  
Not this fierce Atlantic deep,  
While he mutters brokenly :—

*Tristram.*

The calm sea shines, loose hang the vessel's sails  
Before us are the sweet green fields of Wales,  
And overhead the cloudless sky of May.—

*“ Ah, would I were in those green fields at play,  
Not pent on ship-board this delicious day !*

*Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,  
Reach me my golden cup that stands by thee,  
But pledge me in it first for courtesy.—”*

Ha ! dost thou start ? are thy lips blanch'd like mine ?  
Child, 'tis no true draught this, 'tis poison'd wine !  
Iseult ! . . . .

\*                      \*                      \*

Ah, sweet angels, let him dream !  
Keep his eyelids ! let him seem  
Not this fever-wasted wight  
Thinn'd and paled before his time,  
But the brilliant youthful knight  
In the glory of his prime,  
Sitting in the gilded barge,  
At thy side, thou lovely charge,  
Bending gaily o'er thy hand.

Iseult of Ireland !

And she too, that princess fair,

If her bloom be now less rare,

Let her have her youth again —

Let her be as she was then !

Let her have her proud dark eyes.

And her petulant quick replies—

Let her sweep her dazzling hand

With its gesture of command,

And shake back her raven hair

With the old imperious air !

As of old, so let her be,

That first Iseult, princess bright,

Chatting with her youthful knight

As he steers her o'er the sea,

Quitting at her father's will

The green isle where she was bred,

And her bower in Ireland,

For the surge-beat Cornish strand :

Where the prince whom she must wed

Dwells on loud Tyntagel's hill,

High above the sounding sea.

And that phial rare her mother

Gave her, that her future lord,

Gave her, that King Marc and she,

Might drink it on their marriage-day,

And for ever love each other—

Let her, as she sits on board,  
Ah, sweet saints, unwittingly !  
See it shine, and take it up,  
And to Tristram laughing say :  
“ Sir Tristram, of thy courtesy,  
Pledge me in my golden cup ! ”  
Let them drink it—let their hands  
Tremble, and their cheeks be flame,  
As they feel the fatal bands  
Of a love they dare not name,  
With a wild delicious pain,  
Twine about their hearts again !  
Let the early summer be  
Once more round them, and the sea  
Blue, and o’er its mirror kind  
Let the breath of the May-wind,  
Wandering through their drooping sails,  
Die on the green fields of Wales !  
Let a dream like this restore  
What his eye must see no more !

*Tristram.*

Chill blows the wind, the pleasaunce-walks are  
drear—  
Madcap, what jest was this, to meet me here ?  
Were feet like those made for so wild a way ?  
The southern winter-parlour, by my fay,

Had been the likeliest trysting-place to-day !—

*“ Tristram !—nay, nay—thou must not take my hand !—*

*Tristram !—sweet love !—we are betrayed—out-plann’d.*

*Fly—save thyself—save me !—I dare not stay.”—*

One last kiss first !—*“ ’Tis vain—to horse—away !’*

\* \* \* \*

Ah ! sweet saints, his dream doth move  
Faster surely than it should,  
From the fever in his blood !  
All the spring-time of his love  
Is already gone and past,  
And instead thereof is seen  
Its winter, which endureth still—  
Tyntagel on its surge-beat hill,  
The pleasaunce-walks, the weeping queen.  
The flying leaves, the straining blast,  
And that long, wild kiss—their last.  
And this rough December-night,  
And his burning fever-pain,  
Mingle with his hurrying dream,  
Till they rule it, till he seem  
The press’d fugitive again,  
The love-desperate banish’d knight  
With a fire in his brain  
Flying o’er the stormy main.



—Whither does he wander now ?  
Haply in his dreams the wind  
Wafts him here, and lets him find  
The lovely orphan child again  
In her castle by the coast ;  
The youngest, fairest chatelaine,  
That this realm of France can boast,  
Our snowdrop by the Atlantic sea,  
Iseult of Brittany.  
And—for through the haggard air,  
The stain'd arms, the matted hair  
Of that stranger-knight ill-starr'd,  
There gleam'd something, which recall'd  
The Tristram who in better days  
Was Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard—  
Welcomed here, and here install'd,  
Tended of his fever here,  
Haply he seems again to move  
His young guardian's heart with love ;  
In his exiled loneliness,  
In his stately, deep distress,  
Without a word, without a tear.  
—Ah ! 'tis well he should retrace  
His tranquil life in this lone place ;  
His gentle bearing at the side  
Of his timid youthful bride,  
His long rambles by the shore

On winter-evenings, when the roar  
Of the near waves came, sadly grand,  
Through the dark, up the drown'd sand ;  
Or his endless reveries  
In the woods, where the gleams play  
On the grass under the trees,  
Passing the long summer's day  
Idle as a mossy stone  
In the forest-depths alone,  
The chase neglected, and his hound  
Couch'd beside him on the ground.  
—Ah ! what trouble's on his brow ?  
Hither let him wander now ;  
Hither, to the quiet hours  
Pass'd among these heaths of ours  
By the grey Atlantic sea ;  
Hours, if not of ecstasy,  
From violent anguish surely free !

*Tristram.*

All red with blood the whirling river flows,  
The wide plain rings, the dazed air throbs with blows.  
Upon us are the chivalry of Rome !  
Their spears are down, their steeds are bathed in  
foam.  
“ Up, Tristram, up,” men cry, “ thou moonstruck  
knight !

What foul fiend rides thee? On into the fight!"  
—Above the din her voice is in my ears;  
I see her form glide through the crossing spears.—  
Iseult! . . . .

\* \* \* \*

Ah! he wanders forth again;  
We cannot keep him; now, as then,  
There's a secret in his breast  
Which will never let him rest.  
These musing fits in the green wood,  
They cloud the brain, they dull the blood!  
—His sword is sharp, his horse is good;  
Beyond the mountains will he see  
The famous towns of Italy,  
And label with the blessed sign  
The heathen Saxons on the Rhine.  
At Arthur's side he fights once more  
With the Roman Emperor.  
There's many a gay knight where he goes  
Will help him to forget his care;  
The march, the leaguer, Heaven's blithe air,  
The neighing steeds, the ringing blows—  
Sick pining comes not where these are.  
—Ah! what boots it, that the jest  
Lightens every other brow,  
What, that every other breast  
Dances as the trumpets blow.

If one's own heart beats not light  
On the waves of the toss'd fight,  
If oneself cannot get free  
From the clog of misery?  
Thy lovely youthful wife grows pale  
Watching by the salt sea-tide  
With her children at her side  
For the gleam of thy white sail.  
Home, Tristram, to thy halls again !  
To our lonely sea complain,  
To our forests tell thy pain !

*Tristram.*

All round the forest sweeps off, black in shade ;  
But it is moonlight in the open glade.  
And in the bottom of the glade shine clear  
The forest-chapel and the fountain near.  
—I think, I have a fever in my blood ;  
Come, let me leave the shadow of this wood,  
Ride down, and bathe my hot brow in the flood.  
—Mild shines the cold spring in the moon's clear  
light.  
God ! 'tis *her* face plays in the waters bright.  
“Fair love,” she says, “canst thou forget so soon,  
At this soft hour, under this sweet moon ?”  
Iseult ! . . . .

Ah, poor soul ! if this be so,  
Only death can balm thy woe.  
The solitudes of the green wood  
Had no medicine for thy mood ;  
The rushing battle clear'd thy blood  
As little as did solitude.  
—Ah ! his eyelids slowly break  
Their hot seals, and let him wake ;  
What new change shall we now see ?  
A happier ? Worse it cannot be.

*Tristram.*

Is my page here ? Come, turn me to the fire !  
Upon the window-panes the moon shines bright ;  
The wind is down—but she'll not come to-night.  
Ah no ! she is asleep in Cornwall now,  
Far hence ; her dreams are fair—smooth is her brow.  
Of me she recks not, nor my vain desire.  
—I have had dreams, I have had dreams, my page,  
Would take a score years from a strong man's age ;  
And with a blood like mine, will leave, I fear,  
Scant leisure for a second messenger.  
—My princess, art thou there ? Sweet, 'tis too late !  
To bed, and sleep ! my fever is gone by ;  
To-night my page shall keep me company.  
Where do the children sleep ? kiss them for me !  
Poor child, thou art almost as pale as I ;

This comes of nursing long and watching late.  
To bed—good-night !

\*                    \*                    \*

She left the gleam-lit fire-place,  
She came to the bed-side ;  
She took his hands in hers—her tears  
Down on her slender fingers rain'd.  
She raised her eyes upon his face—  
Not with a look of wounded pride,  
A look as if the heart complain'd—  
Her look was like a sad embrace ;  
The gaze of one who can divine  
A grief, and sympathise.  
Sweet flower ! thy children's eyes  
Are not more innocent than thine.

But they sleep in shelter'd rest,  
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,  
On the castle's southern side ;  
Where feebly comes the mournful roar  
Of buffeting wind and surging tide  
Through many a room and corridor.  
—Full on their window the moon's ray  
Makes their chamber as bright as day.  
It shines upon the blank white walls,  
And on the snowy pillow falls,  
And on two angel-heads doth play

Turn'd to each other—the eyes closed,  
The lashes on the cheeks reposed.  
Round each sweet brow the cap close-set  
Hardly lets peep the golden hair ;  
Through the soft-open'd lips the air  
Scarcely moves the coverlet.  
One little wandering arm is thrown  
At random on the counterpane,  
And often the fingers close in haste  
As if their baby-owner chased  
The butterflies again.  
This stir they have, and this alone ;  
But else they are so still !  
—Ah, tired madcaps ! you lie still ;  
But were you at the window now,  
To look forth on the fairy sight  
Of your illumined haunts by night,  
To see the park-glades where you play  
Far lovelier than they are by day,  
To see the sparkle on the eaves,  
And upon every giant-bough  
Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves  
Are jewell'd with bright drops of rain—  
How would your voices run again !  
And far beyond the sparkling trees  
Of the castle-park one sees  
The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,

Moor behind moor, far, far away,  
Into the heart of Brittany.  
And here and there, lock'd by the land,  
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,  
And many a stretch of watery sand  
All shining in the white moon-beams—  
But you see fairer in your dreams !

What voices are these on the clear night air?  
What lights in the court--what steps on the stair?



## TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.

## II.

*Iseult of Ireland.**Tristram.*

RAISE the light, my page ! that I may see her—  
Thou art come at last then, haughty Queen  
Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever ;  
Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been.

*Iseult.*

Blame me not, poor sufferer ! that I tarried ;  
Bound I was, I could not break the band.  
Chide not with the past, but feel the present !  
I am here—we meet—I hold thy hand.

*Tristram.*

Thou art come, indeed—thou hast rejoind me ;  
Thou hast dared it—but too late to save.  
Fear not now that men should tax thine honour !  
I am dying ; build—(thou may'st)—my grave !

*Iseult.*

Tristram, ah, for love of Heaven, speak kindly !  
What, I hear these bitter words from thee ?  
Sick with grief I am, and faint with travel—  
Take my hand—dear Tristram, look on me !

*Tristram.*

I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage—  
Yes, the spray is on thy cloak and hair.  
But thy dark eyes are not dimm'd, proud Iseult !  
And thy beauty never was more fair.

*Iseult.*

Ah, harsh flatterer ! let alone my beauty !  
I, like thee, have left my youth afar.  
Take my hand, and touch these wasted fingers  
See my cheek and lips, how white they are !

*Tristram.*

Thou art paler—but thy sweet charm, Iseult !  
Would not fade with the dull years away.  
Ah, how fair thou standest in the moonlight !  
I forgive thee, Iseult !—thou wilt stay ?

*Iseult.*

Fear me not, I will be always with thee ;  
I will watch thee, tend thee, soothe thy pain :

Sing thee tales of true, long-parted lovers,  
Join'd at evening of their days again.

*Tristram.*

No, thou shalt not speak ! I should be finding  
Something altered in thy courtly tone.  
Sit—sit by me ! I will think, we've lived so  
In the green wood, all our lives, alone.

*Iseult.*

Alter'd, Tristram ? Not in courts, believe me,  
Love like mine is alter'd in the breast.  
Courtly life is light and cannot reach it—  
Ah ! it lives, because so deep-suppress'd !

What, thou think'st men speak in courtly chambers  
Words by which the wretched are consoled ?  
What, thou think'st this aching brow was cooler  
Circled, Tristram, by a band of gold ?

Royal state with Marc, my deep-wrong'd husband—  
That was bliss to make my sorrows flee !  
Silken courtiers whispering honied nothings—  
Those were friends to make me false to thee !

Ah, on which, if both our lots were balanced,  
Was indeed the heaviest burden thrown—

Thee, a pining exile in thy forest,  
Me, a smiling queen upon my throne ?

Vain and strange debate, where both have suffer'd,  
Both have pass'd a youth consumed and sad,  
Both have brought their anxious day to evening,  
And have now short space for being glad !

Join'd we are henceforth ; nor will thy people,  
Nor thy younger Iseult take it ill,  
That a former rival shares her office,  
When she sees her humbled, pale, and still.

I, a faded watcher by thy pillow,  
I, a statue on thy chapel-floor,  
Pour'd in prayer before the Virgin-Mother,  
Rouse no anger, make no rivals more.

She will cry : " Is this the foe I dreaded ?  
This his idol ? this that royal bride ?  
Ah, an hour of health would purge his eyesight !  
Stay, pale queen ! for ever by my side."

Hush, no words ! that smile, I see, forgives me.  
I am now thy nurse, I bid thee sleep.  
Close thine eyes—this flooding moonlight blinds  
them !—  
Nay, all's well again ! thou must not weep.

*Tristram.*

I am happy ! yet, I feel, there's something  
    Swells my heart, and takes my breath away—  
Through a mist I see thee ; near—come nearer !  
    Bend—bend down !—I yet have much to say.

*Iseult.*

Heaven ! his head sinks back upon the pillow—  
    Tristram ! Tristram ! let thy heart not fail !  
Call on God and on the holy angels !  
    What, love, courage !—Christ ! he is so pale

*Tristram.*

Hush, 'tis vain, I feel my end approaching !  
    This is what my mother said should be,  
When the fierce pains took her in the forest,  
    The deep draughts of death, in bearing me.  
  
“ Son,” she said, “ thy name shall be of sorrow ;  
    Tristram art thou call'd for my death's sake.”  
So she said, and died in the drear forest—  
    Grief since then his home with me doth make.

I am dying.—Start not, nor look wildly !  
    Me, thy living friend, thou canst not save.  
But, since living we were ununited,  
    Go not far, O Iseult ! from my grave.

Close mine eyes, then seek the princess Iseult ;  
Speak her fair, she is of royal blood !  
Say, I charged her, that thou stay beside me—  
She will grant it ; she is kind and good.

Now to sail the seas of death I leave thee—  
One last kiss upon the living shore !

*Iseult.*

Tristram !—Tristram !—stay—receive me with thee !  
Iseult leaves thee, Tristram ! never more.

\* \* \* \*

You see them clear—the moon shines bright.  
Slow, slow and softly, where she stood,  
She sinks upon the ground ; her hood  
Had fallen back ; her arms outspread  
Still hold her lover's hands ; her head  
Is bow'd, half-buried, on the bed.  
O'er the blanch'd sheet her raven hair  
Lies in disorder'd streams ; and there,  
Strung like white stars, the pearls still are ;  
And the golden bracelets, heavy and rare,  
Flash on her white arms still.  
The very same which yesternight  
Flash'd in the silver sconces' light,  
When the feast was gay and the laughter loud  
In Tyntagel's palace proud.

But then they deck'd a restless ghost  
With hot-flush'd cheeks and brilliant eyes,  
And quivering lips on which the tide  
Of courtly speech abruptly died,  
And a glance which over the crowded floor,  
The dancers, and the festive host,  
Flew ever to the door.  
That the knights eyed her in surprise,  
And the dames whispered scoffingly :  
" Her moods, good lack, they pass like showers !  
But yesternight and she would be  
As pale and still as wither'd flowers,  
And now to-night she laughs and speaks  
And has a colour in her cheeks ;  
Christ keep us from such fantasy !"

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,  
Which, dogg'd by fear and fought by shame,  
Shook her weak bosom day and night,  
Consumed her beauty like a flame,  
And dimm'd it like the desert-blast.  
And though the curtains hide her face,  
Yet were it lifted to the light,  
The sweet expression of her brow  
Would charm the gazer, till his thought  
Erased the ravages of time,  
Fill'd up the hollow cheek, and brought

A freshness back as of her prime—  
So healing is her quiet now.  
So perfectly the lines express  
A tranquil, settled loveliness,  
Her younger rival's purest grace.

The air of the December night  
Steals coldly around the chamber bright,  
Where those lifeless lovers be ;  
Swinging with it, in the light  
Flaps the ghostlike tapestry.  
And on the arras wrought you see  
A stately Huntsman, clad in green,  
And round him a fresh forest-scene.  
On that clear forest-knoll he stays,  
With his pack round him, and delays.  
He stares and stares, with troubled face.  
At this huge, gleam-lit fireplace,  
At that bright, iron-figured door,  
And those blown rushes on the floor.  
He gazes down into the room  
With heated cheeks and flurried air,  
And to himself he seems to say :  
*“ What place is this, and who are they ?  
Who is that kneeling Lady fair ?  
And on his pillows that pale Knight  
Who seems of marble on a tomb ?*



*How comes it here, this chamber bright,  
Through whose mullion'd windows clear  
The castle-court all wet with rain,  
The drawbridge and the moat appear,  
And then the beach, and, mark'd with spray,  
The sunken reefs, and far away  
The unquiet bright Atlantic plain?  
—What, has some glamour made me sleep  
And sent me with my dogs to sweep,  
By night, with boisterous bugle-peal,  
Through some old, sea-side, knightly hall,  
Not in the free green wood at all?  
That Knight's asleep, and at her prayer  
That Lady by the bed doth kneel—  
Then hush, thou boisterous bugle-peal!"  
—The wild boar rustles in his lair;  
The fierce hounds snuff the tainted air;  
But lord and hounds keep rooted there.*

Cheer, cheer thy dogs into the brake,  
O Hunter! and without a fear  
Thy golden-tassell'd bugle blow,  
And through the glades thy pastime take—  
For thou wilt rouse no sleepers here!  
For these thou seest are unmoved;  
Cold, cold as those who lived and loved  
A thousand years ago.

## TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.

## III.

## Iseult of Brittang.

A YEAR had flown, and o'er the sea away,  
In Cornwall, Tristram and Queen Iseult lay ;  
In King Marc's chapel, in Tyntagel old—  
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold.

The young surviving Iseult, one bright day,  
Had wander'd forth. Her children were at play  
In a green circular hollow in the heath  
Which borders the sea-shore—a country path  
Creeps over it from the till'd fields behind.  
The hollow's grassy banks are soft-inclined,  
And, to one standing on them, far and near  
The lone unbroken view spreads bright and clear  
Over the waste. This cirque of open ground  
Is light and green ; the heather, which all round  
Creeps thickly, grows not here ; but the pale grass  
Is strewn with rocks, and many a shiver'd mass  
Of vein'd white-gleaming quartz, and here and there

Dotted with holly-trees and juniper.  
In the smooth centre of the opening stood  
Three hollies side by side, and made a screen,  
Warm with the winter-sun, of burnish'd green  
With scarlet berries gemm'd, the fell-fare's food.  
Under the glittering hollies Iseult stands,  
Watching her children play ; their little hands  
Are busy gathering spars of quartz, and streams  
Of stagshorn for their hats ; anon, with screams  
Of mad delight they drop their spoils, and bound  
Among the holly-clumps and broken ground,  
Racing full speed, and startling in their rush  
The fell-fares and the speckled missel-thrush  
Out of their glossy coverts ;—but when now  
Their cheeks were flush'd, and over each hot brow  
Under the feather'd hats of the sweet pair,  
In blinding masses shower'd the golden hair—  
Then Iseult call'd them to her, and the three  
Cluster'd under the holly-screen, and she  
Told them an old-world Breton history.

Warm in their mantles wrapt, the three stood there,  
Under the hollies, in the clear still air—  
Mantles with those rich furs deep glistening  
Which Venice ships do from swart Egypt bring.  
Long they stay'd still—then, pacing at their ease,  
Moved up and down under the glossy trees ;

But still, as they pursued their warm dry road,  
From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flow'd,  
And still the children listen'd, their blue eyes  
Fix'd on their mother's face in wide surprise ;  
Nor did their looks stray once to the sea-side,  
Nor to the brown heaths round them, bright and wide,  
Nor to the snow, which, though 'twas all away  
From the open heath, still by the hedgerows lay,  
Nor to the shining sea-fowl, that with screams  
Bore up from where the bright Atlantic gleams,  
Swooping to landward ; nor to where, quite clear,  
The fell-fares settled on the thickets near.  
And they would still have listen'd, till dark night  
Came keen and chill down on the heather bright ;  
But, when the red glow on the sea grew cold,  
And the grey turrets of the castle old  
Look'd sternly through the frosty evening-air,  
Then Iseult took by the hand those children fair,  
And brought her tale to an end, and found the path,  
And led them home over the darkening heath.

And is she happy ? Does she see unmoved  
The days in which she might have lived and loved  
Slip without bringing bliss slowly away,  
One after one, to-morrow like to-day ?  
Joy has not found her yet, nor ever will—  
Is it this thought which makes her mien so still,  
Her features so fatigued, her eyes though sweet

So sunk, so rarely lifted save to meet  
Her children's? She moves slow ; her voice alone  
Hath yet an infantine and silver tone,  
But even that comes languidly ; in truth,  
She seems one dying in a mask of youth.  
And now she will go home, and softly lay  
Her laughing children in their beds, and play  
Awhile with them before they sleep ; and then  
She'll light her silver lamp, which fishermen  
Dragging their nets through the rough waves, afar,  
Along this iron coast, know like a star,  
And take her broidery-frame, and there she'll sit  
Hour after hour, her gold curls sweeping it ;  
Lifting her soft-bent head only to mind  
Her children, or to listen to the wind.  
And when the clock peals midnight, she will move  
Her work away, and let her fingers rove  
Across the shaggy brows of Tristram's hound,  
Who lies, guarding her feet, along the ground ;  
Or else she will fall musing, her blue eyes  
Fix'd, her slight hands clasp'd on her lap ; then rise  
And at her prie-dieu kneel, until she have told  
Her rosary-beads of ebony tipp'd with gold ;  
Then to her soft sleep—and to-morrow 'll be  
To-day's exact repeated effigy.

Yes, it is lonely for her in her hall.

The children, and the grey-hair'd seneschal,  
Her women, and Sir Tristram's aged hound,  
Are there the sole companions to be found.  
But these she loves ; and noisier life than this  
She would find ill to bear, weak as she is.  
She has her children, too, and night and day  
Is with them ; and the wide heaths where they play,  
The hollies, and the cliff, and the sea-shore,  
The sand, the sea-birds, and the distant sails,  
These are to her dear as to them ; the tales  
With which this day the children she beguiled  
She gleaned from Breton grandames, when a child,  
In every hut along this sea-coast wild ;  
She herself loves them still, and, when they are told,  
Can forget all to hear them, as of old.

Dear saints, it is not sorrow, as I hear,  
Not suffering, which shuts up eye and ear  
To all that has delighted them before,  
And lets us be what we were once no more.  
No, we may suffer deeply, yet retain  
Power to be moved and soothed, for all our pain.  
By what of old pleased us, and will again.  
No, 'tis the gradual furnace of the world,  
In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd  
Until they crumble, or else grow like steel—  
Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring—

Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,  
But takes away the power—this can avail,  
By drying up our joy in everything,  
To make our former pleasures all seem stale.  
This, or some tyrannous single thought, some fit  
Of passion, which subdues our souls to it,  
Till for its sake alone we live and move—  
Call it ambition, or remorse, or love—  
This too can change us wholly, and make seem  
All which we did before, shadow and dream.

And yet, I swear, it angers me to see  
How this fool passion gulls men potently ;  
Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,  
And an unnatural overheat at best.  
How they are full of languor and distress  
Not having it ; which when they do possess,  
They straightway are burnt up with fume and care,  
And spend their lives in posting here and there  
Where this plague drives them ; and have little ease,  
Are furious with themselves, and hard to please.  
Like that bold Cæsar, the famed Roman wight,  
Who wept at reading of a Grecian knight  
Who made a name at younger years than he ;  
Or that renowned mirror of chivalry,  
Prince Alexander, Philip's peerless son,  
Who carried the great war from Macedon

Into the Soudan's realm, and thundered on  
To die at thirty-five in Babylon.

What tale did Iseult to the children say,  
Under the hollies, that bright winter's day?

She told them of the fairy-haunted land  
Away the other side of Brittany,  
Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea ;  
Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,  
Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine  
                creeps,

Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps.  
For here he came with the fay Vivian,  
One April, when the warm days first began.  
He was on foot, and that false fay, his friend,  
On her white palfrey ; here he met his end,  
In these lone sylvan glades, that April day.  
This tale of Merlin and the lovely fay  
Was the one Iseult chose, and she brought clear  
Before the children's fancy him and her.

Blowing between the stems, the forest-air  
Had loosen'd the brown locks of Vivian's hair,  
Which play'd on her flush'd cheek, and her blue  
eyes  
Sparkled with mocking glee and exercise.



Her palfrey's flanks were mired, and bathed in  
sweat,

For they had travell'd far and not stopp'd yet.  
A briar in that tangled wilderness  
Had scored her white right hand, which she allows  
To rest ungloved on her green riding-dress ;  
The other warded off the drooping boughs.  
But still she chatted on, with her blue eyes  
Fix'd full on Merlin's face, her stately prize.  
Her 'haviour had the morning's fresh clear grace,  
The spirit of the woods was in her face ;  
She look'd so witching fair, that learned wight  
Forgot his craft, and his best wits took flight,  
And he grew fond, and eager to obey  
His mistress, use her empire as she may.

They came to where the brushwood ceased, and day  
Peer'd 'twixt the stems ; and the ground broke  
away,

In a sloped sward down to a brawling brook ;  
And up as high as where they stood to look,  
On the brook's farther side was clear, but then  
The underwood and trees began again.  
This open glen was studded thick with thorns  
Then white with blossom ; and you saw the horns,  
Through last year's fern, of the shy fallow-deer  
Who come at noon down to the water here.

You saw the bright-eyed squirrels dart along  
Under the thorns on the green sward ; and strong  
The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,  
And the short chipping of the woodpecker  
Rang lonelily and sharp ; the sky was fair,  
And a fresh breath of spring stirr'd everywhere.  
Merlin and Vivian stopp'd on the slope's brow  
To gaze on the light sea of leaf and bough  
Which glistening plays all round them, lone and  
mild,

As if to itself the quiet forest smiled.  
Upon the brow-top grew a thorn, and here  
The grass was dry and moss'd, and you saw clear  
Across the hollow ; white anemonies  
Starr'd the cool turf, and clumps of primroses  
Ran out from the dark underwood behind.  
No fairer resting-place a man could find.  
“ Here let us halt,” said Merlin then ; and she  
Nodded, and tied her palfrey to a tree.

They sate them down together, and a sleep  
Fell upon Merlin, more like death, so deep.  
Her finger on her lips, then Vivian rose,  
And from her brown-lock'd head the wimple  
throws,  
And takes it in her hand, and waves it over  
The blossom'd thorn-tree and her sleeping lover

Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple round,  
And made a little plot of magic ground.  
And in that daisied circle, as men say,  
Is Merlin prisoner till the judgment-day ;  
But she herself whither she will can rove—  
For she was passing weary of his love.

## SAINT BRANDAN.

SAINT BRANDAN sails the northern main ;  
The brotherhoods of saints are glad.  
He greets them once, he sails again ;  
So late !—such storms !—The Saint is mad !

He heard, across the howling seas,  
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights ;  
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,  
Twinkle the monastery-lights ;

But north, still north, Saint Brandan steer'd  
And now no bells, no convents more !  
The hurtling Polar lights are near'd,  
The sea without a human shore.

At last—(it was the Christmas night ;  
Stars shone after a day of storm)—  
He sees float past an iceberg white,  
And on it—Christ !—a living form.

That furtive mien, that scowling eye,  
Of hair that red and tufted fell—  
It is—Oh, where shall Brandan fly ?—  
The traitor Judas, out of hell !

Palsied with terror, Brandan sate ;  
The moon was bright, the iceberg near.  
He hears a voice sigh humbly : " Wait !  
By high permission I am here.

" One moment wait, thou holy man !  
On earth my crime, my death, they knew ;  
My name is under all men's ban—  
Ah, tell them of my respite too !

" Tell them, one blessed Christmas-night  
(It was the first after I came,  
Breathing self-murder, frenzy, spite,  
To rue my guilt in endless flame)—

" I felt, as I in torment lay  
'Mid the souls plagued by heavenly power  
An angel touch mine arm, and say :  
*Go hence, and cool thyself an hour !*

" " Ah, whence this mercy, Lord ? " I said  
*The Leper recollect, said he,*  
*Who ask'd the passers-by for aid,*  
*In Joppa, and thy charity.*

" Then I remember'd how I went,  
In Joppa, through the public street,  
One morn when the sirocco spent  
Its storms of dust with burning heat ;

“ And in the street a leper sate,  
Shivering with fever, naked, old ;  
Sand raked his sores from heel to pate,  
The hot wind fever'd him five-fold.

“ He gazed upon me as I pass'd,  
And murmur'd : *Help me, or I die !*—  
To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,  
Saw him look eased, and hurried by.

“ Oh, Brandan, think what grace divine,  
What blessing must full goodness shower,  
When fragment of it small, like mine,  
Hath such inestimable power !

“ Well-fed, well-clothed, well-friended, I  
Did that chance act of good, that one !  
Then went my way to kill and lie—  
Forgot my good as soon as done.

“ That germ of kindness, in the womb  
Of mercy caught, did not expire ;  
Outlives my guilt, outlives my doom,  
And friends me in the pit of fire.

“ Once every year, when carols wake,  
On earth, the Christmas-night's repose,  
Arising from the sinners' lake,  
I journey to these healing snows.

"I stanch with ice my burning breast,  
With silence balm my whirling brain.  
O Brandan ! to this hour of rest  
That Joppan leper's ease was pain."——

Tears started to Saint Brandan's eyes ;  
He bow'd his head, he breathed a prayer  
Then look'd, and lo, the frosty skies !  
The iceberg, and no Judas there !

## THE NECKAN.

**I**N summer, on the headlands,  
The Baltic Sea along,  
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,  
And sings his plaintive song.

Green rolls beneath the headlands,  
Green rolls the Baltic Sea ;  
And there, below the Neckan's feet,  
His wife and children be.

He sings not of the ocean,  
Its shells and roses pale ;  
Of earth, of earth the Neckan sings,  
He hath no other tale.

He sits upon the headlands,  
And sings a mournful stave  
Of all he saw and felt on earth,  
Far from the kind sea-wave.

Sings how, a knight, he wander'd  
By castle, field, and town—  
But earthly knights have harder hearts  
Than the sea-children own.



Sings of his earthly bridal—

Priest, knights, and ladies gay.

“—And who art thou,” the priest began,

“Sir Knight, who wedd’st to-day?”—

“—I am no knight,” he answered ;

“From the sea-waves I come.”—

The knights drew sword, the ladies scream’d

The surpliced priest stood dumb.

He sings how from the chapel

He vanish’d with his bride,

And bore her down to the sea-halls,

Beneath the salt sea-tide.

He sings how she sits weeping

’Mid shells that round her lie.

“—False Neckan shares my bed,” she weeps;

“No Christian mate have I.”—

He sings how through the billows

He rose to earth again,

And sought a priest to sign the cross,

That Neckan Heaven might gain.

He sings how, on an evening,

Beneath the birch-trees cool,

He sate and play’d his harp of gold,

Beside the river-pool.

Beside the pool sate Neckan—  
Tears fill'd his mild blue eye.  
On his white mule, across the bridge,  
A cassock'd priest rode by.

“—Why sitt'st thou there, O Neckan,  
And play'st thy harp of gold?  
Sooner shall this my staff bear leaves,  
Than thou shalt Heaven behold.”—

But, lo, the staff, it budded !  
It green'd, it branch'd, it waved.  
“—O ruth of God,” the priest cried out,  
“ This lost sea-creature saved ! ”

The cassock'd priest rode onwards,  
And vanish'd with his mule ;  
But Neckan in the twilight grey  
Wept by the river-pool.

He wept : “ The earth hath kindness,  
The sea, the starry poles ;  
Earth, sea, and sky, and God above—  
But, ah, not human souls ! ”

In summer, on the headlands,  
The Baltic Sea along,  
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,  
And sings this plaintive song.

## THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.

COME, dear children, let us away ;  
Down and away below !  
Now my brothers call from the bay,  
Now the great winds shoreward blow,  
Now the salt tides seaward flow ;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray  
Children dear, let us away !  
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go—  
Call once yet !  
In a voice that she will know :  
“ Margaret ! Margaret ! ”  
Children’s voices should be dear  
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear ;  
Children’s voices, wild with pain—  
Surely she will come again !  
Call her once and come away ;  
This way, this way !

"Mother dear, we cannot stay !  
The wild white horses foam and fret."  
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;  
Call no more !  
One last look at the white-wall'd town,  
And the little grey church on the windy shore ;  
Then come down !  
She will not come though you call all day ;  
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday  
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?  
In the caverns where we lay,  
Through the surf and through the swell,  
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?  
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,  
Where the winds are all asleep ;  
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,  
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,  
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,  
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;  
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,  
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;  
Where great whales come sailing by,  
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,

Round the world for ever and aye?  
When did music come this way?  
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday  
(Call yet once) that she went away?  
Once she sate with you and me,  
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,  
And the youngest sate on her knee.  
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,  
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.  
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green  
sea ;

She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray  
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.  
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !  
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with thee."  
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;  
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-  
caves !"

She smiled, she went up through the surf in the  
bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?  
" The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;  
Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;

Come !” I said ; and we rose through the surf in  
the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down  
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd  
town ;

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was  
still,

To the little grey church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their  
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn  
with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small  
leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :

“ Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !

Dear heart,” I said, “ we are long alone ;

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.”

But, ah, she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !

Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.

Come away, children, call no more !

Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !

Down to the depths of the sea !

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,  
Singing most joyfully.  
Hark what she sings : " O joy, O joy,  
For the humming street, and the child with its  
toy !  
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;  
For the wheel where I spun,  
And the blessed light of the sun ! "  
And so she sings her fill,  
Singing most joyfully,  
Till the spindle drops from her hand,  
And the whizzing wheel stands still.  
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand  
And over the sand at the sea ;  
And her eyes are set in a stare ;  
And anon there breaks a sigh,  
And anon there drops a tear,  
From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
And a heart sorrow-laden,  
A long, long sigh ;  
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,  
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;  
Come children, come down !  
The hoarse wind blows colder :  
Lights shine in the town.

She will start from her slumber  
When gusts shake the door ;  
She will hear the winds howling,  
Will hear the waves roar.  
We shall see, while above us  
The waves roar and whirl,  
A ceiling of amber,  
A pavement of pearl.  
Singing : " Here came a mortal,  
But faithless was she !  
And alone dwell for ever  
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,  
When soft the winds blow,  
When clear falls the moonlight,  
When spring-tides are low ;  
When sweet airs come seaward  
From heaths starr'd with broom,  
And high rocks throw mildly  
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;  
Up the still, glistening beaches,  
Up the creeks we will hie,  
Over banks of bright seaweed  
The ebb-tide leaves dry.  
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,  
At the white, sleeping town :



At the church on the hill-side—  
And then come back down.  
Singing : “ There dwells a loved one,  
But cruel is she !  
She left lonely for ever  
The kings of the sea.”

# SONNETS.



## SONNETS.

## AUSTERITY OF POETRY.

THAT son of Italy who tried to blow,<sup>6</sup>  
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,  
In his light youth amid a festal throng  
Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow  
Youth like a star, and what to youth belong—  
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.  
A prop gave way ! crash fell a platform ! lo,

Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay !  
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found  
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse ! young, gay,  
Radiant, adorn'd outside ; a hidden ground  
Of thought and of austerity within.

## EAST AND WEST

I N the bare midst of Anglesey they show  
Two springs which close by one another play ;  
And, "Thirteen hundred years ago," they say,  
"Two saints met often where those waters flow.

"One came from Penmon westward, and a glow  
Whiten'd his face from the sun's fronting ray ;  
Eastward the other, from the dying day,  
And he with unsunn'd face did always go."

*Seiriol the Bright, Kybi the Dark!* men said.  
The seër from the East was then in light,  
The seër from the West was then in shade.

Ah ! now 'tis changed. In conquering sunshine  
bright  
The man of the bold West now comes array'd ;  
He of the mystic East is touch'd with night.

## EAST LONDON.

**T**WAS August, and the fierce sun overhead  
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,  
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen  
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said :  
“ Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene ? ” ---  
“ Bravely ! ” said he ; “ for I of late have been  
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living*  
*bread.* ”

O human soul ! as long as thou canst so  
Set up a mark of everlasting light,  
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—  
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night !  
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

## WEST LONDON

CROUCH'D on the pavement, close by Belgrave  
Square,

A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.

A babe was in her arms, and at her side

A girl ; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare

Some labouring men, whose work lay somewhere  
there,

Pass'd opposite ; she touch'd her girl, who hied

Across, and begg'd, and came back satisfied.

The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.

Thought I : " Above her state this spirit towers ;

She will not ask of aliens, but of friends,

Of sharers in a common human fate.

" She turns from that cold succour, which attends

The unknown little from the unknowing great,

And points us to a better time than ours."

## THE DIVINITY.

"YES, write it in the rock," Saint Bernard said.  
"Grave it on brass with adamantine pen !  
'Tis God himself becomes apparent, when  
God's wisdom and God's goodness are display'd,

"For God of these his attributes is made."—  
Well spake the impetuous Saint, and bore of men  
The suffrage captive ; now, not one in ten  
Recalls the obscure opposer he outweigh'd.<sup>6</sup>

*God's wisdom and God's goodness !—Ay, but fools  
Mis-define these till God knows them no more.  
Wisdom and goodness, they are God !—what schools*

Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore ?  
This no Saint preaches, and this no Church rules :  
'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore.



## IMMORTALITY.

FOIL'D by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,  
We leave the brutal world to take its way,  
And, *Patience ! in another life*, we say,  
*The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.*

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn  
The world's poor, routed leavings ? or will they,  
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day,  
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn ?

No, no ! the energy of life may be  
Kept on after the grave, but not begun ;  
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,

From strength to strength advancing—only he,  
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,  
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

*HE saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save.*

So rang Tertullian's sentence, on the side  
Of that unpitying Phrygian sect which cried :<sup>7</sup>  
" Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,

" Who sins, once wash'd by the baptismal wave."—  
So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she sigh'd,  
The infant Church ! of love she felt the tide  
Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent grave.

And then she smiled ; and in the Catacombs,  
With eye suffused but heart inspired true,  
On those walls subterranean, where she hid

Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,  
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—  
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.

MONICA'S LAST PRAYER.<sup>8</sup>

"**A**H could thy grave at home, at Carthage, be!"—  
*Care not for that, and lay me where I fall!*  
*Everywhere heard will be the judgment-call.*  
*But at God's altar, oh! remember me.*

Thus Monica, and died in Italy.  
Yet fervent had her longing been, through all  
Her course, for home at last, and burial  
With her own husband, by the Libyan sea.

Had been! but at the end, to her pure soul  
All tie with all beside seem'd vain and cheap,  
And union before God the only care.

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole  
Yet we her memory, as she pray'd, will keep,  
Keep by this: *Life in God, and union there!*

LYRIC AND ELEGIAC  
POEMS



## SWITZERLAND.

## I. MEETING.

AGAIN I see my bliss at hand,  
The town, the lake are here ;  
My Marguerite smiles upon the strand,<sup>9</sup>  
Unalter'd with the year.

I know that graceful figure fair,  
That cheek of languid hue ;  
I know that soft, enkerchief'd hair,  
And those sweet eyes of blue.

Again I spring to make my choice :  
Again in tones of ire  
I hear a God's tremendous voice :  
" Be counsell'd, and retire."

Ye guiding Powers who join and part,  
What would ye have with me ?  
Ah, warn some more ambitious heart,  
And let the peaceful be !

## 2. PARTING.

YE storm-winds of Autumn !  
Who rush by, who shake  
The window, and ruffle  
The gleam-lighted lake ;  
Who cross to the hill-side  
Thin-sprinkled with farms,  
Where the high woods strip sadly  
Their yellowing arms—  
Ye are bound for the mountains !  
Ah ! with you let me go  
Where your cold, distant barrier,  
The vast range of snow,  
Through the loose clouds lifts dimly  
Its white peaks in air—  
How deep is their stillness !  
Ah, would I were there !

But on the stairs what voice is this I hear,  
Buoyant as morning, and as morning clear ?  
Say, has some wet bird-haunted English lawn  
Lent it the music of its trees at dawn ?

Or was it from some sun-fleck'd mountain-brook  
That the sweet voice its upland clearness took?

Ah ! it comes nearer—

Sweet notes, this way !

Hark ! fast by the window  
The rushing winds go,  
To the ice-cumber'd gorges,  
The vast seas of snow !  
There the torrents drive upward  
Their rock-strangled hum ;  
There the avalanche thunders  
The hoarse torrent dumb.  
—I come, O ye mountains !  
Ye torrents, I come !

But who is this, by the half-open'd door,  
Whose figure casts a shadow on the floor ?  
The sweet blue eyes—the soft, ash-colour'd hair—  
The cheeks that still their gentle paleness wear—  
The lovely lips, with their arch smile that tells  
The unconquer'd joy in which her spirit dwells?

Ah ! they bend nearer—

Sweet lips, this way !

Hark ! the wind rushes past us !

Ah ! with that let me go



To the clear, waning hill-side,  
Unspotted by snow,  
There to watch, o'er the sunk vale,  
The frore mountain-wall,  
Where the niched snow-bed sprays down  
Its powdery fall.  
There its dusky blue clusters  
The aconite spreads ;  
There the pines slope, the cloud-strips  
Hung soft in their heads.  
No life but, at moments,  
The mountain-bee's hum.  
—I come, O ye mountains !  
Ye pinewoods, I come !

Forgive me ! forgive me !  
Ah, Marguerite, fain  
Would these arms reach to clasp the  
But see ! 'tis in vain.

In the void air, towards thee,  
My stretch'd arms are cast ;  
But a sea rolls between us—  
Our different past !

To the lips, ah ! of others  
Those lips have been prest,

And others, ere I was,  
Were strain'd to that breast ;

Far, far from each other  
Our spirits have grown.  
And what heart knows another?  
Ah ! who knows his own ?

Blow, ye winds ! lift me with you !  
I come to the wild.  
Fold closely, O Nature !  
Thine arms round thy child

To thee only God granted  
A heart ever new—  
To all always open,  
To all always true.

Ah ! calm me, restore me ;  
And dry up my tears  
On thy high mountain-platforms,  
Where morn first appears :

Where the white mists, for ever,  
Are spread and upfurl'd—  
In the stir of the forces  
Whence issued the world.

## 3. A FAREWELL.

MY horse's feet beside the lake,  
Where soft the unbroken moonbeams lay,  
Sent echoes through the night to wake  
Each glistening strand, each heath-fringed bay.

The poplar avenue was pass'd,  
And the roof'd bridge that spans the stream ;  
Up the steep street I hurried fast,  
Led by thy taper's starlike beam.

I came ! I saw thee rise !—the blood  
Pour'd flushing to thy languid cheek.  
Lock'd in each other's arms we stood,  
In tears, with hearts too full to speak.

Days flew ;—ah, soon I could discern  
A trouble in thine alter'd air !  
Thy hand lay languidly in mine,  
Thy cheek was grave, thy speech grew rare

I blame thee not !—this heart, I know,  
To be long loved was never framed ;  
For something in its depths doth glow  
Too strange, too restless, too untamed.

And women—things that live and move  
Mined by the fever of the soul—  
They seek to find in those they love  
Stern strength, and promise of control.

They ask not kindness, gentle ways ;  
These they themselves have tried and known ;  
They ask a soul which never sways  
With the blind gusts that shake their own.

I too have felt the load I bore  
In a too strong emotion's sway ;  
I too have wish'd, no woman more,  
This starting, feverish heart away.

I too have long'd for trenchant force,  
And will like a dividing spear ;  
Have praised the keen, unscrupulous course,  
Which knows no doubt, which feels no fear.

But in the world I learnt, what there  
Thou too wilt surely one day prove,  
That will, that energy, though rare,  
Are yet far, far less rare than love.

Go, then !—till time and fate impress  
This truth on thee, be mine no more !  
They will !—for thou, I feel, not less  
Than I, wast destined to this lore.

We school our manners, act our parts—  
 But He, who sees us through and through,  
 Knows that the bent of both our hearts  
 Was to be gentle, tranquil, true.

And though we wear out life, alas !  
 Distracted as a homeless wind,  
 In beating where we must not pass,  
 In seeking what we shall not find ;

Yet we shall one day gain, life past,  
 Clear prospect o'er our being's whole ;  
 Shall see ourselves, and learn at last  
 Our true affinities of soul.

We shall not then deny a course  
 To every thought the mass ignore ;  
 We shall not then call hardness force,  
 Nor lightness wisdom any more.

Then, in the eternal Father's smile,  
 Our soothed, encouraged souls will dare  
 To seem as free from pride and guile,  
 As good, as generous, as they are.

Then we shall know our friends !—though much  
 Will have been lost—the help in strife,  
 The thousand sweet, still joys of such  
 As hand in hand face earthly life—

Though these be lost, there will be yet  
A sympathy august and pure ;  
Ennobled by a vast regret,  
And by contrition seal'd thrice sure.

And we, whose ways were unlike here,  
May then more neighbouring courses ply ;  
May to each other be brought near,  
And greet across infinity.

How sweet, unreach'd by earthly jars,  
My sister ! to maintain with thee  
The hush among the shining stars,  
The calm upon the moonlit sea !

How sweet to feel, on the boon air,  
All our unquiet pulses cease !  
To feel that nothing can impair  
The gentleness, the thirst for peace—

The gentleness too rudely hurl'd  
On this wild earth of hate and fear :  
The thirst for peace a raving world  
Would never let us satiate here.

## 4. ISOLATION. TO MARGUERITE.

WE were apart ; yet, day by day,  
I bade my heart more constant be.  
I bade it keep the world away,  
And grow a home for only thee ;  
Nor fear'd but thy love likewise grew,  
As mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave ! I might have known,  
What far too soon, alas ! I learn'd—  
The heart can bind itself alone,  
And faith may oft be unreturn'd.  
Self-sway'd our feelings ebb and swell—  
Thou lov'st no more ;—Farewell ! Farewell

Farewell !—and thou, thou lonely heart,  
Which never yet without remorse  
Even for a moment didst depart  
From thy remote and spheréd course  
To haunt the place where passions reign—  
Back to thy solitude again !

Back ! with the conscious thrill of shame  
Which Luna felt, that summer-night,

Flash through her pure immortal frame,  
When she forsook the starry height  
To hang over Endymion's sleep  
Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep.

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved  
How vain a thing is mortal love,  
Wandering in Heaven, far removed.  
But thou hast long had place to prove  
This truth—to prove, and make thine own  
“Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone.”

Or, if not quite alone, yet they  
Which touch thee are unmating things—  
Ocean and clouds and night and day ;  
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs ;  
And life, and others' joy and pain,  
And love, if love, of happier men.

Of happier men—for they, at least,  
Have *dream'd* two human hearts might blend  
In one, and were through faith released  
From isolation without end  
Prolong'd ; nor knew, although not less  
Alone than thou, their loneliness.



## 5. TO MARGUERITE.—CONTINUED.

YES ! in the sea of life enisled,  
With echoing straits between us thrown  
Dotting the shoreless watery wild  
We mortal millions live *alone*.  
The islands feel the enclasping flow,  
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,  
And they are swept by balms of spring,  
And in their glens, on starry nights,  
The nightingales divinely sing ;  
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,  
Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh ! then a longing like despair  
Is to their farthest caverns sent ;  
For surely once, they feel, we were  
Parts of a single continent !  
Now round us spreads the watery plain—  
Oh might our marges meet again !

Who order'd, that their longing's fire  
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd ?  
Who renders vain their deep desire ?—  
A God, a God their severance ruled !  
And bade betwixt their shores to be  
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

## 6. ABSENCE.

**I**N this fair stranger's eyes of grey  
Thine eyes, my love ! I see.  
I shiver ; for the passing day  
Had borne me far from thee.

This is the curse of life ! that not  
A nobler, calmer train  
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot  
Our passions from our brain ;

But each day brings its petty dust  
Our soon-choked souls to fill,  
And we forget because we must  
And not because we will.

I struggle towards the light ; and ye,  
Once-long'd-for storms of love !  
If with the light ye cannot be,  
I bear that ye remove.

I struggle towards the light—but oh,  
While yet the night is chill,  
Upon time's barren, stormy flow,  
Stay with me, Marguerite, still !

## 7. THE TERRACE AT BERNE.

(COMPOSED TEN YEARS AFTER THE PRECEDING.)

TEN years!—and to my waking eye  
Once more the roofs of Berne appear ;  
The rocky banks, the terrace high,  
The stream!—and do I linger here?

The clouds are on the Oberland,  
The Jungfrau snows look faint and far ;  
But bright are those green fields at hand,  
And through those fields comes down the Aar,

And from the blue twin-lakes it comes,  
Flows by the town, the church-yard fair ;  
And 'neath the garden-walk it hums,  
The house!—and is my Marguerite there?

Ah, shall I see thee, while a flush  
Of startled pleasure floods thy brow,  
Quick through the oleanders brush,  
And clap thy hands, and cry : '*Tis thou!*'

Or hast thou long since wander'd back,  
Daughter of France ! to France, thy home ;  
And flitted down the flowery track  
Where feet like thine too lightly come ?

Doth riotous laughter now replace  
Thy smile, and rouge, with stony glare,  
Thy cheek's soft hue, and fluttering lace  
The kerchief that enwound thy hair ?

Or is it over ?—art thou dead ?—  
Dead !—and no warning shiver ran  
Across my heart, to say thy thread  
Of life was cut, and closed thy span !

Could from earth's ways that figure slight  
Be lost, and I not feel 'twas so ?  
Of that fresh voice the gay delight  
Fail from earth's air, and I not know ?

Or shall I find thee still, but changed,  
But not the Marguerite of thy prime ?  
With all thy being re-arranged,  
Pass'd through the crucible of time ;

With spirit vanish'd, beauty waned,  
And hardly yet a glance, a tone,  
A gesture—anything—retain'd  
Of all that was my Marguerite's own ?

I will not know ! For wherefore try,  
To things by mortal course that live,  
A shadowy durability,  
For which they were not meant, to give ?

Like driftwood spars, which meet and pass  
Upon the boundless ocean-plain,  
So on the sea of life, alas !  
Man meets man—meets, and quits again.

I knew it when my life was young ;  
I feel it still, now youth is o'er.  
—The mists are on the mountains hung,  
And Marguerite I shall see no more.

## THE STRAYED REVELIER.

THE PORTICO OF CIRCE'S PALACE. EVENING

*A Youth. Circe.**The Youth.*

FASTER, faster,  
O Circe, Goddess,  
Let the wild, thronging train,  
The bright procession  
Of eddying forms,  
Sweep through my soul !

Thou standest, smiling  
Down on me ! thy right arm,  
Lean'd up against the column there. —  
Props thy soft cheek ;  
Thy left holds, hanging loosely,  
The deep cup, ivy-cinctured,  
I held but now.

Is it then evening  
So soon ? I see, the night-dews.

Cluster'd in thick beads, dim  
The agate brooch-stones  
On thy white shoulder ;  
The cool night-wind, too,  
Blows through the portico,  
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,  
Waves thy white robe !

*Circe.*

Whence art thou, sleeper ?

*The Youth.*

When the white dawn first  
Through the rough fir-planks  
Of my hut, by the chestnuts,  
Up at the valley-head,  
Came breaking, Goddess !  
I sprang up, I threw round me  
My dappled fawn-skin ;  
Passing out, from the wet turf,  
Where they lay, by the hut door,  
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,  
All drench'd in dew—  
Came swift down to join  
The rout early gather'd  
In the town, round the temple,



Iacchus' white fane  
On yonder hill.

Quick I pass'd, following  
The wood-cutters' cart-track  
Down the dark valley ;—I saw  
On my left, through the beeches,  
Thy palace, Goddess,  
Smokeless, empty !  
Trembling, I enter'd ; beheld  
The court all silent,  
The lions sleeping,  
On the altar this bowl.  
I drank, Goddess !  
And sank down here, sleeping,  
On the steps of thy portico.

*Circe.*

Foolish boy ! Why tremblest thou.  
Thou lovest it, then, my wine ?  
Wouldst more of it ? See, how glows  
Through the delicate, flush'd marble,  
The red, creaming liquor,  
Strown with dark seeds !  
Drink, then ! I chide thee not,  
Deny thee not my bowl.  
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then—so !  
Drink—drink again !

*The Youth.*

Thanks, gracious one !—  
Ah, the sweet fumes again !  
More soft, ah me,  
More subtle-winding  
Than Pan's flute-music !  
Faint—faint ! Ah me,  
Again the sweet sleep !

*Circe.*

Hist ! Thou—within there !  
Come forth, Ulysses !  
Art tired with hunting ?  
While we range the woodland.  
See what the day brings.

*Ulysses.*

Ever new magic !  
Hast thou then lured hither,  
Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,  
The young, languid-cyed Ampelus  
Iacchus' darling—  
Or some youth beloved of Pan,  
Of Pan and the Nymphs ?  
That he sits, bending downward  
His white, delicate neck  
To the ivy-wreathed marge

Of thy cup ; the bright, glancing vine-leaves  
That crown his hair,  
Falling forward, mingling  
With the dark ivy-plants—  
His fawn-skin, half untied,  
Smear'd with red wine-stains ? Who is he  
That he sits, overweigh'd  
By fumes of wine and sleep,  
So late, in thy portico ?  
What youth, Goddess,—what guest  
Of Gods or mortals ?

*Circe.*

Hist ! he wakes !  
I lured him not hither, Ulysses.  
Nay, ask him !

*The Youth.*

Who speaks ! Ah, who comes forth  
To thy side, Goddess, from within  
How shall I name him ?  
This spare, dark-featured.  
Quick-eyed stranger ?  
Ah, and I see too  
His sailor's bonnet,  
His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,  
With one arm bare !—

Art thou not he, whom fame  
This long time rumours  
The favour'd guest of Circe, brought by the  
          waves?

Art thou he, stranger?  
The wise Ulysses,  
Laertes' son?

*Ulysses.*

I am Ulysses.  
And thou, too, sleeper?  
Thy voice is sweet.  
It may be thou hast follow'd  
Through the islands some divine bard.  
By age taught many things,  
Age and the Muses ;  
And heard him delighting  
The chiefs and people  
In the banquet, and learn'd his songs  
Of Gods and Heroes,  
Of war and arts,  
And peopled cities,  
Inland, or built  
By the grey sea—If so, then hail !  
I honour and welcome thee.

*The Youth.*

The Gods are happy.

They turn on all side  
Their shining eyes,  
And see below them  
The earth and men.

They see Tiresias  
Sitting, staff in hand,  
On the warm, grassy  
Asopus bank,  
His robe drawn over  
His old, sightless head,  
Revolving inly  
The doom of Thebes.

They see the Centaurs  
In the upper glens  
Of Pelion, in the streams,  
Where red-berried ashes fringe  
The clear-brown shallow pools,  
With streaming flanks, and heads  
Rear'd proudly, snuffing  
The mountain wind.

They see the Indian  
Drifting, knife in hand,  
His frail boat moor'd to  
A floating isle thick-matted

With larged-leaved, low-creeping melon-  
plants,

And the dark cucumber.

He reaps, and stows them,

Drifting—drifting ;—round him,

Round his green harvest-plot,

Flow the cool lake-waves,

The mountains ring them.

They see the Scythian

On the wide stepp, unharnessing

His wheel'd house at noon.

He tethers his beast down, and makes his  
meal—

Mares' milk, and bread

Baked on the embers ;—all around

The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch,  
thick-starr'd

With saffron and the yellow hollyhock

And flag-leaf'd iris-flowers.

Sitting in his cart

He makes his meal ; before him, for long  
miles,

Alive with bright green lizards,

And the springing bustard-fowl,

The track, a straight black line,

Furrows the rich soil ; here and there

Clusters of lonely mounds  
Topp'd with rough-hewn,  
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer  
The sunny waste.

They see the ferry  
On the broad, clay-laden  
Lone Chorasmian stream ;—thereon.  
With snort and strain,  
Two horses, strongly swimming, tow  
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes  
To either bow  
Firm-harness'd by the mane ; a chief,  
With shout and shaken spear,  
Stands at the prow, and guides them ; but  
                    astern

The cowering merchants, in long robes,  
Sit pale beside their wealth  
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,  
Of gold and ivory,  
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,  
Jasper and chalcedony,  
And milk-barr'd onyx-stones.  
The loaded boat swings groaning  
In the yellow eddies ;  
The Gods behold them.

They see the Heroes

Sitting in the dark ship  
On the foamless, long-heaving,  
Violet sea,  
At sunset nearing  
The Happy Islands.

These things, Ulysses.  
The wise bards also  
Behold and sing.  
But oh, what labour !  
O prince, what pain !

They too can see  
Tiresias ;—but the Gods,  
Who give them vision,  
Added this law :  
That they should bear too  
His groping blindness,  
His dark foreboding,  
His scorn'd white hairs ;  
Bear Hera's anger  
Through a life lengthen'd  
To seven ages.

They see the Centaurs  
On Pelion ;—then they feel,  
They too, the maddening wine



Swell their large veins to bursting ; in wild  
pain

They feel the biting spears  
Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,  
Drive crashing through their bones ; they  
feel

High on a jutting rock in the red stream  
Alcmena's dreadful son  
Ply his bow ;—such a price  
The Gods exact for song :  
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian  
On his mountain lake ; but squalls  
Make their skiff reel, and worms  
In the unkind spring have gnawn  
Their melon-harvest to the heart—They see  
The Scythian ; but long frosts  
Parch them in winter-time on the bare stepp,  
Till they too fade like grass ; they crawl  
Like shadows forth in spring.

They see the merchants  
On the Oxus stream ;—but care  
Must visit first them too, and make them  
pale.

Whether, through whirling sand,

A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst  
Upon their caravan ; or greedy kings,  
In the wall'd cities the way passes through,  
Crush'd them with tolls ; or fever-airs,  
On some great river's marge,  
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes  
Near harbour ;—but they share  
Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes  
Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy ;  
Or where the echoing oars  
Of Argo first  
Startled the unknown sea.

The old Silenus  
Came, lolling in the sunshine.  
From the dewy forest-coverts,  
This way, at noon.  
Sitting by me, while his Fauns  
Down at the water-side  
Sprinkled and smoothed  
His drooping garland,  
He told me these things.

But I, Ulysses,  
Sitting on the warm steps,

Looking over the valley,  
 All day long, have seen,  
 Without pain, without labour,  
 Sometimes a wild-hair'd Mænad ---  
 Sometimes a Faun with torches—  
 And sometimes, for a moment,  
 Passing through the dark stems  
 Flowing-robed, the beloved,  
 The desired, the divine,  
 Beloved Iacchus.

Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars !  
 Ah, glimmering water,  
 Fitful earth-murmur,  
 Dreaming woods !  
 Ah, golden-hair'd, strangely smiling Goddess  
 And thou, proved, much enduring,  
 Wave-toss'd Wanderer !  
 Who can stand still ?  
 Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me---  
 The cup again !

Faster, faster,  
 O Circe, Goddess,  
 Let the wild, thronging train,  
 The bright procession  
 Of eddying forms,  
 Sweep through my soul !

## CADMUS AND HARMONIA.

FAR, far from here,  
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay  
Among the green Illyrian hills ; and there  
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,  
And by the sea, and in the brakes.  
The grass is cool, the sea-side air  
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain-flowers  
More virginal and sweet than ours.  
And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes,  
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,  
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,  
In breathless quiet, after all their ills ;  
Nor do they see their country, nor the place  
Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills  
Nor the unhappy palace of their race,  
Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes.  
They had stay'd long enough to see,  
In Thebes, the billow of calamity  
Over their own dear children roll'd,

Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,  
For years, they sitting helpless in their home  
A grey old man and woman ; yet of old  
The Gods had to their marriage come,  
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days  
In sight of blood ; but were rapt, far away,  
To where the west wind plays,  
And murmurs of the Adriatic come  
To those untrodden mountain-lawns ; and there,  
Placed safely in changed forms, the pair  
Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,  
And all that Theban woe, and stray  
For ever through the glens, placid and dumb.

## APOLLO MUSAGETES.

NOT here, O Apollo !  
Are haunts meet for thee.  
But, where Helicon breaks down  
In cliff to the sea,

Where the moon-silver'd inlets  
Send far their light voice  
Up the still vale of Thisbe—  
O speed, and rejoice !

On the sward at the cliff-top  
Lie strewn the white flocks ;  
On the cliff-side the pigeons  
Roost deep in the rocks.

In the moonlight the shepherds,  
Soft lull'd by the rills,  
Lie wrapt in their blankets  
Asleep on the hills.

—What forms are these coming  
So white through the gloom ?  
What garments out-glistening  
The gold-flower'd broom ?

What sweet-breathing presence  
Out-perfumes the thyme ?  
What voices enrapture  
The night's balmy prime ?—

'Tis Apollo comes leading  
His choir, the Nine.  
—The leader is fairest,  
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows !  
They stream up again !  
What seeks on this mountain  
The glorified train ?—

They bathe on this mountain,  
In the spring by their road ;  
Then on to Olympus,  
Their endless abode.

—Whose praise do they mention ?  
Of what is it told ?—  
What will be for ever ;  
What was from of old.

First hymn they the Father  
Of all things ; and then,  
The rest of immortals,  
The action of men.

The day in his hotness,  
The strife with the palm ;  
The night in her silence,  
The stars in their calm.



## URANIA.

SHE smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,  
While we for hopeless passion die ;  
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,  
Were but men nobler than they are.

Eagerly once her gracious ken  
Was turn'd upon the sons of men ;  
But light the serious visage grew—  
She look'd, and smiled, and saw them through

Our petty souls, our strutting wits,  
Our labour'd, puny passion-fits—  
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we  
Scorn them as bitterly as she !

Yet show her once, ye heavenly Powers,  
One of some worthier race than ours !  
One for whose sake she once might prove  
How deeply she who scorns can love.

His eyes be like the starry lights—  
His voice like sounds of summer nights—  
In all his lovely mien let pierce  
The magic of the universe !

And she to him will reach her hand,  
And gazing in his eyes will stand,  
And know her friend, and weep for glee,  
And cry : *Long, long I've look'd for thee.*

Then will she weep ; with smiles, till then,  
Coldly she mocks the sons of men.  
Till then, her lovely eyes maintain  
Their pure, unwavering, deep disdain.

## EUPHROSYNE.

I MUST not say that she was true,  
Yet let me say that she was fair ;  
And they, that lovely face who view,  
They should not ask if truth be there.

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts,  
Wounded by men, by fortune tried,  
Outwearied with their lonely parts,  
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear,  
Their lot was but to weep and moan.  
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,  
For neither could subsist alone !

But souls whom some benignant breath  
Hath charm'd at birth from gloom and care,  
These ask no love, these plight no faith.  
For they are happy as they are.

The world to them may homage make,  
And garlands for their forehead weave ;  
And what the world can give, they take—  
But they bring more than they receive.

They shine upon the world ! Their ears  
To one demand alone are coy ;  
They will not give us love and tears,  
They bring us light and warmth and joy.

On one she smiled, and he was blest ;  
She smiles elsewhere—we make a din !  
But 'twas not love which heaved her breast,  
Fair child !—it was the bliss within.

## CALAIS SANDS.

A THOUSAND knights have rein'd their steeds  
To watch this line of sand-hills run,  
Along the never-silent strait,  
To Calais glittering in the sun ;

To look toward Ardres' Golden Field  
Across this wide ærial plain,  
Which glows as if the Middle Age  
Were gorgeous upon earth again.

Oh, that to share this famous scene,  
I saw, upon the open sand,  
Thy lovely presence at my side,  
Thy shawl, thy look, thy smile, thy hand !

How exquisite thy voice would come,  
My darling, on this lonely air !  
How sweetly would the fresh sea-breeze  
Shake loose some band of soft brown hair !

And now my glance but once hath roved  
O'er Calais and its famous plain ;  
To England's cliffs my gaze is turn'd,  
O'er the blue strait mine eyes I strain.

Thou comest ! Yes ! the vessel's cloud  
Hangs dark upon the rolling sea.  
Oh, that yon sea-bird's wings were mine,  
To win one instant's glimpse of thee !

I must not spring to grasp thy hand,  
To woo thy smile, to seek thine eye ;  
But I may stand far off, and gaze,  
And watch thee pass unconscious by,

And spell thy looks, and guess thy thoughts,  
Mixt with the idlers on the pier—  
Ah, might I always rest unseen,  
So I might have thee always near !

To-morrow hurry through the fields  
Of Flanders to the storied Rhine !  
To-night those soft-fringed eyes shall close  
Beneath one roof, my queen ! with mine.

## DOVER BEACH.

THE sea is calm to-night.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits ;—on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone ; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air !  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,  
Listen ! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery ; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating to the breath  
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another ! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain ;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.



## PROGRESS.

THE Master stood upon the mount, and taught.  
 He saw a fire in his disciples' eyes ;  
 " The old law," they said, " is wholly come to nought,  
 Behold the new world rise ! "

" Was it," the Lord then said, " with scorn ye saw  
 The old law observed by Scribes and Pharisees ?  
 I say unto you, see *ye* keep that law  
 More faithfully than these !

" Too hasty heads for ordering worlds, alas !  
 Think not that I to annul the law have will'd ;  
 No jot, no tittle from the law shall pass,  
 Till all have been fulfill'd."

So Christ said eighteen hundred years ago.  
 And what then shall be said to those to-day,  
 Who cry aloud to lay the old world low  
 To clear the new world's way ?

" Religious fervours ! ardour misapplied !  
 Hence, hence," they cry, " ye do but keep man blind !  
 But keep him self-immersed, preoccupied,  
 And lame the active mind ! "

Ah ! from the old world let some one answer give :  
“ Scorn ye this world, their tears, their inward cares?  
I say unto you, see that *your* souls live  
A deeper life than theirs !

“ Say ye : ‘ The spirit of man has found new roads,  
And we must leave the old faiths, and walk there-  
in ? ’—

Leave then the Cross as ye have left carved gods,  
But guard the fire within !

“ Bright else and fast the stream of life may roll,  
And no man may the other’s hurt behold ;  
Yet each will have one anguish—his own soul  
Which perishes of cold.”

Here let that voice make end ; then, let a strain,  
From a far lonelier distance, like the wind  
Be heard, floating through heaven, and fill again  
These men’s profoundest mind :

“ Children of men ! the unseen Power, whose eye  
For ever doth accompany mankind,  
Hath look’d on no religion scornfully  
That men did ever find.

“ Which has not taught weak wills how much they can ?  
Which has not fall’n on the dry heart like rain ?  
Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man :  
*Thou must be born again !*

“ Children of men ! not that your age excel  
In pride of life the ages of your sires,  
But that *ye* think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well  
The Friend of man desires.”

## REVOLUTIONS.

**B**EFORE man parted for this earthly strand,  
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,  
God put a heap of letters in his hand,  
And bade him make with them what word he could

And man has turn'd them many times ; made Greece,  
Rome, England, France ;—yes, nor in vain essay'd  
Way after way, changes that never cease !  
The letters have combined, something was made.

But ah ! an inextinguishable sense  
Haunts him that he has not made what he should ;  
That he has still, though old, to recommence,  
Since he has not yet found the word God would.

And empire after empire, at their height  
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on ;  
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right,  
And droop'd, and slowly died upon their throne.

One day, thou say'st, there will at last appear  
The word, the order, which God meant should be.  
—Ah ! we shall know *that* well when it comes near,  
The band will quit man's heart, he will breathe free

## SELF-DEPENDENCE.

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking  
What I am, and what I ought to be,  
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me  
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire  
O'er the sea and to the stars I send :  
"Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,  
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end !

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,  
On my heart your mighty charm renew ;  
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
Feel my soul becoming vast like you !"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,  
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,  
In the rustling night-air came the answer :  
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,  
Undistracted by the sights they see,  
These demand not that the things without them  
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

And with joy the stars perform their shining,  
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll ;  
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting  
All the fever of some differing soul.

“ Bounded by themselves, and unregardful  
In what state God's other works may be,  
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,  
These attain the mighty life you see.”

O air-born voice ! long since, severely clear.  
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear :  
“ Resolve to be thyself ; and know, that he  
Who finds himself, loses his misery ! ”

## MORALITY.

WE cannot kindle when we will  
The fire which in the heart resides  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery our soul abides.

But tasks in hours of insight will'd  
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet  
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone ;  
We bear the burden and the heat  
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.  
Not till the hours of light return,  
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,  
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,  
Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control,  
Thy struggling, task'd morality—  
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,  
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,  
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,

See, on her face a glow is spread,  
A strong emotion on her cheek !

“ Ah, child ! ” she cries, “ that strife divine,  
Whence was it, for it is not mine ?

“ There is no effort on *my* brow—  
I do not strive, I do not weep ;  
I rush with the swift spheres and glow  
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.  
Yet that severe, that earnest air,  
I saw, I felt it once—but where ?

‘ I knew not yet the gauge of time,  
Nor wore the manacles of space ;  
I felt it in some other clime,  
I saw it in some other place.  
’Twas when the heavenly house I trod,  
And lay upon the breast of God.”



## A SUMMER NIGHT.

**I**N the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,  
How lonely rings the echo of my feet !  
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,  
Silent and white, unopening down,  
Repellent as the world ;—but see,  
A break between the housetops shows  
The moon ! and, lost behind her, fading dim  
Into the dewy dark obscurity  
Down at the far horizon's rim,  
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose !

And to my mind the thought  
Is on a sudden brought  
Of a past night, and a far different scene.  
Headlands stood out into the moon-lit deep  
As clearly as at noon ;  
The spring-tide's brimming flow  
Heaved dazzlingly between ;  
Houses, with long white sweep,  
Girdled the glistening bay ;  
Behind, through the soft air,  
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.

That night was far more fair—  
But the same restless pacings to and fro,  
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,  
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say :  
*Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,  
Which neither deadens into rest,  
Nor ever feels the fiery glow  
That whirls the spirit from itself away,  
But fluctuates to and fro,  
Never by passion quite possess'd  
And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway ?—*  
And I, I know not if to pray  
Still to be what I am, or yield and be  
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,  
Where, in the sun's hot eye,  
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly  
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,  
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall.  
And as, year after year,  
Fresh products of their barren labour fall  
From their tired hands, and rest  
Never yet comes more near,  
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast ;

And while they try to stem  
 The waves of mournful thought by which they are  
     prest,  
 Death in their prison reaches them,  
 Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,  
 Escape their prison and depart  
 On the wide ocean of life anew.  
 There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart  
 Listeth, will sail ;  
 Nor doth he know how there prevail,  
 Despotic on that sea,  
 Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.  
 Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd  
 By thwarting signs, and braves  
 The freshening wind and blackening waves.  
 And then the tempest strikes him ; and between  
 The lightning-bursts is seen  
 Only a driving wreck,  
 And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck  
 With anguish'd face and flying hair  
 Grasping the rudder hard,  
 Still bent to make some port he knows not where,  
 Still standing for some false, impossible shore.  
 And sterner comes the roar

Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom  
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,  
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?  
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain !  
Clearness divine !  
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign  
Of languor, though so calm, and though so great  
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate ;  
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,  
And, though so task'd, keep free from dust and  
soil !

I will not say that your mild deeps retain  
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain  
Who have long'd deeply once, and long'd in vain—  
But I will rather say that you remain  
A world above man's head, to let him see  
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,  
How vast, yet of what clear transparency !  
How it were good to live there, and breathe free ;  
How fair a lot to fill  
Is left to each man still !

## LINES

## WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

**I**N this lone, open glade I lie,  
 Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand ;  
 And at its end, to stay the eye,  
 Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees stand !

Birds here make song, each bird has his,  
 Across the girdling city's hum.  
 How green under the boughs it is !  
 How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come !

Sometimes a child will cross the glade  
 To take his nurse his broken toy ;  
 Sometimes a thrush flit overhead  
 Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,  
 What endless, active life is here !  
 What blowing daisies, fragrant grass !  
 An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod  
 Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,  
 And, eased of basket and of rod,  
 Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world, which roars hard by,  
 Be others happy if they can !  
 But in my helpless cradle I  
 Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd,  
 Think often, as I hear them rave,  
 That peace has left the upper world  
 And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new !  
 When I who watch them am away,  
 Still all things in this glade go through  
 The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass !  
 The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,  
 The night comes down upon the grass,  
 The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things ! make it mine  
 To feel, amid the city's jar,  
 That there abides a peace of thine,  
 Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,  
 The power to feel with others give !  
 Calm, calm me more ! nor let me die  
 Before I have begun to live.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY.<sup>10</sup>

G O, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill ;  
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes !  
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,  
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,  
Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head ;  
But when the fields are still,  
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,  
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen  
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd  
green,  
Come, shepherd, and again renew the quest.

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—  
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves  
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruise,  
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,  
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—  
Here will I sit and wait,  
While to my ear from uplands far away  
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,  
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—  
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,  
And here till sun-down, shepherd ! will I be.

Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,  
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see  
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep ;

And air-swept lindens yield  
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed  
showers

Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,  
And bower me from the August sun with shade ;  
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—  
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again !  
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,  
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,  
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,  
One summer-morn forsook  
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,  
And roam'd the world with that wild brother-  
hood,  
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,  
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,  
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,  
Met him, and of his way of life enquired ;



Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,  
 His mates, had arts to rule as they desired  
 The workings of men's brains,  
 And they can bind them to what thoughts they  
 will.

"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,  
 When fully learn'd, will to the world impart ;  
 But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—  
 But rumours hung about the country-side,  
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,  
 Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,  
 In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,  
 The same the gipsies wore.  
 Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring,  
 At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,  
 On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd  
 boors  
 Had found him seated at their entering,

But, mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.  
 And I myself seem half to know thy looks,  
 And put the shepherds, wanderer ! on thy trace ;  
 And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks  
 I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place ;  
 Or in my boat I lie

Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,  
Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,  
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills.  
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground !  
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,  
Returning home on summer-nights, have met  
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,  
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,  
As the punt's rope chops round ;  
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,  
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers  
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood  
bowers,  
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more !—  
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come  
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,  
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee  
roam,  
Or cross a stile into the public way ;  
Oft thou has given them store  
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,  
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summe-  
eves,

And purple orchises with spotted leaves—  
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here  
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,  
Men who through those wide fields of breezy  
grass,  
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering  
Thames,  
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,  
Have often pass'd thee near  
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown ;  
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,  
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—  
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone !

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,  
Where at her open door the housewife darns,  
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate  
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.  
Children, who early range these slopes and late  
For cresses from the rills,  
Have known thee eyeing, all an April day,  
The springing pastures and the feeding kine ;  
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and  
shine,  
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—  
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way  
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you  
see  
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,  
Above the forest-ground call'd Thessaly—  
The blackbird picking food  
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all ;  
So often has he known thee past him stray,  
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,  
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill  
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers  
go,  
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,  
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,  
Thy face toward Hinksey and its wintry ridge?  
And thou hast climb'd the hill,  
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range ;  
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snow-  
flakes fall,  
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—  
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream ! Two hundred years are flown  
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,

And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe  
 That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls  
 To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe ;  
 And thou from earth art gone  
 Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—  
 Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown  
     grave  
 Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,  
 Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours !  
 For what wears out the life of mortal men ?  
   'Tis that from change to change their being  
     rolls ;  
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,  
   Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,  
     And numb the elastic powers.  
 Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,  
   And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,  
     To the just-pausing Genius we remit  
 Our well-worn life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so ?  
 Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire ;  
   Else wert thou long since number'd with the  
     dead !  
 Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire !

The generations of thy peers are fled,  
And we ourselves shall go ;  
But thou possessest an immortal lot,  
And we imagine thee exempt from age,  
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,  
Because thou hadst—what we, alas ! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers  
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,  
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things :  
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,  
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled,  
brings.

O life unlike to ours !  
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,  
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he  
strives,  
And each half lives a hundred different lives ;  
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven ! and we,  
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,  
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,  
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,  
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd :  
For whom each year we see  
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;

Who hesitate and falter life away,  
 And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—  
 Ah ! do not we, wanderer ! await it too ?

Yes, we await it !—but it still delays,  
 And then we suffer ! and amongst us one,  
 Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly  
 His seat upon the intellectual throne ;  
 And all his store of sad experience he  
 Lays bare of wretched days ;  
 Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,  
 And how the dying spark of hope was fed,  
 And how the breast was soothed, and how the  
 head,  
 And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest ! and we others pine,  
 And wish the long unhappy dream would end,  
 And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear ;  
 With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,  
 Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—  
 But none has hope like thine !  
 Thou through the fields and through the wood  
 dost stray,  
 Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,  
 Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,  
 And every doubt long blown by time away

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,  
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames ;  
    Before this strange disease of modern life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
    Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—  
    Fly hence, our contact fear !  
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood !  
    Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern  
    From her false friend's approach in Hades  
        turn,  
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude !

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
Still clutching the inviolable shade,  
    With a free, onward impulse brushing  
        through,  
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—  
    Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,  
    On some mild pastoral slope  
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales  
    Freshen thy flowers as in former years  
    With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales !

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly !  
For strong the infection of our mental strife,  
    Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for  
        rest ;



And we should win thee from thy own fair life,  
 Like us distracted, and like us unblest.  
 Soon, soon thy cheer would die,  
 Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,  
 And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made ;  
 And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,  
 Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles !  
 —As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,  
 Descried at sunrise an emerging prow  
 Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,  
 The fringes of a southward-facing brow  
 Among the Ægæan isles ;  
 And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,  
 Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine.  
 Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in  
 brine—  
 And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—  
 And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more  
 sail,  
 And day and night held on indignantly  
 O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,  
 Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,  
 To where the Atlantic raves

Outside the western straits, and unbent sails  
There where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets  
of foam,  
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come ;  
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

THYRSIS.<sup>11</sup>

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,*  
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence, 1861.*

HOW changed is here each spot man makes or  
fills !

In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same ;  
The village-street its haunted mansion lacks,  
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,  
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—  
Are ye too changed, ye hills !  
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men  
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays !  
Here came I often, often, in old days—  
Thyrsis and I ; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,  
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns  
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?  
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,  
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful  
Thames?—  
This winter-eve is warm,

Humid the air ! leafless, yet soft as spring,  
The tender purple spray on copse and briers !  
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,  
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night !—  
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power  
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.  
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour ;  
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.  
That single elm-tree bright  
Against the west—I miss it ! is it gone ?  
We prized it dearly ; while it stood, we said,  
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead ;  
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,  
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick ;  
And with the country-folk acquaintance made  
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.  
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.  
Ah me ! this many a year  
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday !  
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart  
Into the world and wave of men depart ;  
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.  
He loved each simple joy the country yields,

He loved his mates ; but yet he could not keep,  
 For that a shadow lower'd on the fields,  
 Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.  
 Some life of men unblest  
 He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his  
 head.

He went ; his piping took a troubled sound  
 Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ;  
 He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,  
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,  
 Before the roses and the longest day—  
 When garden-walks and all the grassy floor  
 With blossoms red and white of fallen May  
 And chestnut flowers are strewn—  
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,  
 From the wet field, through the vext garden-  
 trees,  
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze :  
*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go-I !*

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go ?  
 Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,  
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,  
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,  
 Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell

And stocks in fragrant blow ;  
 Roses that down the alleys shine afar,  
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,  
 And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,  
 And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not ! light comer, he is flown !  
 What matters it ? next year he will return,  
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days  
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,  
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,  
 And scent of hay new-mown.  
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see ;  
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,  
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—  
 For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee !

Alack, for Corydon no rival now !—  
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,  
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,  
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate ;  
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,  
 And relax Pluto's brow,  
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head  
 Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair  
 Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,  
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace  
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine !  
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,  
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,  
 She knew each lily white which Enna yields  
 Each rose with blushing face ;  
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.  
 But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard !  
 Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd ;  
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain !

Well ! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,  
 Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour  
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill  
 Who, if not I, for questing here hath power ?  
 I know the wood which hides the daffodil,  
 I know the Fyfield tree,  
 I know what white, what purple fritillaries  
 The grassy harvest of the river-fields  
 Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,  
 And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries

I know these slopes ; who knows them if not I ?—  
 But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,  
 With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd  
 trees,  
 Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried

High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,  
 Hath since our day put by  
 The coronals of that forgotten time ;  
 Down each green bank hath gone the plough  
     boy's team,  
 And only in the hidden brookside gleam  
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Here is the girl, who by the boatman's door,  
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,  
     Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham  
         flats,  
 Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,  
 And darting swallows and light water-gnats,  
     We track'd the shy Thames shore ?  
 Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell  
     Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,  
     Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass ?—  
 They all are gone, and thou art gone as well !

Yes, thou art gone ! and round me too the night  
 In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.  
     I see her veil draw soft across the day,  
 I feel her slowly chilling breath invade  
     The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent  
         with grey ;  
     I feel her finger light



Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train ;  
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew.  
 The heart less bounding at emotion new,  
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short  
 To the less practised eye of sanguine youth ;  
 And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,  
 The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,  
 Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare !  
 Unbreachable the fort  
 Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall ;  
 And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows.  
 And near and real the charm of thy repose,  
 And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush ! the upland hath a sudden loss  
 Of quiet !—Look, adown the dusk hillside,  
 A troop of Oxford hunters going home,  
 As in old days, jovial and talking, ride !  
 From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they  
 come.

Quick ! let me fly, and cross  
 Into yon farther field !—'Tis done ; and see,  
 Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify  
 The orange and pale violet evening-sky,  
 Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree ! the Tree !

I take the omen ! Eve lets down her veil,  
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,  
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,  
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out ;  
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,  
Yet, happy omen, hail !  
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale  
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep  
The morningless and unawakening sleep  
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there !—  
Ah, vain ! These English fields, this upland dim  
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,  
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him ;  
To a boon southern country he is fled,  
And now in happier air,  
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine  
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,  
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)  
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old !—  
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain  
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,  
For thee the Lityerses-song again  
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing ;<sup>12</sup>

Sings his Sicilian fold,  
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—  
 And how a call celestial round him rang,  
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink he  
     sprang,  
 And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here  
 Sole in these fields ! yet will I not despair.  
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry  
 Under mild canopy of English air  
     That lonely tree against the western sky.  
     Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,  
 Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee !  
     Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay  
     Woods with anemonies in flower till May,  
 Know him a wanderer still ; then why not me ?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,  
 Shy to illumine ; and I seek it too.  
     This does not come with houses or with gold,  
 With place, with honour, and a flattering crew ;  
     'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—  
     But the smooth-slipping weeks  
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired ;  
     Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,  
     He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone ;  
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound !

Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour !

Men gave thee nothing ; but this happy quest,

If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,

If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.

And this rude Cumner ground,

Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,

Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,

Here was thine height of strength, thy golden  
prime !

And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute

Kept not for long its happy, country tone ;

Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note

Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,

Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy  
throat—

It fail'd, and thou wast mute !

Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,

And long with men of care thou couldst not stay

And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way

Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !

Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,

Thyrsis ! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.

Then through the great town's harsh, heart-  
wearying roar

Let in thy voice a whisper often come

To chase fatigue and fear :

*Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.*

*Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.*

*Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the  
hill,*

*Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.*

## MEMORIAL VERSES.

APRIL, 1850.

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,  
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease  
But one such death remain'd to come ;  
The last poetic voice is dumb—  
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,  
We bow'd our head and held our breath.  
He taught us little ; but our soul  
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.  
With shivering heart the strife we saw  
Of passion with eternal law ;  
And yet with reverential awe  
We watch'd the fount of fiery life  
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said :  
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.  
Physician of the iron age,  
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.

He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear ;  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said : *Thou ailest here, and here !*  
He look'd on Europe's dying hour  
Of fitful dream and feverish power ;  
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,  
The turmoil of expiring life—  
He said : *The end is everywhere,*  
*Art still has truth, take refuge there !*  
And he was happy, if to know  
Causes of things, and far below  
His feet to see the lurid flow  
Of terror, and insane distress,  
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth !—Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice !  
For never has such soothing voice  
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,  
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade  
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come  
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.  
Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye,  
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we !  
He too upon a wintry clime  
Had fallen—on this iron time  
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.

He found us when the age had bound  
Our souls in its benumbing round ;  
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.  
He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth,  
Smiles broke from us and we had ease ;  
The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again ;  
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.  
Our youth return'd ; for there was shed  
On spirits that had long been dead,  
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,  
The freshness of the early world.

Ah ! since dark days still bring to light  
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,  
Time may restore us in his course  
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force ;  
But where will Europe's latter hour  
Again find Wordsworth's healing power ?  
Others will teach us how to dare,  
And against fear our breast to steel ;  
Others will strengthen us to bear—  
But who, ah ! who, will make us feel ?  
The cloud of mortal destiny,  
Others will front it fearlessly—  
But who, like him, will put it by ?



Keep fresh the grass upon his grave.  
O Rotha, with thy living wave !  
Sing him thy best ! for few or none  
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

## STANZAS FROM CARNAC.

FAR on its rocky knoll descried  
Saint Michael's chapel cuts the sky.  
I climb'd ;—beneath me, bright and wide,  
Lay the lone coast of Brittany.

Bright in the sunset, weird and still,  
It lay beside the Atlantic wave,  
As though the wizard Merlin's will  
Yet charm'd it from his forest-grave.

Behind me on their grassy sweep,  
Bearded with lichen, scrawl'd and grey  
The giant stones of Carnac sleep,  
In the mild evening of the May.

No priestly stern procession now  
Streams through their rows of pillars old ;  
No victims bleed, no Druids bow—  
Sheep make the daisied aisles their fold.

From bush to bush the cuckoo flies,  
The orchis red gleams everywhere ;  
Gold furze with broom in blossom vies,  
The blue-bells perfume all the air.

And o'er the glistening, lonely land,  
 Rise up, all round, the Christian spires ;  
 The church of Carnac, by the strand,  
 Catches the westering sun's last fires.

And there, across the watery way,  
 See, low above the tide at flood,  
 The sickle-sweep of Quiberon Bay,  
 Whose beach once ran with loyal blood !

And beyond that, the Atlantic wide !—  
 All round, no soul, no boat, no hail ;  
 But, on the horizon's verge descried,  
 Hangs, touch'd with light, one snowy sail

Ah ! where is he, who should have come <sup>13</sup>  
 Where that far sail is passing now,  
 Past the Loire's mouth, and by the foam  
 Of Finistère's unquiet brow,

Home, round into the English wave ?—  
 He tarries where the Rock of Spain  
 Mediterranean waters lave ;  
 He enters not the Atlantic main.

Oh, could he once have reach'd this air  
 Freshen'd by plunging tides, by showers !  
 Have felt this breath he loved, of fair  
 Cool northern fields, and grass, and flowers !

He long'd for it—press'd on.—In vain !  
At the Straits fail'd that spirit brave.  
The south was parent of his pain,  
The south is mistress of his grave.

## A SOUTHERN NIGHT

THE sandy spits, the shore-lock'd lakes,  
Melt into open, moonlit sea ;  
The soft Mediterranean breaks  
At my feet, free.

Dotting the fields of corn and vine,  
Like ghosts, the huge, gnarl'd olives stand  
Behind, that lovely mountain-line !  
While, by the strand,

Cette, with its glistening houses white,  
Curves with the curving beach away  
To where the lighthouse beacons bright  
Far in the bay.

Ah ! such a night, so soft, so lone,  
So moonlit, saw me once of yore<sup>14</sup>  
Wander unquiet, and my own  
Vext heart deplore.

But now that trouble is forgot ;  
Thy memory, thy pain, to-night,  
My brother ! and thine early lot,<sup>15</sup>  
Possess me quite.

The murmur of this Midland deep  
Is heard to-night around thy grave,  
There, where Gibraltar's cannon'd steep  
O'erfrowns the wave.

For there, with bodily anguish keen,  
With Indian heats at last fordone,  
With public toil and private teen—  
Thou sank'st, alone.

Slow to a stop, at morning grey,  
I see the smoke-crown'd vessel come ;  
Slow round her paddles dies away  
The seething foam.

A boat is lower'd from her side ;  
Ah, gently place him on the bench !  
That spirit—if all have not yet died—  
A breath might quench.

Is this the eye, the footstep fast,  
The mien of youth we used to see,  
Poor, gallant boy !—for such thou wast,  
Still art, to me.

The limbs their wonted tasks refuse ;  
The eyes are glazed, thou canst not speak ;  
And whiter than thy white burnous  
That wasted cheek

Enough ! The boat, with quiet shock,  
Unto its haven coming nigh,  
Touches, and on Gibraltar's rock  
Lands thee to die.

Ah me ! Gibraltar's strand is far,  
But farther yet across the brine  
Thy dear wife's ashes buried are,  
Remote from thine.

For there, where morning's sacred fount  
Its golden rain on earth confers,  
The snowy Himalayan Mount  
O'ershadows hers.

Strange irony of fate, alas,  
Which, for two jaded English, saves,  
When from their dusty life they pass,  
Such peaceful graves !

In cities should we English lie,  
Where cries are rising ever new,  
And men's incessant stream goes by—  
We who pursue

Our business with unslackening stride,  
Traverse in troops, with care-fill'd breast,  
The soft Mediterranean side,  
The Nile, the East,

And see all sights from pole to pole,  
And glance, and nod, and bustle by ;  
And never once possess our soul  
Before we die.

Not by those hoary Indian hills,  
Not by this gracious Midland sea,  
Whose floor to-night sweet moonshine fills,  
Should our graves be.

Some sage, to whom the world was dead,  
And men were specks, and life a play ;  
Who made the roots of trees his bed,  
And once a day

With staff and gourd his way did bend  
To villages and homes of man,  
For food to keep him till he end  
His mortal span

And the pure goal of being reach ;  
Grey-headed, wrinkled, clad in white,  
Without companion, without speech,  
By day and night

Pondering God's mysteries untold,  
And tranquil as the glacier-snows—  
He by those Indian mountains old  
Might well repose.



Some grey crusading knight austere,  
Who bore Saint Louis company,  
And came home hurt to death, and here  
Landed to die ;

Some youthful troubadour, whose tongue  
Fill'd Europe once with his love-pain,  
Who here outworn had sunk, and sung  
His dying strain ;

Some girl, who here from castle-bower,  
With furtive step and cheek of flame,  
'Twixt myrtle-hedges all in flower  
By moonlight came

To meet her pirate-lover's ship,  
And from the wave-kiss'd marble stair  
Beckon'd him on, with quivering lip  
And floating hair,

And lived some moons in happy trance,  
Then learnt his death and pined away—  
Such by these waters of romance  
'Twas meet to lay.

But you—a grave for knight or sage,  
Romantic, solitary, still,  
O spent ones of a work-day age !  
Befits you ill.

So sang I ; but the midnight breeze,  
Down to the brimm'd, moon-charmed main,  
Comes softly through the olive-trees,  
And checks my strain.

I think of her, whose gentle tongue  
All plaint in her own cause controll'd ;  
Of thee I think, my brother ! young  
In heart, high-soul'd—

That comely face, that cluster'd brow,  
That cordial hand, that bearing free.  
I see them still, I see them now,  
Shall always see !

And what but gentleness untired,  
And what but noble feeling warm,  
Wherever shewn, howe'er inspired,  
Is grace, is charm ?

What else is all these waters are,  
What else is steep'd in lucid sheen,  
What else is bright, what else is fair,  
What else serene ?

Mild o'er her grave, ye mountains, shine !  
Gently by his, ye waters, glide !  
To that in you which is divine  
They were allied.

## RUGBY CHAPEL.

NOVEMBER, 1857.

COLDLY, sadly descends  
The autumn-evening. The field  
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts  
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,  
Fade into dimness apace,  
Silent ;—hardly a shout  
From a few boys late at their play !  
The lights come out in the street,  
In the school-room windows—but cold,  
Solemn, unlighted, austere,  
Through the gathering darkness, arise  
The chapel-walls, in whose bound  
Thou, my father ! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom  
Of the autumn evening. But ah !  
That word, *gloom*, to my mind  
Brings thee back in the light  
Of thy radiant vigour again ;  
In the gloom of November we pass'd  
Days not dark at thy side :

Seasons impair'd not the ray  
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.  
Such thou wast ! and I stand  
In the autumn evening, and think  
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round  
Since thou arosest to tread,  
In the summer-morning, the road  
Of death, at a call unforeseen,  
Sudden. For fifteen years,  
We who till then in thy shade  
Rested as under the boughs  
Of a mighty oak, have endured  
Sunshine and rain as we might,  
Bare, unshaded, alone,  
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore  
Tarriest thou now ? For that force,  
Surely, has not been left vain !  
Somewhere, surely, afar,  
In the sounding labour-house vast  
Of being, is practised that strength,  
Zealous, beneficent, firm !

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,

Conscious or not of the past,  
Still thou performest the word  
Of the spirit in whom thou dost live—  
Prompt, unwearied, as here !  
Still thou upraisest with zeal  
The humble good from the ground,  
Sternly represses the bad !  
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse  
Those who with half-open eyes  
Tread the border-land dim  
'Twixt vice and virtue ; reviv'st,  
Succourest !—this was thy work,  
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life  
Of mortal men on the earth ?—  
Most men eddy about  
Here and there—eat and drink,  
Chatter and love and hate,  
Gather and squander, are raised  
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,  
Striving blindly, achieving  
Nothing ; and then they die—  
Perish—and no one asks  
Who or what they have been,  
More than he asks what waves  
In the moonlit solitudes mild

Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,  
Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst  
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,  
Not with the crowd to be spent,  
Not without aim to go round  
In an eddy of purposeless dust,  
Effort unmeaning and vain.  
Ah yes ! some of us strive  
Not without action to die  
Fruitless, but something to snatch  
From dull oblivion, nor all  
Glut the devouring grave !  
We, we have chosen our path—  
Path to a clear-purposed goal,  
Path of advance !—but it leads  
A long, steep journey, through sunk  
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.  
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—  
Then, on the height, comes the storm.  
Thunder crashes from rock  
To rock, the cataracts reply ;  
Lightnings dazzle our eyes ;  
Roaring torrents have breach'd  
The track, the stream-bed descends  
In the place where the wayfarer once

Planted his footstep—the spray  
Boils o'er its borders !—aloft  
The unseen snow-beds dislodge  
Their hanging ruin ;—alas,  
Havoc is made in our train !  
Friends, who set forth at our side,  
Falter, are lost in the storm.  
We, we only are left !—  
With frowning foreheads, with lips  
Sternly compress'd, we strain on,  
On—and at nightfall at last  
Come to the end of our way,  
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks ;  
Where the gaunt and taciturn host  
Stands on the threshold, the wind  
Shaking his thin white hairs—  
Holds his lantern to scan  
Our storm-beat figures, and asks :  
Whom in our party we bring?  
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer : We bring  
Only ourselves ! we lost  
Sight of the rest in the storm.  
Hardly ourselves we fought through,  
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.  
Friends, companions, and train,  
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*  
Be saved, my father ! *alone*  
Conquer and come to thy goal,  
Leaving the rest in the wild.  
We were weary, and we  
Fearful, and we in our march  
Fain to drop down and to die.  
Still thou turnedst, and still  
Beckonedst the trembler, and still  
Gavest the weary thy hand.  
If, in the paths of the world,  
Stones might have wounded thy feet.  
Toil or dejection have tried  
Thy spirit, of that we saw  
Nothing—to us thou wast still  
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm !  
Therefore to thee it was given  
Many to save with thyself ;  
And, at the end of thy day,  
O faithful shepherd ! to come,  
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe  
In the noble and great who are gone :  
Pure souls honour'd and blest  
By former ages, who else—  
Such, so soulless, so poor,



Is the race of men whom I see—  
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,  
Seem'd but a cry of desire.  
Yes ! I believe that there lived  
Others like thee in the past,  
Not like the men of the crowd  
Who all round me to-day  
Bluster or cringe, and make life  
Hideous, and arid, and vile ;  
But souls temper'd with fire,  
Fervent, heroic, and good,  
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God !—or sons  
Shall I not call you ? because  
Not as servants ye knew  
Your Father's innermost mind,  
His, who unwillingly sees  
One of his little ones lost—  
Yours is the praise, if mankind  
Hath not as yet in its march  
Fainted, and fallen, and died !

See ! In the sands of the world  
Marches the host of mankind,  
A feeble, wavering line.  
Where are they tending ?—A God

Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.—  
Ah, but the way is so long !  
Years they have been in the waste !  
Sore thirst plagues them ; the sands,  
Spreading all round, overawe ;  
Factions divide them, their host  
Threatens to break, to dissolve.—  
Ah, keep, keep them combined !  
Else, of the myriads who fill  
That army, not one shall arrive ;  
Sole they shall stray ; in the sands  
Flounder for ever in vain,  
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need  
Of your fainting, dispirited race,  
Ye, like angels, appear,  
Radiant with ardour divine.  
Beacons of hope, ye appear !  
Languor is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not on your brow.  
Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,  
Panic, despair, flee away.  
Ye move through the ranks, recall  
The stragglers, refresh the outworn.  
Praise, re-inspire the brave.

Order, courage, return ;  
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,  
Follow your steps as ye go.  
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,  
Strengthen the wavering line,  
Stablish, continue our march.  
On, to the bound of the waste  
On, to the City of God.

## THE FUTURE.

A WANDERER is man from his birth.  
He was born in a ship  
On the breast of the river of Time ;  
Brimming with wonder and joy  
He spreads out his arms to the light,  
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.  
Whether he wakes  
Where the snowy mountainous pass,  
Echoing the screams of the eagles,  
Hems in its gorges the bed  
Of the new-born clear-flowing stream ;  
Whether he first sees light  
Where the river in gleaming rings  
Sluggishly winds through the plain ;  
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea -  
As is the world on the banks,  
So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,  
Fable and dream  
Of the lands which the river of Time

Had left ere he woke on its breast,  
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed  
Only the tract where he sails  
He wots of ; only the thoughts,  
Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more  
As she was by the sources of Time ?  
Who imagines her fields as they lay  
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough ?  
Who thinks as they thought,  
The tribes who then roam'd on her breast,  
Her vigorous, primitive sons ?

What girl  
Now reads in her bosom as clear  
As Rebekah read, when she sate  
At eve by the palm-shaded well ?  
Who guards in her breast  
As deep, as pellucid a spring  
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure ?

What bard,  
At the height of his vision, can deem  
Of God, of the world, of the soul,  
With a plainness as near,  
As flashing as Moses felt.

When he lay in the night by his flock  
On the starlit Arabian waste?  
Can rise and obey  
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time  
Now flows through with us, is the plain.  
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.  
Border'd by cities, and hoarse  
With a thousand cries, is its stream.  
And we on its breast, our minds  
Are confused as the cries which we hear,  
Changing and shot as the sights which we see

And we say that repose has fled  
For ever the course of the river of Time.  
That cities will crowd to its edge  
In a blacker incessanter line ;  
That the din will be more on its banks,  
Denser the trade on its stream,  
Flatter the plain where it flows,  
Fiercer the sun overhead.  
That never will those on its breast  
See an ennobling sight,  
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,  
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time—  
As it grows, as the towns on its marge  
Fling their wavering lights  
On a wider, statelier stream—  
May acquire, if not the calm  
Of its early mountainous shore,  
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush  
Of the grey expanse where he floats,  
Freshening its current and spotted with foam  
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike  
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—  
As the pale waste widens around him,  
As the banks fade dimmer away,  
As the stars come out, and the night-wind  
Brings up the stream  
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

## NOTES.

### NOTE 1, PAGE 4.

*Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen.*

The name Europe (Εὐρώπη, *the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite. The name Asia, again, comes, it has been thought, from the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor, such as the Cayster or Mæander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them.

### NOTE 2, PAGE 17.

*Stagirius.*

Stagirius was a young monk to whom St. Chrysostom addressed three books, and of whom those books give an account. They will be found in the first volume of the Benedictine edition of St. Chrysostom's works.

### NOTE 3, PAGE 27.

*Sohrab and Rustum.*

“The story of Sohrab and Rustum is told in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, as follows :—The young



Sohrab was the fruit of one of Rustum's early amours. He had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrasiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do, under a feigned name. They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage; the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father; the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes, and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero; and when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death, he burnt his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred; the army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross

the Oxus unmolested. To reconcile us to the improbability of this tale, we are informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth ; and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days."

## NOTE 4, PAGE 62.

*Tristram and Iseult.*

"In the Court of his uncle King Marc, the king of Cornwall who at this time resided at the castle of Tyntagel, Tristram became expert in all knightly exercises.—The king of Ireland, at Tristram's solicitations, promised to bestow his daughter Iseult in marriage on King Marc. The mother of Iseult gave to her daughter's confidante a philtre, or love-potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage Tristram and Iseult, on their voyage to Cornwall, unfortunately partook. Its influence, during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers.—

"After the arrival of Tristram and Iseult in Cornwall, and the nuptials of the latter with King Marc, a great part of the Romance is occupied with their contrivances to procure secret interviews.—Tristram, being forced to leave Cornwall on account of the displeasure of his uncle, repaired to Brittany, where lived Iseult with the White

Hands.—He married her—more out of gratitude than love. Afterwards he proceeded to the dominions of Arthur, which became the theatre of unnumbered exploits.

“Tristram, subsequent to these events, returned to Brittany, and to his long-neglected wife. There, being wounded and sick, he was soon reduced to the lowest ebb. In this situation, he dispatched a confidant to the queen of Cornwall, to try if he could induce her to accompany him to Brittany, etc.”—*Dunlop's History of Fiction.*

NOTE 5, PAGE 113.

*That son of Italy who tried to blow.*

Giacopone di Todi.

NOTE 6, PAGE 117.

*Recalls the obscure opposer he outweigh'd.*

Gilbert de la Porrée, at the Council of Rheims, in 1148

NOTE 7, PAGE 119.

*Of that unpitying Phrygian sect which cried.*

The Montanists.

NOTE 8, PAGE 120.

*Monica.*

See St. Augustine's Confessions, book ix. chapter 11

## NOTE 9, PAGE 123.

*My Marguerite smiles upon the strand.*

See in "Early Poems," the poem called *A Memory Picture*.

## NOTE 10, PAGE 180.

*The Scholar-Gipsy.*

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there, and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned."—*Glanvil's Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661.

## NOTE 11, PAGE 192.

*Thyrsis.*

Throughout this poem there is reference to the preceding piece, *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

## NOTE 12, PAGE 199.

*Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing.*

Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Piplea, who had been carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityerses. Lityerses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping-contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityerses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by corn-reapers. Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph who exacted from him an oath to love no one else. He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph. Mercury, who was his father, raised him to Heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he ascended. At this fountain the Sicilians offered yearly sacrifices.—See Servius, *Comment. in Virgil. Bucol.*, v. 20, and viii. 68.

## NOTE 13, PAGE 208.

*Ah! where is he, who should have come.*

The author's brother, William Delafield Arnold, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, and author of *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*, died at Gibraltar on his way home from India, April the 9th, 1859.

## NOTE 14, PAGE 210.

*So moonlit, saw me once of yore.*

See the poem, *A Summer Night*, p. 174.

## NOTE 15, PAGE 210.

*My brother! and thine early lot.*

See Note 13.



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