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THE
POETICAL WORKS OF TENNYSON
IN TEN VOLUMES
VOL. III.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF
ALFRED TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

VOL. III. MISCELLANEOUS POEMS



LONDON
C. KEGAN PAUL & Co., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1880

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THE TWO VOICES.



STILL small voice spake unto me,

“Thou art so full of misery,

Were it not better not to be?”

Then to the still small voice I said ;

“Let me not cast in endless shade

What is so wonderfully made.”

To which the voice did urge reply ;

“To-day I saw the dragon-fly

Come from the wells where he did lie.

" An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

" He dried his wings : like gauze they grew :
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, " When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

" She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;
" Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

THE TWO VOICES.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
"Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;
"Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

THE TWO VOICES.

“ Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell’d in the world of sense?”

I would have said, “ Thou canst not know,”
But my full heart, that work’d below,
Rain’d thro’ my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
“ Thou art so steep’d in misery,
Surely ’twere better not to be.

“ Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep :
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.”

I said, “ The years with change advance :
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

THE TWO VOICES.

“Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Ev’n yet.” But he: “What drug can make
A wither’d palsy cease to shake?”

I wept, “Tho’ I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

“And men, thro’ novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.”

“Yet,” said the secret voice, “some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

“Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven’s starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

“Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.”

I said that “all the years invent,
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

“Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho’ watching from a ruin’d tower
How grows the day of human power?”

“The highest-mounted mind,” he said,
“Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

“Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

“Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town”

“Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream’d not yet.

“Thou hast not gain’d a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

“’Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

“Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign’d,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.”

THE TWO VOICES.

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonour to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

“Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill’d with dust,
Hears little of the false or just.”

“Hard task, to pluck resolve,” I cried,
“From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

“Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm’d me in the days
While still I yearn’d for human praise.

“When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash’d and rung.

“I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish’d without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

“Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

“Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

“As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

“To search thro’ all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law:

“At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

“ To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

“ In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

“ Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

“ Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.”

“ Yea !” said the voice, “ thy dream ~~was~~ good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

“ If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?

“ Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

“ Yet hadst thou, thro’ enduring pain,
Link’d month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“ Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labour little-worth.

“ That men with knowledge merely play’d,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho’ scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

“For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

“Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

“Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

“ I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

“ If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

“ And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

“ Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all.”

“ O dull, one-sided voice,” said I,
“ Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

“ I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

“ I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

“ Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

“ But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev’n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

“ Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho’ cursed and scorn’d, and bruised with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray’d, and from a happy place
God’s glory smote him on the face.”

The sullen answer slid betwixt :

“ Not that the grounds of hope were fix’d,
The elements were kindlier mix’d.”

I said, “ I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

“ And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

“ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix’d and froz’n to permanence :

“ For I go, weak from suffering here ;
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?”

“ Consider well,” the voice replied,
“ His face, that two hours since hath died
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

“ Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

“ His palms are folded on his breast :
There is no other thing express’d
But long disquiet merged in rest.

“ His lips are very mild and meek :
Tho’ one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

“ His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss’d, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race—

“ His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

“ He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

“ High up the vapours fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him.”

“ If all be dark, vague voice,” I said,
“ These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“ The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

“ I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

“ From grave to grave the shadow crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touch’d by his feet the daisy slept.

“ The simple senses crown’d his head:
‘ Omega! thou art Lord,’ they said,
‘ We find no motion in the dead.’

“ Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

“ Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?

“ He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“ Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forbodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

“ That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro’ thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.

“ The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

“ He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

“ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“ Ah ! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

“But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

“Where wert thou when thy father play’d
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

“A merry boy they called him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

“ Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

“ Who took a wife, who rear’d his race,
Whose wrinkles gather’d on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days :

“ A life of nothings, nothing worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth !”

“ These words,” I said, “ are like the rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast :

“ But if I grant, thou might’st defend
The thesis which thy words intend —
That to begin implies to end ;

“ Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould ?

“ I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe’er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

“ It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

“ As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro’ from state to state.

“ As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

“So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

“But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

“Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

“Or if thro’ lower lives I came—
Tho’ all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

“I might forget my weaker lot ;
For is not our first year forgot ?
The haunts of memory echo not

“ And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

“ Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory :

“ For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

“ Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

“ Of something felt, like something here ;
Of something done, I know not where ;
Such as no language may declare.”

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk," said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast miss'd thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
“ Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.”

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, " Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
“I see the end, and know the good.”

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
“I may not speak of what I know.”

Like an *Æolian* harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :
“What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?” I cried
“A hidden hope,” the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, "Rejoice! rejoice!"





THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.



LADY FLORA, let me speak :

A pleasant hour has past away

While, dreaming on your damask cheek,

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods

To see you dreaming—and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods.

And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm.

The reflex of a legend past,
 And loosely settled into form.
 And would you have the thought I had,
 And see the vision that I saw,
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add
 A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
 And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.



HE varying year with blade and sheaf
 Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,
 Here stays the blood along the veins.

Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearth the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :
In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs

Droop sleepily : no sound is made,

Not even of a gnat that sings.

More like a picture seemeth all

Than those old portraits of old kings,

That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask

Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and
there

The wrinkled steward at his task,

The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;

The page has caught her hand in his :

Her lips are sever'd as to speak :

His own are pouted to a kiss :

The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood ;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, misletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,

And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.



EAR after year unto her feet,

She lying on her couch alone,

Across the purpled coverlet,

The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,

On either side her tranced form

Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:

The slumbrous light is rich and warm,

And moves not on the rounded curl.

II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid

Unto her limbs itself doth mould

Languidly ever ; and, amid

Her full black ringlets downward roll'd.

Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright :
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps : on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.



THE ARRIVAL.

I.



ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.

He gazes on the silent dead :

“ They perish’d in their daring deeds.”

This proverb flashes thro’ his head,

“ The many fail : the one succeeds.”

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :

He breaks the hedge : he enters there :

The colour flies into his cheeks :

He trusts to light on something fair ;

For all his life the charm did talk

About his path, and hover near

With words of promise in his walk,

And whisper’d voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind :

The Magic Music in his heart

Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss *her*—on his knee.
“Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be !”

THE REVIVAL.

I.



TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
“ By holy rood, a royal beard !
How say you ? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap.”

The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

“ Pardy,” return’d the king, “ but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention’d half an hour ago? ”
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return’d reply :
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by



THE DEPARTURE.

I.



AND on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old :
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II.

" I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss ;"
" O wake for ever, love," she hears,
" O love, 'twas such as this and this."

And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III.

“ O eyes long laid in happy sleep !”
“ O happy sleep, that lightly fled !”
“ O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !”
“ O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !”
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

“ A hundred summers ! can it be ?
And whither goest thou, tell me where ?”

"O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

I.



O, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mad,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
 According as his humours lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

I.



YOU shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;

To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men ;
And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again ;
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;
And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers ;
Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there:
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',

To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you ;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes ;
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fullness of the pensive mind ;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;

A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see :
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.



O, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
“ What wonder, if he thinks me fair ? ”
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light ?

Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.





AMPHION.



Y father left a park to me,

But it is wild and barren,

A garden too with scarce a tree,

And waster than a warren :

Yet say the neighbours when they call,

It is not bad but good land,

And in it is the germ of all

That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great

In days of old Amphion,

And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,

Young ashes pirouetted down
 Coquetting with young beeches ;
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
 Ran forward to his rhyming,
 And from the valleys underneath
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
 And down the middle buzz ! she went
 With all her bees behind her :
 The poplars, in long order due,
 With cypress promenaded,
 The shock-head willows two and two
 By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave.
 Came yews, a dismal coterie :

Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,

Poussetting with a sloe-tree :

Old elms came breaking from the vine,

The vine stream'd out to follow,

And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine

From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,

When, ere his song was ended,

Like some great landslip, tree by tree,

The country-side descended ;

And shepherds from the mountain-eaves

Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,

As dash'd about the drunken leaves

The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,

And wanton without measure ;

So youthful and so flexile then,
 You moved her at your pleasure.
 Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!
 And make her dance attendance;
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
 And scirrhou roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age
 I could not move a thistle;
 The very sparrows in the hedge
 Scarce answer to my whistle;
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
 With strumming and with scraping
 A jackass heehaws from the rick,
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
 Like sleepy counsel pleading;

Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

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But what is that I hear? a sound
 Like sleepy counsel pleading;

O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of transplanting trees,
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ;

Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,

 The spindlings look unhappy.

Better to me the meanest weed

 That blows upon its mountain,

The vilest herb that runs to seed

 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,

 And years of cultivation,

Upon my proper patch of soil

 To grow my own plantation.

I'll take the showers as they fall,

 I will not vex my bosom :

Enough if at the end of all

 A little garden blossom.





ST. AGNES' EVE.



DEEP on the convent-roof the snows

Are sparkling to the moon :

My breath to heaven like vapour goes :

May' my soul follow soon !

The shadows of the convent-towers

Slant down the snowy sward,

Still creeping with the creeping hours

That lead me to my Lord :

Make Thou my spirit pure and clear

As are the frosty skies,

Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.

Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go .

All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride !





SIR GALAHAD.



Y good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,

Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims.

Between dark stems the forest glows,

I hear a noise of hymns :

Then by some secret shrine I ride ;

I hear a voice, but none are there ;

The stalls are void, the doors are wide,

The tapers burning fair.

Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,

The silver vessels sparkle clean,

The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,

And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres

I find a magic bark ;

I leap on board : no helmsman steers :

I float till all is dark.

A gentle sound, an awful light !

Three angels bear the holy Grail

With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
 And gilds the driving hail.
 I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields ,

But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls

A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
“ O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near.”
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the holy Grail.





EDWARD GRAY.



SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder
town

Met me walking on yonder way,

“And have you lost your heart?” she said

“And are you married yet, Edward Gray?”

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:

Bitterly weeping, I turn'd away:

“Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more

Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

“ Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will :
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

“ Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

“ Cruel, cruel the words I said !
Cruelly came they back to-day :
‘ You're too slight and fickle,’ I said,
‘ To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.’

“ There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, ‘ Listen to my despair :
I repent me of all I did :
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !”

“ Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
‘ Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;
And here the heart of Edward Gray !

“ Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree .
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me

“ Bitterly wept I over the stone :
Bitterly weeping I turn’d away :
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !
And there the heart of Edward Gray ! ”





WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL
MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.



PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.

Go fetch a pint of port :
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;
With fair horizons bound :
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out, a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And, set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.



Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best.
 That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
 Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers.
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all:
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw :
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire .
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.



But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks !
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than common,
As just and mere a serving-man
As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down
 Into the common day ?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay ?
For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit (my empty glass reversed),
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife
 I take myself to task ;
Lest of the fullness of my life
 I leave an empty flask :
For I had hope, by something rare,
 To prove myself a poet :
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup:
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went

Long since, and came no more ;

With peals of genial clamour sent

From many a tavern-door,

With twisted quirks and happy hits,

From misty men of letters ;

The tavern-hours of mighty wits—

Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks

Had yet their native glow :

Nor yet the fear of little books

Had made him talk for show ;

But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd

He flash'd his random speeches ;

Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd

His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth !
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth ?
I hold it good, good things should pass :
With time I will not quarrel :
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part : I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots :
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots :
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot ;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot ;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruel.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head

The thick-set hazel dies ;

Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread

The corners of thine eyes :

Live long, nor feel in head or chest

Our changeful equinoxes,

Till mellow Death, like some late guest,

Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease

To pace the gritted floor,

And, laying down an unctuous lease

Of life, shalt earn no more ;

No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,

Shall show thee past to Heaven :

But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,

A pint-pot neatly graven.



TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

“Cursed be he that moves my bones.”

Shakespeare's Epitaph.



YOU might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;
But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown :
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry :

“ Proclaim the faults he would not show
Break lock and seal : betray the trust :
Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.”

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth ;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :

His worst he kept, his best he gave.

My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be

The little life of bank and brier,

The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud

And drops at Glory's temple-gates,

For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd !





TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN
GREECE.



ALLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there :

TO E. L.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell ;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.



LADY CLARE.



T was the **time** when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his **cousin**, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :
They too will wed the morrow morn :
God's blessing on the day !

“ He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,” said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, “ Who was this that went from thee ? ”

“ It was my cousin,” said Lady Clare,
“ To-morrow he weds with me.”

‘ O God be thank’d ! ’ said Alice the nurse,
“ That all comes round so just and fair :
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare.”

“ Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse ? ”
Said Lady Clare, “ that ye speak so wild ? ”
“ As God’s above,” said Alice the nurse,
“ I speak the truth : you are my child.

“The old Earl’s daughter died at my breast
I speak the truth, as I live by bread !
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.”

“Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,” she said, “if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,
“But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald’s,
When you are man and wife.”

“If I’m a beggar born,” she said,
“I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by.”

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,

"But keep the secret all ye can."

She said, "Not so: but I will know

If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,

"The man will cleave unto his right."

"And he shall have it," the lady replied,

"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."

"O mother, mother, mother," she said,

"So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,

My mother dear, if this be so,

And lay your hand upon my head,

And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare :
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth ?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are :
I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

“Play me no tricks,” said Lord Ronald,

“For I am yours in word and in deed.

Play me no tricks,” said Lord Ronald,

“Your riddle is hard to read.”

O and proudly stood she up !

Her heart within her did not fail :

She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,

And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :

He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood :

“If you are not the heiress born,

And I,” said he, “the next in blood—

“If you are not the heiress born,

And I,” said he, “the lawful heir,

We two will wed to-morrow morn,

And you shall still be Lady Clare.”



THE LORD OF BURLEIGH



IN her ear he whispers gaily,

“If my heart by signs can tell,

Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,

And I think thou lov'st me well.”

She replies, in accents fainter,

“There is none I love like thee.”

He is but a landscape-painter.

And a village maiden she.

He to lips, that fondly falter,

Presses his without reproof:

Leads her to the village altar,

And they leave her father's roof.

“ I can make no marriage present :

Little can I give my wife.

Love will make our cottage pleasant,

And I love thee more than life.”

They by parks and lodges going

See the lordly castles stand :

Summer woods, about them blowing,

Made a murmur in the land.

From deep thought himself he rouses,

Says to her that loves him well,

“ Let us see these handsome houses

Where the wealthy nobles dwell.”

So she goes by him attended,

Hears him lovingly converse,

Sees whatever fair and splendid

Lay betwixt his home and hers ;

Parks with oak and chestnut shady,

Parks and order'd gardens great,

Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer :
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days
O but she will love him truly !
He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns ;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before :
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.

And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
“All of this is mine and thine.”
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove :

But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirit sank :
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness :
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honour
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
And she murmur'd, " Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me !"

So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side :
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,
" Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.





SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN
GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.



LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elmtree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :

And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd

The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss

Upon her perfect lips.



A FAREWELL.



LOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,

Thy tribute wave deliver :

No more by thee my steps shall be,

For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,

A rivulet then a river :

No where by thee my steps shall be,

For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever





THE BEGGAR MAID



HER arms across her breast she laid :

She was more fair than words can
say :

Bare-footed came the beggar maid

Before the king Cophetua.

In robe and crown the king stepped down,

To meet and greet her on her way ;

“ It is no wonder,” said the lords,

“ She is more beautiful than day.”

As shines the moon in clouded skies,

She in her poor attire was seen :

One praised her ancles, one her eyes,

One her dark hair and lovesome mien

So sweet a face, such angel grace,

In all that land had never been :

Cophetua sware a royal oath :

“This beggar maid shall be my queen !”





THE VISION OF SIN.

I.



HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-
gate.

He rode a horse with wings, that would have
flown,

But that his heavy rider kept him down.

And from the palace came a child of sin,

And took him by the curls, and led him in,

Where sat a company with heated eyes,

Expecting when a fountain should arise :

A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of
grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;

Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and
palpitated;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,

Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head
A grey and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

IV.

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !

Here is custom come your way ;

Take my brute, and lead him in,

Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !

See that sheets are on my bed ;

What ! the flower of life is past :

It is long before you wed.

“ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath !
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember; when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

“ Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :

Let me loose thy tongue with wine :

Callest thou that thing a leg?

Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :

Thou hast been a sinner too :

Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,

Empty scarecrows, I and you!

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :

Have a rouse before the morn :

Every moment dies a man,

Every moment one is born.

“ We are men of ruin'd blood ;

Therefore comes it we are wise.

Fish are we that love the mud,

Rising to no fancy-flies.

“ Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Thro’ the courts, the camps, the schools
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools

“ Friendship !—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

“ Virtue !—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix’d with cunning sparks of hell.

“ O ! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour’s wife.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :

Have a rouse before the morn :

Every moment dies a man,

Every moment one is born.

“ Drink, and let the parties rave :

They are fill'd with idle spleen ;

Rising, falling, like a wave,

For they know not what they mean.

“ He that roars for liberty

Faster binds a tyrant's power ;

And the tyrant's cruel glee

Forces on the freer hour.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :

All the windy ways of men

Are but dust that rises up,

And is lightly laid again.

“ Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

“ No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

“ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs :
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

“ Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

“ Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

“ Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

“ Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

“ Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :

 All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
 And is lightly laid again.

“ Trooping from their mouldy dens

 The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
 Hollow hearts and empty heads !

“ You are bones, and what of that ?

 Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
 Is but modell'd on a skull.

“ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !

‘ Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
 From the fashion of your bones.

“ No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

“ Lo ! God’s likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modell’d, glazed, or framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed !

“ Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath !
Drink to heavy Ignorance !
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

“ Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near :
What ! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

“ Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can !
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn.”

v.

The voice grew faint : there came a further change
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake : “ Behold ! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.”

Another said : " The crime of sense became

The crime of malice, and is equal blame."

And one : " He had not wholly quench'd his power ;

A little grain of conscience made him sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the slope

Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ?"

To which an answer peal'd from that high land,

But in a tongue no man could understand ;

And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn

God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.





OME not, when I am dead,

To drop thy foolish tears upon my
grave,

To trample round my fallen head,

And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.

There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;

But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime

I care no longer, being all unblest :

Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,

And I desire to rest.

Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :

Go by, go by.



THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.



He clasps the crag with hooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.





OVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow :
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go ;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.



BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,

At the foot of thy crags, O Sea

But the tender grace of a day that is dead

Will never come back to me.





THE POET'S SONG.



HE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the
street,

A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,

The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many
songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away"



The second division of these **Miscellaneous Poems** was published in the winter of 1832. Some of the poems have been considerably altered. Others have been added, which, with one exception, were written in 1833.



Y life is full of weary days,
But good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wandered into other ways :
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
Of that deep grave to which I go :
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
So far—far down, but I shall know
Thy voice, and answer from below.



THE · CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.



He that only rules by terror

Doeth grievous wrong.

Deep as Hell I count his error.

Let him hear my song.

Brave the Captain was : the seamen

Made a gallant crew,

Gallant sons of English freemen,

Sailors bold and true.

But they hated his oppression,
Stern he was and rash ;
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came.
So they past by capes and islands,
Many a harbour-mouth,
Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.
On a day when they were going
O'er the lone expanse

In the north, her canvas flowing,

Rose a ship of France.

Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,

Joyful came his speech :

But a cloudy gladness lighten'd

In the eyes of each.

“ Chase,” he said : the ship flew forward,

And the wind did blow ;

Stately, lightly, went she Norward,

Till she near'd the foe.

Then they look'd at him **they** hated,

Had what they desired :

Mute with folded arms they waited—

Not a gun was fired.

But they heard the **foeman's** thunder

Roaring out their doom ;

All the air was torn in sunder,

Crashing went the boom,

Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,

Bullets fell like rain ;

Over mast and deck were scatter'd

Blood and brains of men.

Spars were splinter'd ; decks were broken :

Every mother's son—

Down they dropt—no word was spoken—

Each beside his gun.

On the decks as they were lying,

Were their faces grim.

In their blood, as they lay dying,

Did they smile on him.

Those, in whom he had reliance

For his noble name,

With one smile of still defiance

Sold him unto shame.

Shame and wrath his heart confounded,

Pale he turn'd and red,

Till himself was deadly wounded

Falling on the dead.

Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !

Years have wander'd by,

Side by side beneath the water

Crew and Captain lie ;

There the sunlit ocean tosses

O'er them mouldering,

And the lonely seabird crosses

With one waft of the wing.





THREE SONNETS TO A
COQUETTE.

I.



ARESS'D or chidden by the dainty
hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp and flat ;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When sleep had bound her in his rosy band,
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.

But now they live with Beauty less and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds ;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

II.

The form, the form alone is eloquent !
A nobler yearning never broke her rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplishment :
Yet in the waltzing-circle as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beauteous breast
That once had power to rob it of content.
A moment came the tenderness of tears,
The phantom of a wish that once could move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles restore—
For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,
She still would take the praise, and care no
more.

III.

Wan Sculptor weepest thou to take the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,
In painting some dead friend from memory?
Weep on: beyond his object Love can last:
His object lives: more cause to weep have I:
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—
Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,

But breathe it into earth and close it up
With secret death for ever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams with
weary bones.





SONG.



LADY, let the rolling drums
Beat to battle where thy warrior
stands :

Now thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpets blow,
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee :
Now their warrior father meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.



SONG.

TOME they brought him slain with spears.
They brought him home at even-fall ;
All alone she sits and hears
Echoes in his empty hall,
Sounding on the morrow.

The Sun peep'd in from open field,
The boy began to leap and prance,
Rode upon his father's lance,
Beat upon his father's shield—
“O hush, my joy, my sorrow.”



ON A MOURNER.



NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,
Counts nothing that she meets with base,
But lives and loves in every place ;

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where hums the dropping snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, " Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide will that closes thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride

From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them born.

VI.

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII.

mising empire ; such as those
That once at dead of night did greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.



MISCELLANEOUS.

PUBLISHED IN 1869.





NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

I.



OSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they
canters awaäy ?

Proputty, proputty, proputty—that'e
what I 'ears 'em saäy.

Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass
for thy paaïns :

Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy
braaïns.

II.

Woä—theer's a crow to pluck wi' tha, Sam : yon's
parson's 'ouse—

Dosn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man
or a mouse ?

Time to think on it then ; for thou'll be twenty to
weeäk.*

Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear
mysén speäk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o'
thee ;

Thou's been talkin' to muther, an' she bean a
tellin' it me.

This week.

Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo'
parson's lass—

Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us
thinks tha an ass.

IV.

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daay—they was
ringing the bells.

She's abeauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o'
gells,

Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the
flower as blaws.

But propuppy, propuppy sticks, an' propuppy, pro-
puppy graws.

V.

Do'ant be stunt :* taäke time : I knaws what
maäkes tha sa mad.

Obstinate.

Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur
a lad?

But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma
this:

"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer
munny is!"

VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy mother
coom to 'and,

Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o'
land.

Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a
thowt —

But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass
as 'ant nowt?

VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt
when 'e's deäd,

Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle* her
breäd :

Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt nivir git
naw 'igher ;

An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd
to the shire.

VIII.

An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o 'Varsity
debt,

Stook to his taa'il they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on
'em yet.

An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend
'im a shove,

* Earn.

Woorse nor a far-welter'd* yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e
married fur luvv.

IX.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er
munny too,

Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right
to do.

Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny
laaid by?

Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it:
reäson why.

X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the
lass,

* Or fow-welter'd, —said of a sheep lying on its back in the
furrow.

Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us
thinks tha an ass.

Woä then, propuppy, wiltha?—an ass as near as
mays nowt*—

Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as
owt.†

XI.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o'
the fence!

Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it
shillins an' pence?

Propuppy, propuppy's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy,
I'm blest

If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as
it's the best.

* Makes nothing. † The flies are as fierce as anything.

XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an'
steäls,

Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their
regular meäls.

Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's
to be 'ad.

Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a
loomp is bad.

XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a
laäzy lot,

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver
munny was got.

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt ; leästwaays 'is munny
was 'id.

But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an 'e died a
good un, 'e did

XIV.

Loook thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck comes
out by the 'ill !

Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs up to the
mill ;

An' I'll run up to the brig, an' that thou'll live to
see ; -

And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land
to thee.

XV.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to
stick ;

But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to
Dick.—

Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears
'im saäy—

Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter
awaäy.





THE GOLDEN SUPPER.

[This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.

A young lover, Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel of it. He speaks of having been haunted in delirium by visions and the sound of bells, sometimes tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.]



He flies the event: he leaves the event
to me:

Poor Julian—how he rush'd away; the
bells,

Those marriage bells, echoing in ear and heart--

But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,
As who should say "continue." Well, he had
One golden hour—of triumph shall I say?
Solace at least—before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour of his!
He moved thro' all of it majestically—
Restrain'd himself quite to the close—but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-bells,
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd : but Lionel and the girl
Were wedded, and our Julian came again
Back to his mother's house among the pines.
But these, their gloom, the mountains and the Bay,
The whole land weigh'd him down as Ætna does
The Giant of Mythology : he would go,
Would leave the land for ever, and had gone

Surely, but for a whisper "Go not yet,"
Some warning, and divinely as it seem'd
By that which follow'd—but of this I deem
As of the visions that he told—the event
Glanced back upon them in his after life,
And partly made them—tho' he knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look at her—
No not for months: but, when the eleventh moon
After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and said,
Would you could toll me out of life, but found—
All softly as his mother broke it to him—
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
For that low knell tolling his lady dead—
Dead—and had lain three days without a pulse:
All that look'd on her had pronounced her dead.
And so they bore her (for in Julian's land

They never nail a dumb head up in elm),
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of heaven,
And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then ? not die : he is here and hale—
Not plunge headforemost from the mountain there,
And leave the name of Lover's Leap : not he :
He knew the meaning of the whisper now,
Thought that he knew it. "This, I stay'd for this ;
O love, I have not seen you for so long.
Now, now, will I go down into the grave,
I will be all alone with all I love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is his no more :
The dead returns to me, and I go down
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering the dim vault,

And, making there a sudden light, beheld
All round about him that which all will be.
The light was but a flash, and went again.
Then at the far end of the vault he saw
His lady with the moonlight on her face ;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
Of black and bands of silver, which the moon
Struck from an open grating overhead
High in the wall, and all the rest of her
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the vault.

“It was my wish,” he said, “to pass, to sleep
To rest, to be with her—till the great day
Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,
And raised us hand in hand.” And kneeling there
Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was loving hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a love as mine—

Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her—
He softly put his arm about her neck
And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless death
And silence made him bold—nay, but I wrong him,
He revered his dear lady even in death;
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
“O, you warm heart,” he moan'd, “not even death
Can chill you all at once:” then starting, thought
His dreams had come again. “Do I wake or sleep?
Or am I made immortal, or my love
Mortal once more?” It beat—the heart—it beat:
Faint—but it beat: at which his own began
To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd
The feebler motion underneath his hand.
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak
He came in, and now striding fast, and now

Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,
So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where she was born.

There the good mother's kindly ministering,
With half a night's appliances, recall'd
Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye that ask'd
“ Where ? ” till the things familiar to her youth
Had made a silent answer: then she spoke
“ Here! and how came I here?” and learning it
(They told her somewhat rashly as I think)
At once began to wander and to wail,
“ Ay, but you know that you must give me back:
Send ! bid him come ; ” but Lionel was away—
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.
“ He casts me out,” she wept, “ and goes ”—
wail

That seeming something, y^et was nothing, born
Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof
At some precipitance in her burial.
Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,
“ O yes, and you,” she said, “ and none but you.”
For you have given me life and love again,
And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,
And you shall give me back when he returns.
“ Stay then a little,” answer'd Julian, “ here,
And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself ;
And I will do your will. I may not stay,
No, not an hour ; but send me notice of him
When he returns, and then will I return,
And I will make a solemn offering of you
To him you love.” And faintly she replied,
“ And I will do *your* will, and none shall know.”

Not know? with such a secret to be known.
But all their house was old and loved them both,
And all the house had known the loves of both ;
Had died almost to serve them any way,
And all the land was waste and solitary :
And then he rode away ; but after this,
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him : myself was then
Travelling that land, and meant to rest an hour ;
And sitting down to such a base repast,
It makes me angry yet to speak of it—
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was vile)

And in a loft, with none to wait on him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and rush !
But there from fever and my care of him
Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,
And waited for her message, piece by piece
I learnt the drearier story of his life ;
And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady made
Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her worth,
Her beauty even ? should he not be taught,
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,
The value of that jewel he had to guard ?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the soul :
That makes the sequel pure ; tho' some of us
Beginning at the sequel know no more.
Not such am I : and yet I say, the bird
That will not hear my call, however sweet,
But if my neighbour whistle answers him—
What matter ? there are others in the wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of hers—
Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her eyes alone,
But all from these to where she touch'd on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's seem'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came
To greet us, her young hero in her arms !
“ Kiss him,” she said. “ You gave me life again.
He, but for you, had never seen it once.
His other father you ! Kiss him, and then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too.”

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart ! his own
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him
By that great love they both had borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour with him
Before he left the land for evermore ;
And then to friends—they were not many—who
lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,
And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I never
Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall
From column on to column, as in a wood,
Not such as here—an equatorial one,
Great garlands swung and blossom'd; and beneath,
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,
Chalice and saucer, wines that, Heaven knows
when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups
Where nymph and god ran ever round in gold—
Others of glass as costly—some with gems
Moveable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value—Ah heavens!

Why need I tell you all?—suffice to say
That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guest : and they, the guests.
Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's eyes
(I told you that he had his golden hour),
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his,
And that resolved self-exile from a land
He never would revisit, such a feast
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than rich,
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall
Two great funereal curtains, looping down,
Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid the frame.

And just above the parting was a lamp :
So the sweet figure folded round with night
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate and drank,
And might—the wines being of such nobleness—
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
And something weird and wild about it all :
What was it ? for our lover seldom spoke,
Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use ;
And when the feast was near an end, he said

“ There is a custom in the Orient, friend. -
I read of it in Persia—when a man
Will honour those who feast with him, he brings
And shows them whatsoever he accounts

Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom"—

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with meeting hands
And cries about the banquet—"Beautiful!
Who could desire more beauty at a feast?"

The lover answer'd, "There is more than one
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not
Before my time, but hear me to the close.
This custom steps yet further when the guest
Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.
For after he has shown him gems or gold,
He brings and sets before him in rich guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,
The beauty that is dearest to his heart—

'O my heart's lord, would I could show you,' he

says,

'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose to-night

To show you what is dearest to my heart,

And my heart too.

" But solve me first a doubt.

I knew a man, nor many years ago ;

He had a faithful servant, one who loved

His master more than all on earth beside.

He falling sick, and seeming close on death,

His master would not wait until he died,

But bade his menials bear him from the door,

And leave him in the public way to die.

I knew another, not so long ago,

Who found the dying servant, took him home,

And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his life.

I ask you now, should this first master claim

His service, whom does it belong to ? him

Who thrust him out, or him who saved his life ?”

This question, so flung down before the guests,
And balanced either way by each, at length
When some were doubtful how the law would hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of phrase.
And he beginning languidly—his loss
Weigh’d on him yet—but warming as he went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,
The service of the one so saved was due
All to the saver—adding, with a smile,
The first for many weeks—a semi-smile
As at a strong conclusion—“ body and soul

And life and limbs, all his to work his will."

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
To bring Camilla down before them all.
And crossing her own picture as she came,
And looking as much lovelier as herself
Is lovelier than all others—on her head
A diamond circlet, and from under this
A veil, that seem'd no more than gilded air,
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze
With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of hers
Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,
That flings a mist behind it in the sun—
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,
The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd
With roses, none so rosy as himself—
And over all her babe and her the jewels
Of many generations of his house

Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them out
As for a solemn sacrifice of love—

So she came in :—I am long in telling it.

I never yet beheld a thing so strange,

Sad, sweet, and strange together—floated in,—

While all the guests in mute amazement rose,—

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,

Before the board, there paused and stood, her
breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,

Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.

But him she carried, him nor lights nor feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ; who cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide

And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world

About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,

When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

“My guests,” said Julian : “you are honour’d
now

Ev’n to the uttermost : in her behold
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.”
Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,
And heard him muttering, “So like, so like ;
She never had a sister. I knew none.
Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so like !”
And then he suddenly ask’d her if she were.
She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was dumb
And then some other question’d if she came
From foreign lands, and still she did not speak.
Another, if the boy were hers : but she

To all their queries answer'd not a word,
Which made the amazement more, till one of them
Said, shuddering, "Her spectre !" But his friend
Replied, in half a whisper, "Not at least
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
Prove, as I almost dread to find her, dumb !"

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all :
"She is but dumb, because in her you see
That faithful servant whom we spoke about,
Obedient to her second master now ;
Which will not last. I have here to-night a guest
So bound to me by common love and loss—
What ! shall I bind him more ? in his behalf,
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
That which of all things is the dearest to me,
Not only showing ? and he himself pronounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

“Now all be dumb, and promise all
Not to break in on what I say by word
Or whisper, while I show you all my heart.”
And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily—
The passionate moment would not suffer that—
Past thro’ his visions to the burial ; thence
Down to this last strange hour in his own hall ;
And then rose up, and with him all his guests
Once more as by enchantment ; all but he,
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,
And sat as if in chains—to whom he said :

“ Take my free gift, my cousin, for your wife ;
And were it only for the giver’s sake,
And tho’ she seem so like the one you lost,

Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
Lest there be none left here to bring her back :
I leave this land for ever." Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by ONE HAND,
And bearing on one arm the noble babe,
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.
And there the widower husband and dead wife
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather seem'd
For some new death than for a life renew'd ;
At this the very babe began to wail ;
At once they turn'd, and caught and brought
him in
To their charm'd circle, and, half-killing him
With kisses, round him closed and claspt again.
But Lionel, when at last he freed himself
From wife and child, and lifted up a face
All over glowing with the sun of life,

And love, and boundless thanks—the sight of this
So frightened our good friend, that turning to me
And saying, “It is over : let us go”—
There were our horses ready at the doors—
We bade them no farewell, but mounting these
He past for ever from his native land ;
And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.





THE VICTIM.

I.



PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low,
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe ;
So thick they died the people cried
“ The Gods are moved against the land.”
The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand :

“ Help us from famine
And plague and strife !
What would you have of us ?
Human life ?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,
(Answer, O answer)
We give you his life.”

II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood ;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with flame :
And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd
Till at last it seem'd that an answer came :

“ The King is happy
In child and wife ;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life.”

III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill ;
The King was hunting in the wild ;
They found the mother sitting still ;
She cast her arms about the child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years increased,
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
“ The Gods have answer'd :
We give them the boy.”

IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand ;
The mother said " They have taken the child
To spill his blood and heal the land :
The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the lea :
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me
They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your dearest ?
Or I, the wife ? "

V.

The King bent low, with hand on brow,
He stay'd his arms upon his knee :

“ O wife, what use to answer now ?

For now the Priest has judged for me.”

The King was shaken with holy fear ;

“ The Gods,” he said, “ would have chosen
well ;

Yet both are near, and both are dear,

And which the dearest I cannot tell !”

But the Priest was happy,

His victim won :

We have his dearest,

His only son !”

VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,

The knife uprising toward the blow,

To the altar-stone she sprang alone,

“ Me, not my darling, no !”

He caught her away with a sudden cry ;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,

And shrieking “ *I am his dearest, I—*

I am his dearest !” rush’d on the knife.

And the Priest was happy,

“ O, Father Odin,

We give you a life.

Which was his nearest ?

Who was his dearest ?

The Gods have answer’d ;

We give them the wife !”





W A G E S.



LORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory
of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost
on an endless sea—

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the
wrong—

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of
glory she :

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the wages of Virtue
be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life of
the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of
the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer
sky :
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.





THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.



HE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,
the hills and the plains—

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of
Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which
He seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live
in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and
limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from
Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason
why ;
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel
“I am I?”

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest
thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour
and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with
Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands
and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us
rejoice,

For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His
voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the
fool;


For all we have power to see is a straight staff
bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of
man cannot see;

But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it
not He?





LOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies ;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.





LUCRETIOUS.



LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold ; for when the morning
flush

Of passion and the first embrace had died
Between them, tho' he loved her none the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his foot
Return from pacings in the field, and ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master took
Small notice, or austere, for—his mind
Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise

And long roll of the Hexameter—he past
To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls
Left by the Teacher whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not ; but wrathful, petulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,
And this destroy'd him ; for the wicked broth
Confused the chemic labour of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man's
Made havock among those tender cells, and check'd
His power to shape : he loathed himself ; and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried ;

“ Storm in the night ! for thrice I heard the rain
Rushing ; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—
Struck out the streaming mountain-side. and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

“ Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what
dreams !

For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that come
Just ere the waking : terrible ! for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature ; all her bonds
Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever : that was mine, my dream, I knew it—

Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies
His function of the woodland: but the next !
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they nixt, and yell'd and round me
drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest day ?

“ Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the
breasts,

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed
At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,
The fire that left a roofless Iliou,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I woke.

“ Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,
Because I would not one of thine own doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee? thine,
Forgetful how my rich procemion makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

“ Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these

Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

“ Nay, if thou can'st, O Goddess, like ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms
Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome.

“ Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were abroad ;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears ;

Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse—
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow forth
The all-generating powers, and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers :
Which things appear the work of mighty Gods.

“ The Gods ! and if I go *my* work is left
Unfinish'd—*if* I go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,

Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm ! and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods !
If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law ? My master held
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant ? I
meant ?
I have forgotten what I meant : my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

“ Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—
Has mounted yonder ; since he never sware,
Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,
That he would only shine among the dead
Hereafter ; tales ! for never yet on earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
Moan round the spit—nor knows he what he sees ;
King of the East altho' he seem, and girt
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
That climb into the windy halls of heaven :
And here he glances on an eye new-born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain ;
And here he stays upon a freezing orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the last ;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n

And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,
 Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
 Whether I mean this day to end myself,
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
 That men like soldiers may not quit the post
 Allotted by the Gods : but he that holds
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
 Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that
 break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,
 And wretched age—and worst disease of all,
 These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth

Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
The phantom husks of something foully done,
And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,
And blasting the long quiet of my breast
With animal heat and dire insanity?

“ How should the mind, except it loved them,
clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
The keepers down, and throng, their rags and they
The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of the land?

“ Can I not fling this horror off me again,

Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
At random ravage? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and within
All hollow as the hopes and fears of men?

“But who was he, that in the garden snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—
For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops quivering—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and Faun;
And here an Oread—how the sun delights
To glance and shift about her slippery sides.

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,
And budded bosom-peaks—who this way runs
Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows; but him I proved impossible;
Twy-natured is no nature : yet he draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
That ever butted his rough brother-brute.
For lust or lusty blood or provender:
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she
Loathes him as well; such a precipitate heel,
Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me: but will she fling herself,
Shameless upon me? Catch her, goatfoot: nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilderness,
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I wish—
What?—that the bush were leafless? or to whom
All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,

I know you careless, yet, behold, to you
 From childly wont and ancient use I call—
 I thought I lived securely as yourselves—
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,
 No madness of ambition, avarice, none :
 No larger feast than under plane or pine
 With neighbours laid along the grass, to take
 Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
 Affirming each his own philosophy—
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
 But now it seems some unseen monster lays
 His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
 Wrenching it backward into his ; and spoils
 My bliss in being ; and it was not great ;
 For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,
 To make a truth less harsh, I often grew

Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life—
Poor little life that toddles half an hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—
And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—
What beast has heart to do it? And what man,
What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus?
Not I; not he, who bears one name with her
Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of
 kings,
When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which
 breaks

As I am breaking now !

“ And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me man
Dash them anew together at her will
Through all her cycles—into man once more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower :
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
And even his bones long laid within the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,

Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and plucks
The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
Shall stand: ay, surely: then it fails at last
And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
How roughly men may woo thee so they win—
Thus—thus: the soul flies out and dies in the air.

With that he drove the knife into his side:

She heard him raging, heard him fall ; ran in,
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he answer'd, " Care
not thou !
Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee well ! "



