

SPRING
WILD
FLOWERS

BY
WIL. D'LEINA

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SPRING
WILD FLOWERS.



FR. SCHENCK, lith. EDID.

SPRING
WILD FLOWERS,
BY

WIL. D'LEINA, ESQ.

OF THE OUTER TEMPLE.

"Life, at the season when the earth upsprings
From slumber, as a sphered angel's child,
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings."

Shelley.

THOMAS NELSON, LONDON;
AND EDINBURGH.

MDCCCXLVI.

TO
JESSIE ELEANOR,
HIS INFANT DAUGHTER,
THE AUTHOR DEDICATES, VERY AFFECTIONATELY,
THIS LITTLE BUNCH OF
SPRING WILD FLOWERS,
WITH THE HOPE
THAT NEITHER MAY BE NIPPED
BY THE FROSTS OF AN
EARLY WINTER.

Preface.

That the following Poems are published with no overweening sense of their importance, may be inferred from the form in which they are issued, though the author does not propose on that account to offer them with an apology. With such names as Shakspeare, and Spenser, and Milton, in his thoughts, poets in the exclusive sense of that noble title, he might well hesitate to assign the name of poetry to the humble offspring of his fancy. But he believes that poetry has a far wider range, with many degrees of elevation, wherein, while the poet of all times, singing alone, high in its pure zenith, fills the wide expanse with the music of his song; the lay of the little chorister among the brakens may also be true to nature within its narrower range;--this at least he is conscious of, that whatever he has written has been the result of spontaneous thought; no task work; still less, what he did not feel; but rather because, amid many engrossing occupations, some earnest fancy has prompted him to give it unpremeditated utterance in rhyme.

Poetry, to those who have devoted themselves to it, for the production of that which 'posterity will not willingly let die,' is one of the noblest occupations of genius; nor are they without reward, 'haply not unhearing of that divine and nightly whispering voice, which speaks to mighty minds of predestinated garlands, starry and unwithering^[A].' But with the author it has only been a serious plaything; not irreverently handled, but in which earnest thoughts have often found utterance that had otherwise remained unspoken.

The longest, if not the most important piece in the volume, is written in a peculiar, and, as far as he is aware, a novel measure, intended to unite many of the characteristics of blank verse with its distant rhymes; and thereby to adapt it to the character of a subject, combining the incidents of a domestic tale with serious history. To a casual reader the peculiarity may escape observation, as the rhymes are purposely arranged at such intervals as to secure to it the general character of blank verse, while still he may be conscious of a sense of musical harmony, resulting from this unnoticed source;--the extent of his success, however, he leaves to the decision of others.

A long poem has at all times a certain formidable look, which renders it unattractive to a numerous class of readers, and requires some introduction to give it the chance of a hearing; of the remaining pieces, one or two have already appeared elsewhere: and the whole are sufficiently brief and miscellaneous to be left to the reader's taste.

EDINBURGH, Jan. 29th, 1845.

[A] Coleridge.

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SPRING WILD FLOWERS.

A Garland of Wild Roses

A garland of wild roses
With eglantine and daisies and the like,
Some snowdrops, such as winter oft exposes
Between the thaws wherewith she closes;
Meltings, like the regrets that strike
Amid the chill of human hearts, belike,
When passion looses.

A withered nosegay too,
'Twas plucked one spring day in the fresh green wood;
All laughingly the sun stole through
And quenched his thirst with cups of dew;
Cowslip, heath, and fox glove wooed
Hands that plucked in merriest mood,
Prizing while new.

A few sweet violets;
The scent methinks still clings to the blue leaf;
Trifles, but yet their breath begets
Sweet memories, no heart forgets;
Even with their life so brief,
Are they not worth, at least such grief,
Knowing no regrets?

Some dandelions and gorse,
With a marigold or two full blown,
Gathered at the time; the things are coarse
I own, yet this may have its force,
They took my fancy; weeds not grown
In vain, I think, or Nature had not thrown
So many o'er her course.

All are bound up together
With one little sprig of forget-me-not:
Alas! bright flowers so speedily wither,
And grief's so inconstant, one knows not whether
It is not selfishness after all
Makes us so keenly regret their fall
Ere the wintry weather.

EDWARD.
A TALE OF THE REFORMATION.

A simple tale of an old man's faith;
And a maid found faithful in love, to death,
By such trials as Holy Church sanctioneth:

'Tis an old tale hath been told before,
God grant our times have not things in store
Shall give us the like to tell once more.

Yet thanks to God that such things have been,
Since in martyr's faithfulness I ween
Faith's precursor of liberty is seen.

ARGUMENT. PART I.

The introduction of the Poem, indicates the period of the Tale, depicting the uncertainty of men's minds in the transition state that precedeth change. The past unrolling before the Chronicler, he describeth the scene. An aged monk earnest in chase of truth, having sought vain solace in the legends and traditions of the Church, when satiated with the pleasures of the world, and jaded by conscience to the acknowledgment of virtue, while forsaking her allegiance; turneth his pursuit into the paths of science, and again abandoneth the earnest chase insatiate as before. In his vague search the old Monk stumbleth on the Scriptures, and findeth in the despised and forgotten manuscript, the treasure so long sought in vain; but striving to share it with others, he findeth his mission unhonoured, and the treasure, sought in long pain, and proved in gladness of heart, deemed but a vain illusion; yet are there a few whom the world hath not satisfied, and one, an Orphan Maid, twice desolate by death and separation, the yearnings of whose heart find their full solace in the boundless treasury of Truth.

EDWARD.
PART I. THE MONK.

A tale of th' Olden Time, when mighty thoughts,
Struggling in fever-dreams of Liberty,
Awoke to war for right inalienate,

Freedom to worship God: leagured by doubts,
When faith with night grappled fearfully,
And the young dawn, wrapt in dim mists, o'ersate.

When conscience echoed in her inmost caves,
Not with the shrill accusing note she flings,
Startling th' affrighted soul, noon-slumbering,--

But muttered voices, as when a summer eve
Darkens to storm, or ere the welkin rings
With the thunder's laugh, or pales 'neath its wing!

Immured in gloomy cell an old Monk sate,
Pouring with studious eye upon a missal,
With saintly portraiture emblazoned quaint,

Himself a picture, as through the narrow grate
Stole a ray, the niggard offspring of th' espousal
Of light and gloom,--such scene as Rembrandt

Caught by his pencil's wondrous Alchemy,
Had made a gem that crowns might wrangle for;
--Yet other far his studies,--he from youth

To this hoar age, within the boundary
Of Benedictine rule, hath sieved her store
Of legendary rubbish, seeking truth!

Pent stage, whereon th' emasculated soul
Drags through unfruitful years its weary length,
Unsunn'd by sympathy's dear charities,

Yet, even thence, a History will unroll
Of the same soul awaking in its strength,
And, armed with God's most glorious verities,

Warring against Hell's principalities,

Leagued to uphold night's undivided empire
And bar her gates against besieging day,

Fanaticism's fierce realities
Thick mustering, too, her flag, the martyr's pyre
God-owned, and streaming far into the night.

A noble soul it was, though long pent up
In superstition's gordian subtleties,
And life's lamp far gone down in the dubious round

Of unravelling error's skene, ere he could grope
Up to dim twilight of morn-promised skies,
And wade through learned sloughs to vantage ground;

With energies untried--a slumbering mine
Which yet a tiny spark may heave on high
With devastation dire,--his youth wore on:

No sun arose with influence benign
To woo the pregnant seeds to fructify,
And heavenward lure the soul, descending prone;

Cast on an evil age, when the Church saw
Man's God-resemblance to brute-night succumb,
Yet saw uncaring, save to lend a hand

To urge him down the steep; the unwritten law
All voiceless as the dead, and conscience numb,
While the waked passions sway the wide command.

He, all impetuous, blindly flung his dower
Of giant intellect adown the stream,
Gathered its harvest in,--then conscience woke,

And, armed to reassert her slighted power,
Startled him shuddering from his guilty dream
To shelter in despair, against her stroke!

Where shall he flee?--The mercy freely given,
Blood-bought by that Great Shepherd of the sheep,
By papal bull, the Church her own declares,

Self-chartered, sole monopolist of Heaven;
With purpose doubtless to retail it cheap,
And clear the market of the devil's wares!

Nay, more, the incarnate veil, in which he bled
Who bore our sins upon the accursed tree,
And, once for all, God's justice satisfied,

By her communicable grace re-made,
Sells in her shambles for adulterous fee,
A sacrifice to quick and dead applied;

Nor conscience scared, nor seared will she deny
Her ready lance or salve, alike ordained
The thunderbolts to forge, or grace dispense

Fresh stamped from mint of Heaven's treasury,
And furnishing with licenses to vend,
The ghostly lords of God's inheritance!

Lured by her specious phrased emolients,
Heart conscience-struck, yet unregenerate,
He donned the cowl, and fearlessly assailed

With meretricious works, Heaven's battlements,
With fasts and prayers 'gainst wrath importunate,
While penances for purchase fee availed.

Vain strife, for victory already won,
The free redemption of Hell's Conqueror spurned,
And, counting all as an unholy thing

The atoning covenant blood of God's dear Son,
Peace came not,--and despairingly he turned
His search to learning's shrine, close communing

With the immortal dead, whose buried gems,
Like orient pearls, the cloistered walls retain,
The shells that in ignoble vassalage

Hide what should glow on kingly diadems;
For him the galaxy relumes again,
The mighty dead revive,--poet and sage,

Historian, sophist, and philosopher:
Science unfolds her sacred mysteries,
And Art her powers, and Nature's self,--coy maid--

Won by the worship that he offers her,
Her mask withdraws, and to his dazzled eyes

Unveils the primal beauties that it hid;

By her seductive charms, the Alchymist
In error wanders while in search of truth,
Still missing it in chase of higher good,

Life's niggard taper running all to waste,
And glimmering in the socket, nothing loath,
While dreaming of elixir to renew't.

So the old monk, enshrouded in his learning,
Nature's false scantling shutting out her God,
And Truth herself, for airy phantoms slighted,

Down to the grave had passed, all undiscerning--
Till lost--the mazes of the devious road,
And his large, hungering soul all undelighted

By the glad rays commissioned to illumē
The murky shallows of eternity,
And light the pass to immortality,

Life's lamp and lantern, in the darkling womb
Of night, alike engulfed, fatuity
Bartering for dreams the great reality!

Life's God-wove mystery held a dream of fate,
A rainbow-tissued brittle firmament
Hung o'er eternity by cords aye loosening,

Until death-shivered and annihilate:
When rose the Sun of Righteousness, and lent
A light that scattered healing from its wing

O'er his wrapt soul. As, all uncared, the vision
Of buried loves re-haunt us in our dreams
As every day familiars,--he had thrown

'Mong theologic rubbish, in derision,
A diamond from him, all its lustrous beams
Hid in the cumbering settings of tradition;

But now soul-fired, its lustre is revealing
Treasures the slave of science never knew;
New birth into the glorious liberty

Of the sons of God; the clouds of error, veiling
The mystery of redemption, in love's dew
Dissolved, in love, the light of Deity!

No field for spiritual knight-errantry,
No meretricious gewgaws, pride's invention;
No garish garniture whence the duplicity

Of the deceitful heart may busk a warrantry
For a half saviour, and self-won redemption,--
But the strong arch of Faith's simplicity;

Faith, all the sinner's righteousness and shield,
Faith, all his armoury against surprise
Of Hell's assaults, his ladder, up to light

Lending the heaven-ward way; till, all revealed,
Hope in her realized realities,
And perfect faith, are swallowed up in sight.

Buried within his studious solitude
The old monk cheated the benevolence
Of his large heart, with blessings his discoveries

Should yet enrich the world with; but, endued
With Mercy's nobler largess to dispense,
He burns to circulate its blessedness,

To share with all the God-bought liberty,
To break Hell's chains, to bid her bondage cease,
And freemen of the Cross to welcome them:

"Drink of life's streams," he cries: "why will ye die
In arms 'gainst mercy welcoming to peace,
And God himself descending to redeem?"

But vain the mission, welcomed by resistance
That spurned God's mercy, laughed at Truth's realities,
Gloried in sin, and armed for its possession

The sensual hive, that droned away existence
In Superstition's stale formalities,
Buzzing all hum and sting against the aggression,

Hurling anathemas 'gainst heresy,
And marshalling the ghostly thunders lent
By Councils Fathers with the learned iargon

Invincible, of stolid orthodoxy,
To face the Bible-bannered armament,
Led by their Captain, God's Incarnate Son!

Yet found he list'ners too, and willing sharers,
That owned her power, and bowed in glad submission
To Mercy's welcome terms; but none whose sadness

Yielded to such a joyousness as hers,
The gentle maid, whose sorrow first had won
His sympathy to share with her his gladness.

An orphan was she, to the love entrusted
Of noble relatives,--as some rare flower
Transplanted, drooping for its summer home;

An uncle she had found,--who, rough encrusted
With crabbed whims of age, and wayward, sour,
And petulant by turns, yet gave love's welcome:

A youthful cousin too, and noble hearted,
Who grew up by her, like some lordly oak
Proud in the embraces of the clustering vine.

But, orphan tears twice shedding, as death-parted
From the hoar sire, ere long a crueler stroke
Rent the last home-links that her heart entwined,

And reft her from the unconscious nurturing
Of love's young dream; proudly her heart recoiled
From mercenary minions' disregard

Of her young lover's charge, and, torturing
With the chill touch of charity, till wild
Throbbled the lone heart of Lowden's Orphan Ward.

But now, nor longer proudly spurning them,
Nor sorrowing, she adores his wondrous love,
That, sinless, bowed beneath the sinner's load;

Till, kindling with the Gospel's burning theme,
Her rapt soul, winging to its rest above,
Reposes on the Fatherhood of God.

ARGUMENT. PART II.

The Chronicler looking back from the scene before him, telleth of others witnessed there, when a youthful pair, the Orphan Maid and her noble cousin, slumbered in the blessedness of unconscious love; but now, after long absence, the maiden waiteth his return,--unchanged in affection, yet in doubt, yearning for sympathy in new-found hopes; she dwelleth on the memories of past love, till startled from their vividness to doubt the reality of reunion, ere she silently yieldeth to its delight. Her lover telleth of knowledge and beauty received into his soul; she listeneth delighted, and, for a time, doubt marreth not her bliss,--she questioneth of highest hopes, and sinketh with the discovery that he returneth no sympathy to that wherein she findeth peace. Yet love surviving disappointment, forbiddeth the banishment of hope. The consciousness of obstacles increaseth its intensity, and she wins his admiration by eloquence that fails to convince. The mysteries of God's providence demand our wondering admiration; he who travelled far in search of Truth, returneth still unsatisfied, while the untravelled maid hath in her loneliness found out God.

EDWARD.
PART II. THE LOVERS.

Years have o'erflown, though still, amid the tracery
Of oriel richly dight with quaint device
Of herald's pageantry, the liv'ried light

Stole into Lowden Hall, since guilelessly
Gazing into the depths o' the other's eyes,
As they would read love's destinies aright,

Edward and Hellen sat; no words they uttered,
Nor pearly fringing tear bespoke or grief
Or overmastering gladness; 'twas the love

Of novices, that yet were all untutored
In cunning torturings of disbelief,
Or what self-slaved precisians disapprove;

Unconscious were they of love's rosy chains,
Rosy in thorns as sweets, entwining them,
Or all that lurks in its enfolded core,

What thrilling joyousness, and eke what pains;
Still in the maze of that delicious dream
That, once awakened from, returns no more.

As sister had she loved, and he as brother,
And then perchance they'd deemed it keenest sorrow--
Though passion strove for stronger utterance,

To find such tie concentrated in another;
'Tis the brood of fear and faithlessness that borrow
Precocity's love-blinding eagle glance!

But they had parted;--he, the noble scion
Of Lowden's lordly race, to trim the mind-lamp
And seek fresh oil, amid wide Europe's stores

Far wandering, while the orphan, she, alone
'Mong youth's familiars, deepening the stamp
Of influences mutual of yore!

Years had elapsed, I said, her heart is throbbing,
For Edward now returns; perchance that hour
Again they'll meet! whence now the unbidden tear,

And the cheek flushed, and now the roses robbing
From their frail throne? alas! knows she the power
Of love's passionate dream? has she awoke to fear?

Why should she fear? the oriel, that before
Screened young love sleeping, masquerades light still,
The lawn's still daisy-clad, its herds bound past her

To the woods waked to music, as of yore,
When he with her, there wandering, drank his fill
Of melody: nor miss they now a master

To give the adagio to their wood notes wild
Or list them welcoming: there too the monast'ry
Whence steals along the vale the vesper bell

Pleading that man with God be reconciled;
Or bears it such a mission to the weary
Sin-laden soul!--to her it seems the knell

That summons to fierce warfare; for Religion
Is now no fond enthusiast's dream insipid,
Tickling the fancy with a ghostly fable,

But prize 'gainst flesh and blood that must be won
When spiritual wickedness is vanquished,
And faith, deep mining for foundation stable,

Smiles at the shallow grave!--But now I wander,
While she, absorbed in thoughts set to the pealing
Of that sweet chime, is tracing up time's stream,

Fancy's barque current-borne, until it land her
In that quaint oriel's niche, and love is sealing
His parting infant vows! Hark! does she dream?

"My Hellen!" Is this knight of noble bearing,
With these deep lines of thought upon his brow,
The home-bred boy, her Edward? love ne'er questions,

And yet an onlooker might doubt their caring,
No wild embrace! no words of fevered glow!
Each th' other named, then as fond recollections

Crowded like storm-scared billows on each other,
They gazed unquailing each in the other's eye

They gazed unquailing each in the other's eye,
And drank love's fill, and knew no more of fear;

And then joy's sudden current welling smoother,
Yields the quick crowding question and reply,
Self-lost in sympathy of hearts sincere.

He has drank deep at Europe's scattered fountains,
Has slaked his ear, his eye, his thirsting soul,
Knelt for the self-styled God-vicegerent's blessing,

On his seven-hilled throne, and 'mid the Switzer's mountains
Heard God's own voice through their far vistas roll,
As though dread warning to the universe addressing;

Had seen the Heaven-lit Raphael's soul outpouring,
Till, rapt in inspiration, he expired
As the canvas burned with the transfigured God,

Promethean-winged Buonarotti soaring
O'er the amorphous marble, till soul fired
It woke and shook beneath the Sinai-missioned's load;

Pondering, had travelled o'er that dome, unwearied,
Of the Sistine shrine, whereon his seers and sybils
As o'er that dread assize of God preside!

And held communion with the mighty spirit,
That darkling brooded over Hell's abyss,
And, gloom-enrapt, woo'd Misery for his bride;

And what had she?—as one entranced she listens!
Yet still as hungering for something more,
Something that was not! while he opens out

His wealth of thought, her eloquent eye glistens
Untiring, all his treasures to explore,
But with the pause, returns her haunting doubt,

The wish to question, an o'ermastering terror
As his who trembles at the judgment bar,
With doom or freedom hanging on a word.

He has been gazing in the world's broad mirror
And gathering its jewels strewed afar,
While she, by conscience' still small voice inpour'd

The while hath slaked her longings at that spring
That whoso drinketh of shall thirst no more:
And heard you not, she asks with eager trembling,--

Bright tales have won e'en here on rumour's wing,
Of the new Faith?--heard! yea the hellish roar
Of the Heresy hath made wide Europe ring!

Why trembles she, and sinks, like a frail flower breaking,
By the tempest snapt?--all, all but this she'd bear
And feel't no sacrifice,--but he, the noble

True hearted one, on whom her soul is seeking
To cling 'gainst all the buffets of life's care,
He armed against her!--There had burst hope's bubble,

And all her soul she flung into grief's madness
And wildly wept; fierce threatenings had she known,
The martyr's crown, the faggot's fiery terrors,

Though with them too the glorious gospel's gladness,
By him led up, whose love her lone heart won,
Groping to Heaven's light, thro' blinding errors;

Grief has she known, an orphan's bitter dole,
When left in lone dependence among strangers,
The agonizing strife, when faith with fear

Struggles for mastery in the awakened soul,
And wins no peace; still 'mid sore griefs and dangers
One holy form her prayers and hopes would wear,

She heard of Rome's corruptions, of the assumption
Of apostolic gifts by each mitred minion;
Of the Most High's prerogative now vended

By priestly mountebanks; the dear redemption
In God o'er-mastered anguish hardly won,
Now sealed,--and not of grace, but sale extended,

And the Rome-gospel's God a usurer!
All this she heard, and with it coupling
Vague lines of his transmuted in love's folly,

In saddest hours this hope would reassure her,
He, too, the new-born light is welcoming,

He, too, joint-heir with her, of life and immortality!

Housed in Hope's Ark she has out-braved worst dangers,
But at his breath the fragile raft's gone down;
Like cloud-built home, piled on the vapour's crest,

That cheats the mountaineer, afar 'mong strangers,
Till wreck'd by envious winds, even so his frown
Has whelmed her refuge in the eddying yeast.

Yet if she wept, 'twas on his breast, while tightening
Love's bonds by the very danger threatening severance;
While he, with soothing reassurance, wonders

Whence spring such sorrows; soon her eye is brightening,
Now veiled to utterances of holy reverence,
Now flashing scorn against the ghostly thunders

Raised by a timid maid! she speaks of sin,
A broken law, and an avenging God;
Of penance, alms, and priestly intercessions,

Vain purchase-fee of conscience, peace to win;
Then of our glorious Surety, and the load
He bore upon the cross for our transgressions;

Of purgatorial fires, the mediation
Of the Virgin Mother, and the saintly host;
Cumbrous deceits to hide the Gospel plan!

Of the blood-purchased reconciliation,
The quickening presence of the Holy Ghost,
God's pardoning free gift to rebellious man!

She paints the lowly Jesus in the manger,
God veiled in self-assumed humility,
Whose power and majesty the heavens fill;

For them rejecting him, against the avenger
Pleaser and shield; for them the bitter cry,
Bowing in agony to the Father's will;

The broken bread in each believer's hand,
Simple memorial of that dying hour;
Thus picturing!--behold the other side!

See his ambassador all proudly stand

See his ambassador in princely state,
Faggot and sword the emblems of his power,
And Heaven's gates, that justice opened wide,

Barred, and the priestly usurer within
Selling the pass, that gapes to adulterous crowds,
Yet closes 'gainst the humbly contrite soul!

The visible church, traditionally lain
On the apostolic rock, with hellish shouts
'Gainst the Lamb's bride her blazing thunders roll;

Th' invisible, the bride, a fugitive
Fleeing to shelter in the wilderness!
Say, is not this the voice was heard to cry--

Come out of her my people that believe,
God hath remembered her iniquities,
And wakes to retribution righteously!

Charmed, while amazed, to her burning words he listens,
Nature's heart eloquence, though strange perhaps
As the first welcome to a lover's ear!

Charmed! could he other, while her clear eye glistens,
Flashing back love for love,--from such long lapse
What would not been a happiness to hear!

Yet seemed it foolishness; the spoils of Greece,
The Romans' eloquence and poetry,
Historian, philosopher, and sage--

All were as household words; what then were these
But childish fables? 'tis the spiritual eye
Alone can comprehend the wondrous page!

How strange God's ways! while he in search of knowledge
Has compassed sea and land, unheeding danger,
So he from every source soul-light receive;

The orphan maid, to learning's cloistered college
And travel's liberal stores alike a stranger,
Has found the noblest truth--BELIEVE AND LIVE!

Has learned to know herself, with faith elate
To soar beyond earth's transitory scene
And hold communion with the Deity,

Led down by Christ, with joy to anticipate
The grave, as to a tranquil slumber lain,
The vestibule that ushers to infinity!

ARGUMENT. PART III.

The Introduction glanceth at the obsequies of Henry the Seventh, passing from the scene, and with him the ancient order of things, now boasting security in the source of dissolution. Wolsey disappeareth in the past, and in Cranmer is once more exhibited apostolic simplicity, so long divorced from apostolic claims. The Chronicler rebuketh those who, sitting in the Reformers chair, renounce their confession. The tale is resumed during a brief respite, when Henry, Cranmer, and Cromwell, strange triumvirate, unlock the long sealed scriptures and list the Pulpit's mighty powers in the cause of Truth. On the morning of a high festival, "The Annunciation of the most blessed Virgin, Mother of God," the cousins, in earnest controversy, pass amid a motley throng to the Abbey Church, to join in the services of the day. Musing on the beauties of the gorgeous temple, the Chronicler contrasteth it with the consecration of the heart; while the lovers, pausing at the entrance, review Art's treatment of their theme of discourse. Within, the Arts, uniting with gorgeous ceremonial, force inquiry into the nature of spiritual worship. The service begins, and the still unpurged ritual proceeds through invocations to Virgin and Saints, to the still unquestioned sacrifice of the Mass. But now, the old Monk ascends the pulpit, proclaiming the glad tidings of that Saviour, the promise of whose birth to the Virgin Mother, erst commemorated in the festival of Annunciation, hath merged into worship of herself. He publisheth the Covenant of grace through the dead of the Testator; and, concluding, proclaimeth Henry's noble boon of the English Bible. As they leave, groups of earnest listeners are discovered around one reading from the new Bible, chained to a pillar of the Church. The influence of the new doctrines appeareth variously among the retiring audience; with the lovers, it accomplished the divinely-predicted sword, whose edge is household strife.

EDWARD.
PART III. THE ANNUNCIATION.

O'er royal dust, through proud Westminster's shrines,
The echoes, waked by anthem's funeral peal,
Wail the death-stricken mockery of power,

The thing that was a king! God-winged designs
Wake not as ours, or error's haughty heel
Had trod the neck of England to this hour!

Infallible, in ghostly dogmas mailed,
In pious panoply most orthodox,
Steps the Eighth Henry to the vacant throne;

Foremost in arms when holy church assailed,
The thunder's of the Vatican provokes,
Daring to hold God's word above her own!

Strange clashing, thunders out the pious ire
Of holiness and kingship, jointly aiming
To stifle truth by apostolic nocks,

Yet futile 'gainst a solitary Friar,
Defying confutation, while proclaiming
Rome's treasury of grace a knavish hoax!

But time, that antiquates hoar age, and changes
Even truth to error, passes on to ope
Oblivion's tomb, while yet in regal halls

She boasts eternal empire; light impinges
Along her curtained way, and new-born hope
Beholds God's ichabod upon her walls!

Even England, curtained in security
Of her long slumber, dreams of storms afar,
And stirs to contemplate the breaking day,

Ere yet to rise, in her maturity,
Van-leading conqueror in the glorious war
That rolls Truth's car on her triumphant way!

Her Cardinal bids adieu to all his greatness,
Never to rise; and from the Tudor's lust,
Like lily forced by stercoraceous ferments,

Rises a holy, God-commissioned witness,
That, struggling heaven-ward, is yet to thrust
Hell's barriers aside, and rend her cerements,

And show the church again a mitre worn
Where apostolic grace and meekness centre;
Weaponed with love aye conquering, with the glory

Of bloodless laurels haloed; while, upborne
Through hell's strong legions, leaguings to prevent her,
God's consecrated ark rolls on to victory;

And shame for ever on the apostate brood
Of faithless sons, while at that altar serving
By him, sore travailing, on the bulwarks bound

Of God's own truth, And sealed there with his blood;
Yet dare disown the work as undeserving
Our reverence, God so signally has owned!

But lowlier far our tale, while yet depending
From lofty deeds; the victory of truth,
The desolate upborne all trustfully,

On the untrembling wings of faith ascending
In lightward flight, and the unhallowed ruth
Of bigotry, athirst all lustfully

To slake her burning passions in the blood
Of God's elect, pluming herself the while
She does Him service!--But a breathing space

Hath fallen to the church, and she hath stood,
For a brief hour, on vantage ground, to assail
Hell's leagured host of listed enemies!

For persecution now hath ta'en its flight,
Scared by the champion of soul-liberty
Struggling God's revelation to reveal

Anew to untutored minds, that with delight
Welcome truth's advent, on the darkling eye
To pour new light, the ear long stopped to unseal,

And, through the slumbering nations in her might
Wading resolute till at her appeal

waning resistence, till, at her appeal,
A glorious host wakes up in God's own cause,

To wage fierce war against usurping night,
And hurl her from light's throne.

The old father's cell

And Lowden's lordly hall, in the first pause,

Before the clash of the contending creeds
Renew the strife, alike experience
An all unwonted calm; and th' orphan maid

Banishing sorrow, while young hope succeeds
To its fit vantage ground, basks in the sense
Of the pure joys such sorrows supersede!

From brow of wooded slope to modest dale
Resounds afar the cheering peal of bells,
Borne on the fitful breezes' lull and rise

In gushing swell of sounds most musical,
Each lordly hill reechoing to the vales
That slumber round, its wakeful melodies!

'Tis the Annunciation, holiday
Ordned by Mother Church, and from the dales
That wake in answer to the melody

Gather a motley throng, that wend their way
To kneel, faith-blended, in yon gorgeous aisles:
Vassal, and knight of lordly pedigree,

Yeoman and noble dame, obey the call;
And 'mong them, deep in loving argument,
The cousins ride; she to his ardour heeding

With kindling sympathy; then 'gainst the thrall
Of ghostly domination eloquent,
Or gently for a bleeding Saviour pleading:

But now before the Abbey gate they light,
A gorgeous temple, consecrate to Him
Who dwelleth not in temples made with hands,

But there most surely fixeth His delight

Within the contrite heart. Yet wherefore deem
Such shrines a mockery? though he thus demands,

Before all gifts, the heart with love elate,
And, lacking that, rejects the impious measure
By pride or fear doled out to purchase Heaven;

Yet, he who owes God all, will dedicate--
And with no niggard hand--the God-lent treasure;
Meek piety, ere now, such shrines to God hath given.

Yet, seems the gorgeous porch's sculptured story
Strange commentary, there the Virgin Mother
Tending the immortal God-inveiling Child,

The marble manger with angelic glory
Is haloed round, and Sculpture's honours gather
To tell of Deity all self-despoiled!

A glorious vista bursts upon the view,
The marble avenue's far clustering aisle,
Now wrapped in solemn gloom, and now bedight

With the impassioned rays, that, struggling thro'
The saintly host, high o'er the sacred pile
Presiding, colour even Heaven's own light!

The Grecian Muse, enlisting in the service
Of her poetic creed, upheaved meet shrine,
When Phidias' chisel woke divinity;

But when to her sublimer mysteries
The Christian arts aspire, for meed divine
They soar, and mate with her sublimity!

And dull that soul, as withering funeral wreath,
Unthrilled beneath her heaven-symboling pile,
As now the light a joyous livery wears,

And now subdued, where marble records breathe
Mute eloquence o'er hallowed dust, its smile
Dwells on the tribute of a country's tears;

While pealing anthems through the lofty span,
Now as angelic whispers softly stealing,
Now on the organ's gathering swell are hurled;

And sculptured seraphs, from its empyrean,
Bending, survey the worshippers low kneeling,
Like lingering spirits from a brighter world;

Dim, through the fragrant curtaining clouds that rise
From golden censers, peers the awe-rapt eye,
Where Art's mute drama, on the pencilled canvas,

Enacts apocalyptic mysteries,
Time's doom, or that strange hour of agony
When a sin-burdened God to death must pass!

Merging conflicting thoughts, the lovers viewed
That shrine, that for the conscience severed twain
Alike a consecrated altar rears;--

Since then the owl hath found loved solitude,
And the foul bat a shelter, in that fane,
Where mingled then such differing worshippers!

And where has God pure worship? 'mid the swell
Of such cathedral rites? in sculptured stall?
Or on the lowly bench, beneath the shelter

Of modest village church? or where they kneel
Around the cottage altar?--Even in all
His eye discerns the contrite worshipper!

But now the service merges in the blaze
Of glittering adjuncts, strangely mingled ritual,
That now her God implores, and now to saint,

Or angel, or the Virgin Mother prays;
While souls, all hungering for spiritual
Communion, whose still agonising plaint

Is aye for aid against indwelling sin,
Starve on the visionary banquet, looming
Through mystery and deceit; and to this world

The closer bound, hire priests the next to win;
Blind guides, that, in the brightness of His coming,
Shall to Gehenna's horrid womb be hurled!

Slow wanes the church's night, the glimmering east
But streaked with promised dawn: to error wed

~~...the... from... promised... to... her...
The mass still celebrates; strange blasphemy,~~

Christ made her daily sacrifice, a feast
In sin-stained hands unblushingly displayed,
Foul mystery of Rome's iniquity.

But Truth hath now her vantage, from the pulpit
Resounds the burning eloquence of language
That wins from soul to soul; the hoary Father,

Ere while in Error's devious toils beset,
Now stands Truth's freedman, 'gainst her foes to wage
Uncompromising war. The list'ners gather,

Some in amazement, some in glad surprise
To catch the gospel tidings; wondrous voice
For that long silent shrine, reconsecrate

By new annunciation services,
Calling a mourning people to rejoice
And wake to light, that long in darkness sate!

How throbs the orphan maiden's breast while listening
By her heart's lord to the enchanting strains
That bid earth's wanderers rise, and point the road

On to the heavenly rest: her dark eye glistening
As Rome's deceiving errors he arraigns,
And tells the waking soul, Behold your God!

And now his cheering mission all fulfilled,
The Reformation's God-speed to the soul
Pining for ransom, free for every eye

The Covenant of Grace anew unsealed,
Its long lost Testaments of love unroll
Revealing life and immortality

For Henry--erst in conscience-thrall's defence--
Dubbed, with the guerdon of the Golden Rose,
Defender of the Faith, by papal bull,

Now the unconscious tool of Providence,
Leagued with triumphant truth against her foes,
Proclaims the Word of God the Church's rule,

And lights a lamp in England, yet to blaze
O'er distant isles, where'er her wealth explores
Benighted climes, or where her navies wing

Their conquering way, the Christian's banner raise,
Till earth's wide vales, and ocean's furthest shores,
With the glad Gospel's hallelujahs ring.

Scotland's far mountains catch the beacon flame,
And, consecrated erst to liberty,
Now in her noblest cause their arms combine;

Soldiers of peace, that in a Saviour's name
Lead on God's ransomed hosts to victory.--
But finished now the father's grand design,

With invocated blessings on their head
The assembled crowds disperse, some to arraign
His words, but more, enamoured of the theme,

To mingle where, to listening groups, one reads
Aloud the sacred page,--that by rude chain
Hangs to the fretted wall; the church's emblem,

Chained to the Eternal Rock, yet free to all!
Silent, the lovers wend their homeward way:
A frown is on his brow, and deep disgust

In the brief words he answers to each call
For his opinions; while she to the Stay
And Father of the orphan turns her trust.

Peace and good-will on earth, the angels sung,
Announcing God a dweller among men;
But Christ himself foretold the bitter sword

Borne with it,--agony from true hearts wrung
By household foes, and love's own weapons ta'en
To pierce the soul faith-fianced to her Lord,

And lure her to perdition with foul juggle
Of charity's glossed serpent subtlety,
Wriggling into the core to hatch hell's blight.

God help the lone one in the fearful struggle
Pending 'twixt faith and love's dear fealty;
Thou only conquer whom He buckles to the fight

They only conquer whom he buckles to the light.

ARGUMENT. PART IV.

Considereth the proofs of a First Cause, rejecting the arguments of natural theology, if without the higher evidences from the human mind, with its destinies unaccomplished in this state of probation. The argument passeth to the general majesty of Providential Rule, in whose earnest consideration the student of the past findeth in every age a voice that telleth of its character and fruits. What then the voice of this age? a period when the unplastic formulas of earlier times, grown antiquated and soulless, are giving place to higher truths, wherein the observer discerneth, beyond the struggle of the moment, the privileges with which it is fraught; while yet are to be found high intellects unconscious of the promise of their age, deeming the once good ever the best. A change hath passed o'er the scene, liberty of conscience is withdrawn, and, 'mid many inconsistencies, the Reformation struggleth onward. But, while the old Monk and his Orphan disciple exhibit the power of Truth, the Chronicler beholdeth in the young lord of Lowden an earnest soul missing its rest, and wandering after every semblance of virtue, destitute of self-reliance, with vague credulity doubting all; till, despairing, he returned for refuge to the old unsatisfying creed; and, scheming to lead back his cousin with him to the forsaken fold, he determined on the banishment of the Monk. Soothed by new hopes, the lovers are reconciled; and, on the eve of final parting, eternal vows are exchanged.

EDWARD.
PART IV. THE SEARCH.

Man looks without, to the material world,
For miracle, and proof of a First Cause;
The indwelling soul regarding as a thing

Enfolded, nor, for truth, to be unfurled
In time; strange creed, that blindly overthrows
The eternal temple for its scaffolding,--

That, seeking light, turns from this time-lent ray
Fresh from th' Eternal, and, through devious tracks,
Plods darkly down where feeblest scintillations

Glimmer upon the soul,--that flings away
Faith's evidence of Deity, and walks
Blind 'mid its own God-flashing corruscations!

And what the soul then? An unwritten sheet,
A plastic inner world, amorphous, void,
For the outer one to fashion into being?

Or an immortal consciousness, create
Responsible, and unto God allied,
With mightiest destinies upon the wing,

A mighty mission, too, to be fulfilled
While passing back to God? momentous question!
Big with unutterable mysteries

Within the unopened volumes yet concealed,
Of the beyond eternity; alone
A question for the infinite exercise

Of its far stretching ken; a question, too,
That, realised in its immensity,
Rede by a trustful, earnest, hungering soul,

Might penetrate the pregnant-coming through,
And make again the voice of prophecy
Far folded up futurity unroll.

But is the ancient prophet voice all silent?
The God-taught seer a thing of sacred story,
With revelation dumb? God rules the earth

By providence and judgment still, intent
On ultimates commensurate with the glory
Of His eternal rule; from whence the birth

Of time and revolutions; at whose word
A system marshals in the empty space,
Or sinks in void a teeming universe;

From the buried past prophetic words are heard,
Nor can Time's sweeping pinions so embrace
God's ever presence, in their world reverse!

Though all unequal to the mighty whole
That Deity builds up, the dim mind-eye
Can trace a method in the edifice,

When striving earnestly to reach its soul;--
See Time aye gathering up the destiny
Of mighty empires; the world wide decrees

Of Deity evolved complete; a nation,
With her long line of kings ta'en in his skirt,
As he sweeps calmly past; vassal and peer

Sheer blent to oblivion's mausoleum thrown,
While the poor dreamers, fancying they avert
Dire fate, bedaub a crumbling sepulchre!

The destinies of the past are for perusal;
Each teeming volume with instruction full,
E'en from the narrowest soul; laden as 'tis

With an eternal freight of woe or weal,
And pregnant with impulses, in whose struggle
Life's wave is merged into eternity's!

What then this age's voice? a mighty task
Is given't to fulfil, and who is able
For its performance? Time hath come to the birth

And fails for strength! The iron mask,
Riven from the night of centuries, rocks the stable
Foundations of far kingdoms of the earth;

And her time-mummied dead formalities,
Reflex of lights gone out, reel to their centre:

More lights gone out, feet to their centre,
Time-honoured virtues, too, with the old Faith

That, faithless now, a hollow mockery lies,
A truth grown false; with the faint truth-light lent her
Convulsed, and downward struggling to her death;

Like the elder sons of Time, in lusty youth
Pregnant with virtues, that, grown obsolete,
Perishing, are to her womb again consigned,

The avatar for the birth of higher Truth,
While the rapt Seer discerns beyond, elate,
The golden age that dreamers seek behind!

Yet he alone; for there are gifted minds,
With intellectual powers that promise victory
O'er their time-trammels, who yet blindly travelling

From little light to less, distorted visions
Luring aye further down, until they lie
A living, corpse-wed bridegroom, life's cords ravelling;

The living with the dead, unseemly wedlock,
Whose offspring in the pangs of birth are strangled;
A death-in-life refracted charnel glimmer

Of funeral torches, blinding with their smoke,
That having feebly 'gainst the sun dawn wrangled,
Perish with fetid stink and babbling simmer,

Who might have shone in the mind firmament
As starry mansions of intelligence;
But not such thou, O MORE! although with thee

The light and darkness still were strangely blent,
And thou didst valiant death, in the defence
Of liberty, in slavery's panoply,

While thy dear child immortal beauty gains
In the bitter tragedy: nor such the brave
True-hearted FISHER, who in the old light's setting

Stumbled not, but still found a clear soul-guidance,
Faith's span to bridge across a bloody grave:
For Tyranny's fresh phases are begetting

A brood more like their sire, as Smithfield's fires
Embrace contending martyrs of two faiths
Warring their way to heaven; and 'mong recluse

Hamlets, and modest vales, where truth retires,
As in the thronging mart, o'er-mastering death's
Soul-argument, smites through life's prison-house.

The sacred Book for the enlightenment
Alike of peasant serf and tonsured thrall,
A royal boon, and best e'er king bestowed,

Become foul mockery; and high argument
Of things erst held divine, at its tribunal,
The liberty of faith's appeal to God

Denounced, and their contemners extirpate,
Brave morning stars of truth. Yet faith to her
Blends strangely with the slaves of pelf and lust,

With superstitions ineradicable
And mad fanatic zeal, Error's defender,
As strong in confidence of warfare just,

Of cause not true alone, but Truth's sole fealty,
As they whose weapons are truth-consecrate;
While her owned champions, still of night enslaved,

Prove traitors to her cause, and dare deny
That liberty of soul inalienate,
Themselves the while so hardly have achieved.

Our story hath essayed to show the phases
Of two far differing minds, beneath the sway
Of a purer faith; the earnest loving soul

Of the old father, moulded by the graces
Of the Christ story, till he cast away,
Night's paramour, new braced for Faith's espousal.

And the young maid, the same high warfare waging,
The cumbering works of darkness cast behind,
And light's whole armour ta'en for glorious fence

In the life-war, where truth's alike assuaging
Each hungering soul, all trustfully resigned

Calm on the bosom of Omnipotence.

Yet was not he, who stood aloof from them,
An all unfervid soul, or passionless,
O'er whom this voiceless mystery of being

Swept as the sportive pageant of a dream;
But one deep pondering on the immensities
Time shadowed out beyond, and picturing

A pure soul-shrine for virtue on the curtain
That all impenetrably veiled in gloom
The dumb futurity; he worshipped virtue

With loving earnestness, and strove to attain
Her aid to rend th' impervious clouds that loom
O'er the light-craving soul; to catch a view

Of the inner sanctuary of happiness,
That chase that all pursue through devious windings
And many a phantom-guise! Enthusiastic,

Impassioned, with a wolfish greediness,
Ravering for highest knowledge; ardour blinding
The hungering soul, all inexperienced, plastic,

Clutching at shadows, while its large desires
Aim at the high and true, the highest, best,
The invisible, and the infinite! Ah me,

Without a pilot, and wild passions' fires
Raging within, on life's wide ocean cast
Chartless, and freighted for Eternity!

Who is sufficient for this? who is able
To steer across this gulph, that, eddying, surges
Between the two Eternities? He tasks,

For evidence of God, the untenable
Vain puerilities tradition urges,—
And finds a nursery tale, that hardly masks

The sneer of its retailers, proffering it
To the soul's inquiry; he looks abroad
O'er the wide face of nature, soaring high

And searching deep and chafing at each limit

Of his material prison,--But no God
Speaks to the earnest sceptic, scornfully,

And yet with tearful anguish questioning;
For this had he forsook th' ancestral hall
And love's dear claims, glad exile to endure,

So he might learn were he the chance born thing
Of a material creed, for the carousal
Of a few dainty worms, or foul manure

For some rank grave-yard's herbage, when the sleep
Of the dreamless rest stills life's impassioned pulses
And takes down the machine? or is there verity

In an hereafter, in the abyss deep
Of mid and nether hell's great agonies,
God's loving bounty for the soul's temerity--

As ghostly teachers thunder--that has striven
To reach unto himself? The soul faith-fed
By the light of conscience, 'gainst such tale rebelling,

Flings from itself in scorn the garish heaven,
Antagonist to such a Devil's creed
As this, that shavelling huxters are retailing

For superstition's doits! Poor consolation
Found he far wandering; sceptics manifold,
Off hid in priestly guise, whose sneering laughter

Rang through his soul's waste, echoing desolation
In the deep void. The beauteous earth unrolled
God's handy-work, but, who, in searching after

The soul's repose in truthful earnestness,
E'er found response in nature's vaunted treatise,
To fill the aching void? 'Tis her own faith,

Conscious of giant powers, but, yet all sightless,
That, Samson-like, in its blind agonies
Drags down a shrieking multitude to death!

And what then did he? with a mind bedight
In sceptic mail, that hid blind veneration,
Devoutly questioning each phantom seeming,--

No oak! but a most lovely parasite,
A straggling, aimless, wasted desolation,
Of what had hung gay summer's blossoming

And harvest fruits, if with faith's steadfast pillar
To embrace and cluster o'er; but hurrying guideless,
As by some comet rapt, afar to night,

Soul-shuddering at the all unequal war,
Judge not, nor blame him, if he did retrace
His fruitless travel to the old glimmering light

He had forsook: the only ark then floating
On that wide waste, nor a false ark to some
Proved e'en that erring church, though now a dreaming

And palsied crone, on ancient riddles doating,
Worn threadbare: but the soul will have some home,
And o'er the waste he saw none other gleaming

Than her crased barque.--With famished eagerness
He flew to it again, embraced its dogmas,
Clung to its parting beams with the tenacity

Of a drowning wretch, and blessed God there was grace
Within its pale, all tottering though it was:
Once faith laid hold on't for veracity.

No marvel then if the long tempest-tossed,
Now harboured, view with dread the threatened strife
Involving ruin there, nor care to brave

The stormy billows, late so hardly crossed;
His part's determined now, in death or life
Consistency's self-bound and facile slave!

We left the lovers on their homeward travel,
Strange seeds of discord gathering from the source
Of love and unity, yet he the more

To his soul's idol clinging, as they ravel
The love-forged chains, and he essays to force
Conscience to bend to his mind's gamiture!

His resolution's ta'en, and persecution,

The turgent Tiber's weak affords fair scene

the tyrant ruler's work, anons all scope
For his designs; the old Monk shall be exiled;

And he, the fount of heresy, once gone,
Its streamlets will exhale;--in such new hope
Love's tearful discords soon seem reconciled,

Exchanged forgiveness and eternal fealty,
And as hath oft before, when love is wroth
The strife suffices only to reveal

The indomitable heart's fidelity,
And farewell partings end in plighted troth
Of marriage's irrevocable seal!

ARGUMENT. PART V.

The bridal morn is heralded with mirth, yet the Chronicler looketh bodingly beyond; his vision is of no holiday masking, but the life warfare in a troublous age; for the bridegroom, as it seemeth, with aid of holy Church, will free his bride from evil influence by banishment of the heretic guide. The scene changeth to the old abbey. The bride, knowing no fear, wendeth to the altar by her lord. Suddenly she is bid back, and the promised bridal changeth to bloody contest, as the Church's hirelings seize the doomed maiden. Confusion and maddening tumult give place to silence, as the bride bends over her dying lord; nor moves, till led forth, unresisting, the bride of the dead. The scene, again changing, findeth her tenant of a dungeon, thence only to pass to the martyr's stake; such hath humanity and the Church devised. But anon the scene changeth again, the tribunal is in Westminster Hall: arena of strange contrasting scenes! The old Monk and his youthful disciple are led forth. The pomp of royal state and spiritual power assemble; and, over all, Henry the Eighth presideth supreme, reported tyrant and the slave of lust, yet, as it seemeth, by the Grace of God, Defender of the Faith; in virtue whereof he sitteth to condemn, while the fathers of the Church, tenderly, as becometh their office, commend them to the flames! The old Monk replieth; he scorneth the mediation of saints, as a vain insult to Him whose atonement is already made, His intercession all sufficient and secure. But suddenly the maiden sinketh; whispering of her faith, he bids her shame it not; but it is vain, she hath already triumphed in death, and the old father, in tears rejoiceth over the liberated captive. The tale endeth. The martyr's lesson, already known, we need not linger over the victory of Faith, but hail, in the wane of the rule of might, the dawn of the supremacy of mind.

EDWARD.
PART V. THE BRIDAL.

Glad revelry through Lowden's halls is pealing,
The busy menials, mirth in every eye,
Hurrying along; the youthful pair the while

With seemly gravity, but ill concealing
The passion-pulse of love's deep ecstasy--
Too deep for utterance--'neath a modest smile:

For now's the bridal morn, when Edward, leading
A blushing maiden to the holy altar,
Shall thence bring home his bride; and therefore sadness

Is scared, and hope, e'en eld's fear superseding,
Pencils illusive life-dreams; could love falter,
Counselled alone by the heart's passionate madness,

Or deem it an unconsecrated yoke
That consummated long heart-plighted vows,
And cherished life-hopes? 'Tis a lovely dream,

Alas that the delusion should be broke
Of young hope's sleep, soon as experience throws
O'er the lapped eye-lids her chill morning gleam,

And stern reality proclaims it day!
Up and be doing, in earth's mother-breast
May the life-weary bid adieu to care;

But here, as soldiers, must ye war your way
Probational, or lose the heavenly rest.
But, see, the abbey aisles are all astir;

Scenes shall they witness ere the young day close,
Other than bridal; for the Church must root
The weed of heresy, by instigation

Of the noble bridegroom, where it rankly blows
Within her sacred walls, even by the foot
Of her own altar; so that, left alone,

His gentle bride, unconscious, to her pale
Returning back, shall traverse by his side
The good old paths! but should the purblind crone

With indiscriminating zeal assail
The follower as well's the erring guide,
Rescuing, e'en 'gainst his will, a faithful son

From heresy's insidious pollution,
What then?--Alas, zeal hath ere now o'erleaped
Its aim, and innocence in errors's toils

Dragging the guilty with it, retribution
Swift as the levin's thunder-bolt, hath reaped
The plotter in the harvest of his spoils.

But now, with lordliest pomp of holy church,
She comes to grace th' espousals, outside show
Most blandly meek and apostolical!

Yet, might the initiate, 'neath her matron curch,
Trace ominously there an ireful glow
Dread-worthy wheresoe'er its weight shall fall;

But love and innocence are void of fear,
And towards the altar, with unfaltering step,
The orphan maid by her heart's lord moves on.

But hark! what bridal welcome! draw not near,
To bring pollution from the weltering deep
Of heresy, even to th' incarnate's throne!

A sudden clash of arms; and shrieks of women,
Are mingling with the battle-shouts of men,
Within God's temple; vain the late endeavour

Of yon grim priest to stay the unhallowed din,
And bloody carnage, that from him hath ta'en
Untimely being,--vain his power to sever

The crush of maidens, shuddering all afright,
And ghostly warders armed with cross and beads,
And mail-clad men, and knights in silk attire,

But resolute of heart, thus called to fight
For right of heart and altar:--like the shreds
Of some sweet Raphael-cartoon all afire,

And quenched in blood,--as in her bridal robes,
Now dabbled all with gore, the orphan kneels

Now dabbled all with gore, the orphan knees
Where the relentless steel has drank its fill

Of her Edward's heart-blood, and life's waning throbs
Suffice but for one gush of love, as wells
That ebb that knows no flow; and all is still!

All still!--for she nor shuddered then nor shrieked,
But gazed, as in a trance, on the all left
Of what had been her ALL; and, when they led

Her forth, she asked not, where?--had they not wreaked
Misery's wild worst upon her?--love's cords reft,
And wed her in her bridal to the dead!

On the poor pallet of a prison cell,
Th' eve of her bridal morn, for heresy
To face their ire, and be espoused to Heaven

By martyr's fiery wedlock! such the hell
That stern fanatic zeal can sanctify
Within the beast-god man,--all madly driven

A wreck athwart time's deep, while toppling down
And shivering at his feet, stale formulas
And creeds, and social compacts, and such stuff

As busk the hollow masks, by time o'ergrown
With venerable cobwebs; while what was
The soul o' them hath vanished long enough,

And comes chief mourner to their obsequies,
With just such grief as the young heir-at-law,
Tailored in sables from the miser's hoards,

And master of the will! yet how much lies
Of mortal anguish there, ere time can draw
Its life-breath 'mid the strife of fratral swords
And revolution's natal agonies;

Here a frail maiden, there a hoary sire,
Whirled in the maelstrom of its life-abyss,
Its sacrificial waifs; in such a world,

'Mid such mad clashings of insensate ire,

Faith only holds the key of happiness,
The standard of God's providence unfurled!

And firm the orphan's faith, now death-divorced
From aught of earth; no stillness of despair,
But, self disowned, faith-championed for the fight,

And calm on Him, who through the devil's worst
Of floods and fire, hath sworn "I will be there,
And lead my own unconquered up to light!"

Though, on her ashy brow, and hectic cheek,
Deep graved the strife, when the heart's cords gave way;
And the proud faithfulness of widowed love,

Hiding the wound, bled inwardly, as, meek
In her faith's trust, she gave the well-loved clay
One last embrace, and winged her hopes above!

'Tis hoar Westminster's Hall, whose silent walls
Might tell of many a scene of iron lords,
And kings, and steel-clad barons, all unbent

O'er gorgeous coronation festivals!
Of pomp of solemn state, where battle swords
Were laid aside for high arbitrement

'Twixt might and right; here kings in ermine clad
Judging and dooming heart-nobility,
For noble stand 'gainst will tyrannical;

There of their trappings all despoiled, and made
To doff their kingship, and to a nation's eye
Assume the man!--And now another call

Hath fruitful time found for it; summoned forth
To answer for the doubly damning crime
That claims supremacy for God's command,

An all unequal pair; yet, in the worth
Of true nobility, of faith sublime--
Meet panoply and arms--alike they stand:

'Tis Lowden's orphan maid, and the old friar,

Teacher and taught, alike arraigned to prove,
In passive victory, what fiendlike wrath

The God-made soul of man can belch in ire,
To make this earth a hell;--while throned above,
God's vicegerent! defender of the faith!

By courtesy, most noble, righteous judge!
Presides the Eighth Henry, with the devil's broom
In lustful hands, to purge God's sanctuary--

Of what?--of them who, through the dear-bought pledge
Of God-hood's sacrifice, can hail the doom
That speeds the martyr's chariot on high!

Of whom the world's not worthy, yet by whom
The world escapes putrescence! Shame it were
To dwell upon fair justice's mockery,

The arraignment, or the smoothly worded doom,
With which the Church so meekly yields her share
Of th' hangman's work, commending tenderly

Her victims to the mercy of the flames!
Nor yet enrol in verse, that priestly gang
Impaled upon eternal infamy,

The scare-crows of all time, that holds their names
In blood that will not out; though the old hall rang
With a united execrating cry

Against their victims, shouting to deny
A faith, forsooth, that shamed her saints, and turned
Their church into a cheat! With dauntless air

They rise, while thus the father makes reply,
"Strong in His name we stand, whom priesthood spurned
From Judah's throne; the crucified Redeemer;

Who for us doffed the eternal majesty,
Veiling the Deity in suffering flesh,
And walked our world, a Man acquaint with woes;

For us, here clothed on with humanity,
Quivering within the agonized mesh
Of the immaculate flesh; whose dying throes

Cancelled our chastisement, and by whose wounds
Our bleeding ones are healed; at Pilate's bar
Witnessed a good confession, then for us

Laid down his life; there only rest the grounds
Of each poor sinner's plea, who stands afar,
And, smiting on his breast, for mercy cries;

God hath no daysman in the Anointed's place;
Virgin, or saintly host, to stand between
The living and the dead, were but to stay

The wide embrace of mercy, limitless
As sinner's need; the immaculate hath ta'en
Our sins, and blotted all our guilt away;

By His one sacrifice the work is done,
Nor needs there daily offerings to be made;
The mockery of your mass, in sight of Him,

The Almighty, who so freely gave his Son;
And He on whom the chastisement was laid,
Who, conquering death and hell's leagued sanhedrim,

Rose to proclaim the Atonement freely made,
Then passed within the veil to mediate,
High Priest 'twixt man and God!"--

Why starts the Monk?

He will not fail, nor shrink from all now said
On such dear theme; but sudden she that sate
Undaunted by his side, to the floor sunk,--

He turns to reassure her, "Daughter, rise;
Fear not, be strong in faith; the crown is ours!"
Nay, call her if you would! on that pale brow

Death hath his seal; she hath attained the prize.
All else forgotten, the old father pours
O'er her calm features; and his tears drop now,

Tears, not of grief, but joy.

Our tale is done.

Perchance it were not profitless to have ta'en
Light at the martyr's chariot-wheels, that hurried

The father up to heaven, but we have won
The Martyr's lesson; nor yet on the wane
Will we believe its power; though mystics buried

In English cloisters, tarrying unawares,
Have flung shrill bodings on the twilight morn;
But we can wait for morning; light is breaking

Shall scare such phantoms to their sepulchres!
And, with them too, low laid in pomp of scorn,
The intolerant creed of Toleration; shrieking

Around the federation of the world,
That the long lapse of life shall wondering eye,
Before such bastard brood of tyranny

Back to Gehenna's entrails could be hurled;
That Faith assert her soul-supremacy,
And Mind o'er man assume eternal sway.

NOTES.

Page 30, line 16.

"The Heaven-lit Raphael."

Of the sixteenth century it may truly be said, There were Giants in those days! The same age witnessed Raphael, Michael Angelo, Celini, the Medici, and Luther, with a host of other noble intellects, that by their eminent works, in Literature and Arts, heralded the Reformation. Raphael Sanzio, the greatest of modern painters, died in 1520, at the age of thirty-seven, when just completing his masterpiece, the Transfiguration. It was suspended over his corpse for public homage, while the last traces of his master-hand were yet visible upon the canvas.

Page 30, line 19.

"Promethean-winged Buonaroti."

The Moses, the noblest work of Michael Angelo Buonaroti, was part of the projected mausoleum of Julius II., unfinished portions of which are scattered over Europe, among the most valued works of the sixteenth century. When this statue was finished, he is said to have gazed at it for some moments, and then striking it sportively with his chisel, to have exclaimed,--"Parla dunque, tu sai,"--"Speak now; thou canst."

Memes, in his life of Canova, thus speaks of it:--"Amid the creations of genius, the Moses of Michael Angelo rises a solitary and matchless monument. The prophet seated on the fragment of a rock, his right arm resting on the tablet of the law, is represented at the moment when descending from the mount, the first distant prospect of the idolatrous camp has opened on his view;---a character of intellectual and stern grandeur, of moral fierceness, of haughty and unrelenting independence, breathes--lives in the marble, and almost overpowers the senses. The eye, traversing vacancy, and bent on distance, seems to imply that the objects of resentment are still remote; yet the expression has annihilated both time and space.--Who shall dare to abide that storm of indignation, of scorn, of wrath, which darkens in the frown, which is bursting from the lips, and lightening in the eyes? 'Now curse,' the spectator is ready to exclaim, 'for malediction hangs upon thy tongue, and thou canst speak!'"

Page 31, line 1.

"Pondering, had travelled o'er that dome." &c.

The roof of the Sistine Chapel, in the Vatican, is adorned with alternate prophets and sybils, the work of Michael Angelo's pencil, overlooking that wonderful production of his genius, "The Last Judgment," the largest, the most astonishing, and by many admirers held as the greatest effort of Pictorial Art.

Page 31, line 4.

"Held communion with the mighty Spirit."

Although Dante belongs to an earlier period, when Cimabue and Giotto were urging on the dawn that led to the mighty results of the sixteenth century, yet "The Divina Comedia" was not collected, nor published as a whole till after his death; nor was its full influence experienced till the following century. The "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo is only a translation of part of the great poem into the expressive language of another art.

Page 38, line 16.

"Solitary Friar."

I cannot discover where I have met with the well known line that speaks of Luther as--

"The solitary monk that shook the world."

Page 38, line 19.

"Time, that antiquates hoar age."

"Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these mind monuments." *Sir Thomas Browne.*

Page 46, line 14.

"The Golden Rose."

Henry the Eighth having, in 1521, attacked Luther, in a work entitled "A defence of the Seven Sacraments," the Pope published a bull, wherein, after declaring that he found it sprinkled with the dew of ecclesiastical grace, he conferred on the royal author the title of Defender of the Faith, bestowing also upon him the Golden Rose, which had been blessed by his Holiness.

Page 54, line 3.

"Not such thou, O More."

Sir Thomas More, a man of singular learning, entrusted by Henry with the Great Seal, after the fall of Wolsey, was beheaded for refusing to take the oath of supremacy. "In his early years," says Tytler, "he availed himself to the utmost of the liberty of private thought, and, deeply interested for the cause of reviving literature, exposed with unsparing severity its cloistered and cowed opponents. But when the pillars of those ancient and venerable institutions, in which he had been educated, were seen tottering under the ground-swell of the Reformation, he dreaded the consequences of a convulsion of which he had himself been an unconscious instrument. Hence the early boldness of his youth, and the superstitious timidity of his latter days."

Page 54, line 7.

"His dear Child."

Sir Thomas More thus speaks of the touching parting with his daughter Margaret, when writing to bid her farewell:--

"Dear Meg, I never liked your manner towards me better; for I like when daughterly love and dear charity have no leisure to look to worldly courtesy."

Page 54, line 9.

"True-hearted Fisher."

Bishop Fisher, a man eminent for his learning and piety, who, like Sir Thomas More, had been a zealous promoter of the means that urged on the Reformation, while he still adhered to the ancient faith, was beheaded by Henry, for refusing the oath recognising the legitimacy of his marriage with Ann Boleyn. He bore very severe privations, during a tedious imprisonment in

the Tower, with exemplary fortitude and meekness.

Page 54, line 14.

"Martyrs of two faiths."

Henry latterly burnt Protestant and Catholic at the same stake; the one for denying his supremacy, the other for questioning the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Page 55, line 13.

"Prove traitors to his cause."

The principles of Toleration and liberty of conscience were very imperfectly understood by the early reformers. Cranmer sanctioning even the use of the stake for the eradication of heresy; and urging Edward the Sixth, when he hesitated, to sign the warrant for execution of the bigoted sentence.

THE DEATH OF THE YEAR.

A FEVER DREAM.

"Though this be madness, yet there's method in it!
Will you walk out o' the air?----
Into my grave?"

Hamlet.

Sluggishly sank the sun
Through a bloody west;
Like rebellion's apathy,

In mad'ning eddy-throes begun,
Shuddering to stagnant rest,--
Horror's gore-inebriety:

Night's vapoury slaves,
With his pilfered gauds bedight,
Hung on his track;

Passing to oblivion's caves,
A gasping year, this night
To Eternity gives back.

The hurtling pall o'erhead,
Called to the world around,--
That to the skies;

My steps were on the dead;
And the dusty ground
Muttered her obsequies.

A fold of Time's winding-sheet
Tight'ning around; at my feet
The gasping year! dim visions past,
Tracing her fitful mutterings on the blast:
A down receding, dim Infinity,
I saw the skirts o' the past Eternity
Enfolding back into oblivion's shroud;
While, all uncared, it spoke prophetic warnings out.

I seemed enwrapped in a phantom sea,
All shapeless as madness' phantasy;
When the fever-vexed soul storms fearfully;
But lulling to shaped visibility,
Soul-wove, embodied unreality:

Grave's dungeons ravaged; the dusty dead
Sweeping by in ghostly tread,
Reacting in shadowy mockery,
Fantasias from life's curt tragedy.

Commingling on the death-stage, numberless
Spectres in wild confusion press:
Phantoms that ride the pestilence,
In slimy weeds enwrapped, led on the van;
And howling on the blast, the scene began;
With agony-sated gladness, shivering
The tense air-pulse, until to madness quivering.

Then borne on the gust's receding sigh
Chorus-swelling its fitful minstrelsy;
Trooped a gentler spectral throng,
Answering wild music to their ghastly song:
Robed in a tissue of withered flowers,
They thus that agonised derision
Soothed to a mild death vision,
Like storm-cloud, wooed to summer showers:--

SPIRITS' SONG.

"Trackless the touch of our airy tread,
As sere-leaf, in autumn's forest glade;
And sweeter than mother's cradle song,
Our whisper-call, as we flit along,
 Passing the babe to rest
 From its mother's breast.

"Freight with oblivion's draught, our wing
Glides on to the hoar-tear's welcoming,
As the eld's thin hair longs to twine all still
With the ebon-locks of Death's sentinel;
 Care-reft, all peacefully,
 On Earth's lap to lie."
But anon the changing scene is swept,
 Like the dim sea-mist at morn;
And solitude o'er that wild stage crept,
 That the phantom shades had borne;

Eftsoon a wild, fantastic dirge,
 Sudden swelling, pealing, falling,
Now like the solemn ocean-surge,
 Now like the fitful gust, shrieking, lulling;
And the spectral theatre teemed with sprites,
Clad in the sheen of marish lights;
With fantastic caper each his part
Played,--sudden, irregular, bounding start,
The fickle changes, that lawless flit
In the racking clutch of an ague fit.
'Twas the ague-fiend, with grin and sneer;
 His train fen-sprites, mime-revelling,
 Horsed on the meteor's wing,
To gloat o'er the time-doomed year:
 And thus their lawless melody
 Rose wild and fitfully;
 Like tremulous fingers of the breeze
 Dashed o'er the chords of storm-stript trees.

AGUE SPRITES.

"When stars, flung to night,
 Trail on the sky;
When the hurtling north light
 Flings her storm-tresses high;

When the sleet-storms sleep
In moonlight stealthily:
And mermaids creep
From caves where deep
Lurk winds yet to whistle stormily;
Then to the Tryst of Death we hie,
As Time, on the noon of night, sweeps bye."

But they start from a noble train, that kept
Time to heart-melody, as they swept
In solemn circlings o'er the scene,
Where beauty's transforming blight had been;
A winged torch, at whose burning ray
The meteor's dull eye-glare slunk away,
They bore; and its lambent flame heavenward streamed,
As seeking the star-zoned home they claimed;
The charnel vaults their echoes rung,
As thus in answering chaunt they sung:--

SONG OF THE SPIRITS OF HOPE.

"Sweet flowers on the lap of earth withering lie.
Childhood, and laughing youth, all haste to die;
Down to your wormy caverns' yawning steep,
Hope-lit,--all trustfully they sink to sleep;
Calm, on the lee-wave of life's ocean borne,
To where none ever mourn;
 Rejoice not, slaves of Death,
 We wear your conqueror's wreath."

But all unheeding they gambolled bye,
In the mazes of fiendish impery.

AGUE SPRITE.

 "Hah! hah! hah!
 I foot it still,
 Through bog and foul fen,
 Whither I will;
 The storm sleeps,
 Shall awake ere long;
 The winds are rehearsing
 A boisterous song,
Should a wanderer meet my lantern light,
 Pestilence twines him round,
 His soul is already bound
On the dark journey to the house of night."

SPIRITS OF HOPE.

"We bind up the leaves of each broken flower
That droops at the knell of Death's natal hour;
Our undying torch gilds each dark recess,
Where despair would blot out earth's loveliness:
And lights the mortal to our home above,
Realm of eternal love:

 Rejoice not slaves of Death,
 We wear your conqueror's wreath.
Life's couch spreads out below
 Night's starry team,
Earthward their sphere-notes flow
 In wild sweet dream;
The daisy lifts its head
 Our step to hear;
Hope's star, that at our tread
 Springs every where.

All living nature's sung
To sweet trance below:
The spider hath slung
His cot on the bow,
And the wind steals along
And rocks it now,
And shakes, as it sweeps
The foxglove bell,
Where the butterfly sleeps
In honied cell;
Till it lives again the joys gone bye
In dreams of chrysaline infancy."

But ever the elfin sprites reply:--

"The toad is awake,
The death-watch flies,
From bog and brake
Exhalations rise;
The mandrake shrieks
As the wanderer breaks
Its fatal stalks;
The demon of ague dances past,
Spirits of anguish ride the blast,
The putrid fever walks;
The beldam earth creeps fearfully
As the midnight's nursling, aye for me
Breeds hideous mirth and jollity."

SPIRITS OF HOPE.

"Ours, when the widowed heart is lone,
To guide to the light its loved lord hath won,
To whisper, though all most loved must die,
Yet the love of their loved ones will live on high;
To wipe from the orphan eye
Tear-drops wrung out all silently;
Such duties tend on our happy toil,
We sun o'er death's shadow with Heaven's smile."

AGUE SPRITES.

Far other our duty,
Less gay than thine, I ween:
To scatter seeds of beauty

O'er earth's madly chequered scene;
Still as friendships begin,
We step in between;
When hearts would be one, I keep them two,
I rust love's chains,
Then affection wanes;
And my duty's done,
And my victory won,
When their last link's gone
By my fickle mildew.
But there are mortals will not follow,
Friends nor frail, nor false, nor hollow;
But rare I ween, and few are they,
Not twice seen in a summer's day.--
--But, hist! a mortal step approaches,
Within our pale its tread encroaches,
Away! away! away!"--

And strangely then there cross'd,
Unconscious, through that phantom host,
A pair, all faithless of life's fleet charms,
Each twined in the folds of th' other's arms.

LOVER.

Art thou not all to me? a changeless star,
O'er the dark waters of life's stormy main
Flinging love's rays?

MAIDEN. And thou mine own,
Round whose strong love my frail heart-tendrils long
To twine and cluster for a sunny prop;
Hath not its burden of affection longed
To win such sure repose? Thou wilt not change!
Tell me,--with life, thou wilt not?

L. By the deep
Unchanging azure of yon welkin's dome,
That through heaven's grated portal peers on us,
Down 'mong the racking mists,--I swear my love--

M. Nay, swear not by't, it is too passionless,
There is no feeling on its changeless brow;
Swear, if thou wilt, where love hath sympathy.

L. By the blue deep, then, that with love-sick plaint
Wooes the dull shore---

- M. Nay, 'tis a treacherous maid;
A boisterous scold, in ire all unprovoked;
That,--for the wind's in haste, must fret andrage,
And vent its fumes on th' unoffending barque;
Love spurns such witnesses.
- L. By the sure earth, then,--
- M. 'Tis more uncertain than the wind-vexed sea;
And crueller too, devouring its own babes,
And hungering still for more; Love sleeps not on
Such flower-fringed grave.
- L. Be thou my surety then,
Thou wilt not change; and by thy love I swear--
- M. But my young passion--a prone vine--would climb
To its own sun by thee. Thou wouldst not lean
On thine own parasite!
- L. Come let us hence;
See you, the storm hath scared the timid moon,
With all her menials, from yon murky sky;
Know'st thou no fear, my love?
- M. Fear! and thy love?
While I can round, without her niggard lamp,
My ample world, what could I tremble for?
Dost thou not love? nay, then, I'll swear for thee,
Though yet--to need Love's school--a heretic!
- L. And I, the while, unwearied of the task,
Re-school thee to his faith.
- M. How the boding wind
Groans, like a vex'd thing, through the matted yews;
Hath the zephyr's bride, the rose,--coy, blushing maid,
That chides so sweetly at his warm caress;--
Lied to her love; that thus he howls abroad
Like love-distracted maniac?
- L. Hie we then
To the laurel bower, far fitter eaves-dropper
Than churchyard yews, and the eerie charnel winds.

M. To me,--than this, Love finds no fitter shrine,
He knows not death.

L. But yet ourselves can die.

M. To win thy deathless love, eternity!

So the frail things of earth, in hope, pass'd by;
While a phantom sung, as in eldritch jest,--

"Here is no room for love-laden breast,
Where the hoarse winds shriek,
And the lightnings streak
The storm-cloud's crest.
Here is no time for earth's cumberers
Whispering vain vow;
Beneath are death's dull slumberers;
The dreamless sleep below
Knows not the kindling of love's fevered glow,"

Then, answering him,
The clashing revellers crowd:--

"'Tis the fittest time
When the storm shrieks loud,
And lightnings climb
The thunder-cloud,
For life-doom sprites to fly,
For then we weave young beauty's shroud
When Time's midnight-hour is nigh;
Unweave, of friendship's web, the woof;
Untie love's cords, seemed danger-proof,
And leave young hearts to die:

Oh rare is our glee,
How we gloat to see
The false lover part;
And the broken heart
That repays our art,
And breaks with fond fidelity!"

A gentler sprite replied, in tones, now high,
Now to silence dying stealthily,
Sudden as Æolian music's mystery,--

"The rook hath long sought her airy nest,

The bee and the wild flower are sunk to rest,
The baby is sleeping, and smiles to see
Bright spirits are winging round infancy;
The squirrel is asleep on the topmost bow;
And watchers that weep, are dreaming now;
While the unblest dead come from earth and sea,
And unshrouded tread in strange revelry."

But hist! who come with a lighter tread,
And wilder, than shades of the shrouded dead?
With their tresses in snakey knots entwined,
And flung all aghast on the howling wind?
Strange unearthly loveliness they bear;
In that hectic flush, and the eye's wild glare,
The death-beauty Consumption's victims wear;
And thus their salute, and welcome there.--

CONSUMPTION.

"All hail, grim sprite,
Whose bravest delight
Is 'mong mortals to sever
Friend from friend;
But our boast still is ever,
That true love can never
Withstand! withstand!
When our conclave has said
They shall sleep with the dead,
Their love is laid
At an end! an end!"

AGUE SPRITE.

"Queen of affections, cold and pale,
All powerful phantom, we bid thee hail!
My well won crest is the aspen tree;
A long line of false hearts follow me;
But the true ones yield at thy sovereign nod:
And thy crest is the yew-tree that blights the sod,
Where the cypress sighs, and the willows weep,
O'er the graves where our victims soundly sleep.

But our fate-winged light
Too long is dim;
We have work to-night,
Ere the moon is bright
Or the ravens scream "

And the goblins flitted from the fevered dream,
While Consumption's mournful melody
Charmed my enraptured ear to ecstasy.
Like ocean breakers, rose and fell
That solemn chaunt, in fitful swell;
Like the south wind stealing through the trees,
Or the lullaby of far-off seas,
The cradle-song that the boisterous deep
Sings, soothing the fainting storm to sleep:--
While a stately measure the dancers keep.

SONG OF THE CONSUMPTIVES.

"We have paused 'mid the gay scenes of beauty's bower,
And have left our blight on a lovely flower;--
We have passed where young hearts and hopes beat high,
And the hopes now wither o'er hearts that die;
We have been with fond lovers, long parted then;
They are parting, never to meet again!

Hearts there are breaking where'er we tread,
Shrouds there are making to wrap the dead.

We have passed where the mother gladly smiled
As she pressed the cheek of her darling child;
And have left a canker, that none can stay,
On the pallid brow of our destined prey;
And the mother sickens with hope deferred,
As it speeds to rest, in the lone churchyard.

Hearts there are breaking, &c.

We've stood at the altar when vows were said,
And hands have been joined, they dreamt not wed;
We have claimed as ours the blushing bride,
And snatched her unasked from her lover's side,
And robbed her anew, and borne her away
To the couch we spread for her bridal day.

Hearts there are breaking, &c.

We have trod every maze where affections wind,
And left some trophy of woe behind;
We've culled from earth's garden the loveliest there;
We have left the true lover, for mate, despair;
We have every fond circle in gladness seen,
But sorrow has stayed where our footsteps have been.

Hearts there are breaking where'er we tread,
Shrouds there are making to wrap the dead."

How fled time in this ghostly revelry?
Had another cycle sped all heedlessly?
Or was Eternity's pulse quickening,
As of the fearful death-dream sickening?--
Annihilation's pall o'erhovering,
And greedily earth's love-buds all incovering?
--For strange, and how changed, returned again
That fair one, back on the haunted scene;
But seeming now like a thing akin
To the world she unconsciously mingled in,
That seemed moved, as she of their mates had been:--

MAIDEN.

"Ah me! how changed, how desolate the place
Since last we trod!--WE! there is no such word
Nor never more he'll whisper, hand in hand,
The tale that seemed how passionate and sure!
False art thou?--sure he could not leave me thus
All 'reft, to stumble o'er this thorny world;
Love's lamp gone blind; my soul itself astray!
It did not seem thus desolate with him:
The very graves are ruinous! its confines
Seem a dungeon, whence the prudish vestal night
Bars out the laughing day. The fitter for me!
Does e'er the grave make love; it surely must;
So lover like, with its bland outside show!
Who could suspect the green and flowery mound
All rottenness within? I'll sit me down
And thaw its icy breast to play the wooer:
Knowest thou affection? do thy wormy mates
Pay court but for thy givings? Then thou know'st
Heartaches as keen as mine; Thou dost not hold--
Hark thee,--within thy breast, my lover hid?
Ah would thou didst! The heart whose treasured jewel
Is garnered in the tomb, hath still that shrine
Whereat to worship; while Hope's friendly torch
Burns by the while!--but thus,--what would I say?
My brain seems light,--did not he name this hour,
The place, the time? Come, wilt thou hence with me
To chide his lingering?"----

So the poor maniac;--

While to the whirlwind's wrack
Consumption's train flung wild their tresses back:
The goblins shrieked amain,
And the phantom choir sung out again--

"Room for the broken heart, make room;
Love too hath her offerings for the tomb:
We fear not the heavenward torch's flare,
The grave's foul vapours have dulled its glare;
Light if ye can, that wandering ray;
Room for the reason-reft one, make way."

But still, as deriding, back they turned,
The winged flame of Hope's beacon burned;
And clear through their shrieking triumphs, rung

The answering notes of their farewell song--

"The sickly noon of Time,
Swift to oblivion bears
Its bubble pangs;
A stage too brief and dim,
To tell through its dew of tears
What love o'erhangs.

Here's but the bud of the rose;
Not nipped or dead,
Though all chill;
In Eternity's light it blows,
By life's river margined,
There to drink its fill.

Ye are but God's slaves, lending
Passage o'er the night--
Death brooded deep;
Angels of hope, flame-winged tending
On their light-ward flight
Through its sleep.

There, spiritual beings, blending
With the God-embracing light,
Through each degree:
On still expanding light ascending;
Unknown senses, unconceived delight,
Hope--left in light's infinity."

And the goblin's marish sheen,
Hid in Hope's light:
Hung again its sickly skreen
On the gloom-bound night:
While thus the doom-sprites resume again
The year's death-rite,--

"Join our triumphant roundelay;
Hope's beams shorn:
At the dying hour of day,
Another morn is born
As darkly to pass away:
Mortals forlorn, to mourn
O'er the unburied clay
Reft of life's ray!
Come to the rest of the cradled day;
Come, come away!"

COME! COME away:

Then in wild snatches their fitful song,
As the goblin sprites lawlessly flit along;
They thus each ghostly guest invite
To the doom-orgies of the night.--

"The cold wan moon
Will greet our meeting soon;
'Tis changing and fickle;
Come, come with death's sickle;
'Tis our fittest light
The pale, cold, bright
Fickle rays of the waning moon!"

Consumption's train reply.--

"Tarry not! tarry not!
While the winds sigh,
Autumn's leaves wither
And rotting lie!
Then speed we, nor tarry,
Vain, vain life's hours;
The young may go marry,
Their fairest are ours!"

Then in sad voiced murmurings,
She that the yew-wreath wore,--

"Twine ye amid life's strings,
Coil in its core:
Dry one by one its springs,
Still slow but sure;
Then, when the spark's nigh gone;
When the victory's almost won,
Light false hope's rush:
Dash through the throbbing veins,
Tug till life's frail web strains,
Give the fatal crush,
And 'tis done!"

Thus to her solemn strain
Respond her train;
While in sudden rushing, gasping cry,
The goblins answer it mirthfully.--

CONSUMPTION'S TRAIN.

"We have joined the dance with a merry throng;
Their music has ceased, their mirth and song,
For the loved of all, from their sister band,
Like a torrent speeds to the spirits' land,
Nor will stay their call, tho' they weep in vain
O'er the loved one they never shall see again."

AGUE SPRITE.

"Merry is our meeting,
We have won! we have won!
Gay be our greeting,
Our task is done;
'Tis finished, 'tis finished
What we've begun;
Our aim is accomplished,
Our victory won!
And through bog we'll splash,
And through quagmire dash,
To dance at the hoarse bell's moan!"

And the yew-wreathed sung alone--

"Mother trust not!
The rose-blush there
Is the hectic signal
My victims wear!
Lover hope not,
Thy care is vain;
Her dirge is sung,
And her knell is rung
By my phantom train;
Dank is the mould
That shall pillow her head;
And yawning to fold
Her amid the dead:
The turf is green
That shall wrap her feet;
And wove the web
Of her winding-sheet."

A knell from the old church tower
Boomed forth;--the midnight hour;
Sounds as of many waters gushing,
Gushing from the old church tower

Clashing, crashing, madly rushing,
Then expiring in a long-drawn moan;--
And (gasping as from a tempest, thrown
On the calm strand) affright; I stood alone:

In a delirious dream
Of the brain-blood; fever racked,
Wild wandering!--another year

Through futurity's gorge came;
While, embodied, stalked
Such shapes as pain-wove fancies wear.

I woke, as on my ear
Rose a joyous cry of men,
Borne on the blast;
What aspect does young time wear,
That they should shout amain,
As the year pass'd?

A VISION OF THE SCOTTISH MAKARS.

The ruddy sun, uprisen through a mist
That curtained in the landscape all around,
Was gathering the hoar-frost, as he kiss'd
The crisp meads, where the dew, o'er scaur and mound,
In crystal jewels, silvered all the ground;
And, mirror'd in the loch's expansive shene,
Linlithgow's Palace towers, all ruinous, were seen.

While high o'er head the lark was carolling
Sweet matin to the rosy gates of day:
Hung in the blue vault on her quivering wing,
Still pouring forth the music of her lay,
Whose thrilling notes now fall, now mount away,
Until th' immeasurable dome of sky
Me seemed to vibrate to the thrilling ecstasy.

Filled with the music of the bird of morn,
The poet of the sky, I wandered through
The chamber where the royal maid was born,
Like some rare flower drinking the morning dew;
Fair hapless Mary! hours so bright and few,
That, save for these, through life's long winter day
Lived, withering, for 'the ensanguined block of Fotheringay.'

Thence through the chapel, whose now roofless aisle
Was wont to echo to her infant chaunt
And prayers, until his power, that could assail
The Romish Church in her most guarded haunt,
He whom the power of man could never daunt,
Nor knew even pity for weak woman's tears,
Failed to uproot this seedling of her infant years.

Thus musing, with the matin of the lark
Still in my ear; and the deep blue of heaven
Inroofing time-worn walls, as 'twere an ark
Flung on Time's deluge, and yet onward driven
Secure, and, every reign to fancy given,
She summoned teeming thoughts, and, from the vast
Tomb of the olden time, evoked the nobles of the past.

Methought the lofty hall all lighted up,
And set with tables, and a dais throne,
That groaned beneath the weight of bowl and cup,
And flaggon, ranged in costly heaps thereon:

While all around the walls, each sculptured stone
Was hung with casque and antlers, and the spoils
Of war and sylvan chase, that royal time beguiles.

While, overhead, the storied galleries
Were thronged by minstrels, that, from harp and lute,
Evoked such rich enchanting melodies,
The ravished echoes with the sounds were mute,
Or whispered like some stealthy rivulet,
That, creeping onward through the bosky dell,
Murmurs, as all abashed, its modest charms to tell.

And then, I knew not how, but with the speed
Of dreamer's thoughts, the ancient hall was thronged
With men of noblest presence; that with greed
Methought my eye the grateful sight prolonged;
Such as a feast to one by famine wronged;
Until ear, eye, and sense, and soul were filled,
And passive to the bliss that all their powers beguiled.

But soon my dreaming thoughts 'gan shape their ways,
Escaping out the ecstasy that clung
Like sunlight o'er the scene, in dazzling haze;
And then I could discern the noble throng,
And dwell on each high chief of Scottish song,
Old Scotia's Makars, whose wild notes outthrown,
Sang till the lift rang back from her bright morning's dawn.

And foremost, as by right, in Minstrel Hall,
Her own first James, the royal child of song
Who, from old Windsor's Keep, sung such a carol
As burst its donjon bars, and from the throng
Of noble maids, 'mong whom the "King's Quair" rung,
Bore off the Bell. His stately presence showed
One who, lyre, sword, and sceptre proved no overburdening load.

Nor less Dunbar, the prince of Scottish bards,
Though clad in monkish robes, yet laughing out;
While, on his arm, and hanging on his words,
The Lion-Heart, whom Flodden's bloody rout
Found, 'mid the knightly ring all round about,
Hemming with loyal hearts that bold life's close,
Erst gaily welcomed to the bridal of "The Thistle and the Rose."

Whilst on the other side, his laughing eye
Flinging defiance to his kindly foe,—
Dunbar was handing ribes with Kennedy

And, following in their wake, a motley row
Of gentle knights, for either's overthrow
Were watching, and, as either's 'flyting' gan,
Through the high roofs ribbed rafters echoing laughter ran.

Them following, with stately step there came
A hoary knight, of venerable mien,
That seemed as conning o'er some lofty theme;
And trod apart, as though himself unseen,
And by quick crowding fancies all o'erta'en;
Then shook his flowing beard, and inly smiled,
Until in wavy locks its ample volutes o'er his girdle trailed.

But close behind, with quickening step, there trod
One that me seemed well-used to dais-floor,
A herald's tabard, wrought in cloth of gold,
With rampant lion all inwove, he wore,
And golden crown, the Lion-King of yore,
Sir David Lindsay, told; with courtly air,
Yet reverently, that ancient's hand he shook and welcomed there;

Proclaiming loud the knight of Erceldoun,
Famous in days of yore, their minstrel sire;
Nor one who but a blazing meteor shone,
Startling the gazer with his funeral pyre,
But a clear burning, central, solar fire,
Dwelling alone within that distant blue
Of the far heavens, whose stellar fires are bright and few.

Methought a solemn air o'erspread the scene,
Grave and majestic, yet not terrible;--
But rather like the moonlight's silver sheen,
Whose misty curtain serving to conceal,
Like distance, all the shadows, and reveal
A dreamy grandeur, moving to deep thought,--
Seemed at his entrance o'er that company inwrought.

And he the centre of a priestly ring,
With Gawin Douglas, who the mitre wore,
And Quintyne, and Blind Harry, following;
And Lockart, famous in the days of yore;
Though time, alas, hath set but little store
On many a minstrel loved when he was young,
Sung in Dunbar's Lament, old chief of Scottish song.

And there, too, knightly James of Strivillin,

The royal Gaberlunzie, took his part,
Who sang so blythe o' "Christ's Kirk on the Green,"
And wore the duds with such consummate art,
The gentle beggar wan ilk lassie's heart,
And lightlier held the lift o' Scotland's throne
Than the green bays he wove around the Bruce's crown.

But now apart he walked, with serious air,
And meditative eye, while there he leads
A matron, veiling with her long grey hair
Her face, and all yclad in mournful weeds,
Her eye down drooping on the floor she treads,
Hiding the wreck of beauty, that a throne
Had lost, and in its stead a rival's deadly hatred won.

At sight of whom commingling with the throng
Of olden bards, they moved anew and ranged
From end to end the laden board along;--
As one that on his foe would be avenged
Lingering his blow,--no word there was exchanged,
But statue-like they sat, a stony stare
Throning mute expectation on each noble visage there.

When, lo! another guest and o'er each face
A deeper line of thought me seemed to run,
And expectation, that as swift gave place
To wonder, when there entered Mary's son,
England's first James, but ere the Stuart won
The threshold of the hall such laughter shook
Its roof--as rang re-echoing through its farthest nook.

And then were greetings in mock gravity,
And high laudations mingling jibe and scorn,
And jest flung out with bitter suavity,
And sterner words, by laughter overborne,
And withering contempt on each face worn,--
Fit welcome to this claimant for the bays
Won for her bards, by flower of Scotia's minstrel lays.

All quaint in their attire, his pursuivants
In solemn frippery uniform; his train,
A crawling brood of servile sycophants
Applauding in his ear, that all in vain
Heard the old hall with laughter ring again;
Mailed in scholastic jargon and old saws,
A strutting peacock patched from the prolific nest of daws.

Until the silent glance of her who lived
A queen dethroned, while he, usurper, ruled;
The mother, whose own son, all unbereaved,
Degenerate, inane, by all be-fooled,
In pity's noblest characters unschooled,
Witnessed the captive's hair in youth grow grey,
And basely perish unavenged at Fotheringay!

Methought the dastard quailed, and shrunk aghast
From the pale beauty that against reproach
Seemed struggling, and, oblivious of the past,
Outstretched her arms,—where should he dare encroach
The lion-hearted James me seemed to watch,
And, as he slunk away, with such a clang
Flung back his sword, the farthest echos to the music rang.

Whereat 'gan trooping in another host,
Whose coming seemed to fill the expectant void,
So strangely mocked by the intruding ghost
Of regal pedantry; a noble pride
Sat throned on either's brow, as side by side
Each Makar welcomed by him, to the board,
The younger sons of song, that had the gentle craft restored.

There entered Ramsay, linked with Ferguson,
And Burns that towered a giant 'mid the throng,
Whom, as he passed, each gave his benison,
Till the first James, who from the midst outsprung
And hailed him brother there, whose hand he wrung;
Whereat Dunbar his own bay wreath upflung,
And crowned the peasant bard the king of Scottish song.

Close in his train, a noble following came,
Thomson and Grahame, and Tanahill and Scott,
With Skinner, Smollet, Campbell, Cunningham,
And many another name not soon forgot,
All mingling freely with these bards of note,
The giants of the eld and younger times,
Whose pregnant words outvie the minstrelsy of sunnier climes.

And then they held high converse of the meed
Of Poesy, and of its lofty aim;
Its treasury of old heroic deed,
And high prophetic office,—nobler claim
Than chosen handmaid of enduring fame,
To breathe in words of burning eloquence

Eternal truths, a nation's noblest, safest, best defence!

To charm its willing ear by silver song,
Strung to the themes her bramble trelliced burns
Chant to the mountains as they rush along;
And win by graver melody, by turns,
And lightsome lay, th' unconscious soul that spurns
Law's stolid rule; exalt her noble cause,
Whose humblest lay outweighs the influence of a nation's laws.

Then reverently they spake of elder bards
Whose hands had grace to strike the impassioned wire,
As each with fervid eloquence awards
The muse's honours to some favourite sire,
Who won sweet numbers from the heavenly lyre,
And handed down through the prophetic line
The glorious meed of song, the minstrel art divine.

And Drummond spake of rare old Ben, his frere,
The while Buchanan dwelt on classic times;
And James sang proudly "of his maisteris dear,
Gower, and Chaucer," while with loud acclaims
They each some minstrel's honoured name proclaims,
The Bard of Avon's dwelt on every tongue,
The poet of all times, the master-spirit of the depths of song!

And there was one that spoke of Poesie,
A bastard hind, that pandered to vile lust,
And dragged the heaven-born Muse adown to lie,
Groveling in shameless prurience, in the dust;
Of names shall rankle in eternal rust,
The vulture scavengers, whose piercing vision
Serves but to elevate their Muse to infamous derision.

With that, with arms across, and hand to hand,
They rose and looking up invoked high heaven;
But ere my willing ear could understand
The solemn adjuration they had given,
Me seemed athwart the glorious vision driven
A misty vale, that crumbled as it grew
And all the living scene to shapeless phantasy indrew.

In hoar Linlithgow's royal hostelry
Within its festal hall distent I lay,
But crumbling walls alone I could descry,
Unroofed, save by the noon sun's canopy,

Yminstrelled by the mavis' roundelay,
That charmed the answering echoes with the tune
Heard oft of yore among the sylvan shades of Erceldoun.

NOTE.

To avoid burying a brief poem under a multitude of notes, it may be sufficient to refer to Chalmers's Poetic Remains of the Scottish Kings, where not only Queen Mary, but Darnley, James I., and Charles I., are included among the royal poets of the Stuart line; and to Dunbar's Poems, particularly his "Lament for the Makars;" as well as to the valuable Notes appended to the beautiful edition of his Poems edited by D. Laing, Esq.

Linlithgow Palace is well known as the favourite residence of James V., and the birth-place of Queen Mary.

BURNS.

* * * * Nature's own beloved bard,
Who to the Illustrious of his native land
So properly did look for patronage,
Ghost of Mecænas! hide thy blushing face!
They snatched him from the sickle and the plough
To gauge ale firkins! * * *

On a bleak rock mid-way th' Aonian mount,
There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
Whose aged branches to the midnight blast
Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough
Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be inhaled,
And weeping, wreath it round thy poet's tomb!
Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
Pick the rank henbane, and the dusky flowers
Of night-shade, or its red and tempting fruit;
These, with stopped nostrils and glove-guarded hand,
Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine
The illustrious brow of Scotch nobility!

COLERIDGE.

O! for the lightning's fire
To make the muse's lyre resound,
By no angelic pæan vibrating;
But every thrilling wire
Quivering with remorse profound,
Uttering a sin-repentant nation's offering!

Wild mountain home of song,
That wrote, in tears of blood, the name
Of Burns, thy proudly-gifted peasant son;
And rear'st, thy hills among,
The tardy shrine to his undying fame,
To tell, too late, thou found'st his worth,--when gone.

Mourn, guilty Scotland, mourn!
Bow to the dust in widowed shame,
Hide thee in sackcloth, with dishevelled hair;
But wreath around his urn
No mournful yew,--the laughing thorn, his claim,
Twined with hair-bell and daisy, let him wear.

Yet, why should England boast?
Thv sons have went away the shame.

That doomed his genius to ignoble toil;
Yet, ere we knew him, lost,
Say, had not England's chief denied his claim,
And spurned him back to till thy stubborn soil!

Go, sons of England, seek
The Temple, where, your royal dead among,
Nature's nobility, with nobles rest;
Bid ages' silence break,
Speak noble lyrist of "th' adventurous song"
And tell your recompence, at her behest!

Unveil your Spenser's tomb,
He rests, wrapped in each gorgeous fold
Of his immortal fairie garniture;
Greenly his laurels bloom,
Yet history blushes when his tale is told,
And vainly hides the cypress wreath he wore.

Strike Dryden's Lyre again,
Whence that deep dirge-note from its chords?
Repair its broken strings, that we may hear
His unsung fairie strain;--
Responsive come no music-burdened words,
But echo's dying moan wails on the ear.

Tread yon Cathedral aisle,
View sculpture's tribute to your god-like sires,
And boast the glorious birthright of your land;
But cast your thoughts the while,
Where the God-born a temple scene inspires,
Then, guiltless,--cast the stone, your stigma's brand!

Wake from your glorious rest
Ye mighty spirits who bestride the past
And hand it on into futurity;
Speak to the world you've blest
With voice shall scare to justice' mead at last,
And hail a generous posterity.

O who would strike the lyre,
Charm the world's listless ear to ecstasy,
For guerdon of ingratitude and slight?
Who would not court its fire
To soar aloft to immortality,
By distant ages owned, the soul of their delight?

Sleep many-tombed immortal!
Inurned within the hearts of worshippers
That bow with genius' kindred piety:
Thy song has tongues for all,
Thy ministry the patriot flame inspires--
Nature's anointed priest of melody.

EVENING MUSINGS.

* * * "I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns."

WORDSWORTH. *Tintern Abbey.*

Empress who wield'st thy sceptred sway,
Tracking the path of the parting day;
Rolling along in thy shadowy car
By the herald light of the evening star;
Soft as the gentle breath of spring,
Noiseless as spirits revelling,
And hushed and deep, are the thoughts that burn
In the soul that welcomes thy glad return!
Night! how I love to watch on high,
As the setting sun illumines the sky,
Each coming star on the silvery track
Where thy chariot rolls thee to empire back,
Till the pale beams of Cynthia, crowning the night,
Bathe the robes of the sky in her silvery light.
This is the hour when the soul is free,
And feels her the breath of Deity;
Springing from earth she wings her way
Through brighter paths than the track of day,
To scenes more dear than the sun can show,
And fairer realms than she finds below.
Thy silent hours are dear to me,
I court their star-gem'd brilliancy
Before the gaudy day;
When 'scaping from the toils that bound me,
I see thy dome expand around me,
And in its glittering galaxy
Trace the same beautiful array
That smiled in happiest days gone by,
When, in a loved one's company,
I wandered by thy twinkling ray
Nor wished for the return of day.

Mysterious field of rolling suns
That o'er this ever-varying scene
Each in his course for ever runs
Unchanging. while here intervene

Perpetual as the restless sea,
The rising wave and ebbing tide;
Gloriously bright ye seem to be,
Ever the same, though clouds may hide
Your brightness from our face and give
Another change to the stormy sea
Where we travel on to futurity:
There oft'ner sombrest colours weave
Than starry skies; revisiting,
As by thy light I often do,
A home to which affections cling,
And closer now, that I forgo
All of it save its memory;
A distant wanderer from that home,
When gazing on the midnight sky,
There only, in its glittering dome,
Seems ought familiar to my eye
Ought linked with happiest infancy;
And watching on the brow of night
 The same bright diadem,
 That used to gem
The azure vault that lured our sight,
When, not alone, I used to stray
Through the paths of childhood at closing day;
When we traced upon the evening sky
The fingers of the Deity,
My brother! oh how oft with thee
I've watched the spangled host on high
Marshalled upon the midnight sky;
And now thou'rt slumbering silently
Beneath the hallowed stone.
And o'er thy grave these stars now smile
Brightly as when on both, ere while,
Their heavenly lustre shone.

Thy poetry demands no aid,
It needs not science' borrowed wing;
Beyond its ken are the treasures laid
Of thy worshippers chosen revelling;
Their souls to lovelier scenes aspire
When they snatch a flame from thy sacred fire,
And 'neath thy gem'd pavilion
The soul's imaginings enthrone,
 And with their teemings spread
The azure vault with a brighter train
Than the queen of night, in her silent reign,

Through her spangled track hath led;
Then o'er the emancipated soul
The calm of twilight seems to roll,
Till, wrapt in ecstasy of thought,
The visions of the past are brought
Back on the soul, to choose from thence
The brightest for its dalliance.
Who that surveys the chequered past,
Where darkest shadows oft o'er-cast
The tortuous path through which we wend
Incessant to our journey's end;
Shaded by clouds of deepest grief,
By woes unconscious of relief,
False friends, fierce foes, and, worse than all,
Parting at death's incessant call
From fondest hopes, from dearest tie,
From all that love can sanctify,
And starting, in youth's brightest years,
A pilgrim in the vale of tears,
Who, tracing such a dark display,
As memory shows on his chequered way,
Would, were he offered the lot again,
Retrace his voyage on the stormy main?
Drain to its bitter dregs, once more,
Each cup of sorrow he quaffed before,
Though snatching with them hours of bliss
Remembered amid their agonies,
Like a martyr's visions of Paradise?
But still, as the brightest with sorrow blends,
So joy to the darkest its blessing lends;
And, oh! if the anguish of moments brings
Such indelible grief on its raven wings,
There are brighter hours to the saddest given,
That seem as though snatched from the bliss of heaven.
These are the hours whose return we hail
When Fancy stretches her airy sail,
When Memory as pilot sits to guide
Our barque through the swift returning tide,
Till we quit the past, for a brighter day,
As Hope takes the helm and Desire the sway;
When we fan the flame of Ambition's spark
To illumine the prow of our gallant barque.
And bounding o'er the swelling main,
We snatch each prize we long to gain,
Till all we've won to the past is thrown,
As each hope seems attained, each desire our own.
But what is the gorgeous fairy work

But what is the gorgeous fairy work
Created by Fancy's wand,
To the music of the soaring lark,
When heard in my native land,
Where heaven's bird mounts to meet the sun
Ere it kisses the mountain's brow,
And hails his mate to behold its dawn
Far in the vale below.
The heart leaps fondly to that land
Where the cottage homes of childhood stand,
Though humble may be each hearth,
And pledges its weal in a manly tear,
When on foreign strands there meets the ear,
A song from his land of birth;--
But what are his raptures, tho' deep and wild,
To the home-sick love of a mountain child?
The scenes of England are beautiful,
Her stately rivers majestic roll
Through cultured plains, whose hamlets tell
Of homes where love and contentment dwell;
From her gently swelling hills you spy
Each ivied turret greet the sky,
And her palaces on every hand
Speak of a great and happy land;--
But our northern rivers foam and chafe,
And thunder along o'er rock and cliff,
And bound and dash from the mountain's brow
Till they mirror its form in the wave below,
And the joyous shout of the rushing flood
Is hushed in the lake's vast solitude.
The southern hills, like a summer tide,
Swell in rich verdure on every side,
But Scotland's mountains seem fit to be
The judgment-throne of Deity!
The mountain storm's re-echoing noise
Repeats the terrors of Sinai's voice,
As the thunder rolls from vale to sky
And answering echo shouts reply,
Till far the cathedral anthem swells,
While the solemn organ's deep tone peals
And reverberates through the lofty aisles
Of these temples, the world's Creator's hand
Hath reared to himself in that glorious land.
'Tis there, 'mid the everlasting hills,
At these altars the simple peasant kneels,
And worships his father's God;
Then rising, looks from his mountain cot,

On the land-marks that far in the azure float,
The towers of his native sod;
And boasts a domain more fair and free
Than the acres of titled nobility
Where sunnier climes are trod;
'Tis liberty's cradle! 'tis history's pride!
For their homes and altars its sons have died,
And left for our birthright as proud a name
As nobles trace in the rolls of fame,
Or monarchs in their line;
A name her sons shall still retain
While each peasant's cot is a Christian fane,
And each towering cliff of her wide domain
A consecrated shrine!

How soft the sounds of evening seem!
As though Nature, stirred by a pleasing dream,
Breathed forth upon the silent air,
Low as an infant's lisping prayer;
Whispering through grove and vale and tree
A vesper hymn to Deity;
While, faint as the memory of parting day,
The Sun smiles back a farewell ray;
The Moon, like a maid to the altar led,
Comes forth in her bridal robes arrayed;
No gaudy track, like the sun's, from far
Heralds the path of her silver car,
But she steps at once, ere his light is gone,
With queen-like grace, to her starry throne;
While every flower in the bright parterre,
That has stood unmoved through the sun's fierce glare,
Gracefully bends, at her sovereign tread,
In obeisance low, each lovely head;
And the butterfly calmly sleeps within
While silence and dreams their reign begin.
As we tread the maze of the forest glade
The moonlight alone seems awake in the shade,
Flickering and dancing amid the trees,
As each slumbering leaf is stirred by the breeze;
And there floats a sound through the solemn scene,
Like the gentle murmurs that intervene,
When the calm blue sea, o'er the bright sands lave
Each rising ripple of its restless wave;
Yet soft and low, as though silence then
Swept through the scene with her noiseless train.
And awoke the dream of sounds that dwell

Sealed in the caverns of memory's cell.

But see where the god of day went down,
More bright as he stepped from his dazzling throne,
Where the curtained clouds are richly drawn
Around the monarch's pavilion,
The evening star beams faint on the eye,
Like memory's voices of infancy.
The infant soul, and the vault of night,
Start into being unsulliedly bright,
Alike in the light of the planet's ray,
And the early dawn of the infant day;
But the sky and soul are changed too soon
From the glorious visions we gazed upon,
Not stars alone to the night are given,
But clouds enshroud the face of heaven;
And sullied by storms is the infant day,
As its bright dawn swiftly speeds away:
But tended around by her starry zone,
The Queen of Heaven resumes her throne,
And, touched by her sceptre's silvery ray,
The gathering mists are chased away,
As she ploughs her path in stately pride
Like a vessel breasting the foaming tide,
Till her empire's unsullied splendour shows
Cloudless as when it first arose.

But not from the infant soul
Can these storms of passion roll
And leave it, as he whence life is given
Will say of such are the sons of Heaven.

Evening, mild sister of the rosy day,
And Night thine ebon twin; along whose way
Are scattered heaven's jewels; yet so chaste
Thou wear'st her diamond zone around thy waist,
And thy gem'd coronet; thou seem'st, dark maid,
As of thy charms all bashfully afraid.
As though while sparkling loveliest to the sight,
Suffused with blushes; when the northern light,
Like warm blood mantling on a maiden's cheek,
With silver flush, along each quivering streak
Pulses in life-like ebb and flow: its gleams
Cheating the gazer into waking dreams
Of fanciful conceit. Sweet sister twain,
Elder and younger, welcome here again,
Together, yet apart, as hand in hand,
With tears of odorous dew ye seem to stand

With tears of generous dew ye seem to stand
Weeping a forced farewell, till Solitude
Owns the dark sister, Queen. How art thou wooed,
How welcomed, by the lone heart-broken maid
That feels as of the bold, bright day afraid
And weeps till thy return! How longed for thou
By the dull watcher, from whose fevered brow
Sweet sleep hath fled! who yet, when thou art there,
Chides that the dawn so tardily draws near;
Spurning, like faithless lover, from his sight
The slighted maid; or he whose brow of brass
Hath been the seat of crime and shame, till laws
Long laughed to scorn, or human or divine,
Have beckoned on remorse to intertwine
Her snaky folds around; with cunning art
Darting her curdling fangs into the heart.
To him thy solitude, that serves to hide
His presence from all else, art yet decried
While refuge from himself is still denied.
Dread solitude! the lyre hath hymned thy praise,
Within thy ken, night's glorious orbits blaze,
As hath their Maker, in approachless light,
Chosen his throne, and made thee his delight,
In majesty unknown to mortal eye,
Dwelling alone from all eternity.
But poets' flattering numbers have not told
How the inbrooding spirit doth unfold
The canker rust, the mastery of care,
Until it has unveiled, in stony stare,
The fiendish machinations of Despair;
Forth to remorseless conquest doth he ride,
Scorning the impotence of human pride:
Memory alike his chariot too,
Fancy the glass where he shows us through,
And howls, with hideous joy, to view
Distorted images deride Hope's tangled clue.

But, why such thoughts on this glorious night,
Intruding where all around is bright,
Burd'ning the soul with their gloomy load,
Like Satan among the sons of God?
Away! let the calm of this lovely hour
O'er me its soothing influence pour.
Come, let thy spirit move above
The troubled soul, like a brooding dove
Soothing its cares with a song of love;
Till the lost ones, that find a hidden place

In the depths of thy silent loneliness,
The loved, the mourned, the departed, come
From thy spirit-land's mysterious home,
And we commune again with those whom death
In his sanctuary shadoweth;
Thy holy shrine, where the heart retires
To relume again its earth-quenched fires,
And learn,—alas that heavenly treasures
Should ere be tried by earth's shallow measures.

How pure, and lovely in light, are they
Whom we yearned to behold through covering clay,
When the fleshly garment is rent away.
Alas that the fountain of love should be
So tainted with earth's impurity,
That we vainly sound for the deep recess
Whence it welleteth up in holiness;
Nor dream of the clear unfathomed deeps
Wherein the yearning spirit sleeps,
Till death the dream of love is breaking,
And we weep in vain to behold them taking
To a sleep too deep to know awaking.
Yet why would we mourn, who long to join
Our loved ones there, where the daisies twine
Their roots with the grey moss and eglantine,
Where the rank weeds seem to find a pleasure,
Like dragons in guard of a golden treasure;
And even the noisome nettles sting
The coarse hand, profanely gathering
From the odorous garland spring doth shed
In annual wreaths o'er death's coverlet.

O night! thou blottest out the colouring
Wherewith the golden day is picturing
A boundless range of changing loveliness,
And yet thy colouring doth no less express
An infinite beauty; in thy ebon pall
Wherewith, as in a shroud, thou wrappest all,
Gems sparkle, that beseem one led
Royally to the nuptial bed!
Oh raise our thoughts and teach us to discern
What perfect beauty springeth from the stern
And loathsome grave; oh bid thy stars shine out
Like hope, above the dead, till not a doubt
Mar the deep beauty of their memory;
Till in each buried dear one, love descry

A harvest treasure, ripening for the sky;
A seedling flower th' All-loving purposeth
To garner in the grave, until he perfecteth
Bright life-buds, by the ministry of Death.

O Earth! Earth! for as busy as thou art
At pleasure's shrine, or in the crowded mart,
And for as beautiful, with thy blue sky
Shedding dews for the flowers so lovingly;
And for as firm, the everlasting hills
Weeping their very tears in hurrying rills,
That change themselves to rivers, and rush on
From the grey east to the declining sun,
And seek their slumber only in the motion
Upon the bosom of the restless ocean!
O Mother Earth! for all thou seem'st so stable,
Me seems, of all thy children, none are able
To find a rest, save only those are hiding
Safe under cover, in the grave abiding.
I'll build me rather where the clouds are dipping
Their fringes in the west; the sun, though sleeping,
Smiles on them there; I'll build me there my mansion,
Where thought shall dwell, and know no apprehension
Of tears, save such as rainbow clouds shall weep,
Nor sighs, save of the zephyrs as they sweep
Sweetly adown the west, into the bowers
Soul-consecrated for her holy hours
Of meditation; where the Evening pale
Lists to the love-song of the nightingale,
Till the thoughts, ravished with the melody,
Wander unconscious from the minstrelsy
To lose themselves in holier reverie.

Thus from the starry empyrean, down
To Hell's abysm deep, the soul hath flown
On thought's still wing; thus have your starry wheels--
Whose silver chime in winning measure steals
O'er the enraptured soul, until it leaves
Earth and the things of time, and swiftly cleaves
The ethereal waves of that far, silent sea,
Wherein ye wander through infinity:--
Borne it, in dreamy musings revelling,
Down to the shadowy realms of gloom, whose wing
In raven plumage broods above the deep,
Whose calm, unchanging terrors never sleep.

Unquenched, unquenching suns that blaze on high,
Dwells there among the planetary train

That track your footsteps through the midnight sky,
Another such as ours; where crime and pain,
Self-introduced, have made the God of Love
The dread avenger of his broken law?
Or walks he there, through peaceful bower and grove
Familiar, as of old with man below?
Say, do ye look from sinless purity
On this illumined atom in the sky,
And ask in wonder--"Arms he not for war?
Is not the Almighty's dread right hand laid bare?"
Or watch ye, in this planet hung in space,
A type of mercy, with its rebel race,
To show--while wondering worlds adoring prove,
The mighty mystery of redeeming love?

All vainly the exacting soul desires
To light her little taper at their fires,
And with the stars of Heaven find fellowship;
Struggling 'gainst fate, with curious eye to dip
Into the gloom beyond, and feast her eye
On the sealed volumes of her destiny;--
Night's azure folds by fancy's vision ta'en
As wrappages of time to curtain in
Her petty span of being; and her stars
Nought save the mystic, written characters
Of the eternal pen; there fixed to trace
The unborn secrets of time's dwelling place!
In you, ye infinite realms of mystery
And beauty and perfection, may the eye
Read other lessons, find a different tongue,
A power, and mighty melody of song,
Hymning of God's perfections, of his love,
And of the calm, bright destinies that move
High o'er the petty waves that time upthrows,
On-leading to perfection as its close.
Did the lost Pleiad your bright circle leave,
Ye lovely sisterhood, that we should grieve
But over some air castle toppled down
By man's ambition?--Or for worlds o'erthrown,
And from the eternal eye of God outdriven
In your far-distant battle-field of heaven?
The prophet, wrapt in ecstasy sublime,
Saw, while in Heaven was silence for a time;
But the wrapt eye beholds a world destroyed,
And gazes in the heavens on a void,
Annihilation's reign begun, where stood

A field of sentient beings once called good,
O mystery of mysteries! a blot
On the pure sky; a world by God forgot,
A sun that once had being, and is not!

Thus be the soul's communion with each star,
Catching in awful vision from afar,
As on their rolling cars she rides,
A glimpse of the vale of light that hides
The Deity. The comet sweeping by
Hurrying her far into infinity,
Or, bound within his narrower rule, may run
Through the far-stretching empire of the sun;
With Jupiter outspeed his swiftest spheres,
Or slowly pass the term of fourscore years
In traversing the limits where extends
The solar rule, where Georgium Sidus stands
As outward sentinel in this bright tent;
One in the gorgeous field, whose vast extent
Glitters through all its lines with countless such;
Or spuming, while yet further off she snatch
Glimpses of glory far transcending these,
Speed where the Polar Star her silent watch
Keeps in the north, or to the Pleiades,--
Or bright Orion! fancy's visions catch
Tongues in the brightest stars that nightly blaze;
But, waking what are we? and where are they?
Their solemn march unchangingly they keep,
Through time and space, on through infinity,
While we, but atoms in the mighty deep,
Waifs, whose existence,--save the Almighty eye,--
None in these multitudes of worlds discern,
Hug the fond fancy that our destiny
Is linked with theirs!

Thus, wandering thoughts return
Back from their wildest flights; we learn at length
The fitter lessons of humility:
Return then welcome rest! our waning strength
Asks for renewal, 'while we think we die!'
And, in the mightiest efforts of our thought,
Prove but His vast and all sustaining power,
Who called us into being out of nought;
And whose beneficence now draws once more,
Around a slumbering world, the robe of night,
And curtains up the couch where weary man
Seeks restoration from perpetual blight;
The refuge, whose impartial portals can

The refuge, whose impartial portals can
Exclude alike both anguish and delight:
Where his fierce foe assumes benignant rule,
And in his arms, unconscious of strife,
He passes through the grave's dark vestibule,
Snatching, in Death's embrace, the source of life!

THE SOUL, TO THE POET.

A Poet, wandering alone,
Thus conversed 'twixt his soul and him!--
"This life is but a sickly dream,
Oh soul, say wherefore should it seem
So woe-begone?"

Whereat the soul, "Hast thou a sense
Of infinite power to penetrate the shell,
And read what clear benevolence doth dwell
Enshrined within the rudest cell
Of coarse pretence?"

"Hast thou a spirit-lyre,
All strung with chords, down to the deepest note
That vibrates sympathy with earnest thought,
Which yet thou would'st untune to dote
O'er one shrill wire?"

"Nay soul! I stile this life
Only a bitter worthless dream,
With rotten kernels rife, that dainty seem,
And friendships colder than the pale moonbeam,--
An aimless strife!

"I only say it is a time,
God gives this being, to express
By eloquence of mute distress
Its own exceeding worthlessness,
That he may climb

"To elevated sense of Him
Who, calmly, in the eternal fold
Of the all present future, yet untold,
Scatters existence manifold;--
There Seraphim,

"And th' unfallen Archangel there;
While here a grave is thinly covered
By daisied sod, and death-o'erhovered,
And, save by poet's eye discovered,
Grief every where!

"So dull, alas! is every sense,
By all uncared, my spirit, steeping

In sensibility, is keeping
A wailing ward o'er dreamers, sleeping
In dread suspense."

"Oh Poet, hath thy fancy's play
No greater aim for thy ambition,
Than wailing o'er a life-doomed mission,
Urged to a goal of such perdition,
Thy miserere?

"Hast thou this gift divine
Only to pierce the church-yard sod,
And see beneath, a loathsome clod;
This life-defacing work of God,
The goal of Time.

"The poet had a sense
Of his prophetic mission, in old time
A dim foreboding of a power to climb,
And use, as wing for upward flight sublime,
His influence.

"The old homeric spirit
Bowed in brave lowliness before the shrine
Of Virtue deified, and could assign
Elysian honours, by a right divine,
To suffering merit.

"The spirit of thy time
Crucifies suffering on the anointed rood
Of holy sacrifice; and, Truth withstood,--
Deifies Pleasure as the highest good
Towards which to climb."

"Nay soul, thou dost me wrong,
The burden of my saddest wail
Tells Life her search for happiness must fail,
And bids her aim at the Unsearchable
On pinion strong.

"Have not I sung before,--
'As an expiring taper is life's breath,
That for its scanty oil a brief hour chaseth
Spasmodic wise, around the socket death,
And is no more?'

"Have I not made each string

Quiver to the instructive measure,
Life is no theatre for pleasure,
'Tis but the garner of a treasure,
 Death's pilfering?

"Nay soul! with sense most keen
Of mutability, my lyre hath striven
To catch the soul, from every life-hold driven,
And lift its longings after life to heaven,
 The life divine!"

"Thou hast! and in this wise
Hast made me but a mockery of being,
Me gifting thee with boundless vision, seeing
Life only given for the eternal dreeing
 Of the death guise!

"Oh Poet, hath the holiness
Of thy prophetic mission lost its power,
That thou should'st fling aside God's dower
Of infinite vision, scanning but this hour
 Of lowliness?

"That thou should'st chain me
Down to the wormy dust, thou seest full
Of life's once sentient vestibule,
Striving from the eternal beautiful
 Thus to detain me!

"That thou, the many-stringed,
The many-toned poetic lyre,
Would'st 'minish to one shrill monotonous wire,
Quenching in melancholy dirge heaven's fire,
 So lambent winged.

"Wouldst thou thyself but try
All rev'rently to sound the deepest note
Of my strung chords, such majesty would float
On thy still ear, as the earth dreameth not
 In minstrelsy.

"Knowest thou whence I am?
God made a thing of fearful mystery;
Thy wondrous body the eternal eye
Beheld, called good, and thence from Deity,
 Himself breath came.

"Look thou but through me,
Thou lookest on the thing that looks on God;
His footsteps are around thee, yet abroad
Thou wanderest blind; Him rightly understood
Thyself shalt see.

"What is thy mission here?
Hath not God reared a temple choir in me,
Enshrining there the beautiful to be
The object of thy heart's idolatry,
Holy in fear.

"And if this time-life be
An emanation from the Eternal One,
It cannot be, when its far goal is won,
A pilgrimage so wan and woe-begone
As thou would'st see.

"Yet in that do'st thou well,
Warning against the chase, whose hope bereft her,
Shall see her goal expire in hollow laughter;
A happiness that hath not an hereafter
Of which to tell.

"Is happiness thy aim?
Then wherefore sigh, though thee it visit not?
Theirs an unenviable weal I wot
Who call this bubble breath of time their lot,
This empty name!

"Is fame thy vainer prize?
Complainest thou that thy soul's flower doth wither,
Breathing, unheeded by the world, such treasure
As doth transcend its meed in infinite measure
Of sacrifice?

"Or that thou dost delight
A dull ear, with a tale of deepest beauty,
Yet pinest for reward for thy proud duty,
Sharing with charlatans,--strange incongruity,
Popular slight?

"O Poet! doth the teacher
Ask for infantile reckoning of merit?
Doth he complain that they should disinherit
From the applauding voice the keening spirit

from the applauding voice, the naming spirit
Of Beauty's preacher?

"And if they should not even
Strew unavailing wreaths on thy turf heap,
Will a high judging God less measure keep?
Or will the lowly daisy fail to worship
Where thy rests given?

"O spirit that doth dwell
A mystery within the poet's soul,
O'er whom great thoughts from the Almighty roll,
Broad-sighted visions of the whole,
The ineffable!

"Hast not, in thee, a sense
Of an enduring power that reigneth there?
An infinite will to bear and to forbear?
A wide, unbounded, still increasing sphere
Of sufferance?

"Knowledge thou seekest here,
All knowledge covetest, in every mood;
The Infinite by the finite understood,--
Could it be,--call'st thou this thy highest good
With men to share?

"What, if thou know not God?
Him as he is revealed, a God above
The dreadful majesty of heathen Jove,
Transcendant in the majesty of Love?
Him understood,

"Then shalt thou reverence Death;
Nor teach, that God's anointed minister
Over life's harvest-home of being, here,
Doth only shadow in a just despair
The voice it hath.

"Such did not he, who came
A minister of infinite light to us,
Of infinite truth, of infinite holiness,
Yet only won an infinite perfectness,
Suffering shame!

"Needs must it be that he,
On whom the weight of the world's guilt was laid,

Should be the Captain of Salvation, made
Perfect through suffering; no shade
On heaven's purity!

"Wipe away from thine eyes
These films of the world's dross, that hover o'er
Heaven's lambent flame, strike away from the shore
Into the deep, thou shalt be conqueror
By thy self-sacrifice.

"Self--self thou knowest not;
Expand until thou fill thy world-wide sphere;
Of God thou art; knoweth He here or there?
Love infinite aboundeth every where,
Self all forgot!

"Is it not high reward
If thou art chosen for the sacred one,
Who, as for lesser natures to atone,
Shall tread the path of suffering alone,
As thine accord?

"Lowly bend down and drink,
Drink deeply of that cup, though it be bitter,
Would'st thou not willingly be found a sinner
Patiently at Truth's fount until it glitter,
Kissing the brink;

"Until its calm depths stir
At thy enduring, long spent tarrying,
And, rising, wrap thee in its covering,
Baptising thee for holy minist'ring,
Truth's utterer!

"Then shall that body be
A holy temple consecrate to me,
Me consecrate to thee, and me and thee
One conduit whence the infinite purity
Shall well out free!

"Then shalt thou understand
This sacred garment of thy fleshlyness,
Then shalt thou find its chrysaline hopes express
A mystic beauty in the loathsomeness
That thou didst brand.

"Then shalt thou see in all
The works of the dear God, a purifying
Through suffering up to strength, aye signifying
This the path for the spirit's dignifying,
For the immortal.

"What though thy longing eye
Witnesses through me far off lights, that shine
Luring thee with a beauty all divine,
After which thou dost here so vainly pine
Desiringly.

"What tho' thy sealed lyre
Hath found alone a maimed voice to utter;
Thy work is not against the bars to flutter,
And leave thy song in inexpressive mutter
To expire.

"Life's a progressive thing,
Life finite, and life infinite; see thou
That to the utmost reach of thy sealed vow
Thou aimst up through the check'd scale given thee now
Proudly to sing;

"And from the place thou win'st
At the hour when thy finite Lyre is broken,--
So there be found no truth by thee unspoken,
Nor one withheld of which thou hadst the token,
As thou upspring'st;--

"Even from that upward shrine,
On which thy throbbing wing is folded over,
While the last earth-note on thy Lyre shall hover,
Even from that height, shalt thou beyond discover
One more divine.

"One God for thee attained,
For thee, through Him, found worthy; there thy voice
Shall know no passionate struggle in its choice
Of theme, but on untiring wing's up-poise
Thy aim hath gained.

"But here be it thy meed
Aye to behold the Deity express
Beauty self-perfecting in lowliness,
And wear thy wreath with a proud cheerfulness
And even tread:

And ever read,

"Till thou the goal hath won,
When thou far soaring on the limitless sweep
Of the soul's wing, hath through the infinite deep
Traversing, found all lapt in beauty's sleep,
Press on! press on!"

WITHERED WILD FLOWERS.

Wander, ye memories of the past, thought's shreds,
Stark with the ghosts ye freight of dreamt reunions,
To make vain restitution to the dead!
Like wilted flowers, adrift with quickening life
For other lives, though lifeless for their own;
And odorous breath, more exquisite than life.
Speak in the sighing of your carrier winds,
Yet very softly, as to baby ears:--
Hast heard no whisper, in thy weary travel,
Of any dawn? O flowers, if Winter be
As passionate as ye say, and bitter keen;
Be sure he hears the footsteps of the Spring!

I.
WITHERING FLOWERS.

No more! O never more
Shall ye scent the air
With your fragrant breath,
Your sunny life is o'er,
And your winding-sheet so fair,
Winter spreads o'er the green turf, where,
Withering, ye sweetly lie, in the arms of Death!

No more! O never more
Shall the lark, his quivering wing
Stoop, till he sip your dew,
Or the bee for his store
To your fragrant chalice cling,
Distilling sweets for his winter's revelling;
Death shall alone alight, your leaves to strew.

No more! O never more
Shall the sister band
Of the petal'd rose,
Join in a group to cluster o'er
And bend with the breeze, all hand in hand,
As each blushing cheek by the breeze is fanned,
Wide scattered ye lie for your last repose.

No more! O never more
Shall the early friends--
Life's bloom in spring--return,
They upon whom warm hearts set store,
They on whom silent memory tends
And o'er their tomb with affection bends,
Their bloom is all withered, their leaves death-torn.

What would we? What would ye here,
Dear yearning hearts
And withering flowers?
Ye tell us of an eternal sphere,
A land where the chill frost never smarts,
Where love, from the loved one never parts;
Whose flowers ever bloom in unfading bowers.

II. THE ROSE-BUD.

How vividly bright at times appears
The long lost scenes of early years,
As though memory were embodied then,
And sought a home in the soul again!
One happy scene of Infancy
I now remember vividly,
When I stood, on a lovely autumn eve,
With a young and merry company
Around our mother's knee;
A sabbath eve,--and our thoughts were led
To Him who, victor from the dead,
Arose to-day; then taught to weave
Our artless words in lisping prayer;
A rich deep flow of love was there,
Intensely tender, no austerity
Taught the young heart hypocrisy;
No bigot zeal infused its poison there,
To make the God of Love a source of fear;
But gentle as that hour, and as her love,
Tender and yet profound,--so was each thought,
"Father of all, who dwell'st in heaven above!"
Such was the God our infant minds were taught:
And, proud since then as thoughts and hopes have been,
Gladly I would exchange the proudest now,
For the pure simple feelings of that scene!
Would that we could erase these furrowed lines,
 Passions and sorrow's signs,
 Deep graven on the brow,
And be again that which we once have been!

Fearless then we weaved
 Each childish thought,
Led by her cheering glance
To give our simple fancies utterance,
 A speedy answer sought:
And confidently looked from her, at once,
Ready solution; whom we then believed
Possessed all knowledge, and in whom our trust
Was as implicit, as succeeding years
Have proved thro' all the hateful jealous fears
That time corrodes us with, its source was just!

Well I remember some thoughts of gloom,

As I marked a rose's fading bloom;
"Mother did I not hear you say
That no flowers would in Eden fade away?
But the rose-buds dear Mother, I love to see
Which you said, I remember, resembled me;
Would the lovely rose-buds, do you suppose,
Each spread its leaves to a full blown rose;
For I'm sure I would not love to see
A garden where no pretty buds would be!"
Kindly she pressed my infant brow,
What was her answer I know not now,
But love surpasses oblivion's spell,
And that look of love I remember well!

And where is that happy circle now?
Has sorrow dimmed each bright young brow?
Alas! the tears of some have mingled
O'er the grave of others death has singled,
One sod now wraps the dust of three
Of that gay and joyous company;
The long grass sadly waves above,
But their ransomed spirits the lesson prove,
That the God of Heaven is a God of love!

III.
THE FLOWER UNBLOWN.

Lay her all gently in the mould,
O wherefore mourn her gone?
How could so fair a flower unfold
In the soil Death trod upon?
Why o'er the daisied hillock weep?
Dreamless and sweet is our baby's sleep.

O fragrant as the south wind's breath,
That dreams in the leafy trees,
With the violet's kisses, all faint to death--
Are her storied memories.
Dear Lord, thou hast beckoned our darling hence,
Teach us therein love's recompense.

IV.
THE HOLLY.

ON SEEING A TOMB DECKED WITH HOLLY IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY--
CHRISTMAS, 1838.

We wreath the holly and twine the bay,
Again to welcome that sacred day,
When, to Bethlehem's shepherds, the angels sung.
And with loud hosannahs the heavens rung;
 When the angelic choir
 Struck each celestial lyre,
And sounded o'er Judea's plain
The advent of our Saviour's reign.

But see where each pillar and fretted wall
Proclaims the Christmas Festival,
The holly mingles its verdant bloom
With the marble cypress that decks yon tomb;
 As though the silent dead
 In Christ our living head
Rejoiced, and in our cheerful lay,
Hailed their Redeemer's natal day.

And join not they, when the vaults prolong
The notes of our triumphant song?
'Tis the worthiest wreath for a Christian fane,
It tells us, as we sing, of a louder strain
 Sung to the Lamb who bled
 And suffered in our stead;
When the glorious host of saints on high
Adore the incarnate Deity.

Loud as the angelic anthems rise,
They join the chorus of the skies;
And high o'er all His triumphs swell,
Who crushed the power of Death and Hell:
 Let then around the urn
 The festive bows be worn,
The slumberers here in Christ shall rise
And join the chorus of the skies.

V.
THE IVY.
TO C---- R-----.

Hark! 'tis her funeral knell!
 Another guest
 Gone to the bridal feast,
Obedient to her dear Redeemer's call!
Undismayed by the awful gloom,
Entering the portals of the tomb,
Whose solemn earnest of eternal rest
Ushers her to the mansions of the blest,
And bids us, o'er this stormy waste,
 Look for swift reunion,
 When following those now gone
On through the grave,
Fearless we wade in the threatening wave,
Leaning on him who brake its power,
And strengthened her soul in that awful hour.

Thus Time and Life make note,
 Time throws his shadow o'er life's dial stile,
With deep cut scar that may not be forgot
 He graves the hour, pointing to it the while,
And sternly whispers, in each passing breath,
The only certainty in Life is--Death!

VI.
THE SNOW DROP.
TO B---- L-----.

Frail flower of earth, in purity
Spring's earliest snow-drop emblems thee;
Transient and lovely, a fragile thing,
But born for the hour of withering,
The hectic rose on thy fair young cheek,
Lovely as the setting sun
That smiles despair on the sinking wreck
Where hope is already gone;
That fearful blush that seems to tell
Of a jubilee 'mong the hungering worms,
To feast on one of earth's loveliest forms;
That gentle flush that speaks hope's knell,
And tells--this fair flower for a moment given
To earth, must bloom in its native heaven.

VII.
THE BUD UNBLOWN.

My Babe, wert thou entranced
Amid the burning row of Seraphim
That sing the songs of Heaven?--
That thou but glanced
An all too lovely dream,
Bright as the flaming levin,
Lovely as bright! then swift returned
To take thy station near the throne!
Words cannot tell, my child!
My gentle lamb! how my heart burned,
To clasp again my beautiful, my own!
Oh an thou couldst have smiled,
But one--one last farewell!
That image of thy dull and sunken eye,
The icy chillness of that final kiss!--
Indeed, indeed, thou wert not then, my Anne!
Nor this world mine, nor I myself to be
Ever what I had been; the dream of bliss
Broke bitterly, and I arose a man,
Thy memory in my soul!
I speak not of thee, yet art thou with me
In thoughts too deep for tears,
The everlasting star of memory's goal!--
I would I could, for she
Who bore my babe, oft peers
As fathoming my thoughts of thee,
And thou art with us then,
My blessed one; thought falters
The tongue, yet silently
The tears of love combine;--
Tears thou might'st share within thy happy home;
For memory, faithful aye
To the dear pledge, hath left no bitterness
To dash such thoughts with gloom:
A star in the deep blue of memory
That shineth clear, and ever in its place!

VIII.
DEATH'S BRIDAL WREATH.

Flowers fade, friends fail,
As mightiest empires fall,
Around the cradle is the wail
Of mourners;--and the pall
Jostles the marriage throng;
The corpse in its vestal livery dress'd,
Alone assumes an unchanging vest;
The bridegroom Death, by sov'reign right
Claiming as his the bridal white:
Robed in their shrouds, as each is called,
He holds enthralled
The hoary patriarch, the fair, the young,
The vast, the countless generations gone;
Life holds, and feebly holds but one.

IX.
A LILY CROPPED.
THE CHRISTIAN'S DEATH-BED.

Enter not lightly! Know ye not the place
Where ye would tread upon is holy ground!
Angels attend, the messengers of Grace,
Minist'ring to a dying Christian there;
A soul is hovering on Eternity;
And in that little shrine events unfold
Angels in highest heaven with joy behold,
And for which God assumed humanity;
A Monarch, too, is there, with terror crowned;
And yet that frail girl calmly looks around,
Breathes undismayed her faint low voice in prayer,
Exulting hails that solemn hour draw near;
Welcome, O Death! My dear Redeemer, come
And bear from earth my longing spirit home.

X.
THE LILY OF THE VALE.

It rains! and thou dost sleep my babe this night
Under the turf;--I would it had been bright;
The wind is rising too, but let it rave,
Thou heedest not; within thy little grave
Thou sleepest among friends;--a blessed sleep;
Then wherefore sorrow? thou wilt never weep!
Though the wild winter rains above thee beat,
They cannot reach thee in that calm retreat
Where thou dost shelter; nor the bitterness
Of the world's wilder storms e'er dim thine eye
With tears, wrung forth in the unequal strife
Of this stern warfare! yet thy little life
Hath lightened many cares thou knewest not;
Nor though adversity forsakes my lot,
And all the bitterness of grief-wrung tears,
Fade in a brighter course of prosperous years,
Can the dear memory of thy prattling tongue
Grow dim, the bitterness beguiled to song,--
The hopeless agony thy infant play
From my prone soul had power to chase away.

XI.
THE WITHERED FLOWER.

The flowers o' the simmer time,
A' in brown-leaf shrouds are lying;
The nor' wind is swirling the driven snaw,
An' tossing the white flakes or e'er they fa',
To hide where a' lay a dying;--
But my flower is withered an' winna re-bloom!

The birks in the erie glen
Their leafless bows a' wide are tossing;
The sough frae the upland forest seems
As in wild faem a thousand mountain streams
Frae rock to den were crossing;--
An' my flower is withered and winna re-bloom.

The spring maun return again,
Opening the fresh buds o' ilka flower,
Drappin' the gowans o'er straith an' lea;
Buskin' wi' blossom ilk buss an' tree,
Blessing a' nature wi' walth o' dower;--
But my flower is withered an' winna re-bloom.

Till ance this waefu' world
Its last flowers a' withered, its ways a' toom,
An nought for a lap to the lanesome dying,
But the graves whar death's latest plenish is lying,
Steerin' to wake at the trump o' doom;--
Then my flower though withered shall again re-bloom!

XII.
THE ASTER.

"Thoughts from the visions of the night, when
deep sleep falleth on men." *Job* iv. 13.

A trance as of gristly death came fast
Across my throbbing brain.
Meseemed as the shuddering spirit cast
A longing look far adown the past,
Wherein all life's time was ta'en,
Then pass'd away in pain,--

In agony!--for the soul did clutch
At its clayey tabernacle;
Peering beyond, where the gloom was such
That annihilation seemed to touch
The soul, from each fleshly shackle
Shivered at the call;

And then methought the spirit seemed
In its loneliness to burn
For sympathy, in the waste where gleamed
No brother, but all horrible teemed
With gibing leer, that meseemed to spurn,
Then back to void return:

An atmosphere of amorphous life,
An agony of gloom;
As if annihilation's strife
Had peopled her horrid shades, all rife
With souls, that a vital sneer consume,
Dreeing their doom!

Methought then a rushing whirlwind lashed
The doom-sea whereon I tossed;
Swirling up through the gloom I dashed,
'Mid shrieking spasms, as though it crashed
Through sensate billows, a wailing host
Of spirits lost!

Then shivering into empty void,
Where Death himself seemed dead;
Is the very God not here? I cried,
As annihilation seemed to stride

On with me, in its dread
All silent tread.

Oh God, it was a blessedness
The angels cannot know;
My spirit swept on through the spiritless;
It waded upward, till 'mid the press
Of the blessed ones, who their crowns all low
Before thee throw!

The happy ones of heaven seemed moved,
Methought their anthems dumb;
A dweller in flesh, and all unproved,
Into the land of love, unloved
By yon throned One, from his home
Of earth had come.

Who wert thou, lovely one, that came
From out that startled host!
And named to me the holy name
The blessed ones give the Incarnate Lamb;
Till fear in my soul, all terror tossed,
Was in adoration lost?

My Anne! my child! it was a dream of bliss;
Bright angel thou art there!
In dreams might I foretaste such blessedness,
Again all vainly struggle to express
What ye blest spirits share:--
Silent is my despair.

My babe, beloved one, didst thou come down
From inconceivable realities;
Wert thou permitted--with my young life strown
With thorns,--and thou, so sweet a rose unblown,
The bitterest thorn; my closed eyes
To ope on Paradise?

Away these tears then! life is but the winding
Of the unreturning road;
Weeds tangle it, and pitfalls, thy reminding,
My blessed one, me urges to the finding
Of resignation, till I leave this load,
And, with thee, wake with God.

XIII.
LOVE'S WITHERED WREATH.

Stretched all his length upon a sunny bank,
A youth lay plucking at the flowers around,
The which he flung about in childish prank
Until half buried in the flowery mound,
Whose odorous blossoms littered all the ground;
And then in wayward mirth he strove amain,
All laughingly, the leaves to gather up again.

Then sitting down with staid and serious face,
He set himself to twine a rosy wreath;
Yet still inconstantly would join the chase
If chanced a butterfly to cross the heath;
Yet back would laughing come, all out of breath,
And set himself to task, with serious air,
His wreathed coronal of flowers to weave and wear.

And so time wended with the merry boy,
All through the changes of a summer's day;
Yet seemed the lonely revel not to cloy,
But still by fits he laughed and fell to play,
Then gravely platted at the flowers away,
Until, alternate daisy, brier, and heath,
He knit into a band, and crowned himself therewith.

Whereat he rose, and looked about him then,
Spying the lengthening shadows of the eve,
And seemed as one unconsciously o'erta'en,
And gathering up a bow and arrow-sheaf,
That lay half-buried beneath flower and leaf,
He turned him toward the sun's declining light,
And spread, in haste, his wings, prepared for homeward flight.

Then first, all stern and stark, there met his eye,
An aged man, that had been looking on,
At sight of whom he gazed full tristfully,
And snatched it off, and strove to hide his crown,
Whereat Death sternly claimed it for his own,
'Earth's flowers are mine!' he said, 'even Love's own wreath
Fades to a royal garland for the brow of Death!'

Upon whose touch, the flowers, as struck by blight,
Dropped from his hand, all withered to the ground,
Which Love picked up, and, weeping at the sight,

He smoothed the shriveled leaves, and waved it round,
Then clasped it to his breast, and, with a bound,
Sprung from the earth, and, soaring, heavenward flew,
While the dead leaves distilled such fragrant dew,
That all the air was filled with odours they outthrew.

XIV.
WILD WEEDS.

The storm is raving wild;
The snort of his charger's breath
Booms along; the flashing sheath
Of the lightning by his side he beareth,
Whose sheen through the low murk appeareth
As though it grimly smiled!
The trailing clouds on the horizon
Open, as though clenched teeth were shown,
Then clash, and, ha! the monster laughs,
Rattling down hail and dashing rain!
Hark, the welkin growls amain,
Re-laughing his laughter back again!

The ocean he lasheth to yeasty foam;
Winding the navies in her wave,
And dandling them above the tomb
Where millions find an uncrowded grave!
He strippeth the trees of the yellow leaf,
And dasheth through the skeletons,
Tossing and smashing till their groans
Wail like tormented souls, whose grief
Seeks, in complaining, vain relief.

The silly cattle are fleeing fast,
Cowering beneath the brawny oak
That invites the shivering lightning's shock;
The plough-boy from under his horny hand
Peereth along the scene, aghast;
Then urgeth his team o'er the furrowed land;
And, plunging through the raving brook,
Longeth for the ingle nook
Where the old white-haired villager,
With the timid youngsters cowering near,
Pauseth, at every flash, in his tale
Of the wilder storms he hath known
When he yoked the team, and plied the flail,
In the young days long gone;--
The wee birds cower among the trees,
And misery's homeless child,
Shivering in tatters on the wild,
Sin's bitter heritage--
Wild youth's bequest to age--
Perchance e'en now, all friendless, drees:--

And thou, my babe, that slept
So warmly sheltered on thy mother's breast,
My gentle one, so fondly kept
Within a mother's arms, in rest,
Guarded by love;--
Dost thou more stilly sleep
With the cold sheet of earth above,
In thy cradle so narrow and deep?

Alas! alas! the ploughboy will return
And whistle o'er the furrows with his team;
The drumly torrents of the roaring burn
Change to a brawling, silver stream;
Bright things return with spring,
But thou, my bright, my lovely one;
Of thee, what doth it bring,
But a new blossom to the weed hath grown
Above thy grave, unsown!

XV.
THE LAUREL.
J. M. R. 9th APRIL, 1844.

"God be with thee" I did say,
But he gently answered, "Rather
I would be with God my Father;
Bleakly dawns earth's brightest day,
Oh, I long to win my manumission, and to be away.

"From this earth to be away,
How my weary spirit panteth!
Fleshly tenure spirit daunteth;
Soul to dust doth answer, nay!
Oh, to be unclothed from this clammy robe of clay!"

"But thy battle field's before thee,
Thou art only yet in training;
Armed now go forth for gaining
In some fair field victory;
Laurels thou shalt win and wear triumphantly!"

On the wreath he turned to gaze;
Passed a finger o'er each leaf,
Then said "Its losing costs small grief;
The amaranth, methinks, its worth outweighs:
It feeleth me but cold, this earthly meed of praise!

"Besides, it seemeth me scarce meet,
Each soldier wrangling for some crown;
Sufficeth it, one Captain of renown,
Treading our foemen beneath conquering feet,
Hath won for us the wreath, and for ourselves doth wait.

"It were indeed a noble ministration
Of such a Conqueror to sing,
Whose glory consecrated suffering,
Whose conquest is our earnest of salvation,
Whose suffering was itself a world-won consecration.

"But here I vainly seek to sing,
Methinks there doth beseem to me
Needed an atmosphere of purity
Whereto no breath of earthliness shall cling;
Wherin the spirit can endure for ever on the wing."

Aye, too-late valued friend!
Even then seen, like a sun,
Dimly, through impure mists that run
Upon the course, that to pure noon doth tend;
Thou, toward a cloudless day, on willing wing didst wend.

Yet not all mute he went;
Some broken strains were given,
Prelude to the unbroken ones, in Heaven
He singeth now;--pure, heaven-significant;
Ah, how surpassing now his song of adoration jubilant.

This done, he turned and eyed
The spread feast of world-blandishment,
Then said, "To go from thee I'm well content,
Time's things perchance may charm when purified."
And so, in smiling sweet farewells to all, he died.

Quitting earth's hopes to be,
As was his better choice, the rather
With God; and so found grace to weather
Bravely time's shallow shoals; into the sea
Of his God's infinite love, sweeping triumphantly.

NOTE.

The small piece called "The Aster," as well as the above, have been suggested by an exquisite Poem, which I hope yet to see published, entitled "The Trance," the work of a very dear friend, who died at the early age of twenty-one, too early for fulfilling the promise he already gave of the rarest qualities of true genius; though the writings he has left stand in no need of the apology of their author's years.

THE WRAITH BRIDAL.
A BALLAD.

PART I.

"Light down, light down, Lord Edward, I pray;
And let our parting be done;
For what would proud Lady Margaret say
To her vassal wedded son?"

"Now light ye down frae your bonny steed,
And let this our parting be;
For bluidy I trow is the Roslyn bed
For a maiden o' low degree."

"Na, get ye up, my bonny bonny Maye,
Nor fear for my mother's frown;
An' ye's be a gallant Earl's ladye
Or e'er the sun gae down.

"An' ye'll be decked wi' gowd sae brave,
To tread in Roslyn ha;
An' shine my bride, out o'er the lave,
The fairest o' them a'."

"But lippen still, my lord Edward dear,--"
"I'll lippen to nought enow,
My steed's maist swift, an' my Maye maist fair
In braid Scotland, I 'trow.

"The priest he bydes at St. Mary's Kirk,
That sall buckle my ain sweet Maye;
Say ride ye now; an', afore it's mirk,
Ye'r my ladye for ance an' aye."

"Stay, Edward, Lord Edward; my heart is sair,
An' winna be bidden gay;
For I dreamt yestreen that we met ance mair,
But only to part for aye.

"I dreamt when we met, ye'r bright blue een
Looked siccar and kind as now,
But e'er we parted, their light was gane,
An' the flesh frae ye'r chapless mou'."

"Hout tout, hout tout, my Maye sae dear,
Let the wise woman rede ye'r saye:"
"Na, na, Lord Edward; the woman I fear
Is ye'r mother, that proud Ladye!"

"An' aye as I dream o' ye'r bonny steed,
An' my lover, wi' look sae glad;
Its milk-white sides are a' smeared wi' bluid
An' its rider in shroud yclad;

"Sae this night, alane maun my ain dear ride,
An' I'll byde a maiden still;
For wae wer't if are sae warned to byde,
Would nae fend her ain lover frae ill."

"Mount up wi' speed, an' let's quickly ride,
Or the gloamin' maun eke our flight!
An' fear na Maye, that Lord Edward's bride
Will dream sic anither night."

"Oh bid na me ride this night at least,
For my heart is dool an' wae;
An' again our Ladye I'll pray to bless't,
An' the morrow I'll surely gae."

"Sair, sair am I loath to leave my bride,
But the morrow it e'n maun be;
Sae byde ye for what the morn betyde,
That sall make ye my gay ladye."

"Now blessings gae wi' my ain Edward,
An' light be his heart an' ha';
But muckle I dread, the kirk-yard sward
Is the dool that will befa.'

"An' what were a ladye without her lord,
Though in silk an' gowd a' clad,
Or waefu' bride wi' her lover cauld
In the moul's o' the kirk-yard laid."

He has lighted down frae his milk-white steed
An' gripped her lily hand;
An' a bonnier couple, I trow, to meet,
Ye would seek for in braid Scotland.

They hae parted as only lovers part,
An' swiftly he's sped awa';
But sair's the forboding that wrings her heart,
An' bitter the tears that fa'.

PART II.

She has been sin' the sun, frae the lift sae heigh,
Has wan to the gloamin grey;
She has watched until the moon, frae laigh,
On the crown o' the pine-taps lay.

An' sair I trow was her leal, true heart,
An' aft, wi' a tear she'd say,
"Oh, Edward, dear! did we yestreen part
To be parted for ever an' aye?"

Yet she byded still, till the mirk midnight,
Though the moon o'er the trees gaed down;
An' aye as she listened, she'd try to light
Her heart wi' some gleesome croon.

But just as the mirk night's noon was come,
She kent her ain lover's tread,
An' eftsoon she spied through the murky gloom
The glint o' his milk-white steed.

"Now mount ye, mount ye, my Maye," he said,
But wow, he was pale an' wan;
"Oh tell me what waefu gate ye gaed,
An' what dreesome wierd's befa'n?"

But, "mount ye! mount ye!" was a' he said,
An' she's mounted an' aff they flee;
But caulder aye, as they onward rade,
Did her lover seem to be.

"An' whar ride ye sae swift, Edward?
An' why so late at e'en?"
But never another word she heard,
But "Whar ye s'ould yestreen."

An' on they rade, and still rade on,
Till they cam' to St. Mary's Quire;
But I trow the kirk through the mirk night shone
As though it had been afire!

"Now light ye down, my Maye," he said,
"For here maun our bridal be,
But ye'll match na sicken a bridal bed,
I trow, in Christendie!"

He's ta'en her aff his milk-white steed,
An' into braw Roslyn's aisle;
But waesome an' wild is the shriek she gied,
An' her bonny cheek deadly pale.

For weel she saw 'twas nae earthly light
That shon frae each fretted wa',
O'er weel she kent, frae what met her sight,
St. Clair's proud heir lay low.

A' bluidy, smeared in his leal heart's bluid,
Whar his bride s'ould been yestreen;
An' a' bluidless, beside the weel-lo'ed dead,
Was fand the fair Maye lain.

Ladye Margaret had sworn they souldna meet,
An' bluidy's the byde she's ta'en;
But true to the tryst his Maye had set,
His Wraith to its keeping's gaen.

They've laid thegither in holy Roslyn,
As they fand, the dead-wed pair,
But still when a chief o' St. Clair is gane,
In Roslyn is seen that glare.

AMBITION.
WRITTEN DURING ILLNESS.

"Thou hast a charmed cup, O, Fame!
A draught that mantles high,
And seems to lift this earth-born frame
Above mortality!
Away-----."

HEMANS.

"Thy brother Death came and cried
Would'st thou me!
---And I replied,
No! not thee!"

SHELLEY.

Fame tossed a bauble of glittering glass
'Mong a set of enthusiast fools;
With sanguine hopes, we join the chase,
And lose uncared, in the mad'ning race,
 Health and life, while the passion rules;
But sickness and suffering's sharp embrace
 The glowing ardour cools.
Oh God! it is a fearful thing
To feel the touch of Death's chill fingers,
As his clammy clutch at the heart-strings lingers.

Sternly aroused from dreaming,
And, as hope's visions fade in waking,
To feel the hideous phantom's breaking
The chords where life is vibrating,
And the soul, though lingering,
From her fond delusions spring
And struggle to take wing.
Hence, horrible phantom! flee!
Life's flame burns strong within me,
I feel its tide flow full and free,
I want not to hie, with thee,
To the silent halls where mortality
Beholds the unveiled Deity,
And comprehends this fearful mystery.

I ask but a little while
Ere I quit this scene of toil,
I would not willingly resign
This work to other hands than mine;
Or that stranger hand should run
O'er what bright hopes begun;
Let but this work be done,
 And I will gladly follow thee,
And in thy eternal cells,
Where silence dwells,
 Smile that I am free.

MODERN FASHIONS.
IMPROMPTU TO A LADY.

Life's a bubble Death is breaking;
Earth's a nut that Time will crack;
He is his siesta taking
On the whirlwind's fleeting wrack;
But, believe me, lady fair,
Though the breath its breezes wear
Seems so bland, old Time is there;
Rested, he'll be swiftly back.

Death, most courteously discarding
Black-sweat, plague, and such old hacks;
His quietus is awarding
With the skill of modern quacks;
March-of-intellect made wise,
Time his curricule supplies
With steam-engines tandem ways,--
All the closer at our backs!

APRIL FOOLING.

When old Father Time, one April day,
As all the world knows, fell a napping,
Fun and Frolic by chance found him out as he lay,
And on his bald head, for a capping,
Whipt a fool's-cap and bells, that in jingling awoke
The busy old soul from dreaming
He had given Methuselah's jaws a poke,
And his first rotten tooth was claiming:
But the sober wight
Now in merry plight,
Resolved for once on a frolicking;
Took his glass from its stand,
Then shook from it the sand,
And as quick in its stead put some froth in.
But when Fun caught a few
Of the bubbles he blew,
She tossed them, and set the world after,
And the poking and racing,
The knocking and chasing,
Since have served her and Frolick for laughter.

Of all the bubbles that he blew
'Twere tedious the narration,
But, just to single out a few,
There's the bubble Reputation!
They crowd pell mell
Up Fame's steep hill,
And scramble each for station,
Gulping the bubbles from its rill,
Then sputter with vexation.

The froth another bubble blew
From old Time's soporism,
In whose pursuit a motley crew
In chorus raised the view-hallo,
The bubble Criticism!
Still as they chase the crowd increases,
A rare assortment of odd faces;
The purchaser of musty missal,
In wild pursuit now seems to pass all;
While hard behind, with nimble long limb,
See Van Daub's patron gaining on him;
Nor lags the genuine Antiquary,
When once its worth awoke to,

Who, oh rare gem! from Lethe's quarry
Has rescued Noah's cork-screw!
The owner likewise of Eve's glass,
Hairs from the tail of Balaam's Ass,
A primer that King King David's was.

And Solomon's school-book too!
"But, mark!" cries Fun to Frolick. "yonder,
Just as the bubble turns the corner,
A hero, armed with quill for lance,
And fitly mounted for the nonce,
Spurs on his goose to join the fray,
And bears the glittering prize away!"

But, not to wear your patience out,
'Tis said that Love's a bell too,
Thrown up by Fun to raise the rout
That in pursuit then fell to;
But this an error is no doubt,
The ring's shape may have given out,
Arising from its roundness;
For once within, 'tis soon found out
Its emptiness was groundless!
But since its shape is round no doubt,
An egg it rather must be;
And howsoe'er the WHITE turn out;
When dropt, ere scarce the mouth's about,
The YOKE proves oft times musty!

Besides all these, were found among
The drowsy carle's last bubbles,
A long array, at random strung,
To fit the gay with troubles;
The busy idler, now content,
May prove himself most wretched;
Nor fancied trouble need invent,
When Fun is by to fetch it;
Then from her gilded bubbles choose
The gaudiest you can borrow,
But this, my rhyme
Must tell, that Time
Sobered awoke the morrow;
Refilled his glass; resumed his watch;
And made, for those his bubbles catch,
A double tide of sorrow!

ANE LOVER'S ADRESS TO CUPID!

Most worshipful Dan Cupid, posture-master;
Prime dancer in the jig of life's third stage;
Physician; curer, without salve or plaster,
Of shattered hearts; and cooper of them faster
Than quacks' quintescent pufferies engage;
When swain's vile cobbling botches his disaster,
Thou art the rage!

Then, most unworshipful, jack-ketching slaughterer;
Heart-splitting pickpocket of mortals' wits;
Fixing vain victim's soul on some Eve's-daughter, or
Fair Jezebel; that jilts, and makes him waterer
Of lawn or silk, in fatal blubbering fits;
Vowing swift end in steel, or bowl, or halter, or
Like gift to Fates!

Thou coiner of mad rhymes for madder rhymer,
Yepeled sonnets to some mistress' eyebrow;
'Rainbow divine!' so long as such beau reign her
Puissant ladyship's heart's sole retainer;
'Most high and mighty arch,' until some sly bow
Most archly dropt, a new bowstring to gain her;
Then down as low!

Malicious Harlequin; curst roguish fellow
In motley suit; some pity spare for once,
For weary wight, in weeds beneath the willow,
For lack of poesie's sweet flowers to fill,--oh
Pray grin not at me; but now on the nonce
Just hit a sonnet off to Bella's eyebrow,
Shall win her glance!

She squints you know,--most hideously 'tis certain;
Most beauteously, I rather meant to say:
Her shoulder's humph to some might seem diverting;
But she has virtues, such slight things converting
To charms,--she's ninety,--may not live a day,
So pray now bid her,--(there is gold to gain:)
Just squint this way?

Why so disdainful, heart's love-heat diviner?
Would'st leave sad suppliant in despair to die?
Thou could'st, wouldst thou but favourably incline her
To squint sweet smile upon her hopeless piner:

What sayst?--thou'rt love's, not fortune's deity?
What other is my suit, but Cupid's serving, or
Cupid-ity?

IMPROMPTU.
TO A YOUNG LADY, ON TELLING A SECRET.

Miss Bess, in haste to sing thy praise
I point my pen anew,
And write in laudatory lays,
A judgment good as true.

Imprimis then, like curling smoke,
You're blown by every wind!
Or rather like the weather-cock,
To every whiff resigned!

Trust you with secret,--safe and sure
You vow silence profound;
Like water in a sieve, secure--
At least to reach the ground!

You keep the secret, sure enough,
So long as you meet no one;
But when you do, it comes out puff,
You prove a Perfect Woman!

PREFACE
TO A MS. VOLUME OF RHYMES.

A Preface! pray now be entreated,
Most gentle readers, to be seated,
 And be not such impatient;
You've seen the Title Page, have you?
Well, having asked, "How do you do?"
I should proceed to give a view
 And summary of Contents.

But stay! what does a Preface mean?
'Tis something sure, that comes between
 You and the sight you ask;
And, as a covering for the face,
Save when of thin transparent lace,
Was fitly called in Juliet's days,--
 So called we it--a mask!

For obvious is it, that some books
Give larger promise by their looks,
 To those who read the Reference,
Or Contents, as is named, a list
That occupies a page at least,
And half a dozen, at the best,
 The book distilled to essence!

Just so the Cockney's wondering eye,
At Greenwich Fair, or Bartlemy,
 Stares at the pictured Giant,
Enclosed within a caravan
That seems scarce bigger than his span,
And wondering, pays to see the man
 So huge, and yet so pliant!

Shagrined to find the monster tall,
Is nothing wondrous after all;
 This Gulliver so green,
To Lilliput now goes, and enters
Where, pictured small, his wonder centres,
For,--such the modesty of painters!
 The Dwarf can scarce be seen!

He pays, then sits and stares around him
Till Pigmy's entrance more confounds him,
 For now that he has seen 'em,

He finds a different cause of wonder;
"I see," at length says he, "my blunder,
"I looked to find their size asunder,
 "They've halved the odds between 'em!"

Just so, let me entreat you reason,
When in my Caravan you seize on
 Some Giant, rather small;
Just take whate'er you've fancied monstrous,
Then change my minus into plus,
And add it without further fuss;
 Why now, he's over tall!

This understood preliminary,
Just round the leaf you'll find the entry,
 Hark how the Lions thunder!
But should you think them liker Dormice;
And Dwarfs and Giants equal Pigmies,
My worthy friends, why bless your bright eyes,
 'Tis therein lies the wonder!

CONSEQUENCES
OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT AT VERSES, FOR A FLOWER WREATH
IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

FIRST CONSEQUENCE!

I would wreath thee a garland, fair lady, but say,
Shall I twine it of Holly or deck it with May?
Shall the brown tints of Autumn, or the glad ones of Spring
Be first in the offering of flowers that I bring?

Shall the Yew overshadow the Rose in its bloom,
With the Cypress, that silently tells of the tomb?
Or shall nought but is youthful and lovely combine
Their charms in the chaplet I twine?

Shall the Lily unite with the Violet to speak
How lovely . . . the meek?
Or the gaudy beau Sun Flower, the . . . Fleur-de-lis,
Perk up here their vulgar impertinence? Eh?

Shall the Bachelor's buttons . . . a hem! . . .
With Garlick and Rue ?
To prefer a Blue Bell to a Belle that is blue!
. bah! !!!

SECOND CONSEQUENCE!!

Flowers! confound the flowers!
Here have I for hours
Cudgelled my barren brain
In vain;
Roses rhymes with posies!
Of course it does, and noses,
And twenty other doses
Of sentimental stuff;
But, enough!
I'll quit the Muses;
I leave whoever chooses
To court the Nine,
And call divine
Such vixenish old shrews;
They'll help just when they choose;
You need not try to hoax them,
And just as little coax 'em
Here's a lady's invitation,
And she'll take no denial,
But I must try all
I can at a narration;
And so produce some sweet and pretty,
And very flowery little ditty,
And moreover, not over . . . witty!
But will the vixens aid me?
Hang them! no! they've played me
Nothing but paradoxes,
Say Jews will rhyme with Foxes,
And noses with snuff-boxes!
They've blurred my paper, twitted my rhymes,
And balked my measure a score of times;
But I'll have my revenge, a right good dose,
Though to gain it I tweak Urania's nose,
And take out the change in sober prose!

FINAL CONSEQUENCE!!!
ALBUMS.

Most classic reader, well you know
Album in Latin's WHITE;
A term therefore most apropos
For that with which young ladies go
An angling for a bite!

White-bait the term is meant to be,
As all but gudgeons plainly see;
And therefore, as the word's superfluous,
The owners wisely let it pass,
While with his goose-quill, many an Ass
Records as well's he's able;
With aid of pencil, brush and crayon,
The bites of sundry prizes they won,
With many a glorious nibble!

All hail! of Arts the patronesses,
Of Taste's proud temple the priestesses,
Upon your altars, to the Graces
And Nine, you oft have slaughtered
Your victims to appease their manes;
The sacrifice of course your gain is,
And greater, too, the more his pain is;
But of this have you ought heard,--
So far from e'er their wrath appeasing,
Are you while in your leaves your squeezing
Attempts wrung forth, by art of teasing
To anglers sly and able, known;
The Muses mourn their stolen treasure,
Filched, to procure for halting measure,
Crutches and props to hobble on!

Nay, worse than that, your not contented
To prop the mole-hills thus invented,
You make the Muses referees,
Taking the farthing change of wit,
No matter though't be counterfeit,
And pawn their jewels to novices.
A gemmed pig's snout, for empty lout,
To light him to seek wisdom out;
And like enough it is no doubt
Such wits should chance to find her out!

"But stay," says one, whose fishing tackle

Shows she despises minnows, mackarel,
And all such tiny small fry,
"Tis whales and sharks to catch I study,
And if your wit's at best but muddy,
Why we must try to clarify!
But you're, Sir, though so valiant turned,
As good at theft as we are;
Yourself among the jewels you've wormed,
Our pledges unredeemed have stormed,
And then to hide the plot you've formed,
Dissolved the theft in vinegar!"

PUCK.

Hark, away!
Wouldst fly with me?
Tread mid the maze of our nether halls,
Where the ruby's ray
And the blazing gaze of the diamond's eye
On the fairy revel falls?
Mortals! mortals!
That may not be!
The raftered roofs of the old oak halls
Rung, till each sculptured nook
With eldritch laughter shook,
When our airy train to the dais took,
And the feast was spread by our grammarie,
And the Baron repaid for our glee
By the old oak hall's festivity.
But not with me mortals,
Mortals not now with me;
Oberon still rules our halls below;
But, nor child of mid-earth now heeds our call,
Nor Christian Knight in our courts we see;
Nor our train, where the star-eyed dew gems glow,
Tread the wild maze of the Morris through;

I have lurked where the bat flitted stealthily
Round the eerie haunts of the olden time,
But I met, of our train not one,
But still when aloft on the deep night sky
The storm, wrapped in murky robes, would climb,
Then I haunt the waste alone:
Still, hither and thither I glance my light
To the wandering wight, who seeks the waste,
Till I hear his groan.
When the flash is gone, and the murky night
Blots out the star's last glint in haste,
Then rare is my mirth; such sport, I ween,
As is rarely seen on the dull mid earth.

But I've sought in vain, where the Oak boughs' shade
Our pavilion made in the forest fane;
Though the flashing brook still murmured on,
The hair-bell shook and the glow-worm shone,
And the wood's wild music around was heard
As the zephyr's breath through the foliage crept,
And kissed each trembling spray

Ill the folds of its rich green mantle stirred,
And awoke the soul of sounds that slept,
As it swept through the glade away,
And each whispered note was a voice that told
Where the fairies of old their revels sought;
I listened in vain for their bridles ringing,
I heard not ought but the wood flowers springing,
And the tender grass, as it drank the dew,
Sigh as the soft night-breeze stole through.

The Daisy opened its crimson cup,
And the Night-Stock breathed its rich fragrance up
In modest plaint of the sun's fierce glare,
Whose impassioned stare made her sweet voice faint.
But they greeted nought but the coy maid morn
That, methought, as she sought so curiously
Within each shady nook to pry,—
Seemed sadly to ask, "are the fays all gone?"
But she saw not ought but the dreaming bee,
Or the dragon-fly slumbering stealthily,
Or the butterfly lapped, where the fox-glove bell
Hung a rich tent for its nightly cell.
The sheep-dog's baying was far on the hill,
E'en the nightingale seemed to have sung her fill,
And but carolled a brief song, and then was still;
The glow-worm had slunk to the perfumed shade
That the clustered leaves of the violet made;
And e'en in the dreamer's enchanted scene
There was less of the wild grotesque, I ween,
Than Mab's elf-sprites should of old have seen.
So I dived again to the Diamond halls,
 Where the ruby's glow
And the emerald's ray still gaily falls
 To light, to light
Our eldritch mirth below;
And dull be the sprite that seeks for delight
In ought the wan moon can show.

EPISTLE TO A LADY.

MINE EXCELLENT FRIEND,

And light good correspondent,

A hint I've just got of no answer thus long sent
To a letter, my memory I think thus records,--
Its value transcendant, its length some ten words;
But though fingers of ladies may ache to indite
All the fancies that struggle just ready for flight
From their well practised goose-quill, as prompt now to wander,
As tho' still in pursuit of some gallant young gander.
Yet remember, I pray you, the day has gone by
When we dare on the fancies of goose-quill to fly;
For though ladies' kind hearts, and still kinder intentions
May discard the steel knib, worst of modern inventions,
As so stiff, harsh and cutting, but fit for love bolt,
For some clerk, or poor, starched, pedagogical dolt;
Too coarse and unyielding, too feelingless, fashionless,
Too pointed and sharp, yet too blunt and too passionless;
Yet we masculine bipeds, unfeathered I mean,
Lest so titled, the gander must needs be ta'en in;
We bipeds, I say, can so steadily amble
On a steel-knib, unfearful of fall, race or gambol,
That we dare not, believe me, take quill for our bay,
From the terror that with us 'twill gallop away.

Ah Ladies! kind Ladies! did you only know
All the cheek-blushing pangs bashful wights undergo,
When a sheet must be scrawled in reply to some witty
Fair Lady's epistle, then doubtless you'd pity;
Did you see how we hook for conceits in the bottle,
How despairingly sum up the whole scanty total,
How, poor souls, we discover, like the fly Æsop tells of,
Though much ink's thrown, with mighty fracas, by ourselves off,
Yet the clouds of conceit we've been busily raising,
Though fancied so wondrously worthy of praising,
Are more ink after all, nought but scribbling and blotting,
Goose gambols at best eked by scoring and dotting!
Then let charity plead while you sift each pretension,
And supply for scrawl-metre its kindest invention;
Let me hint, for example, a simple proposal^[1],
Whose use I shall leave at your future disposal
If my letters should prove (oh! most rare case of error)
Unbecomingly sprightly, not marked by due fear, or
Fitting, humble respect, then conclude, with kind charity
That the writer from ignorance mounted unwarily

And was dragged up thus far on presumption's steep mole-hill,
On the back of a hot-blooded, runaway goose-quill,
If the opposite error again you discover
The air of a sneak or a culprit or lover,
The last for a hang-dog look famed the world over;
Then conclude, my dear friend, with the kindness you've fame of,
'Twas a Pullet's wing furnished the faults you complain of;
If attempts to look wise, like a monk from his cowl,
Then be sure 'twas produced by the quill of an Owl;
If vanity glare from the page in high season,
With great self conceit, and a sad lack of reason,
'Twas but the mishap of the writer then, mark ye,
To have borrowed his pen from the Peacock or Turkey;
And to follow the hint, if its trifling, why then
'Tis plainly produced from the quill of a Wren;
If crowing, the Cock's; and the Pigeon's, if cooing;
If croaking, the Rook's; and the Turtle's, if wooing;
If ambitious, the Eagle's; if foppish the Jackdaw;
And the Mocking-bird's, probably, if je-ne-sais-quoi:
For what more might be named, to yourself I shall leave 'em,
Just as samples for all, let me beg you receive 'em;
Yet stay, there's one more I would still wish to mention,
A receipt to whose use I may claim some pretension,
As I might, but for modesty to the invention:--

Whereas lately you've fancied my answer was tardy,
'Twas but fancy:--against such mistake let me guard ye;
The answer,--for answer you certainly got,--
With a quill from the Bat's wing, I long since have wrote
With Invisible Ink, on to-morrow's blank book,
As you'll certainly find, if you carefully look,
'Mong intentions right good all secured in a parcel
By the tape of fair-promise, and indolence broad seal,
Then wrapped over all, for more sure preservation
With a plentiful folding of procrastination!
But one word, my good friend, ere you open the bundle,
There's surely some corner of it must be crammed full
Of letters you've purposed, nay, penn'd in your fancy,
But as yet undelivered as far as I can see:

For all such invisible letters and so forth,
Kind thoughts, good resolves, and choice gifts of the like worth,
I record here perception in full of their beauty
With my quill ('tis a goose's I take for the duty),
And beg--with most grateful returns for the treasure,
To have credit from you, for such deeds in like measure!
But now with John Gilbin's wild steed in my mind

But now with some Captives was steed in my mind,
With Phaeton and sundry more Squires of like kind,
I bethink me 'tis time to alight while I can,
As I fear I might fall, if my Pegasus ran;
So hoping for larger epistolar favours,
With duty and love I subscribe myself here yours
Without more ado,
Most faithful and true.

* * * * *

Bachelor's Hall, Smoakville,
Of our Maiden Queen, year third.

[\[1\]](#)

See "The Doctor."

SONNETS.

I.

Meseems, a form of beauty all divine,
Radiant with Heaven's own light, angelical,
Calls me, with voice most sweetly musical
And winning; wooing to the chase, as fain
To have me willing follower at her call,
And clasp me to that bosom, where doth shine,
As with the light for which I vainly pine,
The holy, radiant in the beautiful.
Dull soul, abandon the illusive chase;
Dost hope that purity with the impure
Will willingly unite, like kindred race?
Thy too ambitious aim is premature,
Strive thou, yet hope not that it shall be given,
Beauty divine shall be attained in Heaven.

II

I stood upon the world's thronged thoroughfare,
And saw her crowds pass by in eager chase
Of Bubbles, glistening in the morning rays,
While, overhead, methought God's angels were
With golden crowns, of which all unaware
They heedless crowded on in folly's race;
But yet methought a few were given grace,
With heavenward gaze, to aspire for treasures there,
All trustfully, as an expectant heir;
Through whom the soul shone, as the body were
But as a veil, wherein it did abide,
Waiting till God's own hand shall it uncover;
Oh God! that such a prize, in vain, should hover
O'er souls in nature to Thyselves allied!

III.

Great things were ne'er begotten in an hour,
Ephemerons in birth, are such in life,
And he who dareth, in the noble strife
Of intellects, to cope for real power,
Such as God giveth as his rarest dower
Of mastery, to the few with greatness rife;
Must, ere the morning mists have ceased to lower
Till the long shadows of the night arrive,
Stand in the arena; laurels that are won,
Plucked from green boughs, soon wither; those that last
Are gathered patiently, when sultry noon
And summer's fiery glare, in vain, are past:
Life is the hour of labour; on earth's breast
Serene and undisturbed shall be thy rest.

IV.

Poet, that wak'st an echo in the soul
That hides in clay, meseems thy mission here
Is not a solitary part to bear,
And weave thyself a wreath, as tho' the whole
Of thy clear melody did thence unroll
From out thy quivering heart, till it appear
Like heaven's own sunlight, to this lower sphere
A God-like largess, unrequited dole.
Thou rather art the consecrated herald,
Through whom the voices of thy time speak out;
Great inarticulate thoughts, all unparalleled,
Deep struggling in dumb souls, until unsought
Thou cloth'st the spiritual in visible sense,
And scatterest to all times thought's mighty influence.

V.

Earth, thou did'st wed the noblest of all time
When thou embosomed his immortal dust,
From hands unconscious of the awful trust,
Rendering thee Milton, with the hope sublime
That waiteth on the exit of the just;
O render back the gift; ambition's lust
Dulls the Poetic Lyre's responsive chime,
Else hath the pregnant Age a power that must
Wake its soul, inert as the marble block
Tarrying its life-breath from the Sculptor's stroke,
That doth concealed divinity uncover;
Such keen expectancy the times o'erhover,
As waiting but the touch of Genius' Lyre
To wake its dumbness into living fire.

VI.

Aspire, proud soul, nor think the utmost height
Of an attainable success is won;
Nor even that the mighty spirits, gone
With the bright past, in their enduring flight
So won their passage towards the infinite,
That they may stand on their far heights alone,
A distant glory dazzling to the sight,
In which all hope of mastery is o'erthrown.
No height of daring is so high, but higher
The earnest soul may yet find grace to climb;
Truth springeth out of truth; the loftiest flyer,
That soareth on the sweep of thought sublime,
Resteth at length; and still beyond doth guess
Truth infinite as God toward which to press.

VII.

Life's brief working day at morn is done,
Calm thou sleepest, dreaming of no wronger;
Thou hadst wings, but that the flesh was stronger,
And balked the soul's aspirings to be gone
Into thought's boundless deep; thy soul no longer
Yearneth, all bodiless to soar alone,
Counting earth's love too shallow to atone,--
Its bounds too narrow, for the spirit's hunger.
Now thy body, like a faithful maiden,
Bideth in its narrow bed, content,
Till God's angels, for its waking sent,
Come with bridal benedictions laden,
And the marriage of the soul shall see
Flesh alike assume an infinite purity.

VIII.

True love is lowly as the wayside flower,
That springeth up beneath the traveller's tread,
And lifteth trustfully its lovely head,
Content to bless therewith the passing hour;
Unheedful of the wealth of heavenly dower
It lavisheth upon a path bestead
With the coarse trafficking for sordid meed,
So it lie open but to sun and shower.
And love no less, with an unstinted hand,
Lavish to others, heedless of reward,
Deeming no sacrifice of self too hard,
So that, with fruitful arms outspread, she stand
Sowing around home's hearth her harvest treasure,
Heart's hoards of golden grain, showered down in affluent measure.

IX.

True liberty is still the birth of time,
And springeth up, for all that tyrants whet
Their pitiful ingenuity, to fret
The bud upshooting through the frosty rime;
That, for their pruning, doth the higher climb,
Spreading a leafy bower, wherein, elate,
The world shall yet rejoice, as consecrate
To virtues flourishing therein sublime.
Quit ye as men, be true then, who would fight
In this so holy cause; think ye a soul
Weighed down by beggarly lusts, can have a right
To urge God's ark of freedom to its goal?
They must be holy who're ordained to be
The high priests of a people's liberty.

X.

A pensive wanderer along life's way,
Pausing, irresolute which side to turn,
Was beckoned by a maiden to delay,
And with her lute to charm away the day
In pleasant dalliance, where a murmuring burn
Aimless, meandering, kissed the o'erhanging spray,
And lured, through flowering bank and mead, astray
Far from life's road beset with rock and thorn.
But as he turned to follow, sorrowing Love
In passing, softly whispered in his ear,
Nor looked behind; whereat he 'gan to move
As with redoubled speed, nor paused to hear
The charmer's lute, but with a resolute will
He bent his eager steps to climb the thorny hill.

XI

A gloomy cloud begirt me all around,
Wherein, when I had sought to penetrate,
Methought were steps ascending from the ground,
Whereon the cloud lashed with monotonous sound;
Rude iron seemed they, where my feet did grate
Harsh discord as I clomb the steps, inwound
By that murk pall, that as with ponderous weight
Opened on rusty hinge its sullen gate;
Whereon, in gloom enthroned, a spirit sate,
Presiding over mercenary toil;
Myriads of willing slaves around did wait
On his stern eye, as trading for a smile;
Yet at his feet, when I had gazed awhile,
Methought love sate, well pleased to consecrate their guile.

XII.

Farewell fond Lyre, to win thy mastery
I have not dared aspire, thee rather ta'en
In wayward moods, to soothe a passing pain;
Deep, incommunicable thoughts, in sigh
Across thy strings breathing wild minstrelsy;
A melody, as uncontrolled and vain
As when the wind æolian chords would try
In random sweep,--but how melodiously!
Bearing a gush of music as intense
As the deep blue it hides in, into night;
With as deep fervour,--would with, as keen sense
Of thy sweet voice,--I see thee quit my sight;
Oh Lyre, because world's care is taking me
So firm a hold, art thou forsaking me?

XIII.

Once more, and then forever to be free
From thy proud servitude, O Lyre divine!
From the ennobling path thou dost assign,
As earnest to thy lowliest votary,
Treading, all reverently, the path where be,
The foot-prints--nay the soul-prints of the free!
Ah, henceforth from thy soothing must I flee,
Nor at the bitter orphanage repine.
Come world's care, since Love be thy harbinger,
I'll give thee all the allegiance I do owe
To Love's dear mastery, thou shalt henceforth know
No heart-divided service; I shall wear
Thy livery, nor deem that badge a shame,
Home consecrates by Love's own holy name.

XIV.

But yet forgive if tearfully I say,--
Break thou fond Lyre, as thus I dash along
The strings that erst have lisp'd my heart's low song;
Where oft my spirit held unconscious play,
Until care's haunting brood would glide away
Beguiled of cruelty, thy chords among;
Break thou, and with thee many a passion strong
Whose liberty within thy sufferance lay;
The donjon wherein slumbering, earnest thought
Hath lain imprisoned, waiting till the token
Of thy responsive echos should be caught,--
Is locked, and thou the master key now broken
Hath made thereof their sepulchre; Oh spell!
Oh mystery of song; I bid thee sad farewell!

PARTING INTRODUCTION.

"He was not one of those persons who complacently suppose everything to be nonsense which they do not perfectly comprehend, or flatter themselves they do."

DOCTOR.

Life plies her busy pen; unceasing fills
Her varied page with rich emblazonment,
Her softest pencilings she invigorates
With boldest touch, then dashes o'er the whole,
And blots the leaves with pencil dipt in gloom;
Oft she begins a chapter, then, ere scarce
The heading has been writ, it is erased;
Her page invites the student to peruse,
Then changes while his interest's at its height,
Nor e'er returns; the motley interweaves
Its racy jest, with grave and saddest thoughts;
Smiles oft relax to tears; and deepest grief,
The anguish of unutterable woe,
Jostles with laughter; till the noisy mirth
Is drowned again in weeping: thus she plies
Her busy pen, and ever and anon
She drops her scattered leaves unwittingly,
Which Death picks up, and binds into a book,
Then seals, and writes his superscription there.
But where her title-page? It stands not there,
Upon the brow of infant innocence;
It offers not in gay and joyous youth,
Maturer manhood, or the waning eld;
The stone, that tells of virtues never known,
O'er which the sculptured tears of sorrow fall,
And mock the ashes, save by them unwept;
Keeps not a sterner silence as to crimes,
Than dawning life of that which is to come:
Could the fond mother, for her infant boy,
Trace out the index of his future years,
Unwise they might be, uncongenial to
The just designs of his Creator's will;
But, oh! how many a chapter would be changed,
How many a varied incident erased
And superseded by the golden tints
Of fond desire. Life's title-page is writ
In the revolving year, the changing sky

in the revolving year, the changing sky,
The ever-varying forest, and the flood;
All tell of change, a never-resting change,
Alas, too oft they speak in notes of woe;
A spring alternating in smiles and tears
Ushers the summer in, its brief bright hours
Wane into autumn, and its changing hues
Perish in winter's sterile cheerless blasts.
And where Life's contents? seek them in the grave;
Life has been striving for six thousand years,
And what has she produced? still as she sows
The grisly monster stands with sickle by,
He reaps and gathers in; and mouldering heaps,
The silent dust, the kindred earth we tread
Tells more of life, by infinite account,
Than living man; yet still the joyous sounds
Of revelry and mirth are heard betimes;
We've viewed our fathers' sepulchres so long,
We sport around them, heedless of the sight,
And thoughtless youth finds mirth in ridicule
Even of the halt decrepitude of eld,
To be himself again, ere long the butt
For others' jests.

But you admonish me,
Most gentle reader, nor in truth untimed,
My task should be to make mine own the theme,
And not the chequered volume life has penned;
To introduce the pages you peruse,
In courtly phrase, not lecture you the while;
'Tis pertinent; and yet, in sooth, good friend,
Pardon the writer if he must confess
His aim has been his pleasure, more than yours,
Life in his own experience hath proved
No masque for pleasure keeping holiday,
But earnest warfare, with keen weapons waged;
And if he hath beguiled it of a care,
The weight of thy displeasure may be borne
To please all readers was as little wished
As hoped; some with a kind and friendly gaze
At its contents, will close the book and smile,
Not at the author's wit, but at himself;
While others opening it, with careless glance
May read with interest, and return again
To seek new pleasure in the motley page.
Even as the postman's varied budget brings
Pleasure to many, hope deferred to some,

And deepest anguish at some time to all^[2];
We take the folded sheet, and eye the seal,
Turning it every way in hope to find
Clue to the author there; then baffled turn
And view again the superscription traced
In no remembered hand, till having thus
Puzzled and wondered, hoped and feared in vain,
We break the seal, and find, what had been found
As easily at first, and what perchance
May seem but dearly purchased by the toil.
Even so, these pages may excite desire
To open and peruse the mixed contents
The volume yields; till gratified, they deem
The labour lost. But, reader, you perchance
Would hint the Introduction's somewhat long;
Yet I would fain have far too high esteem
For any reader of a work of mine
Meant but for friends, than think that they would hold
Communion, save by introduction meet;
True you may gain good company without;
The Arch-Fiend went to Paradise incog.,
Nor needed introduction there, to spoil
The truest bliss by man or angel known:
Yet Satan haply fared not aye so well
As holy legend tells. St Dominic,
The patron saint of Inquisitions, sat
Conning the pages of some holy tome,
Unless his thoughts still saintlier themes engaged,
Devising tortures for arch-heretics:
When straight appeared the fiend before his eye,
Not wrap'd in sulphurous flames, but in disguise
Of humblest Flea, he skipped across the page,
Doubtless, with dev'lish malice to arrest
The father's most benevolent designs;
But well he recognised, through strange disguise,
Nor failed to punish the intruding fiend.
From page to page, throughout the ponderous tome,
The holy father,--leave nor asked nor given,--
Used this Arch-Flea to note, as he progressed,
Each pause: when holy meditation fixed
His upturned eye, straight the unwilling fiend
Stood where he left, nor moved, until again
Progressive meditation dragged him on;
The ponderous volume closed, transfixed he lay
In atmosphere abhorrent, till at length
St Dominic, his studies having done,

Unbound, and let repentant Satan flee.
His fate demands your thought, this lesson gives,--
Eschew, unIntroduced, the worthiest page;
Worth comes not always with the fairest show;
Nor Beelzebub alone, hath glanced upon
An open page, with swift intent to leave,
Yet lingered on, enchained, until the close.
Or should some witty reader rather think
The Flea himself best emblem of my rhymes,--
Doubtless!--and yet the saintly record hints
Huge mischief, as perchance some little good,
May find full compass in the pettiest form.

It happened, when the world was in its prime,
Young Truth, then deemed a fair and comely boy,--
Although the prescience of our wiser times
Dub him Plain Truth, a starched old gentleman,
Somewhat precise and sour, if all be told,
Nor complaisant, though with some sterling parts
To those who care to court his company!
This same young Truth, enamoured of a maid
Called Beauty, wooed and won her for his bride;
Whence sprang a babe uniting either's charms,
Who grew up, lovely in immortal youth,
And still is known as Poesie Divine;
A protean youth, of infinite desire,
A soul of passionate purity and love,
And beauty flashing out through every guise;
Now robed in tragic weeds; veiled loveliness
Telling of woe that asks in vain for tears;
Anon exchanged for innocence of mirth.
Here treading stately measure to the swell
Of the deep organ's voice. There, to the sound
Of the soft lute, breathing a lover's plaint
Unto his mistress' ear--or with a song
Of mirthfulness fore fending rheumy care;
Till the dull world, so long despising him,
Begins to find some virtue in the boy:
The which no sooner known, some prater comes,
Tricked out in gaudy tinsel cap and bells,
Jangling discordant measure as he halts
At every turn; announcing to the world
Some brat of his the twin of Poesie,
Himself forsooth the foster sire of both:
Until the age, grown sick of charlatans,
Turns a deaf ear to Poesie's own song.
Yet doth he own a many-voiced lute

Let down he own a many voiced note
Of varying power, as Beauty's self--no less:
Hath not the organ, that awakes a voice
In the cathedral's far receding aisles,
A lowlier note, to breathe the holy psalm
Responsive to untutored village choir?
While Painting younger, of the Heavenly maids,
Owns as her own, Van Huysum or Ostade,
No less than Raphael, wrapt in theme divine;
And nature's self among her costlier charms,
The daisy and the blue forget-me-not,
Oft echoed sweetly in the muse's ear:--
So have I dared to hope, that Poesie,--
Weighing huge folios, 'gainst some homely song,
And scornfully disowning many a cheat
That apes the passions, strangers to his soul,
May condescend to own my lowly rhymes.

If earnest aspirations after good,
The passionate worship of an ardent soul
Striving to win the Beautiful and True,
Could give the claim to take the lowliest rank
Among 'the God-like race'--then were it mine;
And this, my verse, a heaven-inspired song,
Exacting audience from a listless world.
But vain my song, poor echo to the sense
Of heavenly loveliness, that still eludes,
Charming me onward, in delusive chase,
Attracted by a beauty all divine,
I see, and own, and worship, and would sing,
But that power fails me, and my shamed lyre
Yields but a mockery of the lofty theme.
Yet hath it high reward; though it may seem
Worthless to thee, to me it had a charm
That soothed the writer oft in saddest mood,
And added pleasure to some gayer hours;
A pleasure critics cannot take away.
Nay! fear not! play the critic an thou list,
I care not how thy merriment's produced,
So that, in all true friendship thou art pleased:
Perchance the gayest move thee not to smile,
Why then the graver may! But if thy vein
Is rather, with a sharp and venomous tooth,
To find thy pleasure, torturing my poor verse,
Until it answer as thou list,--I ween
Thou hast full leave to break the Butterfly
Upon thy ponderous wheel; as I now break,

With a stern sense of duty, this weak Lyre,
And give life's morrow to the fate she wills.

[2] See "Task," book iv. line 14.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Obvious typesetting errors have been corrected. Inconsistencies in hyphenation and spelling have been retained to preserve this copy as close to the original as possible. Title for poem "A Garland of Wild Roses" did not appear in original book. It was created for this ebook to link to TOC. There are other instances of listing in book's original Table of Contents not matching title of poem in body of book. These have been retained.

[The end of *Spring Wild Flowers* by Wil. D'Leina (Daniel Wilson)]